

*Contadora Treaty*

When this motion was originally presented in October, 1986, there was widespread Canadian and international concern about war and peace in Central America, and in particular on the survival of Contadora. Since that time we have seen the creation of the Arias Peace Plan drawn from Contadora, and the acceptance of the plan by the five Central American Presidents in Guatemala last month. The Contadora support group has since endorsed the plan, and moves have begun to implement parts of it. I remind the House of the agreement to talks that have now taken place between the Government and Opposition in El Salvador, and I remind the House of the Nicaraguans setting up a commission of national reconciliation in Nicaragua, and other activities that have taken place.

The Canadian Government has declared its support for the Arias Peace Plan, and has long been on record as supporting, in theory at least, the Contadora peace process. In one specific area, Canada has offered verification and other advice in this peace effort.

Now it is even more timely, urgent, and useful for the Government to record its support for the original Contadora Treaty, and to join with the Contadora support group in its endorsement of the Arias Peace Plan. A clear message from the Government that Canada will sign the Contadora Treaty protocol, and join in an active way with the Contadora support group would be consistent with government policy and activities to date, and would be consistent with the general position of all three Parties. It would be an important response to widespread interest and concern of Canadians in Central America, as I have already mentioned. It would send a clear, important, and positive signal to our sister nations in the hemisphere that Canada and Canadians are deeply committed to the urgent task of creating peace in Central America. It would support Canada's development assistance efforts and refugee concerns in the region.

This would be an important expression of the will and interest of Canada, and an important reaffirmation of the commitment of Canadians to peace and conflict resolution.

● (1710)

On August 17, I noted in the House that External Affairs officials were going to Central America. Indeed, I asked the Minister at that time whether this was not a fairly good indication of our need for a more permanent and stronger diplomatic presence in Central America, the fact that we had to send officials down there to see what the different countries were doing in connection with the Arias Peace Plan. Once again I urged the Minister to strengthen Canada's diplomatic presence in the region and called specifically for the long overdue opening of an embassy in Managua.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** I agree with you.

**Ms. Jewett:** I regret that once again the Minister rejected the suggestion. I am delighted that the Hon. Member for

Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) agrees, because he once objected to it, too.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sure the hon. Doctor of Political Science is just teasing me. I am clearly on record in that regard; I have always supported the idea.

I know she is just teasing, but in a few years from now those who read her speech will think that I opposed it. I never opposed it, and she knows that I did not.

**Ms. Jewett:** Canada must do more for peace than just rhetoric, the kind of rhetoric we have just heard. Canada must be seen as willing to do more, and I agree with the Minister that Canada has the capacity to do more. I continue to call upon him and the Government to use that capacity.

I call upon them to sign the protocol to the Contadora Treaty; to offer technical, financial and diplomatic help to the Central American Republics in meeting the requirements of the Arias Peace Plan in respect of amnesties, refugees, civil rights and press freedom, the conduct of elections, negotiations, arms control, and reduction verification; to urge the United States and Nicaragua to resume their essential bilateral talks, including offering Canada as a site for such talks; and to offer to increase direct economic assistance to the region, especially to Nicaragua, because of the vast foreign interference in that country, the U.S. economic blockade, the destabilizing and bankrupting of the economy, recognizing that a collapsing Nicaraguan economy and heightened security concerns will impede any peace settlement.

In conclusion, Canadians expect—and Central America desperately needs it—some greater Canadian diplomatic and political initiative. One initiative mentioned by the Hon. Member for Spadina was that we should take a leading role in rallying international support through the United Nations and in organizing a multilateral support group and peace fund in support of the peace accord verification process. On September 1 in the House my colleague said that such steps would help to sustain the Central American peace accord against attacks from the Reagan administration.

We want to help build and secure peace in our hemisphere. As I mentioned, Canadians do a great deal as individuals. Just the other day in Vancouver I visited a group of fishermen, longshoremen, carpenters, and other workers who in their spare time—perhaps it is a couple of hours a day; in some cases it is only a couple of hours a week—are building a great fishing boat for a village in Nicaragua. The villagers are expecting it. They do not have any boats now except ones which have long since ceased to be useful or practical. They still need money for the engine, and we are hoping to be able to raise it. However, we have that strong feeling of Canadians wanting to give help.

The Government can respond more. Signing the protocol to the Contadora Treaty would be an illuminating expression of