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THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL
PEACE AND SECURITY AND PEACE INITIATIVES

Letter dated 29 April 1984 from the representatives of Costa Rica,
El Salvador and Honduras to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit to you as an annex to this letter the text of the "Joint Declaration of the Foreign Ministers of Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras" of 25 April 1984.

This Declaration refers to the situation in Central America, the activities being carried out under the Contadora process and the joint meeting to be held on 30 April 1984 by the Foreign Ministers of Central America and the Contadora Group.

We should be grateful if you would have the text of this Declaration, the contents of which have been communicated to the Organization of American States, distributed as an official document of the General Assembly under item 25 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Fernando ZUMBADO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Costa Rica

(Signed) Roberto ANDINO
Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of El Salvador

(Signed) H. Roberto HERRERA C.
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Honduras

* A/39/50.

ANNEX

JOINT DECLARATION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF COSTA RICA,
EL SALVADOR AND HONDURAS

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras, meeting in San Salvador, El Salvador, for the purpose of jointly discussing the regional situation, the progress made by the Working Commission and the forthcoming joint meeting of Foreign Ministers of Central America and the Contadora Group, scheduled to begin on 30 April 1984,

CONSIDERING:

That it is desirable to promote, by diplomatic measures, a political and democratic solution to the Central American crisis and to make known the decision of their respective Governments to intensify their joint efforts by reaffirming their commitment to initiating negotiations with a view to the conclusion of a general treaty of peace, democracy, security and Central American co-operation designed to resolve all the differences among the countries of the region and simultaneously to creating a propitious climate and conditions for settling the internal disputes besetting some of the Central American countries; that, as a prerequisite for regional peace and concord, it is necessary to create conditions whereby each of the countries of the area can achieve social peace and political stability through a process of internal reconciliation conducive to the establishment of genuinely democratic régimes faithfully reflecting the aspirations of their peoples; that the Contadora initiative, in which our Governments are actively participating, together with the Governments of Guatemala and Nicaragua and the Governments of Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama, is an important forum for attaining the objectives of regional peace and concord, a forum which should pursue its efforts in a spirit of equanimity and neutrality,

DECLARE:

That, with a view to achieving the aforesaid ends, any agreement must incorporate the 21 objectives specified as part of the Contadora Group's peace-making process, including the commitments which will render it fully verifiable, mandatory and enforceable.

POLITICAL ASPECT

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras reiterate their conviction that regional peace will be possible only if progress is made in internal political reconciliation through a clear commitment to democracy and respect for human rights. For this purpose they renew their decision to contribute to the peace of the region and to the Contadora process, and undertake forthwith:

- (a) To support national reconciliation efforts by maintaining the unconditional offers made to the opposing political and armed groups in the countries suffering from grave internal disputes, in order to seek

suitable ways and means of guaranteeing their participation in the national electoral processes, including due guarantees for the personal safety of the candidates, and for the right of the parties, on a basis of equality, to participate, to have free access to the media of public communication, to be duly represented in the electoral bodies and to have a reliable national electoral roll;

- (b) To support the establishment of national reconciliation or peace commissions for initiating or reactivating dialogue with the opposition groups, armed or otherwise, with a view to the holding of democratic, free and honest elections on the basis of universal suffrage;
- (c) To invite the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights to visit their respective countries before and during the electoral periods, to report on the freedom of information, propaganda, assembly, demonstration, movement and transit and, in general, on the exercise of political rights;
- (d) To invite the Centre for Electoral Advisory Services and Promotion of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights to observe their elections, provide them with technical advisory services and prepare a public report thereon.

