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112, 115, 141 and 142

### REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

#### REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

#### COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

#### DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

#### TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

#### PREPARATION OF AN INSTRUMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS BASED ON SOLIDARITY

#### PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BETWEEN STATES

#### DRAFT CODE OF CRIMES AGAINST THE PEACE AND SECURITY OF MANKIND

Letter dated 2 November 1989, from the Charge d'affaires a.i. of  
the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations addressed  
to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose the text of the open letter (see annex) which His Excellency Francisco A. Rodríguez P., Provisional President of the Republic of Panama, addressed to the Latin American Presidents attending the Presidential meeting held at San José on 27 and 28 October 1989.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session under items 12, 72, 73, 82, 112, 115, 141 and 142.

(Signed) Oscar CEVILLE  
Ambassador  
Deputy Permanent Representative  
Chargé d'affaires a.i.  
of the Mission

Annex

OPEN LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE LATIN AMERICAN PRESIDENTS  
BY THE PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT OF PANAMA

Sirs,

I have the honour to convey to you my best wishes for the success of the deliberations beginning today, in the hope that they will make an effective contribution to the search for ways of arriving at solutions to serious common problems on the agenda of the international political debate whose consideration cannot be put off.

The Provisional Government of which I am the head has been following with very special interest the negotiations recently initiated in response to the evidence that illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse already constitute a terrible threat to mankind and to the stability of human societies constituted as nation States. In the shadow of Governments, through tolerance or complicity, through powerlessness or negligence, criminal organizations have grown up which possess surprising power, respect no law and no moral principle, and have established a network of supra-national corruption never before witnessed in history.

I deem it appropriate on this occasion to reiterate the offer I made at the forty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly to the effect that the Republic of Panama would be pleased to host and serve as the centre of operations of a multinational force to combat the drug traffic, provided that this force is established under an international convention which would guarantee respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations. Such a guarantee is required in view of the way the drug traffic problem is being used, in that it is approached more as an instrument of power games than out of conscientious concern to find solutions.

In addition, at a meeting of such eminent and influential persons an opportunity may perhaps arise, in the discussions on the topics of democracy and human rights, to consider also the perception of another threat to the peace and stability of nations, particularly those among them which are lagging far behind in terms of economic and social development.

Our countries are having to deal with very difficult situations in terms of external debt and the position of each one of them within the world economy. Naturally, our programmes have to treat these as priorities, but their implementation in a climate of peace and democracy is inconceivable at the cost of sacrificing the needs of the masses in terms of health and education, food and preparation for productive work, spiritual sustenance and the development of civic virtues.

Conflicts over hegemony appear to have deflected us from the true challenge facing mankind, namely the struggle to achieve acceptable levels of well-being for all peoples, with each respecting the other and all working together. For the

peoples of the third world, the hopes of a better future will crystallize when the Powers discover that greater real benefits will accrue to their peoples if the existence of different social systems is accepted and if it is understood that peoples produce more wealth as free nations than as colonies or as colonial régimes under another name.

Since the proposed goal is a conglomerate of democratic nations coexisting in productive harmony on the American continent, the initial concerted efforts should be aimed at eliminating the existing obstacles to the emergence of substantially democratic régimes.

The Provisional Government of which I am the head reiterates its commitment to the full restoration of democratic institutions through the holding of popular elections with broad guarantees, once the external factors that currently impede the self-determination of the Panamanian people have been eliminated. However, this commitment also obliges all those who say they are interested in promoting democratic governments to end all forms of interference and destabilization in our country.

It is pointless to refer to a problem of democracy in Panama without mentioning the relentless economic, political and diplomatic aggression to which Panama has been subjected by the United States and the constant harassment carried out by the United States Armed Forces in our territory.

Furthermore, the Torrijos-Carter treaties prohibit intervention or interference by United States civilians or military personnel in the internal affairs of Panama, and United States legislation supposedly prohibits such actions.

This is an undeniable reality which explains why about 20 United States military personnel have been killed in accidents in Panama during intimidating manoeuvres that violate the internal law of the United States.

When our goal is the creation of a continental fraternity, based on equality in the community of nations, and when we are in fact seeking to eliminate every vestige of colonialism, the first thing we should question is the legitimacy of one or more nations claiming to possess the exclusive authority to define, authenticate or determine what constitutes democracy.

If a country seeks to impose on us its own vision or version of democracy, that word will camouflage a structure of neo-colonial domination, since the institutional life of a people is not shaped in that way. It is the people themselves, without foreign interference, who must determine what is the best form of government for them, and that determination cannot lead to stable democracy unless it is the outcome of that people's own evolution. Each people must create its own style of democracy. The development and progress of our nations can only be shaped in accordance with our aspirations when decolonization has become a permanent reality.

The delay which the Americas have experienced in establishing substantive and solid democracies cannot be dissociated from the obstructive influence of neo-colonial domination.

We Panamanians are paying a very high price for our determination to achieve complete liberation, but we shall pursue our course without resentment. We have much to offer, and indeed our geographical position, which has been regarded as a pivot of continental domination, can also serve as a rallying point for a major effort to develop Latin America and the Caribbean, linking them to a global economy reoriented towards the progress of all peoples of the world, with a more equitable distribution of the fruits of our common efforts. You can be sure that you will always find Panama a valuable and reliable ally in this endeavour.

I take this opportunity to confirm the desire of my Government to strengthen its bonds of friendship with all nations, and to convey to you the assurances of my highest consideration.

Panama, 27 October 1989

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