

March 23, 1982

CONGRESS AND AID TO EL SALVADOR

INTRODUCTION

In December 1981, Congress passed the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1981. Possibly the most important and controversial provision of the Act was Section 113 which dealt with "Restrictions on Military Assistance and Sales to El Salvador." Subsection (d) contained five specific requirements that had to be certified by the President in order for aid to continue. On January 28, 1982, President Reagan, through Presidential Determination No. 82-4, formally asserted that El Salvador had complied with Congress's restrictions and consequently U.S. assistance to El Salvador would continue. In February and March 1982 both the House Foreign Affairs and the Senate Foreign Relations Committees held hearings on the issues raised by the President's certification decision. The Committees are expected to vote on certification following the March 28 elections in El Salvador. The certification issue reflects the broad dimensions of the policy debate in the Congress over aid to El Salvador. The major concerns are: human rights, economic and political reforms, free elections and the investigation of the murders of six U.S. citizens in El Salvador.

An examination of these issues reveals a pattern of conscientious attempts by the Salvadorean government to grapple in the midst of war with extremely complex dilemmas involving profound social, economic, and political reforms. But rather than receiving appropriate credit for their efforts, the government of El Salvador has instead often been measured by an unrealistic yardstick used

Much of the analysis in this study is based on first-hand observation and interviews conducted by the author in El Salvador earlier this year.

primarily to indicate that additional improvement is necessary. While most public witnesses who testified before the House and Senate committees on aid to El Salvador related specific failures of the Salvadorean government, few of them placed the issues involved in the certification within the larger context of a country at war -- a war precipitated by Marxist revolutionaries only after the oligarchical regime had been overthrown by a coup d'etat. Moreover, most evidence cited in charges of human rights abuses in El Salvador derives from sources whose finds are suspect. Organizations with few if any reliable observers in El Salvador produce most of the charges of human rights abuses in the country. However, the Roman Catholic Church which functions freely in El Salvador has disavowed many of these organizations and their allegations.

Much of the discussion in Congress concerning social change in El Salvador has disregarded the profound transformation of the country and the fact that all seven democratic political factions vying for power in the March 28 elections have pledged to continue the social and economic reforms. Moreover, the election mechanism established by the junta provided an appropriate vehicle for peaceful transition of Salvadorean society through a representative assembly. Even extreme Marxist radicals could have participated in the process, but refused to do so for fear of revealing their lack of popular support.

HUMAN RIGHTS

One of the most controversial and emotional aspects of the debate over El Salvador has centered on charges of human rights violations by all sides involved in the conflict. The Congress has consistently attached special importance to this issue. Thus, the first two sections of the certification requirements assert that the President must make a determination that the government of El Salvador:

(1) is not engaged in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.

(2) is achieving substantial control over all elements of its own armed forces, so as to bring to an end the indiscriminate torture and murder of Salvadorean citizens by these forces.

It has always been difficult to evaluate respect for human rights by government authorities in wartime. The certification language specifically refers to "a consistent pattern of gross violations." Evaluation of fulfillment of the Act should be based on this general requirement and not the much narrower question of eliminating all human rights abuses.

Reports of human rights violations submitted to the Congress have blamed the Salvadorean security forces for the majority of human rights violations in El Salvador. The charges should not be accepted automatically as valid and accurate. Three of the major organizations which have contributed information on human rights violations do not have credible records.

1. The Legal Aid Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador. Also referred to as "Socorro Juridico," this organization has been used repeatedly as a main source of information by a number of international human rights organizations. It was discredited in a joint communique by the Episcopal Conference of El Salvador on January 6, 1982. The communique clearly states that the Conference:

a) Agrees with his Excellency and Apostolic Administrator of San Salvador Bishop Rivera y Damas that, the only and sole purpose and final objective of "Socorro Juridico," is to be strictly of technical character in the field of justice.

b) Does not recognize all declarations which "Socorro Juridico" makes, has made or may make in the future to brother countries on behalf of the Archdiocese or the Church of El Salvador.

c) Recognizes and establishes that "Socorro Juridico" has adopted and adopts unilateral positions which are not along the same lines as the Pastor of the Archdiocese of San Salvador.