We call upon the Government of Nicaragua to demonstrate in similar fashion its commitment to representative, pluralist and participatory democracy by recognizing the rights of all opposition groups, armed or otherwise, to participate in a free and honest electoral process, guaranteeing the participation of all parties on a basis of equality; for this purpose we invite the Government of Nicaragua to commit itself publicly to:

- (a) Seeking national reconciliation through an appropriate body responsible for initiating an open and unconditional dialogue with all the opposition groups, armed or otherwise, in order to enable them to participate in a fully guaranteed democratic electoral process;
- (b) Creating conditions conducive to the full integration of the citizens in the political, economic and social life of the country, especially by revoking any discriminatory legal provision that prevents or restricts the political participation of citizens in the democratic process;
- (c) Reaffirming a generous spirit of tolerance by decreeing an amnesty, including pardon for political crimes, so that the exiles and refugees can be included in the electoral process, and by duly guaranteeing the inviolability and freedom of those covered by the amnesty;
- (d) Permitting full freedom of the press without prior censorship, and ensuring free access to the media of public communication for all individuals and parties participating in the electoral process;
- (e) Inviting international observers and the foreign press and, on the same basis as for the other States, the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights and the Centre for Electoral Advisory Services and Promotion;

- (f) Prohibiting, by means of appropriate legislation, as incompatible with the democratic system, the single-party régime and linkages between the State and a party or armed forces and a party or paramilitary forces and a party;
- (g) Establishing, in line with the principles adopted in the Contadora context, independent electoral bodies and a reliable electoral roll which will ensure the impartiality and democratic character of the process;
- (h) Permitting the political parties to participate in the electoral process on a basis of equality;
- (i) Guaranteeing the rights of assembly, demonstration, association, movement, transit, residence and free communication and other rights and freedoms inherent in any genuinely democratic society.

SECURITY ASPECT

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs, desiring to bring to an end the acute problems underlying the present critical situation, and determined to promote and ensure security through re-establishment of the military balance in the region and through verification and monitoring of the agreements that may be concluded, and in order to contribute to the necessary confidence-building among the parties in favour of negotiation, declare, on behalf of their respective Governments, their readiness to accept, at the same time as they request the Government of Nicaragua to accept publicly, the following mutual obligations:

- (a) To prohibit the entry into the region of new types or systems of weapons which are not in the possession of any of the Central American Governments;
- (b) To reduce the stockpiles of weapons, to previously agreed levels, such that no country of the region has an advantage over its neighbours or has an offensive capacity that may be used against them;
- (c) To reduce the number of foreign military and security advisers with a view to removing them from the Central American area and to establish a programme for such reductions;
- (d) To put a stop to the traffic in weapons, munitions and other supplies, from or through any country of the region, that are intended for individuals, groups or organizations engaged in subversive activities in other countries;
- (e) To stop exporting subversion, terrorism, sabotage or any other method of destabilizing neighbouring Governments, inter alia by dismantling installations for commanding, controlling, communicating with and supplying guerrillas who have, in any country of the region, bases for operations against any other country;

- (f) To prohibit the installation of foreign military bases in the territory of any Central American country;
- (g) To reduce the number of military personnel to previously agreed levels, to disband and prohibit the organization or the maintenance, whether direct or indirect, of irregular or paramilitary forces, irrespective of what they are called, whether outside or within the normal structure of the armed forces;
- (h) To ban the introduction of nuclear weapons, or devices for carrying nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, and, in general, any heavy armaments, or any other armament which would substantially alter the capabilities of existing weapons systems;
- (i) To establish reliable and practicable procedures for the verification and monitoring of the commitments entered into, which must necessarily include frequent and expeditious on-the-spot inspections by neutral teams having free and timely access to the territory of all the countries of the region;
- (j) To devise a system for the carrying out of the commitments, which shall also be subject to verification and monitoring.

As proof of the good faith of their Governments and their desire to create, through their participation in the Contadora process, a climate of trust among the Central American States so as to foster the achievement of the ends set out in the Document of Objectives of 9 September 1983 and the document of 7 January 1984 on measures to be taken immediately to fulfil the commitments entered into in the Document of Objectives, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras undertake and urge the Government of Nicaragua likewise to undertake:

