

**Friendly Fascism:
Business as Usual in America's Backyard**

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in
*Fascism's Return:
Scandal, Revision, and Ideology since 1980*
ed. J. Richard Golson,
Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998,
pp. 260-300.

[p. 260]

*"We who did not go their way owe them this:
we must make sure that their deaths
have posthumous meaning."*

Ronald Reagan, October 5, 1988
U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

*"Here we will learn that
each of us bears responsibility
for our actions and our failure to act."*

George Bush, February 15, 1991
U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

*"I tremble for my country
when I reflect that God is just."*

Thomas Jefferson

November, 1989. The war in El Salvador -- America's longest and most expensive military engagement since Vietnam -- had been dragging on for nine years.¹

For Salvadorans the devastation was catastrophic. By the end of the war (January, 1992) more than 75,000 Salvadoran citizens--1.5% of the country's population--would be dead from the conflict, the majority murdered by right-wing death squads.

The proportional equivalent within the United States would be 3.75 million American citizens dead: the combined populations of San Francisco, Dallas, Denver, St. Louis, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. And of those cities, the last four would have had their entire populations wiped out by death squads.²

By the fall of 1989 it was the virtually unanimous opinion of the U.S. media that

democracy had been restored to El Salvador. El Salvador had held five elections, sponsored and overseen by the U.S. and certified by the American media as free and fair. But the slaughter continued. Meanwhile, negotiations between Salvador's right-wing government and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) were dragging on. Everyone in El Salvador was weary of the war, most Americans had forgotten about it, and the U.S. Congress seemed to have lost all interest.

Then it happened.

Saturday, November 11, 1989, 8:00 p.m. sharp: While Salvador's elite dined and danced at the lush El Camino Real Hotel--their bullet-proof Jeeps outside and their armed guards nearby--suddenly the guerrillas were everywhere. Not out in the countryside where you usually found them--Chalatenango, Guazapa, Morazán--but all over the capital city, attacking the headquarters of the First Infantry Brigade, mortaring the [p. 261] National Guard Headquarters, attacking the Presidential Palace and even the private home of Salvador's President Alfredo Cristiani.

And not just attacking government positions but also holding large and heavily populated barrios in the northern and eastern sections of the capital city: Mejicanos, Zacamil, and Soyapango. Within hours up to 3,000 guerrillas were deeply entrenched in nearly a third of San Salvador and were attacking the army in middle-class neighborhoods in the south and west of the city.³

The army, caught off guard and barely holding its own, declared a state of siege. As FMLN attacks continued through the weekend and showed no sign of abating, the Chief of Staff of El Salvador's High Command, Colonel René Emilio Ponce, feared the game might be up. It was time for extraordinary measures.

On Monday, November 13, Col. Ponce, with the permission of President Cristiani, ordered soldiers of the Atlacatl Battalion, trained by U.S. Green Berets, to enter the campus of the Jesuit university, the University of Central America or "UCA," in the southwest section of the capital city. Their mission was supposedly to search the Jesuits' residence for weapons and subversive material.⁴

Since the late 1970's the Jesuit university had been the target of frequent bombings and machine-gun attacks from right-wing groups. It was also the object of verbal attacks from the military. On April 20, 1989, Vice-Minister of Defense, Col. Juan Orlando Zepeda called the UCA "a refuge for terrorist leaders, where strategies are mapped out for attacks against Salvadorans."⁵ Col. Inocente Montano, Vice-Minister for Public Security, had also accused the Jesuits of being guerrilla leaders, if for no other reason than that Father Ignacio Ellacuría, the president of the university, was actively working for a negotiated solution to the nine-year conflict. When the November 11 offensive began, the army forced all Salvadoran radio stations to suspend their own broadcasting and to carry only the army's signal. The army then opened its channel to unnamed callers who voiced violent accusations against Ellacuría and even demands for his death.⁶

Born in Spain in 1930, Ellacuría had studied with the most famous Catholic theologian of the century, Karl Rahner, and had received his doctorate in philosophy under the renowned Spanish thinker Xavier Zubiri. He joined the UCA in the 1960's and became chairman of the philosophy department. From November 1979 on, he served as the UCA's president.⁷

Those were the years of growing repression in El Salvador, and Ellacuría was uncompromising in his denunciations of government and army injustices. Those were also the years when liberation theology [p. 262] was having its strongest effect in Latin America, and Ellacuría was one of its most powerful voices. None of this was lost on the U.S. State Department or the government of El Salvador.

The Atlacatl Battalion's search of the Jesuit living quarters on Monday, November 13, turned up nothing subversive, nor was that its purpose. Rather, the soldiers took careful note of where each priest slept, and they positively identified the main object of the search, Ignacio Ellacuría, who had just returned from a trip to Europe. Ellacuría invited them to return the next day to look further, but they did not. Their search of the residence had nothing to do with searching for arms. It was reconnaissance for a mission they would carry out two days later.⁸

Intense fighting continued in the capital city, and by late Wednesday, November 15, the situation was critical. Many Salvadoran military leaders were close to panic, and one American advisor compared the situation to the fall of Saigon.⁹ At 6:30 p.m. Col. Ponce and the High Command met at army headquarters with two dozen high-ranking officers to plan urgent strategy. The High Command decided to bomb guerrilla-held neighborhoods and attack them with tanks. They also decided to eliminate all known or presumed leftists and rebel sympathizers in sections of San Salvador still under army control--labor leaders, popular organizers, virtually anyone they considered suspicious.

That included the Jesuits. Col. Ponce ordered Col. Guillermo Benavides, the head of the Military Academy and the man responsible for security in the university area, to have Ignacio Ellacuría murdered and to leave no witnesses. Benavides was to send the Atlacatl unit that had searched the priests' living quarters on Monday.

Col. Ponce called President Cristiani to High Command headquarters to brief him on the army's decision to take extraordinary measures. Cristiani would remain with the commanders at military headquarters from around 11:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m., that is, throughout the period when the Jesuits were being murdered less than a mile away. Some think the High Command informed him of that operation too. Cristiani denies it.¹⁰

Back in his office at the Military Academy, Col. Benavides chose Lt. Ricardo Espinoza and Second Lt. Gonzalo Guevara to see that the murders were carried out. Accompanying them and overseeing the job would be Benavides' close collaborator, Lt. Yussy Mendoza.¹¹

Espinoza hand-picked a group of elite Atlacatl commandos to do the job. Just three days earlier these men had been receiving special training from thirteen U.S. Green Berets at Sitio del Niño, outside the capital city. The course included instruction in high-tech nighttime [p. 263] operations. To help in their mission to kill the Jesuits the commandos took with them the night-vision goggles of their American trainers.¹²

As midnight passed, the commandos gathered by the gate of the Military Academy. The first wave left the grounds in two Ford pick-up trucks and drove to an assembly point in a residential neighborhood outside the west gate of the university. Minutes later they were joined by the remainder of their group. They numbered forty-seven commandos.

The plan was laid out. Three hundred soldiers from another group would surround the university. Then the commandos would enter the campus and regroup near the priests' residence. Of those, seven would have a direct role in getting the Jesuits. Lt. Mendoza made it clear the key assassin would be commando Oscar Amaya, nicknamed "The Hangman." To make it seem the FMLN had committed the crimes, Amaya would use an AK-47 captured from the guerrillas.

About 1:00 AM the designated group forced the lock on the gate and entered the campus. The moon was out, and not all of the commandos needed night-vision goggles. They regrouped in

a parking lot opposite the priests' residence and then spread out to surround the two-story building. The seven handpicked men forced their way in, some by scaling a low wall that marked off the garden. They then made their way through the same corridors they had searched two days before and ordered the priests out of the building and into the garden behind.

Oscar Amaya, carrying the AK-47, and Antonio Avalos, armed with an American-made M-16, forced the five Jesuits to lie face-down on the grass:

- n Ignacio Ellacuría, president of the university, distinguished professor of philosophy, honorary doctorates from Santa Clara University (1982) and Loyola University Chicago (1986);
- n Ignacio Martín-Baró, Vice-President of the University, professor of sociology; Ph.D., University of Chicago (1979);
- n Segundo Montes, professor of sociology, chairman of the university's human rights institute (IDHUCA), just back from a human rights conference in Washington, D.C.;
- n Amando López, professor of theology, former president of the Jesuit university in Nicaragua;
- n Juan Ramón Moreno, spiritual director and professor of theology.

Espinoza and Mendoza, the two lieutenants in charge of the operation, seemed uneasy. They had their orders, but they also wanted to maintain personal deniability. They held back so that underlings would take responsibility for doing the job. Mendoza even left the scene with the excuse of searching for more subversives in the Jesuits' kitchen. Espinoza, from whom the soldiers awaited the order to kill, hovered in the background by the gate to the priests' residence.

[p. 264] Amaya and Avalos also seemed to balk at doing what was expected. Espinoza called Avalos over and, with intentional vagueness, asked, "When are you going to get on with it?" Avalos returned to his position and told Amaya, "Let's get on with it."

A second of silence. Then he and Amaya blasted away at the priests' heads, splattering their brains over the lawn and up onto the wall of the house.¹³

The soldiers had been ordered to leave no witnesses. In a building adjacent to the Jesuit residence they had found the priests' housekeeper, Elba Ramos, with her 16-year-old daughter Celina huddled in her arms. Commando Tomás Zarpate stood guard over them in their room. When he heard the blasts of fire outside, he shot them both until (in his own words) "they no longer groaned."¹⁴

At that point a sixth Jesuit, the frail, 71-year-old Father Joaquín López y López, emerged into the garden, saw his murdered companions on the grass, and turned to go back in, telling the soldiers not to kill him. One of them shot him in the back and he fell into a room. Commando Angel Pérez decided to inspect the room. As he stepped over the bloodsoaked body, he felt Father López's feeble hand grope at his feet. Pérez stepped back and shot him four times.

Inside the building other soldiers were trashing the priests' offices, smashing windows, burning books, scattering documents. One of them found a briefcase containing \$5,000, a cash award for the UCA that Father Ellacuría had just brought back from Europe. The soldiers stole it.

Their job done, the commandos were leaving the scene when they heard moans from inside one of the rooms. It was the death rattles of Elba and Celina Ramos. The soldiers hesitated. They knew the women would soon die, but they had been ordered to leave no witnesses. They radioed the High Command and asked what to do. A direct order--from Col. Zepeda, Vice-Minister of Defence, according to many--came back over the radio: "*Remátenlas.*" "Finish them off." Commando José Sierra was sent back in. He found the two women lying in a pool of blood, still groaning. He finished them off.

The eight bodies were found at dawn. The High Command immediately charged the murders to the FMLN.

Later that afternoon, a sound truck from the Salvadoran Army's First Infantry Brigade passed in front of the offices of the archdiocese of San Salvador, proclaiming in Spanish, "Ellacuría and Martín-Baró are finished. We are going to continue killing Communists."¹⁵

[p. 265] Can one offer a definition of fascism that fits the topic of America's 1981-1991 war in El Salvador? Or is one constrained to invoke, analogously, Justice Potter Stewart's dictum about hard-core pornography: "I can't define it, but I know it when I see it"?¹⁶

In the end we may be persuaded that our Central America War of 1981-1991 was not an exercise in fascism *stricto dicta*--for surely the United States is not a fascist country, and neither the Reagan nor the Bush administration was a fascist regime. But if America's war in El Salvador was not an exercise in fascism, it will just have to do until the real thing comes alone.¹⁷

This paper is less about El Salvador than it is about the United State's role in that country. It is less about the murder of Ignacio Ellacuría and his companions than about what those murders stand for.

How could Ellacuría, this "incandescent intellectual of world reputation,"¹⁸ who was regularly consulted by the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador, who was a known and respected presence in the corridors of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, whose extensive writings on the Salvadoran situation were read and appreciated both in the State Department and the CIA--how could he and the best of his university faculty be murdered in cold blood by elite commandos armed and outfitted by the United States and trained by U.S. Special Forces? But weren't those commandos simply carrying out the orders of their superior officers, who themselves had been trained at Fort Benning, Georgia, and who served with the support and blessings of the U.S. Embassy, the State Department, and the Pentagon?

And after the crime, how could the responsibility for the deaths of Ellacuría and his companions be covered up for months, and the perpetrators shielded, all with the knowledge and cooperation of the staff of the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Military Group in El Salvador?¹⁹

Perhaps the murder of Ignacio Ellacuría and his seven companions can tell us something of what the United States was about in the 1980s (the way the murder of Giacomo Matteotti laid bare what Italy was about in the 1920s): how the United States aided and abetted a systematically

murderous Salvadoran regime, paid its bills, trained its killers, protected its criminals, covered its tracks, and, when it no longer needed that sorry country, abandoned it to its own fate.

The war in El Salvador was our war, and its dead are our dead, since with or without our consent, we Americans financed that bloody conflict, bankrolling the army and government of El Salvador to the tune of \$6 billion (twice the cost of the Reagan-Bush adventure in Afghanistan²⁰), training, arming, and advising not only Salvador's regular soldiers but also the members of its paramilitary and security forces [p. 266] --many of whom in fact operated as members of death squads--and even training them how to torture.²¹

And it was our war because we not only paid for it but also micro-managed its logistics. El Salvador's President Duarte complained about that very matter in an extended interview published in *Playboy* in 1984.

Playboy: Do the American military advisers also tell you how to run the war?

Duarte: This is the problem, no? The root of this problem is that the aid is given under such conditions that its use is really decided by the Americans and not by us. Decisions like how many planes or helicopters we buy, how we spend our money, how many trucks we need, how many bullets and of what caliber, how many pairs of boots and where our priorities should be--all of that.... And all the money is spent over there [in the U.S.]. We never see a penny of it, because everything arrives here already paid for.²²

By calling this "our war" I refer not just to the overt conflict in El Salvador but also to the secret war waged here at home against American citizens who opposed the Reagan administration's policies. The war at home included a nation-wide and well-documented program of break-ins and FBI surveillance and wire taps carried out against groups and private individuals, who, in pursuance of their First Amendment rights, protested the financing and direction of the Central American war. I shall return to this later.

