

I would like to offer the following comments on the recommendations of the report, starting first with the measures for the verification and control of the Peace Accord. Successive Canadian governments have been supportive of the Central America five in their search for peace. Central America has been on the agenda for virtually every bilateral meeting I have had over the past year or more. We have taken a leading role in discussions in the UN, where we were an early co-sponsor of the U.N. Special Plan for Central America. There has been constant contact with the countries of the region and consultation on a regular basis with the Summit seven countries, the Rio Group, the EC and other international partners. The government will continue the tempo and intensity of this dialogue wherever it can help to further the peace process. It has always been important, however, and will continue to be important that we not attempt to impose solutions. The driving force for this process must be found in the Central American countries themselves.

On Verification and Control measures for the peace accord, Canada remains ready to participate in the Auxiliary Technical Group (ATG) for the design of appropriate peacekeeping mechanisms. I believe the Parliamentary Committee would agree that Canada was chosen for this role because of our credible, active, and evenhanded approach to the region. We await a confirmation of this invitation from the five Central America countries. It is for the Central Americans to decide whether or not they wish to proceed with that offer. We agree entirely with the Committee that a clear mandate is always necessary for the effective operation of a peace supervisory group. We consider that UN or OAS involvement in the auxiliary technical group (ATG) is desirable, but not necessarily essential if the other components for a viable mechanism are in place. However, a responsible political authority to whom a verification and control commission would report is indispensable. We agree with the Committee that the implementation phase should involve more countries than just those of the ATG.

Turning to human rights and democratic development, it should be noted that no outside country has been asked to involve itself in the political aspects of Esquipulas II; the Commission for Verification and Follow-up, which presented its report to the Five in January 1988, was suspended precisely because it did not limit its mandate to security issues. If asked, Canada would consider offering technical assistance requested by the Five, for example, for the more effective cooperation of the National Reconciliation Commissions.