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## El Salvador: Protestants Join Catholics In Denouncing U.S. Policy

London (RNS) — Roman Catholic and Methodist leaders in Britain have strongly endorsed U.S. Catholic Church demands for an end to American military aid to the Salvadoran junta.

In a statement, the Commission for International Justice and Peace of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales called on the Reagan administration to "terminate all military aid to El Salvador," and urged "new efforts to facilitate a negotiated political solution to the conflict" in the Central American country.

In a separate move, the British Methodist Church board for social responsibility cabled an appeal to President Reagan to end U.S. backing for the Salvadoran government.

The board said U.S. support was "causing escalation of violent oppression of the

Bishop Robert J. Spears of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester announced last week that he and 76 active and retired Episcopal bishops have petitioned President Reagan to end U.S. intervention in El Salvador's affairs.

Bishop Spears circulated the petition which said the signers want the president to end all military assistance to El Salvador and to adopt a more humane refugee policy toward those fleeing the civil war there.

people, which leads in turn to the people's violent response."

The U.S. Catholic Conference, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, as well as spokesmen for the American Catholic bishops, have demanded an end to all foreign intervention in El Salvador and sharply criticized U.S. military aid to the Salvadoran government.

The English and Welsh Catholic commission, backing the American Catholic Church stand, said "the civil war in El Salvador is essentially an indigenous problem and the outcome of

50 years of social and economic injustice, repression and electoral fraud."

Alluding to the Reagan administration charges that there is a Soviet-directed communist plot to take over El Salvador, the British church body said it "deplores any attempt to escalate the Salvadoran tragedy into a super-power conflict and to use the Salvadoran people as pawns in East-West power politics."

The commission went on to declare its "firm support" for "the initiatives of the governments of West Germany and Sweden in calling for peace negotiations which would involve the junta in El Salvador, representatives of the Salvadoran opposition front, and the United States government.

It called on the British government, "in conjunction with our European partners, to offer every possible facility to promote such negotiations."



Photo by Terrance J. Brennan

## Deacon Heyman To Be Ordained

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will ordain Deacon George P. Heyman a priest at 7:30 p.m. Friday, April 24, at St. Ambrose Church where the ordinand has for the past nine months served as deacon intern.

Father Heyman will be feted at a reception in the school gymnasium following his ordination. He will celebrate Mass at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, April 26, at St.

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## Chrism Mass

Bishop Matthew H. Clark, center, adds oil to prepare the Holy Chrism during the annual blessing ceremonies last Tuesday night at Sacred Heart Cathedral. Assisting the bishop, from left, Fathers Charles Latus and William Flynn.

# U.S. Bishops Lead Aid Opposition

By Laurence Mullin  
Religious News Service Staff Writer

A growing movement of opposition to U.S. military aid to the El Salvador junta has begun to emerge in America.

From New York to San Francisco, student and civil rights groups and some churches have begun to unite in a common front of resistance to the Reagan administration's policy on Central America's smallest nation.



Chief among the voices of protest is that of the American Catholic church, which has consistently based its stance on that of the church in El Salvador, as given prophetic expression in a letter written Feb. 17, 1980 by the subsequently murdered Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero of San Salvador.

Addressing President Carter, the outspoken champion of human rights who was to be assassinated five weeks later as he was celebrating Mass, he pleaded for a guarantee that "your government will not intervene directly or indirectly with military, economic, diplomatic, or other pressure to determine the fate of the Salvadoran people."

Declaring that "political power is in the hands of unscrupulous military personnel who know how to repress the people and favor the interests of the Salvadoran oligarchy," the Catholic Church leader said it would be "unjust and deplorable if by the intervention of foreign powers the Salvadoran people should be frustrated, repressed and hindered from deciding autonomously the economic and political course our country should follow."

This position — even in the light of charges by the Reagan administration that there is a Soviet-directed Communist plot to take over El Salvador — has been reaffirmed by Bishop Arturo Rivera Damas, the present apostolic administrator of San Salvador.

In a sermon on Feb. 8, 1981, the bishop called on the United States to refrain from pursuing a "military" solution to the crisis in his country.

"We Salvadorans know what our problem is," the prelate said. "We know the causes and we are capable of finding the solution. Our problem is social and of a structural nature."

The Catholic bishops of the United States take their perspective on the conflict in El Salvador from the viewpoint of the church there, a spokesman for the U.S. Catholic bishops told a congressional hearing on Feb. 25.

Said the Rev. J. Bryan Hehir, the top foreign policy expert

of the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC): "The church of El Salvador has taught us to see the situation there through the eyes of the people it serves . . .

"We have been led by the Salvadoran church, and by American missionaries working there, to see the struggle of the last three years as a quest for social justice by the majority of the population who have too long been denied the fruit of their labor; to see the conflict as one rooted in historical patterns of inequity, in the concentration of political, economic and social power in the hands of very few, while the majority lived in conditions marked by poverty and violence."

Noting that the USCC, the agency which represents the Catholic bishops on issues of public policy, had consistently opposed U.S. military aid to El Salvador, Father Hehir said the American Catholic hierarchy was equally opposed to any outside intervention in the country.

Making the Reagan administration claim of Soviet/Cuban involvement on the side of the Salvadoran guerrillas at face value, the USCC spokesman said such involvement was "inadmissible" on political, legal and moral grounds.

"The problem with present U.S. policy," he said, "is not

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