During the 1980s, Central America in general and El Salvador and Nicaragua in particular were a major focus of President Reagan's foreign policy. But the roots of this cathexis on Central America go back at least as far as President John Kennedy, who seemed to have discovered the cause of backwardness in the area. "Communism," he declared, "is the chief obstacle to economic development in the Central American region."²³

To set things right, Kennedy in 1963 organized and chaired a summit of six Central American countries in Costa Rica, an event that Allan Nairn, writing in 1984, described as the beginning of

a basic, bipartisan, institutional commitment on the part of six American Administrations--a commitment to guard the Salvadoran regime against the prospect that its people might organize in ways unfriendly to that regime or to the United States.²⁴

The Costa Rican summit, which culminated in "Declaration of San José" (March 19, 1963), led to a series of subsequent meetings at which the ministers of the interior of each of the

Central American republics committed his country to setting up and coordinating "national security" programs. With the help of the CIA and AID, and under [p. 267] the direction of the U.S. State Department, each country would eventually reorganize its police and security forces to smoke out and eliminate people loosely defined as "subversives." In that regard, the crucial passage in the "Declaration of San José" states:

[T]he Presidents declare that in order to carry out their programs for social and economic betterment, it is essential to reinforce the measures to meet subversive aggression originating in the focal points of Communist agitation which Soviet imperialism may maintain in Cuba or in any other place in America.²⁵

In El Salvador, an important product of that commitment was ORDEN ("National Democratic Organization") and ANSESAL ("National Security Agency of El Salvador"), the combined intelligence network / death squad operation that the United States began organizing there in the 1960s. To lead ORDEN, the U.S. turned to the director of Salvador's feared National Guard, Col. José Alberto Medrano, whom José Napoleón Duarte, the president of El Salvador from 1984 to 1988, would call "the father of the Death Squads, the chief assassin of them all."²⁶

In 1983 Medrano acknowledged that his organization was the brainchild of the United States. ORDEN and ANSESAL, he said,

grew out of the State Department, the CIA, and the Green Berets during the time of Kennedy. We created these specialized agencies to fight the plans and actions of international Communism.²⁷

The organization and training of the organization was supervised by Green Beret Col. Arthur Simons, who at the time was head of the 8th Special Forces Group in Panama. Col. Simon had earlier served in Laos as a Special Forces commander and then at Fort Bragg as chief of staff at the Army Special Warfare Center. Simon sent Green Berets to El Salvador to train a team of Salvadoran commandos, including Col. Domingo Monterrosa, the man who would later be held responsible for the most horrible crime of the war, the 1981 massacre at El Mozote.

According to Amnesty International, the purpose of ORDEN was "to use clandestine terror against government opponents."²⁸ The U.S. Embassy in El Salvador acknowledged the charges in a now declassified document dated April 2, 1979:

It has also been alleged that elements of ORDEN, either in conjunction with legally constituted security forces or acting on their own initiative, have taken violent, repressive actions against the church, campesino, and labor groups in the countryside.

According to Amnesty International findings, ORDEN was responsible for many of the most brutal human rights violations of the Molina period [Col. Arturo Molina, president 1972-1977]--e.g., unexplained disappearances, assassinations [p. 268] of Catholic priests, murder of political opposition members, and beatings and intimidations at the polling places of voters seeking to cast a ballot for opposition parties.²⁹

The cable also admitted the accuracy of the charges. However, it glossed over the issue with exquisite delicacy, referring to death squad operations simply as "surreptitious action" and expressing no particular concern about the matter:

Obviously the military government perceives a threat from a variety of groups and has undoubtedly tried on occasion to suppress such groups through surreptitious

action. ORDEN forces have probably been used for this purpose in the past and may be utilized in certain instances again.³⁰

According to its own self-description, ORDEN's goal was to ferret out suspected Communists among Salvador's rural poor. As Medrano put it, "You discover the Communist by the way he talks. Generally, he speaks against Yankee imperialism, he speaks against the oligarchy, he speaks against military men. We can spot them easily."³¹ President Ford's ambassador to El Salvador, Ignacio E. Lozano, Jr., explained this policy of discovering "Communists" everywhere:

I suppose to a large extent it is our own fault, because we in the United States made such a big thing about Communism as a real threat to Latin America for such a long period. If you are against [the ruling powers], or if you disapprove of what they are doing, they label you a Communist."³²

ORDEN's central office, located within El Salvador's presidential palace, was comprised of eighty analysts whose job was to study reports from the countryside and pass them on to ANSESAL--with predictably lethal results. As former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Raul H. Castro revealed, the murders of suspected Communists were usually carried out by ORDEN death squads using the name "Mano Blanco" ("White Hand"). Up-dating the procedure into the 1980's, Col. Medrano acknowledged:

In this revolutionary war, the enemy comes from our people. They don't have the rights of Geneva. They are traitors to the country. What can the troops do? When they find them, they kill them.³³

ORDEN and its cognate paramilitary and military groups in El Salvador were little different from other death squads that functioned with U.S. supervision throughout Central America. In Honduras, for example, death squad operations were carried out by Army Battalion 3-16, commanded by General Luis Alonso Discua Elvir with the support and supervision of CIA operatives. Battalion 3-16 has been charged with the torture and murder of hundreds of Hondurans during the 1980's when the United States used Honduras as the staging ground for its *contra* war against Nicaragua. Over twenty-five clandestine cemeteries, filled with the Battalion's victims, have since been [p. 269] discovered in that country. As the *New York Times* has reported, "Members of Battalion 3-16, including [General] Discua, got support and training from the American military and from the Central Intelligence Agency, which also paid officers as informants."³⁴

Discua, having successfully defied arrest warrants for human rights abuses in his own country, has since been appointed to Honduras' diplomatic corps at the United Nations in New York City.

By 1979 much of Central America was in revolt. In July of 1979 the Sandinistas overthrew the fifty-year dictatorship of the Somoza family; and on January 10, 1981, the week before Ronald Reagan was sworn in as president, revolution broke out in El Salvador.

Minuscule El Salvador, 150 miles long by 50 miles wide, is even today less a country than a fiefdom, where 2% of the population own 70% of the arable land, 20% earn less than \$200 a year, and 60% are illiterate.³⁵ As with the more recent peasant uprising in Chiapas, the revolution

in El Salvador was prompted by a desperate need for basic necessities like land, food, and respect for human rights.

Even José Napoleón Duarte, the Reagan administration's hand-picked candidate for the Salvadoran presidency and himself a fervent anti-Communist, saw matters that way. Three weeks before Reagan took office, Duarte told a *New York Times* reporter why he thought the guerrillas were fighting the government:

Fifty years of lies, fifty years of injustice, fifty years of frustration. This is a history of people starving to death, living in misery. For fifty years the same people had all the power, all the money, all the jobs, all the education, all the opportunities.³⁶

Add to that what a RAND Corporation report called the Salvadoran's military's "almost uncanny ability to turn citizens into enemies" by "[equating] the government's critics with the enemy, repressing trade unionists, campesino leaders, opposition politicians, and student protesters with the same or more force than they use on the insurgents."³⁷

In 1980 the State Department's Human Rights desk likewise viewed the problem as a matter of social injustice rather than external Communist aggression. Patricia M. Derian, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights in the Carter administration, declared, "Those who study El Salvador know that the problem is home-grown and has been building to the present crisis for many years."³⁸ Robert White, U.S. ambassador to El Salvador from March of 1980 until he was ousted by Reagan on February 1, 1981, concurred. "Whether Cuba existed or not, you would still have a revolutionary situation in El Salvador," he said in January of 1981. "The revolution situation came about in El Salvador because he had one of the most selfish oligarchies the world has ever seen, [p. 270] combined with a corrupt security force."³⁹ Three years later, in testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, White asserted:

Any formulation of a national policy toward Central America must begin with the recognition that conditions in most of Central America justify recourse to revolution. This is especially true of El Salvador. Even the excesses of the despotic, venal Somoza clan in Nicaragua pale in comparison with the brutal, starvation existence imposed on the Salvadoran campesinos and workers by the economic and military elites.⁴⁰

The Catholic Archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero, identified El Salvador's problems with the unjust structures of the wealth in the country:

The cause of the evil here is the oligarchy, a small nucleus of families that does not care about the hunger of our people.... To maintain and increase their margin of profits, they repress the people.⁴¹

They are not yet used to seeing the face of a church converted to the poor. To raise the question of the rights of the poor is to call into question the whole established order. That is why they have no other category for us but that of subversives.⁴²

He accused the oligarchy of "possessing the land that belongs to all Salvadorans"⁴³ and advised:

Again, in the name of our people and our church, I call on them to hear the voice of God and joyously share their power and wealth with all, instead of provoking a civil war that will bathe us in blood. There is still time to take the rings from their fingers before they lose the hand.⁴⁴

Let them share what they are and have. Let them not keep on silencing with violence the voice of those of us who offer this invitation. Let them not keep on killing those of us who are trying to achieve a more just sharing of the power and wealth of our country. I speak in the first person, because this week I received notice that I am on the list of those who are to be eliminated next week. But let it be known that no one can any longer kill the voice of justice.⁴⁵

Finally, on March 23, 1980, he appealed to the enlisted men of the army and security forces:

The campesinos you are killing are your own brothers and sisters.... No one has to obey an immoral law. It is time to take back your consciences and to obey them rather than sinful orders.... In the name of God and in the name of this suffering people whose cries rise to heaven each day more loudly, I beg you, I beseech you, I order you in the name of God: *Stop the repression!*"⁴⁶

The next day Romero was murdered, shot in the chest while saying Mass. At his funeral six days later, Salvadoran Security Forces fired without warning on the crowd of mourners gathered on the cathedral steps. Thirty-nine people were killed and over 200 wounded. Two days on later, April 1, 1980, the United States sent \$5.7 [p. 271] million in riot-control equipment to El Salvador--jeeps, communications equipment, and night-vision devices--in order (as an administration spokesman put it at the time) to strengthen the army's key role in reforms.

When Ronald Reagan took office in January of 1981, he saw red in Central America. As he put it, "revolution has been exported to that area and by design."⁴⁷ An Administration White Paper published on February 23, 1981 called the revolution in El Salvador "a textbook case of indirect armed aggression by Communist powers through Cuba."⁴⁸

For Mr. Reagan, El Salvador was part of a global, East-West struggle, and the problems of the country were caused not primarily by poverty and repression but by the encroachments of international Communism. The FMLN rebels, in his view, "aren't just aiming at El Salvador but, I think, are aiming at the whole of Central and possibly later South America and, I'm sure, eventually North America."⁴⁹ In 1983 he warned a Joint Session of Congress: "If we cannot defend ourselves [in El Salvador] we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere. Our credibility would collapse, our alliances would crumble and the safety of our homeland would be put in jeopardy."⁵⁰

This re-evocation of Richard Nixon's image of the United States as a "pitiful, helpless giant"⁵¹ being made a fool of by Lilliputian Salvadoran rebels, apparently convinced many in the United States. During the ten years of the war the U.S. Treasury poured into El Salvador (a country that would fit inside Illinois seven times) an average of \$1.5 million *per day*, thereby making that country the third largest recipient per capita of American foreign aid during the Reagan-Bush years. And it seemed that the Reagan Administration knew roughly as much about El Salvador in the 1980's as the Johnson Administration did about Indochina in the 1960's.⁵²

The Administration's 1981 White Paper had called El Salvador a "textbook case" of Communist aggression through Cuba. However, both American and Salvadoran officials eventually acknowledged that they had no solid evidence in 1981 that Cuba or Nicaragua (not to mention the Soviet Union) were supplying military aid to the Salvadoran insurgents. In fact, by the end of 1983 the largest supplier of weapons to the Salvadoran guerrillas was President Reagan himself, since up to 20% of the light weaponry and ordinance that he send to the Salvadoran army was being captured by the FMLN in combat.⁵³

The work of Father Ellacuría and other liberation theologians was a matter of great concern in Washington during the 1980's, not least of all in ultra-conservative think tanks like the Council for Inter-American Security (CIS). In the spring of 1980, five of its members authored the widely [p. 272] publicized "Santa Fe Report" for the Republican presidential candidate Ronald

Reagan.⁵⁴

The 53-page document, a blueprint for Central American policy in a new Republican administration, had considerable influence on the Reagan team. Three of its four authors went on to serve the Reagan administration: Lt. General Gordon Sumner, Jr., as Special Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs; Roger Fontaine as a National Security Council Latin America specialist; and Lewis Tambs as a consultant to the National Security Council up to 1983, then as U.S. Ambassador to Colombia from 1983 to 1985 and to Costa Rica from July 1985 to January 1987.⁵⁵

Extraordinarily alarmist in tone and content, the Santa Fe Report demonstrated an enormous preoccupation with the specter of Communism in Central America. It viewed the hemisphere as "penetrated by Soviet power." It saw the Caribbean as "spotted with Soviet surrogates and ringed with socialist states" and fast "becoming a Marxist-Leninist lake," and it deemed America to be "everywhere in retreat."⁵⁶

In keeping with this apocalyptic vision, the report addressed not just the question of "External Military Threat" to the hemisphere but also "Internal Subversion." Accusing the Carter Administration of neglecting Communist expansion while overthrowing non-Communist regimes, the report went on to make a number of policy proposals regarding "Internal Subversion," among them the following:

Proposal 1: that the in-coming Republican administration distance itself from the Carter State Department's "policy of attacking anti-Communist governments for alleged human rights violations."

Proposal 4: "The United States must reject the mistaken assumption that one can easily locate and impose U.S. style democratic alternatives to authoritarian governments and the equally pervasive belief that change *per se* in such situations is inevitable, desirable, and in the American interest. This belief has induced the Carter Administration to participate actively in the toppling of non-Communist authoritarians while remaining passive in the face of Communist expansion."

Proposal 5: "Human rights, which is a culturally and politically relative concept [sic] that the present Administration has used for intervention for political change in countries of this hemisphere, adversely affecting the peace, stability and security of the region, must be abandoned and replaced by a non-interventionist policy of political and ethical realism."

I save **Proposal 3** for last:

"U.S. foreign policy must begin to counter (not react against) liberation theology as it is utilized in Latin America by the 'liberation theology' clergy.

"The role of the church in Latin America is vital to the concept of political freedom. Unfortunately, Marxist-Leninist forces have utilized the church as a political [p. 273] weapon against private property and productive capitalism by infiltrating the religious community with ideas that are less Christian than Communist."⁵⁷

As Father Ignacio Ellacuría was fond of pointing out, these were proposals that the Reagan administration took to heart. Beginning in January of 1981 the new team in the State Department shifted the driving force of its policy in the region from an emphasis on the "culturally and politically relative concept" of "human rights" to a focus on international Communism.⁵⁸

In one of its more cynical moves, the administration appointed as its Assistant Secretary of

State for Human Rights none other than Elliot Abrams. William F. Buckley made the point when he recalled a conversation he had once had with Mr. Abrams about a hypothetical situation involving human rights:

"What would you do if you were told by the Secretary of State to cool it in your report on human rights in, say, Sri Lanka?" I asked him on television. Mr. Abrams said that what he would do would be to cool it.⁵⁹

The administration also turned up the heat on liberation theology. One result of this were the hearings on "Marxism and Christianity in Revolutionary Central America," held by the U.S. Senate's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism" October 18-19, 1983.⁶⁰ The sessions, chaired by ultra-conservative Senator Jeremiah Denton of Alabama, featured the testimony of right-wing contra-supporters who made wild and unsubstantiated claims that liberation theologians preached that there was no God and that Jesus had never existed (pp. 96 and 109). All of this might be quite humorous, were it not for the fact that people in Central America get murdered when such absurdities, sworn to under oath and appearing in the Congressional Record, are repeated in army barracks in places like El Salvador.

