



Security Council

PROVIS IONAL

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PROVIS IONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 10 December 1986, at 4.45 p.m.

President: Mr. WALTERS

(United States of America)

Members: Australia
Bulgaria
China
Congo
Denmark
France
Ghana
Madagascar
Thailand
Trinidad and Tobago
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
Venezuela

Mr. WOOLCOTT
Mr. TSVETKOV
Mr. YU Mengjia
Mr. ADOUKI
Mr. BIERRING
Mr. de KEMOULARIA
Mr. GBEHO
Mr. RABETAF IKA
Mr. KASEMSRI
Mr. ALLEYNE
Mr. BELONOGOV
Mr. AL-SHAALI

Mr. BIRCH
Mr. FABON GARCIA

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The meeting was called to order at 4.45 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 9 DECEMBER 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NICARAGUA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/18513)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Honduras and Nicaragua, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Martinez Ordoñez (Honduras) and Mrs. Astorga Gadea (Nicaragua) took places at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting today in response to the request contained in the letter dated 9 December 1986 from the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/18513.

Members of the Council have received photocopies of a letter dated 8 December 1986 from the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, which will be issued tomorrow as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/18514.

The first speaker is the representative of Nicaragua, on whom I now call.

Mrs. ASTORGA GADEA (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Your diplomatic qualities and your experience promise success for the work of the Council this month.

I wish also to convey our congratulations to His Excellency Ambassador Sir John Thomson of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the very skilful manner in which he guided the work of the Security Council in November.

As a responsible country, Nicaragua has requested this urgent meeting of the Security Council to report on the most recent serious events in the Central American region and on the possible future development of those events.

Just three weeks ago the General Assembly discussed the agenda item on the situation in Central America. On that occasion there was a unanimous expression of concern about the increasing deterioration of the situation, and a universal call for respect for international law and the principle of non-intervention.

Additionally, only five weeks ago the General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for full and immediate compliance with the Judgment of the International Court of Justice in the case of "Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua".

The Contadora Group has sought to harmonize the political will of all the parties to the Central American conflict; that Group, the international community as a whole and the Security Council have appealed for strict respect for international law and the United Nations Charter, and for the non-use or threat of use of force in international relations. They have appealed for peace, understanding and harmony - in short, for a negotiated, peaceful political solution of the crisis in Central America.

(Mrs. Astorga Gadea, Nicaragua)

Yet we are obliged to ask: What has been the effect of these steps, these appeals, these efforts on the policy of force pursued in Central America by the Government of the United States and on the policy of aggression against my country? It is also proper to ask whether the situation has improved. Is there any encouraging sign that could let us foresee, if not conclude, that although the situation has not been resolved there are indications that we are on the way towards resolving it?

Unfortunately for the peoples of Central America, the answers to those and other questions are negative. Not only is there no indication that the complex situation in our region is being resolved, but on the contrary the most recent events compel us to believe that the situation is becoming worse daily and that the possibility of a wider regionalized war continues to be an option which the present United States Administration has not discarded and which it is stubbornly pursuing, to provide a pretext for direct aggression against my country, aimed at overthrowing its legitimate Government in an attempt to turn back the pages of history.

On the afternoon of Sunday, 7 December last, a formation of five combat aircraft flying from Honduras violated Nicaraguan airspace and carried out the following attacks on civilian and military targets inside the Republic of Nicaragua:

First, at 3.30 p.m. on that day, three aircraft from that formation attacked positions of the Sandinist People's Army in the Congojas valley, 12 kilometres north-west of Murra, in the department of Nueva Segovia. That attack caused the death of seven members of the Sandinist People's Army and the wounding of another nine.

(Mrs. Astorga Gades, Nicaragua)

Secondly, at 4 o'clock on the same day - the 7th - two combat aircraft from that same air formation attacked the town of Wiwili, approximately 25 kilometres from the northern border of Nicaragua. As a result of that attack, a home was destroyed and two children - 4 and 11 years old, respectively - were wounded. Furthermore, three soldiers were wounded.

