



## Oral History Interview of Stephen LaRose (OH-002)

Moakley Archive and Institute

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### Oral History Interview of Stephen M. LaRose

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**Interviewed by:** Beth Anne Bower, Moakley Archivist, and Zenelky Ortiz, Moakley Archive Intern (Suffolk University Class of 2003)

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#### Interview Summary

Stephen LaRose, a member of Moakley's congressional staff from 1993 to 2001, discusses his work experience as a legislative correspondent, legislative assistant, and senior legislative assistant working on foreign affairs. His interview covers Congressman Moakley's work to help improve conditions in El Salvador following years of civil war; trips with Congressman Moakley to El Salvador, Cuba, Kosovo, and the Vatican; and Congressman Moakley's human rights legacy. In the final segment of the interview Mr. LaRose identifies photographs of Congressman Moakley's trips to El Salvador in the late 1990s.

#### Subject Headings

Cuba

El Salvador

LaRose, Stephen M.

Moakley, John Joseph, 1927-2001

Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA)

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This interview took place on April 7, 2003, at the Moakley Archive and Institute at Suffolk University, 120 Tremont Street, Boston, MA.

**Interview Transcript**

**ZENELKY ORTIZ:** Can you state your name?

**STEPHEN LAROSE:** Sure. Stephen LaRose.

**ORTIZ:** How did you first meet Congressman Moakley?

**LAROSE:** I was an intern in his office, a volunteer intern, and we were taken over to his Rules Committee<sup>1</sup> office when we first started working there, to meet him. He was great. He sort of welcomed us with a pat on the back, "Welcome to the office, welcome to Washington." I remember him asking a little bit about where I was from back at home, because I was from his district in Boston, the Boston area.

**ORTIZ:** When did you start working with Congressman Moakley?

**LAROSE:** That summer I was a volunteer intern in 1992, and then I became full-time staff in 1993.

**ORTIZ:** What were your responsibilities?

**LAROSE:** Well, they varied over time. When I first started working there, I did a lot of administrative work: picking up the phone, answering mail, things like that; and it kind of progressed through the years. At the end of my time there, I think my title was senior legislative assistant, and I was handling a variety of legislative issues for him, writing speeches on those issues, advising him on what's happening on those issues, and just working with him on a variety

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<sup>1</sup> The House Rules Committee is responsible for the scheduling of bills for discussion in the House of Representatives. According to the Rules Committee website, "bills are scheduled by means of special rules from the Rules Committee that bestow upon legislation priority status for consideration in the House and establish procedures for their debate and amendment." (See <http://www.rules.house.gov/>)

of issues, from foreign affairs, to energy issues, to Defense Department issues, banking issues. It was a wide gamut of things.

**ORTIZ:** Did you work with Congressman Moakley on any other human rights or immigration issues not relating to El Salvador?

**LAROSE:** Yes. Mr. Moakley did a lot of work in Cuba working on trying to change the American policy down there. He felt that, unfortunately, even though there was a brutal dictator down there, our policy was not working in changing that dictatorship. And by having an embargo against them, we were just really making things worse for the Cuban people. He was very concerned. He made a couple of trips to Cuba and saw the poverty down there, and the fact that the people were starving. He really wanted to change the U.S. policy and try and come up with a policy where we try to work with the Cubans, instead of being so opposed to them.

You know, Mr. Moakley was known for his work in human rights. So there would be many cases that would come up that people would contact him, and he always did whatever he could to be helpful. I remember there was a case where there was a gentleman from his district, from West Roxbury, that was caught in Mexico, allegedly with drugs. But there was a lot of talk from some human rights groups that it was basically a sham-type thing where they were just trying to get money out of him; "We caught an American; we'll get a little bit of money here." He didn't have any money, so they kept him, and over time it just sort of perpetuated itself, and the poor man was in jail for years.

So his family contacted Mr. Moakley, and Joe Moakley was just relentless with the U.S. State Department to try to get this gentleman out of jail, to the point where, literally, I think they went to bat for him and got him out of jail just because they didn't want Joe Moakley calling anymore. But he really had strong grounds to do so, because we had some tests that they apparently said, We have drugs; here's what the drugs were, and all of this. You could tell the tests were doctored. We had some eyewitness accounts that said this guy didn't have any drugs. Once Joe Moakley heard that, and he heard that somebody from his district was in jail in Mexico, he just really wouldn't stop until he got him out. It was amazing to work with him on that.

Really, on some of the major issues going on around the world, if there were some human rights concerns, he would always lend his hand, lend his name, lend his voice, because he really believed in trying to help out those without a voice.

**ORTIZ:** Can you tell us who was on the Moakley Commission?<sup>2</sup> I actually have this sheet.

**LAROSE:** Yes. It was a group of members of Congress that were selected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. I can read them down if that's helpful. [See Attachment A]

**BETH BOWER:** I don't think you need to read them. I think one question we had was whether it was bipartisan?

**LAROSE:** Yes, it was.

**BOWER:** Is everybody there, I think is one of the questions. Does that look like the full list?

**LAROSE:** Yes. There's Dreier,<sup>3</sup> who's the Republican chairman of the Rules Committee now, Bob Dornan,<sup>4</sup> several Democrats. Yes, this looks like the list. And it was bipartisan, and they worked together on a bipartisan basis. That was one of the things that Joe Moakley was very good at. He could work with Republicans and Democrats. He had friends on both sides.

**BOWER:** Were there particular congressmen on that list who were particularly passionate on this issue, or that he worked closely with?

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<sup>2</sup> In December of 1989, Speaker of the House Thomas S. Foley appointed Moakley as chairman of a committee to investigate violence in El Salvador, specifically the November 16, 1989, murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter at the University of Central America in San Salvador. The committee is commonly referred to as the Speaker's Task Force on El Salvador or the Moakley Commission.

<sup>3</sup> David Dreier (1952- ), a Republican, has represented California's Twenty-sixth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1981. He was chairman of the House Rules Committee from 1999 to 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Dornan (1933- ), a Republican, represented California's Twenty-seventh Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1977 to 1983, the Thirty-eighth District from 1985 to 1993, and the Forty-sixth District from 1993 to 1997.

**LAROSE:** George Miller<sup>5</sup> was extremely passionate about it, very strong in human rights. Dave Bonior<sup>6</sup> was one of the great—still is—he’s not in Congress right now, but one of the great leaders on human rights around the world in many areas. Congressman Studds<sup>7</sup> from Massachusetts here did a lot of work on that issue and was very helpful. One of the things—I don’t want to give the impression that—they worked together very well. This whole group really got passionate and got serious about this, and that’s why I think they were effective. I put some of those names out there that I just mentioned that I know were especially interested in the issue and really worked very hard on it.

**BOWER:** Thank you.

**ORTIZ:** Besides Jim McGovern,<sup>8</sup> who were Congressman Moakley’s key aides in El Salvador from the 1980s to 2001?

**LAROSE:** Jim handled most of the things in the eighties, and until he ran for Congress in ‘94. And then I started working on it, and I was the person in the office that did that. Sean Ryan<sup>9</sup> also—Sean moved up from the Washington office to the Boston office around that time, I believe it was—I want to say the winter of ‘95. And Sean knew a lot about those issues, and was sort of the Boston office liaison person on some of those things, and is very knowledgeable on those issues, too.

**ORTIZ:** When was the first time you traveled to El Salvador?

**LAROSE:** I believe it was 19—I want to say 1995. No, it was 1994, because it was right around election time in El Salvador, which is particularly spectacular to see because it was just—

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<sup>5</sup> George Miller (1945- ), a Democrat, has represented California’s Seventh Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1945.