To take only one example: On October 19, 1983 the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism heard one Miguel Bolaños-Hunter swear under oath that a Maryknoll sister, Maura Clarke, had run safehouses for Sandinista guerrillas during the Nicaraguan revolution and was so good at it that the Communists sent her to El Salvador to continue her activities there.

Now, as it turns out, Sister Maura Clarke was not in or even near Nicaragua during the revolution. She spent those three-and-a-half years (from January 1977 through June 1980) entirely in the United States, interrupted by only a brief family visit to Ireland.

True, in August of 1980 her Maryknoll superiors sent Maura Clarke to El Salvador to help refugees who were fleeing army sweeps and death squad activities in the northern province of Chalatenango. After [p. 274] she had worked only a few weeks with the refugees, Col. Ricardo Peña Arbaiza, the commanding officer in near-by Chalatenango City, labeled Sister Maura Clarke and another sister "subversives" simply because they were working with the poor.⁶¹ Shortly thereafter, on December 2, 1980, Maura Clarke and three other religious women were kidnapped, raped, and murdered by Salvadoran soldiers acting on higher orders.⁶²

One may recall that at the time of the murders Mrs. Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick, President Reagan's appointee to be ambassador to the United Nations, characterized the four dead women as "leftists"--as if that justified or mitigated the crimes.⁶³ And Secretary of State Haig testified before Congress that the four women "may have tried to run a roadblock, or may have been perceived to be doing that, and there was an exchange of fire."

Note that phrase: "an *exchange* of fire." It seems Mr. Haig was suggesting the nuns were shooting back at the soldiers, Wild-West fashion, after they had crashed their van through a military checkpoint--even though, as Secretary Haig well knew, the evidence showed that the nuns were first raped, and then were shot point-blank, one of them in the chest and three of them in the back of the head.⁶⁴

During the Iran-Contra hearings of 1987, Elliot Abrams was asked whether an earlier statement of his was not perhaps a lie. Mr. Abrams answered, "It depends what you mean by lying." He then went on to distinguish between lying and intentionally leaving a false impression.

In any case, whether it's lying or leaving a false impression, whether it is secretly murdering priests and nuns or blatantly massacring hundreds of peasants, whether it is actively burglarizing the offices of American citizens or merely spying on them--sooner or later, we are told, the truth will out. And so it has.

On March 15, 1993 the United Nations published its *Truth Commission Report* on El Salvador, detailing what happened and who was responsible for a dozen years of violence in El Salvador: massacres of peasants, the murder of the Jesuits, various "extrajudicial executions" and "enforced disappearances" (read: death squad murders), and so on.

Much if not all of the story is there. For example, the U.N. Report details how, during a three-day sweep through Morazán department (December 10 and 12, 1981), Col. Domingo Monterrosa and his Atlacatl Battalion--"the pride of the U.S. military team in El Salvador"⁶⁵--murdered at least 767 innocent civilians in and around the village of El Mozote. At least 207 of those victims were children under the age of 5, and 32 of them were less than a year old. Soldiers of this elite, U.S.-trained Atlacatl Battalion would be the ones to murder the Jesuits eight years later.⁶⁶

The massacre at El Mozote happened just six weeks before President [p. 275] Reagan was obliged by law--if he wanted Congress to continue military aid to El Salvador--to formally certify that the Salvadoran army was improving its respect for human rights.⁶⁷ Therefore, prominent U.S. officials, including Dean Hinton, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador from May 1981 to July 1983, and Thomas Enders, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (the latter in sworn testimony before Congress) publicly denied that the incident had taken place. They did this despite solidly researched newspaper accounts of the massacre and notwithstanding the word of one of their own embassy officers, Todd Greentree, who reported back from Morazán that "there very probably had been a massacre."⁶⁸

The evidence contradicting improvement in human rights was massive and would continue to mount. In the months following the slaughter at El Mozote, the Legal Trustee Office of the archdiocese of San Salvador verified that government forces or death squads had committed 2,334 political murders in the first four months of 1982. Two months later, Americas Watch reported that the number of victims had risen to 2,829 by July 1, 1982. The Americas Watch report concluded: "The government of El Salvador deliberately engages in systematic political murder to advance its interests." Nonetheless on January 29, 1982, and again on July 29, 1982, President Reagan officially certified improvement in the military's respect for human rights.⁶⁹

The State Department also succeeded in hiding from Congress clear evidence of who had planned the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero in March of 1980. Within months of the murder the U.S. embassy in San Salvador knew that Robert d'Aubuisson, a former major trained in the United States, had chaired the meeting at which participants vied for the privilege of killing the Archbishop. On February 6, 1984, former ambassador Robert White (who had been appointed by Carter in 1980 and fired by Reagan in 1981) testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the Reagan administration knew but "chose to conceal the identity of Archbishop Romero's murderer." White made reference to cable traffic between the U.S. Embassy and the State Department, which if revealed, he said, would "finish the political fortunes of...d'Aubuisson."⁷⁰

Ambassador White testified that

from the first days in office the Reagan White House knew--beyond any reasonable doubt--that Roberto D'Aubuisson planned and ordered the assassination of

Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero. In mid-November of 1980, a particularly brave and resourceful American diplomat made contact with a Salvadoran military officer who had participated in the plot to kill Archbishop Romero. This officer was present at the March 22nd meeting which resulted in the death of Archbishop Romero on March 24. [p. 276]

According to this eyewitness account, Roberto D'Aubuisson summoned a group of about twelve men to a safe house, presided over the meeting, announced the decision to assassinate the Archbishop and supervised the drawing of lots for the "honor" of carrying out the plot. The Salvadoran officer informant was disappointed that the luck of the draw had not favored him. He gave bullets from his gun to the officer selected in order that he might participate vicariously in the murder of the Archbishop.⁷¹

But the State Department neither released nor acted on the information. Instead it went on to broker a deal whereby d'Aubuisson became President of Salvador's Constituent Assembly in 1982. Moreover, Reagan officials actually denied they had any proof that d'Aubuisson was involved in the Archbishop's murder. When Representative Thomas J. Tauke of Iowa petitioned the State Department for more information on the matter, he received a letter from the State Department declaring that the information about d'Aubuisson contained in the cables "is limited and incomplete and no definite conclusions regarding d'Aubuisson's involvement can be drawn from it."⁷²

Years later the State Department declassified the cable that is reproduced below. It was sent by White's successor at the embassy, Dean Hinton, to Secretary of State Alexander Haig on December 21, 1981. The text indicates unambiguously that d'Aubuisson had chaired the meeting to plan the murder of Archbishop Romero and that one of the accomplices in the crime, Walter Antonio Alvarez, was subsequently murdered "by unknown hands."

(Note: The phrase "S-entire text" may mean: "Secret--entire text." The word "Reftel" may mean "Refer to telex." The device [.....] indicates lines or words that were blacked out when the document was declassified. I reproduce it here with the same line-breaks as in the original.)

P 211817Z DEC 81
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7156

REF: SAN SALVADOR 8084 (80)

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

1. (S-ENTIRE TEXT).

2. [.....]
.....

.....A MEETING CHAIRED BY MAJOR ROBERTO D'AUBUISSON
DURING WHICH THE MURDER OF ARCHBISHOP ROMERO WAS PLANNED
(REFTEL). [.....] DURING THE MEETING SOME
OF THE PARTICIPANTS DREW LOTS FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF KILLING
THE ARCHBISHOP. [.....]

.....
ASSASSIN) AS "WALTER [.....]

3. [.....] IDENTIFIED [.....]

.....] [p. 277] THE "WALTER" [.....] AS WALTER ANTONIO
ALVAREZ. [.....]

.....]
.....] ACCORDING TO PRESS
REPORTS SEVERAL GUNMEN TOOK ALVAREZ AWAY FROM A FOOTBALL GAME
ON SEPTEMBER 27, SHOT HIM SEVERAL TIMES AND LEFT HIS BODY ON
THE ROAD WHICH LEADS TO MARIONA PRISON. HE WAS 27 YEARS OLD AND
LEFT HIS WIFE, DINORA, AND A SMALL SON.

4. [.....]
AC[.....] WE BELIEVE
IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT THE ASSASSIN OF ROMERO IS NOW DEAD BY
UNKNOWN HANDS.
HINTON
SECRET⁷³

Despite this information, the State Department was unable to draw "definite conclusions regarding d'Aubuisson's involvement" in the murder. But the United Nation's Truth Commission somehow managed to discover, in a mere eighteen months, what the State Department could not figure out in a dozen years. On March 15, 1993 the *U.N. Truth Commission Report* declared:

The Commission finds the following:

1. Former Major Roberto d'Aubuisson gave the order to assassinate the Archbishop and gave precise instructions to members of his security service, acting as a "death squad," to organize and supervise the assassination.

2. Captains Alvaro Saravia and Eduardo Avila, together with Fernando Sagrera and Mario Molina, were actively involved in planning and carrying out the assassination.

3. Amado Antonio Garay, the driver of former Captain Saravia, was assigned to drive the gunman to the Chapel....

4. Walter Antonio "Musa" Alvarez, together with former Captain Saravia, was involved in paying the "fees" of the actual assassin.

....Garay picked out a 1969 photograph of Mr. Héctor Antonio Regalado, with a beard drawn on in, as being closest to his description of the gunman. After Saravia, Regalado had been responsible for d'Aubuisson's personal security.⁷⁴

The reason why the Reagan and Bush administrations covered up d'Aubuisson's role in the murder was that they wanted to work with him rather than oust him. Former Vice-President Dan Quayle made the point in his own breezy way. While acknowledging that d'Aubuisson had an "unsavory reputation" [sic], Quayle writes:

Later in 1989 I met with d'Aubuisson himself, which gave fits to liberal commentators, but I didn't care. He had influence, and if we were going to keep him in line, then we had to talk to him.⁷⁵

Whether or not the Reagan-Bush administrations kept d'Aubuisson [p. 278] i,200ne, they certainly did work with him. D'Aubuisson had trained in the United States in 1970-1971, both with the CIA and at the International Police Academy in Washington, D.C. (The Academy was later shut down after a Congressional investigation revealed that it taught its clients how to torture.) As regards d'Aubuisson's work in El Salvador, the U.S. Embassy and the State Department knew perfectly well that d'Aubuisson had helped found El Salvador's most active death squad, the Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez Anti-Communist Brigade (1979)⁷⁶; that he had planned Archbishop Romero's murder (March, 1980); that he had plotted a coup d'état against the Salvadoran government (May, 1980); and that in June of 1984 he had plotted to assassinate the

then U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Thomas R. Pickering. (President Reagan personally dispatched Ambassador-at-Large Vernon Walters to El Salvador to warn d'Aubuisson not to carry out the assassination plot.)

The embassy in El Salvador and the State Department also knew the names of those who were paying for death squad murders. In his sworn testimony of February 6, 1984, former ambassador Robert White, recalling cables he had sent from El Salvador to the State Department from March of 1980 to January of 1981, publicly named the wealthy Salvadoran landowners who, having temporarily left their country for the safety of Miami, continued to fund the death squads in El Salvador:

...these are the top leadership: [Enrique] Viera Altamirano, Luis Escalante, Arturo Muyschondt, the Salverría brothers (probably Julio and Juan Ricardo), and Roberto Edgardo Daglio. All are in Miami, hatch plots, hold constant meetings and communicate instructions to D'Aubuisson.⁷⁷

But the American Embassy and the State Department did nothing to bring d'Aubuisson and his handlers to justice. As a close friend and protégé of Senator Jesse A. Helms of North Carolina, d'Aubuisson frequently visited the United States, where his legal problems were taken care of by the Milwaukee law firm of O'Connor and Hannan, while the firm's Washington-based partner, Joseph Blatchford, handled public relations for d'Aubuisson in the nation's capital.⁷⁸ Back in Salvador the State Department saw fit to invite him to such official functions as a private luncheon for U.N. Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick (February, 1983) and a Fourth of July celebration held at the embassy.⁷⁹

Closer to home, another bit of truth (but only the tip of the iceberg) emerged on January 27, 1988, when a private citizens' group, the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York City, announced that it had broken through the FBI's code of secrecy and silence. Using the Freedom of Information Act, the Center had managed to pry loose 1,200 [p. 279] pages of documents that the FBI had gathered by the secret surveillance of over 200 groups of U.S. citizens over six years through wiretaps, undercover agents, and informants. These 1200 pages represent only about one-third of the complete file, which, as the FBI itself has disclosed, runs to 17 volumes and 3,756 pages. The FBI, it should be noted, vigorously denies that this surveillance was an exercise in harassment designed to stifle dissent.⁸⁰

The secret investigation began early in 1981, when CIA Director William Casey decided El Salvador had become the latest battleground in the global contest between freedom and Communism.⁸¹ With Casey's encouragement, the FBI under William H. Webster (director, 1978-1987) began spying on a citizen group that strongly opposed U.S. policy: CISPES, the Committee in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador. The FBI's goal was to discover whether CISPES was an agent of the Salvadoran guerrillas.⁸² At the FBI's Washington headquarters the officers in charge of the surveillance were Oliver "Buck" Revell, Executive Assistant Director of the FBI, and Ron Davenport, Supervisory Special Agent, Salvadoran Terrorism Unit.⁸³

Even though the FBI found that CISPES was neither providing weapons to the Salvadoran rebels nor taking political direction from any "foreign principles," and thus supposedly ended the surveillance, nonetheless the investigation was resumed in 1983 under the rubric of "counter-terrorism." An apparently typical cable from the FBI's New Orleans office, dated November 10, 1983, reads:

[Two-and-a-half lines blacked out] IT IS IMPERATIVE AT THIS TIME TO FORMULATE SOME PLAN OF ATTACK AGAINST CISPES AND SPECIFICALLY, AGAINST INDIVIDUALS, [thirty-one spaces blacked out] WHO DEFIANTLY DISPLAY THEIR CONTEMPT FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT BY MAKING SPEECHES AND PROPAGANDIZING THEIR CAUSE WHILE ASKING FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM.

NEW ORLEANS IS OF THE OPINION THAT DEPARTMENTS OF JUSTICE AND STATE SHOULD BE CONSULTED TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF DEPORTING THESE INDIVIDUALS OR AT BEST DENYING THEIR RE-ENTRY ONCE THEY LEAVE.⁸⁴

It was in that year, 1983, that the FBI investigation began to widen into a policy of nation-wide surveillance of such groups as the Maryknoll Sisters, the Sanctuary Movement, the Chicago Interreligious Task force, the Sisters of Mercy, Clergy and Laity Concerned, and U.S. Catholic Conference.⁸⁵

The tactics of surveillance soon turned into active infiltration and included the assembling of a "Terrorist Photo Album" by Frank Varelli, a contract operative in the FBI's Dallas office. As documented in the Congressional record, the album contained pictures and political profiles of American citizens and foreigners, such as the following: [p. 280]

Maryknoll Sister Peggy Healy. The Terrorist Photo Album characterizes Sister Healy as one of the "frontrunners in preaching the Marxist-Leninist 'Liberation Theology,'" and lists her "Terrorist affiliation" as "Pro-Castro. Christian Socialist." The profile goes on: "In El Salvador as well as Nicaragua, the Maryknoll priests and nuns are guilty of aiding, protecting and supporting the Communist terrorists of the FDR-FMLN, [and] FSLN."

