

OUTLINE/IDEAS -- UCA SPEECH

I. Introduction. Jokes. Acknowledgments. How Moakley got here.  
Purpose of the Speaker's Task Force.

As you may know, I am the Chairman of a special task force that was appointed by the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives to monitor the investigation into the terrible murders that took place on this campus on November 16, 1989. Members of the task force have not tried to investigate the case ourselves, but we have tried to monitor the progress of the investigation conducted by the authorities in this country.

Over the past year, our task force has prepared one major report and a number of shorter reports discussing the investigation. These efforts would not have been possible without the help of Father <sup>Miguel</sup> ~~Paco~~ Estrada and Fr. Jose Maria Tojeira and other officials at the UCA and the Society of Jesus. We have also received important help from the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, William Walker, who I believe is a very good man and a man who wants very much to see justice done in this case.

I am conscious, as I stand here, that past relations between the people of El Salvador and Government of the United States have not always been smooth.

Your former President <sup>Jose</sup> Napoleon Duarte once said that El Salvador's history consisted of "fifty years of lies, fifty years of injustice, (and) fifty years of frustration." It is a history, he said "of a people starving to death, living in misery. For fifty years, the same people have had all the power, all the money, all the jobs, all the opportunities."

And throughout those fifty years, all the people of El Salvador heard from the United States was silence.

It was not until ten years ago, after the revolution in Nicaragua, that the U.S. Government began to pay serious attention to El Salvador. Because even the Reagan Administration understood that your country, with its history of social inequality, its corrupt and brutal military and its increasingly active and militant left was as logical a candidate for revolution as this hemisphere has ever seen.

And so, for the past ten years, America has provided more than \$4 billion in economic and military aid to El Salvador. That aid has been designed to help your military make violent revolution impossible, and to reform your government so that violent revolution would be unnecessary.

There are some in the Congress of the United States who have fully supported these policies. Others, such as myself, have expressed serious concern about the wisdom of providing military aid.

## II. Importance of the Jesuits case.

Those concerns were validated on the morning of November 16, 1989.

I do not have to tell you that those murders were not the first in El Salvador, nor would they be the last. The victims of political violence number in the tens of thousands. It makes no difference in the eyes of God, and it should make no difference in our own eyes, whether a victim of that violence is famous or unknown, rich or poor, a partisan of the left or right or of no side at all.

Every one of us is entitled to our rights; and every one of us is entitled to justice when those rights are violated.

It is not on abstract human or moral grounds, then, that so many of us have come to attach so much importance to resolving the

murders that took place here at the UCA. We are moved, instead, by the friendship that so many of us had for one or another of the murdered priests; we are moved by the respect we felt for the courage and faith of these men in their pursuit of social justice and peace; we are moved by the innocence and suffering of Julia Ramos and her daughter Celia; and we are moved by the brutality and cowardice of the murders themselves--carried out, not in the heat of some battle--but instead as a cold-blooded assassination of unarmed and helpless men and women, in the dead of night, with the direct or indirect participation of hundreds of well-armed and well-trained troops.

There has been too much killing in El Salvador to hope to find the truth or to obtain justice in every case. But it should not be too much to expect truth and justice in this one case.

America has invested billions of dollars in El Salvador since 1980 and a principal goal has been to create a system of justice that works. It should not be too much to expect that system to work in this one case.

Opponents of government policies have been picked up, questioned, tortured and murdered in this country for years. Now, they are asked to trust the government, to trust the armed forces, to trust the political system. It should not be too much to expect the government, the armed forces and the system to be worthy of trust in this one case.

For if El Salvador, with all the international pressure, cannot bring those who murdered the Jesuits to justice, how can we expect justice the next time a labor leader or a teacher or a campesino is killed?

And let there be no mistake, finding the truth in this case is important not because it would please the United States or Spain or some other foreign country; it is essential if the people of El Salvador are to live at peace with themselves.

### III. Status of the case.

As you know, eight members of the armed forces, including one Colonel, have been charged with the murders. Two others have been charged with destroying evidence. Four others have been charged with perjury.

I believe that Judge Ricardo Zamora deserves great credit for bringing the case to this point. He has done his best to build a strong case against the accused. And he has done his best to investigate the possible involvement of others in ordering or participating in the crimes.

The role of the military is another story.

General Ponce has said over and over again that these murders should be considered the acts of individuals and not the responsibility of the armed forces as an institution. That is nonsense.

When an armed force of more than 200 is deployed around a university campus; when a unit from that force enters that campus and systematically murders 8 people; when efforts are made at the scene to cover up those crimes; when a phony firefight is recorded in the official log of military operations; when not a single officer comes forward voluntarily with information concerning the case; when evidence controlled by the military is withheld and destroyed; when many of those in the military who are called to testify lie and lie again about what they know; when even the special military Honor Board appointed by President Cristiani to review the case lies about it; I say you've got an institutional problem.

At a minimum, the high command of the armed forces knew soon after the murders which unit was responsible for the crimes. At a minimum, they sought to limit the scope of the investigation in order to protect certain officers from prosecution. And there is

a strong possibility that the murders were ordered by senior military officers not currently charged.

I am convinced that there are officers in the armed forces who did not themselves participate in the crimes, but who have further information about the crimes. To date, these officers have not come forward because they fear they will be killed. They know that telling the truth about the military is considered by some in El Salvador to be a capital crime. If that isn't an institutional problem, I don't know what is.

The fact is that General Ponce has it backwards. There are many individuals in the Salvadoran armed forces who bear no responsibility for these killings; but the institution of the armed forces is directly responsible, not only for the murders but for the failure of the investigation to uncover the whole truth. It is the institution that instills fear; the institution that teaches its members--no, orders its members--to deny the obvious; it is the institution that encourages its members to be loyal not to honor or truth or country, but to the armed forces and the armed forces only.

The fact is that there is nothing a soldier could do that would be more patriotic or better for the armed forces or for El Salvador than to come forward with the truth in this case.

#### IV. What it all means.

What will happen in this case and to this country if the full truth does not emerge?

--if the full truth is

#### V. Peace.

--ONUSAL