

There have been other accomplishments in this past year - the successful Vienna Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking; the coming into force of the Convention Against Torture; the International Maritime Organization Draft Convention on Maritime Security and the progress on verification at the UN Disarmament Commission with which Canada is proud to be associated. They are proof of the worth and vitality of this United Nations, and clear evidence of the benefits to be derived by continuing to confront the world's problems together.

The great purpose of the United Nations is to extend the reach of peace and justice in the world. Sometimes, as in the war between Iran and Iraq, its role becomes most acute when all other efforts have failed. In other cases, it can encourage regional initiatives that may lead to peace where peace is threatened or, focus international attention upon injustice that must end. I want to speak today of one initiative we must encourage, and on injustice we must end.

The initiative is in Central America, where the presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, have joined together in a genuine effort by all parties to settle their differences peacefully. The surprisingly positive outcome of the Guatemala Summit was the result of many factors. They include the foundations laid by Contadora and the Contadora Support Groups; the preparatory work of the Central American countries; and the concessions made at the Summit by each of the five presidents. That achievement was applauded by us all. But it was only the first of many steps along a difficult road.

Canadian aid to the region has been steadily increasing, as has our funding and acceptance of refugees. We have expressed our view that the root problem in Central America is poverty, not ideology; that the real need is development assistance, not military activity; and that intervention by outside powers will only aggravate the tensions. We have supported the Contadora process, and have made available to Contadora the expertise Canadians have acquired in the techniques of peacekeeping.

Immediately after the Guatemala Summit, two senior officials of our government visited Central America to discuss what more Canada might do. I will be visiting the region later this fall.

Canada supports the initiatives of the Central American presidents. We are prepared to provide our expertise mechanisms which, once peace is possible, can help