<sup>6</sup> David Bonior (1945- ), a Democrat, represented Michigan’s Twelfth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1997 to 1993 and the Tenth District from 1993 to 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Gerry Studds (1937-2006), a Democrat, represented Massachusetts’ Tenth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1973 to 1997.

<sup>8</sup> James P. McGovern (1959- ), a Democrat, has represented Massachusetts’ Third Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1997. He was a member of Moakley’s congressional staff from 1982 to 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Sean Ryan was a member of Moakley’s congressional staff from 1993 to 2001.

the peace accords<sup>10</sup> hadn't been signed that long. This was one of the first major elections that they had. And they were free elections to an extent, and people were very excited about it. There was a lot of campaigning going on, and people holding signs, and it was really an interesting time to be there.

**BOWER:** What was the reason that Congressman Moakley decided to go at that time? Was he invited because of the elections?

**LAROSE:** No. It was more to kind of monitor what was happening in El Salvador since it had been such a short time since the peace accords had occurred. I think it was really kind of a coincidence that it was election time. He didn't have any involvement directly in the elections at all. I should say also, that time that I went, I went with a human rights group, and Mr. Moakley didn't go that time with me. I should say, I didn't go with him (laughter)—that I went separately as a representative from his office with this human rights group down there. He did go, I think, earlier that year, but I wasn't on that trip. I think Jim McGovern went on that trip.

**ORTIZ:** Do you remember the name of the human rights group?

**LAROSE:** Yes. It was Washington Office on Latin America.

**ORTIZ:** How many trips in total did you accompany Congressman Moakley to El Salvador?

**LAROSE:** Three.

**ORTIZ:** Were you chosen, or did you choose to travel to El Salvador?

**LAROSE:** Well, I was the person in the office at that point responsible for human rights and foreign affairs, so it just fell into my area of work. And I was very lucky that happened to be the

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<sup>10</sup> In January of 1992, the Salvadoran government and the left-wing Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) political party signed peace accords, putting an end to the country's twelve-year civil war.

case because it was a tremendous honor to travel with him at all, especially to El Salvador, given the work that he's done there.

**ORTIZ:** Did Congressman Moakley go on five trips to El Salvador? Are you certain on the chronology of the years, or just maybe a ballpark? I have some dates.

**LAROSE:** That's a ballpark. I would say five is about right. He went down, obviously, right after the murders. And I believe he went down again a short time after that when he made some major announcements calling out that the higher command was involved,<sup>11</sup> and things like that, which was tremendously courageous given the fact of the violence down there. And then I think he went three times again, sort of in the mid to late nineties to kind of go down and check on things, and to see if he could continue to be helpful and to continue to do some good work down there. It might have been six, as I'm sort of thinking about it. It could have been six.

**ORTIZ:** Okay—do you know after the Jesuit murders were solved, do you know the purpose of what these trips were? Did he go specifically for—I know for '99 he went for the tenth anniversary. But before that, did he just go to help out, like you said before?

**LAROSE:** Yes. He forged a bond with the people of El Salvador. I mean, it was this amazing thing, it was like a love affair of some sort. I mean, they embraced him. He had done so much for them to create peace in their country that he was like a god down there. He felt the same way about them, I think. He felt the warmth coming back, and he wanted to continue to help. Just because the war ended, there was still tremendous problems in the country; great poverty, human rights abuses were still rampant. The war was over, but violence in that country was still the way of life. I mean, that's how people knew how to get things done, was through violence.

So he went down and he would talk about human rights, and he would talk about how we need to rebuild the institutions here, and we need to build a judiciary that works, and we need to build a police force that works. So every time we went down we kind of had a little agenda of things

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<sup>11</sup> The Moakley Commission investigation revealed that the Salvadoran military was responsible for the murders of the six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter.

that he wanted to check on, things that—he asked them, “What can I do from the United States to help down here?” He was always working on creating a better place down there for the people of El Salvador. That was the purpose of those trips.

He also had a great friendship with the Jesuit priests. They obviously felt very strongly about him and all that he did to stand up for them and for their fallen brothers. Every time that he went down, they would hold a nice dinner in their home for him, and it was this great dinner where they would sit around and they would sing songs together. And they loved to listen to him sing. He would sing Irish songs to them. Most of them spoke English quite well, although Spanish was their native language, but most of them spoke English as well. So they would sing together, and they would sing Spanish songs. But most of the priests weren't actually from El Salvador. Several of them were from Spain—I'm trying to think of what other countries they were from—but anyway, Spanish-speaking countries, but not from El Salvador.

So they would sing maybe songs from their homeland. I mean, it was just this surreal scene of them sitting around the tables singing and just enjoying each other's company. And then they would talk about serious issues, about the problems in the country and where things were going, and those issues.

**ORTIZ:** What groups or individuals did Congressman Moakley work with on the Jesuit murders either religiously or worldly?

**LAROSE:** One of the groups that he worked alongside was the Association of—I don't remember the acronym. But basically, it was the association of college presidents for the Jesuit universities,<sup>12</sup> and they were very strong, and they worked very hard lobbying the U.S. government about El Salvador, opposing continued military funding going down there, and things like that. So we worked very closely with them. We worked very closely with the Washington Office on Latin America. We worked very closely with the Latin America Working Group, which was another non-profit NGO [Non-Governmental Organization] like the Washington Office on Latin America. And they had some wonderful—or still do have some

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<sup>12</sup> Mr. LaRose is referring to the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.

wonderful people that work on these issues night and day and really are great resources. So they were helpful to him in understanding what's happening and what the problems were.

**ORTIZ:** Did Congressman Moakley ever try to prosecute the military men that physically shot the priests?

**LAROSE:** No. I don't think he felt that was his role. I think he wanted to create an atmosphere where the Salvadorans would do that. We don't really even have any prosecutorial power to do that, and he certainly understood that. He didn't see that as his role at all.

**BOWER:** What was the outcome?

**LAROSE:** They ended up—Jim McGovern will know better the exact details—but they ended up only—they got a colonel and a couple of lieutenants, but they never indicted or prosecuted any of the high command—who most people believe were involved.

**ORTIZ:** Just two, just two. What was Congressman Moakley's involvement with the University of Central America [UCA] after the Jesuit murders?

**LAROSE:** Well, like I said, the priests, the Jesuits, that was their home at the University of Central America. So they would always do that nice dinner together. And he came and spoke many times there. He might have given a formal speech there every time he went down. I know the times that I went with him, he did. He gave formal speeches talking about the changes in the country and areas that still needed some work. It was a big deal when he came and spoke there, and there would be large crowds that would come to the university to listen. They also had a chair endowed in his name. There was a fundraiser in Boston that raised a great deal of money for that, and it's the John Joseph Moakley Chair. And it's a scholarship for a Salvadoran student to go to the UCA. So he kept tabs on that. A couple of times that he went down he actually presented the scholarship to the student that was winning the scholarship for the next year.

So there was an ongoing relationship at all times with the UCA. And I would talk to the priests every once and a while when something would come up. They would contact us and explain what was happening, and ask, Can Mr. Moakley help out? And, of course, he always said, “Absolutely.”

**ORTIZ:** Could you discuss the efforts made by Congressman Moakley and Jim McGovern to reduce the United States funding for the School of the Americas?

**LAROSE:** The connection there is that the priests’ murderers were graduates of the School of the Americas. Another interesting connection, the priest that started the SOA Watch [School of the Americas Watch] in the United States told us that he started the SOA Watch after he read Congressman Moakley’s report on the Jesuit murders. That’s what got, he says, got him going on, I’ve got to shut down this school. He ended up putting his office across the street from the SOA, down in Fort Benning [in Georgia], and the list goes on of all the great work he’s done.

