



AP/Wide World Photos

Two FMLN rebels train to crawl through the jungle silently in the jungles of Cábanas, about 40 miles north of San Salvador, El Salvador, May 10.

New Hampshire approves resolution to test RU-486

MANCHESTER, N.H. (CNS) — The New Hampshire State Senate has approved a resolution offering the state as the nation's first clinical testing site for the controversial French abortion drug RU-486.

The 13-9 Senate vote to approve the measure came May 16, a week after Bishop Leo E. O'Neil of Manchester had called RU-486 a "destructive drug" that had not been adequately tested.

Bishop O'Neil had said passage of the resolution would result in the killing of "innocent, defenseless life" and not be in keeping with New Hampshire's reputation for guarding "the natural beauty and resources of this state."

The bishop made the comments in a May 9 letter to the state's senators and the speaker of the House of Representatives.

A resolution urging that New Hampshire be a testing ground for the drug was passed March 20 by the state's House of Representatives by a 211-130 vote.

Because the measure is a non-binding resolution and not a bill, New Hampshire Gov. Judd Gregg, a Republican, who has vetoed abortion bills in the past, will not have a chance to veto this measure.

Commenting on passage of the resolution, Nancy Myers, spokeswoman for the

Washington-based National Right to Life Committee, said that the New Hampshire Legislature was "trying to score points with pro-abortion groups at the expense of the lives and health of both women and unborn children."

Pat Murphy, a spokeswoman for the National Organization for Women's New Hampshire chapter, said the vote's message was that "the citizens of New Hampshire will not let women's lives and health be held hostage by the actions of a vocal minority."

A New Hampshire spokesman for Planned Parenthood said the vote was in keeping with New Hampshire's conservative reputation. The state's residents, he said, don't believe in having the government interfere in what he said were personal, private decisions.

Noting that the American Medical Association has cautioned against use of RU-486 without testing by the FDA, Bishop O'Neil said that "no one can predict the complications that may arise" from its use nor the long-range effects on women or on the health of children born to women who use it.

"I am worried about the signals you now send to our citizens," said Bishop O'Neil. "A destructive drug, without adequate tested history, will be welcomed to our state and our citizens will be the subject of its experiment," he said.

The pill, which induces miscarriage during the first seven weeks of pregnancy, is made by the French company Roussel Uclaf and has been used by more than 65,000 women in France since it was legalized there in 1988.

France recently banned the drug's use by heavy smokers and women over 35, after one user died. FDA officials have said they are not convinced it is safe.

Leaders express hope in Salvadoran dispute

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Hope perseveres in El Salvador that the current round of government-rebel talks will lead to a real peace — or at least a cease-fire in the 11-year-old civil war.

As the talks got underway, Salvadorans, including church officials, were expressing cautious optimism, based on progress on constitutional reforms emerging thus far in the negotiations.

Following a mid-May disagreement over the control of territory, however, both observers and participants said a cease-fire is unlikely soon. Without one, they said, agreed-on reforms would be held up.

In another piece of the political backdrop against which the negotiations are being played out, El Salvador's Supreme Court of Justice ordered a lower court to proceed with the trial of nine soldiers accused in the November, 1989, slaying of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter.

The decision came as jury selection in the trial in El Salvador's Fourth Penal Court was set to begin, paving the way for the first civilian trial of military personnel on criminal charges in the country's history.

The murders occurred during a major rebel offensive. It is alleged that the defendants, and possibly others, targeted the priests as rebel sympathizers. The women allegedly were killed because they were witnesses.

While the landmark trial gets underway, peace negotiators will search for a way around the argument over which side controls what piece of the country.

"Territory is a major issue and the rebels can't concede on it and neither can the government," said an analyst familiar with the talks. But "these talks will not progress without some kind of recognition that the FMLN (the rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) does actually control territory."

However, the Salvador military rejects any notion of conceding part of the country to the insurgents.

The FMLN wants to be able to exert political control over large parts it holds — primarily in the north and central regions, while slowly disarming after a peace pact is reached.

The last round of talks, held in late April in Mexico, produced a number of proposed changes that raised the hopes of many Salvadorans.

Those included proposed constitutional amendments aimed at reforming the electoral and justice systems and making the military responsible to civilian power.

Among the specific reforms were allowing leftists on the panel that regulates elections; establishing independence of the judiciary; and creating the office of public

defender for human rights.

In addition, for the first time, leftist politicians were sworn in May 1 to serve as lawmakers in the National Assembly.

The next round of United Nations-mediated talks was to focus on completion of a partial accord on purging the armed forces of human rights abusers.

Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas of San Salvador said in a May 5 homily, "The country has been profoundly transformed and we are living through moments of great hope."

But rebels have been blowing up power lines, forcing citizens to ration electricity.

Rebel radio said the FMLN would continue the sabotage until there is a cease-fire, U.S. military aid is stopped and economic reforms are implemented.

President Alfredo Cristiani has said the specific points on the military reform should be negotiated after a cease-fire.

The military and questions of its rights record figures in the Jesuit trial. Four army officers, including Col. Guillermo Benavides, a prominent member of the officer corps, and five enlisted personnel are charged in the Nov. 16, 1989, slayings on the campus of El Salvador's Jesuit-run Central American University.

Benavides and seven of the other suspects are being held without bail on charges of murder, while one of the enlisted men was at large.

Part of the evidence against them comes from Lt. Jose Ricardo Espinoza, one of the accused. Espinoza allegedly told government investigators that Benavides told the other suspects during a meeting at El Salvador's Military School shortly before the murders that they were in a situation "in which it is us or them; we're going to start with the leaders and inside our sector we have the university and that's where Ellacurria is."

The last reference is to Father Ignacio Ellacurria, the Spanish-born Jesuit priest who was rector of the university and one of the murder victims.

Ireland

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down and talk to anybody at any time without preconditions," Wilson said categorically that his party will "never sit down with Sinn Fein."

He added, however, that if Sinn Fein "laid down their arms and took on an honest, upright role with real political aspirations, then they could be part of talks."

The current round of troubles in the province began in 1969 when the British army was ordered into the streets of Londonderry — called Derry by those who want unity with Ireland — that Aug. 14 to stop what the British saw as an impending civil war.

The origins of Irish-British conflict date to the 12th century, when England was still Catholic. It was Henry II — encouraged by Popes Adrian IV and Alexander III, who saw in him an instrument for spreading church reform among the sometimes reluctant Irish — who planted English rule throughout Ireland in the late 1100s.

War, rebellion and famines marked Irish history for centuries. In the 1600s, Protestant Scots were brought over to work the British plantations and sink England's hold on the colony of Ireland deeper.

It wasn't until 1922 that the current partitioning of the island was accomplished. Northern Ireland, consisting of six northern counties, remained solidly with Britain.

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