Representative Pat Schroeder: "She is openly working on behalf of the Sandinista Government in the US through the NNSNP [National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People] and CISPES."

Former Ambassador to El Salvador, Robert E. White: "He was very instrumental in the formation of CISPES in the US, and works very closely with Sandy Pollack (CPUSA)."

Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas: The "Terrorist affiliation" of the successor of Archbishop Oscar Romero is listed as "Socialist."⁸⁶

The album goes on to characterize the "terrorist tendencies" of Representative Michael Barnes and Senators Christopher Dodd and Claiborne Pell, and mentions other "pro-Sandinista legislators" such as Ted Kennedy, Ron Dellums, and Edward Boland. Boland, of course, was the author of the Boland Amendment, the circumvention of which led to the Iran-Contra affair.⁸⁷

In one sense such a photo album is truly funny. But one might remember that this was the time when Lt. Col. Oliver North of the National Security Council was secretly working with FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to draw up contingency plans to spy on political dissenters and even, as Ross Gelbspan of the *Boston Globe* has pointed out,

to arrange for the detention of hundreds of thousands of undocumented aliens in case of an unspecified national emergency. The plan, part of which was code-named Rex 84, called for the suspension of the Constitution under a number of scenarios, including a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua.⁸⁸

The story exposing these contingency plans broke in the *Miami Herald* on July 5, 1987.

According to the article, Lt. Col Oliver North

helped draw up a controversial plan to suspend the Constitution in the event of a national crisis, such as nuclear war, violent and widespread internal dissent or national opposition to a U.S. military invasion abroad.⁸⁹

The overall program included

a secret contingency plan that called for suspension of the Constitution, turning control of the United States over to FEMA, appointment of military commanders to run state and local governments, and declaration of martial law during a national crisis.⁹⁰

The contingency plans relating to insurrection or national disturbances were worked out in meetings between North and Louis O. Guiffrida, Director of FEMA, from 1982 to 1984. The martial law provisions of Rex 84 were outlined in a June 30, 1982 memo written by Deputy Director of FEMA, John Brinkerhoff. Having obtained and studied a copy of the memo, *The Miami Herald* wrote:

The scenario outlined in the Brinkerhoff memo resembled somewhat a paper Guiffrida had written in 1970 at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pa., in which he advocated martial law in case of a national uprising by black militants. The paper also advocated the roundup and transfer to "assembly centers or relocation camps" of at least 21 million "American Negroes."⁹¹

Two days after the article appeared, Lt. Col. North began his sworn testimony before Congress in the Iran-Contra matter. [p. 281] When Representative Jack Brook of Texas tried to ask North about Rex 84, he was silenced by co-chairman Senator Daniel Inouye because, in Senator Inouye's words, "that question touches upon a highly sensitive and classified area...."⁹² No more was heard about the matter.

The FBI's spying allegedly ended in July of 1985. However, that date marks the beginning of a dramatic, nation-wide escalation of break-ins into the offices of churches and citizen groups that opposed the administration's policies in Central America. During those break-ins, money or expensive office equipment was never taken, but files were invariably rifled and some were stolen. To list but a few incidents:

- n *September 1984*: At Riverside Church, New York City, the apartment of three refugees was broken into twice, and a file folder on sanctuary cases was stolen.
- n *June 1985*: In Los Angeles a list of 1500 donors was stolen from the offices of Amnesty International.
- n *July 16, 1985*: At University Baptist Church in Seattle, which offered sanctuary to Central American refugees, the offices of Rev. Donovan Cook were broken into, keys to the rooms of six Central American refugees were stolen, and files listing Sanctuary supporters were examined. Later the church's insurance company threatened it would dissolve the church's policy unless the refugees were removed.
- n *September 16, 1985*: In Guadalupe, Arizona, Jesuit priest David A. Myers, an attorney on asylum cases, had his files of pending asylum cases stolen.
- n *October 25-26, 1985*: The offices of the Central America Refugee Project in

Phoenix were broken into twice over the weekend. Telephone logs and clients' legal files were copied, but \$500 in cash was left untouched.

- n *November 1985:* At St. William's Catholic Church, Louisville, the rooms of Rev. James Flynn were ransacked, his stack of slides taken in Nicaragua were thrown around the room, and a letter from a Salvadoran refugee seeking asylum was positioned under a lamp on Flynn's desk, as if to be photographed. Cash that Flynn had left on top of his desk was untouched.
- n *December 4-5, 1985:* At the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, Cambridge, Massachusetts, the offices of the New Institute of Central America were burglarized for the fifth time. (The previous break-ins were on November 27 and December 18-19, 1984, and April 20-21 and September 13-14, 1985.) The Cambridge police report states, "The main targets in these breaks were desks and organizational files."
- n *May 21-22, 1986:* The Manhattan offices of NACLA (North American Committee on Latin America) were burglarized just as the Committee was preparing a report on Oliver North's role in organizing of a support network for the contras. The offices were ransacked, and files were examined and scattered around the room.
- n *October 7 and 13, 1986:* At St. Edmund's Episcopal Church, Pacifica, California, the offices of Rev. Stephen Brannon were broken into twice, and his files on Central American political asylum cases were ransacked.
- n *April 1987:* A San Francisco travel agency that arranged trips to Central America was burglarized and its safe opened. \$1500 in cash was left untouched, but the files of clients who traveled to Nicaragua or El Salvador were stolen.
- n *October 29-30, 1987:* At Georgetown University, the offices of the Central American Historical Institute were burglarized, a file cabinet containing articles and stories on Central America was broken into. \$100 in cash and a checkbook, which were in plain view, went undisturbed.⁹³

The perpetrators of these crimes have never been found. The FBI denies having anything to do with the break-ins. Once the scandal about FBI surveillance broke in 1988, FBI Director William S. Sessions admitted that the 1981-1985 part of the operation, conducted under his predecessor, may have been "not properly directed," but nonetheless asserted that it was justified. President Reagan concurred in that judgment.⁹⁴

From the war at home, we return to the war in El Salvador, and the murder of the Jesuits, in order to note the elaborate cover-up carried out by the United States and the government of El Salvador.

1. The confession of Col. Benavides: Within days of the Jesuit murders, President Cristiani appointed Lt. Col. Manuel Antonio Rivas to head up the Special Investigative Unit (SIU) charged with solving the crime. Shortly thereafter, Col. Guillermo Benavides, head of El Salvador's Military Academy, confessed to Rivas that he had ordered the soldiers to carry out the

killings. However, Rivas told Benavides to forget his confession and to start destroying evidence, both the guns that were used to murder the Jesuits and all records of the killers' movements that night. Benavides complied. From the beginning, Col. Rivas and the SIU did their utmost to obstruct the investigation of the murders.⁹⁵

2. The interrogation of Mrs. Lucía Cerna: Next, Lt. Col. Rivas, with the assistance of the American Embassy in El Salvador and the FBI, began intimidating the only witness to the events, Mrs. Lucía Cerna. On November 16, from her lodgings on Calle Cantábrico only thirty meters from the scene of the crimes, Mrs. Cerna heard several shots on the campus shortly after 1:00 a.m. Looking out her window she saw five commandos in camouflage uniforms firing at the Jesuit residence, and she heard Father Martín-Baró, one of the victims, shout at them before he was shot.⁹⁶ From another window, her husband Jorge also saw a group of soldiers. The next morning at about 6:00 a.m. Mrs. Cerna, her husband, and four UCA watchmen discovered the bodies of the priests and reported the crime to the Jesuit Provincial, José María Tojeira.

The Jesuits in El Salvador decided to send Mr. and Mrs. Cerna and their four-year-old daughter to the United States for their safety and protection. First, however, the Jesuits took her to the Spanish embassy, where she gave sworn testimony to a Salvadoran judge, the public prosecutor, and members of the SIU. France's State Secretary of Humanitarian Affairs, who happened to be in San Salvador, agreed to accompany her on the flight to Miami and to deliver her to the French and Spanish consuls there, who in turn would hand her over to U.S. Jesuit officials.

The Jesuits intentionally did not inform the American embassy of their plans, but somehow Ambassador William G. Walker found out. He had Richard Chidester, legal officer of the embassy, telephone the Jesuits just hours before the Cernas' departure on November 23. Chidester, over the Jesuits' objections, insisted that he be allowed to accompany Mrs. Cerna on the flight to the United States.⁹⁷

Chidester brought with him on the flight FBI Special Agent, Edward Sánchez. When the party arrived in Miami, Chidester, contrary to what he had agreed to do, did not deliver the Cerna family to the French and Spanish consuls. Instead he and Sánchez handed them over to the FBI, who held them in a guarded room at the Radisson Hotel in [p. 283] Miami. When the U.S. Jesuits inquired after the Cernas, State Department officials told them the FBI needed time to do a "risk assessment" to determine how much protection the family might require.

However, each day from Monday, November 27 through Thursday, November 30, Chidester and Sánchez took the Cernas to an FBI office in Miami where Lucía and her husband were submitted, incommunicado, to an intensive and intimidating interrogation by Sánchez and another FBI agent, Fred Rivero. Moreover, Lt. Col. Rivas, who was orchestrating the military cover-up in San Salvador, was invited by Chidester to come to Miami, where Rivas participated in the interrogation of Mrs. Cerna.

After days of grueling questioning by Rivas and the FBI, which included insults, intimidation, and implied threats, Mrs. Cerna retracted her story and said she had seen nothing relevant to the murder of the Jesuits.⁹⁸

3. The testimony of Major Buckland: In January of 1990, less than two months after the Jesuits had been killed, U.S. Major Eric Buckland, a senior military advisor in El Salvador, gave sworn testimony on three distinct occasions (1) that Salvadoran officers had planned and carried out the execution of the priests and (2) that he, Buckland, had had prior knowledge--from three weeks before the killings, right up to hours before they were carried out--that the military was going to take out the Jesuits. This was at a time when Col. Rivas and the SIU were working overtime to conceal the perpetrators of the crime. Buckland gave his testimony as follows.

January 2, 1990, San Salvador: On this date, six weeks after the murders, Buckland informed his immediate superior, U.S. Lt. Col. William C. Hunter, Jr., senior U.S. advisor to the Salvadoran Joint Command, that Salvadoran Col. Guillermo Benavides had ordered the Atlacatl commandos to kill the Jesuits. Buckland had received this information on December 20, 1989, from his good friend, Salvadoran Col. Carlos Avilés, who in turn had it on excellent authority from Col. Nelson López y López, a member of El Salvador's Joint Command. On January 3 Buckland put the matter into writing for his superiors, and on January 6 he was flown to the United States.⁹⁹

January 10 and 11, 1990, Washington, D.C.: In the presence of FBI agents, Buckland gave sworn testimony that went beyond his earlier statements: he revealed that he himself had had *prior knowledge*, going back some weeks before the event, that Benavides and other officers were planning to murder the Jesuits. As he put it, "Avilés told me they wanted to handle it the old way by killing some of the priests."¹⁰⁰

January 12, 1990, Washington, D.C.: Testifying now on videotape in the presence of FBI Special Agent Paul Cully, Buckland further specified that on the [p. 284] afternoon of November 15, just hours before the kill-order was given, Avilés had told Buckland the army was planning to go onto the Jesuit campus and "clean out the UCA." Special Agent Cully asked Buckland, "What did this mean to you that they were going to go in and clear out the UCA?" Buckland replied, "To find out, you know, to get the dirty people in there." In addition Buckland told the FBI that he

"understood" the military's "feeling of vengeance" against the Jesuits. That admission prompted the following exchange:

Agent Cully: So if those killings were to occur, you would have accepted that as a necessary thing, for the country?

Buckland: I either accepted it as necessary and I really understood it, okay. You know, even though it might have been--superfluous isn't the word--you know, it might even have been stupid, and I understand, I understood the blood, the blood feeling, but it was their war and it was their country....¹⁰¹

Buckland's testimony blew the case wide open. Up until then, the cover-up had been holding. The American Embassy and President Cristiani were continuing to claim the FMLN had murdered the Jesuits. What, then, became of Buckland's explosive testimony?

Re Buckland's first revelation, El Salvador, January 2: Lt. Col. William Hunter immediately Communicated Buckland's revelation to the head of the U.S. Military Group in Salvador, U.S. Col. Milton Menjívar. That same day, January 2, Menjívar went directly to Col. René Ponce--the very officer who had ordered that the Jesuits be murdered--and revealed Buckland's information to him.

Ponce expressed surprise and anger, according to Menjívar, and then denied knowing anything about it. On the spot Ponce called Avilés, López y López, Buckland, and Hunter into his office and confronted them with Buckland's revelation. Caught between Ponce and Buckland, Avilés and López y López vigorously denied that they knew anything about the matter, and Avilés denied having had the December 20th conversation with Buckland.

Whatever his intentions in the matter, Menjívar, by revealing everything to Ponce, (1) had alerted the chief perpetrator of the crime that the cover-up was coming unraveled, (2) had dangerously exposed two important witnesses who might have helped reveal the military's full role in the murders, and (3) gave Ponce and his colleagues the information and impetus they needed to begin a new cover-up.

The new cover-up began immediately. On January 5, three days after the meeting, the Armed Forces, in private consultation with American officials, took the extraordinary step of setting up *their own* investigative body--the Armed Forces Honor Commission--to [p. 285] look into the Jesuit murders. The real purpose of this rump Commission was to prevent the indictments from reaching any higher than Col. Benavides: He was to be the fall guy, and higher ranking officers, especially the High Command, were to be insulated from indictment and trial.

The tactic worked. In less than a week the Honor Commission came up with a very limited list of low-ranking suspects--the eight commandos who had actually carried out the murders, plus Benavides, who had sent them. They and they alone would go to trial. No members of the High Command would ever be indicted for ordering the murder of the Jesuits.¹⁰²

Why did the United States have an interest in limiting the investigation? Why would the U.S. embassy not want it known that the Salvadoran High Command, rather than just a single colonel, had ordered the killings of the Jesuits? "Because they would have to turn in their own client," replies Congressman George Miller, a member of the House Task Force investigating the murders. "Their client is the Salvadoran government and the Salvadoran military." For the Bush administration to turn in its client would mean that nine years of war and \$6 billion in aid had been in vain. That was unacceptable.¹⁰³

Re Buckland's Washington, D.C., revelations, January 10-12: If the sworn testimony

Buckland gave in El Salvador implicated the High Command in the Jesuits' murder, the information he gave the FBI in Washington, D.C. raised serious questions about the role of the United States. Buckland's testimony indicated that at least one senior U.S. military advisor had had prior knowledge of the planned executions--ranging from weeks to hours before the crime--and had done nothing about it.

