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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 18 November 1986, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. OGOUMA (Benin)
(Vice-President)

later: Mr. NGIRUMPATSE (Rwanda)
(Vice-President)

- The situation in Central America: Threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives: Draft resolution [42] (continued)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Ogouma (Benin), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 42 (continued)

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY AND PEACE INITIATIVES: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/41/L.34)

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): For the fourth consecutive year, the General Assembly is discussing a specific item on the situation in Central America. This is indicative of the tension that continues to prevail in that region, in spite of the efforts made by the United Nations, the Contadora Group of nations, the Lima Support Group, and others. The situation in Central America has also engaged the serious attention of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. At the last summit of Heads of State or Government at Harare two months ago, the leaders of the non-aligned countries expressed concern that the prevailing situation in Central America constituted one of the major focal points of tension at the international level. Over the years, the crisis has worsened because of the policies of interference and intervention which, along with the socio-economic conditions prevalent in the region, represent a real threat to international peace and security.

The General Assembly, at its thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions, adopted by consensus resolutions which underlined the need for a political settlement of the problems of the area through the efforts of the Contadora Group and others. The adoption by the Security Council of resolutions 530 (1983) and 562 (1985) pointed in the same direction. Regrettably, there is little indication of any improvement in the situation. Indeed, events have moved in a manner that, unless timely action is taken, the situation will become explosive.

Nicaragua has felt compelled to have recourse to the Security Council on 12 occasions during the last four years. This is indicative of the sense of insecurity that the Government and people of Nicaragua continue to experience.

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

My delegation believes that peace in Central America must rest on the foundations of the principles of peaceful coexistence and on the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. States have the inalienable right to choose their political, economic and social systems, free from outside intervention or interference. I take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the efforts of the Contadora Group and of the Lima Support Group aimed at securing a negotiated solution to the crisis in Central America.

As Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said at the eighth summit of the non-aligned countries in Harare:

"In Central America and the Caribbean the right of nations to follow national policies of their choice is being challenged. There is outside intimidation and interference, sovereignty is encroached upon, national independence abridged. The Non-Aligned Movement has extended its full support to the Contadora process. The forces of change are not inspired by alien Powers or ideologies. Their aim is to dismantle oppressive, obsolete social structures. These are problems of the region.

"They must be looked at in a regional perspective. They must be resolved in a regional framework, through dialogue and negotiation. We stand by the people of Nicaragua whose unflinching bravery and passionate commitment to freedom is an inspiration to all."

Generations of Central Americans have not known what real peace is. The problems of poverty and deprivation and external interference have produced only strife, instability and violence. We hope that all the countries of the region, and indeed all those who claim a vital interest in its affairs, will work towards eliminating the causes of tension and ushering in a period of peace so that the peoples of the region are able to devote their energies to the betterment of their living standards.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): This is the fourth year that the United Nations General Assembly is considering the item on the situation in Central America. The General Assembly is obliged to do so because of the current explosive situation in the region, which poses a threat to international peace and security.

Various aspects of this urgent problem have, on a number of occasions, been considered by the Security Council. The judgement of the International Court on this subject was recently handed down, and profound alarm in connection with the situation in Central America has been expressed by Latin American States, the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, Governments, governmental and public figures in different countries, all of whom are opposed to the dangerous escalation of tension, and wish to see a settlement of disputes and conflicts by political means.

On 16 November this year the Soviet Government issued a special statement containing the following warning:

"The course of events in Central America is becoming increasingly dangerous. Flagrantly violating the elementary norms of international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter, the United States Administration is intensifying open intervention in the affairs of Nicaragua. Furthermore, Washington makes no attempt to conceal the fact that it is making its goal the overthrow of the legitimate Government of that sovereign independent country."

A whole arsenal of military, political, economic and propaganda devices are being used to threaten and exert pressure on the Nicaraguan people. Preparations for a major armed conflict in Central America into which many States could be drawn are increasing. The United States is creating a massive military infrastructure in the region aimed directly at Nicaragua. In neighbouring countries military bases and airfields have been constructed, a network of strategic roads is being built and training centres and areas are being used for the training of mercenary units.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

On the territory of States adjacent to Nicaragua, and in its coastal waters there are thousands of American military personnel and stockpiles of weapons.

In the course of the many manoeuvres that are being carried out in the immediate vicinity of Nicaragua's sea and land borders, methods are being devised for launching commando-type operations and raids in conditions very closely approximating those of Nicaragua.

The United States President has signed a bill to finance counter-revolutionary gangs and provide them with various kinds of weapons. The amount of \$US 100 million has been earmarked for the Somoza mercenaries who are terrorizing the peaceful population and undermining the economy of Nicaragua. These funds are to be used to equip contra gangs with artillery, aircraft and mobile rocket launchers. Furthermore, the idea is, in fact, that United States military personnel should participate directly in the activities of the counter-revolutionaries. This "paid-for" conflict - paid for with United States dollars - is resulting in bloodshed, suffering and ruin for all the Central American States, and especially for Nicaragua.

In this regard, we can only describe as cynical statements to the effect that the real purpose of resources, appropriated for purposes of war, is to find ways of achieving peace. An alarming symptom is the constant introduction into the region of new modern forms of weaponry. Yesterday, mobile anti-aircraft weapons were made available to the contras. Today, it is large shipments of jet aircraft, and in particular F-5 aircraft. At the same time, United States representatives are all but accusing Nicaragua of proposing a reduction in the most destructive forms of weapons in Central America. As the statement of the Government of the USSR stressed:

"Official United States propaganda is doing its utmost to influence American and international public opinion in a way that will create a suitable climate

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

for the realization of its plans for direct military action against Nicaragua."

At the same time, Washington is attempting to deprive that country of its sovereign right to self-defence and to repel aggression. For Nicaragua, the danger of such aggression is no mere abstraction but an actual fact, and we must face such facts squarely. The United Nations is faced with an extremely dangerous and qualitatively new stage in the escalation of aggression against Nicaragua. This escalation is a serious threat to peace and international stability. The Soviet Government has stated:

"This policy of the United States is an open challenge to the international legal order. The United States Administration disregarded the judgement of the International Court which called for an end to the infringement of the sovereignty and independence of Nicaragua."

The Court's judgement states unambiguously that, by training, arming, equipping and financing the contras, which are waging an armed struggle against Nicaragua, the United States is violating the norms of international law. Of particular significance is the fact that the International Court rejected arguments in favour of the arbitrary use of the right of collective self-defence, with which Washington is attempting to justify its undeclared war against the Nicaraguan people.

In October and November of this year, the Security Council, followed by the General Assembly, considered the question of the need for immediate compliance with the International Court's judgement with regard to military and paramilitary actions in and against Nicaragua. It emerged from these discussions that there was widespread support for a policy aimed at achieving a political solution and rejecting a policy of force. Only three Members of the United Nations voted against the General Assembly resolution on this subject. The results of this vote made it abundantly clear who is thwarting the will of the international community.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The United States Administration is also disregarding the decisions of the Security Council and resolutions of the General Assembly, including those bearing its own signature, as it were.

The policy of State terrorism pursued in Central America is an assault not only on the sacred rights of peoples to sovereignty, independence and freedom, but on their right to choose their own way of life and to determine their own fate. The proponents of this policy are not at all concerned with trying to square their actions with the elementary norms of civilized international relations.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The United States is defying the authority of the Non-Aligned Movement, which is made up of 100 Members of our Organization. As is pointed out in the Harare Political Declaration, the non-aligned countries condemn the escalation of aggression, military attacks and other actions against the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, stability and self-determination of Nicaragua. Support for the Nicaraguan people and its lawful Government by members of that Movement, and, indeed, by all States that cherish the cause of sovereignty and peace, has been clearly echoed in the current discussion. In this regard, we have stated from the rostrum of the General Assembly that the Soviet Union reaffirms its unswerving solidarity with the people of Nicaragua in its just cause and its readiness to continue to provide assistance and support in the fight for freedom and independence.

Washington does not want to hear or reckon with the views of its Latin American neighbours. The constructive efforts of those countries to bring about a mutually acceptable political settlement in Central America within the framework of the Contadora process is being systematically subverted by the United States. The appeals of the Contadora Group and the Support Group to establish a peaceful atmosphere for diplomatic efforts are being rejected. In embarking on a course aimed at thwarting the Contadora process, the United States Administration, in essence, is banking on its ability to do anything it wants and get away with it, and on the use of force to resolve the conflict. Therefore, Washington's great-Power ambition to lord it over the Latin American countries as it sees fit, regardless of the will of their peoples and Governments and their desire to determine their own fate on the basis of their own traditions, convictions and ideas about what constitutes a proper way of life, is starkly revealed. We stress that in attempting to thwart the sovereign choice of the Nicaraguan people, the

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

United States is calling into question the right of every Latin American country and every developing State independently to determine its own fate.

The interventionist actions against Nicaragua are being used by the United States in an attempt to justify its allegations of increasing Soviet military presence in that country. The Soviet Union categorically denies such assertions, which are absolutely groundless.

With regard to the intolerable pressure and intervention from which Nicaragua is suffering, including actual threats to overthrow its lawful Government, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, at a meeting with the President of the Argentine Republic, Raul Alfonsin, on 15 October this year, stated that the Soviet Union has no selfish designs or ambitions in Nicaragua. Mr. Gorbachev pointed out that Nicaragua itself made its own initial choice. He said:

"We respect and, of course, sympathize with it, but we have no intention of imposing anything or of setting up military bases in Nicaragua, or anywhere else for that matter."