In order to carry out that treacherous attack on Sunday afternoon, the aircraft entered Nicaraguan territory and overflew the Congojas sector in Murra; they then overflew Jicaro and Jalapa and they left by way of the Teotecacinte sector.

Our intelligence sources have determined that those aircraft took off from United States bases located on Honduran territory and that the attacks were co-ordinated by specialists from the United States. That information coincides with information on the rockets and bombs used in the bombings - that is, they can be transported only by very powerful combat aircraft, which of course the mercenary forces do not possess.

Responsibility for that grave event lies with the United States Government, with the policy of State terrorism which it is pursuing against my country and by which it attempts to manipulate the Government of the Republic of Honduras and other Governments in the region. {

The seriousness of this fact - viewed in conjunction with the warlike environment that has been created in Honduras by the dangerous fabrication that a large number of troops of our army are in Honduran territory; and the proven presence of the "Contra" mercenaries on Honduran territory, using and abusing that territory to attack my country, under instructions from the present United States Administration - cannot fail to alarm responsible Governments, and in particular the Government of Nicaragua, which is the main victim of this policy of aggression.

(Mrs. Astorqa Gadea, Nicaragua)

The acts of aggression that we are denouncing today have confirmed what my Government has been saying so often in recent years - that the conduct of joint military manoeuvres by the United States and Honduran armies; the strengthening of the military infrastructure established by the United States in Honduras; the permanent presence of advisers and specialized bodies of that great Power on Honduran soil; the continued financing, in the millions, of counter-revolutionary mercenaries, under orders from Washington; the constant crossing of our coasts by warships of the United States Navy; and the constant violation of our airspace, all have one clearly defined objective on the part of the present United States Administration: the overthrow of the legitimately established Government of Nicaragua.

In November we denounced in the General Assembly the manoeuvres carried out in Honduras by the 82nd Air Transport Division and the 75th Rangers Battalion, involving a total of 4,786 soldiers, just a few miles from our border. At the beginning of this month, other exercises began, this time with the participation of the 116th Brigade of the National Guard Artillery of the State of Florida. The 116th Brigade went to the town of Ojo de Agua, in the Danli Department, just a few kilometres from the Nicaraguan border, where it conducted joint exercises with the 3rd Honduran Artillery Battalion in the Las Mesas area, using for that purpose CH-47 helicopters of the United States Air Force and all sorts of heavy military equipment. It is important to point out that since the suspension of these most recent military exercises, the 116th Brigade has been based at the United States military base at Paimeroia.

This persistent military activity will go on in 1987, as has been officially announced, with the continuation of the "Terencio Sierra" manoeuvres. Over 4,000 soldiers will be participating in those new exercises, which will take place

(Mrs. Astorga Gades, Nicaragua)

in the Yoro Department of Honduras. These troops belong to the Army and the National Guards of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin, as well as the General Headquarters of the 416th Engineers Command from Chicago, and they will have the support of motorized forces from the United States Southern Command based in the Panama Canal zone. These manoeuvres will begin in January 1987 and, according to official information, will go on for four months.

The tactics used by the United States through the military manoeuvres to which I have just referred have been to bring the means of warfare closer to the theatre of operations near the counter-revolutionary bases and the border of Nicaragua.

Furthermore, since 13 November, United States warships have been approaching the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, near the Bluefields and Puerto Cabezas regions. This naval formation is composed of frigate and destroyers with conventional rockets such as the Tomahawk, with a range of 150 kilometres. These ships have electronic espionage and exploration equipment which can interrupt and intercept internal Nicaraguan communications and take infra-red photographs at night. This type of naval formation has also been observed near the port of Corinto on the Nicaraguan Pacific coast.

This maritime harassment has been accompanied by air espionage. The United States Air Force carried out between 1 January and 31 October this year a total of 169 espionage and radio-exploration flights.

Recently, the United States newspaper The Christian Science Monitor indicated that the Pentagon is now making every effort to strengthen its military presence on Honduran territory, and against Nicaragua. This includes the widening of the San Lorenzo air strip, which is used by United States aircraft to gather intelligence information; the Honduran Army is also being given sophisticated P-15 and Kfir

(Mrs. Astorga Gadea, Nicaragua)

aircraft - the latter manufactured in Israel; radar facilities are being established in Cerro la Mole; and additional funds have been included in the 1988 budget to strengthen the military base at Palmerola.

