

NEWS

from
**Paul
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U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

POCKET VETO OF EL SALVADOR CERTIFICATION EXTENSION

Senator Paul Tsongas issued the following statement today.

"The President, it is reported, may well refuse to sign legislation extending the El Salvador Human Rights Certification Procedure. This pocket veto, if it transpires, will be most unfortunate.

"The Human Rights Certification Procedure for El Salvador was passed with bipartisan support in the Congress. Administration officials have reluctantly praised the legislation as effective leverage on the Salvadoran government to bring under control the right wing murder squads.

"In the four months since the last certification (July 1983), the awful terror of the fanatical right has increased dramatically in El Salvador. Faced now with the choice of clamping down or overlooking the death squads, the Administration seems prepared to look the other way.

"President Reagan - inexplicably, blindly, and recklessly, in my view - contemplates ending the human rights certification process. Human rights is at the very foundation of our policy of military aid to El Salvador. The President apparently is willing to tear apart that foundation. On the slimmest of Constitutional pretexts, the President appears ready to subvert the last shred of American credibility in El Salvador.

"To the forces of rightest mayhem and violence in El Salvador, this decision will give a bright green light. To those of us in Congress who have anguished over the growing U.S. military aid to the Salvadoran military, this decision will mean a red light, a complete halt, to further U.S. involvement.

"I will not support any further military aid to El Salvador unless it is firmly tied to real human rights progress in that country.

"On this issue there is a broad consensus - the United States will no longer support regimes indulging in gross violations of human rights. Any policy which even suggests the contrary is doomed to rejection and defeat."

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