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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINETY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 25 November 1985, at 3 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. DE PINIÉS	(Spain)
later:	Mr. HEPBURN (Vice-President)	(Bahamas)
later:	Mr. MOSELEY (Vice-President)	(Barbados)

- Programme of work
- The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives: report of the Secretary-General [21] (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to give representatives an outline of the tentative programme of plenary meetings for the first 10 days of the month of December.

In the morning of Monday, 2 December, the Assembly will take up the reports of the Fourth Committee and then proceed to vote on the draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 18, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples".

In the afternoon of that same day, the Assembly will begin its consideration of agenda item 33, "Question of Palestine".

(The President)

On Thursday, 5 December, the Assembly will begin its consideration of item 38, "The situation in the Middle East".

On Monday, 9 December, in the morning, the Assembly will take up item 15 (c), "Election to fill a casual vacancy on the International Court of Justice" and item 31, "Co-operation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee". In the afternoon of that same day, the Assembly will take up item 7, "Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations"; item 10, "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization"; item 11 "Report of the Security Council"; item 32, "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte"; and item 37, "United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy".

On Tuesday, 10 December, in the morning, the Assembly will take up item 36, "Law of the sea." In the afternoon of that same day, the Assembly will take up item 16 (a), "Election of nineteen members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme"; item 16 (b), "Election of twelve members of the World Food Council"; item 16 (c), "Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination" and item 16 (e), "Election of nineteen members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law".

It is of course understood that the Assembly will consider all reports of the Main Committees as they become available.

AGENDA ITEM 21 (continued)

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA; THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY AND PEACE INITIATIVES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/40/737)

Mr. DOS SANTOS (Mozambique): Central America is once again on the agenda of the General Assembly. Events in and around the region have led to a deterioration of the climate of tension and instability in the region. Hostile acts, pressures and destabilization have escalated, thus endangering peace and security in and beyond the region. The ideals of peace, as enshrined in the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations and as prescribed in other relevant instruments of international law, are losing ground to the detriment of a climate of peace, co-operation and mutual understanding. The fulfilment of such basic tenets as the right of a people to choose freely and without external interference their political, economic and social system is being denied to the people of Central America, particularly those of Nicaragua.

The situation in Central America constitutes a matter of great concern to the People's Republic of Mozambique and the international community as a whole. One might wonder why the peoples of our region, a region that lies thousands of miles away from Central America, should be following the evolution of events in this region. Southern Africa and Central America have many things in common that cannot be overlooked except by those who choose to be blind. Both regions have known no peace for a long time now. The countries of both regions have had to endure successive acts of aggression and destabilization, in both cases perpetrated through armed banditry and other barbaric forms.

The last four years have been extremely difficult for the people of Nicaragua. Consecutive acts of destabilization and sabotage have been launched against Nicaragua in an attempt to undermine the democratic process taking place in

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that country, a process that embodies the hope of the Nicaraguan people for a bright and prosperous future. A combination of covert and overt operations has been carried out against Nicaragua in gross violation of the most elementary principles of our Charter and of international law, particularly those concerning peaceful coexistence, the non-use of force and non-intervention. In short, Nicaragua has been the victim of an undeclared war. This war has already claimed the lives of more than 11,000 Nicaraguans; 5,000 have been wounded, 5,000 kidnapped, and a quarter of a million displaced.

This trend of events has compelled some countries of the region to design a peace initiative aimed at curbing tensions in the area. The creation of the Contadora Group is a case in point. As we have said in the past, this regional mechanism represents a valuable instrument in the search for a comprehensive, peaceful and diplomatic solution to the problems affecting Central America. It is therefore right that the international community should have commended its efforts. Notwithstanding the obstacles this Group has met with, it has striven to accomplish its task.

The twentieth century has been blessed by rapid development in science and technology. Man has become the master of other planets completely unknown to him a few decades ago. Many laws of nature have become a domain of human knowledge. However, man has not yet been able to transcend the limits and vicissitudes imposed on him by his inner world. In the circumstances, only respect by all States for the principles of peaceful coexistence, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity remains the basis upon which the interaction of States should rest.

It is in this context that, in drawing up its foreign policy, the Government of Nicaragua did not fail to incorporate these fundamental principles. More

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important than this, however, is the fact that Nicaragua has lived by these principles in its international conduct. The commitment of the people of Nicaragua to peace and stability in the region is well known. In its efforts to promote peace in the region Nicaragua has explored all possibilities offered by the Charter as well as other instruments of international law for a peaceful solution to the problems of the region. It is worth recalling that Nicaragua was the first to accept the Contadora Act fully and without reservation. It has also brought its case before the Security Council and has subjected itself to international scrutiny by putting its case before the International Court of Justice. The Non-Aligned Movement has also deliberated on the issue. Nicaragua has also resorted to bilateral negotiations, as exemplified by the Manzanillo Talks.

Despite these initiatives, the prospects for peace are now as unforeseeable as ever. Indeed, there can be no peace in the region if the States concerned and those with interests in the region withdraw their co-operation in the exercise aimed at restoring peace in Central America. The granting of military or any other support whatsoever to the armed bandits, or the "contras", and the imposition of embargoes of any kind against Nicaragua can only contribute to the deterioration of the already explosive situation in Central America. This, however, is precisely what has happened since the General Assembly last considered the situation in Central America at its thirty-ninth session.

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For that reason Nicaragua cannot be held responsible for the climate of war and tension prevailing in the region.

The solution to the crisis of Central America demands that a climate of peace and co-operation be established in the region. To that end all States in the region should pledge to work together to overcome the extraordinary economic and social crisis now afflicting the region.

However, there will be no peace in the region unless States outside it, but with interests there, stop hindering the peace efforts emerging from the region.

We believe that peace in Central America also demands respect for the sovereignty and inalienable right of all States in the region freely to decide their political, economic and social systems, develop their international relations according to their peoples' interests, free from outside interference, subversion, direct or indirect coercion, or threats of any kind. In this spirit, all States are called upon to refrain from carrying out, supporting or promoting political, economic or military actions of any kind against any State in the region. Peace and peaceful solutions among countries demand that political, economic, ideological, social and cultural differences and diversity be recognized and respected. No nation, however powerful, will be able indefinitely to impose its will on others. When celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, let us not hear battle cries ring out from this rostrum. Let us from here spread words of tolerance, understanding, concord and co-operation.

The root cause of the crisis in Central America has been very eloquently stated by the peoples of the region. The economic exploitation of the natural resources of the countries of the region which has plunged millions of the people of the region into poverty and marginalization, and denied those people democratic

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political expression, is the main explanation for the critical situation in Central America. This is indeed, in the words of the Central Americans themselves, the root cause or the origin of Latin American problems, particularly those of Central America. The root cause will be found in the conquest, domination and plunder of the region by majestic foreign companies. It will be found in centuries of plunder, oppression and repression by expeditionary military forces. It will be found in the struggle waged by the people in the region in their quest for freedom, peace and justice against dynasties of dictatorships imposed and maintained by outside Powers. It stems from the "backyard" theory: my backyard is only mine when it is truly and lawfully mine. When I go beyond it and step into my neighbour's backyard, I will be charged with unlawful trespass. When we are unable to distinguish our backyard from international boundaries, a climate of lawlessness is generated.

To situate that crisis and the war of aggression against Nicaragua within the context of East-West conflict is to give a baptism of death to that country so as to justify the massacres of its innocent population. My country and others in southern Africa have received that evil sacrament and we are paying the price with our precious blood. My delegation therefore rejects this misrepresentation of the sense of history. The plague afflicting Central America was there long before the East made its appearance on the political horizon.

With respect to Nicaragua, my delegation shares the conclusion drawn by a Latin American writer who has said that Nicaragua is still engaged in the search for final answers and that it is far from being a satellite of any Power.

Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): For the third year in a row now the General Assembly is considering the question of the situation in Central America. Eight times a similar question has been considered in the Security Council, and that same subject has been dealt with in the statement made during the anniversary part of the fortieth session of the General Assembly by the President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega Saavedra, who most convincingly expressed the serious concern of the people of that country in connection with the situation that is being created around it. A few days ago we listened attentively to the Deputy Foreign Minister of Nicaragua, Nora Astorga.

The constant attention which the United Nations has been according the situation in Central America is fully warranted. The storm clouds of war have been looming ever more menacingly over Central America: aircraft carriers and other warships have been cruising just off the shores of the countries of the region; military training exercises, with the participation of tens of thousands of troops, warplanes and other military hardware have been proceeding without interruption on the territory of some of those countries; and various ways of invading neighbouring States have been rehearsed. That constant demonstration of armed might is designed to exert pressure against the Central American States to force them to bow to foreign diktat.

The cutting edge of these increasing military preparations is openly aimed against Nicaragua whose people a few years ago overthrew a dictatorial régime and embarked upon the construction of a new life of its own free choice. Since then that small Central American country has been living an unending seige: a genuine - although undeclared - war is being waged against it; that war, as Nora Astorga pointed out in her statement, has already cost Nicaragua more than 3,000 lives and

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more than 4,000 wounded; more than 7,500 children have been made orphans, 240,000 peaceful inhabitants have been made homeless, and more than 5,000 persons have been abducted.

The phrase "act of aggression" is the only way to describe the mining of large areas of the seas adjacent to Nicaragua, its territorial waters and ports. Those mines have blown up the peaceful merchant vessels of Japan, the Netherlands, Panama and the Soviet Union, and completely innocent persons have suffered. The unlawful actions of the United States have been condemned by the International Court of Justice, in The Hague, which has demanded that the mining of Nicaraguan ports and other actions designed to block access to them should end immediately. The International Court has also declared it inadmissible to infringe in any other way the sovereignty or political independence of Nicaragua by any military or paramilitary actions, as well as by threats of force.

Attempts are also being made to choke Nicaragua economically. The declaration of a trade embargo against Nicaragua and the denial of loans to it through international financial organizations are only some examples of the kinds of economic pressure being brought to bear as leverage so as to bring a State, which is not to the liking of some, to its knees. The total amount of damage inflicted on Nicaragua as a result of hostile action is in excess of \$1.5 billion.

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It is clear to all that this broad range of actions has been brought into play to destabilize and topple the existing political and social order in Nicaragua. Nicaragua is also being threatened with direct military intervention. In a special decision the United States Congress has approved the eventual use of United States armed forces against Nicaragua in so-called "exceptional circumstances".

In justification of such a course we have heard statements to the effect that Nicaragua represents an "unprecedented and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy and national security of the United States." But what kind of threat can a small developing country, with a population of three million, pose to the security of one of the world's greatest Powers armed with the most up-to-date weapons? Such assertions are clearly baseless. The truth lies elsewhere. As developments in Latin America have shown, there has been a clear desire to halt the process of growth and the consolidation of national awareness by the peoples of the large and small countries of the Western hemisphere who do not wish to reconcile themselves with their neo-colonial status.

As the Mexican Foreign Minister, Mr. Sepulveda Amor, stated here in the General Assembly on 25 September:

"the deepest causes of the confrontations in Central America are endogenous and should be isolated from the context of East-West confrontation."

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That fact has always been recognized by every objective observer. In his report on this question the Secretary-General of the United Nations has emphasized that socio-economic injustice is the source of the crisis in Central America, and the same assessment has also been made by the representatives of many other countries, including those of Latin America, who have spoken before this and earlier sessions of the General Assembly.

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It is precisely that process of long-overdue social and economic transformations in Latin America and Central America that has been causing alarm among those who would like to maintain that region under the total domination of the transnational corporations which, according to the estimates of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, extracted from the countries of that region in 1983-1984 alone the sum of \$58 billion.

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, at his press conference in Geneva on 21 November, stressed that:

"the roots of regional tensions and conflicts and even wars between States in various parts of the world can be traced back to both past and present socio-economic conditions of those countries and regions. To argue that all such masses of contradictions have been generated by East-West rivalry is not only incorrect; it is extremely dangerous."

And Mr. Gorbachev drew the attention of the United States President and the American delegation to the recent Geneva talks to this matter.

Nicaragua has powerful enemies who do not want the people of that country to advance along the path of democracy and social progress. But that country also has many friends who are not prepared to allow it to be insulted. Among those friends are the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, which understand that if Nicaragua falls the threat to the other developing countries will become even greater. Among those friends are also the socialist States, which sympathize with the objectives of the Sandinist revolution, and the many individuals in Western countries, including the United States, who think reasonably and who understand that it is impossible to quell the desire of peoples for freedom and a better life through the use of force. The countries of the Non-Aligned Movement have repeatedly condemned the policy of threats, attacks, acts of hostility and economic coercion that have

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been aimed at Nicaragua, and the United Nations has also spoken out in support of that country.

In its resolution of 10 May 1985 the Security Council once again reaffirmed the sovereignty of Nicaragua and the inalienable right of that country and the rest of the States to freely decide on their own political, economic and social systems, to develop their international relations according to their people's interests, free from outside interference, subversion, direct or indirect coercion or threats of any kind. In its resolutions on this question the General Assembly has also emphasized the need for a political settlement of the crisis in Central America by peaceful means and has emphasized the importance of stepping up the process of negotiations to reach such a settlement by the Contadora Group, made up of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela.

The importance of the constructive efforts of those States and of the statements of Latin American solidarity has been clearly acknowledged by the formation of the Contadora support group with the participation of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay. The Government of Nicaragua has unwaveringly followed its course of co-operation with the Contadora Group in the quest for a peaceful settlement of the problems of Central America and a normalization of relations among the States of that region. It has repeatedly put forward constructive proposals for that settlement and has taken steps, in all goodwill, to lessen the tensions in the region and create a climate favourable to agreement.

Further evidence of that peace-loving policy was furnished by the letter by President Daniel Ortega of 11 November 1985 addressed to the Presidents of the countries of the Contadora Group and the support group. That letter confirms Nicaragua's position that:

"in order to eliminate sources of tension and conflict it is essential to put an end to foreign military presence in the region."

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In order to achieve that objective, the President wrote:

"we consider it essential to establish in Central America a zone of peace free from any foreign military presence in accordance with the Document of Objectives and the revised Contadora Act of 7 September 1984."

We must, however, note with regret that the United States has not only failed to carry out its obligations as a permanent member of the Security Council in the quest for a settlement in Central America, but has continued to subvert the constructive efforts of the Contadora Group, while at the same time paying lip-service to them. Notwithstanding the Security Council decision calling for the reopening of American-Nicaraguan negotiations, those talks have not been resumed. Unconscionable attempts have been made to weaken Nicaragua's ability to withstand armed attacks against it from various sides and to dictate to the Nicaraguan people the path to be followed towards a solution of its domestic problems. Such a policy cannot but have a negative impact on the development of the international climate as a whole.

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The cause of world peace and international security most emphatically demands the prompt elimination of the dangerous tension centred on Central America. It is clear that a peaceful political settlement in Central America will be possible only on the basis of the following factors: respect for the legitimate security interests of the countries of the region; the dismantling of foreign military bases in the region; the withdrawal of foreign troops; and the cessation of the use of the territory of one country for purposes of interfering in the internal affairs of another. To achieve that objective it is essential to manifest a spirit of responsibility and restraint and to refrain from taking steps which could exacerbate the situation.

The Soviet Union has consistently supported, and continues to support, the solution of the problems of Central America by the States of that region by political means, including constructive negotiations. We express our support for the efforts made to that end by other States, including States of Latin America and Western Europe.

The Soviet Union resolutely repudiates attempts to distort its policies and to blame it in some way for the situation in Central America. We firmly oppose transforming that region into an arena for East-West confrontation. We have not created and do not intend to create a threat to the interests of the United States and its allies. The Soviet Union has repeatedly emphasized that the solution of the problems of Central America is to be found through negotiations taking due account of the legitimate interests of the countries of the region and fully respecting their sovereignty. It is important that the Contadora Group resume its efforts to that end.

As the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gorbachev, has pointed out:

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"In the present atmosphere, broad international solidarity with Nicaragua is an integral part of the total struggle for peace and for the right of all peoples to freedom and independence."

The Soviet delegation considers that it is particularly important how that the General Assembly support efforts aimed at reducing tension and achieving a political settlement in Central America without any outside interference, so as to guarantee the independence and sovereignty of the States of the region.

Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): The development of the situation in Central America has been a constant source of serious concern for the international community. In that region a conflict persists which is steadily worsening, and threatening to burst at any moment into a conflagration with uncontrollable consequences.

The origins of the conflict lie in the persistence of ever-increasing economic and social injustice. It was only natural that the peoples of the region should have developed a tradition of resistance and dissent and the injustice has led to an intensified struggle for the restoration of human dignity, fulfilment of a legitimate aspiration to justice, and the promotion of free and genuine participation in developing a future decided upon in full sovereignty. Thus, as is generally acknowledged, the primary cause of the conflict is rooted in the injustice and oppression imposed upon the peoples of the region. By the same token, the continued attempts to fit the problem of Central America into the logic of East-West confrontation can only increase the outside influence which promotes conflict, is the root cause of the crisis and thus cannot but further jeopardize a solution.

Convinced of that fact and wishing to prevent a conflagration which would threaten regional stability, four countries - Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela - have taken bold action to return to dialogue in order to bring about

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lasting peace. The perseverance and determination of the Contadora Group in its peace efforts deserve not only our appreciation but, above all, our total support for the early success of its endeavours.

The efforts of the Contadora Group enjoy the support of the entire international community: the European Community, the non-aligned countries, the General Assembly and the Security Council. More recently, its actions have been buttressed by the Lima Support Group, composed of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, indicating that there is a broad Latin American consensus in favour of peace in Central America.

Through its dedication and its consistent action the Contadora Group has emerged at the international level as the sole framework providing the single credible alternative to confrontation. It is an alternative based on the revival of a peaceful consensus in favour of co-operation and harmony in Central America and on the values of freedom, independence and human dignity. Those same values have guided the action and positions of Algeria, and that is precisely why my country stands in solidarity with the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean in their struggle to control their own destiny in peace and independence.

It was clear from the start that the Contadora initiative was taken in a particularly unfavourable international situation. Exemplary determination was therefore needed to undertake actions which ran counter to the general tendency towards confrontation.

Now, when the world's two main Powers appear to have resumed the path of dialogue, the Contadora initiative is all the more valuable and significant. While a return to dialogue and negotiation between the super-Powers is indispensable to the improvement of international relations, we must not forget that it is necessary to reach a just and final settlement of regional conflicts, based on respect for the rights of all the peoples and States involved. Indeed, it only emphasizes the

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urgency of such settlements for the establishment of international peace and security shared equally by all nations.

Regional frameworks therefore have a role of paramount validity and importance in the settlement of such conflicts. That is the thrust of the renewed support which the Contadora Group must enjoy in all its efforts and at every stage of the process it intends to set in motion. That applies particularly to the most powerful States and especially to the one State whose effective, sincere support could promote a rapid return to peace.

At the heart of the crisis in Central America there is a non-aligned country, Nicaragua, which is exposed to constant threats to its territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Immediately after its triumph over one of the most savage dictatorships in the history of the region, the heroic people of Nicaragua was diverted from the necessary nation-building and forced to devote a sizeable portion of its energy and resources to defending its sovereignty and protecting its national independence.

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However, faced with the escalation of tension which continues to be a feature of the situation in the region, Nicaragua, assured of the solidarity of the Non-Aligned Movement, has constantly shown its readiness to contribute to improving relations between the countries of Central America, as demonstrated by its immediate willingness to sign the Contadora Act of 7 September 1984. Today the country still remains open to dialogue and negotiation with a view to the speedy promotion of the peace process for the region.

The return to peace in Central America could be initiated very speedily if all the parties involved in the conflict undertook to respect a set of conditions unanimously defined by the international community. These conditions include respect for Nicaragua's sovereignty and inalienable rights and the right of the other peoples of the region to decide, in full sovereignty their economic, political and social systems, free from any outside interference or threats, and non-recourse to any military, political or economic action or pressure that might further aggravate the situation. Another condition is the resumption of the Manzanillo talks between Nicaragua and the United States aimed at normalizing their relations and bringing about regional détente.

Those steps could promote a return to peace and were laid down by the Security Council in its resolution 562 (1985). The framework for their implementation exists and has proved its credibility and effectiveness. I refer to the Contadora Group, which must be encouraged with firm and decisive support, particularly at the present time, when there is a desire to put the avowed will of each party to the real test of peace.

