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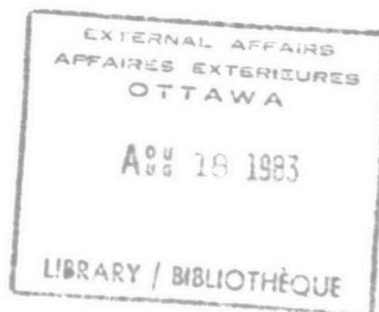
CENTRAL AMERICA - PEACE INITIATIVES

The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, expressed today Canada's continued support and encouragement of the efforts by the Governments of Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela (referred to as the Contadora Group) to bring about peaceful solutions in Central America. Canada particularly welcomed the joint declaration issued by the Presidents of these four countries at the conclusion of their meeting in Cancun, Mexico on July 17, 1983.

In this Declaration the four Presidents proposed that the nations of Central America should make commitments to:

- (a) end the current state of belligerence
- (b) freeze the number of offensive weapons at existing levels
- (c) begin negotiations of agreements to limit and reduce the current inventories of armaments and develop mechanisms for adequate supervision
- (d) proscribe the installation of foreign military bases on their territories
- (e) provide advance notification of troop movements near international frontiers when the size of such movements surpasses previously agreed limits
- (f) provide for joint frontier patrols or international supervision of frontiers by groups of observers selected by mutual agreement of the interested parties
- (g) establish mixed security commissions to prevent or to resolve frontier incidents

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- (h) establish internal control mechanisms to prevent the traffic of arms from one country to the other
- (i) avoid declarations and actions that endanger the development of a climate of political confidence necessary for peaceful solutions
- (j) coordinate systems of direct communication among the Governments concerned to prevent armed conflicts and to generate an atmosphere of mutual political confidence.

The four Presidents also urged that the above measures be accompanied by serious efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, guarantee the observance of human rights, and to encourage political pluralism, the participation of diverse currents of opinion in the political process and full participation of all citizens in the political life of their countries. The four Presidents also stressed the importance of resolving the problems of economic underdevelopment which are the cause of many of the conflicts of the area and of strengthening the mechanisms for economic cooperation, increased regional commerce and better access to world markets.

Mr. MacEachen noted that the proposals of the four Presidents, if accepted and implemented by the Central American governments concerned, would represent a very positive step toward achieving peace in Central America and he hoped that the Governments of the Central American countries would respond positively to these initiatives.

In this connection, he noted that a six-point policy statement of July 19 by Commander Daniel Ortega, Coordinator of the Governing Junta of Nicaragua, also represented an encouraging and positive step by the Government of Nicaragua in the development of a constructive dialogue toward peace. Mr. Ortega proposed a non-aggression pact between Nicaragua and Honduras, a ban on the supply of arms by any nation to combattant forces in El Salvador, a ban on all foreign military aid and training in Central America, respect for self determination and non-intervention in the internal affairs of Central American countries, an end to aggression and economic discrimination, and a ban on foreign bases and military exercises with foreign troops in Central America.

Mr. MacEachen hoped that the next meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group countries and the countries of Central America, scheduled for the near future, would be able to agree on a formula for peace which would incorporate as many as possible of the positive aspects of the various proposals which have been put forward.

Mr. MacEachen noted that in conveying the text of the Cancun Declaration to the Prime Minister of Canada the Presidents of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela expressed their sincere appreciation for the support which the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada had at all times accorded to the efforts of the Contadora Group. Mr. MacEachen said this support and encouragement and Canada's willingness to assist if requested to do so would continue and that the Prime Minister would be indicating this in a direct reply to the four Presidents.