**BOWER:** What’s his name?

**LAROSE:** I am blanking on it—Roy Bourgeois, Father Roy Bourgeois. He would be an excellent person to talk to, by the way. He’s wonderful. So, after Mr. Moakley found out that the murderers were graduates of the School of the Americas, he just couldn’t believe that, first of all, this murder was so horrible, and then to find out that we trained the people in the military tactics that were used. It just shocked him and angered him. And he started working with others in Congress to try and close down the—well, they wanted to close the school, but the first tactic was to try and reduce funding. Actually, Congressman Joe Kennedy,<sup>13</sup> from Boston, introduced the first bill to do this, to shut down the school. And then when Mr. Kennedy actually left Congress, Joe Moakley took up the reigns of being the lead sponsor of that.

After Joe Moakley got involved, it really took off. For the first time—I think the bill had been introduced maybe for four or five years. Mr. Moakley, the first time he was involved or he was

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<sup>13</sup> Joseph P. Kennedy, II (1952- ), a Democrat, represented Massachusetts’ Eighth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1987 to 1999.

the lead sponsor, an amendment passed on the floor of the House of Representatives to cut off all funding for the school. Unfortunately, it didn't end up getting put in the Senate bill, and some little games and tricks went on, as can happen behind the scenes in Congress, and the amendment wasn't finally included, so the funding stayed. But then Mr. Moakley came back the next year and did it again and really started to have a dialogue with the Pentagon about this, and got them to really consider it seriously about the problem of the school. And they made a lot of changes to the school, to the curriculum, changed the name of the school, changed who had authority for the school, and it really became a different place.

Mr. Moakley actually wanted the place completely closed, and not to exist at all, but I think that at the end of the day, while he didn't get that, he certainly, you know, got a lot. It's a lot better than it was before he started working on it. I think another one of the great things that he did was to stop that type of training they were doing down at Fort Benning.

(pause)

**ORTIZ:** Did Mr. Moakley or the Special Task Force ever feel threatened while in El Salvador? And do you know if anything out of the ordinary occurred during the investigation of the Jesuit murders?

**LAROSE:** Yes. I think when they initially were down there I think they felt quite threatened. I think there were a lot of people that probably wanted them killed because they went right at them and said, We know you did it. And that was a serious threat to these military people's careers, and to their power in the country. But Joe Moakley didn't back down. I think he believed so strongly in what he was doing and to how wrong this horrible crime was that he didn't let that stop him. But I think it was a very scary time from what I know, and talking to him and to Jim McGovern about it. I know when they were down there the first time, there were still bombs going off over the mountains and things like that, so certainly that had to get your mind thinking about what could happen.

I know sometimes as they would be going up into the mountains to talk to different people they would be stopped at gunpoint and things like that. So I think there were very serious, serious threats at that time. A couple of times when he was going down in the future there were a few—I don't want to call them threats, but I guess that's the right word—they were checked out by the State Department, and things like that, and ended up—I don't want to characterize them, or I don't even know if I could because I don't have enough info. But they didn't turn out to be threats that he decided not to go, but there were threats in later years when he was going down, against his life.

He told it like it is, like he did with everything else. That was one of the great things, I think, why it worked so well in El Salvador, because Joe Moakley kind of handled it like he handled issues here in Boston. He told people, here's what I know; here's what I think; and he let the chips lay on the table, and a lot of people's careers went down the tube down there because of it.

**ORTIZ:** What about when you went down to El Salvador, did anything—

**LAROSE:** I was there when I know there were some threats made against him, and we investigated them, and talked to the State Department, talked to the FBI about them. But nothing ever happened that I saw that was any type of an attack or anything obviously.

**BOWER:** Actually, I'm remembering from looking at your photographs, did he have security with him during that trip?

**LAROSE:** There was one time that he did because of a threat, yes, a person from the State Department, like the Secret Service, basically. They have a diplomatic security. But it worked out fine. There was no attempt or anything made. I think it was more of an idle threat by somebody who's angry. And the security person stayed kind of clear and let Mr. Moakley do the work he needed to do, and it worked out fine.

**ORTIZ:** What do you think was the effect that Mr. Moakley had on the course of history in El Salvador?

**LAROSE:** Well, I think that—that's a tough question.

**BOWER:** Do you want to break it down a little bit? It seems like—from the little bit I know about El Salvador, which isn't a lot—there had been a lot of unrest. He had been involved with the issue because of the immigration issue in his district. And then when the murders occurred and the Speaker put him in charge, he went down there and he had direct influence. I guess, one of the things I wonder is, do you think that the peace accords would have been reached did what happened with the Commission and what he did, influence the peace accord, the free elections, and maybe you could talk a little bit about where El Salvador is now or in the years you were in the end. So that's sort of the context of the question.

**LAROSE:** I don't think there's any doubt that the peace accord would not have happened when they did unless Mr. Moakley did what he did with the commission, because the Salvadoran government would not have taken seriously the rebel groups. Well, they took them seriously in terms of fighting, but they would not have stopped and gone to the bargaining table if Mr. Moakley had not done what he did. I think they would have continued on with the war.

One of the reasons the Salvadoran government had to go to the bargaining table is the U.S. government finally said, You're not going to get your funding anymore. We're not going to back this anymore. And the only reason the U.S. government did that was because of Joe Moakley, basically, and Congress cutting their funding off, and the pressure that he continued to put on them. So, it's sort of like a domino effect. His commission came out with the report. He passed the amendment to cut off funding for military aid, and the Salvadoran government had to go to the bargaining table and work out a peace accord. So it probably would have happened someday, but who knows when and who knows how many people's lives would have been lost in the years in between that.

And then in terms of the future, I think his continued involvement helped to keep human rights in the forefront, helped to let the Salvadoran people know that there were people in the United States that cared about them, helped within Congress. He worked to get funding for judiciary

programs and police programs and things like that in El Salvador. Even little things; he one time met with the chief of police down in El Salvador, and he invited them up to Boston to meet with Commissioner [Paul] Evans here in Boston and teach him about community policing in Boston. The Salvadoran police officer brought up several of his lieutenants in the Salvadoran police force, and they met with Boston police and learned about community policing. You know, so just little things like that that he did, really helped with creating a sustaining peace, I think, in El Salvador.

And today, El Salvador is not perfect, but neither is this country. El Salvador is doing a lot better in terms of human rights. And, again, not perfect, but certainly the country has made great strides in terms of poverty issues and things like that. The country got hit pretty hard with a hurricane a few years ago, and unfortunately, that set them back. They really were doing so well, and then that really set the country back economically. And Joe Moakley helped to get them out of that terrible downturn. So now they're getting back on their feet again and doing better, and the country is moving forward.

**BOWER:** Can I ask a follow-up question about, you mentioned—there are a couple of things. One is, you mentioned cutting off the aid for the School of the Americas before—I'm sorry, not the School of the Americas, for the—

**LAROSE:** The military in El Salvador.

**BOWER:** Did that happen when he was still Rules chair?<sup>14</sup> Did that play in it at all?

**LAROSE:** Yes.

**BOWER:** And was that a difficult thing to do?

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<sup>14</sup> Congressman Moakley was a member of the House Rules Committee from 1975 to 2001 and served as its chairman from 1989 to 1995.

