

Adjournment Debate

current today. I asked, as reported at page 1402 of *Hansard* for November 21, 1986:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Will the Minister tell the House, when he meets with the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. George Shultz, in what terms he plans to convey the repugnance that Canadians feel toward the continuing violation of the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States by the U.S. continuing funding of terrorist Contra attacks from Honduras into Nicaragua?

With that, and a supplementary question, the answer I received from the Minister was that he would be talking to Mr. Shultz. Otherwise, he said, he would take my question under advisement and perhaps give me a more detailed answer on some other occasion. A year later, Mr. Speaker, I am still hoping for that occasion.

• (1750)

Since that time there has been one considerable development toward peace in Central America, and that is the plan put forward by President Arias and adopted by the other four presidents, with him together, in July at Esquipulas in Guatemala. There is some considerable hope that after many, many years of disappointment, there may be some greater peace in Central America.

Today, November 5, is meant to be a day for identifying the compliance of countries with certain basic requirements of the plan. There has been some discussion about whether certain countries are in compliance and the one which has been the most controversial in our media in Canada, of course, has been Nicaragua. There has been great pressure by the United States Government, and even by President Arias and some others, to have Nicaragua negotiate, enter into dialogue and conversations, with the leaders of the Contra. These leaders of the Contra are not in Nicaragua. They are not among those who are carrying on armed opposition to the Nicaraguan Government. They are sitting safely and comfortably in Miami. They are apparently being funded and fed by the American Government and they and the CIA direct the Contra from a thousand miles away.

The position of the Nicaraguan Government, quite reasonably, has been that it will not negotiate with those gentlemen in Miami because they are not representatives of Nicaraguan elements, they are representatives of the American Government, doing what an American Government tells them to do. In fact, the Arias plan does not require that Nicaragua negotiate with the armed opposition, anymore than it requires that President Duarte of El Salvador negotiate with an armed opposition. What the Arias plan requires is that governments will initiate a dialogue with all unarmed internal opposition groups and those who have availed themselves of the amnesty. The governments of these states commit themselves to undertake all the necessary steps for achieving a cease fire within the constitutional framework.

Nicaragua, I am happy to say, has undertaken those obligations and is carrying them out. It is the first regional

government to establish a commission on national reconciliation and it has taken a bold step by appointing to that commission Cardinal Obando, the most famous and outspoken, unarmed, critic of the Nicaraguan Government. It also appointed the leader of the popular Social Christian Party who leads the largest opposition group in the Nicaraguan legislature. This reconciliation commission has been continuing work that has been done for a couple of years by churches and others within Nicaragua by arranging cease fires on a local basis, and it has had successes.

When I was there a year and a half ago and visited the east coast, I saw the results of some of those successes. They have in fact persuaded some of the groups to lay down their arms. The Sandinistas have also offered an amnesty to the Contras who gave up their arms. They have allowed radio Catolica back on the air and have allowed La Prensa to resume publishing. They have released some of the prisoners. On the other hand, the Contras have been kidnapping more prisoners. They have been carrying on attacks even on unarmed people, as is their custom, except in such cases as the local commission, headed by men such as Cardinal Obando, who have been able to persuade local Contra groups to cease fire.

Therefore, I urge the Canadian Government to support the Nicaraguan Government in its stand to deal with the people as the agreement says, unarmed internal opposition, and it should not be obliged to deal with the Contra leaders who are sitting in Miami.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, Canada's stand in favour of a peaceful resolution of the crisis that afflicts Central America is well known. We do not support attempts to overthrow the Nicaraguan government by force, the objective the contras are seeking to achieve. We have also publicly regretted incursions into Honduras by the Sandinista army of Nicaragua in pursuit of contra forces. The Honduran government has shown great restraint in the difficult position in which the contras' presence places it, and has sought to keep its own forces out of the conflict whenever possible. There is no scope for Canada to apply special pressure on Honduras on the contra question. Our position opposing third party intervention and supporting the peace process has been made clear on numerous occasions already to all parties in the region.

The persistence of violent confrontation reinforces our belief that the underlying economic and social causes of tension need to be addressed by programmes such as those of Canada's development assistance efforts.

Canada's aid to Honduras is humanitarian in nature and is not given on the satisfaction of certain political conditions. Honduras is the second poorest country in the hemisphere after Haiti and the poorest in Central America. It is our only priority country for aid in the region, and has received just under \$44 million in the 1982-86 period. These funds have gone to support humanitarian objectives: the development and