Bishop Rivera y Damas specified that the only authorities to speak on behalf of the church are:

a) The Bishop, recognized leader of God's flock, and caretaker for their well being.

b) The Vicar Generals, when representing the Bishop.

c) The Secretariat of Social Communications when it is expressing the official thoughts of the Bishop. Any other representatives or organizations attached to the Archdiocese, are not the official voice of the Archdiocese.

Nevertheless many recent reports of human rights violations are representing figures reported by the Legal Aid Office as the official assessment of the Salvadorean Catholic Church. A recent human rights report published by The Center for National Security Studies for the American Civil Liberties Union utilized material provided by both "Socorro Juridico" and the "Salvadorean Human Rights Commission." Most of the charts and figures used in the report were provided by these two organizations. This January

1982 report was submitted during congressional hearings in both the House and the Senate as proof of human rights violations -- mostly by the security forces. Such reports are contradictory to the Catholic Church's point of view and are not credible. (See Appendix I.)

2. The Salvadorean Human Rights Commission.

According to reports by the office of the Episcopal Conference in San Salvador, Salvadorean Human Rights Commission officials fled the country in fear for their lives following the assassination of Archbishop Romero. Since then, they have reported out of Mexico City. They have sent representatives to El Salvador to gather information on human rights violations, although much of the information gathered has been difficult to verify. Consequently, it has been virtually impossible for the Commission to keep accurate accounts of human rights violations; instead they depend upon unreliable statements gathered in El Salvador by persons who are sympathetic to the Leftist guerrillas. Although some of their reports may be valid, it is difficult to verify their accuracy and objectivity.

3. The Jose Simeon Canas Central American University.

This Jesuit-run university, which is often referred to as the Catholic University, has also volunteered to keep records on human rights violations. This university is not an accredited Catholic University, and is not considered as such by the Archdiocese of San Salvador. It has played a major role in the development of the guerrilla movement in El Salvador. In this university, three major guerrilla groups were founded under the guidance of several Jesuit priests: The Popular Liberation Front (FPL), the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), and the Popular League-28 of February (LP-28). These groups are now part of the umbrella organization the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), which has joined with the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) as the established forces opposing the Civilian Military Junta of El Salvador. Continued support for these groups has come through the university's quarterly publication ECA.

General Human Rights Problems

There are profound problems in accurately assessing blame for human rights violations. Substantial difficulties arise in attempting to reach even an accurate accounting of the number of dead and wounded, especially since it is customary for Leftist guerrillas to carry the dead bodies of their comrades with them or strip them of any identification or clothing. This makes it nearly impossible to determine whether a victim was a participant in the fighting or a non-combatant. Likewise, it is also difficult to clearly identify piles of human remains, which at times have been classified as remains of innocent victims of massacres.

Written testimony gathered at several parishes throughout the Salvadorean countryside indicates that on many occasions guerrillas have used villagers as shields from the gunfire of security forces. In this manner, they can make their getaway, leaving many innocent victims. These incidents, along with hundreds of others, explain why the guerrillas lack a broader base of support, especially from the campesinos.

The Reagan Administration has not denied or disclaimed human rights violations but instead has argued that these violations by the security forces have been reduced. One must also take into account those forces over which the government has no control, or the guerrilla forces, whose violations often are ignored because they are not a recognized political force.

A year ago, it was common to find great numbers of mutilated bodies daily along the highways leading into the interior of the country. This sort of event has virtually disappeared. On the other hand, a scenario that is still very common on the highways, and was recently reported by television news in the U.S., is the war tax that travelers must pay when they are accosted by guerrillas in the countryside. Some very willingly pay what little they have as long as they are assured that their lives will be spared. Near the City of San Vicente, in early February, two Salvadoreans were robbed on the highway by guerrilla forces just prior to reaching the city; they felt relieved to get away with their lives. At the entrance to San Vicente, they spotted men in uniform and told these assumed members of the security forces the location of their attackers. The individual who reported the incident was shot on the spot and his companion was told that he would be killed if he reported the incident. The guerrillas had dressed in Army uniforms in order to make the local villagers believe they were security forces. The surviving victim fled the country without reporting this incident to any human rights group in El Salvador.

