

El Salvador Canada opposes interference

by Alan Christensen

Canada has taken a stand against foreign intervention in the civil war in El Salvador.

Following a meeting with representatives of the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America and a representative on the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement in El Salvador, Mark McGuigan, External Affairs Minister, made public statements stating Canada's opposition to any nation intervening in or supplying arms to El Salvador. The Canadian government has also cut all direct aid to the war-torn nation and on December 3 it voted against the United

States in favor of a resolution condemning human rights violations in El Salvador.

Canada, however, later dissociated itself from the clause in the resolution which called for a halt to arms shipment to El Salvador. As well, Canadian money is still reaching the Central American nation through multilateral agencies such as the Inter-American Development Bank. According to the bulletin, Central American Update, Canada's main reason for halting the direct aid was because the government feared for the lives of Canadian technicians. The bulletin also stated that Canada is

"accepting at face value" the American assertion that the military aid is "non-lethal."

The United States, however, has renewed its aid to the Salvadorean junta in apparent response to the offensive launched by anti-government guerillas. The Carter administration had halted aid after the murder of four U.S. missionaries by right-wing terrorists. The new aid package includes 2.3 million dollars for "non-lethal" aid including combat uniforms and grenade launchers.

The package also includes 2.7 million dollars for helicopter upkeep. This at first was puzzling because the U.S. has never officially supplied helicopters to the Salvadorean junta. However, six Huey helicopters were sold to "private citizens" in El Salvador and were later "confiscated" by the Salvadorean army. According to the Latin American Weekly Report, the Americans are considering sending military advisors and also, according to opposition sources in Panama, Salvadorean airmen are being trained on U.S. bases in the Canal Zone.

The big question is that if the Carter administration, which was considered "moderate," has renewed military aid to the Salvadorean junta, what will happen now that Ronald Reagan is in power? Jeane Kirkpatrick, Reagan's spokesperson for Latin America, has said that withdrawing aid to the junta would be "irresponsible" and would lead to "a rapid victory of the revolutionary left."

The opposition Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) is now in the process of rebuilding after most of its leaders were assassinated by government forces in November. Guillermo Ungo, a social democrat, has been chosen as the new leader and is apparently planning to form a government in exile in Mexico, where he now has fled. The Socialist International, a union of all socialist and social democratic parties, including Canada's New Democratic Party, has publically denounced the junta and has called for an end to American support of it.

Meanwhile, the anti-government guerrillas have made gains, according to reports in the Nicaraguan newspaper, Barricada, which also reports that a Salvadorean army captain joined the guerrillas along with most of his men in the city of Santa Ana. The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), the guerrilla umbrella organization, said that it wished to create "an irreversible military and political situation" before Ronald Reagan came to power. However, it has been unable to create this situation as of yet and there are already reports, all denied, that Honduras and Guatemala, both of whom support the Salvadorean junta, have sent troops across the border to fight the FMLN.



Fund raising

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A campaign is underway to raise money for medical aid for El Salvador. The Latin American Information Group (LAIG), in conjunction with Oxfam-Canada, is sending out letters asking for donations. The letters are being sent to teachers, university professors, the North End Clinic and to people on the mailing lists of various charitable organizations.

The money will, according to LAIG member Ana-Maria Quiroz, be sent to the Ecumenical Council of El Salvador, who will use it to set up emergency medical clinics in church basements and in other available facilities. This is necessary, says Quiroz, because there is a serious lack

of medical facilities for people wounded in the fighting and also because government troops have in the past killed doctors and nurses who have treated people opposed to the government.

Several prominent people have lent their names as sponsors of the letter, including NDP leader Alexa McDonough, King's President John Godfrey, MSVU President Margaret Fulton and Neptune Theatre Director John Neville. As well, several members of the Dalhousie Administration and Faculty have sponsored the letter. They are: Donald Betts, Dean of Arts and Science, Faculty President Edgar Friedenburg, Professors John Kirk, David Braybrooke and Muriel Duckworth, as well as the three Dalhousie Chaplains.

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