That is the only way to avoid the threat of a general conflict and at last to lay lasting foundations for regional peace and co-operation, which are not only in the interest of the peoples concerned, but also in keeping with their aspirations based on their shared historical legacy, which necessarily gives them a common future.

Mr. TSVETKOV (Bulgaria) (interpretation from French): The situation in Central America is once again before the international Organization. During the general debate about 100 delegations described that situation as a real threat to the peace and security of the region and the world. The Non-Aligned Movement has more than once expressed its deep concern about the situation in the region and, at its meeting in Luanda last spring, its Co-ordinating Bureau made a thorough analysis of the conflict, declaring its solidarity with the constructive initiatives intended to bring about a just and lasting settlement of the problem.

The United Nations has already been debating the situation in Central America for three years, and its position is sufficiently clear and unequivocal. Having voiced its concern about the deterioration of the situation in that part of the world, the Assembly adopted resolution 38/10, which condemned the acts of aggression against the countries of the region and urged the States concerned to desist from hostile acts. The resolution confirmed the inalienable right of each people to decide its future on its own. That right was also reaffirmed by resolutions 530 (1983) and 562 (1985) of the Security Council, which has been seized of attacks on Nicaragua's security and independence.

Unfortunately, it must be said that, despite efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement, tension is continuing to grow in the region, where it has already reached a critical level. The cause of the tension is no secret; it is the collision between the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of Central America to national independence, development, peace and progress, on the one hand, and imperialist reaction on the other. In order to defend its strategic interest imperialism has stepped up acts of aggression, boycotting all proposals for a peaceful solution capable of resolving the crisis in the region.

The military intervention against Grenada on 25 October 1983 provides the most striking example in that regard, bearing in mind that the operation against that small country had much more far-reaching objectives. It is easy to understand the

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meaning of the direct appeals to use the Grenada experience in dealing with other countries in that part of the continent.

Nicaragua is now the main target of brutal pressure and subversive acts in Central America. It is in the Nicaraguan sky that the sinister clouds of armed invasion are gathering. The most recent developments have heightened fears in that regard. We are witnessing growing political, economic and military pressure on that country. The mercenaries of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operating on its territory will this year alone receive nearly \$30 million in the form of so-called humanitarian aid. Thousands of innocent Nicaraguans, including 3,350 adolescents and children, have died at their hands. As they do everywhere else, the agents in the pay of imperialism have been spreading death and destruction, destroying the fruits of the labour of the people. With the trade embargo and other economic sanctions imposed by its powerful northern neighbour, the young Republic will this year see its losses rise to almost \$1.5 billion.

It is significant that the Manzanillo dialogue was broken off unilaterally. The party responsible for that rupture as an absolute condition for the resumption of negotiations the surrender of the legitimate authorities in Managua to the Somozist bands. Another example of brutal interference in the internal affairs of Nicaragua is the express demand made during the debates in the General Assembly on the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations that Nicaragua's social and political system be submitted to international bargaining.

Another proud and sovereign nation of Central America is the target of unceasing hostile acts. The campaign of threats and provocation against Cuba is continuing and becoming more vitriolic. The People's Republic of Bulgaria reiterates to the heroic peoples of Cuba and Nicaragua its firm and whole-hearted support in their struggle to build the society of their choice.

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The state of tension created around Nicaragua and Cuba is only one aspect of the conflicts in Central America. The civil wars which are flaring up in the region are designed to preserve the power of the merchants, big landlords and the oligarchy. The region is the scene of the application of the famous pacification tactics that failed in the Viet Nam era, a field of action for death squads and the target of pitiless air raids.

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The régimes which are said to be undergoing "pacification" have been working with the Green Berets to engage in acts of mass violence against the civilians. On 19 November the Christian Science Monitor reported a new political assassination in the region committed in order to cover up the crimes of the imperialist counter-revolutionaries and mercenaries. In the same issue of that paper we also read that the present Administration is using the territory of neighbouring countries to establish military bases and organize raids into Nicaragua. Concentrations of foreign commando units, frequent joint military exercises in the region and also the presence of patrols around the naval units of a certain major Power denote preparation for an armed intervention. Against such a background the cause for the increasing instability and tension in that part of the Western hemisphere is not in doubt.

There are two types of problems in Central America which must be seen as the origin of the critical situation which has been created there. First, the historical and social conditions, the economic backwardness of the region, which is the result of the merciless exploitation by foreign monopolies and their local partners. But the true cause of the tension is the attempts being made to prop up the decaying dictatorships and privileges by imposing external solutions on internal problems, solutions which are in the interests of well-known political circles, and are advantageous to the transnational corporations.

The international community has expressed its conviction that the problems of Central America must be settled without foreign interference or intervention by political means, without threat or blackmail, in strict accordance with international law and with the Charter. Above all, there must be respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, the right to self-determination, renunciation of the use of force, and respect for the principle of equality in the settlement of disputes.

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On the basis of that position, my country supports the efforts of the Contadora Group and other countries to bring about a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Central America. We must emphasize that notwithstanding the many obstacles, that Group, the sole instrument for a multilateral settlement of those problems, has proved able to define a relevant basis for the political settlement of this critical situation. As the time for taking specific decisions approaches, the Group has come under increasing pressure from forces interested in obstructing the peace progress. But, we still hope that the other parties concerned will follow the example of Nicaragua and show flexibility and good will in those areas in which a consensus will be needed.

I wish to emphasize that Bulgaria welcomes and values the constructive peace proposals of the Nicaraguan Government for the elimination of tension in that part of the world. Its idea of transforming Central America into a zone of peace, with no foreign troops, military manoeuvres and foreign bases provides a broad range of possibilities for normalization. Similarly, the Nicaraguan Government would be prepared to reduce its own forces and armaments if the United States undertook specific measures to put an end to the undeclared war against Nicaragua and refrain in future from such acts of aggression. Such a measure, now under consideration by the Nicaraguan Government, would be possible only in the context of a reasonable balance of forces in the region, one which would not damage Nicaragua's security or the sacred right of the Nicaraguan people to defend their country.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm the total support of my delegation for the unanimous appeal of the international community, contained in the latest Security Council resolution on the problem:

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

"Reaffirms the sovereignty and inalienable right of Nicaragua and the rest of the States to freely decide on their own political, economic and social systems, to develop their international relations according to their people's interests free from outside interference, subversion, direct or indirect coercion or threats of any kind;" (Security Council resolution 562 (1985))

My delegation hopes that it is not too late to reach just solutions in keeping with the legitimate interests of the peoples of the region and the cause of international peace and security. We will do our utmost to achieve that objective.

Mr. NAVA CARRILLO (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): As a member of the Contadora Group, Venezuela is unequivocally committed to the process of negotiation directed to the restoration of understanding and peaceful coexistence in Central America, which would promote its economic and social development and the strengthening of democratic institutions, freedom and human rights.

This broad approach demonstrates that this will be no easy undertaking, but it is one that has been given the backing of joint regional and international action, which should greatly increase the chances of a speedy settlement; that in turn would represent a valuable contribution in the wider sphere of international relations in general. From those same international relations arise interactions that have a disproportionate effect in restricting the field of action of the Contadora Group, and could hamper the full capacity of the countries of Central America to take decisions and to act.

The support of the international community has resulted in related instruments for action such as the Support Group recently set up by Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay - the consolidation this year of the link between Central America, the European Community and the Contadora Group, and the institutionalization this year of a dialogue between Central America and the European Community on some political

(Mr. Nava Carrillo, Venezuela)

issues, on the occasion of the Second Ministerial Conference held this November in Luxembourg. These are all basic expressions of encouragement for our peaceful initiative, which excludes confrontation and concentrates exclusively on dialogue in the search for a reasonable understanding that would enable us to bring about peace and development.

This encouragement is necessary to preserve and keep alive the negotiations on the situation in Central America, within the Contadora framework. It points the way to the definitive establishment of new forms of national and international conduct; but our efforts are encountering obstacles that tend at least to neutralize what is being done, until the time is ripe for an attempt to block it for good. It is like an international fishing trip, in which the fish of peace is fleeing and trying to improve its prospects of escape from the tightening net of bipolar politics. Of course, Central America is not the only stake in this competition and clash of power.

The General Assembly is being kept abreast of developments and results obtained in negotiations which are being pursued within the Contadora framework of by the Central American Governments which are directly responsible for its success.

(Mr. Nava Carrillo, Venezuela)

On 13 September, the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group gave the Central American Foreign Ministers the final draft of the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America. This is a coherent set of commitments, as balanced as possible, to restore coexistence based on political trust, good faith and law.

The date of 21 November was the deadline for the five Foreign Ministers of Central America and the four Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group - Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico and Panama - to discuss exclusively the commitments dealing with the control and reduction of armaments, military manoeuvres and implementation and follow-up mechanisms with regard to security and political matters.

That completed an essential part of the long normative process to achieve a difficult political understanding which has not yet been completed. The main feature of these efforts is to establish a definitive functional, substantive plan covering regional détente and the promotion of confidence, national reconciliation and economic and social development in the area.

During recent discussions in Panama between 19 and 21 November, the Contadora Group delivered to the Central American plenipotentiaries new proposals with the aim of reconciling various positions. Possible solutions were advanced regarding the implementation and follow-up machinery for political commitments pertaining to security and economic and social development. Also, solutions were put forward to be incorporated in the final provisions of the Act, amongst which was the proposed formation of a body for the settlement of disputes to improve the implementation and follow-up mechanisms which could be accepted by the parties when the Act came into effect.

At the same recent meeting of plenipotentiaries in Panama, the Contadora Group once again put forward new criteria for pending negotiations in relation to military manoeuvres and the control and reduction of armaments.

(Mr. Nava Carrillo, Venezuela)

To the complexity of arms issues should be added the notoriously suspicious attitudes that have been fostered by the presence of outside elements, and by direct and indirect influences affecting possible understanding and the harmonization of positions in this particularly sensitive area of negotiation.

The plenipotentiaries of the Contadora Group have informed their Central American counterparts that if the process is to continue, and if negotiated solutions are to be found, a political decision to enter into the commitments laid down in the Act will still be necessary. It is equally true, however, that the creation of conditions which will genuinely make possible a negotiated settlement of the crisis does not depend solely on Central Americans; nor does it depend solely on the imaginative skills of the negotiators or the willingness of Governments to conciliate.

Regional détente and the promotion of confidence among the countries of this region, together with genuine participation by the Contadora Group, are all linked to the attitude of the countries having interests in and ties with the region. That is fundamental to the efforts to promote an atmosphere with a view to reducing current suspicion and distrust which threaten the already precarious legal and political order in the area.

Only a political dialogue will make it possible for the Central American countries, with the support and encouragement of members of the Contadora Group, and with the considerable collaboration of others who lend their support, to find ways and means of putting an end to violence and instability in the region, to begin the march towards economic development and to develop and strengthen democratic institutions and respect for human rights.

This political dialogue can and should make possible a peaceful settlement of disputes based on the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and our own regional organization, which have already been expressed in the Document of

(Mr. Nava Carrillo, Venezuela)

Objectives adopted by the Central American countries and in the commitments which they will assume under the Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America. But that instrument means something more, much more. In its inspiration and its bases, it is the expression of a genuine regional Latin American initiative. It has nothing to do with alien forces which are unable to resolve these problems. Interdependence must not mean the unnecessary confrontation of interests, nor an obstacle to the institutions of peaceful coexistence, or a reasonable understanding and of peace and development. The Contadora process has been on the point of success on a number of occasions. At times its attempts to help to overcome the Central American crisis through Latin American formulas have met with a lack of understanding, and interference from elements outside the region.

As part of an objective and positive analysis of the Central American situation and more specifically of the peace initiative of the Contadora Group, we believe that the General Assembly was quite right to wait for a draft resolution to be submitted which, without favouring any special interest among the Central American countries, does reflect, in keeping with the mandate handed down by the General Assembly decision, a fair balance and likely to promote the negotiating process within the Contadora Group. In addition, it should help to restore peace and peaceful coexistence in the Central American region.

We are well aware of the reality of the situation. We know that we have not yet succeeded in bringing about a peaceful settlement of the problems, despite the extraordinary and exemplary efforts of the Central American countries and of the Contadora Group. But the lack of success is not due to a lack of will or determination to create a peaceful and respectable framework for peaceful coexistence; also we know that delay cannot be solely imputed to the negotiating process.

(Mr. Nava Carrillo, Venezuela)

However, with the same conviction expressed by the Head of State of Venezuela:
"We believe that all the countries directly concerned in the region desire
peace and that there are no sectors of the area bent on prolonging
war-mongering speculation in connivance with foreign interests." (A/40/PV.14,
p. 16)

As President Lusinchi stated:

"we Venezuelans shall not relent in this quest, since we are convinced that it
is necessary to use dialogue to oppose those who try to promote war and
confrontation." (ibid., p. 17)

Mr. ERDENECHULJUN (Mongolia): The item on the situation in Central America at present under discussion is being considered for the third consecutive year in the General Assembly upon the initiative of Nicaragua. The importance of the issue has not diminished since it was first brought to the United Nations General Assembly. On the contrary, the course of events in the region of late makes it increasingly urgent for the world community to give its undivided attention to the serious nature of the situation in that part of the world.

The full gravity of the situation was most convincingly expounded by the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Nicaragua, Nora Astorga, in her statement before this Assembly last Friday.

As is known, the situation in Central America has been repeatedly examined by the Security Council as well - the last time being early in May, when it met to discuss the situation created by the trade embargo imposed on Nicaragua by the United States. The Security Council then adopted resolution 562 (1985), in which, inter alia, it reaffirmed the sovereignty and inalienable right of Nicaragua and the rest of the States to freely decide on their own political, economic and social systems, to develop their international relations according to their peoples' interests free from outside interference, subversion, direct or indirect coercion or threats of any kind. It reaffirmed, further, its firm support to the Contadora Group; called on all States to refrain from carrying out political, economic or military actions of any kind against any State in the region which might impede the peace objectives of the Contadora Group; and called on the Governments of the United States of America and Nicaragua to resume the dialogue in Manzanillo.

The Movement of Non-Aligned States, in its Final Declaration adopted at the Ministerial Conference in Luanda, pointed out that the situation had further deteriorated as a result of imperialist policies of interference and intervention, which, along with the conditions of poverty and oppression from which the region

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

historically suffered, represented a real threat to international peace and security. In this regard the Conference observed that the danger of direct United States intervention in Nicaragua, Cuba and other countries in the region had increased alarmingly.

The facts irrefutably prove that the main source of the continuing increase in tensions in Central America is the United States policy of flagrant interference in the affairs of sovereign States, its military, economic and other pressure against them. It is no secret that since the very first days after the victory of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, the United States of America has made every attempt to destabilize and overthrow the legitimate Government of Nicaragua. With greater intensity, Washington is financing, training and equipping with the most modern means of subversion the Somozan bands carrying out counter-revolutionary attacks and subjecting the peaceful population of that country to terror and violence.

The Reagan Administration has recently approved a new appropriation, of \$27 million, for the terrorist activities of counter-revolutionary groups. It has imposed an economic and trade embargo on Nicaragua.

To judge from the American press, those and other steps undertaken by the United States Administration represent but the beginning of a wider aggressive scheme against that country. This is evidenced by the United States Administration's campaign in the United States Congress to obtain its approval of open military aid to the mercenaries who carry out attacks and subversive activities against Nicaragua from the territory of neighbouring countries. Suffice it to recall here this statement by United States Assistant Secretary of Defense Fred C. Ikle: "If democratic forces are not aided now, a future Administration may have to use force directly".

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

In its so-called peace plan for Central America early this year, the United States of America openly demanded from the Sandinista Government that it should enter into a "dialogue" with the counter-revolutionary mercenaries and hold "new elections" in the country. This act of flagrant diktat is, at the same time, intended to serve as a justification for Washington's subversion of peace efforts to settle the Central American problem and its obstruction of talks with the Government of Nicaragua in Manzanillo.

There lie, in our opinion, the real causes of the present crisis situation in Central America. Therefore, we cannot agree with those who, intentionally or unintentionally, try to fit this crisis within the context of East-West confrontation.

The Government of the Mongolian People's Republic firmly believes that the problems of this region can and must be resolved through political means on a multilateral and bilateral basis. It is precisely that objective which is being pursued by the Government of Nicaragua and the efforts of the Contadora Group, joined recently by the Contadora Support Group comprising Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay.

The Government of Nicaragua has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to settle the Central American problems by displaying common sense and flexibility.

Any viable solution to the conflicts in Central America should take into account the security concerns of each and every country of the region, including Nicaragua. My country therefore fully supports the position of Nicaragua to the effect that in order to defuse the factors of tensions and conflict in Central America it is necessary to end all forms of foreign military presence in the area, to dismantle foreign military bases, to withdraw all military advisers and to prohibit all foreign military manoeuvres.

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

In conclusion, I should like to express my Government's full support for the just struggle of the Nicaraguan people, who are defending their freedom and independence from the encroachments of imperialism and reaction, as well as the peace initiatives of the Government of Nicaragua aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the problem of Central America.

Mr. BERROCAL SOTO (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): Once again, Mr. President, we express Costa Rica's pleasure at seeing you conducting the Assembly's work so ably. We express our thanks, too, to the Secretary-General for his report on "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives".

Before I begin my statement on the item before the Assembly, I wish to express to the sister Republic of Colombia the sympathy and sorrow of the people and Government of Costa Rica in connection with the tragic eruption of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano, which has brought so much pain and suffering and loss of life. We have been encouraged by the generous response of the international community, and we hope that this solidarity will be broadly expressed, for that is so necessary if the indispensable assistance is to be given to Colombia during this very difficult time.

(Mr. Berrocal Soto, Costa Rica)

For the third time the General Assembly is taking up the question of Central America. Costa Rica's position in the General Assembly, as in negotiations in the Contadora Group, the Organization of American States and other bodies, is based inevitably on our established historical principles. I therefore begin by stating quite flatly and simply that Costa Rica is in favour of peace in Central America.

That is our only response to the crisis in Central America. For Costa Rica there is no other position that our country, our people, could accept. That response is in keeping with our history, our traditions and our approach to law and order. That has been our position in the past; it is our position in the present; and, as a result of the sovereign will of the Costa Ricans, it will be our position in the future. Our people are devoted to peace. Costa Rica has made peace its national cause, and peace is the core of our international policies and is at the heart of our relations with other peoples and nations. We are here in the General Assembly to reaffirm that truth once again to the international community, that Costa Rica is in favour of peace, and that a political, regional, negotiated solution in Central America, as advocated by the brother countries of Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama, is most decisively and absolutely supported by Costa Rica. Peace is the banner that we hold aloft in the Contadora Group.

Two years ago, on 17 November 1983, President Luis Alberto Monge, interpreting the deepest feelings of the Costa Rican people, proclaimed permanent, active and unarmed neutrality for Costa Rica. In his address to the country he said:

"Costa Rica is against war. Costa Ricans are opposed to violence as a means of settling political disputes. People used to believe that war was the final, rational expression of politics, but Costa Ricans believe that war is the ultimate irrationality, the failure of politics. The contemporary history of Central America only reaffirms our convictions. A policy of peace is an

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inescapable imperative of the present time. Every foreign policy or policy of security must be in the service of this idea. A policy of peace is the only true policy of our time."

The thesis of neutrality has its remote origins in our national independence. In 1829, for the first time, Juan Mora Fernandez, the humble country teacher who was at the time the Head of State of Costa Rica, when the Central American Republic still existed and today's five countries were a unit that had recently gained independence from Spain, reaffirmed our neutrality in the face of the constant civil warfare which was tearing the region apart. This was ratified in the crisis of 1864 and throughout our history by Government after Government, until in 1948 the three-time President of Costa Rica, Jose Figueres, made the abolition of the army as a permanent institution a constitutional provision. Thirty-seven years ago our country decided to disarm voluntarily and unilaterally. Since then we have channelled military appropriations to education, culture, health and social welfare, that is, to peace and the full development of man in society. President Luis Alberto Monge has said:

"Other developing peoples prefer to run the risk of maintaining an army; we prefer to run the risk of not having an army. We have no army, nor shall we ever have one."

