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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTY-FIFTH MEETING

**Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 18 November 1986, at 3 p.m.**

President:

**Mr. HENAR
(Vice-President)**

(Suriname)

later:

**Mr. THOMPSON
(Vice-President)**

(Fiji)

- 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. Benar (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.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. TSVETKOV (Bulgaria) (interpretation from French): The General Assembly is now considering the situation in Central America for the fourth time, which demonstrates that the growing concern and fears for the future of peace and security in that part of the world are justified. As is emphasized in the Final Document of the eighth summit Conference of non-aligned countries, held in Harare, the situation in Central America is one of the main causes of international tension. Despite the constant appeals of the Non-Aligned Movement and the overwhelming majority of States and the efforts of the Contadora Group to find a diplomatic solution, the crisis has worsened because of the imperialist policies of interference and intervention, which, added to the endemic situation of poverty and oppression in the region, constitute a real threat to international peace and security. The Heads of State or Government also emphasized the fact that the roots of the conflict in Central America are social and economic in nature and cannot be seen in terms of ideological confrontation between military blocs. They noted that the danger of direct United States intervention in Nicaragua and other countries in the region has increased alarmingly.

There has been recently a serious worsening of the situation in the region. As the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Support Groups stated on 1 October last:

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

"The crisis in Central America is becoming more serious every day and the risk of war is increasing." (A/41/662)

During the general debate many Heads of State or Government and many Foreign Ministers expressed in the General Assembly their serious concern over the critical and extremely tense situation in Central America.

In this the International Year of Peace proclaimed by the United Nations it was natural to expect that all countries and Governments would focus their efforts on the search for ways and means of strengthening international peace and security and increasing trust and co-operation among States. But the United States has taken an extremely dangerous step, heightening tension in Central America and adding to the danger of military confrontation just before the General Assembly took up this item on Central America, the President of the United States signed the Bill allocating military aid in the amount of \$100 million to the Nicaraguan counter-revolutionary bands, thus virtually opening up the way to aggression against a sovereign State Member of the United Nations and a member of the Non-Aligned Movement. What was earlier entrusted in secret to mercenaries of all kinds has now become official State policy.

Against the background of the recent irrefutable proof of United States participation in the supply and financing of counter-revolutionaries - as in the case of the mercenary captured recently on Nicaraguan territory - the international community cannot fail to be alarmed by all this. The anti-people, terrorist nature of the contras is known to all. The facts established before the International Court of Justice unmasked them as mercenaries in the pay of foreign interests and without popular support. This policy also harms the Nicaraguan economy, the damage amounting already to over \$2 billion, and its corollary is a terrorized civilian population and the death of 16,000 Nicaraguans.

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

Plans have been revealed to rearm the contras with new modern weapons and aircraft and to train them in special units of the United States Army. The latest information from the United States press indicates that United States territory will be used directly, as will that of neighbouring States, for military aggression against Nicaragua.

We should also recall the judgement handed down by the International Court of Justice on 27 June 1986 to the effect that in training, arming and financing the contras carrying out armed combat against Nicaragua the United States is violating the norms of international law. Mining the territorial waters, violating the air space, carrying out attacks and organizing sabotage against economic targets constitute gross interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State. The International Court of Justice has delivered an unambiguous judgement calling on the United States immediately to end and to refrain from any similar act that would strengthen the military and paramilitary activities against the Republic of Nicaragua.

The decision of the International Court of Justice has received wide support in the international community and the United Nations. It was also firmly supported by the Heads of State or Government meeting in Harare, who addressed an urgent appeal to the United States to comply with the judgement. This was also the prevailing view in the Security Council during its recent meetings, but the United States veto prevented the adoption of a resolution to that effect. Recently, the General Assembly, in its resolution 41/31, called for compliance with the judgement of the International Court of Justice.

The interests of peace and security require, as stated in General Assembly resolution 40/139,

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

"all States to refrain from intervening in the internal situation in El Salvador and, instead of helping in any way to prolong and intensify the war, to encourage the continuation of the dialogue until a just and lasting peace is achieved".

They also require the cessation of the use of the territory of the States of Central America as staging posts for acts of aggression and subversion to thwart aspirations to freedom and independence.

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

The condemnation of this policy by the international community and the United Nations leads to the clear conclusion that in the world of today problems must be solved not through force and intervention but on the basis of respect for the fundamental principles and norms of international law. That was the main conclusion of the three meetings held by the Security Council in the last six months to consider the critical situation in Central America and threats against Nicaragua. Particular attention was drawn to the fact that the increased acts of aggression against Nicaragua were a violation of Security Council resolutions 530 (1983) and 562 (1985) which confirm the right of Nicaragua, as of any other State in the region, to live in peace and security without outside interference, and also confirms their exclusive right to choose their own political and social system.

Contrary to what some believe, the world has not forgiven another black page in the recent history of the peoples of the region, that is, the military intervention and occupation of the small island country of Grenada. It is relevant to recall that Grenada became the victim of aggression precisely because it dared to choose its own path to independence and development. The aspirations of the people there were crushed, but its ideals of national independence and of independent development and progress can never be crushed. The situation in Central America and the developments taking place there prove once again that in the world of today it is in the interests of international security to unite all our efforts to eliminate the flash-points of tension that exist in various parts of the world. That is why the People's Republic of Bulgaria, with other socialist countries, submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-first session the question of establishing a comprehensive system of international peace and security, including as principal elements the settlement of conflicts, respect

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

for the essential rules of civilized relations between States, and safeguards for the right of each State freely to choose its own political and economic development.

In explaining our position on the situation in Central America and, in particular, on the dangerous situation created around Nicaragua, the Bulgarian delegation wishes to reaffirm its support for the constructive efforts of the Contadora Group and the Support Group to find ways and means of achieving a political settlement of the situation in Central America, with due regard for the interests of all the countries of the region. The agreements arrived at by the Contadora Group took into account in a balanced manner the security interests of all countries in the region and contain specific and realistic proposals for ensuring peace, for ending military escalation and preventing armed intervention from the outside, for halting armed interference from foreign territories with the aid of mercenary gangs and other forms of terrorism, pressure and blackmail against countries in the region. Here we should note the constructive position taken by Nicaragua, which has said that it is ready to accept the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America as a whole and to sign it without any further delay. It is now clear, two years after that document was first produced, who is blocking the way to its adoption and hampering the negotiations.

Obviously the critical situation in Central America can only be settled through negotiations, including direct negotiations between the United States and Nicaragua, pursuant to resolutions of the Security Council on normalizing relations between those two countries, a normalization to which there is no real obstacle.

Attempts to proceed from a position of strength, to use threats, the diktat and direct military intervention, whether in Central America, in southern Africa, in the Middle East or in the Caribbean, are doomed to failure. To act thus is to act against the legitimate aspirations of the peoples for peace, national

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

independence, democracy and social progress. The historic achievements of the Cuban people, who decided their own destiny in independence almost 30 years ago, despite the continuing psychological and economic pressure brought to bear by imperialism, is a shining example that the desire for freedom and development cannot be stifled.

We are deeply convinced that maintaining a situation of tension in Central America is not in the interests of any country of the region. It is also contrary to the interests of peace and security in the world.

As we have frequently said, Bulgaria stands in solidarity with the struggle of Nicaragua, which is defending its independence and its right to choose freely its own form of political and economic development.

My country endorses the calls for realism to win out over adventurism, so that the peoples of that region of the earth can be left to themselves to decide their own future and realize their dreams of peace, independence and social progress in their own way.

Mr. KORHONEN (Finland): The situation in Central America remains critical. We are witnessing continuous acts of violence in the region. The principles of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity are being frequently violated. Resources desperately needed for social and economic purposes are being wasted. As always, innocent civilians are those who suffer most. They often have to leave their homes and become refugees. They need our special attention. Finland, therefore, commends the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has been what it can to alleviate the plight of the refugees.

All avenues should be used and every effort should be made in order to reach a peaceful and lasting settlement in the Central American region. The roots of this

(Mr. Korhonen, Finland)

current crisis lie deep in the old social and economic structures. Consequently, any comprehensive solution to the area's problems is possible only if it addresses these basic issues.

The Contadora Group and its Support Group have endeavoured to find a solution agreeable to all Central American States. They have presented several comprehensive proposals to this end. Moreover the existence of the Contadora process has had a positive and calming effect in the region.

The United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council have recognized the efforts of the Contadora Group as the best avenue to solve the present crisis and its root causes. As a rule, a regional solution to a regional problem is the best alternative. Finland also believes that the Governments in the region are those most capable of understanding all needs and obstacles as well as of finding a balance between various interests.

We once again wish to reaffirm our full support of the efforts of the Contadora Group. It is important that its work should continue. And it is crucial that it should be given the chance to work towards agreement without any outside interference and without burdening it with extraneous elements.

We believe that the recent development in the region towards pluralistic, democratic systems, as well as the continuation of the dialogue among the five Central American leaders, will have a positive effect on the negotiation process. We also hope that the decision to establish the Central American Parliament will give new possibilities for mutual confidence.

(Mr. Korhonen, Finland)

The Government of Finland gives its full support to the rules of international law and to the United Nations Charter. Accordingly, we believe that all international disputes must be settled by peaceful means and through negotiations. All States must refrain from the use of force or the threat of use of force. The principles of non-interference and non-intervention must be respected.

We also wish to uphold the authority of the International Court of Justice. In our opinion the decisions which are taken by the highest guardian of international law should be respected. The authority of the International Court of Justice would be best served if all States would, like Finland, accept its compulsory jurisdiction.

Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway): We have, over the past year, witnessed a worsening of the general situation in Central America, marked by increased bilateral incidents, the escalation of warfare and a stalemate in the negotiating process. We share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on the situation in the area. We also share his views concerning the basic elements on which a peaceful settlement of the conflict should be based.

Of special importance is the need for a Latin American solution to the region's problems, problems which should be removed from the arena of the East-West conflict. Furthermore, the establishment of pluralistic democratic systems and respect for human rights, as well as the right of all nations to self-determination and the right to choose freely and without outside interference their own forms of government and their own political, economic and social systems, constitute the central elements in this context. At the same time the prohibition of the use of a nation's territory as a base for attacks on another country is a crucial pre-condition for lasting peace in the region.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

The problems of the Central American region are not new. They have been caused by centuries of social injustice and exploitation. Political change in Central America is inevitable. The escalation of violence offers no hope to the peoples of that troubled region.

My Government continues to support the peace efforts of the Contadora Group and the Support Group. We are, however, concerned about the lack of progress in the peace process.

We would strongly welcome political and economic support by other countries and groups of countries to the area in the hope that broad and constructive involvement will contribute to a peaceful solution of the problems in this region. My Government feels that it is essential for the people of the area to be allowed to solve their problems free from outside interference. The root causes of the problems are as I have said, economic and social, and continued warfare can only exacerbate these problems.