**LAROSE:** It was extremely difficult. It had been tried several times before. They never were even close. One of the reasons that that amendment passed in the House is because of Joe Moakley's ability to call on people to say, "I need your vote on this. This is important, and here's why." He also kind of forged an alliance with Congressman Murtha<sup>15</sup> who was a very powerful member of the House—still is—and a very powerful Democrat who was, at that point, chairman of the Defense Appropriations Committee. So, not generally a person who was working on human rights in El Salvador. Mr. Murtha was more of a military aligned person, but he and Mr. Moakley were friendly and worked together on other issues, and had a lot of respect for each other. And Mr. Moakley convinced Mr. Murtha of the importance of this amendment and what was happening in El Salvador. And Mr. Murtha also did a great job in getting votes for that amendment. So I think the two of them working together, that was just a great team, and that's how the amendment passed.

**BOWER:** When you started working with him and doing the legislative issues in this area, can you tell us a little bit about what exactly you did? Did you draft legislation? Did you do background research? What kind of things would you do on a particular, either appropriation-- let's see, you gave an example of getting funding for El Salvador after the free elections.

**LAROSE:** Right-right. It would start out with talking to people about a problem, you know, we have this problem in this area. And then it turned into talking with Mr. Moakley about, well, how do we fix this problem. We would come up with whatever strategy it was. If it was maybe an appropriations issue, Mr. Moakley would do a letter to other members of Congress saying, Join with me in this letter to the Appropriations Committee about getting some funding for this problem. Or, for instance, on the School of the Americas, there were several different bills going around, but I would draft something, and Mr. Moakley would approve it or make some changes and things like that. We would then take that, actually to—this is a kind of boring procedure, but there was a legislative council in the House of Representatives that kind of put our more common English language into legislative language that was appropriate for a bill. And then the

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<sup>15</sup> John "Jack" Murtha, Jr. (1932- ), a Democrat, has represented Pennsylvania's Twelfth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1974. He served as chair of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee from 1991 to 1995, then became chair again in 2007.

effort in terms of my role would be to try and promote that legislation through education of other offices. We would hold meetings where we would discuss it, or we would hold briefings where I would bring in maybe an expert on something, or just letters to members of Congress—they're called "Dear Colleagues"—and draft those for Mr. Moakley. And he would sign off on them and send a letter around to every member of Congress explaining his legislation. So that's kind of how it worked. I don't know if that helps but yeah that's how it worked.

**BOWER:** That was very helpful.

**ORTIZ:** In your perspective, how do you think the people of El Salvador felt about Moakley? I know you said something earlier.

**LAROSE:** Yes, it was amazing. He didn't speak any Spanish, but they just seemed to understand each other. I think it was just a respect thing, that he felt that the Salvadoran people were wonderful people. He always commented on how kind they were, how many Salvadorans were quite poor, but they didn't complain to him about being poor or anything. They were always looking just to get to have a better life, and to work harder to get that next step. And he was just tremendously impressed with the Salvadoran people. I think from their end, I got a feeling from being around him when they were there that they were just amazed that this person wanted to help them, because they just didn't have other people like that going to bat for them. And I think a lot of them were amazed, you know, Why is he doing this? He's so wonderful.

One time we went to visit a village up in the mountains that he had been to during the war, right after the Jesuits were killed. And we come in and he had just been sick. It was right after he kind of had recovered from his liver transplant. So this was sort of the new Joe Moakley's back type thing. So we go up into the mountains several hours away from the capitol, and they had this wonderful festival for him. And there were signs in Spanish Welcome Mr. Moakley, and they put on a play welcoming him, and hundreds and hundreds of people coming in off the fields from working, and just coming to this sort of dusty field, and playing music. It was just this amazing scene. And people coming up to him.

He was sitting. It was a large crowd, and people sitting in rows of chairs watching the nice festival that was going on, or the play or the music, and just people coming over and shaking his hand, or giving him a hug. So he says to me, "I have to do something here. What do I do?" I said, "You should go up and say a few words." He said, "I'm going to sing a song." I said, "All right." But, of course, he didn't speak any Spanish. So I said, "What are you going to sing?" He said, "You'll see." So he goes up there and he takes the microphone, and he was like a singer in a stage act. And he sang, "When You're Irish, Come Into the Parlor." And I've got my hand over my face and I'm thinking, "Oh, boy, what is going to happen here?" And he starts singing. He's wailing away. The people absolutely loved it. I mean, they were cheering. They were clapping. They were kind of singing along, picking up the phrases, "When you're Irish, come into the parlor." I mean, it was just surreal. We were out in this field, and there he is singing. But that's sort of how he created a bond with them because I think he just sort of acted like their friend and they got along wonderfully. It was an amazing scene, just amazing scene.

**BOWER:** Would he see some of the same people on subsequent trips, besides the Jesuits?

**LAROSE:** Oh, yes. For instance, this group—I can't remember the town. If I looked at maybe one of our itineraries from one of those trips, I might remember. But they were people that he remembered that he had met even years back. They were people that a couple of the leaders of the town when he was in the capitol in San Salvador, they would come down to visit, even if he wasn't coming up. So there were some old friends and things like that. And there were other people, human rights workers, that he had met back during the time of the Jesuit murders, that he would always have a meeting with when he went to El Salvador to find out what's going on, how things had progressed. So, yeah, there were definitely some familiar people.

**ORTIZ:** Would he go to the UCA every visit that he went there?

**LAROSE:** Oh, yes. That would basically be sort of the heart of the visit, would be to go see the priests, to speak at the University, and then he would schedule many other things around it. But that would be the main reason. And often he went on the anniversary of the killing of the priests. He went to that tenth year anniversary. But every year they have some type of a remembrance.

The tenth was a huge, massive remembrance, with just, I don't know how many thousands of people that came to the evening Mass that they had. But every year the university does some type of remembrance, and that was often when he would go down, in November.

**BOWER:** I just had a quick question when you were talking about remembrances. I think we noticed in some of the photographs that he also—I don't know the geography, but there seemed to be—I don't know whether a shrine is the right word, for the Archbishop Romero?<sup>16</sup>

**LAROSE:** Yes.

**BOWER:** Is that something you visited, as well?

**LAROSE:** Yes. By the way, there are shrines to Archbishop Romero everywhere in the country. He is just a real—very, very present throughout that whole country just because people love him. But at the church where Archbishop Romero was murdered, he was murdered while saying Mass, so at the small little church there are a group of nuns that maintain that church. It's a convent. And Archbishop Romero lived there with them in his own home, across from the convent, because Archbishop Romero didn't want the huge, fancy, Archbishop's home. So he had this very humble room, basically. And while he was saying Mass, he was brutally murdered there. So Mr. Moakley would go and visit that location. And there is a beautiful bust of Archbishop Romero's head right by the little room that he lived in. And then Mr. Moakley would go across to the church to pay his respects.

**BOWER:** Where is it? Is it in San Salvador?

**LAROSE:** It's in San Salvador, yes. It's kind of in a residential area.

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<sup>16</sup> Óscar Romero (1917-1980) served as a Roman Catholic priest and bishop of San Salvador before being appointed archbishop of San Salvador in 1977. Archbishop Romero is known for speaking out against human rights violations in El Salvador and supporting the country's poor and victims of its civil war. He was assassinated in 1980 while celebrating Mass in San Salvador.

**ORTIZ:** Did Mr. Moakley develop a relationship with the priests that succeeded—well, not succeeded, but took the place of the murdered Jesuits afterwards?