And if Buckland had prior knowledge of the crime, why not other U.S. military and diplomatic personnel? In the days before the murder of the Jesuits two other U.S. advisors--Col. Porter and Major Lewis--had been working closely with C-2, the Salvadoran Army's intelligence section. Could they too have known the army was planning the murders? U.S. advisors often had close personal relations with their Salvadoran counterparts. Many shared offices with them. Buckland's office, along with those of Lt. Col. Hunter and other American advisors, were in the annex of the Joint Command Headquarters. Besides knowing *that* the executions were being planned, could other American advisors have also shared Buckland's "understanding" for the army's motives in carrying out the crime? Might they too, like Buckland, have "accepted it as necessary"?¹⁰⁴

Buckland's prior-knowledge testimony could not be allowed to stand. The strategy for undoing it was twofold: bury the evidence and break the witness.

[p. 286] First, the FBI sent copies of Buckland's prior-knowledge testimony--both his affidavit of January 10-11 and the videotaped testimony of January 12--to the U.S. Embassy's Legal Affairs Officer, Richard Chidester, the very one who, two months earlier, had helped hold Lucía Cerna incommunicado in Miami until she changed her testimony. The FBI briefed Chidester and his superiors on the seriousness of the matter.

Then, instead of passing Buckland's testimony on to the Salvadoran judge in charge of the case, Ambassador Walker, in an extraordinary move, invited President Cristiani to the ambassador's private residence for a secret viewing of the tape. Legal Officer Chidester and Deputy Chief of Mission Jeff Dietrich were also present at the viewing.

Shortly thereafter, U.S. diplomatic and military officials in Washington and El Salvador decided to bury Buckland's admission of prior knowledge. As Martha Doggett, the American lawyer who carried out the most thorough investigation of the case, puts it:

They decided not to disclose this information publicly, or to share it with the court. More than just concealing the evidence, State Department and Pentagon officials actually denied its existence when *The New York Times* printed rumors suggesting that a U.S. officer had prior knowledge of the murder plot.¹⁰⁵

But despite the denials the videotape still exists. The FBI keeps it logged under the case title "Shooting of Six Jesuit Priests" at the FBI's Polygraph Unit, section GRB, Suite 2, file number #00116093 PQ1.¹⁰⁶

The second part of the strategy entailed breaking Buckland. His admission of prior knowledge was too explosive; he had to take it back. And he did. On January 14, the day after Chidester and Walker had received copies of his Washington testimony, Buckland announced at Fort Bragg that he wanted to change his story. In an article entitled "Cracking the Major," *Newsweek* cited sources in the Bush administration who knew what had been done with Buckland:

Newsweek has learned that an American Special Forces officer, who told U.S. authorities in January he knew of Salvador military plans to murder six Jesuit

priests last November, was later pressured by FBI and State Department officials to recant. "He was grilled and grilled until he cracked."

U.S. officials told *Newsweek* that Buckland's original statement [in Washington, D.C.] was "100 percent accurate." The administration "didn't want that story to come out," sources said, because it wasn't productive to the conduct of the war."¹⁰⁷

When the administration advised *Newsweek* to retract the story, the magazine refused.

Representative Joseph Moakley of Massachusetts, who led the House Task Force investigating the murders, thinks he knows how [p. 287] Buckland was pressured into retracting. By admitting prior knowledge of the crimes, the American major was possibly implicating himself in them: he not only knew the murders were being planned but even expressed understanding for the army's motives and for why the executions might be "necessary." In Moakley's words,

He couldn't have made up all those details [of the Washington revelations]. I think what happened was that after he testified, someone in a legal office somewhere must have pointed out to him that he had incriminated himself. That's when he decided to recant.¹⁰⁸

On January 18, in a written affidavit, Buckland retracted those parts of his previous testimony that indicated prior knowledge of the plot to kill the Jesuits. He swore:

I do not recall and am not aware of any specific information regarding any proposed threat to or attack on the University of Central America, including any of the Jesuit priests prior to the incident on November 16, 1989. I wish to specifically retract information or comments or suggestions made to FBI agents last week to that effect.¹⁰⁹

The legalistic language that characterizes this recantation is in marked contrast to the more discursive and even emotional tenor of his earlier testimony cited above. Moreover, as Long and Smyth report, after his retraction Buckland took an FBI lie detector test--and failed it.

In answer to the question, "Did you have prior knowledge that the Jesuits would be killed?" Buckland said no, and the polygraph indicated "deception," according to official FBI documents.¹¹⁰

Nonetheless, the cover-up worked. Indictments in the case never reached the Salvadoran High Command, the true perpetrators of the crime, and the embassy was able to deny that *any* U.S. advisors in El Salvador had prior knowledge of the murders or agreed with the murderers' motives.

In the words of Father Charles Beirne, S.J., Ellacuría's successor at the UCA, "The Americans were helping to protect the High Command all along. They were afraid the whole house of cards would fall if the investigation went any further. They were involved with the cover-up from the very beginning."¹¹¹ The television network CBS got a taste of that some six months after the murders. When Ed Bradley of "Sixty Minutes" went to El Salvador to interview Ambassador Walker about the military's role in the crimes, the ambassador secretly taped their conversation and then sent the cassette across town to Col. Ponce to help Ponce prepare for his own interview with Bradley.¹¹²

The trial for the murder of the six Jesuits, their housekeeper, and her daughter lasted only

three days, September 26 to 29, 1991. The defendants were limited to the eight men hand-picked by the military's Honor Commission: Col. Benavides, plus seven soldiers who [p. 288] ranked no higher than lieutenant. The jury found only Col. Benavides and Lt. Yushy Mendoza guilty of murder. The other six, including the confessed triggermen, were absolved of all crimes.

On April 1, 1993, under a general amnesty law, Benavides and Mendoza were released from prison.¹¹³

Col. Ponce, the man who ordered the crimes in the first place, was promoted from colonel to general, and from head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Minister of Defense. He remained a client of the United States and continued to serve his country until June 30, 1993, when he retired with honors and full pension.

Epilogue

Was the U.S. war in El Salvador an exercise in fascism? Surely not, for the United States is not a fascist country, and neither the Reagan nor the Bush administration was a fascist regime. But one is left wondering what the war was really about and why the United States would expend an extravagant \$6 billion on that tiny country.

By way of epilogue, some brief reflections from Arnold Toynbee, Albert Beveridge, and Mark Twain.

In the early Sixties, as John F. Kennedy's anti-Communist crusade was about to unfold in Latin America, Arnold J. Toynbee wrote:

Today America is no longer the inspirer and leader of the World Revolution, and I have an impression that she is embarrassed and annoyed when she is reminded that this was her original mission. No one else laid this mission upon America. She chose it for herself, and for one hundred and forty-two years, reckoning from the year 1775, she pursued this revolutionary mission with an enthusiasm which has proved deservedly infectious.

By contrast, America is today the leader of a world-wide anti-revolutionary movement in defence of vested interests. She now stands for what Rome stood for. Rome consistently supported the rich against the poor in all foreign Communities that fell under her sway; and, since the poor, so far, have always and everywhere been far more numerous than the rich, Rome's policy made for inequality, for injustice, and for the least happiness of the greatest number.

America's decision to adopt Rome's role has been deliberate, if I have gauged it right. It has been deliberate, yet, in the spirit that animates this recent American movement in reverse, I miss the enthusiasm and the confidence that made the old revolutionary American irresistible.¹¹⁴

Mark Twain took a somewhat different tack. Whereas Toynbee would put the turning point at the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 (cf. "one hundred and forty-two years, reckoning from the year 1775"), Twain thought the American empire came into its own with the Spanish-American War. And having followed the speeches of Republican senator from Indiana, Albert Jeremiah Beveridge (1862-1927), Twain was hardly convinced that Americans were "embarrassed" about becoming a new Roman empire.

[p. 289] Twain had read Senator Beveridge's paean to America's God-given imperial

mandate, delivered in the well of the Senate on January 8, 1900 during a debate on annexing the Philippine Islands. "We will not renounce our part in the mission of our race," Beveridge had thundered, "trustees under God, of the civilization of the world." He believed, as he told his colleagues, that God had been preparing "the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples" for this mission for a thousand years.¹¹⁵

Beveridge saw America's mandate as one of blood and business (Twain took to capitalizing the latter as "Business"), and nowhere did Beveridge better spell out that mission than in a speech he gave in Boston at the height of the Spanish-American War, April 1898:

We are a conquering race. We must obey our blood and occupy new markets and if necessary new lands.... In the Almighty's infinite plan...debased civilizations and decaying races [are to disappear] before the higher civilization of the nobler and more virile types of man. [...] Fate has written our policy for us; the trade of the world must and shall be ours.¹¹⁶

Mark Twain's response to all of this came in February, 1901, in an article entitled "To the Person Sitting In Darkness."¹¹⁷ The United States had just acquired the Philippine Islands and was engaged in a bloody counterinsurgency war against the Filipinos, who, having just been freed from Spain, were not anxious to be colonized by America. It was America's first Vietnam: 75,000 American troops on the ground, atrocities on both sides, the Americans frequently burning whole villages to the ground and killing each and every inhabitant.

A strong critic of this counterrevolutionary conflict, Twain addressed himself with bitter irony to the rebellious Filipinos, whom he called "the People Who Sit in Darkness" of Psalm 107:10. To them the imperial United States--or as Twain put it, the "Blessings-of-Civilization Trust"--promised the Light of Freedom, Progress, and Civilization--in a word, Business. But the question was how to get the message across to people who did not want the gift.

The Person Sitting in Darkness is almost sure to say: "There is something curious about this--curious and unaccountable. There must be two Americas: one that sets the captive free, and one that takes a once-captive's new freedom away from him...."

Twain paused and addressed to his readers a question that might resonate even today.

Shall we go on conferring our Civilization upon the peoples that sit in darkness, or shall we give those poor things a rest? Shall we bang right ahead in our old-time, loud, pious way, and commit the new century to the game; or shall we sober up and sit down and think it over first?

He then supplied the answer which he thought the "Blessings-of-Civilization Trust" might give in response to his question:

[p. 290] Extending the Blessings of Civilization to our Brother who Sits in Darkness has been a good trade and has paid well, on the whole; and there is money in it yet, if carefully worked. But the People who Sit in Darkness have become suspicious of the Blessings of Civilization. More, they have begun to examine them. This is not well. We should say to him:

"There have been lies; yes, but they were told in a good cause. We have been treacherous; but that was only in order that real good might come out of apparent evil. True, we have crushed a deceived and confiding people; we have turned against the weak and the friendless who trusted us; we have debauched America's honor and blackened her face before the world; but each detail was for

the best.

"Our Congress and our fifty State Legislatures are members not only of the Church, but also of the Blessings-of-Civilization Trust. This world-girdling accumulation of trained morals, high principles, and justice, cannot do an unright thing, an unfair thing, an ungenerous thing, an unclean thing."

That will convince the Person who Sits in Darkness. And it will give the Business a splendid new start.

Twain ended his essay by suggesting that, once the Philippine Islands were conquered and assimilated to the project of Business, America should adopt a new banner to fly over its far-flung colony:

As for a flag for the Philippine Province, it is easily managed. We can have just our usual flag, but with the white stripes painted black, and the stars replaced by the skull and cross-bones.

Progress and Civilization in that country can then have a boom, and will take in the Persons who are Sitting in Darkness. And we can resume Business as usual at the old stand.¹¹⁸

End

ENDNOTES

1. I have drawn on:

U.N. Truth Commission Report, *From Madness to Hope: The 12-year War in El Salvador. Report of the Commission on the Truth For El Salvador*, ed., Belisario Betancur, Chairman, with Reinaldo Figueredo Planchart and Thomas Buergenthal. The United Nations, March 15, 1993, 62-66; in Spanish, *De la locura a la esperanza. La guerra de 12 años en El Salvador. Informe de la comisión de la verdad para El Salvador*, 60-65. Hereinafter these two texts are referred to as *U.N. Truth Commission Report*.

Martha Doggett, *Death Foretold: The Jesuit Murders in El Salvador*, Washington: Georgetown University Press/Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1993, and her updated report, "The Assassination of the Jesuits: What the United States Knew," read to the Latin American Studies Association conference in Atlanta, Georgia, March 10, 1994, typescript.

Teresa Whitfield, *Paying the Price: Ignacio Ellacuría and the Murdered Jesuits of El Salvador*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.

Alejandro Artucio, *A Breach of Impunity: The Trial for the Murder of Jesuits in El Salvador*. Report of the Trial Observer of the International Commission of Jurists. New York: Fordham University Press, 1992.

Instituto de Estudios Centroamericanos and El Rescate, *The Jesuit Assassinations: The Writings of Ellacuría, Martín-Baró and Segundo Montes, with a Chronology of the Investigation (November 11, 1989 - October 22, 1990)*, Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1990.

[p. 291] Documents referenced as "Lawyers Committee for Human Rights" refer to typed reports available from that group's offices at 330 Seventh Avenue, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

For an abundance of valuable information I am grateful to two veteran reporters in El Salvador, Eugene Palumbo (*Christian Science Monitor*, *Commonweal*, Canadian Broadcast Corporation) and Thomas Long (*Miami Herald*, *Village Voice*), some of whose published work is cited in these notes.

2. Death squad killings: For the figure of 40,000 political murders committed by death squads, see Douglas Farah, "Salvadoran Death Squads Threaten Resurgence," *Washington Post*, August 28, 1988, pp. A1 and A26: "By 1985, the Catholic Church estimated more than 40,000 Salvadorans had been murdered by death squads." p. A26. Likewise Lindsey Gruson, "Salvadorans Consider Sweeping Amnesty for Military," *New York Times*, March 18, 1990, p. 3; and Benjamin C. Schwarz, *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Reform and the Illusions of Nation Building*. Prepared for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1991, pp. 35 and 42.

Death squad composition: In a 1988 report on death squads, Amnesty International concluded ("convincingly," according to Schwarz, *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine*, p. 41) that "the squads are made up of regular army and police agents, acting in uniform or plainclothes, under the direction of superior officers." Amnesty International, *El Salvador: "Death Squads"--A Government Strategy*, report of October, 1988, p. 9.

Private funding of death squads: See House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Situation in El Salvador*. Hearing before the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations and on Western Hemisphere Affairs, January 26; February 6, 1984. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984, pp. 41 and 46-49 for former ambassador Robert White's testimony that wealthy landowners living in Miami "organize, fund, and direct death squads through their agent, Major Roberto d'Aubuisson." (See below.) Also, Douglas Farah, "2 Salvadorans Detail Origin of A Death Squad," *Washington Post*, August 29, 1984, p. A1 and A20, here p. A20. Concerning investigations into these charges see Janet DiVicenzo, Scott Armstrong, Nicole Ball, and Thomas S. Blanton, eds., *El Salvador: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1977-1984*, Alexandria, Virginia: The National Security Archive and Chadwyck-

Healey Inc., 1989, Document No. 04974 (1984/04/11), letter of W. Tapley Bennett, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs to Representative Thomas J. Tauke. Hereinafter this work is abbreviated as *El Salvador: The Making of U.S. Policy*.

