

Governments of the area, with opposition groups, and with NGO workers in the area. There was a solid consensus in all my consultations on the fact that longstanding social and economic injustices in Central America are the principal causes of current unrest and instability. There was an equally strong consensus that our aid to social and economic development in Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica should continue and expand on its current basis.

There were some who advised that no aid should go to Nicaragua on the grounds that the Nicaraguans are attempting to export revolution to El Salvador. Also, there were some who advised that aid to Honduras should be stopped because that country is supporting the "contras" against Nicaragua. No one, however, supported the termination of aid to both countries.

The part of Canadian assistance to Central America which is significant more for its quality than its quantity, is that provided by the Canadian non-governmental organizations. However, the visit raised some concerns in my mind about the distribution of this assistance and there were some cases where its motivation was questioned. The needs, which can be addressed by skilled and dedicated Canadians, particularly in humanitarian and people-to-people activities, should not be circumscribed by ideological boundaries. It is my hope that political attachments should not distract invaluable work of this kind from its central objectives.

Our aid to Central America is needed, appreciated and highly respected, because it is directed to the basic development needs of people and societies. Canadian aid in Central America will not be determined by the political complexion of the recipients. This is consistent with our view that aid policy is intended to help countries of the region overcome the disabilities which are the primary causes of social, policy and economic injustice. The merits of this Canadian approach to and support for Central America were reconfirmed during my visit and consultations.

I made clear to the Governments of Honduras and Nicaragua that Canada opposes any interference by any country in the internal workings of another. And I recalled that in one special case we had terminated our relationship to one country because that country had diverted combat soldiers to military adventures abroad rather than using its military resources for strictly defensive purposes.

The visit also afforded me an opportunity to hold a meeting with Canadian Heads of Post in the region. The meeting took place in Cartagena and provided a useful, in-depth review of the area and of Canadian policies.

I believe that the visit to Colombia and to Central America was both timely and worthwhile. It was of great value