

News from Senator

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE HUMAN RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR

WHY AMERICANS ARE IN EL SALVADOR

EARLIER THIS WEEK, I SPOKE BRIEFLY ABOUT THE TRAGIC DEATH OF STAFF SERGEANT GREGORY FRONIUS, THE AMERICAN MILITARY ADVISER WHO WAS VICTIM OF AN ATTACK BY MARXIST GUERRILLAS AIMING TO OVERTHROW THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT DUARTE. OUR PRAYERS GO OUT TODAY TO SERGEANT FRONIUS' GRIEVING FAMILY.

AND, TODAY, I ALSO WANT TO SAY ANOTHER BRIEF WORD ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON IN EL SALVADOR -- ON A SUBJECT THAT, IN A REAL SENSE, IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE DEATH OF SERGEANT FRONIUS.

AMERICAN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ARE IN EL SALVADOR, IN THE FIRST PLACE, BECAUSE WE WANT TO SEE A STRONGER, BETTER SOCIETY EVOLVE THERE. WE WANT EL SALVADOR TO HAVE THE CHANCE TO DEVELOP IN SECURITY AND PEACE -- FREE FROM AGGRESSION FROM ITS NEIGHBORS; AND FREE FROM VIOLENCE PERPETRATED BY TERRORIST MARXIST ELEMENTS INSIDE THE COUNTRY.

U.N. FINDS DUARTE GOVERNMENT PASSING HUMAN RIGHTS TEST

ONE CRITICAL MEASURE OF THE WAY EL SALVADOR IS EVOLVING UNDER THE DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED DUARTE GOVERNMENT -- ONE CRITICAL MEASURE OF THE SUCCESS OF OUR OWN POLICIES THERE -- IS THE RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAT COUNTRY. HAPPILY, THE RECORD IS GOOD. AND IT IS GETTING BETTER -- AT LEAST AS FAR AS THE DUARTE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIVITIES ARE CONCERNED.

I WANT TO BRING TO THE SENATE'S ATTENTION TODAY A LETTER I RECEIVED FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS ED FOX. THE LETTER SUMMARIZES THE 1986 REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR DONE BY THE UNITED NATIONS. THE AUTHOR OF THE STUDY HAS BEEN MONITORING HUMAN RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR FOR THE U.N. SINCE 1981. HE HAS SEEN THE DIRECTION AND PACE OF DEVELOPMENTS. HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT.

AND, AS MR. FOX'S LETTER INDICATES, HIS BASIC CONCLUSION IS THAT THE DUARTE GOVERNMENT IS DOING AN EXCELLENT JOB ON HUMAN RIGHTS -- AND DOING IT BETTER EVERY YEAR. LET ME QUOTE ONE BRIEF EXCERPT FROM THE U.N. REPORT, CITED IN MR. FOX'S LETTER:

"RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS," THE U.N. REPORT SAYS, "CONTINUES TO BE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE CURRENT POLICY OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT DUARTE, A POLICY WHICH, WITHIN THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIC NORMALIZATION, IS ACHIEVING INCREASINGLY SIGNIFICANT AND COMMENDABLE RESULTS IN THE CRUCIAL AREA OF RESPECT FOR THE LIFE OF PERSONS."

BUT MARXIST INSURGENTS FLUNK

BY CONTRAST, THE U.N. REPORT FINDS THAT THE MARXIST GUERRILLAS -- GUERRILLAS INSPIRED AND SUPPORTED BY MANAGUA, HAVANA AND MOSCOW -- CONTINUE TO UNDERTAKE ACTIVITIES DIRECTLY UNDERMINING FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS -- INDEED, DIRECTLY THREATENING INNOCENT LIFE. QUOTING FROM MR. FOX'S LETTER:

"[A] LARGE AND DISTURBING NUMBER OF NON-COMBATANTS [ARE] KILLED OR SERIOUSLY WOUNDED BY THE EXPLOSION OF CONTACT MINES...MOST SUCH MINES WERE PLACED BY THE FMLN [I.E., THE MARXIST] GUERRILLAS."

FURTHER, THE REPORT STATES: "THE SYSTEMATIC ATTACKS CARRIED OUT BY THE FMLN...SERIOUSLY THREATEN THE PRESENT AND FUTURE ENJOYMENT BY SALVADORAN CITIZENS OF IMPORTANT ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS."

THESE OBSERVATIONS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. WE ARE ON THE RIGHT SIDE IN EL SALVADOR -- THE SIDE OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROGRESS FOR THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR. I THINK ALMOST EVERYONE IN THE SENATE NOW AGREES WITH THIS PROPOSITION.

FALSE TRUMPETS

BUT LET ME REMIND YOU: FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO, THAT WAS NOT THE CASE. FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO, THE QUESTION OF HELPING EL SALVADOR RESIST A MARXIST TAKEOVER WAS A HIGHLY CONTENTIOUS ISSUE IN THE CONGRESS. FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO, THE PREDICTIONS OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE DID PROVIDE AID TO EL SALVADOR -- THE VIETNAM ALLUSIONS, THE REFERENCES TO "STARTING DOWN A SLIPPERY SLOPE" -- THOSE KINDS OF SHRILL WARNINGS WERE HEARD ALL OVER CAPITOL HILL.

THOSE WARNINGS WERE OFF-BASE. THEY WERE WRONG. THEY WERE AIMED AT STOPPING US FROM DOING SOMETHING -- HELPING ESTABLISH DEMOCRACY AND FOSTER HUMAN RIGHTS -- THAT IS AT THE CORE OF WHAT OUR COUNTRY IS ALL ABOUT. THAT IS VITAL IF WE ARE TO REMAIN THE LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD.

OUR STRATEGY, OUR ASSISTANCE, WORKED IN EL SALVADOR. IT CAN WORK OTHER PLACES, TOO. IF WE GIVE IT THE CHANCE AND THE TIME TO WORK.

THE PRICE WE HAVE TO BE WILLING TO PAY

FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM, TRYING TO ELIMINATE OPPRESSION, IS A RISKY, LONG-TERM PROPOSITION. IT CAN COST US A GREAT DEAL, EVEN THE BLOOD OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS -- A TRAGIC FACT WE HAVE SEEN AGAIN IN EL SALVADOR THIS WEEK.

BUT IT IS A STRUGGLE WE MUST UNDERTAKE, A PRICE WE MUST BE WILLING TO PAY, WHEREVER FREEDOM IS AT STAKE: EL SALVADOR, NICARAGUA, ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE, AFGHANISTAN, KAMPUCHEA. THE LIST GOES ON AND ON. AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM GOES ON AND ON.

AMERICA MUST PLAY A LEADING PART IN THAT STRUGGLE. THAT'S THE LESSON OF OUR HISTORY; THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OUR POSITION IN THE WORLD; AND THE HOPE FOR OUR FUTURE AND THE FUTURE OF THE PRINCIPLES WE ESPOUSE.

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