It is no secret that in pursuit of its narrow, selfish goals Washington is attempting to represent the situation as if the Central American tension were an outgrowth of the rivalry between East and West. This interpretation of the situation is totally false and extremely dangerous. Furthermore, Washington is working hard to impose upon the international community a stereotype of a Communist threat in Central America. This kind of approach can be viewed only as a manifestation of the long outmoded philosophy of the witchhunt translated into terms of foreign policy. This approach is typified by a total disregard of contemporary political reality and the great variety in the world today. Intolerance of pluralism in the social and economic choices of different countries

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

and the aspiration to pursue an independent course is, in fact, the expression of an allergy to everything that does not fall squarely within the framework of hegemonist standards concerning norms of political conduct - hence the high-handed assertions and attempts to dictate to sovereign States how to organize their own internal life and with what countries they should maintain relations.

As stressed in the declaration of the Soviet Government of 16 November:

"The Soviet Union shares the legitimate alarm of the world community at the present explosive situation in Central America and its possible consequences for international peace.

"The Soviet Government vigorously condemns the escalation of the aggressive policy of the United States in Central America, calls for an end to the criminal preparations aimed against the Nicaraguan people and calls upon the United States to show restraint, realism and a sense of responsibility."

Clearly, with regard to the situation in Central America, Washington is suffering from the absence of sober political thinking and a critical appraisal of its own conduct in the international field. Furthermore, what is needed today is for every Government, and above all the Governments of major Powers, to renounce confrontational and, even more important, interventionist approaches to resolving international problems.

An example of political thinking based on the aspiration to bring about diplomatic solutions in Central America and normalize the situation there is demonstrated by the Contadora Group and its Support Group. The efforts of the Contadora Group to bring about the peaceful resolution of the crisis without outside intervention is finding the broadest possible support among States of the most diverse political leanings. The Contadora Group has done a great deal to halt the dangerous course of events in the region. Had it not been for that machinery,

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

the situation in Central America would very probably have become even more threatening.

The Soviet Union supports the constructive goals of the Contadora process, which is designed to bring about a Latin American solution to the regional crisis. We are convinced that eventually the Contadora and Lima Groups will succeed in achieving practical results. In this task, the Latin American Groups can undoubtedly rely on the support of the overwhelming majority of the Members of the United Nations.

For its part, the Soviet Union is ready to facilitate in a practical way the establishment of circumstances conducive to a just political settlement in Central America. The Soviet Union supports the views expressed in the Declaration by the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group and its Support Group on 1 October, and shares their conviction that peace is still possible in Central America. What is needed for that is, first and foremost, the cessation of interference in the affairs of the sovereign States of the region, respect for their right to an independent choice, the establishment of good-neighbourly relations and co-operation among them, and assistance in resolving urgent social and economic problems.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

As was stressed by the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, Mr. Shevardnadze, at a press conference in Mexico on 5 October, a settlement in Central America would not be that difficult if there were agreements between the existing Governments and not an attempt, by political as well as military means, to eliminate the lawful Government of Nicaragua.

In the view of the Soviet delegation, what is important today is to do everything possible to prevent a dangerous escalation of the conflict in Central America. The Soviet Union believes that settlement of the crisis situation in that region will be possible only by means of a political settlement in accordance with the universally acknowledged norms of international law. In our view, the General Assembly must bring to bear its authority in order to clear away the obstacles to the search for a peaceful settlement in Central America. It is our profound belief that the elimination of the Central American flashpoint of tension will make a contribution to improving the international climate as a whole and, consequently, be in keeping with the interests of all countries and peoples. On that basis the Soviet delegation supports the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly by the Contadora Group and the Support Group.

Mr. FISCHER (Austria): More than 160,000 Central Americans have been killed in the past decade. Two million persons have been displaced. The international community is indeed deeply concerned about the situation in Central America. The interrelationship between armed conflict and social as well as economic problems complicates efforts to build democratic societies and to remedy the deep inequities underlying the many divisions in the region.

For many years Austria has been firmly committed to a process of peace and reconciliation in Central America. That position remains unchanged. Not only political confrontation but also human suffering, deep social injustice and economic misery are the problems we are called upon to address. What Central America needs first and foremost is equitable and durable peace in that region.

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

In order to reach this objective, a chance must be given to the peoples of Central America to determine their own fate, to resolve their political problems free from external pressure and to eradicate the very origins of these conflicts, namely, unjust social and economic conditions. Austria, like other European democracies, has always held the view that conflicts in Central America cannot be resolved by force or foreign intervention from whatever side. Only a political dialogue, mutual trust and confidence, combined with the necessary political will of all parties involved, can bring about a solution. Ever more military weapons are no answer to burning economic and social problems. Adverse social and economic circumstances, however, can never justify the denial of human rights and individual freedoms. At the same time it is our firm belief that respect for the territorial integrity of States must be universal and that international relations must be conducted on the basis of international law.

Austria is convinced that a solution to the Central American crisis can be achieved only in a regional framework. We welcome every effort to negotiate a comprehensive and well-balanced peace settlement, which takes into account the Contadora Group's programme. From the outset Austria has supported the Contadora process as an independent Latin-American initiative for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Central America. Until now the Contadora initiative has provided the only authentic regional approach to solving the problems of the region. It recognizes the factors of unity and diversity that exist in Central America. Austria encourages the Contadora countries to pursue further, despite the present setbacks, their most relevant mediating role in the patient and noble process of conciliation.

On this occasion let me express the strong feelings of solidarity and support of my country towards the Governments of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

for their initiative and for their commendable efforts to find a comprehensive political solution to the crisis in Central America. At the same time I should like to address the members of the Contadora Support Group - Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay. Their efforts in supporting the negotiating process are of crucial importance.

We deeply regret that it has not been possible so far to reach an agreement on a comprehensive regional peace process, as advocated by the members of the Contadora Group. There is an urgent need to act on the Contadora Group's recommendation and to create an atmosphere of confidence in which peace negotiations could be reopened. Bold steps by the countries in the region are needed to bring fresh momentum into the peace negotiations.

The European democracies are called upon to contribute their ideas in this context. Austria welcomed the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Contadora Group and of the Support Group in Caraballeda in January this year, conveying a message of peace, security and democracy in Central America. We also welcomed the meeting of the Heads of State of the five Central American States which took place in Esquipulas in May. The proposals put forward with regard to the promotion of national reconciliation, the establishment of a Central American parliament and the resumption of talks between the Governments concerned are firm proof of the common will of the peoples and Governments of the region to break out of the present deadlock. The implementation of these proposals and effective measures to reduce military potentials in the region could help to avoid a confrontation with possible disastrous consequences for the entire area. Pluralist democratic societies in Central America will be strengthened through political dialogue and national reconciliation.

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

Therefore, a regional peace treaty, signed and fully implemented by all countries concerned, would offer the best guarantees for peace and security and lasting respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in Central America.

In our view, the situation in Central America calls for the utmost restraint by all sides. The Austrian Federal Government remains convinced that only a policy which takes into account the recommendations of the Contadora Group aiming at mutual understanding and reconciliation can contribute to a lessening of tensions in Central America. Such a lessening of tensions can also be promoted by each individual Government through policies of internal conflict resolution, in particular through strictly observing human rights and fundamental freedoms as a matter of priority and through fostering national reconciliation. That applies not least to the present tense internal political situation in Nicaragua.

At the same time, I should like to emphasize that Austria fully supports the International Court of Justice, the principal judiciary organ of the United Nations. Therefore, I would appeal to all sides concerned to co-operate in the implementation of its decisions.

All nations are called upon to contribute to the economic and social development of Central America. As I have already mentioned, Austria supports the Contadora peace initiative morally and politically. But this support for development in the region is not limited to the political field: it is accompanied by a number of initiatives by the Austrian people who support numerous development assistance projects in Central America, as is also done by my Government. Recently, the Austrian Government sent a Counsellor for Technical Assistance to the region, since it considers the social and economic dimension of the present situation in Central America to be of crucial importance.

(Mr. Fischer, Austria)

A peaceful solution to the problems afflicting Central America is not an objective easy to attain. The present climate of hostility has to be overcome. Policies of force have to be replaced by confidence, trust and co-operation. Poverty and social injustice must be seriously addressed. In order to attain these noble objectives, let us explore together all the possibilities of making better use of the United Nations in dealing with Central America's problems of today and its challenges for the future.

Mr. TRIBLE (United States of America): We are meeting today to address a subject of great significance to the United States and to our friends and allies in this hemisphere.

Central America has in recent years been a frequent focus of consideration in this body. The issues raised have dealt with conflict, with threats to security, with violations of human rights and with various other problems that have long cast a shadow over the lives of our friends in the region. These are legitimate concerns that deserve our full and urgent attention. It is unfortunate, however, that by stressing the difficulties over and over again, the picture of Central America that has been presented has been less than accurate. For all of its problems, Central America is not the dark and desperate place that some might suggest. On the contrary, Central America is a region of hope. The urgency of the problems at hand is fed not by despair but by the expectations born from the remarkable progress of the last decade.

Today I should like to depart from the normal practice and review all that has been achieved in Central America.