Small shop owners have been forced to pay a security tax so that their struggling businesses may be spared from terrorist bombings.

Such attacks by the guerrilla forces provide a realistic assessment of whom they consider the enemy. Obviously, the true enemies are not always the government, nor large multinational corporations, nor even the few wealthy landowners -- with the agrarian reform activated, no one owns more than 500 hectares. Guerrillas have only the Salvadorean people to attack, the poor campesinos, the laborers, and others struggling to survive.

On February 17, 1982, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of El Salvador unanimously singled out the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) as responsible for El Salvador's recent rising level of violence and called them an "armed communist group."

Section (2) of the certification requires that the government is "achieving substantial control over all the elements of its own armed forces, so as to bring an end to the indiscriminate torture and murder of Salvadorean citizens by these forces."

Although extremely difficult during a war situation, efforts have been made to control human rights violations by government security forces. On March 9, defense minister General Garcia gave a strong warning to his troops concerning violation of human rights. He instructed his forces at all levels of his command that they must respect human rights.

The recent arrest of a former military officer, leader of an extortion ring and a paramilitary right wing death squad, should give some indication of the government's efforts in bringing to justice the perpetrators of such violence. According to some government sources, fifty-seven members of the security force have been detained and turned over to civilian criminal courts for trial. Some 400 security guards have been expelled from the force since the junta took power in October 1979. Details of the outcome or punishment of these offenders by civilian courts are still confidential. It should be noted that the United States -- a country not at war -- often experiences difficulty in bringing malefactors to justice.

IMPLEMENTING ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFORMS

The certification passed by the Congress mandates that the President "determine that the Government of El Salvador is making continued progress in implementing essential economic and political reforms, including land reform, and is supporting the private sector."

El Salvador has implemented the most radical land reform in Latin America to date. Despite serious setbacks due to poor administration and threats from extremists of both the Left and the Right, it should be considered as a major achievement that a military and civilian-run government in Latin America could initiate such a program. This reform has been accepted by the majority of the people of El Salvador; opponents know that their goal is now unattainable. All political parties participating in the electoral process have accepted the validity and urgency of its continuation.

The Marxist answer to the agrarian reform would be for the state to expropriate all arable land and have a state-run economy. This is what is being done in Nicaragua, and now basic food must be rationed. It is generally made available only to card-carrying militia members and patterned on the activities of the Cheka in the Bolshevik revolution in Russia from 1917 until 1921.

El Salvador's former system of education has been abolished and a decentralized system established. The budget for education

in 1981 was the highest ever. In particular, the system now includes the Armed Forces. The number of illiterates this past year was brought down below 40 percent with a projection of 20 percent for 1982.

When the National University was in operation, students had to take part in guerrilla training in the classrooms. Students were often issued weapons and desks would be removed from the classrooms in order to make room for guerrilla activity and training. Any student who refused was threatened, harassed and humiliated until he would join a Leftist organization or leave the University. This type of activity took place before the 1979 coup and during the early months of the civilian/military junta. The University was eventually closed by the armed forces after it became a base of operation for guerrilla forces to stage attacks on the capital of San Salvador. Although the National University has remained closed, new centers of higher education have opened, and student enrollment is higher today than ever.

The AFL-CIO has worked closely with the government of El Salvador for the past twenty years. During the last two years, they have been providing technical assistance to the Salvadorean Communal Union (USC), in the area of land reform, reform which the AFL-CIO considers the most revolutionary change in recent Latin American history. On March 6 and April 28, 1980, laws were decreed in El Salvador concerning land reform which said that farmers now owned the land they worked. These reform laws affect over two-thirds of all the crop land in the country, and benefit over two-thirds of the campesino families who had never owned the land they worked on, including all of those who had been tenant farmers.

A report requested by President Duarte was presented on December 10, 1981, outlining the progress of the land reform program. Compiled by the Communal Salvadorean Union, the report was a strongly worded demand that the government of El Salvador take action to solve some of the immediate problems associated with the land reform. President Duarte accepted the UCS report as a constructive document and acted upon it. Since the publication of the report, the number of killings and evictions, compiled from information supplied by UCS recently, has significantly dropped.¹

At the 14th Annual Convention in 1981 of the AFL-CIO, a resolution concerning El Salvador asserted that:

The AFL-CIO supports the view of the trade union movement of El Salvador that a victory of the totalitarian left

¹ Testimony before the Subcommittee on the Inter-American Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives on February 25, 1982 by William C. Doherty, Jr., Executive Director, American Institute for Free Labor Development.

or the privileged few of the extreme right would be a disaster for the workers of that beleaguered country.

