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**-EL SALVADOR EXECUTIONS-
3 AMERICANS MURDERED BY FMLN ASSASSINS;
BUSH SHOULD FULLY FUND CRISTIANI REGIME**

WITH ALL EYES UNDERSTANDABLY FOCUSED ON THE PERSIAN GULF, WE FORGET AT OUR OWN PERIL THAT THE REST OF THE WORLD CONTINUES TO TURN -- SOMETIMES WITH TRAGIC RESULTS.

YESTERDAY, THREE AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL DIED IN EL SALVADOR -- WHEN THEIR HELICOPTER WAS SHOT DOWN BY FMLN REBELS.

THERE IS NO DISPUTE ABOUT THAT. THE FMLN PROUDLY CLAIMS CREDIT FOR THE DEATH OF THESE THREE AMERICANS.

MURDER

AND THERE IS, MOREOVER, SOME VERY DISTURBING EVIDENCE THAT -- AS TERRIBLE AS THESE DEATHS ARE IN ANY CASE -- WE MIGHT BE DEALING HERE NOT WITH A TRAGIC ACT OF WAR, BUT A DELIBERATE CASE OF MURDER.

FOR THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE, STILL BEING INVESTIGATED BY BOTH AMERICAN AND SALVADORAN AUTHORITIES, THAT AT LEAST TWO OF THE THREE AMERICANS WERE ALIVE AFTER THEIR HELICOPTER CRASHED -- BUT WERE SUBSEQUENTLY EXECUTED BY FMLN GUNMEN.

LET US WAIT FOR THE RESULTS OF THAT INVESTIGATION BEFORE WE MAKE UP OUR MINDS ABOUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED.

BUT LET US NOW FACE, AND DEAL WITH, SOME CLEAR FACTS.

CONGRESS LOSES ON FMLN INTENTIONS

LAST YEAR, THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES, BECAUSE IT WANTED PEACE, GAMBLED ON THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF THE FMLN.

I HAPPENED TO BELIEVE THEN THAT IT WAS A LOUSY GAMBLE.

IN LIGHT OF WHAT HAPPENED SINCE, I NOW KNOW IT WAS. AND ANYONE WHO LOOKS AT THE FACTS MUST KNOW THAT, TOO.

LAST NOVEMBER, SADLY, WE ALL HEARD SPEECH AFTER SPEECH ON THE SENATE FLOOR, CRITICIZING THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT CRISTIANI AND THE SALVADORAN MILITARY -- AND TOTALLY IGNORING THE REAL SOURCE OF THE VIOLENCE AND TURMOIL IN EL SALVADOR, THE FMLN.

LAST NOVEMBER, WE HEARD ONE REQUEST AFTER ANOTHER TO GIVE THE FMLN A CHANCE TO DEMONSTRATE ITS INTENTIONS; TO USE THE TERM THEN HEARD SO OFTEN, TO GIVE PEACE A CHANCE.

IT MIGHT BE INSTRUCTIVE FOR ALL OF US TO TAKE SOME TIME TO REVIEW THE RECORD OF THAT PARTICULAR DEBATE.

FMLN SHOWS BLOODY INTENTIONS

BUT THE BOTTOM LINE IS: LAST NOVEMBER, WE HELD OUT EVERY INCENTIVE WE COULD FOR PEACE IN EL SALVADOR -- EVEN AT THE COST OF PUNISHING OUR ALLY, THE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT OF THAT COUNTRY. WE GAVE BOTH SIDES A CHANCE TO SHOW THEIR TRUE STRIPES.

LAST NOVEMBER, A FEW WEEKS LATER, THE FMLN DID. IT LAUNCHED A MASSIVE AND BLOODY OFFENSIVE. HUNDREDS WERE KILLED, AND THOUSANDS WOUNDED.

THIS WEEK, THE PRESIDENT MUST DECIDE, UNDER THE TERMS OF THE LEGISLATION WE PASSED, WHETHER HE SHOULD RELEASE THE BALANCE OF THE MILITARY AID FOR EL SALVADOR WE WITHHELD, AS AN INCENTIVE FOR PEACE.

THAT ACT -- PUNISHING THE CRISTIANI REGIME, AND IMPLICITLY REWARDING THE COMMUNIST REBELS -- THAT ACT TURNED OUT TO BE NOT AN INCENTIVE FOR PEACE; BUT A GREEN LIGHT FOR FMLN TREACHERY AND AGGRESSION.

BUSH SHOULD FULLY FUND MILITARY AID TO CRISTIANI REGIME

I HOPE THE PRESIDENT DOES DECIDE TO RELEASE THE BALANCE OF THE SALVADORAN AID. NOT BECAUSE WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE MORE VIOLENCE; BUT BECAUSE FAILURE TO DO SO UNDER THE TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES THAT PREVAIL MAY AGAIN DOWN THE ROAD APPEAR TO BE, INADVERTENTLY, JUST THE WRONG KIND OF SIGNAL, WITH JUST THE WRONG KIND OF RESULT. NOT PEACE AND JUSTICE; BUT VIOLENCE AND TREACHERY.

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