

Meanwhile, other literature describes US support of El Salvador in a more positive light, where its motive for involvement was rooted in the establishment of a constitutional democracy in five major interrelated areas. (Fishel, 1998:48) This perspective emphasizes that the primary security interests and ideals of the US were best served by helping the Salvadoran to create a functioning constitutional democracy and to create a more just and prosperous society. Specifically, the US supported efforts to: 1) create political institutions and attitudes essential for lasting and constitutional democracy; 2) reduce human rights abuse and improve the justice system; 3) foster economic growth and development, create jobs, and redistribute wealth more fairly; 4) seek peace through dialogue, negotiation while successfully conducting the war; and 5) help establish peace and democracy in all of Central America. (Fishel, 1998:49) However, United States' action and inaction towards the blatant human rights abuse occurring throughout the war indicates something different.

US military support began in 1980 when it loaned \$20 million to the El Salvadoran government. (Gettleman, 1986:57) Its original goal was to defeat FMLN rebel forces, and eliminate the insurgency, something they never managed to accomplish. (Downie, 1998:130) US military assistance came in various forms, including the provision of modern high-tech weapons and equipment; training in US military bases around the world to improve their defensive and offensive strategies; extensive loans and military sales credits for weapons and artillery purchases; and expert of US military advise.

However, in the United States' quest for democracy and assistance in counterinsurgencies, it helped keep in power El Salvador's abusive and oppressive government. In efforts to legitimize US support in El Salvador and overcome Congressional objections, an election was deemed as the public relations 'solution.' But, given the political state of the country, any potential candidate even moderately left would have faced a high risk of assassination in running. Thus, in 1984 the CIA pumped \$1 million into the presidential campaign of José Napoleón Duarte, the leader of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), and the only 'suitable' candidate for US interests. During his five years in power, 30,000 - 50,000 people were murdered. (Fish, 1988:16)

This was the same man that was tortured and exiled himself in 1972, which later returned President of the fourth civilian-military junta in December 1980. (Gettleman, 1988: 57) From December 1980 to May 1982, it was the period of greatest violence in the recent history of the country. It was a time when over 1,000 civilians a month were slaughtered by the government and para-government forces: an era in which the death-squads truly ruled the country. (Fish, 1988:18)

After both elections, the PDC became wholly dependent on Washington, both to pay its bills and to keep its opposition at bay. (Fish, 1988:16) In 1981 President Duarte requested that the US assist the Salvadoran High Command to develop a comprehensive national strategy. General Fred F. Woerner and his seven-person team were given two months to study the military