

NEWS

from

Paul Tsongas

U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

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TSONGAS DEPLORES MURDER OF ABC JOURNALIST IN NICARAGUA

Senator Paul Tsongas made the following statement today in regards to the murder of ABC journalist Bill Stewart in Nicaragua earlier this week;

"Wednesday afternoon the world witnessed the senseless and brutal execution of an American newsman at the hands of a Nicaraguan national guardsman. This deplorable act of violence is a moral affront to all civilized people of the world. It can not be tolerated and will not be forgotten. Far from the isolated "action of an individual soldier", responsibility for reporter Bill Stewart's death must be placed on the shoulders of the repressive and brutal Somoza regime. Fueling anti-journalistic sentiment with inflammatory rhetoric, Somoza has repeatedly and without justification blasted the American press. He must, therefore, be held accountable for the Stewart tragedy.

"Yesterday's murder should not be viewed as a single event. In the words of U.S. Vice Consul to Nicaragua John Bargeron, "it was a normal execution. Nicaraguans are killed like this everyday." The blatant disregard for human life displayed by the Somoza government has also been shown time and time again in the daily bombings of civilian homes and villages over the past several weeks and general repressive acts over the years. Bill Stewart's death must be viewed within this broader context. It is indicative of a sickness that now characterizes the Somoza government. Broadbased popular support of the Sandinista guerilla movement by the Nicaraguan people more than adequately underscores this point.

"The U.S. can not sit idly by and condone by silence further gross violations of human life. While we no longer provide military assistance and have not renewed economic aid to the Nicaraguan government this year, the time has come for the U.S. to speak out forcefully and critically of the excesses of the Somoza regime. I also support the administration in calling for the resignation of President Somoza so that the free will of the Nicaraguan people may prevail.