I could not begin with a more apt example of what is right in Central America than Costa Rica. That small but exemplary country has been spared the violence and turmoil that has in the past been endemic among its neighbours. The Costa Rican democracy is venerable, having endured and thrived through the long period when

(Mr. Tribble, United States)

civil strife and repression ravaged the other countries of the region. The election this year of Oscar Arias, a man whose personal ideals reflect the society he leads, was only the last chapter in the long history of free elections in one of this hemisphere's strongest defenders of political liberty. Costa Rica has borne a heavy responsibility as the sanctuary for dispossessed Central Americans. But it has done so generously. It is - perhaps as never before - the refuge for thousands of persons fleeing repression. But Costa Rica is no longer alone in its defence of democratic ideals. It is today a member of a community of shared goals and aspirations. Despite the difficulties Costa Rica faces on many fronts, it can take pride in its past and look to the future with confidence.

In Costa Rica there is hope.

Last week the Organization of American States (OAS) convened its annual General Assembly. The representatives to that respected institution, dedicated to liberty and democracy, met in a free and democratic Guatemala. They gathered in a country where the institutions of liberty have, in just a few years, taken root: in a country that not very long ago was under military rule, plagued by serious human rights abuses and suffering the consequences of a brutal and violent Marxist insurgency. The delegates to the OAS General Assembly were welcomed by a President chosen by the Guatemalan people in an election that was free, fair and energetically contested. President Cerezo, in his short term in office, has made great progress in implementing urgently needed reform. He and his administration have worked tirelessly to create an atmosphere of respect for human rights. Through their example and through their visible dedication to the common good, they have earned the enthusiastic support of a people that at long last is beginning to reap the benefits of representative Government - not by force of arms, but by guaranteeing the basic rights to which all men are entitled. The Cerezo Government

(Mr. Tribble, United States)

has eroded the prospects of victory for an armed insurgency in thrall to an alien and totalitarian ideology.

In Guatemala, as in other nations of Central America, much remains to be done. Many years of hard work, stability and security will be needed to allow the institutions on which liberty is based to flourish. Democratic processes must be further expanded and the spirit of participation embraced by still larger numbers of Guatemalans. The scars left by a long history of arbitrary rule will take time to heal, but the process has begun.

In Guatemala there is hope.

El Salvador, which shares with Guatemala a similar history of military Governments and denied rights, is making a transition that is even more difficult. Under the inspiring leadership of President Jose Napoleon Duarte - a man who himself paid dearly for his democratic convictions - the Salvadorians are rallying to create a strong foundation for freedom. The odds against success have been enormous. The extreme right had reacted to its loss of privilege with violence. The extreme left, armed and supported by foreign Powers, has attempted to restore its fading hope and prominence through the use of terror. The recent earthquake, in addition to its toll in human life, has destroyed much of the economic gain so painfully accumulated and has presented the Government with another challenge. The courage and responsibility demonstrated in the country's response to this latest tragedy reflect the determination of El Salvador's new democracy to survive and prevail.

In El Salvador there is hope.

(Mr. Tribble, United States)

By contrast, Honduras has travelled a far smoother road to democracy. The transfer of power this year from one freely elected Government to another was a milestone in that country's history. Hondurans, under the outstanding leadership of President José Azcona, enjoy the fruits of liberty and exhibit all the exuberance and contention that mark free societies. In today's Honduras there is broad representation in the Legislative Assembly, a proliferation of political organizations, a strong private sector and full freedom of expression exemplified in a critical investigative press. Despite its economic problems, Honduras, like Costa Rica, has shown great generosity to its less fortunate neighbours, offering a haven to tens of thousands of refugees.

The vigour with which the Hondurans have exercised their new rights is irrefutable evidence that democracy is no mere passing phenomenon, but a reflection of a people's will.

In Honduras there is hope.

I come now to Nicaragua, a sad and battered land where the promise of freedom has been denied. The aspirations that gave birth to a democratic revolution in 1979 - aspirations which so often seem lost in the memory of the outside world - remain alive in the hearts of Nicaraguans, if only as a poignant reminder of what might have been. Those of us who enjoy the blessings of liberty can only imagine the desolation of those brave people who waged a costly struggle for liberation only to fall to a tyranny unimagined in even the worst days of the old régime. How tragic an irony that the country that became a symbol of the will to freedom should watch while its neighbours walked off with the prize which it had been denied.

That is the sad side of Nicaragua's story. But we can all take heart from the fact that Nicaragua is not yet lost to the community of free nations. In the face of a highly organized and massive effort to impose a totalitarian system, guided

(Mr. Tribble, United States)

and financed by masters of oppression, Nicaragua's democratic forces have waged a courageous struggle to vindicate the sacrifices of that revolution. A civil opposition continues to speak out on behalf of the rights of Nicaraguans, despite threats, despite arrests, despite imprisonment and despite assassination. An armed resistance of nearly 20,000 men and women have pledged their lives to the ideal of freedom, pinning their hopes for their country's liberation on the conscience of those who, from the safety of their own free world, have watched the dream become a nightmare. These Nicaraguans are making a statement that has already been made by their neighbours. They, too, are trying to ride the wave of democracy sweeping the rest of Latin America. They will be free. They will be the masters of their own destiny.

Yes - even in Nicaragua there is hope.

The people of Central America have raised their voices in support of freedom. We must heed and respect that choice. The credit for this remarkable phenomenon must go to those whose convictions, courage and determination made it possible: to a leader such as President Arias, who has carried on his nation's long tradition of democratic government; to leaders such as President Azcona, President Duarte and President Cerezo, who have helped to transform democracy from theory to reality. These are the heroes who have dedicated their lives to the ideals on which this Organization is founded. These are the politicians who, often at great risk, have preserved for or restored to their people their inalienable rights. My Government is proud to be in the vanguard of the many nations represented in this Assembly that have provided moral and material support to Central America's democratic forces, enabling those countries to take their place in the growing circle of free nations.

The unshakeable commitment of the United States to the process of democracy is not merely rhetorical; it is demonstrated consistently in the provision of

(Mr. Tribble, United States)

significant economic and technical assistance. In recent years the United States has made available some \$900 million annually to aid Central America. Despite our own severe budgetary constraints we have done so. The Congress of which I am a member has shown its determination to maintain assistance levels to Central America. We seek to support the efforts of democratic leaders in the region to promote both economic growth and structural reforms that will guarantee a more equitable distribution of wealth to their people. Our substantial material aid is a major element in the implementation of the recommendations of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America for the promotion of economic opportunity, human development, democracy and security in the region.

As the 1984 report of the National Bipartisan Commission clearly stated, the root of Central American instability has been social injustice. The Government of the United States has dedicated itself to helping our friends surmount the obstacles to a free and fair society. Nevertheless, we fully concur with the view of the Central American democracies that all the progress achieved through hard work and sacrifice is at risk from hostile forces that seek to undermine the growing democratic consensus. We share a unanimous conviction that the gains of recent years are all too vulnerable to an alien ideology that is repressive at home and expansionist by nature and design. For that reason the democratic countries have sought to find a comprehensive regional solution that will guarantee Central America's long-term tranquillity and the conditions essential to growth and democracy.

My Government supports that goal, and its attempted realization through the Contadora negotiations. As Secretary of State Shultz and other Administration officials have publicly and repeatedly affirmed, we believe that the 1983 Contadora Document of Objectives represents a fair, comprehensive and balanced framework for

(Mr. Tribble, United States)

a lasting negotiated settlement of this regional crisis. However, we also agree with our friends in Central America that any effort to approach the problem in piecemeal fashion - either bilaterally or by addressing only certain elements of the Document of Objectives - is destined to fail. As Costa Rican President Arias has pointed out, the institution in each country of truly representative Government, responsive and accountable to its people, is no less vital to Contadora's success than the establishment of mechanisms to verify the level of military forces and other treaty commitments. Each of the region's democracies stands to lose if the threat in Central America is not defused. There is a regional problem; it demands a regional solution negotiated directly by the sovereign nations of Central America. It demands a solution acceptable to the Governments involved. It demands a solution which will enjoy the support of the people of Central America.

For the first time in the history of the Central American region, a majority of its population is overcoming its legacy of poverty and repression and living under democratic government. A bold struggle is under way to keep alive the hope that the one nation in the region which is not so fortunate may one day share that blessing with its neighbours.

There remain problems and challenges. The solution, however, can never be capitulation or despair. The Government of the United States is firm in its determination to lend every effort to help complete the democratic revolution under way in Central America. We believe there is hope in Central America. We believe there is reason to be optimistic about the future. We believe that, with the support of others in the democratic community, those who recently joined the family of free nations will succeed. We are confident that those still struggling to do so will prevail.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guyana): When, in 1982, Nicaragua first brought to the Security Council its fears about the worsening situation in Central America and the threat that that situation posed to the independence and sovereignty of Central American States and to its own peace and security, the United States accused it, in effect, of crying wolf. During the intervening four years we have all watched the slow and steady deterioration of the situation which Nicaragua complained about in 1982. Now, four years later, the wolf is hard at the gate, if not already at the door, and, menacingly, her deadly cubs sniff and scratch.

Nicaragua, being their main target, is naturally concerned about its own safety and independence, as any small State would be in similar circumstances. But the perception of danger is not only a Nicaraguan perception. It is the perception of the peoples of Central America and of the Contadora Group of States, which, along with the Lima Support Group, has been working painstakingly to create conditions for a régime of peace and stability in Central America and for the promotion of relations of friendship and co-operation between the States of the sub-region. It is the perception of the Organization of American States and it is the perception of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, whose Heads of State or Government, meeting in Harare in August this year, determined that the prevailing situation in Central America constitutes one of the major focal points of tension at the international level. It is the perception of the General Assembly.

The whole world views with concern the deterioration that is taking place in Central America, and the whole world knows what attitudes and what policies and practices lie at the heart of this deterioration.

Strangely enough, side by side with this negative development in the region the air is filled with talk of peace. The term "peace" in the Central American context seems to mean different things to different interests. Some talk loudly about their concern for peace in the region, while in the name of that peace they organize dissidents into armies, train them, finance them, arm them, call them by

(Mr. Sinclair, Guyana)

nice-sounding names and send them off to violate Nicaragua's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to kill, destabilize and overthrow. They call this working for peace.

Meanwhile, feeling threatened by this well-organized contra activity, Nicaragua boosts its defence capability, as any State similarly threatened would. Then we hear that the Nicaraguans have more arms than they need for their defence, and are therefore contemplating aggression against their neighbours. So more arms are given to the contras, and the spiral twists upwards.

Peace is peace; it is not in what we say, but in what we do. The promotion of contra activity is inconsistent with the pursuit of peace in Central America. The contra army injures Nicaragua's nationalist sentiment and threatens its independence and sovereignty. It is therefore both a symbol and an instrument of instability and insecurity in Central America.

True peace, the peace that the peoples of Central America yearn for, is one in which the peoples of Nicaragua - as, indeed, the peoples of all other States of the sub-region - will be able to live free from the threat of intervention or from interference in their internal affairs and will be allowed to organize their own domestic affairs in accordance with their own needs and their own interests, one in which relations of harmony, stability and active and friendly co-operation flourish.

The animosities being promoted among Central American States and the emphasis on militarism which has been introduced into the approach to solutions in the region are decidedly out of place in terms of the political evolution that has been taking place there. As the representative of Mexico correctly said yesterday, the history of Central America, like that of other parts of the wider region, is punctuated with bilateral conflicts, territorial disputes, destabilization, foreign intervention and foreign interference. But that is not the whole picture. In his

(Mr. Sinclair, Guyana)

statement to the Assembly on 6 October last my Minister of Foreign Affairs drew special attention to what he described as:

"a political disposition on the part of Latin America and the Caribbean to work collectively for the solution of their manifold problems and for the protection and promotion of their political and economic interests.

"Consistent with this attitude, the Governments and peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean are desirous of negotiated solutions to the political problems of Central America. They have therefore been solidly in support of the Contadora process, which is designed to find a regional solution to a regional problem." (A/41/PV.25, pp. 21-22)

Central America has evolved since those days when the region was seen as the backyard or the playground of outside Powers. Our numerous institutions of co-operation and integration, both regional and sub-regional - including, most recently, the Contadora Group and the Lima Support Group - are all reassertions of the dignity, self-respect, independence and maturity of the States of our region and of our determination and capacity to deal with and to find solutions to the problems affecting our region. Unhappily, appreciation of this ethic of co-operation and integration is not universal; in particular, it is not shared by some who are recognized as having interests in the region and who therefore have a stake in the kind of solutions that are found.

No responsible analysis of the Central American reality can deny that the United States of America, as the regional Power, has a vital interest in the region, and that therefore its interests must be taken into account in any approach to solutions to problems affecting the sub-region.

But there is a constructive way to ensure that these interests are taken into account and harmonized with those of the States of the region - and that is through dialogue. This is precisely what Contadora has been about. When there is dialogue

(Mr. Sinclair, Guyana)

the opportunities for understanding and peaceful co-operation are enhanced. Where there is no communication, not only are these opportunities lost, but tensions easily proliferate. That is why my delegation so regrets the interruption of the Manzanillo talks between the United States and Nicaragua, and we sincerely hope that the United States will soon see fit to recommence that dialogue.

In the same way, Guyana considers a reinvigoration of the Contadora process to be essential. The Contadora Group and the Lima Support Group have done a great deal to lay the basis for a comprehensive peaceful settlement. We call for the fullest and most unequivocal support for the continuation of the Contadora process - not only from outside the region but also from within it. In making this appeal, my delegation is fully conscious of the gulf that separates various sides in the dialogue being promoted under the Contadora process. Like any other such undertaking, this will not be easy. But differences, which are natural, must not be allowed to obscure or to detract from the attainment of the wider goal of a régime of peace, stability and co-operation in Latin America. Under such a régime we all stand to gain; without it we are all losers. Contadora must succeed.

The work of the Contadora Group and the Lima Support Group is truly a labour of peace, and those who seek to frustrate or to undermine it are doing the Devil's work. It is a labour, furthermore, which has its roots in the Charter of this Organization and in a number of lofty and sacred instruments which the Assembly has elaborated over the years for the conduct of inter-State relations - among them, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations; the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security; and the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Internal Affairs of States. It is rooted in the firm desire of the peoples of the region to give effect to these principles and to make them a dynamic force in relations between our States and between our States and outside Powers.

(Mr. Sinclair, Guyana)

When these principles are ignored or set aside in inter-State relations certain negative consequences inevitably follow. If since 1982 they had been given the respect which Nicaragua and the rest of the international community had been urging be given, there would have been no need for this debate today. The thousands of lives lost in attempts at destabilizing Nicaragua and in the effort to defend against such attempts would have been spared. There is still time to turn away from the heady course of violence, which is producing nothing but death and insecurity. Guyana, as a small State in the region, has a vital interest in seeing such an evolution. My delegation hopes that the overwhelming expressions of concern heard in the course of this debate will induce a return to sanity and to respect for law and order in Central America.

Mr. ALZAMORA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): The primary responsibility of the developing countries represented here, which constitute more than four fifths of the Organization, is defence of our independence and sovereignty, that is, defence against foreign intervention. Our history, as Latin Americans from the very moment of our independence, has been one of constant struggle against intervention. As the culmination of that effort the San Francisco Charter enshrined the principle of non-intervention as a fundamental guarantee of civilized coexistence, which is an obligation on all of us, strong and weak alike. The same process of institutional evolution of inter-American relations depends on acceptance and recognition of this principle of non-intervention. Thus, the inter-American system is valid when it respects that fundamental premise of non-intervention, but is in a state of crisis when it violates it. For the principle of non-intervention not only is contained in treaties and conventions, but also inherent in the spirit and blood of Latin Americans and is among the elements that are firmly transmitted from generation to generation as the essential condition of their own identity.

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

For this reason, in adopting interventionist measures one cannot ignore the reactions that will thus be provoked in the region, the way in which this will affect the political behaviour of the Latin American peoples and the future of the relation between the north and the south of the hemisphere. Unless these elements are given due weight it will not be possible to make a true assessment of the counter-productive consequences of what is in essence a use of power for power's sake outside the framework of law.

For this reason, two fundamental elements must be taken into consideration. The first is Latin America's desire for autonomy, its desire to solve its own problems by peaceful means, without foreign intervention, hence the significance of Contadora as a reaffirmation of the will of Latin America to determine for itself its own fate. The second is our special link with Central America, because Central America is a vital part of the Latin American organism. Our history is one, forged by common heroes who, without distinction as to nationality, fought as brothers for the freedom of all our peoples and in times of adversity found in each of our countries the generous warmth of their own hearth. Latin Americans and Caribbeans intimately share the hopes and the sorrows of the Central American countries, because we share the same past of the struggle for sovereignty, a past in which the main intervention was in Central America and the Caribbean.

For this reason it is both the obligation and the responsibility of those that wish to see a positive, dignified relationship between the north and the south of the hemisphere to speak out frankly and say what we all feel; to sound a warning when the very basis of this relationship is in danger; to encourage joint reflection by all when the feeling of omnipotence might lead to arbitrary decisions or error when the law, which is a guarantee for all, has been displaced by force, which in the long run may create a false sense of security for some.

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

There are many values that we share in the hemisphere: a common dedication to freedom, the same desire for democracy and equality; the same generous vision of the future of mankind. But the concept of security of one major Power and that of other States in the region result from different outlooks, different concepts of the past and different destinies. Therefore, sometimes these concepts coincide and sometimes they are contradictory.

We respect the differences in outlook, but we cannot accept that these values which we share, these principles which, despite the asymmetry of power, constitute the very basis of our hemispheric coexistence, should be subordinated, if not sacrificed to the concept of a security that undermines our own. Above all, we cannot in any way accept the elimination of the principle of non-intervention, because for Latin America this principle is the very basis of and the primary requisite for our sovereignty and our peace. This peace is threatened today by intervention in Central America, and the conflict which this might provoke would not only jeopardize international peace and security, but possibly unleash serious tensions and conflicts in the whole of the continent.

For this reason, speaking on behalf of the 250 million Latin Americans, the Foreign Ministers of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela alerted all the States of the international community, in their joint declaration about six weeks ago in New York, that the risk of war is increasingly serious in Central America and called on them to join urgently and actively in the effort to avert war and preserve peace, warning them that the peace of Central America is our own peace.

Time and time again we Latin Americans have said to the world - and it is our duty to repeat this once again here - that we do not want a war to be imposed upon us and to lead to an artificial conflict in the region; we do not want to see Latin Americans armed and trained to kill other Latin Americans; we do not want to see

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

Latin American territories used for attacks against other Latin American countries; we do not want to see the Latin American effort to bring about a peaceful understanding among Latin Americans sabotaged; we do not want to see Latin Americans divided and set against each other in order to destroy Latin American unity; we do not want to see the Latin American peoples harassed and dragged forcibly into a war which all these peoples, brothers by blood and by history, want to avoid at all costs.

