

• (1730)

How wonderful it would be if each of these constituent elements could be addressed by those countries in the region. The situation could become stable and there would be the long-term peace and security that the region so desperately requires. However, already we see that there has been a certain amount of equivocation on the part of Honduras. Again, people might suspect that that might be because of the U.S. policy in the region. Honduras might feel itself obligated and perhaps economically indebted to the United States and it has already raised some questions with respect to verification procedures, allegedly for fear of establishing that there are indeed bases located strategically within its frontiers.

That merely points to the great flaw in this plan which is that it requires more than the support of the region, it desperately requires that of the United States. The United States has said that it is supportive, but Mr. Shultz has said: "We are committed to working with its signatories," referring to the signatories to the Guatemalan peace plan, "to strengthen it, to deal with issues not covered by the agreement, to help gain broad support for its purposes and provisions, but," he said, "it is simply not in our national interest to leave the Sandinista regime unconstrained by credible resistance forces on the basis of a hope or a premise".

In conclusion, let me say that that glimmer of hope which we saw emerging in August must be fanned by goodwill. It must be supported by this Government and, as I have said, apart from the technical assistance and other specific steps we can take in that regard, I believe we must send a strong message to Washington.

Over the last several years, my criticism of the posture of the Government has been that while its policies and its rhetoric in the House against aid to Contras, urging the United States basically to withdraw that support and to help bring a peaceful resolution to the problems in Nicaragua have been supported by all of us and while we continue to provide foreign aid to the area, I do not think that our voice has been heard. I think there has been a reluctance to speak out and to deliver a message to our good friends in Washington as good neighbours and friends should. We should speak frankly and candidly to the Americans on this issue and we should support those Members of Congress and those areas of American public opinion with which we are very much in agreement.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec Est):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to debate the motion proposed by the Hon. Member for New Westminster—Coquitlam (Ms. Jewett). Although the motion has been largely overtaken by events, it still addresses the very difficult and complex situation in Central America. This is an important issue because Central America is the scene of some of the most tragic internecine warfare in the world today and it also has become the scene of serious East-West conflict. It is also important to Canada because it is taking place in the western

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hemisphere, in that part of the third world closest to Canada and in a region with which Canada has growing social, economic and political interests.

My hon. friend, the Member for Beauharnois—Salaberry (Mr. Hudon), has very ably explained the Government's response to the most recent developments in Central America. The emergence of a new peace plan, the initiative of the countries of Central America themselves, is the most encouraging development in the region for several years. As has already been pointed out, the Canadian Government has not stood idly by. While recognizing that Canada has no direct role to play at this stage of the negotiations, we have gone to some lengths to give the maximum possible support and encouragement to the parties. The process of converting the commitments which have been made into a peace settlement will be a difficult one. Our support is more than just rhetorical: the Government stands ready to provide technical advice, where we have the appropriate expertise to offer, in the control and verification process which follows a cease fire in the region.

I want to remind the House, however, that this is not a new approach by the Government. On the contrary, it is entirely consistent with the policies which this Government has pursued with respect to Central America since it was elected. Indeed, our recent effort in support of the new peace plan is a logical extension of the role Canada has sought to play for some time.

Canadian policy towards Central America is a distinct one, shaped by Canadian criteria. It has been developed in recognition of the geopolitical realities of Central America and of the social and economic factors which are at the root of the current problems.

The Canadian Government opposes third party intervention anywhere in Central America and regrets the intrusion into the region of East-West tensions and the related militarization of the area.

Canada does not approve of the supply of armaments by any country to opposing factions in the region. This position has been expressed on numerous occasions to the Governments of Central America, to the United States Government and to the other governments concerned. The United States' decision to provide additional aid to the Contras runs counter to our position. Canada has constantly emphasized its firm belief that the countries of Central America must be free to seek their own solution to their own problems without interference from any outside source.

We strongly share the view that the growth and development of democracy is an important issue in Central America. Canada welcomes the progress which has been made in several countries in the region, while recognizing that there is still room for improvement, particularly in Nicaragua.

Canada does not wish to see Nicaragua locked into the Soviet bloc or involved in destabilizing its neighbours. We