The AFL-CIO condemns the flow of Soviet weapons to the guerrilla forces in El Salvador as well as the use of U.S. weapons by right-wing forces as instruments of domestic repression. Unless there is substantial progress toward land reform, free elections, human rights guarantees, and control of the "death squads" the AFL-CIO will oppose further military aid to the government of El Salvador.

FREE ELECTIONS

The certification passed by the Congress mandates "that the Government of El Salvador is committed to the holding of free elections at an early date and to that end has demonstrated its willingness to negotiate with opposition groups an equitable political resolution to the conflict."

An independent Central Elections Commission was appointed in March 1981. The basis for participation in the elections was established and approved in July of the same year. This meant that any political party previously registered would be automatically re-registered upon receipt of its current by-laws and a list of its board of directors. Also any group of twenty-five or more citizens that collected 3,000 signatures could register as a new political party. These guidelines were presented to all Salvadoreans willing to participate in the elections. The Social Democratic MNR and the Communist UDN, both previously registered and regarded as the opposition, could automatically reinstate their status for the elections under this new regulation. Both the MNR and UDN have refused to participate. They fear that their candidates would be killed by the extreme Left as traitors to the "prolonged struggle" of the Marxist guerrillas. Any extensive study of the character of the extreme Left in El Salvador would indicate that their orientation, goals and methods of operation are incompatible with the creation of a democratic form of government.²

Seven political parties registered for the March 28 elections knowing that the Christian Democrats had the advantage of being the party in power. (See Appendix II.) In recent weeks, participating political candidates have been subject to abuses and attacks from guerrilla forces who are determined to destabilize the elections prior to March 28. The Army has prohibited its members from participating in the elections as a sign that they will not interfere in the outcome of the elections as have military regimes in the past.

² See Alexander Kruger, "El Salvador's Marxist Revolution," Heritage Foundation Background No. 137, April 10, 1981.

The statement unanimously issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of El Salvador on February 17, 1982 reiterated its support of the elections, calling them "a peaceful way for the majority of the people who have said NO to violence," be allowed to express their will, and that the vote could be "the beginning of a solution to an armed conflict." (See Appendix I.) Following the Bishops' statement, a special communique from Rome by the Pope encouraged Salvadoreans to participate in the elections as a peaceful means toward a solution to the conflict in that country. The Campesino Union (UCS) has endorsed the forthcoming elections even after critical statements of the agrarian reform and under pressure from the Left not to participate. A massive rally was sponsored March 14 by UCS in support of the elections.

The promise of elections is being honored by the Salvadorean junta even under the abnormal circumstances of continued guerrilla warfare. This contrasts sharply with the Sandinistas' promise for free elections in Nicaragua and the creation of a pluralistic society. Elections have been postponed in Nicaragua to at least 1985 and democratic dissent has been increasingly suppressed.

An extraordinary hemispheric consensus exists in support of the elections in El Salvador. The Organization of American States endorsed the elections by an overwhelming vote of 22-3 with four abstentions. President Duarte has admitted that the elections will not solve all the problems. "However, they are a part of democracy and are the basis for freedom." Unfortunately, inordinate attention has been placed on the position of Mexico -- which is the only democratic government in Latin America not supporting the elections. Recent interest by the Reagan Administration in the Mexican proposals for dealing with El Salvador have baffled nearly all political factions in San Salvador.

Efforts by the present Salvadorean government to reach an agreement with the opposition members of the Left have failed due to pre-electoral conditions imposed by the opposition. These conditions were based on the Left's requirement of equal participation in the governing of El Salvador prior to the election: in other words, a fully fledged coalition government safely implanted before the elections. Despite these conditions, the door has been left open for the opposition parties of the Left to join the elections and an unconditional amnesty has been offered to guerrillas who wish to lay down their arms and join the electoral process.