Annotated lists of death squads in El Salvador: Ciarán ó Maoláin, *The Radical Right: A World Directory*. A Keesing's Reference Publication. Jarlow, Essex: Longman Group, 1987, pp. 74-79; and Peter Janke, *Guerrilla and Terrorist Organizations*, New York: Macmillan, 1983, pp. 470-474.

3. **FMLN guerrillas:** The best analysis of the development of the FMLN as a fighting force is Francisco Emilio Mena Sandoval, *Del ejército nacional al ejército guerrillero*, San Salvador: Ediciones Arcoiris, n.d. Much less well informed is the view from the government side presented by José Angel Moroni Bracamonte and David E. Spenser, *Strategy and Tactics of the Salvadoran FMLN Guerrillas: Last Battle of the Cold War, Blueprint for Future Conflicts*, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1995. The figure of up to 3,000 guerrillas attacking the capital city is from *A Breach of Impunity*, p. 17.

4. **Atlacatl Battalion:** The Atlacatl was created early in 1982 with the assistance and guidance of Col. John David Waghelstein, who served as Commander, U.S. Military Group, El Salvador, from 1982 to mid-1983.

Green-Beret trained: Thirteen U.S. Special Forces (Green Berets) were training the commandos up to forty-eight hours before the murders. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Update on Investigation of the Murder of Six Jesuit Priests in El Salvador," March 25, 1991, p. 12; and J. Donald Moran, "U.S. should not subsidize Salvadoran murderers," *Boston Globe*, October 8, 1991. See below.

5. Cited in Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Status of the Investigation of the Jesuit Murders in El Salvador: Memo to the U.S. Jesuit Conference," April 12, [p. 292] 1990, p. 7. Zepeda specifically blamed the Jesuits for planning an attack that had been carried out by FMLN urban commandos. Doggett, *Death Foretold*, p. 61. He made his charge in the newspaper *El Diario de Hoy*, which was owned by Enrique Viera Altamirano. In 1984 (see below) U.S. Ambassador Robert White would name Viera Altamirano as one of the powers behind the death squads.

6. Ellacuría maintained correct but critical relations with both the Salvadoran army and the guerrillas, even though both groups often disagreed with his political analyses and positions. A staff member of the guerrillas' Radio Venceremos recalled: "The rector of the UCA [Ignacio Ellacuría] was a man whose opinion mattered, not only to his students but to the guerrillas as well. He always deserved our respect, [and] even though we didn't agree on a lot of things--and we agreed on many others--we had excellent relations with him." In José Ignacio López Vigil, *Rebel Radio: The Story of El Salvador's Radio Venceremos*, trans. Mark Fried, Willimantic, Connecticut: Curbstone Press, 1994, p. 143; in Spanish, *Las mil y una historia de Radio Venceremos*, San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1991, pp. 350.

7. **Ellacuría's publications:** A bibliography of his writings appears in John Hassett and Hugh Lacey, eds., *Towards a Society that Serves its People: The Intellectual Contribution of El Salvador's Murdered Jesuits*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1991, pp. 373-382. His political writings are published as: Ignacio Ellacuría, *Veinte años de historia en El Salvador (1969-1989): Escritos políticos*, 3 volumes, San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1991. His chief work in philosophy is *Filosofía de la realidad histórica*, San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1990; a bibliography of his philosophical works is provided in that volume, pp. 603-606.

Zubiri: Spanish philosopher Xavier Zubiri (1893-1983) was a subject of interest even to the House Inter-American Affairs Subcommittee, which, on May 20, 1980, also looked into Ignacio Ellacuría. "Who is Zuberi?" [sic], asked Representative Fenwick, to which William G. Bowdler, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America (and the one responsible for easing Anastasio Somoza out of Nicaragua in July, 1979) responded, "We are not acquainted with such a

person." *El Salvador: The Making of U.S. Policy*, Document No. 00650 (1980/06/10), excerpting p. 30 of the transcript of the Subcommittee's hearing.

U.S. Embassy's first reference to Ellacuría: On November 8, 1979, the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador cabled the State Department its (to my knowledge) first reference to Ellacuría: "New rector of Catholic University (UCA): Dr. Ignacio Ellacuría was named new UCA rector on November 7, replacing Junta member Román Mayorga. Ellacuría is Jesuit of Basque extraction and naturalized Salvadoran citizen. He has been important influence at UCA for some time as member of Jesuit Board of Overseers and Head of Faculty of Philosophy." *El Salvador: The Making of U.S. Policy*, Document No. 00286 (1979/11/08).

8. **Results of the search:** "They found no signs of any guerrilla presence, war matériel or propaganda." *U.N. Truth Commission Report*, English 50, Spanish 47.

Authorization of the search and falsification of the results: Only on July 12, 1990, at a news conference, did President Alfredo Cristiani for the first time admit publicly that he personally authorized the search of the Jesuit residence two days before the priests were killed. Cristiani also made the false and damaging charge that *guerrilla weapons* were found at the university during the search. He had not retracted the charge as late as March 25, 1991. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Update on Investigation of the Murder of Six Jesuit Priests in El Salvador," March 25, 1991, p. 11.

9. Thomas Long, "Jesuit Cover-up in Salvador: Videotape of U.S. Adviser Reveals Army Planned Priests' Murders," *Village Voice*, July 16, 1991, pp. 25-26, here p. 26.

10. **President Cristiani:** A wealthy coffeegrower who was educated at the Jesuits' Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., Alfredo Cristiani succeeded Roberto D'Aubuisson as Secretary General of the ARENA party in 1984 and served as president of El Salvador 1989-1994.

Cristiani informed by High Command: "Col. Ponce [after 6:30 p.m., November 15] authorized the elimination of ringleaders, trade unionists and known leaders of FMLN.... It was agreed that President Cristiani would be consulted about the measures." *U.N. Truth Commission Report*, English p. 50, Spanish p. 47.

Duration of Cristiani's stay at High Command headquarters: The source of this information is the then Defense Minister, General Rafael Humberto Larios López: Doggett, *Death Foretold*, p. 57.

What did Cristiani know? Is it realistically possible that Ponce informed Cristiani the army would be taking extraordinary measures, without mentioning that the Jesuits had been targeted and were already being killed? Cristiani claims that nothing at all was said about the UCA during his meeting with the High Command.

11. **The kill-order:** As Espinoza and Guevara later testified, Col. Benavides told them at this meeting: "This is a situation where it's them or us; we are going to begin with the ringleaders. Within our sector we have the university, and Ellacuría is there. You [Lt. Espinoza] conducted the search [of the UCA]. Use the same tactics as on the day of the search, and eliminate him. And I want no witnesses." Doggett, *Death Foretold*, p. 65. Lt. Espinoza was a graduate of the *Externado*, the Jesuit high school in San Salvador, where Father Segundo Montes had been his teacher.

12. **The goggles.** The information on the night-vision goggles comes from U.S. Major Samuel Ramírez, an American military advisor in El Salvador, and was first reported by Thomas Long, *Miami Herald* (International Edition), July 2, 1991, and *Village Voice*, July 16, 1991. See also Martha Doggett, *Death Foretold*, p. 212. Ramírez claims the commandos took the goggles without informing their trainers.

Training the murderers. The training was conducted at Atlacatl Headquarters in Sitio de Niño, La Libertad, near the capital city. The American trainers were detached from the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Deployment for Training, from Fort Bragg, North Carolina. This

information on the Green Beret training sessions was supplied to Congressman Joseph Moakley by Carl W. Ford, Jr., Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

Later fate of the trainers: Representative Moakley's Task Force reported on April 30, 1990 that the Green Berets who trained the Jesuits' murderers later "spent a day barricaded in the San Salvador Sheraton" when the FMLN guerrillas occupied the building on November 21, 1989. See Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Status of Jesuit Murder Investigation in El Salvador," report to the U.S. Jesuit Conference, July 27, 1990, p. 17.

13. **The gunmen.** Amaya, using the AK-47, shot Ellacuría first, then Martín-Baró and Montes; simultaneously Avalos shot Moreno and Amando López with his M-16. *U.N. Truth Commission Report*, English, p. 47, Spanish, p. 45.

The crime scene. The description of the lawn and the wall of the house was given me by reporter Eugene Palumbo (February 22, 1996), who arrived at the scene some five hours after the murders.

The M-16. The M-16 used to kill Fathers López and Moreno was produced by Colt Manufacturers in Hartford, Connecticut ([203] 236-6311), under contract with the U.S. government; and the 5.56 mm cartridges employed to kill the priests were manufactured at the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant near Independence, Missouri ([816] 796-7101) under [p. 293] contract with Olin Winchester. I am grateful to the offices of Mr. Gary Cox of the Lake City Plant, for supplying some of this information on February 21 and 22, 1996.

14. Doggett, *Death Foretold*, pp. 68-69, Whitfield, *Paying the Price*, p. 13.

15. **The sound truck:** Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Status of the Investigation of the Jesuit Murders in El Salvador," p. 8.

FMLN reaction: A guerrilla reaction to the murder was voiced on November 19, the day of the Jesuits' funeral. Carlos Henríquez Consalvi ("Santiago") said on Radio Venceremos: "They spread their knowledge to the thousands upon thousands of young people who studied with them. They spread the moral values of Christianity, which are so compatible with the principles of revolutionaries. Today the moral values these priests taught have become thousands of seeds. They weren't the brains behind the revolution. They were part of our national conscience, the critical, scientific conscience that searched for the roots of the conflict by researching our history, to try to find a path to peace and national reconciliation." López Vigil, *Rebel Radio*, p. 228; *Las mil y una historia*, pp. 534-535.

16. Justice Stewart made his statement in the Supreme Court's reversal of an Ohio court's finding that Louis Malle's 1958 film "The Lovers" was obscene. See Philip Winters' letter to the *New York Times*, November 29, 1995, p. A18.

17. With a nod to John E. Peurifoy (1907-1955), former Ambassador to Guatemala. On December 18, 1954, following his first dinner with President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala, Peurifoy concluded his five-page telegram to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (Dispatch No. 522) by saying that if Arbenz "is not a Communist, he will certainly do until one comes along." In Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit*, Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1982, p. 138 and p. 273, n. 13.

18. Mary McGrory, "Salvador: Murder and Resurrection," *Washington Post*, April 15, 1990, p. D1.

19. See Thomas W. Lippman, "1989 Salvadoran Atrocity Posed Agonizing Choice for U.S.," *Washington Post*, April 5, 1994, p. A13.

20. **Cost of the Afghan adventure:** Anthony Lewis, "And We Walked Away," *New York Times*, February 19, 1996, p. A11.

Cost of the war in Salvador: A figure frequently given for U.S. expenditure in El Salvador is \$5 billion; however, the Rand Report (Schwarz, *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine*, pp. v and 2, with n. 5) correctly sets the figure at \$6 billion, including "an estimated CIA investment of over \$500 million." With the signing of the peace accords in January 1992, annual aid to El Salvador shrunk until by 1995 it was only \$266 million.

21. **Training in torture:** Tim Weiner, "Documents Show U.S. Trained Salvadorans Linked to Death Squads," *New York Times*, December 14, 1993, pp. A1 and A4. Clifford Krauss, "U.S., Aware of Killings, Worked With Salvador's Rightists, Papers Suggest," *New York Times*, November 9, 1993, p. A4; and his earlier "How U.S. Actions Helped Hide Salvador Human Rights Abuses," *New York Times*, March 21, 1993, pp. 1 and 8; Dennis Volman, "Salvador Death squads, a CIA connection?" *Christian Science Monitor*, May 8, 1984, pp. A1 and C1; Allan Nairn, "Behind the Death Squads," *The Progressive*, May 1984, pp. 1, 20-29, and his "Confessions of a Death Squad Officer," *The Progressive*, March 1986, pp. 26-30. Lawrence Ross, "Salvadoran's Arrest Raises Questions: Ex-assassin charged U.S. was involved with death squads," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 12, 1990, pp. A1 and A18, and his "Unwanted Testimony," *Pacific Sun*, July 13, 1990, pp. 8-10.

22. Interview with Marc Cooper and Gregory Goldin, *Playboy Magazine*, November 1984, p. 73.

23. Cited in Allan Nairn, "Behind the Death Squads," *The Progressive*, May, 1984, pp. 1 and 20-29, here p. 21.

24. Nairn, "Behind the Death Squads," p. 29. On Kennedy in Costa Rica, see Richard N. Goodwin, *Remembering America: A Voice from the Sixties*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1988, p. 221; and Alexander Cockburn, "Beat the Devil," *The Nation*, May 15, 1995, p. 659.

25. **Central America summit:** The text of the "Declaration of San José" (sometimes called the "Declaration of Central America") is printed in *The Department of State Bulletin*, 47, 1241 (April 8, 1963), 515-517, here p. 517; other relevant texts in "The Presidents' Meeting at San José," pp. 511-540. The presidents attending were Orlich of Costa Rica, Rivera of El Salvador, [p. 294] Ydígoras of Guatemala, Villeda of Honduras, Somoza of Nicaragua, Chiari of Panama, and Kennedy of the United States, each of them accompanied by their foreign ministers. Kennedy's speeches and press conferences relating to the Cost Rican Summit are printed in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1963*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1964, pp. 262-273, with a relevant press conference at pp. 273 ff. Kennedy constantly reiterates the need to "increase our capacity to prevent the infiltration of Cuban agents, money, and propaganda" (March 18, 1963), p. 266b; on p. 274a (March 21, 1963) he adds "arms" to the list of "agents, money, and propaganda."

26. **Duarte:** Duarte is cited in Nairn, "Behind the Death Squads," p. 21. "ORDEN" stands for *Organización Democrática Nacionalista*.

ORDEN: On the origins of ORDEN, see Michael McClintock, *The American Connection*, vol. 1: *State Terror and Popular Resistance in El Salvador*, London: Zed Books, 1985, pp. 204-209.

ANSESAL: The word is an acronym for *Agencia Nacional de Seguridad Salvadoreña*. The U.S. established analogous organizations Honduras (ANSEHON), Guatemala (ANSEGUAT), and in Somoza's Nicaragua (ANSENIC).

27. Nairn, "Behind the Death Squads," p. 21.

28. Nairn, "Behind the Death Squads," p. 20.

29. **Source:** "The Nationalist Democratic Organization (ORDEN)," seven-page typescript

prepared by Chase Brandon of the Embassy's Political Section and sent from the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador to the State Department, April 2, 1979: *El Salvador: The Making of U.S. Policy*, Document No. 00124 (1979/04/02), p. 5.