The Contadora Accord remains the only widely-acceptable basis for reaching a peaceful solution. It affirms the sovereign equality of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the rejection of the threat or use of force, as well as the export of terrorism and subversion, support for democratic institutions and the promotion of social justice.

It is our sincere hope that the efforts undertaken by the Contadora Group and its Support Group will lead to an early solution of the complex and difficult problems in the area.

The conflict in Central America can be settled only by political means. We do not believe that military assistance from States outside the region will help in resolving the conflict.

It is important that we do not forget the human aspect of the political crisis in Central America. The upheavals and the fighting are causing an increasing

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

number of refugees in the region. I should like to pay a tribute to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the invaluable assistance it provides to the refugees. May I also extend that tribute to other international and non-governmental organizations which are active in this field. The Norwegian Government has contributed to this humanitarian effort and will continue to do so as long as it is required.

Mr. KNIPPING VICTORIA (Dominican Republic) (interpretation from Spanish): At the last session of the General Assembly and throughout this year the Government of the Dominican Republic has repeatedly expressed to the international community its deep concern about the crisis besetting the Central American region. During this entire period and since the beginning of the Central American conflict, we have maintained, in unequivocal and consistent terms, our profound conviction that the solution to the crisis will be viable and lasting only if it is the result of dialogue and the political will to achieve an agreement among the parties directly concerned. We have, moreover, firmly and repeatedly stated that, in the search for a peaceful settlement of the crisis, the fundamental principles underlying the international legal order, guaranteeing harmonious and civilized coexistence between nations and in particular the principles of non-intervention and the self-determination of peoples, must be reaffirmed and strengthened. However, this dialogue and political will necessary to achieve agreement to which we have referred must be placed in a propitious and suitable context likely to engender the best possible conditions capable of eliminating suspicion and political or any other difficulties and which at the same time could create the climate of mutual confidence that must prevail in any negotiating process.

(Mr. Knipping-Victoria,
Dominican Republic)

How has the situation evolved in Central America in the time that has elapsed since the General Assembly debated that question at the fortieth session? A quick retrospective look shows that there has been a profound deterioration in the Central American situation, a deterioration which has taken many different forms, accentuating and aggravating conditions which could cause a true explosion of alarming and unsuspecting proportions in Latin America.

This cursory examination enables us to ascertain how bilateral relations between some countries in the region have reached disquieting levels of danger; how the same situation arises with States outside the region which nevertheless have links and interests in the area; how the threat of serious border clashes and armed incidents have persisted; how the irrational arms race has continued in the area; how the foreign military presence has intensified in the area; how the process of mutual accusations and recriminations between certain countries in the region has increased.

To this dangerous situation we would have to add the crushing economic recession which aggravates the already desperate conditions in which our Central American brothers live. In fact the present world economic crisis which affects the whole of Latin America has in Central America deepened the prevailing unjust inequalities resulting from its anachronistic structures, thus contributing to the deterioration of the aforementioned situation both in its political as well as in its economic and social aspects.

Until now the Contadora Group has been able to keep Central America out of any military confrontation. That has been an invaluable contribution to the cause of peace which has earned for the Contadora Group the gratitude of the international community as a whole and more especially that of the countries of Latin America.

(Mr. Knipping-Victoria,
Dominican Republic)

On the other hand, Contadora's untiring and unremitting efforts in favour of peace have strengthened the increasingly widespread view that the use of force as an alternative to a solution does not resolve but rather exacerbates underlying tension. Despite the present growing difficulties, we firmly believe that the Contadora Group could promote the peace process and create anew the conditions required to restore a climate of mutual co-operation and confidence, an indispensable precondition for the restoration of the negotiating spirit among the Central American countries. Therefore we must now more than ever encourage the efforts of the Contadora Group in its quest for peace in Central America.

An effective way of contributing to the Contadora effort in favour of peace, that splendid and plausible Latin American initiative, would be to observe and scrupulously comply with all its recommendations and provisions suggested in its quest for peace and especially those conveyed in the Caraballeda Message addressed both to the Central American countries themselves and to States having links and interests in the region.

Compliance with those provisions would make it possible to restore the climate of confidence necessary for dialogue and negotiations. It would also be desirable for all States to refrain from adopting, supporting or promoting political, economic or military measures of any kind against any State in the Central American region would could hamper the Contadora peace objectives.

All of those actions, if carried out concomitantly, would give decisive impetus to the negotiating process undertaken by the Contadora Group, which, despite the disruption of the conditions intrinsic in a dialogue, still maintains its full validity as a Latin American instrument for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

(Mr. Knipping-Victoria,
Dominican Republic)

As we have stated on different occasions, we believe that the root causes of the crisis in Central America are to be found in the unjust political, economic and social structures which have prevailed in that part of our America. For peace to be achieved in Central America a new broader social order must be established in the region, with greater participation of democratic and pluralist institutions, where, unrestrictedly, public freedoms are respected and human rights are promoted and guaranteed.

Similarly, that new order should respect the right of dissent, establish minimum indispensable requirements so that the great masses of the population may have access to the benefits of education and culture, the right to food and housing, the right to work and to health, in short to eliminate the blatant economic and social inequalities which give rise to the present situation.

In this context we are pleased to emphasize a passage from the Esquipulas Declaration, signed by the five Central American Presidents, which agrees substantially with the aforementioned principles and views, as follows:

"... peace in Central America can be achieved only through an authentic democratic process that is pluralist, and participatory, which entails the promotion of social justice and respect for human rights, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the right of every nation to choose, freely and without outside interference of any kind its own economic, political and social pattern, it being understood that such a choice is the result of the freely expressed will of the peoples concerned." (A/40/1119, p. 3, para. 4)

There is no doubt that this awareness of the Central American countries, which are the only ones competent to resolve their differences and determine their own future, on the basis on which a solution to the present crisis should be found,

(Mr. Knipping-Victoria,
Dominican Republic)

opens new encouraging prospects in the arduous peace process since those same principles and others complementing them are reflected in the Contadora Act for peace and co-operation in Central America.

At the same meeting the Central American Presidents recognized categorically that the Contadora process was the best political forum at present available to Central America for the achievement of peace and democracy and the reduction of tensions.

In light of those considerations, and above all taking into account the fact that the Central American countries unanimously accepted by consensus the substantive provisions in the Contadora Act, we cannot on this occasion allow ourselves to be overcome by disillusion. The peace efforts that have been so admirably undertaken by the Contadora Group with the active co-operation of its Support Group must be continued.

At this crucial stage of the negotiations the international community, authentically represented in the General Assembly, should reiterate its full support for the Contadora peace initiative, the only alternative that can bring to the troubled Central American region a new era of peace, concord, brotherhood, economic development and social justice.

Mr. TREIKI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): Four years have passed since the General Assembly first considered the situation in Central America. However, no progress has been made with regard to that situation of tension because of the economic, military and political pressures on Nicaragua, which are designed to undermine its independence and national sovereignty.

The judgement of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 reaffirmed that the training, arming, equipping and financing of mercenaries constitutes interference in the affairs of other States. We believe that this judgement of the highest judicial body should be respected and that the countries of Central America should co-operate in its implementation in such a way as to ensure their right to choose their own political and economic systems and fulfil their aspiration to freedom, economic development and social justice.

The Contadora Group has made great efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement of the problem of Central America and bring peace and security to the region. Despite those efforts, however, the situation continues to deteriorate day by day because of the continuance of hostilities against Nicaragua and the attempts to impede the Contadora process. In the firm belief that it is the responsibility of the countries of Central America to solve their problems for themselves, by peaceful means and without foreign interference, my country consistently supports the efforts of the Contadora Group to bring about a comprehensive, lasting settlement of the problems of Central America and to bring peace to that region, so that the peoples of Central America may live in an atmosphere of peace and security.

Nicaragua has repeatedly affirmed its willingness to engage in a constructive, meaningful dialogue with the United States and it has welcomed the good offices of the Contadora Group designed to bring peace to the region. However, in spite of all these efforts towards peace made by the Government of Nicaragua, there has been

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

no response from the United States. Nicaragua continues to be faced with persistent acts of subversion and aggression by the contra gangs, which enjoy the support and backing of the United States.

The United States has rejected any dialogue with Nicaragua and, indeed, refuses to engage in dialogue with small countries. It wants to impose its hegemony by force of arms, such as it used against my country, by invasion as in the case of Grenada, or by supporting mercenaries, as in the case of Nicaragua.

Finally, my country reiterates its condemnation of acts of repression, the use of economic pressure against Nicaragua and interference in its internal affairs. We hope that the Contadora Group will bring about the best possible peaceful settlement of the crisis situation in Central America. We consistently and fully support the good offices of that Group.

Mr. SOGLO (Benin) (interpretation from French): If there is one region of the world in which the clash of two antagonistic wills is endangering international peace and security, it is that of Central America. The first is the will born of the legitimate aspiration of the peoples of the region to decide their own future in full sovereignty; the second is the will of a Power, Nietzschean in essence, to adhere to the notorious Monroe Doctrine, rejecting outside intervention in the affairs of the Americas that would call into question their pre-eminence in the region.

To the noble ideals of Bolivar, Jose Marti and Sandino are opposed the autocratic, feudal concepts of Somoza, Trujillo, Battista and Duvalier.

We are only too aware that the tensions that have always prevailed in Central America and the Caribbean are essentially of a political, social and economic nature. Those tensions, which result from the traditional structures of repressive régimes and national economic structures that cause poverty, inequality and

(Mr. Soglo, Benin)

suffering, are exacerbated by outside intervention and interference. So, like the peoples of Africa and Asia, the peoples of Latin America have paid and continue to pay heavy tribute to the dominating forces that have always opposed their most legitimate aspirations and the exercise of their inalienable rights.

Directly, or through puppet régimes, international imperialism is committing aggression against the States and denying the peoples of the region their right to choose freely their own political system. For having dared to question this situation and to rise up against more than half a century of Somozosist barbarism and tyranny, the people of Nicaragua now have unleashed against them the wrath of those that see the liberation of oppressed peoples in terms of damage to their own selfish interests.

Isolated, threatened, attacked constantly, Nicaragua had no recourse, to defend its sovereignty and independence, but to make known to the international community the terrible trial with which it was confronted.

The Non-Aligned Movement, at all its meetings both at the Foreign Minister and at the Heads of State level, has never failed to express its concern at the threats of all kinds to that country and the region, and for four years now, at each of its ordinary sessions, the General Assembly has discussed this matter. We deplore the fact that Security Council resolutions 530 (1983) and 562 (1985) have remained dead letters, and that despite the efforts of the Contadora Group and the Support Group tension still persists in the region. In all these forums regret has been expressed at the increase in the number and the violence of confrontations, which involve great loss of life and serious material damage. There has been condemnation of the acts of aggression by armed mercenaries organized and financed from outside, and of the application of coercive economic measures, including a trade embargo.

(Mr. Soglo, Benin)

To prevent this explosive situation from leading to a generalized conflict in the region, the international community must continue to appeal to the conscience and sense of responsibility of all the countries involved in the conflict to abide by the principles of the United Nations Charter and of international law concerning non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, the non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and peaceful coexistence.

