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CANADA PARTICIPATES IN UNITED NATIONS

RECONNAISSANCE TO CENTRAL AMERICA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today announced that Canadian experts will participate in a United Nations reconnaissance mission which will define the operational requirements for the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA).

The reconnaissance mission will visit the area from September 3 to 23, 1989, and will then report its findings to the UN Secretary-General in New York.

The 18-member mission will be led by General Gomes of Brazil. The Canadian contingent will consist of Colonel Don Ethell, an expert in peacekeeping operations, and Lt. Col. Don Ferguson, a logistics specialist.

The reconnaissance mission is being sent in response to a request made on March 31, 1989, to the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, by the five Central American Foreign Ministers.

The Foreign Ministers asked that the UN establish a military observer group which would be charged with on-site verification that the territory of one Central American state was not being used for attacks on another, and that aid and assistance to insurgent forces was terminated.

The March request for the reconnaissance mission is going forward now as a result of an accord reached among the Central American Presidents at Tela, Honduras, on August 7, 1989. The Honduran Government initially had some reservations concerning the mission.

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

Canada

Depending upon the findings of the reconnaissance mission, the UN Security Council is expected to ask a number of countries, including Canada, to take part in the UN Observer Group. Canada is prepared to consider such a request provided that an acceptable agreement can be reached on an Observer Group's operating guidelines, timing and duration, and financing.

CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PROCESS

BACKGROUND ON TERMS

CIAV:

- International Support and Verification Commission (known by its Spanish acronym)
- The Tela Declaration of Central American Presidents of August 7 calls for the establishment of this new commission, under joint UN and OAS auspices, to supervise the voluntary demobilization and repatriation or relocation of Nicaraguan contra forces based in Honduras.
- It is anticipated that the CIAV would be staffed mainly by civilians, although it would also require a military mechanism for collecting the weapons of contras who agree to demobilization.

ONUCA:

- United Nations Observer Group in Central America (known by its Spanish acronym).
- The Tela Declaration calls for the deployment of ONUCA military observers to serve as a regional security verification mechanism. Its primary mandate at this time would be to monitor the Honduran/Nicaraguan frontier.
- Two Canadian military officers will participate in an ONUCA operational reconnaissance team visiting Central America during September 1989. Canada has indicated that it will be prepared to give positive consideration to any future request by the Security Council to participate in an ONUCA Observer Group.

"INTERNATIONAL PEACE-KEEPING FORCE":

- The Tela Declaration notes the reiteration by Honduras of its request for an "international peace-keeping force" to prevent irregular forces (whether Nicaraguan contras or Salvadoran FMLN guerrillas) from using its territory as a base for attacks on other states.
- The Honduran proposal, which would entail a force separate and distinct from either ONUCA or CIAV, has not been endorsed by the other Central American republics. Moreover, the stipulation by Honduras that such a force might need to undertake coercive action against irregular forces runs counter to normal peace-keeping criteria for the UN. Deployment of armed UN peace-keeping force is normally conditional on a prior cessation of hostilities between conflicting parties.

ONUVEN:

- United Nations Election Verification Mission in Nicaragua (known by its Spanish acronym)
- In response to an invitation by the government of Nicaragua, the UN Secretary General has agreed to establish ONUVEN to observe and verify the Nicaraguan electoral process leading to presidential and congressional elections on 25 February 1990.
- Canada is prepared to consider a request to participate in ONUVEN, whose creation we support.
- Canada is extending bilateral technical assistance to the Supreme Electoral Council of Nicaragua, to help ensure that an adequate electoral infrastructure is created.