In the face of the present crisis in Central America, our position is not one of expediency, nor is it a strategic position or one that accommodates to circumstances. Our history speaks for Costa Rica. Our position is a moral, ethical and political position based on a national reality that speaks for itself and is based on more than 100 years of democratic tradition. Ours is a country which fully respects human rights and in which freedom is an objective fact, not an empty word or a recent acquisition. I am speaking on behalf of a country where

(Mr. Berrocal Soto, Costa Rica)

every four years the citizens go freely to the polls to elect their rulers, where no one is persecuted for his political or religious ideas, where all the social forces may organize and express themselves over the general range of all the ideological options of today's world. I am speaking on behalf of an unarmed country, one that has made of tolerance and dialogue its basic policy. That is Costa Rica, that is what Costa Rica represents in this crisis in Central America.

For this reason we have listened patiently - with Franciscan patience, as our peasants say - to the speeches of several representatives in the General Assembly. Some have spoken about good faith, and we thank them. Some have offered their solidarity and their support, and we appreciate that. For those that sincerely share our ideas about peace and democracy, genuine freedom and respect for human rights, the struggle against poverty and social injustice, progress and well-being without totalitarianism from the right or the left, for those who have rightly said that the conflict in Central America should not be part of the East-West confrontation or a scenario for a super-Power struggle, for all of them Costa Rica has respect and appreciation. We know there is justified concern in the international community. We know that an immense majority of countries of good faith are supporting the Contadora Group. We know that there are some countries that are truly interested in disarmament and in a political settlement of the crisis of Central America. All those countries have the appreciation and the gratitude of the Government and people of Costa Rica.

Unlike those countries, there are others which represent the denial of everything that we have said and everything that represents a settlement of the crisis in Central America. Those countries have institutionalized repression and dictatorship. Yet they come here to the General Assembly and talk to us of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights. Those countries have turned

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their national territory into a military base in the service of a super-Power, and have turned terrorism into a State policy. But they are preaching peace, tolerance, negotiated solutions and support for the efforts of the Contadora Group. We do not, of course, deny those countries their right to express their opinions on Central America. Every day in all forums there are those who turn the word "freedom" into an ugly caricature and "democracy" into a bad word, while they promote totalitarianism and dictatorship, persecution of trade unions, lack of respect for human rights, and torture, ignoring what is being striven for by the international community, because they understand only their concept of man and society and their sovereign right to oppress their peoples ideologically and militarily. That, unfortunately, is how history is being written in the world of today.

The struggle in Central America is for democracy. The struggle in Central America is for the full enjoyment of human rights. What the Central American peoples want is to elect those who govern them freely. What the social forces want is the right to organize and to express their opinions freely, without censorship or control by those in power. What we need in Central America is freedom of the press, trade union freedom, religious freedom, freedom to express political opposition and freedom to establish political parties of all ideological trends. The struggle in Central America must be to free political prisoners. Thousands and thousands of Central Americans have died in recent decades, but not to replace dictatorships of the right by dictatorships of the left. The countries of Central America have not overthrown their Governments in order to replace those oppressive bodies by general mobilization and conscription. Militarism is not the destiny of Central America; dictatorship, whether of the right or of the left, cannot be the future of Central America.

(Mr. Berrocal Soto, Costa Rica)

What the peoples of Central America want is to build their future in peace, to work hard to produce wealth, eliminate poverty and underdevelopment, and to create better living standards, with justice and social equality and in freedom. The struggle in Central America is therefore one for peace, but it is basically a struggle for democracy and for economic and social development in freedom. Without freedom and democracy there will never be peace in Central America. Social justice in freedom and democracy must be the goal of the struggle in Central America, and that is the firm conviction of the people and Government of Costa Rica as well as the deeper meaning behind our participation in the negotiations sponsored by the Contadora Group.

My country is prepared to sign the Contadora Act for Peace and Co-operation and our Foreign Minister has stated as much on a number of occasions. We have no reservations on the final draft of the Contadora Act for Peace and Co-operation in Central America transmitted to Governments on 13 September this year. That is the clear, firm and unswerving position of Costa Rica.

The Secretary-General, in his report on the situation in Central America, quite rightly states that

"the roots of the Central American crisis are to be found in unjust socio-economic structures and domestic policies; it is thus obvious that the solution to the crisis is contingent on the political will of the States in the region". (A/40/737, para. 11)

As regards the first statement, I am particularly pleased to recognize the positive and important step taken by the countries of the European Economic Community (EEC) together with Spain and Portugal, which recently adopted in Luxembourg an important agreement on economic co-operation with the countries of Central America. The agreement was concluded one year after the historic meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica, where the European foreign ministers met for the first

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time with their colleagues from Central America and the Contadora Group in September 1984. This European agreement unquestionably represents a first step in the right direction and a realistic, pragmatic, respectful approach to Central America.

Costa Rica believes that the United Nations system must act in the same direction. Rhetorical solidarity is not enough. Good intentions are not enough. In our opinion, and along the lines indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, the latter should formulate as soon as possible and in co-ordination with the bodies and organs of the United Nations system, especially the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), an effective and coherent plan of economic and social assistance for Central America. In that way the United Nations could act effectively and in conformity with the principles of the Charter. This point, which has been understood by the countries of the EEC, Spain and Portugal, and other friendly countries, is of major importance.

By way of example I might simply say that, in spite of the difficulties and civil strife beyond our borders, the Central American market accounts for 25 per cent of Costa Rica's exports. With minor adjustments that figure also applies to Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. The people and Government of Costa Rica wish to deal with the crisis in Central America from the standpoint of economic and social development within the framework of existing institutions in the Central American common market. In this area, technical and financial support from the United Nations would also be particularly valuable.

On 24 October this year the General Assembly celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of this Organization and, on the initiative of Costa Rica, unanimously agreed to declare 1986 International Peace Year. In the context of the crisis in Central America, and as an eloquent expression of our

(Mr. Berrocal Soto, Costa Rica)

long-standing devotion to peace, President Luis Alberto Monge, two years after the proclamation of Costa Rica's perpetual, active, unarmed neutrality, presented to the Legislative Assembly of my country on 17 November - just a few days ago - a bill on principles of neutrality which will become the binding law of the Republic and thus embody permanently in my country's legislation what is already part of our national history. That decision is also an act of faith in international law, in the United Nations and in the machinery for collective security adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS).

My country is well aware of the heavy responsibility it has assumed. Every Costa Rican is well aware of the overriding importance of the negotiations of the Contadora Group. It is either the Contadora Act or war. We are on the threshold of peace - or possibly the threshold of war in Central America. Some positions of absolute intransigence have made the chances of peace more remote in the past few days. The Contadora Group is going through a decisive and crucial time.

My country is wholeheartedly in favour of peace, but if war and irrationality win the day then Costa Rica, in an act of legitimate self-defence, to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity, will have to turn to friendly democratic countries and invoke whatever security machinery is necessary. We had to do so in 1948 and in 1955 and we were forced to do so again in 1979. Our neutrality must not be confused with defencelessness. We shall not hesitate to do likewise in 1985 or 1986, or whenever it may be necessary, because, just as history would not forgive us for failing to do everything possible for peace, future generations in Costa Rica would never forgive today's leaders if they allowed foreign troops to humiliate Costa Rica and trample underfoot our democratic institutions.

Mr. SALEH (Democratic Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): Since the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly we have been discussing the item entitled "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives". Since 1979 the international community has been convinced that once the Nicaraguan people had decided, thanks to the leadership of their Sandinista revolution, to overthrow the dictatorial Somoza régime and choose a revolutionary and independent path, United States imperialism would create problems and difficulties to abort the legitimate right of the Nicaraguan people to choose that path. Events since then have indeed confirmed that conviction. The repeated attacks against the Nicaraguan people and the threats to their sovereignty and independence have placed historic responsibilities upon our shoulders, because such acts represent gross violations of the United Nations Charter, international law and the legitimate right of all countries to defend their sovereignty and independence and to choose their own social and political system.

(Mr. Saleh, Democratic Yemen)

In the historic address to this Assembly by Comrade Daniel Ortega Saavedra, President of Nicaragua, he highlighted the nature of the aggression against his country and people. He said:

"Since 1981 the Government of the United States of America has attempted to destroy Nicaragua's democratic process and to deny the existence of a non-aligned Nicaragua in the Central American region. Thus, in 1981, the United States rulers suspended food credits to Nicaragua. They adopted a 10-point programme and earmarked \$19 million to set up a mercenary force. In 1982 the United States Government authorized covert operations against Nicaragua and vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution banning the use of force or interference in the affairs of other nations."

(A/46/PV.42, p. 4)

Later in that statement President Ortega Saavedra said Nicaragua was no enemy of the United States and wished only to live in peace with it.

Having heard that, we must ask why the United States bears such ill will towards the people of Nicaragua and its revolutionary Government. Why does it not desist from its policy of intervention in the affairs of Nicaragua and its attempts to concoct pretexts for the transformation of Central America into a hotbed of war - a war that will undoubtedly visit devastation and destruction upon the peoples of the region at a time when they are in dire need of peace so that they can forge their prosperity and development?

We have long been accustomed to the United States Administration's illogical and imaginary pretexts aimed at justifying its attacks and threats. We all recall the vicious invasion by American forces against a small country, Grenada, replacing a revolutionary régime with another regime that does its bidding against the express desires and aspirations of the Grenadian people.

(Mr. Saleh, Democratic Yemen)

In the past four years Nicaragua has experienced an economic blockade imposed upon it in order to pre-empt its progressive options and to thwart its non-aligned principles. The United States Government refuses to stand before the International Court of Justice to discuss the case brought by Nicaragua in relation to the aggression and violation of its rights as an independent, sovereign State Member of the United Nations.

The attitude of the United States Administration can never relieve it of liability for the consequences of the vast human and material losses inflicted on the Nicaraguan people, nor can it diminish its responsibilities arising from its undeclared war against Nicaragua, including the economic blockade.

This comes at a time when we all know that the American Administration vehemently objects to and opposes the call made to the international community to take economic measures against the racist Pretoria régime to force it to change its inhuman policies against the black population. The United States even goes as far as to provide Pretoria with all assistance to perpetuate its occupation of Namibia and to obstruct international efforts to eliminate the last strongholds of racist colonialism in our world.

Such breaches of international law and the United Nations Charter constitute a serious and growing threat to the sovereignty and independence of small States and imperils international peace and security.

My country supports all efforts aimed at bringing about security and peace in the Central American region and believes that the only choice lies in peaceful methods and the continuation of the ongoing constructive dialogue initiated by the Contadora Group with a view to arriving at positive solutions that will ensure the right of all to select their own path of development to the future and to establish the foundation of political and economic co-operation between the countries of the

(Mr. Saleh, Democratic Yemen)

region on the basis of adherence to and respect for the principles of peaceful coexistence between them.

There is no doubt that the presence of United States forces in the region constitutes an obstacle to the achievement of such goals and undermines the bridges of understanding Contadora is trying to set up in the interest of peace and security in the region. It is incumbent upon our international community to call upon the American Administration to cease its intervention in the internal affairs of the countries of the region, withdraw all its forces, refrain from hostile acts and threats of armed aggression against Nicaragua and respect the sovereignty and independence of the countries of the region, including their legitimate right to a political system of their choice.*

Democratic Yemen reiterates its support for the revolutionary régime chosen by the Nicaraguan people and stands firmly by their absolute right to build an independent life. We commend the ongoing process of economic and social transformation aimed at improving the living standards of the people and fostering a new democratic life. Moreover my country supports all United Nations efforts to bring about peace and security in Central America and to further the principles of the United Nations and of international law, principles that guarantee the right of all States to sovereignty and independence and free choice of their path of development.

Mrs. MARTIN (Canada): This year marks the third occasion on which the question of Central America has been brought before this body. I am confident that there is no one here who would argue against the need for our discussions to reflect the support of the entire international community for the development,

*Mr. Hepburn (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mrs. Martin, Canada)

acceptance and implementation of a workable, durable and comprehensive peace agreement for the entire region. The energetic attempts of the past six weeks led to renewed hope that such an agreement would soon be within our grasp. Alas, sadly we once again seem to be watching these undertakings trickle away like sand through the hourglass of negotiation.

After three years of continuous efforts by the countries of the Contadora Group, and the countries of Central America, after three years of progress, frustrations and dangerous incidents, we could be tempted collectively to seize upon a superficial solution, a quick fix, something that could be wrapped up in all the right ribbons and signed by all the key players to the sound of trumpets. However, the history of cosmetic agreements designed for short-term solutions is well known. Canada believes that the results of such an approach now in Central America would be counterproductive and potentially disastrous.

It is from this perspective that Canada has attentively followed the events in the region over the course of the past year. In fact when one looks back at the tasks that Contadora undertook some three years ago, one can only admire its tenacity, perseverance and demonstrated skill. At the outset the obstacles to this task appeared insurmountable given the diversity of motives, the military disequilibrium, the externally supported guerrilla campaigns, the growing East-West dimension of the crisis as well as the declining standard of living of all the countries of the area and, maybe above all, the overwhelming lack of mutual confidence that characterized those first months of negotiations.

Under these adverse circumstances, the agreement on the 21-point list of objectives in September 1983 could only be seen as a remarkable and highly significant accomplishment. At that time Canada expressed in the General Assembly the view that enduring solutions to the problems of the region could best be

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reached by the countries of the region. As we noted then, this approach is consistent with the highest principles of the United Nations Charter. Canada maintains its position on both points. What is needed now is a renewal of faith, a new impetus and above all a willingness to invest the confidence and hard work required to ensure just and lasting solutions within the area. The support of the United Nations and the world community are also essential elements in the search for peace, human dignity and eventual prosperity.

(Mrs. Martin, Canada)

Canada views the current upheaval and unrest in Central America as primarily a function of chronic social and economic injustice coupled with persistent frustration over failure to institute the necessary economic and social reforms to meet even the most basic popular expectations. We realize that external interference and a tendency to view matters in an East-West context have exacerbated and aggravated an already complex situation. Based on our perspective reflecting the growing concern of Canadians about the region in recent years, our response, beyond strong support for Contadora, has been to focus our main efforts on bilateral development assistance. Thus, in 1981 we announced the tripling of our aid to Central America. Since then Canada's policy towards Central America has evolved and been refined taking into account both our humanitarian concerns and the geopolitical realities of the area.

I must stress, however, that Canadian development assistance in Central America is not given on the basis of politics or held back to reward or penalize Governments. Indeed, such a generalized practice would contradict our fundamental policy, which aims at promoting the economic and social development of disadvantaged people so that they and their children may look forward to an improved quality of life. Regrettably, however, internal situations have arisen which have led us to suspend individual bilateral aid programmes, as has been the case in certain countries. We are pleased, however, that at least in one case we have been able to resume our development assistance programmes in the light of positive developments. Canada continues to believe that respect for human dignity and basic human rights in each of the countries of Central America constitutes a fundamental element of the return to peace and stability in the area. Such respect remains a transcendent concern of Canada and a visceral preoccupation of Canadians.

Briefly stated, Canada's concerns in Central America are in large measure the same as those which motivate the countries of the Contadora Group themselves.

(Mrs. Martin, Canada)

There are honourable exceptions, but we are appalled by the disregard of basic human rights. We are troubled by poverty, the declining quality of life, the displacement from their homes of over 2 million people, or about one tenth of the population of the entire Central American region, and foreign military interference. We fervently hope that all the parties involved in the various Central American conflicts will refrain from increasing the already alarming level of militarization of the area. In the broader context, as a fellow Commonwealth country, we cannot fail to note the severe socio-economic problems caused for Belize, a small nation not a party to any conflict but host to thousands of refugees from States that are. Our policy towards the region reflects both our compassion for those who are suffering and our pursuit of good-neighbourliness in the Western hemisphere.

This is one reason why we have expressed our support for Contadora since its inception and why we have provided practical forms of diplomatic assistance. At the request of the Contadora countries, Canada prepared detailed comments on the control and verification mechanisms at the various stages of the draft Contadora Act, based upon our long experience in the field of United Nations peacekeeping activities. We have also been assisting in the reconciliation efforts in Nicaragua by witnessing in Bogota and Mexico the talks between the representatives of the Sandinistas and the indigenous opposition group, Misurasata.

We believe that the creation of the Support Group, composed of Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina and Peru, and the recent conference in Luxembourg between the European Community, Spain and Portugal and the Contadora Group and the Central American countries constitute valuable efforts to strengthen the peace process in the region. These efforts have our full support, as do the complementary measures that have been taken from time to time to foster dialogue between the protagonists

(Mrs. Martin, Canada)

in the region. In this context we were heartened to hear the references to dialogue in the statement last Friday by the United States representative, Ambassador Walters, particularly inasmuch as we recognize dialogue between the United States and Nicaragua to be a key element in the search for lasting solutions.

We witness in Central America both an era of uncertainty and a time of frustration. Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica have recently held or will shortly hold national elections which constitute a renewal of democracy and thus contribute to strengthening peace and stability in the area. But the economic crisis continues to take its toll. Border incidents between neighbouring countries are all too frequent. External influences have added pressure and continue to increase tension. Some of the countries of the Contadora Group have just suffered terrible natural catastrophes, and to them we continue to extend our sincerest sympathy and help. But, as long as the people of Central America cry out for peace and reconciliation, we cannot lose hope. They must not lose hope. The pursuit of the efforts of the Contadora countries in conjunction with the Governments of the region are of course even more crucial to them than they are to us. It is more important than ever, therefore, that the Contadora Group pursue its valiant work towards a comprehensive regional agreement. There are those who diminish the Contadora peace process, those who say it has achieved too little. The question for the detractors, however, is obvious: where might we now be without it? Contadora has helped to keep the lid on an increasingly explosive situation. It has created a framework for peace. It will require even more patience and, moreover, the indispensable political will of the parties involved. Continued regional dialogue is the only possible means to find a solution to this most complex crisis. The task is enormous, but it is obvious that the stakes are even greater.

(Mrs. Martin, Canada)

Canada is willing to help in the design of essential security provisions of a Contadora Act in response to requests from the Contadora Group. We are also prepared to maintain our developmental assistance to the Governments and peoples of Central America. But perhaps most important, Canada and Canadians will continue to view events in this troubled region with humanitarian interest and concern.

Mr. MUÑIZ (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): The Central American crisis is one of the most serious concerns of the international community at the present time, and for us Latin Americans it has acquired an even greater dimension because of the close historical and cultural bonds and blood ties between us and the peoples of the region.

The danger to international peace and security inherent in the possible escalation of violence in Central America is particularly serious for Latin America because of the damaging consequences that a generalized conflict would have for our continent. A military confrontation in Central America would do irreparable harm to hemispheric relations and could serve to promote divisions among the nations of Latin America, generating enormous tensions and uncertainties which could endanger the successful rebirth of democratic systems in the region.

(Mr. Muñiz, Argentina)

Now we are seeing the outward manifestations of the deep economic and social injustices which lie at the origin of the Central American crisis. The peoples of the region have experienced centuries of backwardness, poverty, lack of freedom, foreign intervention and militarism, as a result of which their hopes for real economic, social and political development have been frustrated time and again.

Central American societies are now at a crucial stage in their history, engulfed in a whirlwind of change and the need to alter unjust structures. Whether or not that change will benefit the peoples of the region, who in the last analysis should be our prime concern, depends on the efforts of all. We must make sure that the outcome of the crisis guarantees the establishment of democratic pluralistic societies in which the inhabitants live in freedom and are able to develop harmoniously.

The fundamental causes of the crisis have been recognized in General Assembly resolution 38/10.

Argentina contends that there must be full respect in Central America for the principles of non-intervention, of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, of the non-use or threat of the use of force in international relations, of the peaceful settlement of disputes, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all must be fully respected and promoted, as must be the ideological pluralism which is a natural consequence of the exercise of the self-determination of peoples.

That is why it is fitting to recall that the General Assembly and the Security Council in unanimously adopted resolutions have reiterated the right of all the peoples of Central America to determine their own form of government and to choose their own economic, political and social system without foreign intervention, coercion or restraint of any sort.

(Mr. Muffiz, Argentina)

The General Assembly, also within the context of the Central American crisis, has reaffirmed the obligation of all States to refrain from resorting to the threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of any State. It also emphasized the importance of a genuine democratic process, of respect for human rights and the economic and social development of the region.

These principles have received the unanimous support of the international community. None the less, we see that in practice compliance with them in the region has been sporadic at best.