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

And the question is: is it so difficult to understand this? Is it so difficult to understand that every act of intervention in Latin America is an affront to the dignity of the Latin Americans, that every act of intervention in Latin America opens up old wounds and revives shared sorrows and humiliations? Is it so difficult to understand that this intervention unnecessarily radicalizes the political process in Latin America and jeopardizes the future for democracy in the whole region, that this policy of intervention is sowing a wind to reap the whirlwind, and creating an infinitely more serious danger than that which the supposed aim is to prevent? Is it so difficult to understand that this intervention lends legitimacy to other interventions in Latin America and creates new problems of security for our peoples, that this policy of intervention is poisoning relations in the hemisphere and destroying the future of inter-American coexistence? Is it so difficult to understand these elementary arguments of the international political situation? Is it so easy to forget the past?

Yet it is quite clear that the Central American problem will not be solved merely by ending foreign intervention, but will require a continuation and extension of the Contadora negotiating process, that will guarantee security and confidence for all those directly concerned, give all of them the right to choose their own path while respecting that adopted by others, ensure access to freedom, to democracy and social justice, and open the way to national unity and regional brotherhood. But none of this can be achieved on a genuine and lasting basis under the pressure of foreign intervention or aggression, because these values are meaningless and empty if they are offered in barter for independence and sovereignty. This has already been clearly and firmly stated by the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group and the Support Group in their Declaration of 10 October 1986:

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

"[Latin America] does not wish the principles of self-determination and non-intervention to be sacrificed in the name of security or democracy."

(A/41/662, p.2)

Only a few days ago we adopted resolutions in the General Assembly, by a large majority, calling for the end of other interventions, the withdrawal of occupying troops and respect for self-determination in other areas of the world. Is this what we in Latin America shall have to do after the fact? Are we unable to prevent the intervention or aggression from taking place? Is the United Nations now absolutely powerless to stand up in defence of peace, international legal order and elementary security safeguards for small and medium-sized countries?

We do not believe this is so, and consequently we will vote in favour, and that vote is a vote for the rights and safeguards of all the countries represented here, since it goes beyond all regional and ideological considerations, like other resolutions which in recent days have reaffirmed the support of the majority of Member States for the principles of non-intervention and self-determination.

The question of Central America has thus taken on a universal significance and scope, because here, as in other regional crises, fundamental principles and values of international coexistence are at stake that are particularly cherished by the developing countries.

Latin America has always been able to find appropriate ways of reaching peaceful negotiated solutions to its problems, when its own autonomy and freedom to do so have been respected. The Foreign Ministers of the eight member countries of the Contadora Group and the Support Group demand this autonomy and freedom once again when they state in their Declaration:

"As Latin Americans, we request time to act, time to offer both sides a peaceful, just and lasting solution ..." (ibid).

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

In the resolution of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted a few days ago in Guatemala, all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have reiterated their support for the two Groups, as they did at the meeting of the Latin American Economic System (SELA) in Lima, and have urged them to continue their efforts, taking a unanimous stand in favour of peace and negotiation and against intervention and war.

The time has now come for the international community represented here to mobilize its operative ability to maintain peace and ensure that intervention no longer violates the principles of the Charter and the dignity and integrity of our peoples.

In this hour of extreme gravity for Latin America and for world peace, those of us who support Contadora reiterate our desire for harmony and our good will towards all the parties involved in the conflict. We renew our call to spare our peoples the upheaval and violence that would inevitably result from a solution based on force.

We reaffirm the urgent need for a realistic and just political negotiation that would safeguard the right of all the peoples of Central America to peace and security and that would cement the national unity and the regional fraternity of all Central Americans within the broad framework of Latin American solidarity.

Mr. CESAR (Czechoslovakia): The General Assembly of the United Nations has recently deliberated on the International Year of Peace, the observance of which is evidence of the fact that the international community wishes to adopt concrete measures to secure the peaceful development of mankind.

Central America remains one of the dangerous hotbeds of world tension. Defenceless civilians, women and children, are still dying there. The fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and norms of international law are still being trampled upon without scruples. In an effort to restore its domination over

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

the Western hemisphere, the United States administration is now pursuing a political course that amounts to nothing but implementation of the long-standing policy of American imperialism aimed at achieving hegemony and stifling every spark of the national liberation struggle of the peoples of that region.

There is an ever-stronger prevalence of reliance on the use of force and on a power-based solution of the problems of Central America, combined with unwillingness to understand the simple fact that the escalation of the provoked conflict in Central America has a very serious destabilizing impact not only on Latin America but on the world in general as well.

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

Washington persistently refuses to understand that the political destabilization in the region is merely the result of the hunger, poverty and suffering, which has lasted for centuries, and the inequalities in the commercial and political relations between advanced capitalist States and developing countries. The developments in the situation around Nicaragua have caused particular concern of late. In addition to the officially approved \$100 million allocated for Nicaraguan contras, hundreds of millions more have been sent for some time through secret channels to bands of mercenaries with the aim of destabilizing the political situation in Nicaragua, disrupting its economy as much as possible, and weakening the Sandinist armed forces. More and more politicians warn of the danger of a direct military intervention.

Claiming the need to defend its national interests and using absurd arguments about the alleged danger posed by the independent Nicaraguan nation, with a population of 3 million, to United States security, the United States has been stepping up military, economic and political pressure on Central American States, especially the Republic of Nicaragua. That is why the suffering of that Central American country, which was for decades subjected to the dictatorship of one of the cruellest tyrants in history - Somoza - still continues. United States armed forces in the Central American region are being constantly added to, existing military bases are being expanded and new ones are under construction. Military exercises with United States participation are going on virtually incessantly in Honduras. This demonstration of strength is designed to intimidate Central American countries and to compel blind obedience from them. The determination to suppress by military force every single germ of free expression of the sovereign will of the people of the region was manifested by the so-called success of the armed aggression against Grenada.

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

Less than half an hour ago we heard the statement of the representative of the United States that attested to the fact that the United States intends to continue the policy it has practised so far towards the countries of Central America, a policy which has been condemned more than once in a number of places - including this Assembly - by the international community. It is our opinion that in this case it is not proper for the United States to give lessons on what is democracy and what is freedom. Only the people of Nicaragua, under the leadership of the Sandinist Government, have the right to decide on their internal affairs and the road to a better and happier future.

There is a sharp contrast between the United States position and the constructive approach of the Sandinist Government of Nicaragua, that has been striving for a fruitful dialogue among the countries concerned with a view to achieving a just and peaceful settlement of the situation in the region. This is demonstrated by Nicaragua's interest in resuming direct negotiations with the United States, as well as by its readiness to accept the documents formulated and put forward by the Contadora Group.

The Republic of Nicaragua has been actively participating in peace efforts and has submitted a number of initiatives of its own that might be conducive to reaching a generally acceptable consensus. It has also taken a constructive attitude to proposals put forward by other countries of Central America, displayed a readiness to accept possible modifications of the fundamental Contadora documents, and to make a number of concessions, provided that the armed aggression is halted and that there is no interference in its sovereign internal affairs. It is obvious - and this has been manifested by developments until now - that no peace initiative by Nicaragua has a chance of success unless there is a change in the position of the United States Government, which has clearly been striving to overthrow the legitimate Sandinist Government. Any attempts to prevent understanding among the fraternal peoples of the Central American countries, tied

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

to one another by historical, cultural, ethnic and other bonds, an understanding that would be instrumental in achieving a just, peaceful settlement, can never be successful.

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, as well as other socialist countries, has been making every effort to create conditions for the maintenance of world peace, advocating enhancement of the role and responsibility of the United Nations, in an endeavour to achieve this high human goal. We therefore condemn the defiance of the decisions of the International Court of Justice in The Hague and demand the adoption of effective measures conducive to halting the undeclared war waged against the Sandinist régime in Nicaragua.

We highly appreciate and value the peaceful and constructive foreign policy of the Nicaraguan Government, striving to achieve understanding among the nations of the region and to solve existing problems by means of negotiations on the basis of non-interference in internal affairs, equality and co-operation. The results of the elections have given convincing evidence of the broad active support of the people for the popular cause of the Sandinist leadership of Nicaragua aimed at restoring the country, strengthening its national unity and political and economic independence, and achieving a more equitable political settlement in Central America. We fully understand the measures that the Sandinist Government has been compelled to adopt, due to the escalating aggression against Nicaragua's domestic policy, in order to ensure the country's security and defence capability. We appreciate the peace efforts of the countries of the Contadora Group, as well as those of the Lima Group. We shall support the activities of the Contadora Group, and strive to intensify the support given to it by the United Nations. Czechoslovakia will continue, to the extent possible, to extend to the Republic of Nicaragua, political, economic and material encouragement and assistance so as to

(Mr. Cesar, Czechoslovakia)

enable Nicaragua to fulfil the noble goals of the Sandinist revolution, to achieve full political and economic independence, and to eliminate the consequences of the undeclared war it has been facing. We demand the cessation of the financing of the contra bands, non-interference in the internal affairs of the countries of the region, and respect for their sovereignty. We are convinced that only the implementation of measures to this end will create the prerequisites for a final peaceful and generally acceptable solution of the Central American crisis.

