

Difficulties of Implementation

Difficulties in implementing the verification provisions of a Central American peace accord will be many, as can be surmised from what has been stated so far. These difficulties can be discussed in three sections: terrain (and climate), political and military complexities, and technical concerns. At each stage the impact of such difficulties on the nature and functioning of a verification agency will be assessed.

Table 3

Key Data on Central American Countries 1987-1988

	COSTA RICA	GUATEMALA	HONDURAS	NICARAGUA	EL SALVADOR
Area	51 000 km ²	109 000 km ²	112 000 km ²	148 000 km ²	21 000 km ²
Population	2 600 000	8 843 000	4 667 000	3 408 000	5 800 000
Capital	San José	Guatemala	Tegucigalpa	Managua	San Salvador
Population Growth (p.a.)	2.7%	3.4%	3.5%	3.4%	2.5%
Gross Domestic Product (\$bn U.S.)	4.1	7.8	3.74	5.34	3.98

Terrain and Climate

Of all difficulties associated with the verification of a peace accord in Central America, no factor exceeds in difficulty that of terrain. As shown by the annexed map, Central America is dominated by a central highland belt with coastal areas on both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, which are flatter and can be either plain, forest, or jungle.

This pattern is seen in the north with Guatemala divided into a Pacific coastal belt, a central highland region, and the jungle northern region of Petén. The border regions are generally rugged with only the Pacific border areas with Mexico and El Salvador settled and developed. The northern border with Mexico is dominated by the southern reaches of Mexico's Yucatan jungle and the eastern border with Honduras is hilly with either thick forests in the north or scrub in the centre.