We must then analyse the question seriously to determine whether there is a real political will on the part of countries with interests in the area to reach a solution which would take account of the rights of all.

Confrontation benefits no one and must be discarded.

No one is better qualified than the Latin American countries to understand the situation in Central America, and accordingly to propose workable and acceptable solutions for all parties.

We believe the international community has a great debt of gratitude to Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela which, through the Contadora negotiating process have provided the only reasonable alternative to resolve this crisis.

Those countries have worked tirelessly to establish a balance between all the interests involved and have prepared a set of agreements which constitute in objective terms a real possibility for a global solution. The Contadora Act covers everything ranging from military aspects to the consolidation and defence of democracy; from the political aspects to the economic revitalization of the area.

(Mr. Mufiz, Argentina)

Argentina reiterates here its unreserved support for the diplomacy of Contadora and in this regard I wish to recall that my country, together with Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, have constituted a Contadora support group in order to provide active assistance, as far as we can, to help it to achieve its noble objectives.

The international community, and in particular this General Assembly, have given their unanimous support to the Contadora negotiating process and we are convinced that, once again, this is the right forum in which to voice universal support for that process and urge that it be continued. In this sense, we firmly support, and will continue to do so, whatever solutions may be arrived at through the efforts of the Contadora countries.

Without goodwill on the part of all interested parties there will be no solution to the problems of Central America. We appeal for that goodwill and for common sense on the part of all in order to bring about propitious conditions so that the peoples of the region can at long last live in peace and prosper in an atmosphere of democracy and freedom.

That is why we appeal to all the parties involved to refrain from doing anything to impede the negotiating process and to take measures conducive to the establishment of a climate of understanding. In this context, we recommend that the United States and Nicaragua resume the Manzanillo dialogue in keeping with Security Council resolution 562 (1985).

The United Nations bears great responsibility towards the peoples of Central America. The solution of this crisis is a historical and moral imperative of the highest magnitude and we must set about meeting it.

Mr. YU Mengjia (China) (interpretation from Chinese): In recent years the situation in Central America has presented a scene of tension and turbulence and there is no sign of relaxation so far. The international community is deeply concerned over this development. Though China and the Latin American countries are far apart geographically, it, too, is much concerned over the situation in Central America, one of the hotspots in today's world.

In retrospect, since the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the situation in Central America, no large-scale military conflicts have broken out there, thanks to the unremitting efforts of the Contadora Group countries. However, border conflicts among some countries in the area have occurred from time to time. What must be pointed out in particular is that foreign military forces continue to be present in the region and outside intervention has been on the increase rather than decrease, manifested by aggressive intimidation and the imposition of trade embargoes or by ever-increasing direct or indirect, overt or covert, military aid to that region under specious pretexts. The peace and security of Central America are still subjected to serious threat. In view of this development, it is highly necessary for the General Assembly, at its current session, to consider once again the situation in Central America.

During the general debate at the current session of the General Assembly, representatives from many countries pointed out in their statements that there were deep-rooted internal and external factors for the prolonged turbulence in Central America and that the intervention and meddling by outside forces, particularly the attempt by the super-Powers to bring the Central American issue into the orbit of their rivalry, have further complicated the question. These representatives made clear their position against outside interference and stood for a peaceful settlement of the Central American question through negotiations by countries concerned in the region. Such a proposition should be met with serious consideration and earnest support.

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

The Chinese delegation maintains that the State sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries in Central America must be respected; the problems of Central America should be settled by the Central American peoples themselves; intervention in Central American affairs by whatever outside forces in whatever form should be opposed; and the contradictions and conflicts among the countries in the region should be settled fairly and reasonably through peaceful negotiations in conformity with the norms guiding international relations as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations

Over the past few years the Contadora Group, consisting of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela, has made continuous and new efforts towards relaxing the tense situation in Central America and promoting the process of a peaceful settlement. The Contadora Group has thus won sympathy and support for its efforts from more and more countries. In July of this year Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay formed the Lima group, in active support of the work of the Contadora Group. Last August, the Foreign Ministers of those eight countries held a successful joint meeting at which they pointed out that a comprehensive and durable solution should be found to the conflicts in Central America and that the settlement of the Central American question cannot be reached by force but, rather, should be achieved through political and diplomatic dialogues and negotiations, as consistently advocated by the Contadora Group. These just and reasonable propositions are conducive to the relaxation of tension in Central America and should therefore receive due attention. At the same time, we are glad to see that the non-aligned countries, the European Economic Community (EEC) countries and the Secretary-General of the United Nations have all been making positive efforts towards the peaceful settlement of the Central American question.

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

As we are again considering the situation in Central America, the Chinese delegation wishes to reiterate its firm support for the Contadora Group in its effort to bring about a relaxation of the situation in Central America and to find a political solution to the disputes there. China supports the Group's stand that the Central American issue should not be brought into the orbit of the East-West conflict. We hope that the countries concerned will respect the aspirations of the Central American countries, abandon their policy of interference and adopt a positive attitude, so that the efforts of the Contadora Group and the Lima group in favour of the realization of peace and stability in the Central American region may be fruitful and all the countries there may live in peace and amity.

Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR, like virtually all the other delegations which have spoken, is obliged yet again to note that, notwithstanding the decisions and resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice, there has been no improvement in the situation in Central America. Indeed, tension there has continued to rise. The peaceful initiatives of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Latin American countries, which were undertaken in order to improve the political climate in that region, have been getting nowhere. The reason for this lies in the policy of the United States, which has been expanding its undeclared war against the small country of Nicaragua and trying to undermine the democratic process taking place in that country and to prevent its people from building their own life, free from outside promptings and diktat, in keeping with their own interests and aspirations.

The forces of imperialism have set in motion the whole arsenal of sophisticated forms, methods and means of suppression previously refined at great cost in suffering to other countries and peoples fighting for their freedom. The

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arsenal is a wide-ranging one from the cutting off of food loans, a trade embargo, economic blockade, political pressure and blackmail, all the way to the financing, training, organizing and dispatch of terrorist bands, the mining of ports and large-scale military operations against a sovereign country, spreading death, violence and destruction. Thousands of entirely innocent women, children and old men have already fallen victim to these barbarous actions. The overall damage inflicted by foreign aggression on the people of Nicaragua has already exceeded the amount of \$1.5 billion, which is more than one and a half times higher than the volume of the so-called economic assistance of the United States to the entire Central American region.

But it seems that that is not enough. In April 1985 a routine ultimatum was delivered to the Nicaraguan Government that, if it did not change its internal and foreign policies, the United States would feel free to step up its undeclared war against Nicaragua, not excluding the possibility of armed intervention in so doing. Many millions of dollars of appropriations have been set aside for such unlawful actions. And this is being done at a time when 80 per cent of Americans oppose the use of armed force in Central America.

During the commemorative meetings of the fortieth session of the General Assembly the President of the Republic of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega Saavedra, demonstrated the unswerving will of his people for peace, and called upon the President of the United States to answer the question "he is willing to normalize relations with Nicaragua in conformity with the principles of the Charter and of international law" (A/40/PV.42, p. 9). In reply he heard that America's support for the contras must not be stopped and will not be stopped.

In order to justify such a policy, attempts are made to depict Nicaragua as an exceedingly mighty military Power, capable of crushing its neighbours and even of threatening the United States from the rear. In fact, however, according

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to data from the London International Institute for Strategic Studies, the regular armed forces of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala are twice as big as the armed forces of Nicaragua. They have greater fire-power and their air forces have considerably more warplanes and helicopters. In Washington every possible attempt is being made to cast doubt on the legitimate right of the Government of Nicaragua to buy overseas the foreign hardware which it needs to repel aggression.

At the same time it is well known that the Pentagon is very widely represented in Latin America and particular attention is given, in the development of its military infrastructure in that part of the world, to Central America and the Caribbean, where dozens of military facilities have been set up, some of them near the territory of Nicaragua. In that region there is an unceasing succession of military manoeuvres designed to intimidate Nicaragua and also to supply the counter-revolutionary bands and equip them with weapons.

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Nicaragua is a threat to no one. It is a member of no bloc. It is not a member of a military alliance with any State. The only thing it wants is an opportunity to build its own life in peace.

During the hostile campaign which is being waged against Nicaragua it has been accused of literally everything, including human rights violations; but the truth cannot be hidden. It is not the Sandinistas but the contras who have been making a mockery of human rights, and even the bourgeois press cannot hide that. For example, The New York Times of 16 July 1985 noted in particular that "the most brutal violations of human rights in Nicaragua are being committed today by the contras. That same newspaper reported on 16 November 1985 that the contras have been terrorizing, plundering and killing Honduran peasants, and those killers have been dignified by their American protectors with titles such as "brothers", "freedom fighters", "democratic forces" and so on.

One cannot fail to be struck by the cynicism with which attempts are being made to manipulate the words "freedom" and "democracy". Apparently it is enough to hang the label of totalitarianism quite arbitrarily on any State and immediately one has a fallacious pretext for aggressive actions against it - actions that trample under foot all the norms of international law governing relations between sovereign States, as well as the very concepts of freedom and democracy. Those who have won the dubious laurels of "pacification" in Grenada are clearly eager for more.

As for the Government of Nicaragua, which has palpably and really improved life for the majority of its citizens, it has shown no lack of goodwill in the quest for ways to normalize the situation in the region. It has repeatedly proposed to the United States Administration that they resume the dialogue in order to establish a basis for the normalization of relations between the two States in

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a spirit of mutual respect and strict compliance with international law.

Corresponding proposals have been addressed to the Governments of Honduras and Costa Rica also.

Unceasing efforts to secure a political settlement in Central America without outside interference have been undertaken also by the non-aligned States, the members of the Contadora Group and the Support Group for the Contadora process.

The Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America, if adopted, not just by Nicaragua but also by the other countries of the region and the United States, could very greatly improve the situation. However, the United States refuses to hold negotiations on an equal footing concerning a political settlement. The constructive proposals in favour of peace of the Government of Nicaragua, the Contadora Group and other countries continue to be thwarted by that same country, the United States, and this is happening at a time when the majority of the countries Members of the United Nations consider that the problems of Central America can and should be resolved without outside interference, by political means, excluding intervention, threats and pressure. The Charter, which everyone is bound to observe, steers us precisely in that direction.

It is disturbing to note that certain countries of Central America are following their American protectors, thereby slowing down the process of achieving a political settlement in that region. It is now high time for them to move from verbal assurances of peaceful intentions to concrete acts and put an end to hostile acts against Nicaragua, in particular support for the contras who have dug in on their territory and are carrying out bloody raids against Nicaraguan territory.

The Byelorussian SSR expresses its full solidarity with the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean in their struggle for independence and social and

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economic progress. We condemn the aggressive actions which are being carried out against Nicaragua and call for their immediate and unconditional cessation. In that region of the world, too, it is essential to guarantee a normal and stable international situation in order to bring about the free and independent development of all States in conditions of peace and good-neighbourly relations. This will promote peace and international security.

Mr. WASIUDDIN (Bangladesh): The agenda item entitled "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives" is once again before this Assembly. The Secretary-General's report on the item (A/40/737) is before us for consideration. We have studied the report with interest and are concerned to note that during the course of the year "the situation in Central America has been steadily deteriorating" despite sustained efforts to reverse the trend by the countries of the Contadora Group. He has cited an increase in bilateral incidents between countries in the region which have not only hindered the Group's work but also "prompted fears of a more serious breach of the peace". (A/40/737, para. 8)

Preceding speakers, in their statements, have comprehensively reviewed developments in the region and expressed grave concern at the prevailing situation there. Bangladesh fully shares that concern and we are disturbed to note the apparent lack of progress in defusing tension and mistrust in the region. During the period under review we have seen communications from countries of the area accusing each other of interference and intervention in each other's internal affairs. My delegation therefore fully endorses the following view of the Secretary-General that

(Mr. Wasiuddin, Bangladesh)

"The continuing deterioration in the situation over the past year demonstrates the urgent need for an equitable, comprehensive and negotiated solution in the region." (para. 11)

It should be self-evident by now that the prevailing situation in Central America continues to be volatile and grave and that any further deterioration would only further aggravate it, making it more difficult to restore peace in the region. What is urgently required now is a constructive dialogue among the parties involved with a view to creating an atmosphere of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence.

(Mr. Wasiuddin, Bangladesh)

It is our sincere expectation that all the parties involved will show moderation, self-restraint and vision in order to build peace and stability in Central America.

It was in this spirit that a process of dialogue was set in motion about three years ago by the countries members of the Contadora Group, Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela. The Contadora process provides a valuable framework for peace and co-operation among the countries of the region designed to avert further exacerbation of tension and any recourse to a military solution to the problems of the region. The Contadora process places emphasis on the spirit of negotiation within a regional context in an effort to isolate the issues from extraneous political influences. The draft Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America is an outcome of a series of intensive negotiations among all the parties concerned, and it provides the much-needed framework for peace and co-operation on the basis of shared perceptions and mutual accommodation. The Contadora process has been widely appreciated, and we firmly believe that that important initiative should be allowed to take its final course leading to the desired fruition. In this context my delegation would join in the appeal made by the Secretary-General to the countries in the region to persevere and to refrain from any action that could jeopardize the peace initiative.

My delegation has consistently extended its full support to the Contadora initiative, for we firmly believe that such a regional endeavour is most likely to succeed, since those engaged in it are in a better position to evaluate the situation with greater comprehension and accuracy. At preceding sessions the Assembly has adopted resolutions by consensus which, inter alia, lent full support to the Contadora process and has also spelt out the very principles upon which those dialogues should be based. We should continue to extend our full support to this timely and valuable initiative. It is encouraging to note that the Organization of American States has also endorsed the Contadora process. The

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Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, of which my country is an active member, has consistently supported this regional endeavour. The countries of the region have recently further strengthened this process by forming a Contadora Support Group, consisting of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay. We welcome this development and fully share the Secretary-General's perception that it reflects "strong Latin American concern". Such concern is understandable, because, in the words of the Secretary-General,

"the roots of the Central American crisis are to be found in unjust socio-economic structures and domestic policies". (A/40/737, p. 3)

It reinforces our conviction that the Contadora process, with the support and assistance of all the parties directly concerned, will bring positive results in restoring peace in the region. Any attempt to view the developments in Central America in the context of East-West confrontation will not only hamper the process of normalization through meaningful dialogue and negotiations but also exacerbate the situation.

The draft Contadora Act reaffirms, inter alia, such principles of inter-State relations as the inadmissibility of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of States; the sovereign equality of States; the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States. Those cardinal principles, based on the United Nations Charter, have universal application and are particularly relevant in the Central American region. The document also upholds the right of peoples to choose freely their own form of political, economic and social system and recognises the importance of creating, promoting and strengthening the democratic system in all countries of the region. It also stresses that acts of subversion or sabotage and the use of the territory of one State for undertaking any action affecting the security of another State are

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contrary to the fundamental norms of international law and peaceful coexistence. The draft Act, the outcome of a long and arduous process of dialogue and negotiations by all the countries of the region, is the only viable arrangement for restoration of peace and co-operation in the region. Now that the Contadora process is at a crucial juncture and its draft Act is in its final phase of consideration, it is imperative that the Assembly give a clear and unmistakable signal to all concerned that the time has now come for them to take firm and decisive action to restore peace, stability and co-operation in the region.

For our part, Mr. President, my delegation will render, as always, its full support and co-operation in your endeavour to seek an end to the present explosive situation in Central America. Our firm and principled stand on this issue is based on the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the fundamental norms of international law and peaceful coexistence. We will continue to extend our unequivocal and unconditional support to the efforts of the Contadora Group until it achieves final success.

In consideration of the urgency of the situation my delegation emphasizes once again the importance of reaching an early regional consensus to restore peace and stability in Central America so that all the countries can devote their full attention to economic and social development. We believe that at this session, which marks the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, the General Assembly should take firm and decisive action to promote and encourage the current process of dialogue and consultations, with the assistance of the countries of the Contadora Group. On this historic occasion we hope all concerned will rise above their narrow national interests and demonstrate flexibility and understanding in the cause of peace. My delegation remains ready to extend its full support and co-operation to any concrete action towards that end.

Mr. WIJewardane (Sri Lanka): Despite some hopeful signs, the situation in Central America appears, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, to have been "steadily deteriorating this year". (A/40/737, para. 8) Threats have been posed to the independence and sovereignty of States in the region. Cross-border incidents, terrorist attacks, the introduction of sophisticated arms into the area, acts of military provocation and destabilization attempts have all contributed to exacerbating tension and increasing instability in the region. It is appropriate, therefore, that this item, "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives", be considered in plenary meeting to serve in the search for peace and stability in Central America. We welcome Nicaragua's initiative in bringing the item before the Assembly for the third year running.

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Whatever the concerns of the international community, however, it is clear that the root causes of the instability in Central America lie in the tragic legacy of political, economic and social exploitation to which the region has been the unfortunate heir - in other words, what the Secretary-General, in his comprehensive report, describes as "unjust socio-economic structures and domestic policies" (para. 11). This background situation has been further aggravated by the record of foreign encroachment and pressure on the region.

The States comprising the Central American region have come to represent a diversity of political, economic and social systems, with each State upholding different perceptions of development and national priorities. Respect for and acceptance of this factor is vital not only on the part of those within the region but also on the part of others external to it. The right of a nation to choose and thereafter develop the political and socio-economic system which, it perceives, best fulfils the aspirations and needs of its own people is sacred. This right should be exercised and expressed in a free and open regional environment, without pressure from external quarters, whether applied directly or in more subtle and insidious ways. Different ideologies must be permitted to coexist peacefully. Dialogue rather than confrontation must govern relations between States whose perceptions of their national purpose may differ. Understanding and tolerance rather than mutually hostile propaganda must be promoted between peoples. No State should be permitted to arrogate to itself the right to push its own ideology, system or way of life upon another State, because each State's national endeavour should be fashioned by the particular dictates of its own special situation and the unique genius of its people.

Security Council resolution 562 (1985), adopted earlier this year, recalled General Assembly resolution 38/10, which reaffirmed

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"the inalienable right of all peoples to decide on their own form of government and to choose their own economic, political and social system free from all foreign intervention, coercion or limitation".

Acceptance of this fundamental principle implies acceptance of the principle of non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of States.

The infringement of this principle has led to instability, tension and violence not only in Central America but also in other parts of the globe, bringing in its wake immense suffering and retarding the people's process of economic and social development. The preamble to the draft Contadora Act, which is reproduced as an annex to the Secretary-General's report, refers to the fact that

"the destabilization of the Governments in the region, taking the form of encouragement or support of the activities of irregular groups or forces, acts of terrorism, subversion or sabotage and the use of the territory of a State for operations affecting the security of another State, is contrary to the fundamental norms of international law and peaceful coexistence among States".

(A/40/737, p. 35)

Change cannot be fostered from abroad. As Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister, the Honourable A.C.S. Nanjund, has commented in respect of Central America,

"If there is to be a change in any State, it must emerge from the impulses of its own people, without pressure or interference from outside."

In this context, Sri Lanka welcomes the trend towards the fostering of democratic forms of government in the region, which encourages popular participation in the political process. That trend could constitute one of the most powerful antidotes to the festering of the authoritarian rule and the sly foreign encroachment that have been responsible for most of the unfortunate conditions that have plagued the

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region. The draft Contadora Act recognizes

"the importance of creating, promoting and strengthening democratic systems that are representative, participatory and pluralistic in all the countries of the region". (p. 34)

Clearly, the principles relevant to the Central American situation have a validity that extends far beyond that region, and this is one of the reasons for Sri Lanka's participation in this debate. The principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the non-use of force, the sovereign right of States to pursue their own political, economic and social systems free from external coercion, the encouragement of dialogue, and the peaceful settlement of disputes have an applicability, a validity and a relevance that is universal. Secondly, Sri Lanka is conscious that the tensions and instability in Central America run the risk of causing repercussions beyond the region, posing a threat to international peace and security. Finally - and this is very important - Sri Lanka wishes to endorse, encourage and extol the Contadora initiatives, which offer the most viable and logical blueprint for peace and co-operation in Central America.

The efforts of the Contadora group - Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela - are of special significance because they are being pursued in close consultation with the Central American States concerned and are in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. We welcome also the decision of the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay in July this year to form a Support Group to strengthen the endeavours of the Contadora Group.

