

El Salvador

30 was disrupted by fire bombs and shootings. The leftists blamed the military and the rightists, while the government blamed the leftists, and the state of siege was extended for another 30 days.

Nevertheless, some reforms were pursued; at the end of April, sharecroppers and tenant farmers were given title to the land they worked.

The violence continued throughout the summer and autumn of 1980. On October 9, the South African ambassador, still a hostage of the left wing forces, died. Ten other assassination attempts were made; some successful, some not. On November 27, six leading members of the opposition were murdered. On December 4, the bodies of four American churchwomen were found in a shallow grave near the airport. On December 13, the junta was reorganized and Napoleon Duarte was named president. On January 10, the "final offensive" of the left wing began with widespread fighting and the calling of national strikes.

Nobody in the House denies that much of the violence, the murdering and the torturing, as far as we can see, was caused by right wing forces. The Secretary of State for External Affairs and other members have spoken plainly about this; but the resolution would seem to imply that the killings were caused only by the El Salvador government. While it is not easy to be clear about what exactly is happening, it is certainly clear that violence begets violence. Clearly no one is blameless in this terrible situation. The House should not be asked to approve a resolution which fails to take into account that there are, as always, two sides to a story, both of which in this case make very unpleasant reading.

The resolution before us also indicates that the left wing forces are the only ones wishing to establish a democratic government. The record would lead one to question this. The government of El Salvador has taken some steps to institute reform. In so doing, it has antagonized forces on the right and forces on the left. We all agree that the progress made has not been as swift or as significant as we would like to see, and I am sure that the people of El Salvador would like to see. But, despite the necessity of dealing with a continuing series of armed attacks, occupations, murders, assassinations and strikes, the government of El Salvador has been able to implement, albeit haltingly, some of its promised reforms.

There is no evidence to suggest that given a period of peace and tranquility, the government of El Salvador might not proceed to implement its reforms. If left wing sources are as determined to establish a democratic government, as the resolution would have us believe, why have they been so active in seeking to achieve power by brutal force against a regime which has publicly declared its intention to establish reforms?

No one on this side of the House has any illusions that the present government of El Salvador is perfect; far from it. Its imperfections are clear for all to see, but its imperfections are admitted by its leaders. They admit that greater efforts must be made to eliminate those imperfections. We have not heard that the leadership of the revolutionary forces admits any imperfections, but, as far as we can see, they urge their

followers to greater violence. The revolutionary forces have shown no great desire to work for a ceasefire and no willingness to negotiate toward a democratic settlement.

The president of El Salvador publicly expressed his willingness to negotiate with responsible leaders of the revolutionary forces. I hope those leaders will take up that challenge and seek to settle the differences in El Salvador with ballots rather than bullets. When the Secretary of State for External Affairs met the revolutionary leaders and sought their views, I understand they said that they were interested only in a discussion with the United States and that the discussions were only to persuade the United States to stop all military and economic assistance to El Salvador, so that revolutionary forces could overthrow the government.

It is hard to reconcile that view with the statement contained in the resolution of the New Democratic Party that the revolutionary leaders wish to establish a democratic government.

The Canadian government's policy has been clear and consistent throughout. We all care very deeply that there should be peace in that unfortunate country and that this senseless killing should stop. I certainly support the government's policy of objecting to the supply of military equipment by any and all countries to any and all parties in El Salvador. I support the government's position in using every opportunity to urge the government of El Salvador to put an end to abuses of human rights and to work toward a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the difficulties.

I support the Canadian government's activity in making its view known to other countries by discussions through diplomatic channels, but it is hard to see that the course suggested in this resolution would do anything to help matters.

● (2040)

This resolution contains two rather contradictory elements, one in which the Government of Canada is condemned for failing to protest publicly the American policy while, at the same time, we are asked to urge an end to military involvement on the part of the United States. It is difficult to see how, in the course of a state visit from an ally, our neighbour and friend, we can both urge and persuade, if that is what the NDP would have us do, while also prejudging and pre-empting the discussions by making public statements beforehand.

The resolution before the House is a flawed resolution, but it has served a useful purpose today by making us all think more deeply about the tragic state of affairs in El Salvador. It has made us think about the tragic denial of human rights in many other countries and the need for us to be vigilant and to use the international forums to express our convictions on every possible occasion.

Mr. Bob Ogle (Saskatoon East): Mr. Speaker, I believe that tonight I am part of an historical moment in our country's history. I am proud to be able to speak for my party on this resolution. I have been in the House of Commons for almost two years now and up until tonight there has not been a debate