**LAROSE:** There were a couple of priests that were in residence at the time of the murders that just didn't happen to be there that night. Father Jon Sobrino,<sup>17</sup> I think traveled back home to—no, he was on a speaking engagement somewhere. He's a tremendous speaker, a real theologian and tremendously intelligent man. And he does speaking tours all over the world about different issues, basically, human rights and things like that. And he was on a speaking tour. I know he always feels he would talk about how badly he feels that he wasn't with his brothers that night, Why was he so lucky to be away?

And then Jose Maria Tojeira,<sup>18</sup> who's the rector down there now, he wasn't there. And again, I'm not sure where he was, but he was probably also on a speaking engagement or something along those lines. So, they are still there. So, Mr. Moakley always would see them, and had a wonderful relationship with the two of them. And then there's several new priests that have come in and out over time that he would always become friendly with. And there was an American priest there for a short time too, as well. I'm not sure if there is one there now, but there was one there.

(pause)

**BOWER:** It's not El Salvador, but when you mentioned the other human rights work, I noticed on his passport that he went to Kosovo. Is that—

**LAROSE:** Yes.

**BOWER:** That connection?

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<sup>17</sup> Jon Sobrino, S.J. (1938- ) is a Jesuit Catholic priest and theologian.

<sup>18</sup> Jose Maria Tojeira, S.J. (1947- ) is a Jesuit Catholic priest and has been rector of the University of Central America since 1997.

**LAROSE:** What that was, actually, he was invited by Speaker Hastert<sup>19</sup> to go to Rome to present the Congressional Gold Medal to the Pope. And we had this incredible, small group meeting with the Pope. Again, just an amazing event. And the Speaker and Joe Moakley presented [the medal to the Pope]. Joe Moakley went as the top Democrat, and the Speaker was, obviously, the top Republican. And they presented this Congressional Gold Medal, which is the highest honor the U.S. Congress can bestow on anyone, to the Pope for all of the Pope's work in human rights around the world.

And part of that trip they decided, since they were there, they went to actually see U.S. troops in Kosovo, because it was around the time of the war in Yugoslavia. So they went to a military base, Camp Bondsteel, and visited with our troops, and toured the base, and talked about the war and what was happening, and things like that. And, again, just a very interesting trip.

**BOWER:** Why did the Speaker ask Congressman Joe Moakley to do that?

**LAROSE:** Well, I think part of it was that Mr. Moakley was a Roman Catholic. That was, I think, number one. The other thing is—I think the Speaker, kind of similar to Joe Moakley, had a similar style; I think they were friendly and had a lot of respect for each other, so those two things together.

END OF PART 1

**LAROSE:** By the way, on that trip, I don't know if they knew each other real, real well, but they really forged a great friendship on that trip. It was very interesting to see the two of them interacting, and they really got along very well.

**BOWER:** So you went on that trip?

**LAROSE:** Yes.

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<sup>19</sup> J. Dennis Hastert (1942- ), a Republican, represented Illinois' Fourteenth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1987 to 2007. He served as Speaker of the House from 1999 to 2007.

**BOWER:** What year was that?

**LAROSE:** That was 1999. No, I'm sorry, that was 2001. That was just before Mr. Moakley passed away. It was only four months before he passed away.

**BOWER:** Did he have his diagnosis?

**LAROSE:** Prior to his diagnosis.

**BOWER:** So he wasn't feeling well, but he hadn't—

**LAROSE:** He actually had some—felt tired on the trip, but didn't think much of it other than that. But, obviously, that was the beginning signs.

**ORTIZ:** When did you stop working with Congressman Moakley?

**LAROSE:** Well, he passed away Memorial Day in May, and then we kept the office open to maintain the archives, to prepare the records to be archived here, and to close up business. A lot of people had some things we were working on for them. So, we closed up the business on that and closed the office up properly. I left, I believe, in July of 2001.

**ORTIZ:** Could you tell us a little bit about your professional career after working with Mr. Moakley?

**LAROSE:** I'm now working as an attorney for a law firm, Nixon Peabody, in the litigation department, doing business litigation. It's not related to human rights work or foreign affairs. But I think working with Mr. Moakley helped me with this career because his style, and his way of working with people, and handling tough situations, and being respectful of people, and things like that. I think it was great to work with someone like that and learn from him. So I think it

will help me in that sense. Not necessarily the issues are the same, but the way to deal with things is always similar in life, I think.

**BOWER:** Steve, you said that you started as an intern. Were you in college?

**LAROSE:** I was in college. I was a senior at Villanova down in Philly. He was my congressman, and I thought I liked his politics. I thought he was an interesting person, and gave it shot. I went down to Washington and tried to get an internship, and they had an opening. I was lucky, very lucky to just get a slot, really. And then I kind of did the same thing after college was over. I just really enjoyed the experience, and working for him was just tremendous. So, I tried to go down there, and they didn't have any openings. So, I was kind of doing some things and interning some places and waiting tables. Finally, a slot opened up and I was, again, lucky to get into the slot.

**BOWER:** You mentioned a group of university presidents [the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities]?

**LAROSE:** Yes.

**BOWER:** And that's a Jesuit group?

**LAROSE:** Yes. It's the college presidents from the Jesuit universities.

**BOWER:** One of the pictures that we have, I believe, is the president of St. Joe's.

**LAROSE:** Charlie Currie,<sup>20</sup> is that right?

**BOWER:** I was thinking Rashford.<sup>21</sup> Is there a Rashford?

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<sup>20</sup> Charles L. Currie, SJ, was rector of Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia from 1991-1997.

<sup>21</sup> Nicholas S. Rashford, SJ, was president of Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia from 1986 to 2003.

**LAROSE:** Yes, that's right. He was after.

**BOWER:** And is that the connection, because when I found the picture I was like, "Okay, he's a Jesuit," so I know that's part of it, but what is the connection here? Would it have been around that organization?

**LAROSE:** Probably around the organization. Was there a year on the picture?

**BOWER:** I don't think so, no.

**LAROSE:** Because one of the things it could have been, that dinner that raised a great deal of money. Mr. Moakley raised a great deal of money for the chair at the University of Central America. A lot of Jesuit priests were there. So it could have been something like that, as well.

**BOWER:** This is a—this is not at the dinner, although Evelyn<sup>22</sup> was in the picture. So she was alive.

**LAROSE:** Oh, so then it was back that far?

**BOWER:** Yes. Although, she was alive when the dinner took place.

**LAROSE:** Yes. That was '93. It also could have been maybe that the group of university presidents, they would have an event every year in Washington, and I think they would come and talk to members of Congress. So it could have been something around that. But, yes, I think that was the connection, either through that association or through simply the Jesuit issue of working in El Salvador.

**BOWER:** Were you also the staff person for the Cuba work?

**LAROSE:** Correct, yes.

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<sup>22</sup> Evelyn (Duffy) Moakley (1927-1996) was Congressman Moakley's wife. They married in 1957.

**BOWER:** You mentioned at the beginning of the interview that he was sort of out front on that issue?

**LAROSE:** Yes, way ahead of everybody else.

**BOWER:** I actually found a position paper from 1969 where he stated that.

**LAROSE:** Interesting.

**BOWER:** Isn't that interesting?

**LAROSE:** I wouldn't know that it was that far back.

**BOWER:** I was wondering if you had any insight into where his commitment in that area came from. And maybe—did you go to Cuba with him at all, and maybe talk about that a little bit?

**LAROSE:** I did go to Cuba with him twice. I have no idea how back in '69 he was interested in that. I couldn't tell you. All I know is the way that a lot of times this would happen, people from his district would come and talk to him about something, and it would just generate and get his mind going. So maybe that's how it started. So I don't know. But he was very committed on that. He was way ahead of it. I'm talking in the mid-nineties he was way ahead of it. So if you're saying '69, that's amazing.