To these offers of negotiations and participation in the elections, the FDR-FMLN answers with shouts of "revolution or death." Guerrilla leader Cayetano Carpio on January 22 of this year, during the celebrations of the inauguration of the second clandestine radio station (Radio Farabundo Marti), threatened the elections and those participating by saying:

You must thoroughly analyze the objective reality. If you do this, you will arrive at the conclusion that by participating in the elections, you are helping the genocidal plan of imperialism and the junta.

The people are watching and learning to know their enemies and collaborators. We don't want you to continue to be on this dishonorable list. Therefore, we insist on telling you that you must not continue to participate.

We will be watching your future behavior.

Revolution or death, the armed people will win.

Signed: The Farabundo Marti Peoples Liberation Forces,
El Salvador, 1982.

Threatening remarks such as these heard daily on clandestine radio stations throughout the country do not indicate a desire for a peaceful solution.

Several members of Congress have initiated proposals for a negotiated settlement between the Leftist factions of the opposition and the civilian-military junta. On October 16, 1981, Members of Congress received copies of the proposal presented by the Coordinator of the Nicaraguan Junta, Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, before the United Nations General Assembly on October 7, 1981. This proposal calls for a political solution through five basic principles, the fifth stating that: "They should be initiated without pre-established conditions by either party." Following these principles, two points are outlined for discussion. Point B calls for:

The reconstruction of the Armed Forces, based on the officers and troops of the current army who are not responsible for crimes and genocide against the people, and integration of the hierarchy and troops of the FMLN.

The FMLN-FDR statement goes on to say, "Our Fronts consider elections a valid and necessary instrument of expression of the people's will whenever conditions and atmosphere exist that allow the people to freely express their will."³ Such a statement is contradictory to statements issued by guerrilla forces on January 21 of this year in which they claim they will "increase...harassment during the next few weeks," prior to the elections, and that "an agreement already exists among the guerrilla groups to launch strong attacks during the months of January, February and March, although an attempt will be made to keep guerrillas in their camps in election day."⁴

Such statements only add to the atmosphere of confusion and insecurity created by the guerrillas. Thus, it is difficult to

³ Information Bulletin of the Political-Diplomatic Commission of the FMLN-FDR, 10-16-82.

⁴ Panama City ACAN-EFE in Spanish, 1741 GMT January 21, 1982.

determine their true objective in negotiations when they are the main cause of a critical and dangerous atmosphere for the elections. If the Leftist factions are truly in favor of a political solution to the problems in El Salvador and believe in the electoral process, they should participate in the elections rather than oppose them. But they lack the popular support necessary to win elections; most experts estimate only 10 percent of the people support the gurrillas. Even supporters of negotiations with the FMLN-FDR acknowledge that at most 20 to 30 percent of the people support them. Guillermo Ungo, head of the Revolutionary Democratic Front and a former member of the junta, received a mere 6.1 percent of the vote in the 1971 assembly elections. Then he ran as a candidate for the National Democratic Union (UDN), and later rose to prominence when he joined the Duarte ticket in the presidential elections of 1972 as vice president.

Repeatedly, statements have been made by different factions of the FMLN-FDR opposition that conspicuously reveal their lack of interest in a peaceful solution to the conflict. On January 17 of this year one of these messages said:

One of the main goals for which the FMLN and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) fight is the establishment of a democratic-revolutionary government that will guarantee full freedom for the Salvadorean people as well as political, economic and military independence from U.S. imperialism.

Let us firmly, militantly and with revolutionary spirit fight for the establishment of the democratic revolutionary government. Long live the FMLN and the FDR! United to fight until the final victory! Revolution or death, we will win!⁵

INVESTIGATION OF THE MURDER OF SIX UNITED STATES CITIZENS

The certification requirements passed by the Congress mandate "that the Government of El Salvador has made good faith efforts to both investigate the murders of six United States citizens in El Salvador in December 1980 and January 1981 and bring to trial those responsible for those murders."

During the recent trials held in El Salvador, evidence has been presented of five security guards' participation in the murders of the United States missionaries. The Junta has promised that all documentation will be provided to the U.S. government, and the families of the victims and be made public. The cases of the other two Americans are still under investigation. It is believed that the recent capture of a former military officer, a

⁵ Radio Unity in Spanish to El Salvador GMT 2100, January 17, 1982.

leader of right wing death squads, will reveal details leading to the solution of these murders.