(Mr. Soglo, Benin)

My delegation can only welcome the continuing efforts being made by the Contadora Group and the Support Group to achieve a just and lasting peace in the region.

We can only agree with them on the need for a Latin American solution to the problems of the region, outside of the context of the East-West conflict.

It is significant that they have reconfirmed the right of all nations to self-determination, which means that all States must be able, freely and without outside interference, to choose their own forms of government and their own political, economic and social systems. It is also significant that they have condemned the use of a nation's territory as a base for attacks on another country or for the provision of military or logistical support to irregular troops or subversive groups as well as support by any State within or outside the region to any irregular forces or subversive groups operating in any country of the region.

But I would above all refer to their Declaration dated 1 October 1986 entitled "Peace is still possible in Central America". It is much more than a simple statement of what they believe in and a commitment to work for peace; it is a cry of hope that all those must be heeded and echoed by all those who wish to create an atmosphere of trust and peace in that region which so sorely needs it. The new name of this peace is development.

In conclusion, I would repeat what the delegation of Benin has always said, namely, that the peoples of Central America in general and the people of Nicaragua in particular, like all peoples of the world, aspire to peace and security. They wish to forge their own future freely, independently, through harmonious economic and social development. This is an inalienable right that the entire international community must recognize. To act otherwise would be to maintain or encourage

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hotbeds of tension in the area. To act otherwise would be to perpetuate a policy of domination and hegemonism which peace-loving and justice-loving peoples such as those of Central America could never accept.

Mr. RAJAIE-KHORASSANI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Central America is a very important part of the American continent. It plays a key political, strategic and economic role in relation to the rest of the continent, north and south, and to the rest of the world. It is an area of our world where a great number of very small yet great and beautiful countries happen to exist, to live together peacefully and to contribute to all of us economically, commercially and culturally. Their peace of mind and happiness bring peace of mind and happiness to all of us, and their problems and miseries become a matter of concern for all of us.

Apart from these general conditions and interrelationships that bind the region of Central America to all Member States, my country has strong bilateral relations with many of these countries; this increases the general concern that my country feels for the peace and security of this region, and therefore it follows the developments in this region very carefully.

I wish in this context, to express the appreciation of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the untiring and sincere efforts that the Secretary-General has been continuously making to reduce regional tension in this part of the world and also for his valuable report in document A/40/1136. Unfortunately, as one expects, the report does not reveal any positive developments towards a peaceful resolution of the problems of this region, although it does take note of cases of free elections and steps towards democratization in some countries of this region.

The major problem of this region, as is very well known, stems from certain short-sighted United States policies, which reflect the material interests of

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

United States imperialism in the region rather than the principles of international law and human values.

Many countries of the world have already expressed serious concern about the situation in this region. Important organizations in addition to the United Nations have expressed their positions and expectations with regard to the problems of this region. The Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries unanimously adopted the following text:

"The Heads of State or Government pointed out with deep concern that the prevailing situation in Central America constitutes one of the major focal points of tension at the international level. They further noted that, in spite of the constant appeals of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the overwhelming majority of States and the efforts of the Contadora Group of countries in the search for a diplomatic solution, the crisis has worsened because of imperialist policies of interference and intervention which, along with the condition of poverty and oppression from which the region traditionally suffers, represent a real threat to international peace and security. They reiterated that the process of change in Central America could not be explained in terms of ideological confrontation between the military blocs and further observed that the danger of direct United States intervention in Nicaragua and other countries in the region had increased alarmingly.

"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. In this context, they particularly condemned the violation of its airspace and

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territorial waters, the launching of military manoeuvres and the commission of other intimidating acts; threats of seizure and occupation and selective bombing of Nicaraguan territory; the use of neighbouring countries as bases for aggression and the training of mercenary groups; acts of sabotage, air and naval acts, the mining of the country's main ports and the imposition of coercive economic measures, including the trade embargo. Such terrorist practices have caused the deaths of thousands of Nicaraguans, resulted in heavy economic losses and hindered Nicaragua's normal development."

(A/41/697, pp. 103-104)

The General Assembly has also, during the past three years, clearly spoken out about the immoral, destructive United States policies in respect of this region as a whole and has, as a matter of fact, condemned such policies, which have jeopardized international peace and security of the countries of the region.

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

Yet, the report of the Secretary-General indicates that the United States imperialism does not heed any of these appeals and calls and continues with its unholy role and policies in this region.

The incredible and clumsy allegations that the United States Administration has been making against Nicaragua deserve the particular attention of the international body. How a small country like Nicaragua can pose any threat to the United States or to United States interests in the region is beyond belief. What does threaten United States illegitimate interests in the region of Central America and the Caribbean is the exercise of the right to independence and self-determination that the people of Nicaragua, thanks to the Sandinist revolution, are enjoying. In that exercise, the people and Government of Nicaragua have the admiration and solidarity of all the non-aligned States and all peace-loving nations of the world.

My Government, too, has always supported the revolutionary people and Government of Nicaragua and is determined to continue to do so. We also stand beside all other countries and peoples of the region, who are directly or indirectly suffering from the hegemonistic, interventionist and illegal policies of the United States. We strongly reconfirm the right of all peoples of this region to absolute independence from all external coercions and interventions. The region of Central America, like our Middle East, has entered a new historical era in which independence, sovereignty and self-determination in the full sense of the term constitute the main aspiration of all the nations of these regions. United States imperialism must come to recognize that these and many other regions of the world are now entirely different from the past when colonial objectives and policies were pursued.

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

In the region of Central America, the so-called backyard of the United States, this political awareness and responsibility has a more direct message for United States imperialism, which the United States Administration must heed and change its policies with regard to this region accordingly.

We strongly condemn all the aggressive and interventionist policies of the United States in the region of Central America, and indeed elsewhere as well. It surprises us greatly to see that the United States, which claims to be a second super-Power, is so naively committed to a bunch of mercenaries to whom President Reagan has given so much military and financial assistance, as well as the title of "revolutionary movement". We never thought that the degree of perversion, meanness and lawlessness of the United States foreign policy is so insurmountable that the contras and the Somoza mercenaries in the United States system of values constitute a liberation movement. What can the international body say to such an unethical system and policy?

My Government strongly supports all the anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist struggles of the people of Central America and requests that the international body exert utmost pressure on the United States Government to dwarf its aggressive and interventionist policies towards the oppressed people of the region. We believe that the people of Central America have the inalienable right to choose their political system and their own economic order without any foreign intervention and coercion. We welcome all the concrete and constructive measures that the United Nations may propose to support the independence, sovereignty and self-determination of these people and the resolution that the Contadora Group has proposed for the purpose of bringing peace to this region.

Mr. SAMUDIO (Panama) (interpretation from Spanish): For the fourth consecutive year the General Assembly is called upon to consider the question: "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives". Under this heading we have considered, year after year, the historical, political, economic, social, cultural and other factors responsible for the critical situation in which the 22 million men, women and children comprising the population of the region find themselves.

The events of the past year, regrettably, indicate that the situation has worsened, confrontations have increased and a more widespread conflict is threatened.

This view of the regional picture was clearly defined by the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora and Support Groups in their joint Declaration issued in New York on 1 October 1986 wherein, with justified alarm, they stated that:

"The crisis in Central America is becoming more serious every day and the risk of war is increasing." (A/41/662, p. 2)

The fact that the Secretaries-General of both the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS), in their respective annual reports for this year, should have agreed that the causes of the worsening of the regional situation are the intrusion of conflicting ideologies, attempts to impose unilateral solutions and the use of force, is worthy of the greatest attention.

Nevertheless, my delegation is of the opinion that we are closer to peace and that we have made some headway. Contadora is today the Latin American force most representative of the desires and aspirations of the people of the region. In its diplomatic action, and that of the Support Group, the millions of human beings living in that part of the world have placed their hopes and confidence. To affirm that its diplomatic action has prevented the conflict from becoming more widespread is to say the obvious.

(Mr. Samudio, Panama)

Over that period, the Contadora Group and its Support Group have undertaken tireless efforts culminating in the presentation, on 7 June of this year, of the final version of the Contadora Act for Peace and Co-operation in Central America to the five Central American Foreign Ministers for their consideration and eventual signature. That document embodies the results of three and a half years of talks and negotiations with the countries directly concerned. Formulas for agreement, carefully studied, discussed and revised on each of the aspects covered by the negotiations were prepared, including those relating to international military manoeuvres and the control and verification of weapons still awaiting the conclusion of an agreement.

(Mr. Samudio, Panama)

My delegation believes that it is appropriate to observe in this connection that the new formulations proposed by Contadora in the final version of the Act do not reflect the specific views of any of the States involved in the negotiations but represent an effort to harmonize the proposals presented by the Central American countries themselves.

But the diplomatic efforts of Contadora are not confined to the drafting of a legal instrument. America as a whole has this year been the scene of countless conferences and meetings, both formal and informal, at the technical level, as well as the level of Deputy Ministers and of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of State. Every event, every occasion, every regional meeting has helped the representatives of countries members of the Contadora and Support Groups, together with the Central American countries, to develop a process of permanent consultation aimed at overcoming the paralysis which at times appears to afflict the negotiations.

Such meetings have generated, among other things, the Caraballeda message of 12 January 1986, with its permanent basis for peace in Central America, the Guatemala Declaration, the Washington communiqué, the Punta del Este communiqué, the Managua communiqué, the Panama communiqué, the Esquipulas Declaration, the Panama message and, more recently, the joint New York Declaration, to which I have referred, and which was adopted on 1 October.

As a corollary of such meetings, the principles underlying the political conduct of the region have been enriched, and we can say that we are witnessing the formulation of what might be called the "Contadora doctrine".

The development of this peace initiative has not been bereft of misunderstanding and pressures of various kinds. There have been many attacks

(Mr. Samudio, Panama)

against the Contadora policy, some within countries members of the Group itself. Others have been mounted at the international level. The countries of the Contadora and Support Groups have paid a political price in placing the prestige of their Governments and leaders behind those negotiations. Some members of the Contadora Group have been the victims of slanderous campaigns aimed at tarnishing the image of their Governments and undermining their participation in the Contadora Group, in an attempt to hamper the peaceful settlement of the Central American crisis. Nevertheless, the Contadora unity and its Support Group have not been affected and their proposals continue to reflect the unanimous view of their members.

In this connection, the President of the Republic of Panama, Eric Arturo Delvalle, from this very rostrum categorically stated:

"Panama, together with the other countries of Contadora, is determined to continue to fight for the Latin American approach - that of the peaceful settlement of disputes in Latin America. Our unswerving aim of continuing to seek the conclusion of an international instrument which may once and for all restore peace to the Central American region will not be altered by any kind of pressure." (A/41/PV.6, pps. 14-15)

In point of fact, Contadora has devoted itself to the development and application of recognized principles of international law and, in particular, of the rules of conduct enshrined in American law. The principles of non-intervention, the self-determination of peoples, non-use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes, are of paramount importance in this context and resolutely applied. The purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other international instruments, which are the cornerstones of coexistence among nations, are also particularly valid.