Because people thought, and a lot of people in his district thought, he was hanging out with the communists. But he didn't see it that way at all. He looked at it from a completely different angle and just felt that for forty years we had this embargo. And maybe that was a good policy back in the sixties to try and get rid of Castro and to try to squeeze them. But it just didn't work. And after forty years, you have to do something else. The Cuban people just had a very tough life, and we weren't getting anywhere, and maybe we need to open up a dialogue. So he was trying to work on the U.S. government to get the U.S. government to open things up. And then

the U.S. government wasn't budging, and he just went ahead and kind of did it himself a little bit and started to create some relationships.

He met with [Fidel] Castro on a couple of occasions. Again, Joe Moakley didn't pull any punches. A lot of people thought, Why is Joe Moakley meeting with Castro? He's just coddling this dictator. But I was in the meetings, and he would say to Castro, "You got to stop locking people up, Mr. President. If we're going to get anywhere, you got to stop. You got to let people out of the jails if they're political," you know things like that. He just laid it out on the table. And that's how Joe Moakley was in Boston, and that's how he was going to be in Cuba.

One time I remember Castro kind of going on and on and on about things that weren't really what the meeting was about and just talking about the revolution and things like that. And Joe Moakley kind of just ended the meeting and just said, "Okay, all right, this has been great, thank you," and everybody was stunned. But he really believed that if we did open up a dialogue here, we could change things in Cuba for the Cuban people. And that was his number one agenda. And I think he really has moved the issue along.

I've been reading, I haven't been involved, but I've been reading that the Cuban-American—the foundation down in Miami [Cuban American National Foundation]—is starting to talk more about possibly having dialogues with the Cuban government instead of not talking, and things like that. So, I think people's minds are changing a little bit. And at the end of the day, all he wanted to do was to try and help out the people down there. That was his issue.

**BOWER:** Did you get the sense that there were constituents in his district who had, in the nineties, had concerns about this issue?

**LAROSE:** Oh, definitely. I mean, we would get letters from constituents saying, "Why are you dealing with Castro? And why are you interested in this?" Joe Moakley was very sensitive to that, actually, because he was very much a district member of Congress. His district came first. So he didn't want people to think that maybe he was letting his district go to run down to Cuba. So he, I think, tried very hard to make sure that people understood that this is one issue that I'm

working on, but the number one issue is the Ninth District and jobs and healthcare, and issues like that, education. But he also wasn't one-dimensional and, while the district was number one, he wanted to dabble in these things. And he had a reputation that he could do good in foreign affairs.

I think he tried to be very sensitive. He tried to explain to people why he was doing it, because there were some concerns from people in the district. And I think, rightly so. I mean, they certainly made some good points, as well.

**BOWER:** Did you go on his first trip to Cuba?

**LAROSE:** No, Jim McGovern went on it.

**BOWER:** Did you have any problems traveling to Cuba? Were there any problems around going?

**LAROSE:** Well, the first time I was helping them with the trip, but I didn't end up going. And we didn't get the visa from the U.S. government until they were in Miami waiting to get on the plane to Cuba, because the U.S. government didn't want Joe Moakley to go. And he just—again, just forging ahead—and he finally got it at the very last minute, basically because they realized he's there. If he went all the way to Miami, and he's got the plane waiting, he may just go and just not get the visa. And then we'd have a big uproar, and the U.S. government probably said, We probably don't want to do that here. Again, I'm guessing as to why, but they finally did let him go and gave him the visa.

**BOWER:** And this was the Clinton administration?<sup>23</sup>

**LAROSE:** Correct. And then other times when I actually went with him, it was always a little bit of a tug and pull to get authorization to go, but it never got to the point of that first time that he went.

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<sup>23</sup> William J. Clinton (1946- ), a Democrat, was president of the United States from 1993 to 2001.

**BOWER:** Do you have more questions?

**ORTIZ:** I actually wanted to look at the pictures from 1997. [See attachment B; photos are referenced using numbers one through fifty]

**LAROSE:** Sure.

(pause)

**ORTIZ:** There's three batches. So these are just events. Maybe you can discuss the events taking place.

**LAROSE:** This is that scene (#1) that I was talking about up in the mountains in El Salvador where he was singing, "When You're Irish, Come Into the Parlor." That's him up there singing. And Jim McGovern is actually next to him. You can see Jim McGovern is laughing because he probably also was amazed that he was singing Irish tunes to the crowd of Salvadorans. You can see all the children here, which I remember Mr. Moakley commenting on and how many children were there. I remember saying how beautiful the children were.

Same scene here (#2). I think this is Mr. Moakley now more addressing the crowd and speaking about how happy he was to be back in their town. That's Gladys Rodriguez-Parker<sup>24</sup> who was translating for the crowd into Spanish.

This is one of the town leaders (#3). This is a gentleman, like I had mentioned that Mr. Moakley had met before, and he's just thanking Mr. Moakley for this commitment to them, and for continuing to stay with them over the years.

This is the United States ambassador (#4) at the time, Anne Patterson, and she was tremendously supportive of, first of all, the things that Mr. Moakley wanted to do in El Salvador. She was

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<sup>24</sup> Gladys Rodriguez-Parker is a member of Congressman Jim McGovern's district staff.

thrilled that he was coming down. I think that Mr. Moakley commented several times that some of the ambassadors before didn't really like to get out there with the people and didn't like to, kind of you know, maybe do things that were slightly dangerous, and things like that. And he always mentioned that Ambassador Patterson, whatever he wanted to do, wherever he wanted to go, she would go with him. And she did a lot of great work helping the people of El Salvador. She was ambassador, I want to say, for about three or four years in the nineties.

**BOWER:** Do you have any idea where she is now?

**LAROSE:** I think she's U.S. ambassador to Colombia.<sup>25</sup> Oh, actually, with the changeover-- I'm sorry-- they may have a new ambassador with the Bush Administration. So I don't know where she'd be after that.

**BOWER:** So she went to Colombia afterwards?

**LAROSE:** She went to Colombia after El Salvador, yes.

I couldn't remember the town before, but there it is, Santa Marta (#5), and this is one of those welcome signs, Bienvenidos a Santa Marta.

That just shows—I mean, they had these signs everywhere welcoming him and all. It was tremendous. The same type scene, with Gladys translating for Mr. Moakley (#6).

This is me with a bunch of children in front of the helicopter that took us up there into the mountains (#7 & #8).

**BOWER:** Oh, here I'd say you're bumping along on a bus.

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<sup>25</sup> Anne Patterson (1949- ) was ambassador to El Salvador 1997 to 2000, then ambassador to Colombia from 2000 to 2003. She served as Deputy Inspector General of the U.S. State Department from 2003 to 2004. She then worked with the United Nations and as Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs before being appointed ambassador to Pakistan in 2007.

**LAROSE:** Well, we did many times, actually. But this one was so far away, and the roads were not good. And that's interesting you mentioned that, because that became an issue because Mr. Moakley didn't want the people in this town to feel like they were being invaded. He was very sensitive about that. So that was kind of a negotiation. But the U.S. Embassy didn't feel at all comfortable that they could get us there in vans, so they insisted on the helicopter, and I think that Mr. Moakley relented just because he wanted to go.

**BOWER:** Was one of your trips after the hurricane?<sup>26</sup>

**LAROSE:** Yes. This was not that trip, but yes. In fact, one of the reasons that he went on that trip was because of the hurricane, to try and help and find out what we needed to do to help the country. And he went out in some bumpy vans, deep into the country, by the Rio Lempa, the river that overflowed and destroyed several towns, and was there working on what the U.S. government could do to help rebuild those towns.

