

Both types of accord, demand a considerable force on the ground to verify the cease-fire and related security provisions. Again this requirement results from reasons of terrain and dispersal of local forces. In the view of this author such a force would have to be considerably larger than those suggested up to now. The size of this force would depend upon the extent to which local conditions improve but even more so upon how far insurgent groups are willing to go in accepting an accord. Probably in Costa Rica, and possibly in Guatemala, depending on negotiations with the insurgents, the observer force's strength could be in the range of those set out by Lieutenant-Colonel Ethell's paper, say 31 and 33 officers respectively. Disengagement, cease-fire and other responsibilities in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, on the other hand, would suggest considerably larger deployments in those countries if the job is to be done properly. More dispersed personnel operating in the sensitive areas will be needed since capitals are too far away and these areas are very difficult to access. Significant levels of all-weather vehicles and helicopters would need to be available if this force's verification role is to be a credible one and thus of use in the suspicion-charged atmosphere of Central America.

As has been seen, the Central American situation offers a scene where ideas abound for confidence-building measures, risk management, and furthering peace in general. That very abundance of ideas, however, leads to very complicated verification arrangements that must be properly implemented if they are not to run the risk of endangering the peace process, rather than helping it along.

There is, of course, a Central American peace agreement at the moment. The Esquipulas II accord may well still prove the beginning of a series of real negotiations for peace in Guatemala and El Salvador as it appeared to have done in Nicaragua. However, at the moment Esquipulas II is in trouble, and its security aspects, left largely still with Contadora, are doubly so. Nor does the Sapoá agreement, allowed for by the opening of "political space" by Esquipulas II, seem problem-free, as is more than obvious. This paper has then opted to look at what would be likely to survive in any successful peace accord, as well as what would be needed for a more complete one which continued with political objectives such as democratization as well as attempting to draw in the United States.

Further research work could help in discovering the likely levels of military force, and types of weaponry, that could at a minimum give regional states and the United States a sense of security while not appearing to threaten others. Secondly, the kinds of technical means that might best assist in the verification process described here need further study by experts. Thirdly, the implications for Canada of involvement at a higher level in the Central American peace process need closer examination within the context of national objectives and resources, as well as those more specifically of the departments of External Affairs and National Defence. Finally, useful areas for "étapiste" initiatives need to be identified and evaluated.