It is worth noting that at about the same time that the American missionaries were murdered, two Salvadorean priests were killed, one the day before the disappearance of the nuns and the other the day after. One was killed by the Left and the other by the Right. Their murders have never received any attention, presumably because they were not Americans. Similarly, Hugo Wey, Charge d'Affaires from Switzerland, was shot in cold blood on the streets of San Salvador in May 1979 and his killers have never been brought to justice. The FPL, a member of the FMLN-FDR, claimed responsibility for that murder, and yet no one speaks on Wey's behalf and demands trials of FPL assassins.

Participation by a number of foreign and local clergy with the guerrilla forces puts not only the lives of American missionaries in danger, but also the lives of other religious persons who are devoted to the well-being of the Salvadorean people.

A recent visit by the author to the refugee camp in the Archdiocese of San Salvador revealed the complex interrelationship between refugees and guerrillas. At this camp, which was organized by one of the missionaries who was murdered, there are no guarantees of one's safety. The refugees there are relatives of armed guerrillas; wives, children and parents fear for their lives because of the role their relatives have chosen in resistance to the government. These refugees run the electrical and water supply of the entire facility. This includes even the Apostolic Administrator's sleeping and office quarters, the seminary and all offices in the building utilized for the administration of the diocese.

The Secretary General of the Bishops' Conference, Monsignor Delgado revealed how such a peculiar situation is able to exist:

the government won't come in and raid the camp because they would be accused of human rights violations, the Apostolic Administrator Bishop Rivera y Damas is afraid that international human rights organizations will criticize him for throwing them out, so we must live under their constant surveillance and threat and pray they respect our lives, as we have respected theirs.

It is difficult in a wartime situation to bring all guilty parties to justice, let alone survive the violence created by such a conflict. Pressure should continue to bring the culprits to justice -- but not just one group of violators but all those who are guilty of violent crimes.

EL SALVADOR'S REACH FOR DEMOCRACY AND U.S. INVOLVEMENT

Fulfilling the promise of carrying out an electoral process should be granted to the civilian-military government. Once that

process has been carried out, priority attention should go to avenues of cooperation with the elected representatives of the Salvadorean people. Almost all other nations in the region have recognized and supported the efforts of the Salvadorean government.

Costa Rica, long regarded as the most democratic country in Central America, recently signed a resolution with El Salvador and Honduras, creating the Central American Democratic Community. If Honduras was given a chance for elections after a long history of military rule, El Salvador deserves the same chance. On the other hand, Nicaragua, which is allied with the guerrillas in El Salvador, has refused to allow any elections.

Continued support must be provided to help sustain the already implemented socioeconomic reforms. In order to more effectively oversee these and existing programs, additional American AID personnel should be assigned to El Salvador. New programs in social, welfare, education, and medical assistance would begin to solve the socioeconomic problems.

In 1980, the Peace Corps assistance to the Salvadorean peasants had to be curtailed due to threats from guerrilla forces. Such a program would revitalize areas of the country and help avoid disproportionate development that can lead to social conflict.

Soon after the Sandinista revolution, 2,000 teachers, doctors and technicians arrived from Cuba. Now the number of advisors in Nicaragua numbers above the 5,000 and includes some 2,000 military advisors. Similar kinds of outside support from non-communist governments in the hemisphere are needed in El Salvador.

CONCLUSION

The debate on the future of El Salvador should focus on how best to work with those elements in the country who have embraced both the democratic political process and the social and economic reforms that can create a viable foundation for the development of El Salvador. Instead, much of the debate in Congress has centered on charges of human rights abuses, usually leveled by organizations which have little or no direct contact with the situation in El Salvador or which have largely used guerrilla sources for their information. Similarly, the call in Congress and elsewhere for negotiations ignores the fundamental character of the guerrilla FMLN-FDR organization, which ultimately seeks to create a Marxist state in El Salvador antithetical to the creation of a pluralistic democratic society.

