

government has armed and helped greatly to expand Central American military forces, which have shown themselves repeatedly to be indifferent to human rights. A majority of the committee believes that it must be stressed that U.S. policy has been designed, in part, to counter other foreign military intervention in Central America and that Canada should oppose outside intervention in Central America by all countries.

A few committee members consider that the government should make strong public representations to the government of the United States that it adopt a policy towards Central America based on the need for social, economic and political reform in the place of the current policy, which stresses East-West conflict and militarization.

The same minority would also like Canada to join the initiative of the foreign ministers of the Contadora Group and the Lima Support Group to impress upon Washington the need to try to bring the conflict to an end and to change its policy towards Central America. We are all agreed, however, that Canada should continue to oppose outside intervention in the region, including the funding of such groups as the Contras and the provision of outside forces.

In making these general observations about Central America, the committee wishes to draw attention to the varying situations in the five republics of the region. While the human rights prospects in some of these countries remain uncertain at best, there are also important signs of hope and progress.

*Guatemala* has the worst human rights history in Central America, a history that reached its nadir in the early 1980s in a brutally efficient military search and destroy campaign against guerillas and Guatemala's large Indian population. As a result of human rights violations, Canada ended its official development assistance program. We are encouraged by the fact that politically motivated human rights violations have declined over the past year. The election of a new civilian president in comparatively honest elections is a hopeful sign, though it remains uncertain whether President Cerezo's government can bring the military under control. We welcome the Guatemalan government's proclaimed respect for human rights and support for regional peace. Canada should seek, through non-governmental organizations, to support projects designed to help the poorest people in Guatemala, as well as the process of social and economic reform. Guatemala also presents the opportunity and need for Canadian co-operative programs of human rights and democratic development.

*El Salvador*, Guatemala's neighbour to the south, continues to suffer the ravages of a five-year-old civil war that has brought widespread human rights violations and economic devastation. It is clear that human rights abuses have been committed by both sides in the civil war, although Amnesty International continues to report that the vast majority of violations is being committed by right-wing death squads and security forces under the control of government authorities. The number of politically motivated murders has declined significantly over the past two years, although human rights organizations in San Salvador still report four to six assassinations by death squads every month.

The 1984 election of a civilian president, Napoleon Duarte, was seen at the time as a step in the direction of political reconciliation. Regrettably, the Duarte government's control of human rights violations and ability to promote economic and social reform is limited. We are encouraged, however, by the government's recent offer to resume negotiations with rebel forces and the acceptance of that offer by the rebels. Canada's own role in this situation must be to encourage dialogue and to ensure that the