(Mr. Samudio, Panama)

If this set of principles is shared by all members of the international community, and in particular by the countries directly involved, if we have a peace proposal in the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America, and if the mediation of the Group has received the unanimous support of the international community, why is it that we have not yet achieved peace? What are the obstacles in the way of the speedy conclusion of an agreement on lasting peace among the countries of the region?

The difficult mediation process, in which we have participated during these past years, has taught us many harsh lessons. It has taught us how to look at the reality of others and to understand that what is valid for one country is not valid for another, that within each nation there is a complex set of relationships, aspirations, customs and spiritual values whose secrets people in other countries cannot fully understand but must respect, since they are at the very root of the peaceful coexistence on which the organization of any society is based. In short, pluralism and tolerance appear to be the inseparable elements of a vital equation.

My delegation is firmly convinced that responses to the Central American crisis must be formulated in terms of the specific realities prevailing in the region and not in terms of preconceived ideas or unilaterally imposed prescriptions.

The Governments of the Contadora and Support Groups have reiterated on countless occasions that the conclusion of a peace agreement depends essentially on the political will of the Central American countries and the firm commitment of countries with links to and interests in the region.

We all agree that peace will be achieved only if the Central American countries become convinced that the Contradora Act is the guarantee of that lasting peace for which their peoples are clamouring and deserve.

(Mr. Samudio, Panama)

Contadora and its Support Group, with the support of the entire international community, have produced a document which is a commitment to peace and has the moral support of all countries of the world. It is now up to the Central Americans, with the guarantees offered by that international document, to overcome their differences and mutual mistrust and get down with determination to negotiating the necessary final adjustments that the Act may require, and then sign the peace document submitted to them by other nations.

It can no longer be said that what hampers the achievement of peace are prevailing social and political conditions, for these have been identified, and all countries have proposed special programmes, many of them with the support of the international community. It can no longer be argued that peoples are under the yoke of dictatorships, tyrannies or military Governments for in Central America significant political changes have taken place in the last five years, from the overthrow of a well-known dictatorship to the resurrection of representative democracies - the product of popular elections - where their peoples have elected constitutional leaders who have decided to heed popular claims and demands.

If we have identified the problems which kept peoples at the margin of society and which were at the root of conflicts, upheavals and insurgencies against previous Governments or dictatorships, how is it that today, when we have elected Governments, we cannot fight those injustices of the past under the banner of national unity instead of fighting against brothers?

The debate on the situation in Central America must continue, but instead of dealing with "threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives", it should focus on the joint action that should be taken to start rebuilding economies devastated by war, rebuilding cities and communities, some destroyed by natural causes and others by lack of understanding among men, and restoring the

(Mr. Samudio, Panama)

national integrity that was destroyed by economic, social and political differences, thus promoting national reconciliation.

Central American problems are limitless. The needs are even greater, since Governments have diverted resources and their attention from their social and development problems to the purchase of war material and the maintenance of troops in order to cope with insurgency, to defend their territory and to deter possible violations of their national integrity.

The Central American common market, which several years ago was an example of regional integration, and for which the five Central American countries dismantled customs barriers and became a single economic unit generating work and resources for the benefit of its peoples, is today destroyed because of political differences between Governments. Its factories are abandoned or working at minimum capacity, because they have lost the regional markets which were their raison d'être.

(Mr. Samudio, Panama)

Insurgency and the danger of general war have all but halted the social and political changes which are the generators of the conflict, destroying the economy, creating greater unemployment, preventing further investments and affecting the overwhelming masses of the population, which not only have no sustenance for survival but are in danger of becoming innocent victims of the conflict. The conflict must be stopped. The dangers of war must cease. Central America needs an emergency programme for its reconstruction; we must translate this support that we have heard from all delegations into effective support and generous co-operation to build the foundation of a lasting peace based on development with social justice and democracy.

Let us become the guarantors of that peace, which the peoples of Central America deserve. Let us all watch over its peaceful implementation, guaranteeing that the provisions of the Act are respected by the entire international community, which today gives them their support, and let us express the hope that they will be faithfully observed. There must be no doubt that it is the will of all the countries in the Organization that peace in Central America be guaranteed and that the Contadora document be supported. We hope that this action will serve to deter any Government that might seek to violate those agreements.

Mr. RODRIGO (Sri Lanka): It was the clear perception of the Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries at their Conference held recently in Harare that the situation in Central America constituted one of the major focal points of international tension today.

This is the fourth time that the General Assembly has considered the situation in Central America. There has been no amelioration of the tension and instability that have been plaguing the region - in fact, conditions appear to be perhaps even more volatile and grave than they were when the General Assembly, on the basis

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

of an initiative by Nicaragua, first considered this item, and the breath of war seems to lie heavy on the air.

The situation in Central America is an intricate complex of numerous factors and it is certainly no easy task to unravel the various strands that underlie it. The instability and turbulence in the region, as well as the persistence of conflict, could be traced to its legacy of political and economic exploitation, which has been aggravated by foreign encroachment. The States in the region, nevertheless, do not constitute a monolith: they have each developed differing political, economic and social systems, with differing national perspectives.

A sense of insecurity pervades the region and violence has escalated, owing to several factors: acts of cross-border terrorism and subversion, the transfer of sophisticated arms and ammunition to the region, the deployment of foreign military advisers and mercenaries, the activities of irregular forces, the holding of military manoeuvres, as well as other manifestations of foreign military presence. All these factors have contributed to destabilizing the entire region, directly imperilling the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of individual Central American States and hampering their peaceful and orderly political and economic development.

In such a situation of political ferment, the Contadora effort for peace and co-operation in Central America, initiated by Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela and their Support Group made up of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, offers the best hope that, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, a process of dialogue and discussion could replace the hazardous course of conflict and confrontation. The Contadora ministerial Declaration issued in New York on 1 October 1986 said it all in its title: "Peace is still possible in Central America" (A/41/662).

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

Two major elements in the draft Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America, namely, the questions of military manoeuvres and the control and verification of armaments, have yet to be settled. It is nevertheless heartening that there has indeed been a convergence of views between the five Central American States and the Contadora Group on other key elements on which a comprehensive settlement should be based.

There is agreement that the region's problems require a regional solution which should be insulated from attempts to infuse into them an East-West ideological complexion. The Contadora enterprise is a mature and realistic expression of Latin America's collective desire to take concerted action. This regional consciousness must be encouraged and supported by the international community because it is precisely a regional approach that would be best able to understand and cope with the special characteristics and complexities of the situation. Furthermore, a regional approach would also limit outside involvement and complication of the issues.

Convergence of views has also been reached on the need to establish pluralistic democratic systems and to respect human rights, on the right of all nations to self-determination and on the need to carry out profound economic and social reform in the region.

Prohibition of the use of a nation's territory as a base for attacks on another country or the provision of military or logistical support to irregular forces or subversive groups, as well as the ending of support by any State for such forces and groups operating in any Central American country, constitute further vital elements considered necessary for an eventual settlement of the region's conflicts.

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

That a convergence of views has been achieved on these elements is a practical demonstration of the diplomatic capacity of the Contadora States and a tribute to their persistence.

At the heart of the Contadora endeavour as it has proceeded through several versions of its draft Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America is the affirmation that all States, irrespective of their size and their location, have the right freely to determine and develop the political, economic and social system which best suits the genius and aspirations of their people without foreign interference in their internal affairs. This right can flourish only in a free and unfettered regional environment in which differing ideological and development perspectives are accepted and permitted. Inter-State disputes and conflicts, if they arise, must be settled peacefully without the use of force and without recourse to direct or more insidious acts of destabilization, subversion and sabotage. The dictates of international law must be heeded, and no State should presume to force its own political or economic ideology or way of life upon other States.

These principles have a relevance beyond Central America and because of their universal validity it is a matter of concern to all States if they are breached. The breaching of those principles has brought instability, tension and violence in other areas of the world as well. The international community's special interest in the efforts of the five Central American States, the Contadora States and their Support Group is understandable. It goes without saying, however, that the international community must equally respect and abide by the eventual outcome of the efforts of these States.

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

The ministerial communiqué of the Contadora States issued in New York last month, notwithstanding its assertive and hopeful title, also warns of the prospects of the "expansion of the conflict, intensification of the confrontations and war" (A/41/662, p. 2). I am certain that all delegations will join the Secretary-General in commending the determination of the Contadora Group and the five Central American States to persevere in their efforts to deal with the issues remaining unresolved. This is a unique regional exercise, which we earnestly hope will lead on to success and help build a solid foundation for peaceful regional co-operation in Central America in an atmosphere of mutual respect and confidence.

Mr. MUDENGE (Zimbabwe): At their meeting in Harare last September the Heads of the non-aligned countries observed that:

"... the prevailing situation in Central America constitutes one of the major focal points of tension at the international level." (A/41/697, p. 103, para. 224)

That assessment was correct then and is correct now. The region continues to cause concern as one of the focal points of tension. Hostile propaganda flows across its international borders; threatening military exercises and manoeuvres are undertaken with the barely concealed object of intimidating Nicaragua; bases and logistical facilities essential for invasion are put into place; monies are appropriated and mercenaries recruited, armed, supplied and directed for the purpose of overthrowing a Government with which all countries, regionally and extra-regionally, are presumably at peace.

The question that arises is: Why?

Why do the Central American States - small, developing and poor as they are, sharing a common past, a common present, a common language, a common identity, a common destiny and common hopes and aspirations, which are increasing the economic and social well-being of their peoples and safeguarding their national self-determination and independence - find themselves frittering away scarce resources by indulging in warmongering in this fashion?

The present situation is not of Central American choice. If fault must be found with the Central American Republics, it must be on the grounds of size, poverty and geographic location. It would appear that in an age of super-Power arrogance and chauvinism they should have realized that being small, poor and situated in what someone considers to be his backyard is regarded almost as being irresponsible. They should have been prudent enough to have located themselves far away, out of sight of the lion's hungry eyes. But, alas, such a reprimand is

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

without justification, for as the late President Machel of Mozambique used to say, there are two things we cannot choose for ourselves, namely, brothers and neighbours. Fate sees to that. The Central American States are victims of policies and interests beyond their control.

I would not deign to arrogate to myself the task of defining the security interests of the United States or the manner in which those interests may be pursued. That is the duty and prerogative of that country and it has over the years demonstrated an amazing adeptness at pursuing them. My sole purpose is to reaffirm the rights that the Central American States enjoy under international law, rights which all States would do well to respect as they pursue their national security or other interests.

Those rights are so self-evident and so well known that they hardly merit restating at length: the inalienable right of all peoples, including those of Central America, to self-determination and national independence; the right of all Governments, including those of Central America, to pursue political systems of their choice without interference, intervention or any other form of outside pressure and the right of all countries, including those of Central America, to live in peace and pursue their freely determined goals of political, economic and social development without hindrance.