- (a) To provide without delay an inventory of active and reserve combat units and of the main weapons systems to a special commission of the Inter-American Defense Board and to call upon the latter to dispatch an appropriate inspection team to verify the contents of the inventories;
- (b) To make public all military treaties and agreements with third countries;
- (c) To notify the Inter-American Defense Board of deliveries of weapons and munitions from outside sources and to allow the Board to ascertain the particulars of such deliveries;
- (d) To make public the number and position of all foreign military personnel in our countries and to allow the Inter-American Defense Board to verify this information. We call upon the Government of Nicaragua to give a similar demonstration of support for the negotiation process sponsored by the Contadora Group by divulging with equal frankness its foreign military relations, the size of its armed forces and weapons systems, and the presence in its territory of foreign military and security advisers who are providing support to its armed forces.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECT

Convinced that economic co-operation between all the countries of the region is an essential condition for overcoming the present adverse conditions facing their respective peoples and achieving greater economic and social development, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras are also agreed to declare their support for the efforts of the Contadora Group in the economic and social sphere, and propose to and invite the Government of Nicaragua to assume reciprocal commitments to promote regional co-operation, including the following:

- (a) To contribute to the capital of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration;
- (b) To recognize the Central American Monetary Council as an international body corporate;
- (c) To negotiate the necessary steps for restoring to normal functioning and improving the free trade zone and the customs union;
- (d) To take joint action to improve and expand access to international markets;
- (e) To take joint action to obtain additional external resources to revive their economies;
- (f) To undertake new sectoral co-operation projects at the regional or subregional levels, such as the hydropower production and distribution system and the system of regional food security, which help to forge stronger and more durable bonds of interdependence;
- (g) To take joint action vis-à-vis the European Economic Community with a view to the conclusion of a special co-operation agreement between the latter and the five Central American States;
- (h) To seek to ensure that assistance to the region from outside sources is provided to all countries on the basis of their commitment to political pluralism and economic freedom;
- (i) To guarantee the rights of trade union movements and private enterprise;
- (j) To create in their respective countries conditions conducive to the voluntary repatriation of refugees under international supervision, and in the meantime to support efforts aimed at providing greater material assistance to Central American refugees and to continue to offer them asylum on humanitarian grounds while the repatriation process is being carried out.

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs also declare that peace, democracy, security and co-operation between their countries and within their societies are matters of the highest priority and require their best efforts, and they call upon the

Government of Nicaragua to abandon its obstructive attitude to the work of the Working Commissions established under the Contadora Group.

In the meetings of the Working Commissions held in Panama today, Nicaragua has once again displayed this attitude by rejecting the regional objective of military balance and security in Central America and asserting that it will continue to arm itself and will not accept any measures that would impose limitations on it in that regard, maintaining that its problems are with the United States and not its neighbours and that, consequently, it must prepare to defend itself against a world Power. Moreover, Nicaragua has totally rejected the document on the principles and commitments to be accepted by the Central American States in the political sphere, and has thus thwarted one of the main political objectives embodied in the document of objectives adopted by the five countries on 9 September 1983, namely democratization.

This negative stance of Nicaragua's clearly bears out the observation made by the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group in their information bulletin of 8 April of this year, to the effect that in the Working Commissions "obstacles remained ... stemming in some cases from attitudes that were not always flexible and effectively geared to negotiation".

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs declare that they will pursue this effort so that the perseverance of their Governments in the cause of peace may lead to a meaningful regional agreement which meets the criteria of openness, comprehensiveness, effective action and verification embodied in the proposal which they are today making to the Government of Nicaragua. Any agreement which fails to meet such criteria will jeopardize the future of Central America and betray the lofty objectives embraced within the Contadora framework and the trust which their peoples and the international community have placed in the peace-making process which they are promoting.

They express the hope that the Government of Nicaragua will respond constructively to this appeal for understanding and concord as factors of regional détente, and at the same time express the intention of their respective Governments to submit in due course a draft general treaty of peace, democracy, security and co-operation, aimed at achieving those objectives, which has already been prepared and is now being updated by their respective foreign ministries with a view to its early negotiation and formalization.

Done at San Salvador, El Salvador, on 25 April 1984.

CARLOS JOSE GUTIERREZ
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica

FIDEL CHAVEZ MENA
Minister for Foreign Affairs of El Salvador

EDGARDO PAZ BARNICA
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras