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THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA:
THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE
AND SECURITY AND PEACE
INITIATIVES

Letter dated 9 June 1986 from the Permanent Representative of Panama
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the "Panama Message" issued by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Contadora Group and the Support Group at the end of the meeting held with the Central American Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 7 June 1986 at Panama.

May I request you to have this letter and the annex to it circulated as a document of the fortieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 21, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) David SAMUDIO, Jr.
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Panama Message of 7 June 1986

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, which are members of the Contadora Group and the Support Group, who met at Panama on 6 and 7 June 1986, declare:

1. That they welcome the historic meeting of the five Central American Presidents at Esquipulas, on 25 May 1986, at which they reaffirmed their support for the Contadora process and their intention to sign the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America. In that connection, they reiterate the statement made by the five Central American Presidents at Esquipulas: "Peace in Central America can be achieved only through an authentic democratic process that is pluralistic and participatory, which entails the promotion of social justice and respect for human rights, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the rights of every nation to choose freely, and without outside interference of any kind, its own economic, political and social pattern, it being understood that such a choice is the result of the freely expressed will of the peoples concerned."
2. In recent weeks a set of negotiations has been held with a view to settling outstanding matters relating to the Peace Act. Taking account of the positions stated by the five countries in the negotiations, the Contadora Group prepared a new draft Act reflecting the parties' interests in a balanced manner. This revised version was transmitted, on the agreed date, to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five Central American countries, who had been invited to Panama.
3. As in the case of earlier proposals, this proposal was never intended to become an instrument to force the sovereign parties to take any action not in keeping with their legitimate interests. However, we believe that reconciliation of those interests through proposals to promote peace, security and democracy is of the greatest importance not only for Central America but for the entire region.
4. That the Contadora Group has had, and continues to have, two fundamental goals. The first goal is to co-operate actively in preparing a peace treaty governing relations between the Central American States in a just and balanced manner, and the second goal is to identify the basic requirements for the signing, implementation and observance of the peace treaty by the parties. It is clear that the two goals are complementary: a treaty without conditions for its implementation is an illusion, and without a legal framework such conditions are insufficient to be permanently binding on the parties.
5. That it would therefore be erroneous to believe that the crisis could be dealt with merely by means of preparing a draft treaty. Progress must also be made in bringing about the necessary conditions for the signing of the Peace Act.
6. That in the Carahalleda Message, which was endorsed by the five Central American countries, an endeavour was made to identify the conditions that should be the lasting principles on which to base peace, democracy and security in Central America.

7. Ten principles and nine forms of action that must be fully realized were set forth in that Message.
8. If progress is to be made in the Contadora process and the final goal of peace is to be achieved, it is essential that three fundamental commitments should be accepted:
- (a) Use of a country's territory as a base for committing acts of aggression against another country or for providing military or logistical support to irregular forces or subversive groups should not be permitted;
 - (b) No country should become a member of military or political alliances that threaten peace and security in the region either directly or indirectly, thus drawing the region into the East-West conflict;
 - (c) No Power should give military or logistical support to the irregular forces or subversive groups that are operating, or that may operate, in the countries of the region, or use or threaten to use force as a means of overthrowing any Government in the area.
9. That peace should be consolidated in the region through the rule of pluralistic democracy, which calls for the exercise of universal suffrage through free, regular elections supervised by independent national bodies and a multi-party system in such a way as to permit the legal and organized representation of all beliefs and political action in society. There must be majority government, thus guaranteeing the freedoms and fundamental rights of all citizens and safeguarding those of political minorities in the context of the constitutional order.
10. That this peace endeavour should be accompanied by an effective contribution to the economic and social development of Central America, which Latin America declares itself willing to promote, while inviting the other members of the international community to join it in that endeavour.
11. That the eight countries members of the Contadora Group and its Support Group reaffirm, for the benefit of all the countries of the region and countries with interests in and links with the region, their willingness to make available their good offices among all the parties involved in these commitments. In that connection, they are willing to consider, together with the parties, ways in which the necessary verification procedures should be carried out, who should be responsible for carrying out those procedures and how fulfilment of the commitments undertaken is to be guaranteed.
12. That, taking account of all these issues, they believe that the new draft Contadora Act, which is being formally submitted to the Central American countries today, both can and must bring the negotiating process to a rapid and effective conclusion.

The consequent entry into force of the Act as soon as possible and its implementation on the basis of adequate safeguards is the only way of achieving a just and effective peace in Central America, in keeping with the aspirations of the entire international community and all Latin Americans in particular.