It is not merely a question of morality to respect those principles: it is also a matter of legality. To flout these fundamental tenets is consequently not only immoral but also illegal.

The socio-political changes taking place in Central America are a product of indigenous factors and not the machinations of some deus ex machina from outside the region. They cannot provide a justification for interference by any outside

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

Power. The Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries at their meeting in Harare last September understood this when they said that:

"... the process of change in Central America is of a socio-economic nature and therefore could not be explained in terms of ideological confrontation between the military blocs ... (A/41/697, p. 104, para. 224)

The changes in Central America therefore are a normal stage in the region's political development. Outside interference can only stifle such change, prolong the period of change with the concomitant fact of increased human suffering and, quite possibly, a generalized conflict in the region. It was for that reason that at the same meeting in Harare the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries warned that:

"... the crisis [in Central America] has worsened because of imperialist policies of interference ... which, along with the condition of poverty and oppression from which the region traditionally suffers, represent a real threat to international peace and security." (A/41/697, pp. 103 and 104, para. 224)

There is no justification for foreign Powers to interfere in the internal affairs of Nicaragua or those of any other country in the Central American region. International law bestows on no country the role of policeman. No country has a right to impose its concept of democracy on Nicaragua.

The International Court of Justice found that no country in Central America had ever fought in self-defence against Nicaragua or indeed had cause to appeal to a third country for support against Nicaragua. It is therefore clear that Nicaragua is a victim of outside aggression and interference for no reason other than that it has chosen to follow its own socio-economic political system which is

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

not approved by the regional super-Power; yet Nicaragua's rights have been vindicated time and again by the United Nations and the International Court of Justice.

But, sadly, the United States Administration has not heeded the injunctions of the United Nations and the World Court. Events since the most recent World Court judgement bear testimony to the contempt in which the United States holds the International Court of Justice. Far from being restrained, the United States Congress proceeded to appropriate \$100 million for the contras. That money is to be disbursed by the Central Intelligence Agency for dirty tricks operations against Nicaragua. Helicopter gunships are being delivered to the contras. American servicemen are engaged in gun-running to the mercenary contra forces and in training them for intensified fighting against Nicaragua. Above all, the danger of direct United States intervention in Nicaragua has increased exponentially, as seen in the affair of Hasenfus, a United States mercenary shot down over Nicaragua.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

I wish to make it very clear that my country does not regard the debate on Central America as a discourse on the ways and means through which the United States may choose to pursue its national security interests. The debate is about Central America: about the rights which all States, including Central American States, are guaranteed under international law, and the obligation of all States, including the United States, to conduct themselves in such a manner as not to infringe upon the enjoyment of those rights - in Central America or anywhere else.

In this sense the debate ceases to be about Central America per se, and participation in it is stripped of any connotations of altruism. Participation in the debate becomes a matter of supreme self-interest for all States - not only the smaller nations - as the debate becomes transformed into a question of the protection obtainable under the current international juridical order, the predictability of State conduct in terms of prevailing legal norms and the very survival of the current international political order.

I have had the occasion before today to question the wisdom, on the part of the United States, of assailing the legal underpinnings of the international order in which its dominance is enshrined for the purpose of securing some transient short-term gain. I wish to repeat that observation today. If Grotius is to be sacrificed on the Hobbesian altar, so be it. But woe unto all of us, for there will be no winners, just losers.

My country views the recent use of the veto by the United States in order to evade compliance with the legally binding judgement of the International Court of Justice as a most serious challenge to the Charter of the United Nations and the concept of international law. In so far as the International Court of Justice judgement was meant to bring peace and security to Latin America and the Security Council resolution was to enforce that decision, it stands to reason that the United States veto was a vote against peace and security in the region. Through

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

this veto the Security Council was stopped from carrying out its responsibility under the Charter and the International Court of Justice was rendered ineffective. At that moment the "Leviathan" took its first step onto the international stage.

My Government's views regarding the situation in Central America are very consistent and are a matter of public record. We have previously stated in the General Assembly and in the Security Council that we believe in a political solution to the crisis. In this connection we have welcomed the efforts of the Contadora countries and the Lima Support Group to find a negotiated solution to the Central American crisis. The Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe welcomed the Message of Caraballeda, issued by the Contadora and Lima Groups on 12 January 1986, which was endorsed by the Foreign Ministers of the Central American States in January this year and was reaffirmed at Punta del Este, Uruguay. It is our hope that those efforts and the implementation of the simultaneous action envisaged in the Message will lead to the resumption of the process of negotiation and dialogue essential for the peaceful resolution of the crisis in Central America.

It is our firm conviction that if an atmosphere conducive to peace and co-operation in Central America is to be achieved, concrete steps should be taken to ensure the security of the Central American States. A major step in this direction would be a cessation of hostile acts against Nicaragua. In that regard I should like to urge the United States to heed the call by the leaders of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at their meeting in Harare last September to

"resume negotiations with the Government of Nicaragua with the object of normalizing bilateral relations and for the purpose of securing a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Central America guided by the principles of mutual respect, sovereignty and self-determination of peoples." (A/41/697, p. 108, para. 233)

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

My Government firmly believes that tension would be reduced and a negotiated solution to the crisis in Central America brought nearer by scrupulous adherence to the principle of refraining from the threat or use of force by the parties concerned, the halting of military manoeuvres, the withdrawal of foreign military advisers and the dismantling of foreign military bases.

Zimbabwe also welcomes regional initiatives aimed at increasing mutual confidence between the States of Central America, such as the commissions of supervision and control of the border areas envisaged between Nicaragua and Costa Rica and, possibly, between Nicaragua and Honduras.

The battle in Central America is not for Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, or Guatemala. It is for common decency, respect for the law and, ultimately, whether or not the current world juridical order has any meaning. If Nicaragua goes, something irreplaceable will go with it. If it can be said that international society has a soul, then that soul will die when Nicaragua dies.

The situation in El Salvador is also of grave concern to the international community. I should like to recall that at their meeting in Harare last September the Heads of State or Government

"reiterated their profound concern at the continued deterioration of the situation in El Salvador due to the deepening economic, political and social problems and the increased imperialist intervention that has intensified the armed conflict throughout the country." (p. 110, para. 241)

We are disturbed by the continued foreign intervention in El Salvador, especially in view of the fact that the General Assembly, in resolution 39/119 of 1984, specifically requested

"all States to refrain from intervening in the internal situation in El Salvador and, instead of supplying arms or helping in any way to prolong

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

and intensify the war, to encourage the continuation of the dialogue until a just and lasting peace is achieved."

We urge all foreign Powers in that regard to adopt a constructive attitude conducive to the attainment of a political solution that will put an end to the suffering of the Salvadorian people.

The fighting in El Salvador, especially the attacks, bombings and forced removals that the Government forces are carrying out against the civilian population in the zone controlled by the insurgents, has caused innumerable civilian victims, increasing the already high number of refugees and internally displaced persons, and poses serious social and economic problems for the country. In this connection Zimbabwe had welcomed the agreement by the Government of El Salvador to resume dialogue with the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front - Democratic Revolutionary Front (FMLN/FDR) earlier this year. We are, however, disappointed that such talks have not yet taken place and urge the two parties to agree quickly on the venue and agenda of such a meeting with a view to working out the mechanism for bringing justice and peace to their troubled country.

Finally, I should like to state the conviction of my country that, while the international community can and must help Central America solve its problems through such contributions as non-intervention, non-interference and respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Central American countries, it is ultimately those countries which will have to work out a modus vivendi among themselves, and guard against external intrusions that can sow disharmony in their relations with each other. For let us never forget those famous words of Shakespeare's Cassius:

"Men at some time are masters of their fates:

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,

But in ourselves, that we are underlings." (Julius Caesar, I, 2)

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

In this connection my country welcomed the historic meeting of the Presidents of the five Central American States in Esquipulas, Guatemala, on 25 May 1986, at which they stated that peace in Central America can result only from a democratic, pluralist and participatory process involving promotion of social justice, respect for human rights, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the right of all nations to choose, freely and without external interference of any kind, their own economic, political and social system, it being understood that this choice will be the result of the freely expressed will of the peoples.

This is a good start which augurs well for the region. It is the sincere hope of my country that such initiatives will become the norm rather than the exception so that Central America can secure the fruits of peace, freedom and economic development it so richly deserves.

Mr. KIBEDI (Uganda): The General Assembly is once again considering the situation in Central America and the danger it poses to international peace and security. The situation in the region has been the focus of international attention and has become a matter of world-wide concern. It now ranks among the major hotbeds of world tension. The fact that we have, for the last four years, considered this item on our agenda is in itself evidence of international pre-occupation with the conflict in the area and its ramifications.

We in Uganda have closely followed developments in the region. One reason for our special interest in and concern about the problems of the region is that what is at stake are certain fundamental principles which we consider imperative to defend. These include the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries and the right of each State to choose and pursue its own form of political, economic, and social development.

Uganda, as a small country and member of the Non-Aligned Movement, feels that full respect for the above rights, which are embodied in the Charter, is the protection which guarantees the security of all States. We shall, therefore, always remain vigilant in their defence. It is to us a matter of regret that in the current conflict in Central America these principles are being compromised or violated by parties both within and outside the region. Consequently, the danger of a regional war with the active participation of outside Powers has been increased.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Contadora Group and the Support Group drew our attention to this danger in their Declaration of 1 October 1986 when they stated:

(Mr. Ribedi, Uganda)

"The crisis in Central America is becoming more serious every day, and the risk of war is increasing.

"Those who believe in a military solution are disregarding the true dimension of the problem. We wish to draw attention to what is at stake: expansion of the conflict, intensification of the confrontations, and war."

(A/41/662, annex, p. 2)

My delegation listened carefully to all the speakers who have spoken before us in this debate. We paid particular attention to the words of the representative of Nicaragua. She gave a clear exposé of the problem her country is facing. One was left in no doubt as to the extent of external pressures and armed attacks that Nicaragua has suffered and continues to suffer. These have included, among others, mining of ports, economic blockade, and bombings. The clear objective of all these actions is to destabilize the legitimate Government of Nicaragua. Thus, Nicaragua has had to divert its resources from the urgent task of economic reconstruction to the defence of its sovereignty and independence. Equally, other Central American States have, for one reason or another, been embroiled in the conflict and embarked on an arms race, thus further destabilizing the region. Armed garrisons and bases have increased. Cross-border attacks have resulted in the loss of lives and damage to economic infrastructures. The sovereignty of countries and their territorial integrity is being compromised and challenged.