The broadening of the peace process along those lines is significant from another perspective: it is a practical manifestation of Latin America's collective will and a demonstration of its capacity to take carefully concerted action on regional issues from a decidedly regional vantage-point and perspective. This

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regional approach must be encouraged and supported, as must any appropriate regional approach anywhere in the world.

The noble efforts of the Contadora Group have yet to culminate in the adoption of the draft Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America. I do not intend to judge the progress or lack of progress in the protracted negotiating process. The views expressed in this debate by the delegations directly concerned and more knowledgeable than my own have helped Sri Lanka greatly, if only by alerting us and clarifying the great complexities involved.

We must all wish the process well. The international community must with one accord express solidarity with this unique comprehensive regional enterprise, which seeks to transcend considerable obstacles, defuse regional sources of tension, prevent extraregional encroachment and foster dialogue and co-operation. This search, we hope, will lead to a solid basis on which the States of the region can develop socially, politically and economically in accordance with the needs and aspirations of their peoples, in conditions of mutual respect, peace and harmony.

Mr. CESAR (Czechoslovakia) (interpretation from Russian): I wish at the outset to note the importance of a particularly significant event in international relations: the recent Geneva meeting between the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union. The implications of the meeting go far beyond the bilateral relations between those two States. Its value will certainly be reflected in the establishment of conditions more favourable to an improvement in the international situation and a return to the policy of détente.

Developments in Central America have taken a new, dangerous turn. Owing to its volatile nature, that region is one of the world's most dangerous hotbeds of crisis. The general debate at this session of the General Assembly illustrated

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

the fact that the situation in Central America, owing to the threat it poses to international peace, is on the same level as the situations in the Middle East and in southern Africa. With regard to this situation, the United Nations has pointed the way in numerous resolutions to eliminating the causes of the crisis.

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

The causes of the explosive situation in Central America are to be found not in a global confrontation between East and West, but, rather, in the profound political, social and economic crisis caused by imperialism. In this respect the United States has the longest "tradition of influence", and has turned Central America and the Caribbean into its strategic backyard, where it maintains order by means of its policy of the big stick and gunboat diplomacy. During the relatively short period of its existence - in historical terms - the United States has had a "military presence" in virtually every country of Central America.

When we look back through history we see that changes have taken place only in the choice of political circumstances in which the United States makes a show of military force. Whereas earlier it interfered primarily in conflicts between States, today it threatens to use force more and more in connection with the internal political situation of sovereign States. The nature of its interference has also changed. There is a growing tendency towards more so-called collective action in the display and use of force, as was shown by the military intervention in Grenada.

At the same time, there is also increase in the scale of shows of force, in which increasing numbers of troops, ships and aircraft take part. We believe that the ever-more frequent shows of nuclear force are a growing threat to the peace of the world. I refer, for example, to voyages of warships carrying missiles and intercontinental flights of B-52 strategic bombers.

The most characteristic feature of the situation in Central America is the escalation of the open armed intervention by the United States in Nicaragua and the developments in El Salvador. In this respect the United States Administration is pursuing a twofold policy. Direct hostile acts against Nicaragua are being covered up by a supposed concern for political dialogue with Nicaraguan representatives and lip service in support of the work being done by the Contadora Group to promote

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

peace. Accompanying that hypocrisy is the increasing activity of the United States special services which are intended to act as an invisible Government in Central America.

Having learned its lesson from its notorious experience in Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Viet Nam, Laos, Kampuchea and Angola, the United States is using a wide range of State instruments to achieve its goals. However, their use is contrary to international law and the United Nations Charter. It is hardly surprising that its policy is being condemned even by a number of Washington's allies. There must be an end to the covert war and the overt but undeclared war being waged in Central America against the progressive democratic development of the countries of the region. We must take account of the real evolution of world affairs and the legitimate interests of peoples. Consequently, we must eliminate such anachronisms as the bankrupt Monroe Doctrine from present international political practice. No thinking person can accept as legitimate the attempts of the United States to achieve a monopoly over determining the future of the peoples of the American continent. The only consequence of those attempts, which are contrary to the norms of international law, is further loss of life and greater impoverishment for the peoples of Central America.

The most obvious and unacceptable imperialist pressure is being brought to bear on Nicaragua. The United States is resorting to a war of attrition aimed at starving Nicaragua and hampering its economic recovery, and bringing about internal disruption by means of terror and ideological diversions. It is giving broad support to armed counter-revolutionary forces and attempting to isolate the revolutionary régime at the regional and international level. It is doing all that in order to keep Nicaragua within its geopolitical sphere, and to prevent the Nicaraguan people from choosing their own development path.

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

It is well known that in pursuing its national liberation revolution Nicaragua is doing no more than to implement the ideas of Central American liberal politicians of the last century, such as Francisco Morazan, and patriots such as Zeledón and Sandino. In other words, it is carrying out the profound democratization of its system, and it offers the hand of co-operation to all in the hope that the problem of obsolete, outdated and unequal social relationships in Central America can be solved by peaceful means.

The United States propaganda machine advances such ridiculous arguments as the claim that the most powerful capitalist Power in the world is threatened by the 3 million people of Nicaragua. According to these arguments, the Nicaraguan Government has no right to seek assistance from friendly countries when it is in a difficult situation created by United States pressure.

There is no doubt that, but for the action taken by the United States to create a rift, the systematic peaceful efforts of the Contadora Group countries would long have been crowned with success, for they enjoy the support of the United Nations and are also actively supported by the Organization of American States (OAS) and the non-aligned countries.

Czechoslovakia has repeatedly expressed appreciation of the constructive approach adopted by the Government of Nicaragua and of the Contadora Group's proposals. Nicaragua's position on the new draft Contadora Act of 12 September 1985, which is set out in General Assembly document A/40/894 of 15 November 1985 is, in our view, fully justified, legitimate and far-sighted and, in respect of the Nicaraguan people, reflects a responsible approach by the Government of this country. That Government has the right and duty to ensure the security of its country at the international level.

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

Czechoslovakia which, together with the other socialist countries and other States, is working to increase the role and responsibility of the United Nations in the maintenance of world peace, and which deeply sympathizes with Nicaragua's heroic struggle to exercise its right to self-determination, appreciates the consistency of the Nicaraguan Government, which bases its foreign policy on the norms of international law and particularly the United Nations Charter. We therefore resolutely condemn the cruel policy of violence, intrigue and distortions being conducted against that country by the present United States Administration. Such steps are contrary to the vital interests not only of Nicaragua but also of all the Central American countries, because they hinder the elimination of the causes of their economic and social backwardness, which are the consequence of many years of exploitation and which cannot be eradicated without peace, security and co-operation in the region.

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

Why is it that countries adjacent to Nicaragua require enormous numbers of weapons and military advisers when Nicaragua proposes to them that border incidents should cease and that a demilitarized zone under effective international control should be created? How can those weapons improve the economic climate of the Central American countries, groaning under the burden of foreign indebtedness, and enable their Governments to stop the decline in the level of living of their workers? What benefits have the peoples of the Central American countries derived from the continuing series of manoeuvres of foreign military units in the region or from counter-revolutionary activities which have turned these countries into a military base? Who is going to benefit from a backward, divided Central America as a "sphere of vital interest", and who is going to pay for all this? This and many other questions received a clear answer in the statements which have already been made at the fortieth session of the General Assembly. The dialectical link was clearly demonstrated between the struggle for peace on the one hand and, on the other, the struggle for national sovereignty and social progress.

Czechoslovakia intends to continue to support the activities of the Contadora Group, whose systematic and purposeful efforts in the interest of the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Central America we respect. We are also encouraged by the activities of the Group set up to support Contadora activities. Those two Groups reflect the aspirations of the Latin American and Caribbean peoples to peaceful coexistence among States.

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic will continue to do everything possible to give Nicaragua maximum political and material support, because its efforts are aimed at liberation and are based on the inalienable rights of its people. The action taken by the Nicaraguan Government is aimed at achieving its goals, and is fully in keeping with the principles of international law and the interests of world peace.

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

It is vitally necessary that the United States Government should return to the bilateral negotiations in Manzanillo on the normalization of relations with Nicaragua, cease financing and using counter-revolutionary bands against Nicaragua and end its intervention in El Salvador and other Central American countries. In that way it would no longer sabotage but create conditions for stabilizing the process of democratization and eradication of the roots of injustice which are the only cause of the continuing tensions in the Central American region.

The recently-adopted Sofia Declaration of the Political Consultative Committee of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty Organization, states:

"All States must strictly abide by the principles of respect for national independence and sovereignty, non-use of force or threat of force, inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs, equality, and other universally recognized norms of international relations. Slandorous campaigns giving a distorted picture of the situation in this or that country and of its policies are also inadmissible. Intervention in the internal affairs of other countries and peoples and pursuit of a policy of State terrorism are totally unjustifiable. Nobody should encroach on the sovereign right of every nation to live and work under the socio-political system that it has itself freely chosen." (A/C.1/40/7, p. 4)

Those words apply fully to the Central American region.

Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand): New Zealand's links with Central America are limited. We have no history of close involvement in the region. Our trade with Central America is minimal. We have no posts in the region. So we have no independent means of assessing the situation from month to month.

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

But there is in New Zealand a widespread knowledge of the unrelenting misery endured by many people there. Adverse economic, social and political conditions have led the Central American region to be one of instability and tension. Poverty, conflict, oppression and a lack of personal freedom are the daily lot of thousands. It is the concern of New Zealanders about this position that has caused me to speak to this item today. We are particularly concerned at the Secretary-General's comments in his report that the situation in Central America has been steadily deteriorating this year, specifically in relation to border incidents between countries in the region. The human suffering in that part of the world must be halted.

There is no doubt that the problems of the region are awesome and complex. They can be effectively tackled only at the root. The foundations for peaceful progress must be economic development and political and social justice. We have no special insights to offer by way of a solution, but we do believe as a matter of principle that in Central America as in our own part of the world, the South Pacific, the people of the region must have the opportunity to realize peacefully their legitimate aspirations. This cannot come from armed conflict or through domination by force. Nor can a solution be imposed from outside the region. The wishes of the people of Central America are of paramount importance.

It is for this reason that New Zealand firmly supports the initiative of the Contadora Group. Through the Contadora process countries of the region are working towards a solution by the region, of the region, for the region. The Contadora process is an attempt by the region to tackle its problems through political and peaceful means, that is to say, through negotiation. It is, as previous speakers have pointed out, a uniquely Latin American initiative. It attempts to resolve the conflicts of Central America at their source, through reconciling the legitimate

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

interests of the nations of the area, and to encourage a comprehensive settlement, which would be the foundation for economic and social progress.

We are pleased to note that the Contadora initiative has won support from the region, from the hemisphere, from the continent - indeed, it is a process which has world-wide endorsement. It is a process which is still going on.

We are grateful to the representatives of the Contadora Group in this Assembly for bringing us up to date on the latest meeting in Panama. Nothing is more clear from their accounts than that a solution will ultimately rest on political will. We urge all countries involved to continue the process of dialogue, and to refrain from any action that might adversely affect a solution. New Zealand believes that the Contadora process represents the best way forward, the best hope for a solution.

New Zealand cannot assist materially to overcome the severe problems of the people of Central America. But we can and do lend our support to those who are making dedicated efforts to do so. The key, as I said before, to the solution of the problems of Central America is political negotiation. We are encouraged at the latest news from Panama that the talks there have been extended beyond the original deadline. If we have any advice to the countries involved it is simply to keep talking. So much depends on the Contadora initiative.

Mr. SIV SICHAN (Democratic Kampuchea) (interpretation from Spanish): My country is half a world away from Central America. Our people have a different life-style and a different culture. Cambodia's important geo-political situation is always essential to peace, security and stability in South-East Asia. The result of the Cambodian struggle for freedom and independence will determine the region's fate and future security. Similarly, the outcome of the situation in Central America will have implications for countries outside that region itself.

The Cambodian people, which has known immense suffering, particularly after the invasion and occupation of Cambodia by Viet Nam, can fully appreciate the efforts of the people in Central America to live in freedom, independence and democracy.

Since the first debate in the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session, my delegation has followed with great interest the development of the situation in Central America. In our opinion, this complex problem in the region can be resolved only by a comprehensive political settlement with the total participation of all its peoples and countries. Unfortunately, we have noted with profound concern the deterioration of the situation in Central America, particularly over the past year. The bloodshed has become more widespread and the economic situation has grown worse; it has even reached the point of paralysis. For that reason, we believe it urgent that a just and equitable political solution be found for the region.

In that regard, my delegation supports the efforts of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela, which led to the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America, because we firmly believe that the problem of Latin America can only be resolved by Latin Americans.

(Mr. Siv Sichan, Democratic
Kampuchea)

We think that efforts such as those made by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to find a political solution to the problem of Cambodia which was created by the continued occupation and colonization by the Vietnamese forces are the appropriate means for the peaceful settlement of disputes. In the same way, we believe that the Contadora process is a genuine initiative for regional peace.

We are pleased to note that the Contadora Act contains many basic principles from our Charter, in particular: refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of States; the peaceful settlement of disputes; and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

Since those important elements have been included in the Act, we hope that the political will to implement that Act exists among the countries of the region. Its implementation should lead to full compliance with the commitment set forth in the Act. The fact that agreement has been reached to set up specific machinery to ensure the implementation of commitments and to ensure that they are binding indicates that the Contadora is a most appropriate forum for the quest for a political solution to the crisis in Central America.

May I once more affirm my delegation's support for Contadora by quoting a paragraph from a speech made in the General Assembly by our Head of State, His Royal Highness Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, on 2 October 1985:

"last, we consider that the Contadora Group is the best instrument to resolve the crisis in Central America by peaceful means, and to restore peace and stability on the basis of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in the region."

(Mr. Siv Sichan, Democratic
Kampuchea)

"The recent setting up by four important Latin American countries of a group in support of the Contadora Group will not fail to give a new impetus to its action so as to prevent the situation in the region from dangerously deteriorating, and it will help to realize its noble objectives. We continue to lend our support and encouragement to the Contadora Group. (A/40/PV.18, pp. 30-31)

My delegation would also like to praise the Secretary-General for his contribution to peace in Central America.

Mrs. CARRASCO (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish): The peaceful settlement of international disputes is one of the primary aims of our Organization. It can only become a reality if our countries are determined to recognize the principle of the inadmissibility of the threat or use of force in solving their disputes. That means that they must use all possible means to solve the disputes peacefully.

My delegation considers that the Contadora Group is the most appropriate negotiating machinery for the relief of tension and the preservation of peace in Central America.

The international community has welcomed the support given throughout Latin America to the Contadora process, which is now strengthened by the establishment of a support group. In this connection, the Security Council has adopted resolution 530 (1983) in which it made an urgent appeal to the interested States to co-operate fully with the Contadora Group, through a frank and constructive dialogue, so as to resolve their differences; and urged the Contadora Group to spare no effort to find solutions to the problems of the region. The same resolution recalled the principles of the Charter, in particular the obligation of States to settle their disputes by peaceful means and not to resort to the threat or use of force.

(Mrs. Carrasco, Bolivia)

Similarly, in resolution 39/4 the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction at the drafting of the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America and urged the countries concerned to speed up the consultations with a view to the signing of the revised Act.

We must recognize that since the adoption of that resolution significant progress has been made in the negotiations held by the Contadora Group. However, because of various difficulties, it has not been possible to move forward to the signing of the Act. This deterioration in the negotiations is the result, as the Secretary-General indicates in his report to this session, of an increase in bilateral incidents between countries in the region which, in addition to hindering the work of the Contadora Group, have at certain times prompted fears of a more serious breach of the peace.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has on more than one occasion, in praising the efforts and dedication of the Contadora countries that drafted the Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America, expressed its concern over the disturbing events there, which jeopardize all the efforts being made to seek a negotiated political solution.

Furthermore, it has been stressed both in this forum and in others that there exist unjust economic and social situations which contribute to the upheaval in the region; that it is important for the East-West conflict to be kept separate from this issue; that a solution to this regional problem must come from the political will of the peoples of the region alone; and that no solution should be imposed from outside, because that can only increase tension and hinder the process of dialogue.

In our view, the countries concerned should continue the negotiations on the outstanding issues, so as to ensure that the Act to be signed will contribute to peace and security in Central America. Furthermore, the international community

(Mrs. Carrasco, Bolivia)

should continue to support all the efforts being made by the Contadora Group, which is the practical regional instrument in the search for a peaceful, diplomatic solution.

There is no doubt that the achievement of peace is of crucial importance for the political, economic and military stability not only of the countries directly involved but also of the entire region. So long as discord and frustration prevail, the Central American countries will continue to live in an atmosphere of upheaval, with the serious risk of no solution being found.

The only way to strengthen peace is for all the parties concerned to consider their positions from the viewpoint of the future and not the past. My delegation therefore urges the five Central American nations to contribute to the restoration of confidence and to support the measures suggested by the Contadora Group to maintain the collective security of each and every one of the Central American States. Similarly, we urge the Contadora countries and the Support Group to continue to work for the achievement of their noble goals, which will without doubt benefit the whole Latin American region and the Caribbean region, and therefore the international community as a whole.

My delegation also expresses again its conviction that the maintenance of peace in the Central American region must be based on faithful compliance with the fundamental rights laid down in international law, in particular the rights to self-determination and to non-intervention in the domestic affairs of States as well as other rights established in the United Nations Charter and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.

In conclusion, it is encouraging that the meeting that has just ended in Panama was held in an appropriate atmosphere in which the members of the Contadora Group gave the representatives of the Central American countries new proposals aimed at reconciling the various positions and thus making the negotiations viable.

(Mrs. Carrasco, Bolivia)

A communiqué was adopted on that occasion thanks to the efforts exerted for the solution of the issues connected with implementation and follow-up machinery and with the final provisions of the Act, and thanks to the fact that new criteria were considered for negotiations on military manoeuvres and the control and reduction of armament. This new move in the negotiations allows us to believe that there does exist an atmosphere of understanding and a desire for the continuation of diplomatic steps towards achieving the signing of an agreement that will guarantee and benefit the interests of all the parties.

Mr. KNIPPING VICTORIA (Dominican Republic) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to express to you, Mr. Vice-President, my delegation's great satisfaction at seeing you presiding over this meeting.

A year has passed since the General Assembly last considered the situation in Central America. Throughout that period the international community, and most particularly the Latin American region, has been watching with deep concern the developments in that part of the world. That concern is quite evident, because throughout this time a whole series of events and situations has occurred that has caused a deterioration in the climate of mutual understanding that should prevail in the region as a prerequisite to the quest for peace.

In this regard, we have seen the bilateral relations of certain countries of the region sinking to an alarmingly dangerous level. That situation has occurred also in States that are outside the region but that nevertheless have links with and interests in it. Moreover, disturbing border conflicts and serious armed clashes have occurred; the senseless arms race in the area has continued; the foreign military presence has been stepped up; and attempts have been made to find solutions without the consent of all the parties directly concerned in the Central American crisis.

(Mr. Knipping Victoria, Dominican Republic)

This is the general outline of the situation that has prevailed in recent months. The picture I have drawn is marked by growing difficulties and obstacles, and reveals the persistence of the crisis and the need to continue efforts to achieve a worthy, lasting, overall and negotiated solution in Central America.

The fact that the Central America crisis has not led to a serious military conflagration is due essentially to the work that has been done by the Contadora Group in its search for peace in the region.

Despite the serious difficulties that it has had to deal with, the Contadora Group, which is the most genuine expression of Latin America's desire for peace, has, throughout the crisis, been making extraordinary efforts to reduce the tensions that affect bilateral relations, to create a climate of confidence more conducive to the consideration of existing differences, to remove the obstacles that prevent greater rapprochement between the parties to the conflict, and to create the necessary conditions for a continuation of constructive dialogue. That this is to the credit of the Contadora Group cannot be denied by anyone.

Furthermore, in this context we repeat our view that merely curbing the threat of the outbreak of war throughout the entire Central American region, with serious and unforeseeable international consequences is in itself one of the most valuable services rendered by the peaceful and friendly action of the Contadora Group to the cause of peace.

It cannot be denied that the roots of the present crisis afflicting Central America are to be found in the unjust political, economic and social conditions that have prevailed in that region since time immemorial. It is necessary therefore to establish in the region a more accessible and participative social order ensuring more just and equitable relations among all members of the society that will enable the broad masses of the population to satisfy their minimal

(Mr. Knipping Victoria, Dominican Republic)

requirements from the standpoint of civilization and culture and take an active part in the political life of their nations while at the same time guarantee the most effective enjoyment of human rights.

In the final analysis, in promoting peace, all the flagrant economic and social inequalities that have led to this situation must be eliminated and democratic and pluralistic political systems must be strengthened and consolidated throughout the region.

Peace constitutes the principal objective of the foreign policy of the Dominican Republic. This line of conduct has been an inflexible constant in the history of my country, and reflects the inherent love of peace of the Dominican people. Furthermore, as a Latin American country, we are deeply concerned over and distressed by the situation in Central America. Hence we have given militant support to the efforts being made by the Contadora Group to find a peaceful political and negotiated solution to the crisis in Central America. In this regard, we have categorically opposed any military solution in the area. We share the view that the use of force as an alternative solution does not dissipate but rather aggravates underlying tensions.

The work of the Contadora Group has not been confined merely to the creation of a propitious climate to enable the Central American States - the only States that are competent to solve their differences - to find through dialogue and negotiation and mutual understanding ways and means of overcoming their regional problems, but has also upheld the principles that govern the international legal order, prepared a legal instrument that offers a broad basis for working out the political aspects of the crisis and at the same time attacked the unjust socio-economic structures that have given rise to them.

(Mr. Knipping Victoria, Dominican Republic)

Therefore we urge the Central American countries to continue the negotiation of the outstanding issues to be agreed upon in the Contadora Act for Peace and Co-operation in Central America.

We also urge States having links with and interests in the region to give their most determined support to the peace moves, and to refrain from any political, economic or other type of action likely to frustrate the objectives of the Contadora Act for Peace and Co-operation in Central America.

We are at a crucial stage in the negotiating process in Central America. We have to redouble our efforts to achieve peace in that region. Therefore the General Assembly, as the most authentic expression of the will of the international community, expects both from the Central American countries themselves and from those having links with and interests in the region to devote their best intentions and the necessary political will to the achievement of peace.

Mr. RAJAIE-KHORASSANI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Although my country is far from the Central and Latin American hemisphere, we have been following events in that part of the world carefully and with great concern. This is because we, who have suffered from similar problems for a long time, could never remain aloof from the problems of our fellow sufferers. We are deeply worried by the comments of the Secretary-General in his recent report, which indicates that the situation in Latin America is deteriorating. To be more specific, it is the revolution of the Nicaraguan people which is imperilled by imperialist intervention, and therefore the central theme of the situation in Central and Latin America is the threat to the revolution of Nicaragua, a threat in defiance of all accepted norms of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

Ever since the victory of the revolution in Nicaragua, the revolutionary people and Government of Nicaragua have been the target of imperialist aggression.

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

United States officials, ever since, have dropped other matters and concentrated on Nicaragua, pinpointing every small event in that country, finding every fault with its ruling council, weeping crocodile tears and the demise of democracy in Nicaragua, as they put it, and playing the role of a nurse who is kinder to the child of the Nicaraguan revolution than its own mother. The President of the United States has officially declared his military, paramilitary, and intelligence war against a tiny country, a small turquoise. Nicaragua, whatever else it may be, is not a threat to the United States. In terms of population, there is no comparison between the United States and Nicaragua. The United States has a population of about 240 million, while the population of Nicaragua is about one per cent of that figure. Bearing in mind that there are 400 different kinds of addiction in the United States, I am absolutely convinced that the total number of addicts in the United States is ten times greater than the entire population of Nicaragua. Officially registered alcoholics in the United States numbered 10 million in 1983.

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

The people of Nicaragua constitute a small, developing society with many economic restraints and limitations, with so much to be done in terms of education, health, economic development, employment problems, and so on, all of which made the Nicaraguan revolution inevitable. The United States, however, is an affluent society, probably the most affluent society history has known, sinking in abundance, whose people are carrying millions of tons of extra weight because every one of them has been consuming more than his fair share of the resources that providence has bestowed upon mankind, while a great number of people in Nicaragua, as in the rest of the third world countries, are suffering from malnutrition. In the United States a great many people need medical treatment for cardiovascular diseases which are usually generated by over-consumption and extravagant diets.

Technologically speaking there is no comparison whatsoever between the two countries. While Nicaragua is accused by the United States Administration of having bought a few Russian light weapons, like guns and machine-guns, or a few helicopters, from the Soviet Union simply to defend itself against planned operations by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the United States is the country which has the greatest laboratories, the greatest factories, the greatest air force, the greatest number of, and the most sophisticated, air bases and airports, the greatest research centres for all good and evil projects that anyone could imagine. It is a country which is planning to test an aeroplane with a speed 10 times faster than the speed of the human voice, that can orbit the entire globe from above the earth's atmosphere in two hours; and, unsurprisingly, it has only a military application since no sane civilian needs to travel at that speed anyway. It is a country which has the ambition of "star wars" and is not comparable to its counterpart, Nicaragua.

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

Nicaragua is therefore in no way a threat to the United States and would not be even if it followed the most extreme brand of communism, of which the United States pretends to be scared. The phobia of communism is only an excuse for the United States Administration to crush every revolutionary régime struggling for the sovereignty and independence of its own people.

What is it that the United States is afraid of? The answer is that the Nicaraguan revolution shows the road to freedom, and it is that road that the United States bankers and multinational companies cannot tolerate. It is no accident that the people of Central and Latin America remain the most deprived in that hemisphere while owning the richest resources of all kinds in the region. The CIA has therefore decided to conduct all its covert and overt subversive policies in order to smash the Nicaraguan revolution and to discourage other freedom fighters and liberation movements in the region, but that will never come about because revolution is a road of no return.

It was independence and democracy in Nicaragua, not the alleged presence of a few foreign advisers or any other claim, that convinced the United States Administration that it should donate \$27 million of "humanitarian aid" to the contras. Although the people of Nicaragua had no complaints, the wise and revolutionary members of the Sandinista régime decided to demonstrate to every critical observer that they really represented the people of Nicaragua. They therefore held a popular election - but what was the result? The United States Administration tried to find fault with the election, too. The situation in the country has always been normal in spite of all the economic sanctions, the mining of harbours, bombardment of economic facilities and industries and invasions by Somoza elements and mercenaries backed by the United States. Despite the goodwill

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

all too well demonstrated by the Nicaraguan people and Government, the interventionist and subversive policies towards Nicaragua have continued.

Nicaragua has always been ready to sit at the negotiating table with the United States. However, the foreign policy of the United States being what it is, we do not expect the Reagan Administration to be receptive to the positive and most constructive gestures made by Commander Ortega, President of the Republic of Nicaragua, in his statement of 21 October on the United Nations fortieth anniversary. We hoped that the United States Administration would at least take note of the preparedness of the Government of Nicaragua for direct talks and for the peaceful resolution of whatever differences the United States officials could have with Nicaragua. The United States refusal to hold such talks is understandable, because we have learned of no United States accommodation with any revolution or of any revolutionary régime. The nature of imperialism is essentially a counterrevolutionary entity.

My Government has a very high regard for the normalized social and political situation in Nicaragua. It is a great achievement by the Government of Nicaragua. We know how sincerely the Government and people of Nicaragua, in spite of all the difficulties and barriers created for them by the United States Administration and its lackeys in the region, are fighting their way towards strengthening their democracy and safeguarding it against any possible outside threats. They are drafting a new constitution in which respect for private property is specified. They wish to shape the administrative structure of their country on the basis of their own genuine heritage, with an independent and non-aligned foreign policy, free from intervention and interference, and that is probably why the United States Administration is displeased.

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

The Government and people of Nicaragua wish to see the removal of all foreign bases and the ending of all military manoeuvres in their region. They have our full support but, regrettably, not the support of the United States. My Government strongly supports the Nicaraguan revolution and the constructive course of action that the Nicaraguan Government and people have been taking for their country. They are a model for the whole region. We condemn foreign interventions and subversive policies in Nicaragua which blatantly undermine the rights of the Nicaraguan people to sovereignty and independence.

(Mr. Rajaie-Khorassani, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

We urge the United States authorities to stop telling the people of Nicaragua and the other peoples of the region what is good for them. Let them form their own administration, society and future as they wish. It is not the business of United States officials to decide for the people of Nicaragua or any other people. It is so sad that the helpless, defenceless villagers and farmers of Nicaragua must carry their few belongings on their backs, going from one border area to another in order to be safe from the fire of the rebels backed by the United States, who receive lump sums in humanitarian assistance, always in the millions. Is this really what the people of the United States want? Are they really happy to see that simply living adjacent to the United States can be adversity?

We are so happy that Nicaragua, in addition to its preparedness for direct talks with the United States, has been in close co-operation with the Contadora Group and agrees to the solving of its local differences within the framework of the Contadora proposals. We too support the aspiration of the countries of the region, including Nicaragua, to see Latin America and Central America become a zone of peace. We strongly support the consistently positive position of Nicaragua towards the Contadora Group and sincerely hope that the United States will come to understand the significance of that positive attitude and also of Nicaragua's constructive position towards the Contadora Support Group. The United States should give them a chance to resolve local differences without foreign intervention. We wish to see the United States not as a party to the conflict but as an impartial observer that supports only peace and not counter-revolutionary rebels and mercenaries.

Mr. MUDENGE (Zimbabwe): Let me at the outset express the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General for the report before us and for his untiring efforts aimed at finding political solutions to the urgent problems of the

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

Central American region, which to this day remains one of the hotbeds of tension and conflict and an undoubted threat to world peace and security.

One of the major causes of tension in Central America is the wholly unjustified attempt by the United States Government to remove the present Government of Nicaragua. The United States does not like Governments that follow a different socio-politico-economic system from its own in what it terms its regional sphere of influence.

In the debate on Namibia last week we had occasion to state Zimbabwe's opposition to the concept of spheres of influence in southern Africa in particular and in the world in general. We then rejected this concept as being based on hegemonism. We also denounced the arrogant designation of certain regions and countries as back yards of this or that country. Back yards are places where one usually keeps one's unwanted items and at times does things one would not normally want to be seen doing in the front yard. To treat Nicaragua as one's back yard is the height of insensitivity and arrogance. It emanates from the same imperialistic sentiments which seek to force the Nicaraguans to call other countries "uncle". This is based on the law of the jungle. It is the very negation of international law and morality. It vitiates the principle of the sovereign equality of nations and replaces it with brute force as its justification.

No matter how one looks at it, Nicaragua can never pose a threat to the United States of America. It is a small, poor country struggling against daunting odds to solve the enormous developmental problems it inherited from decades of exploitation and negligence. What it wants is to be left alone to chart its own course. It has had "uncles" in the past, but all they did was to exploit and impoverish it. It now yearns to be left alone. Is this too much to ask?

How do we want Nicaragua to prove its bona fides without going to Canossa to

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

genuflect and say "uncle"? Its actions are an eloquent testimony to its pacific intentions and its desire to live at peace with all its regional partners, including the mighty United States. Nicaragua accepted the 1984 Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America. It was ready to follow the Manzanillo road to improve relations with the United States until the latter unilaterally terminated the dialogue. It brought its conflict with the United States before the International Court of Justice in search of a peaceful solution. It proposed the creation of a neutral zone of security on its border with Costa Rica in order to lessen tension in that area. It has supported the call for the dismantling of foreign military bases in the region, the withdrawal of military advisers, the stopping of military manoeuvres and other acts of force, and so on. At every turn and on every occasion Nicaragua has stretched out the hand of friendship, hoping someone would reciprocate. But all these goodwill gestures have been spurned and arrogantly brushed aside. Instead, all it has got in return is, to quote from the Final Declaration issued by the Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement in Luanda earlier this year,

"the violation of its air space and territorial waters, the launching of international manoeuvres and other intimidating acts; threats of seizure and occupation and selective bombing of Nicaraguan territory; the use of neighbouring countries as bases for aggression and the training of mercenary groups; acts of sabotage; air and naval attacks; the mining of the country's main ports; and the imposition of coercive economic measures, including the trade embargo".

The Ministers went on to add that

"Such terrorist practices have caused the deaths of thousands of Nicaraguans, resulted in heavy economic losses and hindered that country's normal development."

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

It should be recalled that the United States has recently voted millions of dollars which it has pumped into recruiting, training and equipping bandits who have been instructed, through the infamous Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) training manual on terrorist tactics, to torture, rape and assassinate the ordinary people of Nicaragua in order to intimidate them into supporting the contras. As the Assistant Secretary of Inter-American Affairs, Mr. Elliot Abrams, proudly proclaims in The New York Times of today, 25 November,

"the purpose of our aid is to permit people who are fighting on our side to use more violence".

Violence to do what? To kill more Nicaraguans.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

One is staggered by the sheer hypocrisy of countries that pride themselves as the epitome of open democratic societies that value human rights and brand others as terrorists when they themselves violate all they claim to stand for. If what the United States is doing in Nicaragua is not State terrorism then the term has no meaning. One would have thought that the history of Viet Nam and Iran had shown that the Metternichian approach to diplomacy is as ineffective now as it was when it was first devised. Whether we like it or not the aspirations, hopes and convictions of the ordinary man and woman in the final analysis count in international affairs and therefore must always be taken into consideration in policy formulation. Machines and force have their role, but ultimately history is about people, and it is they who make it. It appears that the United States, like the Bourbons before it, has learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

We are concerned over the escalation of intervention and violence in Nicaragua as a result of increased financing of the bandits by the United States, including the recent provision of aeroplanes. This is bound to heighten tension and increase the destruction of life and property. We deplore and denounce this latest escalation of the conflict. It is a reckless and futile attempt to intimidate the Government and people of Nicaragua. It will not achieve its objective, but will only increase the misery and suffering of the innocent people of Nicaragua.

The contrast between United States policy in Nicaragua and its policy towards South Africa never ceases to astound us. In the case of Nicaragua the United States is ready to act alone to defy everybody and everything, including some hallowed principles of international law, in order to impose its own will on that country. Yet in the case of South Africa the United States, in league with the United Kingdom, has acted in defiance of the international will in order to shield the apartheid régime from international wrath. Everybody, including the United States and the United Kingdom, agrees that apartheid is an abhorrent system that

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

must be dismantled totally. Yet time and again the two allies have colluded to frustrate international efforts to bring about the destruction of the evil system of apartheid. Is it any wonder that many developing countries feel that in the matter of southern Africa these two allies have made moral principles subservient to their interests? In the name of pragmatism they have exalted expediency to the level of a national philosophy. Are we unfair in seeing this as a glorification of perfidy and hypocrisy?

Those whom the United Nations Charter entrusts with the awesome responsibility of upholding international peace and security should not be the first to undermine world peace, and we are entitled to express our grave concern whenever they, by their delinquent actions, imperil world peace. Whether peace is endangered in Afghanistan or Nicaragua, we will not keep quiet, irrespective of whose toes we may step on. Peace is indivisible. We small nations cannot afford the luxury or discretion of keeping quiet when the sovereignty of another small nation is being trampled on. Yesterday it was Grenada; today it is Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Kampuchea, and tomorrow it may be Angola. But what about after that? Whose turn will it be to satiate the Gargantuan appetite of the monster? No, we cannot respect the concept of spheres of influence or backyards. It is a hegemonistic strategy to destroy our sovereignty. We cannot feel secure in such an international régime. That is why Zimbabwe feels compelled to cry out at the situation in Central America. If Nicaraguans are not permitted to choose a socio-politico-economic system that displeases their big neighbour to the north, then none of us is safe to choose our own forms of societal organization. If we accept without protest such a development, then the Leviathan will truly have entered the world stage and woe unto all the small nations of this world. We therefore call on the United States to heed the voice of reason and stop behaving

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like an international rogue elephant in the jungles of Central America. Instead it should accept and implement the Contadora peace proposals.

I cannot end my statement without saluting the efforts of the Contadora group of nations, as well as paying my respects to the Lima group of nations, for their contribution to peace in Central America and in Latin America in general. We welcome the recent meeting of the Contadora group of nations held in Panama and ask them to persevere with their noble task. We urge them also to make available their good offices to the people of El Salvador in an effort to find a just and lasting solution to the problems of that troubled country.

Finally, we appeal to the international community to come to the economic assistance of the Central American countries - especially Nicaragua, which is suffering from the effects of an unjust and illegal embargo. In this context we welcome the ministerial meeting of the countries of the European Economic Community (EEC), including Spain and Portugal, with the Central American countries and the countries of the Contadora group. We hope this will reinforce the political and economic dialogue between the two regions to their mutual benefit.

Mr. TILLET (Belize): Mr. President, it is a special pleasure for me to observe the efficient manner in which you conduct the business of this Assembly. We have come to expect a high performance from the delegation of the Bahamas and have not been disappointed.

Once more, for the third year, the situation in Central America is being considered by this General Assembly, and yet, according to the Secretary-General's report, that situation is getting worse. The Belize delegation sincerely hopes that this debate on the situation in Central America is a genuine attempt to bring peace, tranquillity and prosperity to the Central American region.

For our part, we will listen and be sensitive to the needs and aspirations of other nations and peoples.

(Mr. Tillett, Belize)

When he addressed this body on 8 October, Mr. Dean Barrow, Belize's Foreign Minister, outlined Belize's position in relation to Central America. He said,

"Belize's relations with neighbouring States on our Central American mainland are based on respect for national self-determination, sovereignty and the right of all peoples to choose their own political, social and economic systems free from external threats and pressures....

"The violence that continues to consume Central America and cause wrenching dislocations of people from their homelands is regrettable and weighs heavily on our ability as peace-loving nations to create the conditions for a return to normalcy in our region.

"My Government has a particular concern in this matter because the transborder migration of those fleeing the conflicts has produced an influx of refugees into Belize which strains our already thinly stretched social and economic resources and threatens to produce serious ethnic and demographic tensions.

....

"... We hold to the thesis that the Contadora process is the best means to deal with the situation". (A/40/PV.27, pp. 42-43)

(Mr. Tillett, Belize)

The support Belize has given to the Contadora process is known to all of us here. And the Belize Government continues to support the Contadora process and sees it as the best way to bring an end to the conflict in Central America.

Yet the Contadora process and any other process dealing with any matter in Central America, whether social, political or economic, must be cognizant of the fact that Belize is a sovereign State in Central America. Any treaty, or act, or negotiation, or any matter intending to deal with the Central American region is incomplete without the input of the peace-loving nation of Belize.

While our socio-economic and political history is inextricably interwoven with that of the Caribbean sister nations, our Latin American sister nations on the mainland must come to terms with the fact that Belize is a sovereign and independent nation, with its own permanent territorial boundaries, located in Central America.

It could be that because Belize is such a peaceful neighbour it is so frequently overlooked. But since the Contadora process is to provide peace in Central America might it not be possible for Belize to make a contribution to that process or any other Central American peace or economic initiative?

We thank God that Belize is not directly involved in the conflict in Central America. At the same time we must regret that Belize has been directly affected by this conflict.

The conflict in Central America has created an unprecedented migration of refugees from the wartorn area to Belize.

To those who seek escape from the Central American conflict, Belize looks like a paradise, but paradise violated is paradise lost.

Let us examine the prospect of Belize's future if this conflict continues.

We live in an area surrounded by nations all larger than ourselves. Guatemala has a population of approximately 8 million people, Honduras over 4 million,

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Nicaragua over 3 million, El Salvador over 5 million and Costa Rica over 2.5 million. Belize's population is about 150,000.

With war on every side for 14.5 million people, Belize looks like an oasis in a desert to which they flee for peace and tranquillity.

It is now estimated that already some 15,000 refugees have sought peace in Belize. To those larger States which have accommodated many more than we have that may seem like a small amount.

But let us put the figures in the proper perspective. Fifteen thousand is one tenth of the Belize population. If we compared it with the United States of America it would be more than the combined cities of New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles or equivalent to the whole State of California - over 23 million people.

This situation poses a severe threat to Belize. It has already strained our social, economic and legal services beyond measure, it is already endangering the lives and stability of Belizeans, it has already caused the drug trade to flourish by providing the principal cultivators of marijuana.

If the flow of refugees into Belize continues, the ramifications are incalculable, not the least of which is an undesirable and unwelcome change in Belize's social, political and economic systems and institutions.

This Assembly talks excitedly and is very concerned about the killings and property damage and damage to international relations in Central America. But how much attention do we pay to the living: those who are uprooted from their homes and those whose homes are threatened by those who are uprooted. This situation makes Belize very vulnerable.

