

Central to the Arias Plan was a fixed timetable of negotiations along with disarmament by the governments and rebels in those states experiencing civil war. Even so, any agreement which may be reached under this plan will be only a first step toward a durable peace process. The military problems are only symptomatic of more fundamental problems which they have not yet begun to address. Exacerbating the wide-spread poverty are corrupt and dictatorial governments, ignoring the needs of the population as a whole and human rights in general. Thus, not only do they have to improve their national security and their economy, but they would have to establish a regime within which human rights, freedom and justice were assured for their people.

The formation of a Regional Association of Nations (RAN) including Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and perhaps Panama, would be a necessary first step for establishing a durable peace in this area and improving the standard of living of its peoples.

RAN ADAPTED FOR CENTRAL EUROPE

Obviously, the situation and problems in Central Europe are quite different from those of Central America. Contending armies face one another daily across borders prickly with barbed wire and nuclear warheads. The massive concentration of troops and all classes of weapons, deployed by the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO, foment a fear of conventional war. And even though land-based intermediate-range nuclear weapons will be eliminated as a result of the 1987 INF Treaty, tactical missiles with nuclear weapons are still on this territory and additional warheads can be launched easily from both sea and air.

special issue on Alternative Defence, Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1984; and a special issue, Alternative Defence and Security, Bulletin of Peace Proposals, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1978.