The rule of law in international relations should be our guide in dealing with conflicts between States. It is our guarantee for building a better world where justice, freedom and the self-determination of peoples can be respected and preserved. It is our view that the rule of law applies both to the powerful States and to the weak ones as well. In the case of Central America, the International Court of Justice has made its unambiguous pronouncement as to the illegality of the

(Mr. Kibedi, Uganda)

acts perpetrated against Nicaragua and has handed down its injunctions. Under the United Nations Charter, States members have the obligation to abide by the injunctions of the Court. Indeed, the General Assembly on 31 October called for full and immediate compliance with the Judgment of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986. We call on all those concerned to comply with that resolution and abide by the Judgment of the International Court of Justice. To do otherwise is to undermine the fabric of international law which governs relations between States.*

Very often attempts have been made to depict the problems of Central America in global terms and to view them as originating in East-West rivalry. In our view this is a simplification of a complex matter. As we have had occasion to state in the past, the problems of Central American have their origins in a long period of political and social imbalances for which foreign interference was responsible to a large extent. The accumulated frustrations and the failure of those in power to address these grievances catalyzed the social forces in the region to demand and fight for political rights, meaningful development and national independence. The crisis, therefore, cannot be solved without addressing these fundamental freedoms. The challenge is to battle against underdevelopment which, in this instance, is compounded by a century of marginality and the exclusion of the overwhelming majority of the people from the political process. Every effort should therefore be made to assist the region to meet this challenge. In this way a durable peace can be achieved.

* Mr. Thompson (Fiji), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Kibedi, Uganda)

I wish to restate Uganda's well-known position, namely, that we believe every State has a right to determine its own destiny and to choose its own political system free from external interference. No State has the prerogative of determining what is best for others. This equally applies to Central America. Uganda therefore respects a democracy based on pluralism. But the logic of that concept on the international level means acceptance of a multiplicity of political and social and economic systems.

The crisis that has plunged the region into violence and widespread suffering and anxiety must be brought to an end. The people of Central America are yearning for peace so that they can devote their energies and efforts to social and economic development. While the solutions to the problem of Central America are not easy to attain, we are encouraged by the awareness that all the people in the region have the same goals. The most urgent task is the creation of conditions of peace in which the legitimate aspirations of the Central American States can be fulfilled.

In this context, we applaud the efforts of the Contadora Group and the Support Group. Their initiatives have provided a good foundation for a peaceful solution to the crisis. It will be recalled that, on 7 November 1984, the Contadora Group presented a treaty, that is, the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America, which took into account the legitimate concerns of all countries in the region.

(Mr. Kibedi, Uganda)

Not surprisingly, the Group's proposals for a framework for coexistence and co-operation among the countries in the region was acclaimed world-wide. We were encouraged when Nicaragua accepted the package without any reservations. In our opinion, this was a demonstration of Nicaragua's spirit of accommodation and desire to find a peaceful solution to the problems of the region. It was our hope that others would respond positively, but, alas, there was disappointment.

It is to us a matter of deep regret that, instead of building on that foundation, no progress has been registered since then towards the desired goal. Rather, the region has been embroiled in intensified conflict. The recent incident in which a foreign aircraft engaged in military operations was shot down in Nicaragua was a dramatic manifestation of the conflict and the danger it poses for international peace and security.

Uganda has always maintained that it is through dialogue that the countries concerned can reach a peaceful settlement. Thus, we regret that the dialogue between Nicaragua and the United States remains suspended. We appeal to both countries to resume their bilateral talks.

In our view, the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America represents a balanced and comprehensive proposal for the settlement of the conflict in the region. If all parties show the necessary political will, a peaceful settlement is within our grasp. It is imperative for all to support the Contadora Group in its efforts to bring this about. This support must go beyond mere words or rhetoric; it is important that it be demonstrated by action. Regrettably, in the past the actions of some have tended to block the Contadora process.

My delegation wishes to express its unequivocal support for the Contadora process. As President Yoweri Museveni stated when addressing the eighth Summit Conference of non-aligned countries, in Harare:

(Mr. Kibedi, Uganda)

"Central America has assumed centre-stage in terms of contention by local nationalists and great-Powers. Today the region is characterized by destabilization, provocations and economic sabotage, to the extent of the mining of ports at some points.

"Nicaragua has paid dearly for having stood firm for its revolution for independence and non-alignment. We should all urge the settlement of Central American problems through peaceful means. There is already a regional framework for peace in the region - negotiated under the auspices of the Contadora Group, which would enable all countries in the region to live in peace. We applaud Nicaragua's positive response regarding the final Act on peace and urge other parties to respond positively as well."

Mr. KIILU (Kenya): The political situation obtaining in Central America confronts the international community with a situation fraught with a potential threat to regional and international peace and security and therefore requires to be addressed comprehensively, with solutions being sought accordingly.

Kenya maintains that peace in Central America is possible only through negotiations and not through armed military confrontation. We also believe that such a negotiated settlement can be attained in the framework of the Contadora Group's initiative, begun in September 1983 by Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela and subsequently buttressed by the Support Group, namely, Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, as a diplomatic alternative to the conflict escalating in the region. The four Contadora Group nations recognized that there was a diplomatic vacuum in the conflict and moved to fill it. The Contadora Group was to provide a counterweight to the dominance of the conflict by outside Powers and hoped to enhance its own role and influence in connection with the problems that confronted the region with a view to establishing a trend that would culminate in a peaceful solution to the Central American conflict.

(Mr. Kiilu, Kenya)

It is the considered view of my delegation that the Contadora Group's initiative has made it possible to establish a consensus on a number of goals that could constitute the basis for a negotiated settlement, as contained in the 21 points of the Document of Objectives, of September 1983. Kenya finds itself in agreement with the principal points contained therein, which include, inter alia: first, democratization and national reconciliation within the countries embroiled in the conflict; secondly, the reduction and eventual phasing out of foreign military advisers and troops, irrespective of their ideological persuasion; thirdly, prohibition of the establishment of foreign military bases; fourthly, an end to support for paramilitary forces across the borders; and, fifthly, control of regional arms races. These were incorporated in the draft treaty, or Act, of September 1984 and were quickly accepted by some, but just as quickly rejected by others.

My delegation firmly believes that problems peculiar to a region must be addressed by the inhabitants of that region in order to achieve home-grown solutions to home-grown problems. It was in recognition of the importance and effectiveness of regional solutions to regional problems that the peoples of the world, through the United Nations and its Charter, strongly advocated regional solutions to regional problems. Article 33 of the Charter, for example, calls, among other things, for nations to

"resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice"

to solve localized problems, before resorting to the United Nations Security Council. Article 52 of the Charter similarly calls for nations to

"make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements".

Local problems have to be solved by the main regional protagonists in any conflict.

(Mr. Kiilu, Kenya)

Following this trend of argument and accepting the efficacy of home-grown regional solutions to local problems, my delegation finds the efforts of the Contadora Group and the Support Group analogous to our own in the eastern African region and elsewhere. The region has continually seen that our economic, political and social problems must be addressed by us and solved from within, and by us. My own President, Daniel Arap Moi, has spared no effort whatsoever in promoting good-neighbourliness in the region. Externally initiated and engineered solutions which may be effective in assisting the process of national reconciliation and economic development cannot be taken comprehensively and administered as a blanket solution.

While Kenya accepts the importance and effectiveness of the international community and its organs in solving international problems, it is also the strong conviction of my delegation that the final and decisive drive towards peace and security must come from within. The successes of regional approaches to crisis solutions are clear. We urge the global village and its village council, the United Nations, to reinforce the efficacy of such regional efforts at crisis solution as our own, those of the Contadora Group and others wherever they may be initiated.

(Mr. Kiilu, Kenya)

Although the exact circumstances pertaining to the eastern African region cannot be wholly transplanted into the Central American situation, or vice-versa, both regions have a great deal to learn from each other and to draw from each other's experiences and thus help to reinforce the regional approach to pacific settlement of disputes.

Kenya supports the continued efforts of the Contadora Group to achieve a peaceful solution to the situation in which the Central American region is embroiled. But while accepting the importance of the Contadora initiative, Kenya also makes it clear that it is more difficult to create a diplomatic solution than it is to call for one. There are impediments that must be surmounted. In Central America, my delegation maintains that the road the Contadora Group is taking is the right one. Many of its working groups are now grappling with such problems as how to stop arms trafficking and how to establish effective verification procedures for predetermined arms levels.

A negotiated settlement should not be cosmetic. All protagonists must be willing to ensure compliance within such a compromise settlement.

Mr. VLASCEANU (Romania): The Romanian delegation shares the profound concern expressed from this rostrum by many delegations in connection with the situation in Central America, which becomes more complicated this year and where new signs of tension have accumulated.

We note with regret that such a deterioration of the situation, not only in Central America but in the world at large, took place in the year solemnly proclaimed by the United Nations as an International Year of Peace, in the context of which all peoples were called upon to join in efforts to safeguard peace and the future of humanity, and following the solemn appeal of the General Assembly, at its fortieth session, to Member States in dispute to refrain from the threat or use of

(Mr. Vlasceanu, Romania)

force, from any intervention in the internal affairs of other States, and to resort only to peaceful means, to negotiation for settling their disputes and conflicts.

Developments in Central America and elsewhere show that the General Assembly's appeal has yet to be heeded and translated into action aimed at reducing the focal points of tension and conflict, so as to pave the way for a relaxed atmosphere, to open real prospects for peace, understanding, co-operation and security for all. This should strengthen even further our conviction that the only way is through reason, and that it is incumbent upon us, as responsible Members of the United Nations and of the international community, to seek with determination to halt this course of events dangerous for a political solution to the problems which are confronting us today.

Proceeding from this understanding, from the need to oppose any action which endangers the peace and security of peoples, Romania and President Ceausescu have repeatedly appealed for reason, for moderation in international relations, and have called for halting, without delay and for good, all military actions and demonstration of force, for solving all conflicts and disputes through a process of political negotiation.

In this regard, we believe that the United Nations, acting in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter, should intensify its efforts to eliminate policies of force and interference in internal affairs of other States, to seek a peaceful solution to existing conflicts, including the crisis in Central America, and to affirm the right of every nation to a free and independent development.

We believe that the increased tension in Central America and the danger of an outbreak of armed conflict, with possible involvement from outside the region, require the continuation of the efforts for harmonizing the positions of the interested parties, and an intensification of political and diplomatic actions

(Mr. Vlasceanu, Romania)

aimed at the conclusion and signing of the Act of Peace and Co-operation in Central America.

The escalation of tension this year, the military attacks against the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity and stability of Nicaragua, the political and economic pressure, which have resulted in human and economic losses and affected the normal economic development of the country, increase the risk of a regional war and hinder the efforts and dialogue promoted by the Contadora Group for a negotiated political solution to the problems of the region.

