

In the light of the above, inspection and observer teams will have to be chosen with great care. As mentioned in the Ethell paper, their mandate, as well as that of the international forces as a whole, will have to be clear and well-defined. What they are there to achieve and what the limits are regarding the means they can use -- both must be known to all. Difficulties with ensuring impartiality must be addressed immediately. For example, officers of some, especially Latin American, forces deployed may have considerable sympathy with rightist governments, parties and forces in the region. This could complicate matters if not worked out as soon as possible.

However, far beyond these issues related to the complexity of the peacekeeping and verification job at hand is the underlying difficulty of the whole peace process, a complicating problem which may only appear to go away with the signing of a peace accord. This point refers to the unpalatable but stark fact that the "will to peace" among the region's governments and guerilla groups is neither unanimous nor strong. Major elements of all four conservative governments, especially those of El Salvador and Honduras, fear peace if it leads to a decline in United States concern for what happens in the region. All four depend to some extent, and most to a very great degree, on United States economic and military assistance. This dependence has brought the comment recently that these states are no longer "banana" republics but "aid" republics, dependent for their survival no longer on one export crop but on U.S. assistance.

If the U.S. stake in Central America declines through a peace accord, particularly one with which Washington is at variance, then the region's governments could find themselves in a desperate economic and social situation virtually immediately. For these governments peace, however tempting, is only worthwhile if U.S. involvement and interest in their countries' affairs can be guaranteed after it is achieved. In addition, some rebel groupings have settled down to a fairly comfortable level of fighting, and live in relative ease in their inaccessible regions. They have accepted the need for a "protracted struggle" and are not necessarily happy with the idea of a politically costly compromise with the government in the interests of peace. While circumstances may force these governments and guerillas to sign an accord, this background where a will to peace is not necessarily strong could complicate the long-term, and even short-term, achievement of an enduring peaceful settlement.