Charges against ORDEN: Brandon noted that ORDEN allegedly had "become an instrument of control for the military-dominated National Conciliation Party (PCN)." The organization had likewise been accused of engaging "in repressive, paramilitary tactics to harass the Catholic Church and to subjugate 'anti-government' factions such as the Christian Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FECCAS)." Ibid., p. 1.

The structure of ORDEN: By the late 1970s, ORDEN's headquarters was the *casa presidencial* (Salvador's "White House"), while each of the country's fourteen departments had a two-man team of liaison officers (*comandantes departamentales*), who oversaw both military units (*servicios territoriales*) and civil action sectors in each department. The liaison officers stayed in radio contact with headquarters and conveyed orders to non-commissioned subordinate officers (usually sergeants), who commanded the peasant recruits who served on the *patrullas cantonales* (canton patrols) that kept an eye on the country's 262 *municipios* and 2,261 *cantones*. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

30. **Admission and mitigation:** *El Salvador: The Making of U.S. Policy*, Document No. 00124 (1979/04/02), p. 7. The report concludes by noting that Medrano, in an interview with the U.S. Embassy, "admitted that the organization may be guilty of carrying out repressive actions against the church and other groups in rural areas," but the document goes on to mitigate the charges: "That is not to say, however, that ORDEN is at the heart of a systematic conspiratorial drive by the military government to defeat its enemies real or imagined." Ibid., p. 6.

31. Nairn, "Behind the Death Squads," p. 23.

32. U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, *The Recent Presidential Elections in El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*. Hearings before the Subcommittees on International Organizations and on Inter-American Affairs, March 9 and 17, 1977. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977.

33. Nairn, "Behind the Death Squads," p. 23.

34. Barbara Crossette, "Honduras Sends Officer Linked to Abuse to U.N.," *The New York Times*, February 20, 1996, p. A6. See the exposé of Battalion 3-16 by Gary Cohn and Ginger Thompson, *The Baltimore Sun*, June 11-18, 1995, reprinted as Special Report, "Unearthed: Fatal Secrets," *The Baltimore Sun*, 501 N. Calvert Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21278.

35. **Salvadorans' yearly earnings:** See *U.S. Foreign Policy: The Reagan Imprint*, Washington, D.C., Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1986, p. 54. The number of people below the poverty line has increased dramatically in El Salvador in the years since then. In 1995, 45% of the employable population was either unemployed or underemployed and 83% of the people were earning less than \$4,000 a year. Meanwhile, in 1994 exported coffee brought \$245 million to the small percentage of the population who are finca owners. See Mike Edwards, "El Salvador Learns To Live With Peace," *National Geographic Magazine*, 188, 3 (September 1995), 108-131; here, pp. 117, 121.

Salvadoran literacy rates: Dr. Eduardo Molina, "Social Justice in the Aftermath of the El Salvador Civil War," lecture, Loyola University Chicago, March 25, 1993.

36. Duarte's statement, made on December 27, 1980, appears in Raymond Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit: U.S. Policy and El Salvador*, New York: Times Books, 1984, p. 24.

37. Schwarz, *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador*, pp. 24 and 25. In 1984 former ambassador Robert White told Congress, "The fundamental error of the Reagan foreign

policy team [in El Salvador] has been to hide the fact that death squads and butchery are intrinsic to the regime their policies have helped create." House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Situation in El Salvador*, February 6, 1984, p. 45.

38. Cited in *New York Times* September 26, 1991, p. A14.

39. [p. 295] "El Salvador's Future--and How U.S. Can Influence It: Interview with Ambassador Robert White," *U.S. News and World Report*, January 26, 1981, p. 37-38, here p. 38.

40. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Situation in El Salvador*, February 6, 1984, p. 45 .

41. Interview with *La Prensa Latina*, February 2, 1980, on the occasion of his receiving an honorary doctorate in Louvain, Belgium. From: Plácido Erdozaín, *Archbishop Romero: Martyr of Salvador*, trans. John McFadden and Ruth Warner, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981, p. 76.

42. In Erdozaín, *Archbishop Romero*, p. x.

43. Homily of March 16, 1980, in James R. Brockman, S.J., *Romero: A Life*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989, p. 239, with p. 273, n. 30. See also *Archbishop Oscar Romero, A Shepherd's Diary*, trans. Irene B. Hodgson, Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1993, p. 528.

44. Homily of January 13, 1980, in Brockman, *Romero*, p. 219, with p. 272, n. 42. Romero reiterated the point some three weeks later (February 2) on the occasion of receiving an honorary doctorate in Louvain: "I have warned the oligarchy time and again to open their hands, give away their fancy rings, because if they don't, the time will come when they will be cut off." in Erdozaín, *Archbishop Romero*, p. 76.

45. Homily of February 24, 1980, in Brockman, *Romero*, p. 233, with p. 273, n. 13. Romero was killed a month, rather than a week, later.

46. Homily of March 23, 1980, in Brockman, *Romero*, pp. 241-242, with p. 274, nn. 37-40.

47. From President Reagan's fifth press conference, November 10, 1981, in *Reagan's First Year*, Congressional Quarterly, Inc., Washington, D.C., 1982, p. 154.

48. *Reagan's First Year*, p. 44.

49. "Transcript of the President's News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Matters," *New York Times*, March 7, 1981, p. 10. The news conference took place on March 6, 1981. The president's remarks recall a statement that he frequently attributed to Vladimir Lenin: "We will take Eastern Europe. We will organize the hordes of Asia. And then we will move into Latin America and we won't have to take the United States. It will fall into our outstretched hands like overripe fruit." The statement, however, comes not from Lenin but from page 10 of *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, compiled by Robert Welch in 1958: "Lenin died in 1924. But before he died he had laid down for his followers the strategy for this conquest. It was, we should readily admit, brilliant, farseeing, realistic and majestically simple. It has been paraphrased and summarized as follows: 'First, we will take Eastern Europe. Next, the masses of Asia. Then we shall encircle the last bastion of capitalism, the United States of America. We shall not have to attack; it will fall like overripe fruit into our hands.'" See Karl E. Meyer: "The Elusive Lenin," *New York Times*, October 8, 1985, p. A30.

50. Speech of April 27, 1983, cited in Eric Alterman, "Bosnia and the Credibility Trap," *New*

York Times, May 13, 1993, p. A11.

51. Nixon's remarks are from his "Address to the Nation on the Situation in Southeast Asia" (televised speech from the Oval Office, April 30, 1970, announcing the U.S. invasion of Cambodia), in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1970*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971, No. 139, pp. 405-410, here p. 409a.

52. From one perspective--that of American casualties--the war in El Salvador was one of America's cheapest.

Estimates of American military casualties: Estimates of how many American military personnel died conflict-related deaths in El Salvador range from twenty to nine:

(1) twenty: William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*, Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1995, p. 358, with by sources and newspaper documentation at p. 437-8, n. 27;

(2) eighteen by the spring of 1987: Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*, second, revised and expanded edition, New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1993;

(3) seventeen: Benjamin C. Schwarz, *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador*, p. 3;

(4) nine: J. Michael Waller, *The Third Current of Revolution: Inside the 'North American Front' of El Salvador's Guerrilla War*, Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1991, frontispiece. Waller, a far-right apologist for the Reagan-Bush administrations' Central America policies, worked for the State Department's Office of Latin American Public Diplomacy under Otto Reich during the Reagan administration and later for the Council for Inter-American Security (CIS), which sponsored the publication of Waller's book. Re CIS see below on the "Santa Fe Report."

Claims of wider U.S. combat roles: For allegations of wider combat roles played by American soldiers, see Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, p.p. 274-75; Blum *Killing Hope*, pp. 358, and 438 nn. 28-33; "The Pentagon Turned its Back on Them," *60 Minutes*, CBS News, May 21, 1995, transcript, pp. 1-12. Also Ed Offley, "El Salvador raid in 1985 revealed: Fort Lewis Rangers hit guerrilla camp, killing 83," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, pp. A 1 and A 20; and Ed Offley, "Former Ranger tells of raid to destroy terrorist camp: Mission: 'There are to be no survivors,'" *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 15, 1995, p. A. 1 and A 21.

53. **Arms for the FMLN:** See, for example, Walter Isaacson, "A Lot of Show, but No Tell: The U.S. bungles its evidence of foreign subversion in El Salvador," *Time*, March 22, 1982, pp. 18-22; also *Washington Post*, February 21, 1982: "...for more than a year there has been very little solid evidence of material support for the Salvadorans origination in Nicaragua." *New York Times*, in early March 1982, cited an intelligence officer in El Salvador: "Military aid from Nicaragua and Cuba is not a key factor in the campaign of the Salvadoran guerrillas." On March 23, 1983, *Foreign Broadcast News* announced that Salvadoran Col. Juan Rafael Bustillo admitted there had been no evidence, for a year and a half, of aircraft carrying arms and ammunition for the FMLN. Also Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, p. 263, and Thomas Sheehan, "Recent Developments in El Salvador," *Three Penny Review* (Berkeley, Calif.), 16 [p. 296] (Winter, 1984), p. 10. Later on in the war, the Salvadoran rebels acknowledged they had received some military aid from Nicaragua, but American and Salvadoran intelligence had extraordinary difficulty in detecting it.

54. **Santa Fe Report:** The formal title of the text is *A New Inter-American Policy for the Eighties*, and it is signed "by The Committee of Santa Fe." It was authored by L. Francis (Lynn) Bouchey, president of CIS, free-lance writer Roger W. Fontaine, David C. Jordan, Lt. General Gordon Sumner, Jr., and Lewis Tambs (who alone is listed as editor). It was published privately in the summer of 1980. The follow-up "Santa Fe II" (35 pages), published privately on August 13, 1988, proclaimed: "The Communist subversive and terrorist network stretches from Chiapas in southern Mexico to Chile, making the entire Pacific coast below the Rio Grande an arena of open

conflict" (p. 1).

55. See Roger Reed, Director of Publications of CIS, "Editorial Note to the Second Printing"; also the curriculum vitae of Lewis A. Tambs in his "Mikhail Gorbachev: *Still a Dedicated Marxist-Leninist*," in Herbert London, et al., *Communism: The Ideology Fades -- The Threat Remains*, Buena Park, California: Americanism Educational League, 1990, pp. 11-15, here p. 11.

56. Tambs, ed., *A New Inter-American Policy for the Eighties*, pp. 2 and 3.

57. Tambs, ed., *A New Inter-American Policy for the Eighties*. The proposals cited here appear on pp. 17 and 20.

58. Testifying at a Congressional hearing, former ambassador to El Salvador Robert White remarked: "For fifty years, El Salvador was ruled by a corrupt and brutal alliance of the rich and the military. The young officers' revolt of 1979 attempted to break that alliance.... When the Reagan Administration took office, it reidentified the United States with the military and economic elites--with disastrous results." House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Situation in El Salvador*, February 6, 1984, p. 46.

59. William F. Buckley, "Elliot Abrams Is on the Right Track," *Esquire*, December 1984, pp. 496-500; here, p. 498. Mr. Abrams' effort to explain and justify his actions in the 1980s is found in his *Undue Process: A Story of How Political Differences Are Turned Into Crimes*, New York: The Free Press, 1993. Abrams served as the State Department's Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs from December 12, 1981 to July 12, 1984, then as Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs until January 20, 1989.

60. U.S. Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Marxism and Christianity in Revolutionary Central America*. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, October 18-19, 1983. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984.

61. The other sister, Ita Ford, reported this incident to her family in a letter. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "A Decade of Failed Promises: The Investigation of Archbishop Romero's Murder," March 1990, p. 14, n. 23.

62. U.S. Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Marxism and Christianity in Revolutionary Central America*, Appendix, pp. 289-305. Also *U.N. Truth Commission Report*, English, 62-66, Spanish, 60-65. The U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Robert White, citing Salvadoran military sources, named Lt. Col. Oscar Edgardo Casanova Vejar as the probable source of the orders. At the time Casanova Vejar was Commander of the Zacatecoluca military detachment (within whose jurisdiction the crime was committed) and was in charge of the National Guard at the national airport, outside which the women were kidnapped. White also named Casanova Vejar's cousin, Col. Eugenio Vides Casanova, as one who perpetrated the cover-up of the crime. The Reagan administration later helped Vides Casanova become Minister of Defense. See Clifford Krauss, "How U.S. Actions Helped Hide Abuses in Salvador," *New York Times*, March 21, 1993, p. 8. On May 23 and 24, 1984 Deputy Sergeant Luis Antonio Colindres Alemán, and four members of the National Guard were convicted of the murder of the churchwomen, and each was sentenced to thirty years each. They were released from prison in April of 1993.

63. Krauss, "How U.S. Actions Helped Hide Abuses," p. 8; and Anthony Lewis, "The Catharsis of Truth," *New York Times*, March 22, 1993, p. A17.

64. Mr. Haig's testimony was given before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 18, 1981. See Anthony Lewis, "Fear of the Truth," *New York Times*, April 2, 1993, p. A19. In a letter to *The New York Times*, March 1993, Haig claimed he was merely reporting a Salvadoran

Government theory, but as Anthony Lewis points out (ibid.) "No one but Mr. Haig, then or since, has advanced such a theory. Nor has Mr. Haig explained how it would fit the facts: the nuns raped and shot in the head at close range."

65. Clifford Krauss, "How U.S. Actions Helped Hide Abuses," p. 8. Monterrosa died in a helicopter crash in Morazán on October 23, 1984. See López Vigil, *Rebel Radio*, pp. 124-136; *Las mil y una historia*, pp. 316-338.

66. [p. 297] **El Mozote:** See Mark Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote*, New York: Random House/Vintage, 1994; see pp. 280-304 for the names of the victims. Danner's text was first published as "The Truth of El Mozote," *The New Yorker*, December 6, 1993, 50-133. Also, Larry Rohter, "Where Countless Died in '81, Horror Lives On in Salvador," *The New York Times*, February 12, 1996, pp. A1 and A4.

67. **Human-rights certification:** The bill requiring the president's semi-annual certification of improvement in human rights was co-sponsored by Congressman Stephen J. Solarz, of the House Western Hemisphere Affairs subcommittee, and was signed into law on December 29, 1981, seventeen days after the massacre. Six weeks after the massacre President Reagan, on January 28, 1982 did certify to the United States Congress that the government of El Salvador was "making a concerted and significant effort to comply with internationally recognized human rights [and was] 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." Cited in Blum, *Killing Hope*, p. 359. Benjamin Schwarz writes: "In 1981 over 10,000 political murders were committed by the Salvadoran military and death squads linked to it." *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine*, p. 23.

68. **Greentree and Enders:** Greentree's words are cited from Alan Tomlinson's report, "Allegations Reagan Officials Lied to Congress Surface," National Public Radio, May 3, 1993, p. 2; typed transcript supplied by NPR. (Greentree served as a Consular Officer at the embassy from January, 1981 to March, 1982, then as Political Officer until July, 1983.) On Thomas Enders, see his obituary, *New York Times*, March 18, 1996, p. C12.

