

NEWS RELEASE

From Congressman Joe Moakley, 9th District, Massachusetts

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For Immediate Release
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Congressional Leaders Introduce New El Salvador Legislation Bill Subjects All New Military Aid to Congressional Reprogramming

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- A bipartisan group of Congressional leaders today introduced new legislation specifically designed to encourage and support a negotiated settlement to the 11-year civil war in El Salvador. The bill would shift United States policy away from military priorities towards those of demobilization, reconciliation and transition to peace -- and, at the same time, restate Congressional concern regarding human rights -- in particular the Jesuits' case. The bill would further subject all future U.S. military aid, including funds transferred to support demobilization, to the review and approval of the four pertinent foreign affairs committees of Congress.

While a vote on this legislation is not expected until early next year, Congressman Joe Moakley (D-Mass.), the lead sponsor, stated, "This bill clearly represents the direction the debate will take. The Congress is demonstrating its unequivocal support for the United Nations, its desire for an end to the violence by both sides in the conflict, and its commitment to helping rebuild El Salvador."

The bipartisan group consists of members of the House Democratic leadership and key congressional policymakers on foreign affairs and defense matters. They include: Congressman Joe Moakley (D-MA), chairman of the House Rules Committee; Congressman John Murtha (D-PA), chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense; Congressman Matthew McHugh (D-NY), member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations; Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI), chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations; Congressman Dante Fascell (D-FL), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee; Congressman Dave Bonior (D-MI), House Majority Whip; Congressman Robert Torricelli (D-NJ), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs; Congressman Richard Gephardt (D-MO), House Majority Leader; Congressman Lee Hamilton (D-IN), member of the Foreign Affairs Committee; Congressman Stephen Solarz (D-NY), member of the Foreign Affairs Committee; Congressman Ted Weiss (D-NY), member of Foreign Affairs Committee; Congressman Gerry Studds (D-MA), member of the Foreign Affairs Committee; Congressman Bill Green (R-NY), member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations; Congressman Arthur Ravenel, Jr. (R-SC), member of the Armed Services Committee; Congresswoman Constance Morella (R-MD), chair of the bipartisan Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus; Congressman Christopher Shays (R-CT).

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Key Provisions of the Bill:

-- Expresses Congressional support for the New York Agreement signed by the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN; commends the negotiators for the contending parties and the role played by the United Nations in achieving the agreement; calls upon the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN to accelerate their efforts to achieve a comprehensive agreement to end the war, and reaffirms Congressional support for the role of the United Nations in helping to achieve such an agreement.

-- Urges the President to work closely and cooperatively with the Congress in fashioning an assistance policy for El Salvador that supports the efforts of those seeking a negotiated solution, and that contributes to national reconstruction and reconciliation.

-- Requires the President to seek the approval of four committees of the Congress (the Committees on Appropriations and Foreign Affairs in the House and the Committees on Appropriations and and Foreign Relations in the Senate) before providing further military aid.

-- Permits the transfer of military aid to the Demobilization and Transition Fund for El Salvador (established by Congress last year) to meet costs associated with the "demobilization, retraining and relocation and reemployment in civilian pursuits of former combatants." Monies transferred to the Fund can only be obligated once a permanent settlement, including a ceasefire, is reached. Requires the President to seek the approval of the same four committees of Congress noted above before spending monies transferred to the Fund.

-- Carries forward certain provisions from current law: (1) subjecting U.S. military aid to civilian control in El Salvador, and (2) terminating all U.S. assistance to El Salvador in the event of a coup.

-- Expresses continuing Congressional concern regarding the murders of the Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter.

-- Urges the FMLN to turn over to the appropriate judicial authorities in the United States or El Salvador the murderers of U.S. Private First Class Ernest G. Dawson, Jr. and Lt. Col. David Pickett for the purpose of standing trial.