Mr. PERM (Sweden): The crisis in Central America has seriously worsened during the past year. The situation causes grave concern to the Swedish Government. Tensions and conflicts have escalated. The military build-up is growing as well as external interference. Violations of fundamental principles of international law, such as respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, have increased. The decision by the United States to expand its assistance to the so-called contras has been a major factor in this new and serious phase of threatening dimensions.

The conflicts in Central America have their roots in economic, social and political injustices over many years. These underlying causes of the conflicts must be tackled. The Swedish Government has stressed from the outset that this can only be achieved if the conflicts are settled by political and peaceful means. Military pressure from the outside is detrimental not only to peace efforts but also to the process of democratization and social and economic reform.

In his report on Central America of 2 July this year, the Secretary-General of the United Nations mentions six elements on which a comprehensive solution should be based.

The Swedish Government strongly and fully supports the view that these elements constitute the fundamental pre-condition for lasting peace in the region. If these elements were implemented fully and simultaneously it would mean a decisive break of the vicious cycle we have witnessed in recent months and in the words of the Secretary-General

"the continuing aggravation of the Central American crisis, the steady ideologization of the conflict and its consequent inclusion in the arena of the East-West struggle, and the threat of widespread conflict in the region."

(A/40/1136, para. 11)

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

The seriousness of the situation has been further underlined by the Contadora Group in its recent declarations. The international community must respond to these alarming signals by intensifying its support for the Contadora peace efforts.

The Contadora countries are at present giving particular attention to the principal conditions that determine the political climate in the region and the obstacles impeding a peaceful solution. This is an extremely important task and should be seen as a necessary adaptation to partly new and, unfortunately so, more aggravating circumstances. We are fully convinced that the tireless and innovative Contadora work towards a negotiated agreement will continue.

Our continued and wholehearted support for the Contadora process is primarily based on our conviction that there is no realistic alternative to this Latin American effort to establish peace. The Contadora process is based on the principles of international law, such as territorial integrity, national sovereignty, non-use of force, principles which are of paramount importance to Sweden too. Furthermore, the other basic Contadora principles - disarmament, promotion of human rights and economic co-operation - are also prominent elements in Swedish policy. Sweden is prepared to consider in a positive spirit proposals concerning the way in which European countries could take a more active part in this work.*

The Swedish Government has repeatedly rejected any measures of economic sanctions and support of armed groups in violation of international law to overthrow a legitimate government. Such measures are now seriously obstructing the peace work of Contadora. The Swedish Government endorsed Security Council resolution 562 (1985) of May 1985 and took exception to the decision of the United States to impose economic sanctions against Nicaragua.

* Mr. Ngirumpatse (Rwanda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

The International Court of Justice, in its judgement of 27 June 1986, concluded that the United States, in its relations with Nicaragua, had acted in breach of the principle of non-intervention in international law. This decision by the Court was based on the finding that the United States had trained, armed, financed and supplied the contra forces and thereby had encouraged and supported military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua. Furthermore, the Court found that by laying mines in the internal or territorial waters of Nicaragua the United States had acted in breach of the fundamental international obligation not to use force against another State.

It should also be noted in this context that the Court rejected the justification of collective self-defence put forward by the United States. The Court pointed out that whether self-defence be individual or collective, it can only be exercised in response to an armed attack. The Court unanimously called on both parties to seek a solution to their disputes by peaceful means in accordance with international law.

The judgement of the International Court of Justice is the highest international legal opinion on this question. Sweden firmly believes in and supports the International Court of Justice. Sweden has consequently accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court. The judgement by the Court against United States assistance to the contra groups is thus of great importance to us. In addition to its important normative value for the present and the future, the Court enables the international community to have an objective judgement on a question which is now blurred by ideological considerations and military criteria.

Sweden joins in the international call on the United States to comply fully with the judgement of the Court and to cease without further delay its support to,

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

and training of, the contras. Furthermore, we reiterate our appeal to the United States to give its unconditional and active support to the Contadora process and to act in its spirit.

I have already stressed the social and economic dimension of the crisis in Central America. For example, the real per capita income has drastically declined in the region. The income distribution of most of the countries has become even more uneven. There is a need for large-scale international assistance to the region in order to support efforts to overcome the current economic and social crisis and to change the socio-economic structures that are often unjust.

In several parts of the region a severe suppression of civil and political human rights is manifest. There is an alarming need for immediate humanitarian assistance, in particular to the great number of refugees and displaced persons in Central America. Humanitarian assistance is also an important instrument to promote democracy and respect for human rights. Against this background, my Government welcomes the attention given by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to this aspect of the crisis in Central America. Sweden is prepared to continue to play its role in this context.

In the generally dismal situation in Central America there are, however, some positive elements. There have been elections during the past year in Honduras, Guatemala and again in Costa Rica. The five Central American Presidents have decided to set up a Central American parliament composed of members freely elected by direct universal suffrage. A draft constitution is under preparation in Nicaragua. The Swedish Government welcomes and encourages these democratic developments.

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

The Swedish Government has also welcomed the election of a civilian constitutional Government in Guatemala. Its commendable ambitions in the field of human rights and its policy of active neutrality constitute, in our opinion, important elements for positive development in the region.

As mentioned earlier, support to the irregular armed forces is in total contradiction to basic principles of international law and counterproductive to peace efforts in the region. My Government, therefore, believes that the declared intention of Costa Rica, as stated by its new President, not to allow its own territory to be used by the contra groups is in line with the Contadora peace process. It is evident that such a policy, if followed by other countries in the region, would contribute decisively to the peace process and decrease bilateral tensions.

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

My Government attaches great importance to Nicaragua's commitment to democracy, to a pluralist political system and to non-alignment. Nicaragua should be assisted and encouraged to achieve those basic objectives. Military and economic pressure will only jeopardize such a development.

The Swedish Government has deplored the decision taken by Nicaragua to reimpose the state of emergency, as well as the new measures to restrict freedom of expression further. We hope those measures will be lifted as soon as possible. We cannot fail to note, however, that they were imposed in connection with the decision by the United States Congress to allocate \$US 100 million for assistance to the contras. Groups of contras have murdered and kidnapped civilians, attacked farms, looted food stores and threatened and assassinated foreign aid workers. My Government unequivocally condemns such activities. The contras are not the messengers of hope and democracy.

In spite of certain steps towards a resumption of peace talks between the Government of El Salvador and the Revolutionary Democratic Front-Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FDR/FMLN) the armed conflict continues. The civil war in El Salvador causes enormous human suffering and impedes social and economic progress, as well as improvements in the human rights situation. The tragic earthquake has put a further strain on the economy of the country. It is the hope of the Swedish Government that the dialogue between the two parties to the conflict, a dialogue so actively supported by the Archbishop of El Salvador, will be reactivated and will result in political solutions broadly supported by the population of El Salvador. Continued and increased foreign military assistance will, in our opinion, not contribute to the necessary negotiating process or to improvements in the human rights situation.

The increased border incidents and tensions between the States in the region, in particular those involving Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua, constitute a

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

serious development which clearly endangers peace efforts. We call on the parties concerned to engage in direct bilateral negotiations in accordance with the Contadora principles to solve these conflicts. We hope they will do so without delay and refrain from steps which increase confrontations. Interim agreements on creating peace-keeping frontier supervisory commissions could be important steps towards reducing tensions. Finally we appeal to the Central American countries to commit themselves once again to work within and in conformity with the framework of Contadora. Outside pressures must not be allowed to interfere with such efforts.

Mr. AL-ATASSI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): The General Assembly is now considering "The situation in Central America" as it does every year because of the danger posed by that situation to international peace and security and the stability of States of the region, and also because of the wars it causes which might not remain within the confines of the region. In point of fact, the situation in Central America is an issue related to the right of States to choose their own economic and social systems without external interference and their right to live in peace, free from the threat of the use of force in inter-State relations. United States attempts at overthrowing the ruling Sandinist régime in Nicaragua cannot but endanger peace and security in the region.

The United States of America has been engaged, especially in the course of the year, in acts which cannot be described as conducive to peace and security, their aim being to make trouble and create problems that threaten the Government of Nicaragua. The approval by the United States Congress of the allocation of \$US 100 million to the so-called contras was merely an expression of the hatred of the United States Administration for the Sandinista revolution, and indeed of the Nicaraguan people. This sum is to be used to overthrow the Government of Nicaragua to recruit mercenaries and to create conflicts between surrounding and neighbouring States.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

The attempts by the United States of America to impose sanctions and tighten its blockade against Nicaragua are completely at variance with the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security and the right of peoples to choose their own economic and social systems.

The mining by the United States of America of Nicaragua's ports runs counter to the most basic rules and norms of law, which stipulate non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States. The International Court of Justice has ruled that such acts by the United States of America constitute a violation of the sovereignty and political independence of an independent State Member of the United Nations, and called upon the United States of America to put an end forthwith to such acts and refrain from all efforts to restrict, block or endanger access to or from Nicaraguan ports and particularly the laying of mines there.

Nicaragua has more than once expressed its ardent desire to safeguard peace in Central America and has shown that it is prepared to co-operate fully with the Contadora Group in its efforts to establish peace in Central America. It has declared its support for the support Group and, as a token of its good will, has shown its willingness to resume the dialogue with the United States Administration and review all differences between the two States.

