

NEWS RELEASE

From Congressman Joe Moakley, 9th District, Massachusetts

STATEMENT OF REP. JOE MOAKLEY

CHAIRMAN OF THE SPEAKER'S TASK FORCE ON EL SALVADOR

JANUARY 16, 1991

The Bush Administration is today issuing a report on the current situation in El Salvador that includes a decision to remove any legal restrictions on the release of the full amount of U.S. military aid to that country. The decision is based on evidence that the FMLN has violated conditions in federal law that previously required the withholding of 50% of military aid.

I do not fault the Administration for its criticism of the FMLN. I do fault it for rationalizing abuses committed by the armed forces. The law requires balance; the Administration's action is unbalanced, poorly-reasoned, ill-timed and based on a highly selective use of facts.

There is no question that the FMLN has violated conditions in law by continuing to acquire arms from outside El Salvador. But the armed forces are also violating conditions in the law by continuing to obstruct justice in the Jesuits' case. The Administration's double standard can only reduce pressure on the Salvadoran armed forces to reform and negotiate seriously for peace.

Americans should understand, as well, that the Administration's continued call for the FMLN to accept an unconditional ceasefire is propaganda, not policy. Last May, the FMLN and the Salvadoran government agreed that a series of political reforms would be required before -- not after -- a ceasefire.

For two years, this Administration has talked about the importance of a bipartisan policy towards El Salvador. But bipartisanship requires balance. And once again, sadly, the Administration has gone off the tracks.

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