The numerous conditions that Congress has imposed on continued assistance to El Salvador have been met by the government, although, given the ambiguous character of many of the conditions, debate will continue on the degree of compliance. The debate should now turn from an examination of various details of the conflict to the broader dimensions of its nature and possible

outcome. In such an examination, the Congress would find that the only hope for establishing a free and democratic society in El Salvador resides in the existing government and other political groups participating in the March 28 elections. The continuation of American assistance to El Salvador can promote the process. The kind of state which the FMLN-FDR would establish in El Salvador would not only be inimical to the welfare of the people of El Salvador, but would also threaten the security of the other nations in the region and ultimately the United States.

Richard Araujo
Policy Analyst

APPENDIX I

CONFERENCIA EPISCOPAL DE EL SALVADOR (CEDES) EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF EL SALVADOR
(TRANSLATION OF PRESS RELEASE BY THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF EL SALVADOR) THE
BISHOPS OF EL SALVADOR, IN A SPECIAL MEETING, ON THE 17TH DAY OF FEBRUARY OF
THE YEAR 1982, MAKE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

1) ...The majority of the people of El Salvador reject violence, whether it be from the Left, the Right, or abuses by elements of the Armed Forces and Security Guards.

2) We state that the conflict, which is based on (internal causes) has been internationalized to such an extent, that the decisions for a solution of the problems are now out of the hands of Salvadoreans. It is a fact that the superpowers contribute to maintaining the conflict.

3) The present conflict, which has been degenerated by terrorism, has been accentuated in various areas of the country by armed communist groups such as the (FMLN) in an effort to prevent the elections. The social means of communication, at an international level, have maximized these facts, creating a false image of what is going on in the country.

4) We believe that the elections, even though held under the most abnormal conditions and circumstances, are the most peaceful means by which the majority of the people who have said NO to violence may have the best means of expressing their will. This could be the beginning of one of the solutions to the armed conflict.

5) We reiterate, once more, that the problem of El Salvador must be solved by the people of El Salvador.

Signed in San Salvador on Wednesday, February 17, 1982.

Jose Eduardo Alvarez, C.M.
Bishop of San Miguel
President of CEDES

Pedro Arnaldo Aparicio
Bishop of San Vicente
Vice President of CEDES

Arturo Rivera y Damas
Bishop of Santiago de
Maria, Apostolic Administrator
of San Salvador

Mario Rene Revelo
Bishop of Santa Ana

Freddy Delgado A.
Secretary General of CEDES

(This is not an official translation.)

APPENDIX II

REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES FOR THE MARCH 28 ELECTIONS IN EL SALVADOR

1. RENEWED ACTION PARTY -- PAR (PARTIDO DE ACCION RENOVADORA)

Founded in 1944. Secretary General: Ernesto Oyarbide
 Party of the people, with genuine leftist credentials. Main appeal:
 labor and students.

2. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT PARTY -- PDS (PARTIDO DEMOCRATA CRISTIANO)

Founded in 1960. Secretary General: Julio Samayoa
 Party in power, representatives of the civilian sector of the government.
 Main appeal: Centrists, labor, middle class.

3. DEMOCRATIC ACTION -- AD (ACCION DEMOCRATICA)

Founded in 1981. Main representative: Dr. Rene Fortin Magana
 Main appeal: middle class professionals, businessmen and women.

4. POPULAR ORIENTATION PARTY -- POP (PARTIDO DE ORIENTACION POPULAR)

Founded in 1981. Secretary General: Gral. Jose Alberto Medrano
 Main appeal: middle and upper class, some former military officers.

5. NATIONAL CONCILIATION PARTY - PCN (PARTIDO DE CONCILIACION NACIONAL)

Founded in 1960. Secretary General: Raul Molina Martinez
 Main appeal: business professionals, military.

6. POPULAR SALVADORAN PARTY -- PPS (PARTIDO POPULAR SALVADORENO)

Founded in 1965. Secretary General: Dr. Francisco Quinonenz
 Main appeal: middle and upper class, businessmen, conservatives.

7. NATIONALIST REPUBLICAN ALLIANCE -- ARENA (ALIANZA REPUBLICANA NACIONALISTA)

Founded in 1981. Secretary General: Major Roberto D'Aubisson
 Main appeal: businessmen and professionals, military.