We have repeatedly heard the Nicaraguan leaders say that their country wishes to live in peace and is willing to establish good, friendly relations with the people and Government of the United States of America. We have listened to the representatives of the Nicaraguan Government in the Security Council and heard them say that, despite the plots of the United States against their country, they are prepared to negotiate with the United States of America and resume the dialogue with that country.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

The leaders of Nicaragua, in seeking to have recourse to the law, wished to have the international conscience, represented by the Security Council, arbitrate the issue of the implementation of the judgement of the International Court of Justice. Most unfortunately, the Security Council turned out to be both arbitrator and adversary. A resolution was indeed adopted on the need for the United States to abide by the judgement of the International Court of Justice, only to be aborted by the United States veto.

However, Nicaragua does not consider that its just cause has suffered a setback, because the General Assembly then stressed the need for the United States of America to commit itself to abide by the judgement of the International Court of Justice.

The use - or, rather, the misuse - of the right of veto by the United States places the international community face to face with the problem of this privilege granted by the Charter to a super-Power which has a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security but which has consistently used that privilege to protect itself from condemnation or to protect its collaborators, such as Israel and South Africa, from the application against them of Charter provisions for the crimes they commit.

(Mr. Al-Atassi, Syrian Arab Republic)

How many times has the United States misused the right to veto to protect Israel from condemnation of its acts of terrorism and dispersal of the Palestinians? How many times has the United States misused its right of veto to prevent Israel from being condemned for its attacks on holy places and houses of worship in occupied Palestine? How many times has the United States misused its right of veto to protect Israel from condemnation by the Security Council for its invasion of Lebanon? The record of the United States is replete with examples of such misuses of the right of veto.

Everyone is aware of the role that has been and is still being played by Israel, the partner of the United States, in supporting Somoza and United States interests in Central America.

The Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that was held this year in Harare described the prevailing situation in Central America as a "major focal point of tension at the international level" (A/41/697, annex, p. 103). It concluded that, in spite of the efforts of the non-aligned countries and the Contadora Group, United States imperialism was continuing to escalate military attacks and to interfere in Nicaragua's internal affairs. The Heads of State or Government

"condemned the escalation of aggression, military attacks and other actions against Nicaragua's sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, stability and self-determination". (A/41/697, annex, p. 104)

The Syrian Arab Republic very strongly condemns all the actions by United States imperialism against Nicaragua's sovereignty and independence. We particularly condemn the financing and training of mercenaries, who are used for purposes of sabotage in Nicaragua. We call on both parties to resume dialogue, to sit down at the negotiating table and reach a political settlement to the problems of the region, in co-operation with the Contadora and Support Groups.

Mr. KEOLA (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): The situation in the world in 1986, which has been proclaimed the International Year of Peace, is marked by the intensification of conflicts and tensions for which the belligerent forces of imperialism and international reaction are responsible. Central America is also being sucked into this tragic maelstrom, which poses very serious threats to international peace and security.

The peoples of Central America and Latin America, like other oppressed and colonized peoples in the world, persist in waging a stubborn and heroic struggle for national independence, freedom, democracy, equality and justice. The current world economic crisis serves only to worsen their economic and social situation. Everyone is aware that the political crisis that is now disturbing that region has its roots in the unjust social and economic structures prevailing there. Regrettably, that view is not shared by those who persist in committing acts of aggression and political and economic destabilization against one of the countries of the region: Nicaragua.

Since assuming power in July 1979, the people of Nicaragua, under the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, has been devoting all its efforts to nation-building, to constructing a new, truly just and democratic society. That is the sovereign and inalienable right to what is known as "self-determination", which that people oppressed by the bloody Somozist dictatorship has been exercising since the triumph of the Sandinist revolution. The imperialists are afraid that this edifying example will spread throughout the region. That is why the United States Government and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) constantly strive to overthrow the democratic régime in Nicaragua. Vast sums of money have been spent by that imperialist super-Power to finance, overtly or covertly, criminal activities aimed at destabilizing and overthrowing the new régime. It is worth recalling in this regard that Nicaragua has complained to the Security Council more than 10 times on this matter.

(Mr. Keola, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

The General Assembly and the Security Council have on more than one occasion condemned these acts of provocation and aggression committed by this super-Power and the mercenary gangs, the contras, based on the territory of Nicaragua's neighbours. Everyone knows that Washington is speeding up its plan for consolidating its armed forces and military bases in the countries neighbouring Nicaragua, so that, when and if necessary, it can intervene directly in Nicaragua. Furthermore, the United States Government has been exerting pressure on Governments of the region to induce them to support its policy against Nicaragua and the revolutionary movements in the region.

Everyone is perfectly well aware that the contras, trained and equipped by the United States Government and the CIA and operating freely in the territory of Nicaragua's neighbours, are traitors who have committed and continue to commit indescribable crimes against the Nicaraguan people, but who will never be able to regain power and oppress and exploit the people again. All they can do is create temporary difficulties for the Sandinista National Liberation Front; they are nothing but cannon-fodder in the pay of imperialism.

On 8 November this year, foreign delegations participating in the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Sandinista National Liberation Front and the tenth anniversary of the death of Carlos Fonseca, were able to see clearly for themselves that the people of Nicaragua, like all other peoples, cherish peace and justice.

The domestic and foreign policy of the Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN) is a just one and entirely in keeping with the legitimate aspirations of all its working people. That is why the Nicaraguan people is determined to defend its independence and national sovereignty won at the price of an arduous struggle. The Nicaraguan people has a long tradition of heroic struggle against imperialist

(Mr. Keola, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

aggression and, indeed, any oppression and local exploitation of which it had been victim.

Recently the Sandinist People's Army shot down a C-123 tactical transport aircraft, which transported supplies of armaments and other equipment for the mercenaries in the pay of imperialism. A member of the aircraft's crew, an American, was captured. That shows that the Sandinist People's Army is becoming increasingly strong and is capable of thwarting all acts of sabotage and aggression, by any enemy, which may prejudice their country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

The experience borne of the United States war of aggression in Laos, Viet Nam and Kampuchea makes clear that no aggressive country, however powerful, can ever succeed in winning a people's war in a country, no matter how small, which is the victim of aggression.

The Lao Government associates itself with the tribute paid by the International community to the peace efforts and initiatives of all the countries of the Contadora and Support Groups for all they have done so far to achieve a peaceful, just and lasting settlement of the situation in Central America.

We believe that the restoration of peace in Central America requires an end to all interference and aggression against Nicaragua, all support to the anti-Sandinista contras, the use of countries of the region as springboards for attacking Nicaragua and revolutionary movements in the region, as well as scrupulous respect for the fundamental national rights of all the peoples. The use of force, which is contrary to the Charter and international law, can serve only to make the situation worse.

Aware of the serious threats posed to international peace and security by the escalation of tension at the present time, the international community and, only recently, the United Nations General Assembly have called upon the United States

(Mr. Keola, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

Government to respect and enforce scrupulously the judgement of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 and all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, to take into account the reasonable proposals of the Nicaraguan Government, the appeal of the Eighth Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement and the peace initiatives of the Contadora Group, and to abide by the United Nations Charter and the elementary principles of international law.

The fight to protect the sovereignty and national independence of Central American and other peoples of Latin America is undeniably a just one. That is why it enjoys increasing energetic support from all peoples of the world, including the people and Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. We are convinced that this legitimate struggle will ultimately be victorious and thus contribute to the preservation of peace and security in Central America, throughout the Latin American region and the world, and will promote mutually advantageous international co-operation.

Mr. MORAN (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): The Spanish Government follows very closely the item with which we are dealing at present, namely, the situation in Central America, not only because of the fraternal links that bind us to all the countries of the Central American region but also because of the very grave nature of the situation now inherent in the Central American crisis.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, "the crisis in Central America is becoming more serious every day, and the risk of war is increasing" (A/41/662, annex, p. 2), as stated by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Contadora and Support Groups on 1 October last. My country shares that fundamental Ibero-American concern owing to the extraordinary negative repercussions that the increase in military tension and possible open conflict would have not only for Central American countries but also for the whole of Latin America and for world peace.

(Mr. Moran, Spain)

The shift towards an impractical military solution must be avoided; instead, we must all give our support to a peaceful, negotiated regional solution, as advocated by the Contadora and Support Groups, which from an overall standpoint and from their own perspective try to tackle the region's structural problems from their security as well as their economic, social and political dimensions. My country has given its unreserved support to the Contadora initiatives since the Group was set up in 1983 and has said so on several occasions in the General Assembly and in the Security Council.

We have always believed that the Contadora road is the only one capable of understanding and solving such a complex problem as that of Central America, the result of a special historical experience that makes it impossible simply to apply external models. Central American societies face great economic and social inequalities, a very high degree of foreign economic dependence, the obvious failure of dictatorial or autocratic solutions, and divisions in the process of social diversification. In these circumstances, progress towards common ideals of peace, development, justice and freedom can be achieved only within their own genuine framework, without foreign interference, as outlined by the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America.

Nor can we forget that the introduction of the logic and dynamic of the East-West conflict into this area would distance the region even further from the much needed atmosphere of dialogue and harmony among the Central American Governments that would enable them to overcome their differences and tackle the really acute problems. In the struggle for peace in Central America those countries with special links and interests in the area bear a special responsibility. It is regrettable to note that, despite appeals made by the Contadora Group, measures sometimes are adopted which, far from contributing to a climate of dialogue and harmony, in fact favour - objectively speaking - violent solutions.

(Mr. Moran, Spain)

As the Contadora Group recognizes, the genuine path to a solution is through scrupulous respect for the principles of self-determination, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, respect for territorial integrity, the non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are precisely the basis of the Latin American internationalist philosophy.

