

region increased, so too did public concern in Canada. In 1985 it resulted in the submission of more briefs on Central America to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations than on any other subject. It is noteworthy as well, however, that the Committee was unable to agree on what, if anything, Canada might do about the situation except to maintain assistance for refugees, of which Canada has accepted about 16,000 since 1980, continue official development assistance (except to Guatemala) and support the Contadora process.

Since 1986, when the Committee reported, Canada has increased its aid to the region (this now includes Guatemala), maintained its level of support for refugees, held detailed discussions with local governments on the conditions for successful peace-keeping without formally offering to participate, and reiterated its criticism of outside intervention in Central America. Mr. Clark's visit to the region in November was important as a symbolic demonstration of these interests, but it did not lead to the changes in policy that his critics advocate. These include the public condemnation of US aid to the contras, greater commitment to the peacekeeping provisions of the Arias Peace Plan, and the attaching of stricter conditions to Canadian development assistance, especially to Guatemala and El Salvador. Such views reflect a growing disenchantment with US policies, but they also recall a traditional dilemma for Canadian governments: how far should they go, and how publicly, in disassociating Canada from US action that endorses or implies the use of force against small states? The case of Vietnam comes to mind. Officials generally argue that quiet diplomacy works best. But in the nature of things, the evidence for this assumption is not available and it can only be expected to satisfy the critics if US policy in fact changes.