

Fighting continued in El Salvador and sporadically in Nicaragua. In October Honduras called for the United Nations to provide a peacekeeping force to patrol its borders, suggesting that Canada might take part, and this was followed up in December by a letter from the five Foreign Ministers to the United Nations Secretary-General. It was not clear how such a force might operate without, at the least, an agreed cease-fire between the parties involved.

Canadian non-governmental organizations, conscious of a continuing flow of refugees (some 17,000 from Central America since 1983) and engaged in substantial aid programmes in the region, pressed the government to intervene more forcefully in the peace process by offering assistance for peacekeeping and the safeguarding of human rights, increasing development aid, and opening diplomatic missions in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras. A special parliamentary committee reported in favour of such recommendations in July.

The Government agreed to increase development aid by \$100 million over five years and to open the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) offices (but not embassies) in the countries mentioned. It repeated previous assurances that requests to participate in "the design of appropriate peacekeeping mechanisms" (J. Clark, 10 September) would be met positively, and that, it asked, it would also assist with advice about human rights. These issues were barely mentioned in the election campaign, however, and, with the demise of Reaganism in the US, it may be that public concern will diminish. It will certainly revive if conditions in the region deteriorate again and if the prospect of military intervention by the United States increases. Alternatively, a political settlement could lead