

The reality is that those who are committed to a civil order, to reform of the most moderate kind in El Salvador, have now been driven by their integrity into a guerrilla kind of operation. That is the reality, Mr. Speaker. It was Robert White, the former ambassador of the United States, who said about the regime that existed after the junta was established in 1979:

They have killed a minimum of 5,000 or 6,000 kids just on mere suspicion.

That is the kind of government which exists in El Salvador today.

I want to stress, Mr. Speaker, as directly and as humanly as I can, that it is time that we in Canada, those in Central America who have a sense of decency, those in western Europe and elsewhere in the Third World, said: enough is enough; this human slaughter must stop. Wherever mankind is needlessly suffering, we have an obligation to help. In particular, violent death must concern us all. If it does not, then those people who have said—and there are quite a number—that the twentieth century has made man into a totally insensitive and brutalized creature will turn out to be correct.

● (1540)

Before turning to what we in the country can and should do, I want to deal with some myths about this conflict which were partly created in Canada, certainly perpetuated in Canada, and partly elsewhere, certainly in the United States. The first myth is that the civil war was the product of a sinister sequence of events and personnel which can be traced from its terminal point in El Salvador back to Havana and ultimately to Moscow. Regrettably this idea or belief is wedged in the minds of certain policymakers. It is certainly in the minds of key policymakers in the United States of America. Nothing could reflect a deeper misunderstanding of the history of any country than the belief that a revolution, based on the profound rejection of an unjust order of the kind being experienced in El Salvador, can be exported from one country to another. There is no country in the history of mankind which has been able to export a revolution. Either the conditions for such a revolution exist or they do not.

The kind of argument one hears in the United States is false. I regret to hear it, even from intelligent human beings. It is exactly analogous to saying that the French revolution occurred in 1789 because a number of Frenchmen happened to have heard from a number of democrats who were very successful in the American revolution of 1776. Of course it is true that the war of independence had an effect upon European thought; it would be silly to deny it. But it would also be silly to suggest that the profound change through which France was going was caused by a few ideas that drifted across the Atlantic Ocean. So, too, in Central America the cause of revolution is not the exportation of Marxist ideas; the cause of revolution is the unjust life millions of people have to live.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Broadbent:** The second myth is one in which I am afraid the present Government of Canada believes. It corresponds to certain views of the Secretary of State for External

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Affairs (Mr. MacGuigan) and of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). It is that the present government of President Duarte is "a centre government" which somehow resides between the two extremes—the radical right, on the one hand, and the radical left, on the other.

I spent two weeks in that region. I talked with both sides in the conflict in El Salvador but, more important, I talked with people in other countries who were much more familiar with the area and the history of El Salvador than I could ever be because they grew up in that region and paid very close political attention. These political figures go all the way from Fidel Castro on the extreme left to the President of Costa Rica, who is a democrat but quite a conservative individual; ideologically he is on the right. They include the President of Mexico and, in short, a broad spectrum of political ideologies.

What is their view? Do they agree with the Government of Canada that what is in existence in El Salvador is a centralist government which is somehow keeping the forces of the right and the forces of the left at bay? The consensus I obtained from my trip is not that at all. In fact the consensus of mature people of judgment is exactly what I alluded to a minute ago—the government of El Salvador is a government of the extreme right. The people who control El Salvador today, as we debate this important topic, are not the handful of civilians, including President Duarte. The people in control are the army and Colonel Garcia. It is a right-wing, repressive regime; it is not a moderate, centralist government.

The government has lent some credibility to the third myth. I hope the Secretary of State for External Affairs is doing some homework, at least to apprise himself of some relevant facts in this regard. The argument is that the government of President Duarte is committed to democratic elections, next year at one level and two years from now at another level, and that we in Canada and those elsewhere in the world should encourage this alleged democratic process. I ask all hon. members of Parliament whether it is sensible to talk about a democracy in a land where approximately two weeks ago 25 people in one day alone were tortured and mutilated overnight? Every day the body count in the capital is roughly the same. One day it is 27, another day it is 29, but it goes on day after day. It is terrorist killing. It is not the killing between the combatants on both sides, between the guerrillas, on the one hand, and the army on the other. These are innocent victims. Can we talk meaningfully about an election under those circumstances?

I pose the following question to the democratically-elected politicians of the House: Who would become a candidate now in El Salvador? Would a Progressive Christian Democrat or a Social Democrat? Would anyone other than a member of the very extreme right dare to become a candidate? Surely the answer is no. I know it is from conversations I have had, because they fear for their lives and the lives of their families.

Even if they had the courage to become a candidate, would it make sense for any of them to expect that the army would respect the election results? In the late 1960s there were elections in El Salvador. They were turned over by the army.