As was rightly pointed out by many delegations, such actions, including granting financial support to contra forces, aimed at overthrowing the legally constituted Government of Nicaragua, gravely infringe upon accepted norms of conduct in international relations, violate principles of international law, represent acts of direct interference in the internal affairs of Nicaragua, and are a threat to its political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Obviously, all these actions have worsened the general situation in the region, increased tension and created new obstacles to efforts to achieve a general and comprehensive agreement capable of putting an end to foreign interference, military actions and policies of force in the region, and to promote a proper climate conducive to peace and co-operation which Nicaragua, the Contadora and Support Groups and other Latin American countries are actively seeking. These actions against Nicaragua are also in total disregard of the principles contained in the Caraballeda Message on peace, security and democracy, adopted by the Central American countries in the Guatemala Declaration, in which a just and balanced solution was proposed to the crisis in Central America, one likely to ensure the right of peoples to choose freely their own form of social and political life, without interference in their internal affairs.

(Mr. Vlasceanu, Romania)

We believe that immediate cessation of all threats and hostile acts against Nicaragua, total renunciation of the acts of intervention in its internal affairs, respect for its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, acceptance in practice of the principle of non-use of force and of other principles which govern inter-State relations, would reduce tension and contribute to the search for a political negotiated solution to the problems of Central America. This is the only basis for mutual trust, for achieving an atmosphere conducive to peace, security and co-operation for all in Central America.

As is well known, Romania, based on its belief that the problems in Central America can be solved through peaceful regional negotiations and dialogue, has supported from the beginning, and continues fully to support, the process of negotiation initiated by the Contadora Group. We are confident that with the setting up of a Support Group, its initiatives are strengthening the peace efforts in the region.

(Mr. Vlasceanu, Romania)

This position of constant support for a political dialogue among the nations, and for the peace initiatives taken by the Contadora Group and the Support Group has been affirmed by the President of Romania on many occasions, including his talks and contacts with leaders and representatives of Latin American countries. Most recently, in an interview granted to the Mexican magazine Mundo Internacional, the President pointed out that the vital problems of Latin America relate to its independent economic and social development, and to a permanent end to any interference in their internal affairs. In this framework we highly appreciate the activities of the Contadora Group directed to solving the problems of Central America.

We have always stressed in this connection the importance that should be attached to respect for the right of every people to decide its own fate, without outside interference, to the elimination of force and the threat of force, and of relations of domination, inequality and inequity, and to the settlement of all disputes through negotiation, with due regard for the right of every people to freedom, independence and sovereignty and to socio-economic development in conformity with their own interests and aspirations.

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

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

(Mr. Vlasceanu, Romania)

Expressing its solidarity and support for the just cause of the Nicaraguan people, the Romanian people demands that an end should be put to any interference in the internal affairs of other States, and resolutely condemns any kind of infringement of the norms of justice and international legality and of the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Romanian delegation is also in favour of the intensification of the political activities of the States of Central America directed towards finding a negotiated solution of the conflict in the region, and also of their efforts to take further action, in conjunction with the Contadora Group and the Support Group, to bring about the final conclusion, signature and application of the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America.

We support the appeal made from this rostrum to all parties involved to refrain from doing anything that might impede the negotiating process, and to contribute to a climate of understanding conducive to advancing the cause of the peoples in the region.

We consider that in relation to the positive efforts directed to the peaceful settlement of the Central American situation the General Assembly should voice its unanimous support for this process of negotiation, and press for its continuation and finalization. We fully support the draft resolution, which responds to these requirements, and all other efforts to make that peace in Central America become a reality.

Mr. ANDRADE DIAZ-DURAN (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): The General Assembly of the United Nations, in discussing the question of the situation in Central America, is dealing with two aspects: threats to international peace and security, and peace initiatives. As in past years, the United Nations by

(Mr. Andrade Diaz-Duran,
Guatemala)

including the item on Central America in its agenda for the session, is showing the profound concern of the international community about the crisis which is having such serious effects in that region.

It is therefore most important that this forum should continue to deal with and discuss this serious problem so that all countries represented here may gain a better understanding of the various elements and circumstances that affect that situation.

Guatemala is well aware of the importance of any action to promote arrangements conducive to the restoration of regional stability and the achievement of the prosperity of the Central American nations.

In this context, it is appropriate to refer to the following comment by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization:

"The situation in Central America has steadily deteriorated with the increasing intrusion of conflicting ideologies, the attempts to impose unilateral solutions to the problems of the region and the resort to force. The tireless efforts of the Contadora Group, with the more recent backing of the Support Group, have helped in preventing the outbreak of a generalized conflict, but agreement which would bring peace to the region is yet to be achieved. I believe that only by insulating the Central American situation from the East-West conflict and seeking a Latin American solution that takes account of the economic and social needs of the area can a genuine settlement be achieved. This requires the support of all countries with interests in the region." (A/41/1, p. 5)

(Mr. Andrade Diaz-Duran,
Guatemala)

We also wish to recall that from the very first moment when the General Assembly dealt with the Central American question in 1983, it affirmed the right of all the countries of the region to live in peace and to decide their own future, free from all outside interference or intervention, condemned any attack on the sovereignty, the independence and territorial integrity of the States of the region, and urged them to refrain from using pressure or violence against each other. The Assembly also reaffirmed the validity of the principles enshrined in the Charter as a means of ensuring coexistence and peace among the peoples.

Similarly, in subsequent years the General Assembly reaffirmed its support for the peace initiative of the Contadora Group, endorsed a year ago by the Support Group.

In spite of the sustained negotiating efforts within the framework of Contadora, the situation is tending to deteriorate further. Friction has increased, and a series of additional elements and special circumstances have rendered the attainment of agreements leading to the relaxation of tension and to peace in the area more difficult.

The Contadora initiative has been hampered by a variety of unfavourable factors which adversely affect the possibility of pursuing a constructive dialogue with a view to permanent communication between the parties and the eventual conclusion of specific agreements.

This is the precise reason why now, more than ever, it is necessary to strengthen that process, to encourage and stimulate it so that it may continue to be enriched by new contributions. In particular it is for the Governments in the region to show by their actions that they are prompted by a real desire to find a solution and that good will, and above all good faith in the negotiations, should

(Mr. Andrade Diaz-Duran,
Guatemala)

enable all of us to adopt formulas of accommodation which could put an immediate stop to the continuing deterioration of the situation. Time and again we have emphasized the imperative need for greater flexibility in the various positions taken, and for everyone sitting around the negotiating table not only to make proposals and demands, but also to know how to yield and make concessions. It is nothing less than the peace of our peoples that is at stake here, and consequently each and every one of our Governments has a great responsibility that calls for sacrifice.

(Mr. Andrade Diaz-Duran,
Guatemala)

Guatemala wishes to reaffirm emphatically in this forum its resolute and unconditional support for the Contadora process. Those of us who have lived at close quarters with and participated actively in the Contadora initiative can state authoritatively and categorically that that mediation has been objective and that those good offices have been rendered generously and consistently. We Central Americans have been listened to, suggestions have been made to us and proposals have been put forward - always with a respectful attitude and accompanied by creative initiatives. Several years of patient negotiation have prevented a generalized military confrontation and opened up the possibility for us to find for ourselves the course that will enable us to overcome our differences. I take this opportunity to pay a grateful tribute to the Governments of Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, Panama, Peru, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.

A few days ago the sixteenth regular session of the general assembly of the Organization of American States, our most representative continental entity, was successfully concluded in Guatemala. That assembly discussed and dealt with the item under discussion here today. I can assure representatives that the statements were characterized not only by frankness but also by substance and sincerity. There were difficult moments, but among all participants, at all times, a spirit of conciliation prevailed, which is why it was possible to adopt by acclamation a resolution which, because of its far-reaching importance, I shall now read out. The General Assembly decided:

"1. To take note of the communication of the Foreign Ministers and recognize the praiseworthy efforts undertaken by the Contadora Group and the Support Group to bring about peace in Central America;

(Mr. Andrade Diaz-Duran,
Guatemala)

"2. To reiterate its support for the peace initiatives of the Contadora Group and the Support Group and urge all States to continue to give them their resolute support;

"3. To request the Contadora Group and the Support Group to persevere in their valuable efforts in favour of peace in Central America;

"4. To request the Contadora Group and the Support Group to submit to the seventeenth regular session a communication on their peace-making initiatives."

This shows that we are all aware that it is essential to continue to strive to achieve the objectives to which we all aspire. It is therefore opportune to recall and emphasize the importance of the Document of Objectives, which the Central Americans adopted by consensus at the presidential level in September-October 1983 and which faithfully reflects the aspirations of the Central American peoples. The 21 points in that historic document - which is, incidentally, the only one so far to be approved without reservations by the five Governments - refer clearly to the fundamental aspects of political, security, economic and social matters. Guatemala is convinced that no effort should be spared to bring about the genuine reconciliation at both the subregional and the internal level of our countries. The principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and of the self-determination of peoples must be strictly respected, but we believe that it is equally important that peoples should be able freely to determine their own future. This means that they must have the possibility of choosing the system of Government they wish, without limitations or pressures of any kind, in full freedom and with respect for political and ideological pluralism and fundamental human rights.

(Mr. Andrade Diaz-Duran,
Guatemala)

The active neutrality practised by Guatemala is intended to make a positive contribution in the region. We have been careful to maintain a balanced and cautious attitude, while attempting to be constructive and to assist and supplement the Contadora effort. That is why President Vinicio Cerezo convened a meeting of Central American Presidents some months ago in the Villa de Esquipulas; a place steeped in history and tradition in the frontier zone of three friendly countries. At that meeting a draft constitution for a Central American parliament - its own autonomous forum - was considered. This is intended to facilitate the discussion of common problems and the means of their solution. We very much appreciate the fact that this initiative was welcomed and encouraged enthusiastically by the Contadora and Support Groups. We have worked on this idea with enthusiasm and there have been regular meetings at the Vice-Presidential and Foreign Minister level. A technical committee is now drawing up specific proposals for consideration by Governments so that eventually they may take a political decision to set up that parliament.

In spite of the foregoing, we are convinced that dialogue and communication have become more difficult of late.

Guatemala has continued to develop various initiatives to reactivate the Contadora process. Two weeks ago our Foreign Minister, accompanied by the Deputy Foreign Minister, visited the Central American countries to urge their Governments to resume the discussions promoted by Contadora. The reaction of the Governments was positive, although some said that favourable conditions must first be created, which they said, could be achieved by avoiding simultaneous, parallel discussion in different bodies of the problems of Central America. In this context I would recall that the Government of Guatemala, in a communication addressed to the Contadora and Support Groups a few months ago, stated, inter alia:

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Guatemala)

"the Government of Guatemala endorses the assertion in the Esquipulas Declaration to the effect that the Contadora process is the best political means available to Central America thus far for the achievement of peace and democracy and the reduction of tension.

"For that reason it has welcomed the decision of the Contadora Governments to continue to make their invaluable contribution to the process of diplomatic negotiations now under way. In keeping with the letter and the spirit of the Esquipulas Declaration the Government of Guatemala believes that it is of the highest importance that the Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America be fully implemented ..."

