

CBC Radio - As it Happens - April 12
DPM/SSEA - Canadian Policy in Central
America

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External Affairs Allan MacEachen completes his four country - 10 day tour of Central America tonight. He visited Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras on a mission to, as he put it, test Canada's policy against the reality. MacEachen questioned the heads of government and top officials in every country. Canada has poured millions of dollars in economic aid into Central America. We've reached the Honourable Allan MacEachen in Tegucigalpa, Honduras:

Q: Mr. MacEachen has this visit affected the way you think we should define our interests in Central America?

DPM/SSEA: I haven't come up with any new policies. I think that what we're doing stands the test reasonably well, but I think my perceptions of the situation have sharpened considerably and I hope my understanding of the situation has improved.

Q: Are you going to come away from there feeling that we should somehow in some way have a higher profile?

DPM/SSEA: Yes, I think that I come away with that idea, that what we are doing in the Aid Program is important. We ought to, I think, increase our political consultations. I think we ought to support where possible the democratization of Central America. Countries like Costa Rica, a fledgling democracy like Honduras where I am now, certainly deserve support of a country like Canada, and I think they need that support.

Q: Can we do that with one Embassy in Costa Rica covering the four countries or do we need more diplomatic representation?

DPM/SSEA: Well, I think that probably it would be better if we had a stronger presence in Nicaragua, for example, and I think that my visit increased my consciousness and