I remember one great scene where they needed a church, and Father Charlie Currie was with us, who was, at that time, the head of the Jesuit universities association. And they were talking about they needed a church and all of this. And Joe Moakley, right on the spot, turns to Father Currie and said, "Charlie, can you help them out with that," and poor Father Currie, on the spot, looking at the people. He said, "Joe, I'll get working on that." They had a church in like a year. And in that same meeting, the people were telling Mr. Moakley they had no electricity. So Mr. Moakley got the U.S. government—the Embassy—to run electricity wires to that town. And within a couple of months, they had electricity. It was amazing, the stuff that he did.

This is a beautiful view of the countryside (#9). El Salvador is a beautiful country. A lot of it was destroyed by the war, but some of the parks are coming back, as you can see how beautiful it is.

This is a very interesting picture (#10). This U.S. pilot was from South Boston. I mean, talk about Joe Moakley being excited, a constituent of his. He just thought that was the greatest thing

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<sup>26</sup> Hurricane Mitch hit El Salvador in October of 1998.

in the world. And they actually talked, I remember, for quite a while about home, “Oh, where do you live.?” And Joe Moakley knew people in his family and all of this, and it was great. So he was one of the pilots that flew us up there that day.

**BOWER:** That’s an amazing coincidence.

**LAROSE:** Yes. I mean, it was tremendous. Some more scenes with the pilots (#11-12).

This here (#13) is a meeting with Hector Silva,<sup>27</sup> who is a very progressive politician in El Salvador. He was the mayor, at this time, of San Salvador, which is a very, very powerful position, because San Salvador is basically the major urban center in the whole country. So next to the president, I mean, he might have been the next most powerful person. He was educated in Massachusetts. So that was kind of a connection with Mr. Moakley. I think, I want to say, he went to Amherst, but don’t hold me to that one. But I know he went to school in Massachusetts.

So they had a very good relationship and worked together over the years on creating a better El Salvador. And Mr. Silva was an opposition candidate to the Salvadoran government, the ARENA party.<sup>28</sup> The political parties are funny down there—I shouldn’t say funny. Sometimes they combine parties. So he was part of the opposition, but I don’t recall exactly which party he belonged to. But he was not part of the main party, the ARENA party.

Again, that’s Mr. Moakley with the mayor (#14).

This is at the Mass that they held (#15). I believe this is the tenth anniversary. I couldn’t find a date, but I believe this is the tenth anniversary of the murder of the Jesuits. And this is Jim McGovern with one of the Jesuit priests making a presentation.

More scenes from Santa Marta (#16 & #17).

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<sup>27</sup> Hector Silva is a member of the *Centro Democrático Unido*, or United Democratic Center, political party. He ran for president of El Salvador in 2004 and received 3.9 percent of the country’s votes.

<sup>28</sup> The ARENA party (*Alianza Republicana Nacionalista* or Nationalist Republican Alliance) is a conservative political party that was founded in 1981 in El Salvador in opposition to the revolutionary junta. It has controlled the Salvadoran presidency since 1989.

This is a meeting with some of the community leaders near the Rio Lempa (#18), where their town was destroyed by the hurricane. And this gentleman is telling Mr. Moakley some of the problems they're having and some of the needs they have.

Joe Moakley loved kids (#19). So everywhere that he would go, he would just love to talk to the kids and say hello to the kids. And this, I believe, is at the U.S. Embassy I want to say, at a meeting he held there. I think these two children were the children of one of the women that worked at the Embassy.

This is at the Jesuit Mass, and it poured that year. And this is the ambassador of the United States holding the umbrella for Joe Moakley (#20). So everybody was working for him. (laughter) But this picture does have some significance because this is the first time that a U.S. ambassador went to the Mass for the Jesuit priests. So that was another—Ambassador Patterson—that was another reason that she really impressed Mr. Moakley, was that she was the first U.S. ambassador that went to the Mass for the priests.

This is, again, in Santa Marta (#21). But this is significant; you can see the Salvadoran military officers with the machine guns. So you can still see the way the country existed at that point. This is, I think, '97, I want to say. So you still had military officers with machine guns in the town, and things like that.

This is Ambassador Patterson listening, probably, to Congressman Moakley singing (#22). This woman [next to her] here is a human rights activist in El Salvador. I don't recall her name, but a real great leader on human rights work.

More scenes of all the children in Santa Marta (#23).

Here's Congressman McGovern speaking with the children (#24).

This was another meeting they held that trip in another town (#25). And this was a town that really, I recall, was hit very hard by the war. It lost a lot of people. A lot of people worked for the opposition for the FMLN from this town. And a lot of the rebels came from there. So I remember they were very touched that they came to visit their town.

Santa Marta, again (#26). Santa Marta (#27).

More U.S. pilots with Gladys (#28).

This gentleman, his name escapes me, but he was the director of AID, the United States Agency for International Development in El Salvador (#29). He was the director for El Salvador. Ken Ellis.

Ambassador Patterson talking to the crowd in Santa Marta (#30).

**BOWER:** Steve, can I ask you, because we're talking about the ambassador and her going—I got the impression from a little bit of—Congressman Moakley did an oral history interview before he passed away. I believe there were several different ambassadors that he dealt with during the time of the commission. Was Walker<sup>29</sup> one of them?

**LAROSE:** Walker was the main person. He was the ambassador when the priests were killed.

**BOWER:** And that was under a Republican administration, correct?

**LAROSE:** Correct. That was George Bush, the first.

**BOWER:** Do you know what kind of relationship he had with Walker?

**LAROSE:** I think it was a pretty good relationship. I know that they weren't thrilled with the way that the ambassador had been handling things in El Salvador at the time. And I think they were concerned about them, not covering things up, but just not making appropriate decisions

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<sup>29</sup> William G. Walker (1935- ) was ambassador to El Salvador from 1988 to 1992.

with some of the information that was coming out about threats and the Jesuits, and things like that. But I think after the ambassador—and Jim McGovern would have a better sense of this—but after Ambassador Walker realized what was going on, became forthcoming and was helpful to Congressman Moakley.

**BOWER:** Did the ambassador change when Clinton came into power?

**LAROSE:** Yes, and I can't recall who was the ambassador after Mr. Walker.<sup>30</sup> And then Ambassador Patterson came in, I want to say, about '96.

**BOWER:** I think I noticed from some research that we did, that Walker ended up being head of a commission in Kosovo?

**LAROSE:** Correct, that's correct.

**BOWER:** Did you run into him when you were in Kosovo?

**LAROSE:** No.

**BOWER:** I was just curious.

**LAROSE:** Wouldn't that have been something. He was the envoy from the U.S. government. When we were in Kosovo, we just went to the military base to see the troops.

This is one of the plays that the children put on in Santa Marta for Congressman Moakley (#31). It was a play about living in Santa Marta, what their life was like.

Same thing going on here (#32).

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<sup>30</sup> Alan H. Flanigan was ambassador to El Salvador from 1993 to 1996.

**BOWER:** We have an embroidered piece of cloth that has scenes on it. There's a river. Do you remember these?

**LAROSE:** Yes. The helicopters.

**BOWER:** And the people shooting each other?

**LAROSE:** Yes. That was a gift that was given to him. It was on that trip. It was one of those two towns.

**ORTIZ:** It's the River something.

**LAROSE:** I think it's the River Lempa, I think.

**BOWER:** What is it?

**ORTIZ:** The Rio Lempa.

**LAROSE:** You saw the significance there, the U.S. helicopters shooting down on people and killing people. I mean, that was the perception that many Salvadorans had because the U.S. government was funding the war against the Salvadoran people really. It was giving aid to the military down there.