The dead we can do nothing about; property can be replaced or repaired. But we can make life better for the living and fleeing by ending this conflict in Central America.

(Mr. Tillett, Belize)

The Belize Government appeals to the Governments of Central America to bring this conflict to a speedy end through the Contadora process.

Let us rebuild. Let us sow comfort where pain has ruled. Let us sow prosperity where destruction has been king. And let us make peace instead of war. Remembering always that in international relations there is no virtue in either the desire or the willingness forcefully to impose our own ideology on other nations.

There is virtue, however, in both the desire and the willingness to let others choose their own course even when we believe ours is better.

Belize has chosen parliamentary democracy and free enterprise. We recommend it to all, but impose it on none.

May God grant us all wisdom to do likewise and bring peace to Central America.

Mr. ALBORNOZ (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me, Mr. Hepburn, to express to you my great pleasure at seeing you conducting this meeting.

The item "The situation in Central America" is of particular importance for Ecuador, not only because it concerns countries of a subregion of Latin America but also because in the Central American crisis principles are at stake that are fundamental for all our peoples and especially for the genuine exercise of democratic freedoms which are of primary importance if we are to avoid the dangers of solutions imposed by force and if we are to restore peace throughout the affected region. The title of the item is significant: "threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives". The fact is that the extension of the Central American situation, so much deplored by the world community, has the effect of exacerbating tension and preventing the development of international co-operation while consuming scarce resources of poor peoples in military activities that present a step backwards, not only in economic development but also

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

in terms of a loss of freedom and the full exercise of human rights to the degree that is proper in democratic systems.

In supporting peace initiatives, and essentially those of the Contadora Group, as the General Assembly did by consensus in 1984, the international community is addressing the leaders of Central America and urging them to solve their differences peacefully by negotiation and to adopt in some cases and maintain in others systems that guarantee the freedoms of their citizens, in particular the freedom of suffrage. That is the self-determination of peoples by means of universal suffrage without limitation or hindrance. In this regard, we welcome as a favourable indication of sure movement towards democracy the recent elections held in Guatemala and Honduras which have allowed the expression of all political trends in these nations, thus allowing the people to take part in forging their own destinies without any conditions.

Thus, disarmament and free elections, as well as peaceful solutions by negotiation and understanding, would be steps that, in the tension-free atmosphere promoted by the Contadora Group, could achieve the desired result of maintaining peace and security in Central America.

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

Furthermore, support for the work of Contadora involves recognition of a Latin American diplomacy with worthy antecedents in the democratic origins of its Governments, a diplomacy geared to contributing to the solution of regional problems by persevering efforts, fraternal zeal and the necessary understanding of the characteristics of our countries, and directed to preventing the transfer to our New World of ideological confrontations or power plays of an East-West type that have such dangerous implications for the world as a whole.

Ecuador hopes that the world Organization will once again give full support to the activities and peace initiatives of the Contadora Group, so that the negotiations on the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America may be concluded and so that that Act may soon be signed and its various commitments come into effect. We reaffirm the Government of Ecuador's commitment and desire to work for the consolidation of peace, democracy and law throughout the Central American region, in which we regard it as fundamental that there should be self-determination for the peoples, real democracy and, furthermore, effective disarmament.

Mr. FOUM (United Republic of Tanzania): The adoption by consensus of resolution 39/4 at the last session of the Assembly reflected our common concern at the grave situation at that time obtaining in the region. It was also a reflection of our belief, and hope, that efforts, in particular the initiatives launched by the Contadora Group, would contribute to a peaceful settlement of the problems confronting the countries of the region. Since then, however, far from improving, the situation in Central America has become more volatile, causing increased concern and anxiety in the international community.*

*Mr. Moseley, Barbados, Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Foum, United Republic
of Tanzania)

Central to the problems confronting us is the history of this region. It is a history of unequal relations and hegemony; a history of the rush to exploitation by extra-regional Powers, and the imposition of surrogates to institutionalize that foreign exploitation. It is the history of the economic and social causes that have motivated the peoples of that region to wage unswerving struggles, not only for their independence and sovereignty, but also for their emancipation to achieve social justice and progress. In those conditions the imposition of foreign influence has always remained the root cause of the aggravation of the situation. Despite the passage of time, this reality has not changed much. All kinds of pretexts and subterfuges have been employed to obstruct the efforts of the people of the region to bring about a genuine change of their environment.

It is no secret that efforts to secure peace in the region have been thwarted by externally induced activities, principally against the Nicaraguan revolution. That young revolution has become the victim of the most blatant use of power aimed solely at impeding and seeking to reverse the gains achieved by the people of Nicaragua. The imposition by the United States of an economic embargo on Nicaragua in May of this year stands out as a clear reminder of the abuse of power. In the communiqué adopted at the conclusion of the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Countries, held in Luanda, Angola, in September of this year, it was stated:

"The Ministers considered that these new actions of political and economic coercion must be viewed, together with the military actions, within the context of a broad plan to destabilize and overthrow the Government of Nicaragua and constitute an additional danger to peace and security in the region. In this respect, the Ministers demanded an immediate end to all threats, attacks, hostile actions and measures of a coercive nature against the people and Government of Nicaragua."

(Mr. Foun, United Republic
of Tanzania)

In its resolution 562 (1985), the Security Council directly confronted this issue when it reaffirmed the right of all States, including Nicaragua, to decide on their own political and economic systems, free from interference, subversion and direct or indirect threats of any kind.

However all reports, irrespective of source, indicate that disrespect and gross violation of those principles is escalating. Ever more violent groups of mercenaries are concentrated in territories around Nicaragua and are directed and launched from there to cause wanton destruction in Nicaragua. It is such acts, which are a refusal to respond to the need for change, that undermine confidence and constitute an obstruction to the regional quest for a peaceful solution of the problems.

Furthermore, the continuation of the civil war in El Salvador is an extension of the same phenomenon of the denial of the people's rights. During the discussions on this question last year, we had been given great hopes that efforts were in motion to ease the tensions in that country and to pave the way for a resolution of the conflicts engulfing the Salvadoran people. An "Americans Watch Report", published in September of this year, states:

"Though our Report and its seven supplements have chronicled many changes in the human rights situation, including significant reductions in some forms of abuse, at no time has it been possible for us to assert that there was a general improvement in human rights ... the human rights situation in El Salvador remains terrible."

In his report contained in document A/40/737, the Secretary-General observes that:

(Mr. Foun, United Republic
of Tanzania)

"... although legislative elections were held in March, the armed conflict goes on, with an increase in bombings ... while the talks between the Government and the Frente Democrático Revolucionario-Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FDR-FMLN) remain stalled." (A/40/737, para. 9)

There are, moreover, reports of resort to the Rambo-syndrome, with increased bombardments, strafing and army ground operations aimed at brutalizing and terrorizing the civilian population. In the "Americas Watch Report" - to which I referred earlier - it is further observed:

"The all-important role of the United States in equipping, arming, training, financing and guiding the Salvadoran Government makes the United States share responsibility for the failure to end systematic abuses of human rights."

(Mr. Fomu, United Republic
of Tanzania)

Whether it is a consequence of internal oppression or external intervention, the people of El Salvador, like all other peoples, cannot be denied the right to struggle for a just cause - a cause for development that seeks to ensure the maximum enjoyment of fundamental human rights and the broadest participation in the political process. It is precisely the denial of those rights that has spawned and will prolong and intensify the conflict. Consequently, we believe it is most urgent that no action be taken that will allow undue advantage to any party and that all the parties to the conflict be encouraged to participate on an equal footing in the elaboration of a programme that will bring peace to that country.

We submit that, in order to relax tension in the area, all kinds of external pressure and interference must cease. The Charter of this Organization, the fortieth anniversary of which we have just commemorated, enjoins us all to respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the countries in the region. Furthermore, it enjoins us all, without exception, to respect and promote the rights of the peoples of that region to the pursuit of their self-determination. Narrow-minded policies, biased for the advancement of super-Power hegemony, serve only to exacerbate the conflict situation.

In the past several years the Contadora Group has made commendable efforts towards bringing the parties directly involved close to a negotiated settlement of their disputes. The principles contained in the Contadora Group's Document of Objectives were drafted, we believe, in the spirit of getting peace, stability, social justice and progress in the region as a whole. They include the basic principles for the self-determination of peoples, non-intervention, sovereign equality of States, peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for the territorial integrity of States, respect for and promotion of human rights, prohibition of

(Mr. Foum, United Republic
of Tanzania)

terrorism and subversion, and support for democratic institutions and their pluralism. Therefore, removal of the threat to the States of Central America, whether from within or outside the region, and respect for the right to self-determination and political and economic independence constitute a firm basis for any successful negotiations on permanent arrangements by the countries involved to ensure lasting peace and security in the region.

Naturally, the re-establishment of peace and co-operation between countries will have to be preceded by the establishment of conditions conducive to that co-operation and of a climate of mutual confidence, demonstrated by a clear resolve by all the parties to seek authentic regional solutions. It is that spirit, we trust, that the Contadora Group has sought to rekindle as it continues to help the countries of Central America to narrow their differences and come to terms with the realities of the region. But its work can be meaningful only if all Powers refrain from fomenting tension and strife and prolonging destruction and suffering.

The Assembly must therefore call upon countries outside the region to refrain from exacerbating the conflict. The Deputy Foreign Minister of Nicaragua, speaking in this Assembly, reiterated once again her Government's position of commitment to political modalities that would restore peace to Central America. Her Government supports the efforts of the Contadora Group and the Support Group in their efforts to bring peace to the region. It is imperative that we build on that commitment and seek to ensure similar commitments from the other parties involved.

We, members of the Non-Aligned Movement, have on several occasions repeatedly expressed concern at the heightened tension and growing conflict in Central America. We have emphasized the need for respect of the right of all countries in that area freely to choose their political, economic and social systems. To that

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of Tanzania)

end, we have reiterated our demand for outside Powers to stop interfering in the internal struggles for social and economic changes in the Central American region. Let the people in the region decide their own fate. Our role should be limited to complementing their efforts.

With that in mind, my Government supports the work of the Contadora Group and the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and the Support Group to find a negotiated, comprehensive solution to the serious crisis in the region. Through their efforts and the responsible efforts of the Nicaraguan people and their leaders, it has so far been possible to avoid a major catastrophe in the region. Let us encourage them.

Mr. VLASCEANU (Romania): Since the adoption by consensus of resolution 39/4, by which the General Assembly further encourages the process of dialogue for the solution of the crisis situation facing Central America, we have been witnesses of the contradictory developments in that part of the world. Those developments, on which we are focusing our attention today, surely will have their impact on the measures to be taken for the finalization of the negotiated process in Central America, thus increasing the contribution of the United Nations to the efforts for securing peace in that part of the world based on respect for the Charter, international principles of law and norms of conduct in inter-State relations.

First, we have been witnesses of a continuing serious deterioration in the situation in Central America, marked, as stressed in the Secretary-General's report, by an "increase in bilateral incidents between countries in the region" (A/40/737, para. 8), by the increasing of tension on the borders of those countries, "the continuing presence of military forces from outside the region" (ibid.), as well as by action of pressure, including the economic blockade

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against Nicaragua. Such developments have attracted our attention since they cause new sufferings to the peoples of the region and adversely affect the peace efforts in the region and the climate for international co-operation.

Secondly, activities have been assiduously developed and intensified, in particular by the Contadora Group; support actions have been expanded on the Latin American continent, especially through the establishment of a political Support Group in the international arena in favour of a comprehensive solution by negotiation of the complex issues and the crisis situation facing Central America. Such actions have played a positive and encouraging role, diminishing tension to some extent and improving the general atmosphere in the region.

We share the assessment contained in the Secretary-General's report regarding the roots of the Central American crisis, namely, the unjust socio-economic structures, which should be taken into account as we consider the problems of that region. Also, we share the assessment in the report according to which the continuing deterioration in the situation in the area over the past year demonstrates the urgent need for an equitable, comprehensive and negotiated solution in Central America, so that the people of the region may be free to devote themselves to the peaceful construction of their countries.

(Mr. Vlasceanu, Romania)

Romania has on more than one occasion stressed the fact that in approaching the problems of Central America one should start from the fact that the present tension in that area is generated by the long-standing maintenance of superseded socio-economic structures, that the peoples of the area have for too long suffered exploitation and oppression and that that situation generated their struggle for change, for a free and dignified life, for full national independence and for the right freely to decide their destiny.

In this regard we consider that, regardless of the forms through which such changes are taking place, it is imperative that close co-operation be promoted among all Central American countries, based on the need for respect for the right of every people freely to decide its own fate without outside interference.

Certainly - as has been pointed out in our debates and proved by the efforts of the Contadora Group - it is in the interest of all the peoples of Central America if the various problems of the region can be overcome by peaceful means and if broad co-operation can be promoted on the basis of equality, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for national independence and sovereignty.

We believe that the increase in the tension in the region and of the danger of an outbreak of armed conflict, with the possible involvement of neighbouring States as well as of those farther away, requires intensification of the political and diplomatic activities aimed at finalizing the efforts of the Contadora Group to find the best ground for understanding and the settlement of the existing problems in Central America in order to avoid the risk of a war.

It is in the interest of all the peoples of Central America, of the other Latin American peoples and, in general, of peoples throughout the world, to act firmly, above all differences of opinion and concepts, to promote political dialogue with a view to diminishing tension and finding solutions for all situations of conflict and to improve the international political climate. We consider that the

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actions of the Contadora Group in favour of peace and the arrangements made in connection with the negotiation, signature and implementation of the draft Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America are major achievements for normalizing the situation in that region. They are also an indication of the emergence of a widespread trend in favour of the political solution, through negotiation, of conflict situations everywhere, in accordance with the need to ensure the conditions for trust, understanding and confidence.

In the United Nations Romania has initiated a series of proposals for the reaffirmation and development of the obligation on Member States to solve their disputes by peaceful means and for the improvement of the machinery and procedures to which they must have recourse in that regard.

Only a few days ago the General Assembly adopted a solemn appeal addressed to States in conflict to put an end to armed actions forthwith and to proceed to the settlement of their disputes by negotiations and other peaceful means. That resolution also called upon all States to refrain from the threat or use of force and from any intervention in the internal affairs of other States and to resolve international conflicts and disputes by peaceful means.

The appeal, which was adopted with the agreement of all Member States, concerns all conflicts and disputes and is addressed to all States in the world. If Member States involved in conflicts and situations of tension would respond to the call of the General Assembly and if the provisions of the solemn appeal were to be honoured, ways could be found to settle disputes and conflicts everywhere and to eliminate existing hotbeds of tension.

As is well known, Romania, based on its belief that the problems in Central America can be solved through peaceful regional negotiations and dialogue, has supported from the beginning and continues to support the process of negotiations initiated by the Contadora Group. That position is in accordance with the

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guidelines of our foreign policy, a central point of which is the determination to contribute actively to the establishment of a climate of peace, collaboration, confidence and understanding in order to build a world from which the use and threat of force would be removed and the anachronistic practices based on force, domination and the violation of national prerogatives would be replaced by the will to settle disputes between States by peaceful means, through negotiations.

As we have consistently pointed out, the changes in international life and the structure and nature of the new relations that must be strengthened throughout the world objectively require that political solutions be found at the bargaining table, thereby replacing for ever the "dialogue of arms" by "the arms of dialogue".

There can be no doubt that, as has been proved by developments in contemporary history, a more just and better world, the world of peace, understanding and co-operation to which our generations aspire, can be built only through the assertion and application by all and for all of the democratic principles of inter-State relations and the guarantee of peace, détente and good-neighbourliness among all nations.

Romania's consistent position with respect to the peaceful, negotiated settlement of inter-State disputes, the promotion of the policy of dialogue, peace, understanding and co-operation among all nations of the world, including the peace initiative of the Contadora Group, has been expressed by President Nicolae Ceausescu on many occasions in his contacts with leaders and other representatives of Central American countries. In those contacts the activities and initiatives of the Contadora Group have been encouraged. He has expressed the opinion that those activities and actions could contribute to a political settlement of the situation in that part of the American continent. He has stressed in this connection the importance that should be attributed to respect for the right of every people to decide its own fate, without outside interference; to the elimination of force and

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the threat of force and relations of domination, inequality and inequity; and to the settlement of all disputes through negotiation, taking into account the right of every people to freedom, national independence and sovereignty and to socio-economic development in conformity with their own interests and aspirations.

In this spirit we express our solidarity with the Nicaraguan people in their struggle to defend their right to free social and economic development, without outside interference, and to an independent destiny of their own. At the same time, we declare ourselves to be in favour of a negotiated settlement of the problems between the United States and Nicaragua and among the various States in Central America.

We consider that the principles of international law and the norms of conduct in inter-State relations must be strictly respected and that all forms of pressure, including economic blockade, and any other form of outside interference in the internal affairs of Central American countries should be ended.

We would also like to stress that Romania, a country linked to the Latin American countries by the bonds and affinities of language and culture, in spite of geographical distance, attaches great importance to the strengthening of solidarity and co-operation between countries in Central America and among Latin American countries in general for the consolidation of their national independence and for their development along the path of social and economic progress.

In conclusion, I should like to stress that Romania supports the constructive proposals made during the debate by the Contadora Group, by other Latin American countries, and by all developing countries, which are, like Romania, vitally interested in creating a climate that can allow them to devote their efforts to settling the problems posed by their development and to peaceful construction

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within their countries in accordance with their interests in social and economic progress and with the requirements of peace, security and international co-operation.

We consider that such proposals should be reflected in the draft resolution that will be adopted by the General Assembly, together with positive appreciation of and support for the role of the United Nations Secretary-General in the attainment of the proposed objectives.

Mr. EDON (Benin) (interpretation from French): Once more the question of the situation in Central America appears on the agenda of the General Assembly. In recent months that situation has further deteriorated, with an intensification of aggression which has rightly alarmed the international community. The region has become a veritable powder-keg; if nothing is done, it could explode, engulfing the entire region.

Greatly alarmed by this situation, Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries, meeting at New Delhi in March 1983, expressed their concern at the multifarious threats facing the countries of the region. They came to the conclusion that the political, social and economic crisis of the region was

"brought about for the most part by the traditional repressive power structure and by national economic structures that produce poverty, inequality and misery and [is] aggravated by the interference and intervention to which those countries have been subjected since the end of the last century". (A/38/132, Political Declaration, para. 134)

That conclusion of the seventh non-aligned summit conference, held at New Delhi, coincides with my delegation's view that the causes of the crisis in Central America are to be found in the injustice of the established social, economic and political structures of the countries of the area. They cannot be seen in terms of East-West confrontation.

Two years after the appeal for peace made to the parties concerned by the Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries, two years after the call for a non-aggression and non-interference treaty among the States of the region and other interested parties, a call issued at the Ministerial Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New York on 6 and 7 October 1983, and in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of Central American Heads of State through the Contadora Group to help to establish a just and lasting peace in the region we can say today without fear of contradiction that the situation has continued to deteriorate.

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In Central America tension remains; measures of economic coercion have been employed, including a trade blockade; increasingly violent confrontations take place, resulting in great loss of life and property; and there have been instances of economic sabotage. To prevent this situation from becoming explosive - especially in Nicaragua, which is the target of constant aggression by armed bands organized and financed from outside - the international community's many calls for peace must be heeded by all the countries concerned.

My country ardently hopes for peace in that region; it can come about only through negotiations, through scrupulous respect for the basic principles of non-interference in the affairs of other countries, the inviolability of territorial integrity, and the principles of the peaceful settlement of disputes and peaceful coexistence. Dialogue is of particular importance in this process, for there can be no communication without dialogue and no understanding without communication.

My delegation welcomes the peace proposals made by the Contadora Group in its Contadora Act, and supports all measures which could establish and safeguard peace. We welcome the establishment of the Support Group for the Contadora process consisting of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay. Similarly, my delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that another positive element is the second meeting between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the European Community, including Portugal and Spain, and their counterparts from the five Central American States and from the Contadora Group, held at Luxembourg on 11 and 12 November 1985.

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The peoples of Central America in general, and the Nicaraguan people in particular, like all the world's peoples, aspire to peace and security. They want freely and independently to forge their own future, through harmonious economic and social development. That is an inalienable right which must be recognized by the whole international community. To act otherwise would amount to an attempt to maintain or create tension in the region; it would amount to seeking to perpetuate policies of domination and hegemonism which peoples devoted to peace and justice, like those of Central America, cannot accept.