At the recent meeting of the Security Council on the judgement of the International Court of Justice of 27 June this year, I reaffirmed my country's respect for the norms of international law and the need to ensure that at times of crisis, such as that now being suffered by the Central American region, no State can unilaterally renounce its obligations to comply with the principles of the Charter and international law.

Although it is true that one of the basic requirements for the Central American region to be able to tackle its problems is that there shall be no outside interference, we must emphasize that the draft Contadora Act itself points out the need for progress to be made in the political as well as the socio-economic sphere.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to express its satisfaction at the progress in democratization that has occurred in the region. A process is under way, which we must appreciate and encourage, towards the establishment of political régimes based on civil authority and free elections, régimes which are trying to increase the capacity for integration of their societies. As we have already had the opportunity to acknowledge in the Third Committee, although there are still great difficulties to overcome, progress has clearly been made in Guatemala and El Salvador with regard to human rights.

(Mr. Moran, Spain)

It is precisely those advances in democracy and the concomitant progress with respect to human rights that we wish to see consolidated through the restoration of a climate of confidence and the participation of all countries in the existing mechanisms for dialogue, while avoiding unilateral action conducive to a worsening of the situation in the region.

In my country's view, the initiative of President Vinicio Cerezo of Guatemala in calling for the establishment of a Central American Parliament deserves all our support, as it suggests mechanisms for dialogue and co-operation in political, economic and social matters. Such dialogue and co-operation are fundamentally necessary to overcome the crisis.

Similarly, my country will spare no effort in the preparation for, and holding of, the forthcoming conference of the European Economic Community countries and the Central American countries, to be held in Guatemala, because the institutionalization of dialogue between the two regions will make it possible to increase co-operation between them as a means of overcoming some of the problems at the root of the Central American crisis.

In the Declaration of 1 October of the Contadora Group and the Support Group, the Ibero-American community announces its decision to embark on a series of consultations and political negotiations in order to restore peace and unity. My country repeats its readiness to support those endeavours, convinced that only a solution of the kind advocated by the two Groups can guarantee peace in Central America.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): My delegation is greatly distressed that the situation in Central America has been deteriorating since the General Assembly debated it last year. External intervention in the region has not been restrained either by the decision of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 or by

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

the Security Council deliberations aimed at bringing the authority of the Council to assist in the search for a peaceful settlement. The rejection of the decision of the International Court of Justice by the United States, the hindrance of a decision by the Security Council through the exercise of the veto and the obstacles placed in the path of the Contadora Group are all unfortunate manifestations of a determination to perpetuate the explosive situation and to attain objectives by means of force. The Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group and of the Support Group warned in their statement of 1 October 1986:

"The crisis in Central America is becoming more serious every day, and the risk of war is increasing". (A/41/662, p. 2) Knowing how much faith the General Assembly had placed in the Contadora process, we cannot now be unmoved by the warning of the Contadora Group.

It is perhaps necessary to remind ourselves that respect for the principles of the Charter and for international law, particularly those principles applicable to relations between States is indispensable for the maintenance of international peace and security. Article 2 (4) of the Charter calls upon all Members to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. The preceding Article calls upon Member States to settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered. Unfortunately, the unsettled situation in Central America is clear evidence of the persistent violation of these provisions of the Charter.

The General Assembly has not been remiss in shouldering its responsibility to try to deal with the situation in Central America. Bearing in mind the potential of that situation for disturbing peace and security, successive sessions of the General Assembly since 1983 have focused attention on it, and reaffirmed the right

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

of all the countries of the region to live in peace and to decide their own future free from all outside interference or intervention. The Assembly has consistently and appropriately warned against any acts of aggression against the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the States of the region. It has also urged all parties directly or indirectly involved to refrain from the threat or use of force to put any political pressure on the States in the region.

Moreover, the General Assembly, faithful to the Charter, has sought to encourage recourse to regional solution and has therefore supported the efforts of the Contadora Group, and the Support Group, who have doggedly and painstakingly sought a peaceful settlement of the disputes in the region. My Government fully endorses and supports these efforts aimed at easing tension in the region and securing a negotiated settlement which will take into account the right of all the peoples of the region to national self-determination, independence and sovereignty as envisaged in the Contadora Group's draft peace treaty.

It is for these reasons that my delegation notes with great concern that the Contadora Group is being frustrated to the point of exasperation. In its statement of 1 October to which I referred earlier, the Group observed

"We remain firmly committed to peace, development and justice in Central America. We are fully aware that powerful interests oppose our efforts. War cannot be avoided if the protagonists want war." (A/41/662, p. 2)

The United Nations should, in my delegation's view, assist the Contadora Group to ensure that war is not inevitable.

A basic requirement for a solution is recognition of the right of every sovereign State to determine its political and economic system without interference or intervention. This basic principle of our Charter cannot be violated without grave consequences for international peace and security, particularly in the region concerned.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

This is why my delegation deplores any intervention, direct or indirect, in the internal affairs of either Nicaragua or any other Central American State, for that matter. Regardless of the views of outsiders about the direction in which these States are moving, it is legally wrong and contrary to the provisions of the Charter to seek to force changes in their political and economic system through the threat or use of force. Any genuine dispute between a State in the region and an outside Power should be resolved in accordance with the Charter. Consequently, my delegation, which attaches great importance to the rule of law, deeply regrets the non-compliance with the decision of the judicial organ of the United Nations. Compliance, in our view, would have facilitated the search for an overall political solution. In the same way, we urge the Central American States to exert greater efforts to settle their disputes by means of dialogue and negotiations rather than through mutual recriminations, confrontation, subversion and resort to violence.

Finally, my delegation appeals to the Contadora Group not to relent in its efforts in search of a peaceful settlement of the disputes in the region. We urge all concerned to co-operate in pursuit of the Contadora process, which is aimed at resolving all these issues in the interest of the peoples of the region of Central America and, of course, of the protection of international peace and security.

Mr. HENAR (Suriname): Once again we are called upon to deal with the agenda item entitled "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives". The importance of this item has been amply demonstrated during previous sessions, when many delegations have revealed their grave concern at the situation in this subregion.

In spite of General Assembly resolutions urging the Central American Governments to accelerate their consultations aiming at the conclusion of the negotiating process regarding the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America, the situation has not changed for the better. The past four years

(Mr. Henar, Suriname)

have been characterized by serious efforts to further the cause of a comprehensive settlement in the region. The commendable efforts of the Contadora Group and its Support Group notwithstanding, the situation in Central America has markedly deteriorated. Acts of interference and intervention, overt and covert, have continued, while the process of dialogue between two of the States directly involved has been stalled for some time already.

The Government of the Republic of Suriname is gravely concerned over the negative developments in the region, especially since there seems to be an escalation of aggression, military attacks and other action against Nicaragua's sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and right to self-determination. The resumption of military aid to the counter-revolutionary groups operating from neighbouring States has caused the situation to deteriorate further. It is common knowledge that the root causes of the Central American problems are to be found in old, unjust socio-economic structures.

Various United Nations bodies, such as the Security Council, the International Court of Justice and the General Assembly, have continued to serve as political battlegrounds without having a major impact on the crisis. Just and durable solutions to Central America's problems cannot be achieved by any form of coercion. Respect for the principles of non-interference, the inviolability of national frontiers, self-determination without external pressure and the settlement of conflicts by peaceful means through negotiations remain of overriding importance. It is our conviction, therefore, that the only viable option remains the genuine regional effort of the countries constituting the Contadora Group and the Support Group.

According to the information my delegation has received, the latest text of the peace treaty was put forward on 6 June 1980. We urge the Central American

(Mr. Henar, Suriname)

Governments to speed up their consultations with the Contadora Group with the aim of bringing the negotiation process to a conclusion. We appeal to the Government of the United States of America as well as the Government of Nicaragua to resume the suspended dialogue. In the opinion of my delegation the normalization of relations between the United States of America and Nicaragua is important for the success of the Contadora initiatives and the pacification of the Central American region. The primary responsibility for avoiding a war in Central America lies with those Governments that are directly or indirectly involved in this conflict.

Suriname, a non-aligned developing country, fully endorses the declaration of the Heads of State or Government at the eighth summit, in Harare, in which an appeal was made to all the parties concerned to facilitate the establishment of the atmosphere of mutual trust necessary for the achievement of a just and durable settlement of the crisis in the region, based on assurance of the security of all States and respect for their sovereignty, national independence and self-determination, by adopting a constructive attitude regarding the simultaneous implementation of the Caraballeda plan, approved by the Central American countries in the Guatemala Declaration.

We also support the view that the dismantling of foreign military bases, the withdrawal of foreign military advisers, the halting of military manoeuvres, and scrupulous adherence to the principle of the non-use of force or the threat of force in relations between States would substantially reduce tension and contribute to the search for a negotiated political solution to the problems of Central America.

My delegation feels that peace in our region is important because it has an impact on peace in the rest of the world.

Before concluding, I should like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's unswerving support and great admiration for the laudable and

(Mr. Henar, Suriname)

persistent efforts of the Contadora Group and the Support Group to bring about a comprehensive, negotiated solution to the Central American crisis. Democracy in Central America cannot be genuine and lasting unless it is founded on peace, economic and social development. While some now seem to question the possibility of reaching a regional agreement through the Contadora process, my delegation still believes that this process presents the best opportunity to achieve a comprehensive, peaceful solution.

We therefore urge the international community not to despair and lose hope, but to continue to endorse and support the praiseworthy regional efforts.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.