**BOWER:** When you say the U.S. helicopters, those were U.S. made helicopters being flown by Salvadorans?

**LAROSE:** I don't think so. I think that was more—I don't know the answer to that. I don't think we gave them, actually, any helicopters that were actually shooting people. I think it was more military aid that were used to—

**BOWER:** So the result of giving money was the helicopters doing that?

**LAROSE:** Exactly. I mean, that's my understanding. Jim McGovern may know better.

**BOWER:** It's just when I unwrapped that tapestry, you know what it reminded me of? It reminded me of ones from Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees that I've seen.

**LAROSE:** I don't think they were actually U.S. helicopters, but the Salvadoran people were certainly smart enough to put two and two together and realize, well, they wouldn't be able to have any of this military hardware without the U.S. money. So it was the same thing to them.

**BOWER:** Actually, a question that I hadn't thought to ask you earlier. But once the military aid was cut off, I know that Congressman Moakley worked hard to get other kinds of aid. But did the aid to El Salvador ever reach the levels—

**LAROSE:** Oh, God, not even close. Not even in the same ballpark.

**BOWER:** Really? That's very interesting.

**LAROSE:** He got some nice projects, and some good funding, but not even close, unfortunately. And he would bring that up. He made the connection you just made, that we gave all this money for military aid to tear the country down. Let's give them the same amount right back in aid for judiciary, aid for healthcare, aid for clean water. But it didn't happen.

The media would be very interested when Mr. Moakley would go to El Salvador. And they would always have the crew kind of traveling around in different stations and things like that. Actually, this woman (#33) here is a U.S. citizen that was working in the area near Santa Marta to try and help the people build a-- she had a particular project. I think she was building a healthcare center with them, or helping to teach them how to run a healthcare center. Kelly, her name was.

I think what's happening here is Kelly is actually helping translate for Mr. Moakley from this journalist here.

Ambassador Patterson, again (#34).

Jim McGovern, not looking too happy in the helicopter (#35).

This is a mayor of another town welcoming them to the town (#36).

This was actually—they made a stop along the way to go up to Santa Marta. This was another town (#37).

Same picture. This was in that same town, and they had a nice little lunch for the congressman in the town (#38).

Similar scene (#39 through #41). This is out walking and meeting people in the town.

Here the kids (#42) are playing some music for the congressman and the group.

Here is [the home of] Archbishop Romero (#43). And this nun, I remember Congressman Moakley commenting and saying, "Boy she's tough." Because every time he saw her, she would hit him up for money. (laughter) She was this small woman, but she would always, just right off the bat, just hit him up for a donation. Which Joe Moakley was so generous, he would always, whatever he had, he gave to people.

And this is a memorial to Elba and Celina Ramos (#44).<sup>31</sup> This is at the UCA, the University where they were killed with the priests.

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<sup>31</sup> Elba Ramos was the housekeeper for the six Jesuit priests who were murdered in 1989. Her daughter, Celina, was also killed.

This is a meeting (#45) with some legislators in the Salvadoran parliament. And I definitely won't recall the name, but this was the president, I believe, of the parliament at that point, and another legislator.

**ORTIZ:** Do you know where they were buried? And did Congressman Moakley visit them, as well?

**LAROSE:** Good question, actually, where they were buried. The priests are buried on the property in kind of like a tomb in the church. That's a very good question, where Elba and Celina were buried. My recollection was they're buried on the property, as well, kind of over near where their house was. They had a small home on the property. But I don't recall, exactly.

There's the beautiful rose garden, which is where the killing took place. And there's roses that will be there forever, marking kind of the place where the priests were killed. But that's a good question.

Here are some of the police (#46) that they met with. And this is part of that meeting where Joe Moakley decided to bring up some of the lieutenants. Actually, I don't think the head of the police came up, but some of the top lieutenants in the police came up to Boston. But this is in El Salvador at the police station. And they were talking about creating a professional police force, instead of a military-style police force—a police force that was there to work with the people, not a police force that was oppressive. Eventually, many of the police came up to Boston and learned some of our tactics here.

Another picture of the meeting with Hector Silva (#47), the mayor of San Salvador.

This meeting here is with President Calderon Sol (#48),<sup>32</sup> the president of the country, in the President's [House]—similar to our White House.

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<sup>32</sup> Armando Calderón Sol (1948- ), a member of El Salvador's ARENA party, served as the country's president from 1994 to 1999.

Again, the same meeting with President Calderon Sol (#49).

And this meeting is with the judiciary in El Salvador (#50), the head of the judiciary.

**BOWER:** Great.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

## OH-002 Attachments

**Attachment A:** “Members of the Speaker’s Task Force on El Salvador” in *Interim Report of the Speaker’s Task Force on El Salvador*, April 30, 1990. MS 100: Congressman John Joseph Moakley Papers.

**Attachment B:** List of photographs referenced in interview.

**Note: Attachments are available for in-archive use only. Please call 617-305-6277 to make an appointment.**

## **Attachment B:**

### **List of Photographs Identified in Interview**

The photographs listed below were taken by Stephen LaRose and Gladys Rodriguez-Parker on congressional trips to El Salvador with Congressman Moakley and Congressman McGovern. The majority of photographs are from the trip to El Salvador in November 14-18, 1997 that marked the 8<sup>h</sup> Anniversary of the Jesuit Priest murders at UCA. (All photographs are part of : MS 100 Congressman John Joseph Moakley Papers.)

1. Visit to the Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
2. Visit to the Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
3. Visit to the Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
4. Visit to the Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
5. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
6. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
7. Helicopter photograph, November 17, 1997
8. Helicopter photograph, November 17, 1997.
9. View from helicopter, November 17, 1997.
10. Congressman Moakley and helicopter pilot from South Boston, November 17, 1997.
11. Gladys Rodriguez-Parker and children, November 17, 1997.
12. Children with helicopter pilot, November 17, 1997.
13. Meeting with Hector Silva, Mayor of San Salvador, November 15, 1997.
14. Meeting with Hector Silva, Mayor of San Salvador, November 15, 1997
15. Anniversary Mass at UCA, November 15, 1997.
16. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
17. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
18. Visit to town on the Rio Lempa (post-hurricane), Nov 13, 1999.
19. Dinner in San Salvador, Nov. 16, 1997
20. Anniversary Mass at UCA, November 15, 1997.
21. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
22. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
23. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
24. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
25. Visit to Villa Victoria, November 17, 1997.
26. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
27. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
28. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
29. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
30. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
31. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
32. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
33. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
34. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
35. Congressman McGovern in helicopter, November 17, 1997.
36. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.

37. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
38. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
39. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
40. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
41. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
42. Visit to Santa Marta, November 17, 1997.
43. Visit to Archbishop Romero's residence and chapel, November 1997.
44. Visit to Elba and Celina Ramos's memorial, Nov. 1997.
45. Meeting with Salvadoran Legislative Assembly, Foreign Relations Committee, November 18, 1997.
46. Meeting with Salvadoran Police, November 15, 1997.
47. Meeting with Hector Silva, Mayor of San Salvador, November 15, 1997.
48. Meeting with President Armando Calderon Sol, Nov. 18, 1997.
49. Meeting with President Armando Calderon Sol, Nov. 18, 1997.
50. Meeting with Salvadoran Legislative Assembly, Foreign Relations Committee, November 18, 1997.