In the same vein, the Security Council, in its resolution 562 (1985) of 10 May 1985, has reaffirmed the inalienable right of Nicaragua and the rest of the States freely to decide on their own political and economic systems free from interference, subversion, direct or indirect coercion or threats of any kind. Reaffirming its support for the Contadora Group, the Council called on all States to refrain from carrying out political, economic or military actions of any kind against any State in the region which might impede the peace objectives of the Contadora Group.

Stating the position of Benin on this matter, my delegation stated in this Assembly, on 13 October 1983, that

"no nation, large or small, has the right to interfere or become involved in the internal affairs of another country, or to try to impose on another country its views or a course of conduct other than the one that that country has chosen for itself". (A/38/PV.32, p. 33)

To accomplish the noble mission it undertook in San Francisco, our Organization, on its fortieth anniversary, should reaffirm its condemnation of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence

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of any State, regardless of the scale of the dispute in question. Violation of that principle leads inevitably to inadmissible intervention and interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

My delegation hopes that the appeal of the Security Council and the whole international community will be heeded, and that the resolution to be adopted at the end of this debate will be implemented so that peace may finally be restored and strengthened in Central America, whose hard-working people ask only to be allowed to live in peace and to devote themselves to the tasks of national construction and development.

Mr. BASSOLE (Burkina Faso) (interpretation from French): My delegation wishes first to express the deep sympathy of our people and the National Revolutionary Council to the people and Government of Colombia over the tragedy caused by the violent eruption of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano. My country, sorely tried by a lengthy drought, well understands the unjust fate that natural calamities sometimes have in store for courageous, hardworking peoples.

For the third year in succession the General Assembly is having to consider the question entitled "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives". This shows that the evolution of the situation in that part of the world continues to cause us serious concern, despite the many efforts of the parties concerned and the goodwill that has been shown in helping to find a solution.

According to the Secretary-General's report (A/40/737), the roots of the Central American crisis are to be found in unjust socio-economic structures and domestic policies of the States in the region, and its solution depends on the political will of those States. My delegation agrees with that analysis.

It is therefore important that all the parties concerned adopt a responsible and constructive attitude, bearing in mind respect for the independence and sovereignty of States and for the right of the peoples of the region to determine their own future.

In this context it is useful to recall Security Council resolution 562 (1985), adopted after the United States imposed a trade embargo on Nicaragua on 1 May 1985. In that resolution the Council: reaffirmed the inalienable right of Nicaragua and the other States of the region freely to decide on their own political, economic and social systems, free from outside interference, subversion, direct or indirect coercion or threats of any kind; reaffirmed its firm support for

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the Contadora Group; called on all States to refrain from carrying out political, economic or military actions of any kind against any State in the region which might impede the peace objectives of the Contadora Group; and called on the Governments of the United States of America and Nicaragua to resume the dialogue they had been holding in Manzanillo, Mexico.

Clearly, we are far from having made great progress in that regard. Therefore, the international community must continue to give firm support to the work of the Contadora Group, as it has always done so far. My delegation welcomes the decision taken on 29 July this year by the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, to create a political Support Group for the peace and co-operation efforts of the Contadora Group.

My country's position on the situation in Central America is well-known, having been expressed many times here and elsewhere, particularly in the Security Council. It is in keeping with the position adopted by the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in New Delhi in March 1983.

Last year, while taking part in the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement met here and adopted a communiqué in which, among other things, they reaffirmed their firm condemnation of the use of economic measures as a way of putting political and economic pressure on States, in violation of their sovereign rights and decisions.

The difficulty encountered by the States of Central America in showing the political will mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report stems from the fact that Powers outside the region decided that they should have a say about the political, economic and social choices being made there. The States of the region, like other third-world countries, are the victims of outside interference. My Government unequivocally condemns that inadmissible attitude, which is in violation

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of the Charter, particularly the form it has taken in Nicaragua, where, since 1979, everything is being said and done to overthrow the revolutionary Sandinista régime.

We are told that it was in the name of democracy that the harbours of Nicaragua were mined; that it is in the name of democracy that serious measures, including a total trade, air and maritime embargo has been imposed on that country. In addition, it seems, it is in the name of that same democracy that vetoes rain down on the Security Council preventing the international community from imposing mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter against racist South Africa. It makes one want to cry out: O democracy, democracy, what crimes are committed in thy name!

It is not, and never will be, Burkina Faso's intention to involve itself in parochial quarrels, which have already paralyzed the United Nations for many sad years. For there is a proverb that when two elephants fight, it is always the grass that suffers. The conclusions of the Geneva Summit are eloquent in that regard.

The persistent attempts to attribute the many crises besetting the world to an East-West confrontation force us, however, to break our silence and clearly state our opinions if we want to have a chance to save the Organization. No crisis can be finally solved as long as our votes continue to be categorized as pro-West or pro-East.

Burkina Faso reaffirms its complete support for the purposes and principles of the Charter - particularly the maintenance of international peace and security, respect for the sovereign equality of States, the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means, the non-use of force or the threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, the

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self-determination of peoples and non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States.

Those principles, and scrupulous respect for them, govern - and will always govern - my country's actions, taken in all sovereignty, without regard to pressure of any kind and no matter what the origin, in order to make its contribution to finding just and lasting solutions to the problems afflicting the world.

Moreover, those principles applied by my country makes it incumbent upon us urgently to appeal once again today to all the parties concerned about the crisis in Central America to bear in mind the valuable contribution that the Contadora Group is continuing to make to the search for a just solution, which is needed in order to establish lasting peace in Central America. In order to do that, the General Assembly must unreservedly support the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Contadora Group. My delegation is ready to join any consensus to that effect.

Mr. de FIGUEIREDO (People's Republic of Angola): May I state at the outset that the Government and people of Angola have many reasons and bases for solidarity with the Government and people of Nicaragua. We are both developing countries, we are both members of the Non-Aligned Movement, we are both engaged in the task of national reconstruction, we have both fairly recently thrown off the yoke of either colonialism or neo-colonialism.

The similarities are endless. Both Angola and Nicaragua are situated in two volatile subregions, southern Africa and Central America. Both Angola and Nicaragua find themselves willy-nilly, against our wish, against the facts, against the reality of the situation, against all common sense, drawn by imperialist thinking, based on imperialist strategic and tactical considerations, into a false, non-existent link with the East-West conflict of which we are no part.

Both Angola and Nicaragua are besieged by overt and covert support for bandit groups that in themselves cannot possibly pose any threat, but which, when supported by a mighty super-Power, provide the facade behind which imperialist forces operate. Thus imperialism seeks to present a legitimate carapace to its illegal, unjustified and unprovoked actions.

It is for these reasons, too, that my delegation places on record our solidarity with the progressive forces fighting to preserve their right to freedom, dignity and peace, their right to national development in accordance with the will of the peoples of Central America, with all the norms and principles of international law and the Charter, and with the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement to which the majority of developing countries belong.

The conflict in Central America has to do with the geo-political situation of the region and with the historical past and present of the region.

The present problems in Central America stem from imperialist support for its own policies and designs, and from the heavy military presence and strong financial

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support it gives to the surrogates and to the lackeys of those surrogates. Simply by extension, therefore, the problems stem from the attempts by the genuinely independent countries in Central America to resist imperialist intervention, to fight internal fascist dictatorship and tyranny, to choose social justice for all peoples instead of privileges for a chosen few, and to give moral, political and diplomatic support to those who valiantly fight fascism and imperialism. Such support is viewed by the United States, by some strange twisted logic, as a threat to itself. Therefore, as in the case of Angola, the United States tries to legitimize its illegal actions in Central America in general and in Nicaragua in particular by raising a totally false, non-existent spectre of communism, on the specious grounds that unless that so-called communist threat is fought on the shores of Central America, it will later have to be fought on the shores of the United States.

It is such blinders indeed that has led the United States to consistently reject the honest efforts of the Contadora Group to negotiate a comprehensive settlement in the region, one that surely would satisfy all the requirements of all the parties if only it were given a chance. It has further led the United States to categorically reject all offers made by the Government of Nicaragua, offers that directly address manifest United States concerns; those, too, have been inexplicably rejected. Each time the United States has come forward with so-called new and renewed factors, the people of Nicaragua have responded with proposals which take into account such requirements. Again and again such offers and proposals are rejected without adequate explanation.

The conflict in Central America has more to do with imperialism and support for imperialism than with any other factor. However, since we must begin somewhere, my delegation calls upon all parties to give honest consideration to the

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proposals put forward by Contadora and Nicaragua. We further call upon the United States Government to respond to the Nicaraguan Government's offers and we appeal to the international community not to be taken in by spurious factors manufactured by obvious interests but to examine facts as they have been and as they are.

The people and the Government of Angola pledge its support for the positions of the progressive Governments in Central America, in particular to the Government of Nicaragua.

The struggle continues. Victory is certain.

Mr. SOUDANI (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): The situation prevailing in Central America is rightly a subject of concern for the international community. As in Africa, in the Middle East and in Asia, the persistence of tensions and the risks of conflicts jeopardize world peace there and hinder the work of co-operation among nations of the subregion. Innocent populations live there in difficult, if not tragic, circumstances; their chances for development are seriously compromised as are the security and stability of the countries concerned. The door is wide open to foreign interference and to the rivalry among the great Powers which for strategic considerations or to serve their interests tend to take advantage of this.

Tunisia, which is facing the same situation in the Maghreb, sees no other way out than by resort to the principles and rules of law and morality which should govern the international order and of which the Charter is the perfect expression. To emerge from the impasse, our countries have an imperative duty to base their relations on mutual confidence, good neighbourliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, regular organized consultations on questions of common concern, and the promotion of co-operation on the basis of solidarity and complementarity.

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We must seek to settle disputes by the peaceful course of negotiation and in respect for each other's interests. Each people has the right to decide its own fate, to have the Government of its choice on the sole condition that it really be given the means to make that choice freely and democratically.

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It was in that spirit that Mr. Béji Caïd Essebsi, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his statement in the general debate here, made a point of reaffirming Tunisia's support for the auspicious activities of the Contadora Group, which is working for the establishment of peace and co-operation among the States of Central America. He said:

"We believe that this action springs from a conciliatory state of mind and respect for the legitimate rights of the States concerned and from the principles of non-intervention and self-determination of peoples that inspire us as a State of the Maghreb."

He added:

"Tunisia therefore wishes to express ... the hope that the process that has thus been set in motion will spare the countries of the region tensions and conflicts that cannot but prejudice their security and their development, as well as peace in that part of the world." (A/40/PV.15, p. 48)

While offering every encouragement to the countries of the Contadora Group, to back up their sustained and even stubborn action and help to ensure a successful conclusion, Tunisia hopes that the Central American States will do everything in their power to overcome the remaining difficulties, which in fact are only minor when set against the great enterprise of implementing the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America. By doing so, they can not only demonstrate their sense of responsibility and offer their sub-region a historic opportunity of combining its efforts and pooling its considerable potential to ensure progress and prosperity; they will also, by their example show other countries in similar situations the path to follow in their quest for a better future in concert and in harmony. They will also have closed the door to foreign interference, which in fact can only gain a foothold as a result of our weaknesses and divisions.

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Tunisia is convinced that the Central American States are fully aware of the importance of what is at stake for them. Do we need to tell them that what is involved here is the success of a major experiment in the third world, in which we are all concerned? We have great hopes of seeing it succeed.

Mr. BUSREWIL (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): At its last session, the General Assembly considered the situation in Central America and today once again the Assembly has the same question before it. During this period there has been no improvement in the explosive situation in Central America. That is due to the obstinacy of the United States, which is constantly committing acts of aggression and direct interference in the internal affairs of States, and its provocative actions in supporting and financing armed bands in Central America, actions that violate the United Nations Charter and constitute a very serious threat to international peace and security.

The peoples of Central America wish to live in peace and security and to establish normal relations based on mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of any State. But the continuing intransigence of the United States Administration, which has seen fit to step up its campaign of aggression and prolong the explosive situation in the region, its endless acts of provocation and its repeated violations of the principles of the United Nations Charter, its desire to impose its domination and hegemony over the States of the region on the pretext of protecting the "backyard" of the United States, for the sake of its monopolies, have prevented the peoples of the region for many years, from concentrating their efforts and resources on achieving the aims of their peoples in the area of development and progress towards a better life.

For a long time now, the history of the United States has been marked by many acts of aggression, occupation, invasion and interference, not only in Latin America, but in other parts of the world. Its attitudes and policies relating to

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the Middle East countries have been exemplified by their adoption of the Zionist entity and their alliance with Israel, which is occupying the territory of Palestine, in order to undermine Arab unity, occupy further territory and carry out new acts of aggression against other countries of the region, giving rise to displacement of the population. The United States attitude towards the system of apartheid and its manifest hostility to liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America show that this conduct, far from being in accordance with international law, is a violation of the United Nations Charter and contrary to the will of the international community. That conduct reflects the imperialist policy directed towards domination, extending its influence and its hegemony, and making itself master of the destinies of other peoples and exploiting them.

The heroic people of Nicaragua, having made enormous sacrifices under the leadership of the revolutionaries of the Sandinista Front, succeeded in overthrowing the puppet régime of Somoza and in establishing a revolutionary régime which devotes its efforts to the development of the Nicaraguan people in every field. Instead of supporting that régime, we see that the forces of aggression have adopted a hostile attitude towards the people and Government of Nicaragua and are doing everything they can to sabotage the democratic process in that country and deny it the status of a non-aligned country in Central America. It is clear that the United States Administration is determined to pursue its campaign against the people and Government of Nicaragua by preparing, in co-operation with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), a plan including a series of operations of blackmail, provocation and direct and indirect interference in the territory of Nicaragua, and jeopardizing its economic institutions.

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Thus the United States has imposed a trade embargo in order to destabilize that country; it has mined its ports and undertaken the financing of military operations against Nicaragua; it has trained mercenaries and given material assistance to the enemies of Nicaragua.

We do not have all the full details; but we can quote passages from the speech made by President Ortega in the General Assembly during the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations; when he said:

"Since 1981 the Government of the United States of America has attempted to destroy Nicaragua's democratic process and to deny the existence of a non-aligned Nicaragua in the Central American region. Thus, in 1981, the United States rulers suspended the provision of food credits to Nicaragua. They adopted a 10-point programme and earmarked \$19 million to set up a mercenary force. In 1982 the United States Government authorized covert operations against Nicaragua and vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution banning the use of force or interference in the affairs of other nations." (A/40/PV.42, p. 4)

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Thus, the United States continues to violate the principles of the United Nations Charter and to practise State terrorism. When Nicaragua brought a complaint against the United States in the International Court of Justice because the United States had mined its ports and carried out military and paramilitary activities against Nicaragua's territory, the United States Government claimed that it was not within the Court's competence to consider the complaint by Nicaragua. This proves, quite simply, that the United States already knew that its military activities were in flagrant violation of international law and practice. Hence, this was merely a way for the United States to shirk its obligations under international law.

The United States has not limited itself to the training and financing of mercenaries and of secret operations that have caused the death of thousands, the displacement of people, the destruction of bridges and attacks on airports. The United States has also waged psychological warfare against the people of Nicaragua, through hostile statements by high-ranking United States leaders for the purpose of creating a climate of destabilization of the country. The United States withdrew from the Manzanillo talks in Mexico. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in fact published and distributed to the mercenaries a guide on methods of psychological warfare. The United States has allocated \$27 million for material assistance to the enemies of Nicaragua, on the pretext that this is humanitarian aid. The United States has exerted all kinds of pressure on international economic institutions to prevent them from assisting Nicaragua. It has not even tried to hide its real aim: to overthrow the Government of Nicaragua.

It is quite natural that the non-aligned countries should focus attention on the tense situation in Central America and the policy of aggression against Nicaragua's sovereignty. The Foreign Ministers of the non-aligned countries, meeting in Luanda at the beginning of September this year, expressed their deep

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concern over the disquieting situation in the Central American region, which they said was one of the major hotbeds of tension in the world. They considered that political and economic pressure and the accompanying acts of military aggression were parts of a broad plan for the destabilization of Nicaragua and the overthrow of its Government. My delegation supports the declaration by the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Luanda in which they called for an immediate end to all threats of aggression against the people of Nicaragua and for respect for their free choice and their sovereignty.

The acts of aggression and provocation are not directed against Nicaragua alone. They arouse concern and anguish among many of us as well, because we fear that there will be a repetition of these acts of aggression by the United States against other small countries, as happened in Grenada. My country, like Nicaragua, continues to be subjected to threats and provocations at the hands of the United States. These acts of terrorism have taken various forms. There have been provocations and military threats from the Sixth Fleet off the Libyan coast, near the Gulf of Sirte; there have been many violations of Libyan airspace; there have been military manoeuvres near our borders; there have been propaganda campaigns designed to harm the reputation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has drawn attention on several occasions to the gravity of the terrorist policy practised by the United States against the Arab people of Libya and the Arab nation. It has drawn attention also to the plots and troubles stirred up by that country. My country has already had the opportunity of condemning the policy of terror practised by the United States against the Libyan people and other peoples.

The most recent in the series of United States plots against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was revealed in the Washington Post on 3 November 1985. The newspaper reported a terrorist plan fomented by the United States Administration against my

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people and my revolutionary régime. That is a plan, which the leaders of the United States have not denied; indeed, it was confirmed by the Reagan Administration when it asked for an investigation into how the mass media had got hold of the documents and information on this terrorist plan.

It is up to the international community to put an end to the barbarous acts perpetrated by the United States. The United States claims that it is fighting against terrorism, whereas it is the United States Government itself which continues to practise organized State terrorism. The international community should express firm opposition to the policy of aggression waged against peoples. It should vigorously condemn the acts of aggression against Nicaragua.

Nicaragua has reaffirmed its respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter, its determination to live in peace with all the peoples of the region, including those of the United States. Nicaragua has expressed its wish to establish normal relations with the United States as well. We express our deep appreciation of the goodwill and the spirit of co-operation demonstrated by Nicaragua. Nicaragua co-operates with the countries of the Contadora Group, which is striving to achieve a peaceful solution guaranteeing the peace and security of the countries of the region. We are convinced that this sincere determination shown by Nicaragua, together with the countries of the Contadora Group, should be welcomed. The determination of a small country like Nicaragua to exercise self-determination should be respected. The United States should put an end to its policy of aggression against Nicaragua.

We draw the international community's attention once again to the seriousness of the consequences that could flow from these policies that violate international instruments and customs, particularly when the policies are pursued by a great Power that is a permanent member of the Security Council, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. HOGUE (Australia): Australia is a long way geographically from Central America, but we believe there are certain principles which should guide international behaviour in all parts of the world, and as a responsible middle Power we feel we have a duty to speak on matters which are of broad international concern.

The Central American countries have a troubled history, and most of them are plagued by unjust social and economic structures to this day. Attempts are being made to overcome the legacy of the past. These attempts are not all equally far-reaching, equally energetic or equally successful; but genuine efforts at reform deserve the support and encouragement of the international community.

No encouragement, however, should be given to domestic repression nor to outsiders of any kind who wish to impose their solutions on the people of the region. The people of Central America must be allowed to find their own solutions to their problems, in accordance with their own traditions and their own wishes. They have the right to work out their own systems of government, free from outside interference from any source.

The sad conflict among these countries can only hold back the progress and prosperity of their peoples, and we hope that a peaceful solution to these disputes will be found, and found quickly.

Australia has consistently supported the efforts of the Contadora Group, because it is working for a peaceful, negotiated settlement in accordance with the wishes of the countries of the region. We are pleased that a Support Group comprising Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay has been formed to help. Contadora has received widespread support from the international community, and it is essential that the five countries of the region give Contadora their full support.

(Mr. Hogue, Australia)

While it is true that meddling by outsiders does not contribute to the peace and security of the region, it is equally true that there will be no solution unless the countries of the region themselves show a real willingness to compromise and co-operate. Countries which are not part of the region must continue to offer genuine and effective support to the Contadora process. That process has had its ups and downs, but it is not just the best chance of a peaceful solution, it is the only one.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will resume and conclude the debate on this item on Wednesday morning.

The meeting rose at 9 p.m.