69. **Human rights, 1982-1985:** See Thomas Sheehan, "Ignoring the Facts," *Chicago Tribune*, July 28, 1982, Section 1, p. 17; and "Should Congress Continue Military Aid to El Salvador?" *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 1982, Part IV, p. 3. For statistics on human rights abuses in El Salvador through June of 1985, see Amnesty International, *Reports on Human Rights in El Salvador*, New York and Washington, D.C., Seventh Supplement, September, 1985. The Report notes: "Abuses by the Salvadoran government not directly connected to combat include: a resurgence in death squad activity," which the Report specifies as "targeted killings and disappearances by military and paramilitary forces" (p. 3).

70. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Situation in El Salvador*, p. 51.

71. **The plot to assassinate Romero:** House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Situation in El Salvador*, p. 50. White continued: "The reliability of this military officer [who had reported on the meeting] as a trustworthy source has been established over the months and years. All of the above information was reported to Washington." p. 51.

72. **State Department denial:** The letter was written by W. Tapley Bennett, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, dated April 11, 1984. It has been declassified and is found in *El Salvador: The Making of U.S. Policy*, Document No. 04974 (1984/04/11).

73. The cable is given in two similar forms in *El Salvador: The Making of U.S. Policy*, Documents Nos. 02308 and 02309 (1981/12/21, 1817Z).

74. **Romero's murderers:** *U.N. Truth Commission Report*, English, pp. 127 and 130; Spanish, pp. 132 and 137. For an earlier review of the case, see Brockman, *Romero*, "Appendix: Romero's Killers," pp. 249-255. Other sources implicate Edgar Pérez Linares, a detective in Salvador's National Police. Pérez fled to Guatemala in 1986, but the National Police pursued and secretly arrested him and shot him to death, allegedly while he was trying to escape. See Douglas Farah, "2 Salvadorans Detail Origin of A Death Squad," *Washington Post*, August 29, 1984, pp. A1 and A26, here p. A26.

75. Dan Quayle, *Standing Firm: A Vice-Presidential Memoir*, New York: HarperCollins/Zondervan, 1994, p. 121.

76. **D'Aubuisson and death squads:** In 1984 the *Washington Post* discovered and interviewed two former death squad members who confirmed that "Roberto d'Aubuisson headed the nationwide death squad network," with "overall command [of] the Maximiliano Hernández Brigade, the White Hand and the Escuadrón de la Muerte." Farah, "2 Salvadorans Detail Origin of A Death Squad," *Washington Post*, p. A26.

77. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Situation in El Salvador*, February 6, 1984, p. 48; also p. 41 (where the misprint "nothing" should be "noting"). The reference to March 1980--January 1981 is on p. 49.

78. See "Minneapolis Law" in *Bulletin of Municipal Foreign Policy* (published by the Center for Innovative Diplomacy), 4, 1 (Winter 1989-90), 50-51, with further sources at p. 51; and William Greidler, *Who Will Tell the People? The Betrayal of American Democracy*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992, pp. 256-7. The Carter administration (specifically Ambassador White) denied d'Aubuisson a visa and succeeded in barring him from entering the United States. The Reagan administration overturned the policy. See House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Situation in El Salvador*, p. 50.

79. Krauss, "How U.S. Actions Helped Hide Abuses," p. 8. D'Aubuisson died of cancer on February 21, 1992. See his obituary, *New York Times*, February 22, 1992.

80. For a list of the organizations the FBI spied on, see "Groups Included in the [p. 298] CISPEs Files Obtained from FBI Headquarters," Center for Constitutional Rights, 666 Broadway. New York, NY 10012, January 27, 1988, 11 pages, typescript.

81. See Ross Gelbspan, *Break-ins, Death Threats and the FBI: The Covert War Against the Central America Movement*, Boston: South End Press, 1991, p. 216, and Bob Woodward, *Veil*, New York: Pocket Books, p. 110.

82. **FBI surveillance:** The collection of foreign intelligence by the FBI under certain conditions was legitimized by National Security Directive No. 22, "Designation of Intelligence Officials Authorized to Request FBI Collection of Foreign Intelligence," January 29, 1982. The Directive, which was declassified on May 17, 1991, is printed in Christopher Simpson, *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1995, p. 94. The text reads: "In order to implement Section 1.14 (c) of Executive Order 12333, I hereby designate the Director of Central Intelligence (or the Acting Director of Central Intelligence) as officials authorized to request the FBI to collect foreign intelligence or support foreign intelligence requirements of other agencies within the Intelligence Community. [Six lines blacked out.] Ronald Reagan." Simpson notes on p. 57 that Directive 22 "set the stage for CIA monitoring of international telephone calls by U.S. Congressmen and congressional staff members seen by the CIA as critical of U.S. policies." In that regard, see David Johnston with Michael Wines, "Spying Data on Sandinistas Involved U.S.

Congressmen, Ex-Officials Say," *New York Times*, September 15, 1991.

83. On April 4, 1996, Oliver "Buck" Revell surfaced on Ted Koppel's television program *Nightline*, speaking about the arrest of Theodore J. Kaczynski.

84. A facsimile of the cable is reprinted in Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars Against Domestic Dissent*, Boston: South End, 1990, pp. 18-19.

85. For the following, see, Gelbspan, *Break-ins, Death Threats and the FBI* (supra) and Churchill and Vander Wall, *The COINTELPRO Papers* (supra). Also:

House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, *Break-Ins at Sanctuary Churches and Organizations Opposed to Administration Policy in Central America*. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, February 19 and 20, 1987. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987.

Michael W. Hirschorn, "Newly Released Documents Provide Rare Look at How FBI Monitors Students and Professors," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 10, 1988, p. A1 and A13.

Sandy Tolan and Carol Ann Bassett, "Informers in the Sanctuary Movement," *The Nation*, vol. 241, July 20-27, 1985, pp. 40-43.

Vince Bielski, Cindy Forster, and Dennis Bernstein, "The Death Squads Hit Home: Which Side is the FBI on?" *The Progressive*, vol. 51, 10 (October 18, 1987), pp. 15-19.

Brian Glick, *War At Home: Covert Action Against U.S. Activists and What We Can Do About It*, Boston: South End Press.

86. The above are from U.S. House of Representatives, *Break-Ins at Sanctuary Churches and Organizations Opposed to Administration Policy in Central America*, respectively pp. 464, 655, 458, and 457.

87. On the album, see further: Wayne King, "An F.B.I. Inquiry Fed by Informer Emerges in Analysis of Documents: Once-Discounted Tale of Invented Tips to Justify Spying on Policy Critics Is Bearing Out," *New York Times*, February 13, 1988, p. A33; and Gelbspan, *Break-Ins*, pp. 97-102.

88. Gelbspan, *Break-Ins*, p. 184.

89. Alfonso Chardy, "Reagan advisers ran 'secret government,'" *The Miami Herald*, July 5, 1987, pp. 1A, 14A, and 15A; here, p. 1A. The "U.S. military invasion abroad" was widely understood to refer to Nicaragua. The United States invaded Grenada on October 25, 1983 and Panama on December 20, 1989.

90. Chardy, "Reagan advisers ran 'secret government,'" p. 14A.

91. Chardy, "Reagan advisers ran 'secret' government," p. 15A.

92. Gelbspan, *Break-Ins*, p. 185.

93. Details can be found in *Break-Ins At Sanctuary Churches and Organizations Opposed to Administration Policy in Central America*, pp. 534, 537, 538, 555, etc. See also Gelbspan, *Break-Ins*, pp. 194-207.

94. See Philip Shenon, "F.B.I.'s Chief Says Surveillance Was Justified," *New York Times*, February 3, 1988, pp A1 and A13; and Philip Shenon, "Reagan Backs F.B.I Over Surveillance," *New York Times*, February 4, 1988, p. A21.

95. See Doggett, *Death Foretold*, pp. 73-100. The Spanish name of the SIU was "Comisión de Investigación de Hechos Delictivos" (CIHD).

96. Lucia Cerna heard Father Martín-Baró's last words--"!Esta es una injusticia! !Son una carroña!" (perhaps: "This is an injustice! You are utterly corrupt!"). [p. 299] Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "The Jesuit Murders: A Report on the Testimony of a Witness," December 15, 1980, p. 7.

97. **Cerna's departure:** Walker was informed of the departure by a telephone call at midnight, November 22-23, from Kevin Whitaker, El Salvador desk officer at the State Department in Washington, D.C. (The State Department may have been informed by a member of the SIU.) Walker then phoned Chidester, who in turn called the Jesuits around 1:30 a.m. on November 23, some seven hours before the flight was to leave El Salvador. See Doggett, "The Assassination of the Jesuits," which here draws upon the embassy's "Mission Chronology" from Volume 7 of the State Department's documents on the murder of the Jesuits.

Richard Chidester: In 1986-1988 Chidester had served as political officer in the U.S. Embassy in Honduras and was responsible for liaison with the *contras*. See Sam Dillon, *Comandos: The CIA and Nicaragua's Contra Rebels*, New York: Henry Holt, 1991, pp. 221-222 and 324. Also Whitfield, *Paying the Price*, 76. Chidester left the foreign service in 1991.

98. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "The Jesuit Murders: A Report on the Testimony of a Witness," December 15, 1989. Also Doggett, *Death Foretold*, p. 220: "President Cristiani told reporters at a December 9, 1989 news conference that Mrs. Cerna was lying. In Washington, Mr. Chidester proposed to U.S. Jesuit officials that they hold a joint news conference to announce that Mrs. Cerna now admitted she had seen nothing on the murder night."

99. The chain of information is as follows: Benavides --> Rivas --> López y López --> Avilés --> Buckland. That is: Benavides confessed to Rivas and asked for Rivas' help in the matter. Rivas told Col. Nelson López y López of the confession. López y López then told Avilés, who in turn told Buckland. Ponce had planted López y López on Rivas' investigating Commission and so probably knew of Benavides' confession. Cols. López y López and Avilés were members of the Joint Command: López y López was the Chief of C-1 (Personnel), and Avilés was Chief of C-5 (Psychological Operations). See Doggett, *Death Foretold*, pp. 222 and 336-337.

100. **Buckland's prior knowledge:** Thomas Long and Frank Smyth, "Release the Jesuit Tapes: The FBI Has Videotaped Testimony That Accuses the Salvadoran Army of Killing Six Jesuits--and Proves the U.S. Knew in Advance," *Village Voice*, November 13, 1990, pp. 18 and 22, here p. 22. See further also Thomas Long, "Jesuit Cover-up in Salvador: Videotape of U.S. Advisor Reveals Army Planned Priests' Murders," *Village Voice*, July 18, 1991, pp. 25 and 26. See also Doggett, *Death Foretold*, pp. 225-226. Buckland's sworn statement (not handwritten, as formerly thought) is on file at the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

State Department intimidation: Long's exposé articles mentioned above, along with one in the *Miami Herald* (International Edition), July 2, 1991, earned him threats from State Department personnel at the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador (the embassy threatened to bring "the weight of the U.S. government down on the *Miami Herald* editors and owners" to get Long fired) as well as a two-year ban against his entering the grounds of the U.S. Embassy there. The ban was imposed by Mr. Jeff Dietrich, Deputy Chief of Mission. Information from Thomas Long, March 11, 1996.

101. Cited from a transcript of the videotape: Long, "Jesuit Cover-up in El Salvador," p. 26.

102. Besides Benavides, the indicted were: Lt. José Ricardo Espinoza Guerra and Yushy René

Mendoza Vallecillos, and Second Lt. Gonzalo Guevara Cerritos, the three who led the raid; Private Oscar Mariano Amaya Grimaldi, nicknamed "PiliJay" ("Hangman)," who killed Frs. Ignacio Ellacuría, Ignacio Martín Baró, and Segundo Montes; Sub-Sergeant Ramiro Avalos Vargas, nicknamed "Toad" or "Satan," who killed Frs. Amando López and Juan Ramón Moreno; Corporal Angel Pérez Vásquez, who finished off Fr. Joaquín López y López; and Sub-Sergeant Tomás Zarpate Castillo, nicknamed "Sampson" and (in absentia) Private Jorge Sierra Ascencio, who, respectively, shot and finished off Elba Ramos and her daughter Celina. Benavides, Espinoza, Mendoza, Guevara, and Avalos were all graduates of the U.S. School of the Americas, Ft. Benning, Georgia.

103. Representative Miller made his statement in response to questions from Ed Bradley, CBS, *Sixty Minutes*, "The Jesuit Murders," April 29, 1990.

104. On Col. Porter, Major Lewis, and their relation with the Salvadoran army's C-2 (Intelligence), as well as on the close relation between the U.S. trainers and the Atlacatl commandos who carried out the murders, see Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Update on Investigation of the Murder of Six Jesuit Priests in El Salvador," March 25, 1991, p. 12.

105. Doggett, *Death Foretold*, p. 226-227.

106. This was first disclosed by Long and Smyth, "Reveal the Jesuit Tapes," p. 18.

107. "Cracking the Major," *Newsweek*, November 19, 1990, p. 6. See Doggett, *Death Foretold*, p. 228, n. 457.

108. Cited in Long, "Jesuit Cover-up in Salvador," p. 26.

109. Cited in Doggett, *Death Foretold*, p. 226.

110. Long and Smyth, "Release the Jesuit tapes," p. 22.

111. Long, "Jesuit Cover-up in Salvador," p. 26.

112. CBS, *Sixty Minutes*, "The Jesuit Murders," story by Ed Bradley, April 29, 1990.

113. *New York Times*, AP Wire, "El Salvador Frees 2 In Murder of Priests," April 2, [p. 300] 1993, p. A7. For a brief report on the trial, Vincent T. O'Keefe, "The El Salvador Trial in the Jesuit Case," *America*, October 19, 1991, p. 260.

114. Arnold J. Toynbee, "The Shot Heard Round the World," in his *America and the World Revolution, and other lectures*, New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 92-93.

115. In Leon Wolff, *Little Brown Brother*, New York: Doubleday, 1961, p. 303, and here taken from Barbara Tuchman, *The Proud Tower*, "End of a Dream: The United States, 1890-1902," New York: Bantam, 1962, p. 190. A more modest expression of the project might be simply: "promoting security and stability in our hemisphere." Cited from a Dole campaign working paper on foreign policy, in William Safire, "The Dole Doctrine," *New York Times*, April 1, 1996, p. A11.

116. In Tuchman, *Proud Tower*, p. 177.

117. Mark Twain, "To the Person Sitting In Darkness," *North American Review*, 81 (February, 1901), pp. 161-176. See also Mark Twain, "Thirty Thousand Killed a Million," *Atlantic Monthly*,

269, 4 (April, 1992), pp. 52-65, and the introduction, "Mark Twain on American Imperialism," pp. 49-51.

118. See Twain, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," pp. 170, 164, 165, 174-175, 176.