

Social change and economic progress in Central America cannot be achieved in an atmosphere of military confrontation. Canada, therefore, has fully endorsed the regional peace initiative sponsored by the Contadora Group since its very beginning, and continues to do so. This attempt made by Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela to find regional solutions to regional problems deserves the support of all concerned and is in full conformity with the UN Charter. We think that at an appropriate stage the Contadora process should be supplemented by direct dialogue between the parties concerned.

In spite of the progress achieved recently by the Contadora Group and the five Central American countries with the adoption of the document of objectives produced in Panama last September, the situation in Central America remains of serious concern.

We believe that escalation can be reversed, that the crisis in Central America need not move inexorably towards greater political danger. We believe that military responses and the export of violence will not serve the interests of the peoples of Central America, no matter what the political orientations of their leaders may be. By the same token, foreign intervention of any party will not assist the objectives of peace, stability, social and economic progress. If serious efforts are not made to open political dialogue within and among states, if military solutions are pursued at the expense of accommodating social and economic change, the results within states will be political oppression, increased violence and deepening misery. Among states the result will be dangerous confrontation.

Canada is ready to assist the parties to promote or facilitate political dialogue. Although we do not seek to involve ourselves directly unless requested to do so, our message to all who seek to restore peace in the region is to reverse the pattern of military escalation so that social change, economic progress and the exercise of freedom will not be stifled. We believe a lasting peaceful solution can only be based on an acceptance by all concerned of the principles of respect for sovereignty, non-interference in the domestic affairs of states, and non-use of force in international relations as well as acceptance of the need to withdraw all foreign military forces.

In conclusion I wish to reiterate my country's strong support to the effort of the Contadora Group and express our sincere hope for a negotiated political solution to the turmoil from which Central America has been suffering for already too long.

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