In confirming its support for the Contadora initiative, Guatemala also wishes to state that United Nations action is a valuable contribution to the efforts of the international community, which is determined to avoid a conflagration in Central America and to achieve, in keeping with the principles and tenets of the United Nations Charter, a comprehensive, integrated, negotiated solution by political and diplomatic means, without violence or foreign interference, which would only complicate the situation and make it more difficult. We also unreservedly support the appeal which this Assembly has addressed to States to refrain from any military or other action designed to exert political pressure in the area, and, in particular, the request to all States with ties to and interests in the region to co-operate in efforts to bring about a peaceful solution.

(Mr. Andrade Diaz-Duran, Guatemala)

We must point out that, beyond the political and security problems, Central America is experiencing the worst economic crisis of the last three decades. The Secretary-General was correct when he stated in his report on the situation in the region that real per capita income had decreased by the end of 1985, in the case of some countries of the region, to levels that had been reached in the 1960s, and that savings and investments had declined by over 40 per cent between 1978 and 1985. He noted too that during the same period terms of trade had fallen by almost 50 per cent and that the value of exports had dropped by 25 per cent.

I wish to stress the integrationalist goals of Guatemala and of Central America as a whole: even in the present situation integration remains the best strategy for promoting understanding and, especially, joint development of our region. Despite the adverse effect of the crisis on the process of integration, significant ties of economic interdependence and common interests generated by that process, have proven resistant to some of the effects of tension and have even lessened the seriousness of the crisis to some degree. That is why we Central Americans welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General regarding the formulation of a co-ordinated plan of large-scale assistance to the five countries of the region in order to help their Governments overcome the present economic crisis.

Finally, Guatemala appeals to the Central American Governments to reinvigorate the Contadora negotiating process in a spirit of solidarity and co-operation. Rigid and dogmatic positions do not promote negotiated agreements. Great flexibility and great political will are required. Our peoples demand that we act responsibly and wisely. Equivocation or hastiness could be tragic and could have unforeseeable consequences. Let us reflect calmly and in the knowledge that no one is the sole master of truth. We must therefore be prepared to make mutual

(Mr. Andrade Diaz-Duran, Guatemala)

concessions in order to realize the highest values to which man aspires: peace, justice, democracy and integrated development. It is up to us in Central America to decide for ourselves and to forge our own future.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. I call now on the representative of Venezuela to introduce draft resolution A/41/L.34.

Mr. AGUILAR (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): As the Assembly concludes its debate in the item relating to the situation in Central America, we remain convinced that a speedy solution of the conflict in that part of our continent is one of the greatest concerns of the international community. Moreover, statements in the debate have testified to the great support enjoyed by the Contadora Group and its Support Group as the appropriate machinery to promote a positive end to the Central American crisis.

Prompted by the prevalent spirit of our debate, and on behalf of the sponsors, the delegations of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela, I wish to introduce draft resolution A/41/L.34.

The primary source of inspiration for the text before the Assembly was the decision adopted at the sixteenth session of the general assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), held last week at Guatemala City, with the support of all the States members of that regional body there represented. The imperative of averting war in Central America and defending peace at any cost was the basic motivation of the sponsors in submitting this draft resolution.

The preambular part unequivocally reflects cardinal principles on which any peace process must be based, approached from an essentially Latin American - and specifically Central American - point of view. It reaffirms the purposes and

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

spirit of previous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. It reaffirms more particularly the right of all the countries of the Central American region to live in peace and security, free from outside interference, and it urges all interested States in and outside the region to abide by the urgent appeal of the Security Council to co-operate fully with the Contadora Group, through a frank and constructive dialogue, so as to achieve solutions.

An important element of the preambular part of this draft resolution is the reference to the international community's effective support for the Contadora Group's peace efforts, support which has stimulated those efforts, which have been strengthened since last year by the invaluable support of the Lima Group, composed of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay.

The sponsors also felt it proper to stress an important aspect of General Assembly resolution 39/4, which urged each of the five Central American Governments to speed up its consultations with the Contadora Group with the aim of bringing the negotiation process to a conclusion and to respect fully the purposes and principles of the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America. In recalling Security Council resolution 562 (1985), we have stressed the Council's appeal to all States to refrain from carrying out, supporting or promoting political, economic or military actions of any kind against any State in the region which might impede the peace objectives of the Contadora Group.

The draft resolution also takes account of the right of the peoples of Central America to achieve peace, development and justice without outside interference, in accordance with their own decision and their own historical experience, and without sacrificing the principles of self-determination and non-intervention.

(Mr. Aguilar Venezuela)

The last part of the preambular part of the draft resolution eloquently reflects concern about the deterioration in the Central American situation and the possible outbreak of a war which could have serious consequences for the rest of the continent. We, the sponsors, are fully convinced that all members of the international community share our view about the gravity of the situation, as stated by the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Support Groups in their Declaration of 1 October 1986.

To turn now to the operative part of the draft resolution, which I have the honour to introduce, paragraph 1 reaffirms the conviction that the global, comprehensive and negotiated solution of the conflict in Central America requires that all States fully respect the principles of international law enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The next two paragraphs refer to the peace initiative of the Contadora Support Groups, which are requested to persevere in their efforts with the resolute support of all States.

We trust that, as an expression of their interest and desire to assist in the achievement of peace in Central America, all Member States will support the draft resolution I have introduced, so that it can be adopted by consensus. Of course, we hope that the Assembly will express its agreement at this session, if possible.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/41/L.34. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt this draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/41/L.34 was adopted (resolution 41/37).

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their position on the resolution just adopted.

May I remind Members that statements are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. YOST (United States of America): Today's consensus represents an affirmation of the need for peace and dialogue in the Americas. All of us in this hemisphere have again affirmed our commitment to resolving differences within the region in a regional framework and without outside intervention.

Today's draft resolution underscores the desire for co-operation expressed in the resolution approved on 14 November by the Organization of American States.

The participation of my country in the consensus adoption of this draft resolution lauds the spirit of democracy sweeping Central America. The reference to self-determination reinforces the crucial role of democracy in allowing citizens to choose their leaders through freely-contested fair elections. We are glad to see all of the Central American countries joining in support of this call for constructive dialogue.

The United States remains committed to the 1983 Contadora Document of Objectives. We welcome initiatives from all nations to encourage the effort of the Contadora Support Groups to produce an agreement that achieves the comprehensive, verifiable and simultaneous implementation of these points, so that all the peoples of Central America can live in peace and security.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind Members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/101, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second, and should be made by representatives for their seats.

Mrs. ASTORGA GADEA (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): The views of the more than 55 countries which have taken part in the discussion of this important item have been so eloquently expressed that we doubt whether there is any need to respond to yesterday's statement in exercise of the right of reply and to

(Mr. Astorga Gadea, Venezuela)

the statement made today by the American delegation, since other countries have done so in no uncertain terms.

Representatives of the various countries taking part in the debate have emphasized the need to respect the principles and norms of international law, and in particular the principles of non-intervention and self-determination, in the quest for a solution to the Central American problem. There is no need to say who is the main violator of these principles and norms. Baseless attacks, disinformation and lies cannot conceal that truth, nor the share of responsibility which the United States bears for the situation prevailing in our region.

The adoption a few moments ago of the draft resolution submitted by Contadora is proof, too, of the willingness of all countries represented in this forum to resolve the problems of Central America through negotiation without foreign interference.

Unfortunately, however, one of the major defects which some United States Administrations have had - and the present one suffers from it in a particularly alarming and dangerous way - is the inability to learn from the mistakes of the past and to accept the natural changes of history. We think that the present leaders of the United States could benefit from a review of their own history of revolution and struggle for democracy, for it would enable them to understand the Central American phenomenon. It was in that context that we quoted Patrick Henry's well-known words of 1775 before the Virginia Parliament. If the blindness of superiority and militaristic designs did not distort their vision, they would easily see that the counter revolution - which they created, finance, train and arm to overthrow the legitimate Nicaraguan Government - has more in common with Benedict Arnold, the traitor to the United States, than with the founding fathers of the American nation.

(Mr. Astorga Gadea, Venezuela)

The representative of the United States said in his statement today that he considers there is hope for a better future for Central America and Nicaragua. My country is of the same view. The freedom, democracy, self-determination and sovereignty of our country is, and will continue to be, a reality. To that end, we Nicaraguans have fought for so many years and will continue to defend ourselves against foreign intervention. The United States simply forgets that the history of Nicaragua and its future development are in the hands of the Nicaraguans and that its mercenary army, the contras, merely represent the Somozan past of terror and death; that the type of democracy that the contras represent was the one under which we suffered during five years of Somoza's dictatorship which was supported by the United States of America; and that, on 19 July 1979, for the first time in its history, our small nation was offered the possibility of being free, sovereign and independent, and of building a democratic society.

(Mrs. Astorga Gadea, Nicaragua)

Lack of historical memory leads the United States to forget even more recent events, such as the efforts made by Contadora in the past three years since the adoption of the document of objectives in 1983, which Nicaragua, of course, signed, ratified and continues to support. Since then, Contadora has submitted to the Central American Governments for their consideration two versions of the Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America, which only Nicaragua viewed in positive terms and which, on the other hand, the United States prides itself on having blocked. It is deeds, and not words, which show who is for peace and who has opted for war.

My delegation has listened carefully to the statement by a Central American country in this debate to the effect that its Government would be prepared to put an end to the presence of military advisers in its country if my country were to do the same. We are gratified by that statement if it implies a change of attitude on the part of that country in relation to its previous position. Nicaragua confirms its desire that Central America should become an area free from foreign military presence. Contadora has made a very specific proposal on this point and Nicaragua has accepted it. If it is also accepted by the other Central American countries, we should meet under the auspices of Contadora to conclude the necessary agreements. Nicaragua is prepared to attend a meeting convened by Contadora to deal with this or other aspects of the Central American problem. We hope that the other Central American countries will express the same willingness. Peace in Central America depends on the political will of all of us.

Mr. GVIR (Israel): Although my delegation had not intended to intervene today, the interjection of totally extraneous and unwarranted elements into the discussion by a certain Member State now compels me to do so.

(Mr. Gvir, Israel)

Once again this morning, one country - and I shall refrain from naming it - followed its usual abusive custom of injecting its own narrow and transparent political interests into the General Assembly's debate. Of course, these interests are not relevant to the issues we are gathered here to discuss. By obstructing the course of this debate with such matters that country undermined the progress of the discussion and, in effect, held the Assembly captive. I should like to point out that that country, which revels in such abuse, is among the worst offenders against international peace. Its financial logistical, diplomatic and ideological support of international terrorists have produced some of the most horrendous acts of terror in the world today. It has recently been caught red-handed in attempting to carry out more of these horrors.

Many international terrorists find a welcome home in the heart of Central America. It is no coincidence that the PLO, the spearhead of modern terrorism and the world's foremost terror group, has a long-standing and intimate relationship with at least one country in the region. But there are other forums in our Organization where such topics are and should be discussed. The General Assembly is not one of them. We should, therefore, have avoided such empty and extraneous rhetoric in this important debate and restricted it to the question of peace and security in Central America.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 42.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.