It is clear that it is within that context of aggression and preparation of the conditions necessary to the direct participation of the United States in the war that we find the recent appropriation of \$100 million by the United States Government and the consequent authorization given to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to direct and control the mercenary operations against my country.

In the same framework, mercenary commandos are being trained by United States specialists at an air base in Florida. At the beginning of next year, the United States Administration plans also to spend \$40 million for heavy military equipment for the Contras.

This fabrication about an invasion of Honduran territory by troops of the Sandanist People's Army has been constantly repeated since 19 November by official circles of the Reagan Administration, who state that Sandanist troops are positioned in towns bordering on the Paraiso Department. But a group of international journalists went to that zone and found that Washington's statements were false. The Honduran Government issued an official denial two days later. Nevertheless, the United States Government continued to insist on its lie. It was then that a sudden trip was made to Honduras and Costa Rica by the Special Envoy for Central America, Philip Habib, who met with the respective Presidents and heads of the military.

(Mrs. Astorga Gadea, Nicaragua)

On 20 November my Government denounced an attack plan by counterrevolutionary groups against the Honduran town of Danli as a manoeuvre to inculcate the Nicaraguan Army for that attack.

Some time ago, our President, Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, at the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the FSLN had already warned of the danger and death inherent in the facts to have just laid out before the Security Council. He denounced the fact that the United States was preparing for attacks against Nicaraguan positions and towns in order to blame the Sandinista People's Army. On 16 November our Defence Minister also publicly denounced the fact that the United States was promoting acts of sabotage against strategic Nicaraguan targets, as well as direct attacks on bases and temporary or permanent helicopter stations. Thus, such acts of provocation by the United States, in which Honduras and mercenary contra forces are employed, come as no surprise to us.

Using a purported attack on Honduran soil by our troops, the United States has rushed to participate directly in the transport and concentration of Honduras troops in the Las Vegas sector, at the very spot where counterrevolutionary forces are also concentrated. General John Galvin, commander of the United States Southern Command Force, went to Honduras with the purported intent of supervising the transport of Honduran troops. It is significant that General Galvin's trip should have occurred when the transport of those Honduran forces had already ended.

These events are taking place at a time when the counterrevolutionary offensive, the so-called Operacion Limpieza, ordered by the United States and launched on 24 October, has resulted in total failure, creating a situation of utter dependency on United States military intelligence and supply.

(Mrs. Astorga Gadea, Nicaragua)

The artificial and much-publicized conflict the United States is attempting to foment between Honduras and Nicaragua cannot be considered outside the context of the crisis that the United States Administration is now facing. Information published daily in the United States press confirms our repeated contentions that the mercenaries are being financed and supplied not only in violation of international law but, what is more important, counter to the domestic legislation of the United States itself. At the same time, we cannot disregard the fact that all this military preparation will pave the way for a greater United States military presence in the region and, therefore, prepare for its direct military intervention against Nicaragua, which is the main purpose of the present United States Administration's policy of aggression against my country.

The Government of Nicaragua, understanding the escalation of United States aggression as an attack against the peace, security and lives of the peoples of Nicaragua and Honduras, has once again come to the Security Council to alert the international community to this new escalation of aggression by the United States of America, to call once again for respect for the norms and principles of international law and to defend the right of the peoples of Central America to life and peace. With that goal in mind and in a constructive spirit my Government, in a note dated 7 December, proposed to the Government of Honduras that the Secretary-General of the United Nations be invited to send a fact-finding committee to the zone of tension, with the participation of the Contadora members, to determine the causes of tension and recommend relevant measures to be adopted to prevent a further worsening of the situation. That proposal was reiterated in a note dated 8 December addressed to the Foreign Minister of Honduras.

(Mrs. Astorga Gadea, Nicaragua)

Unfortunately, owing to pressure exerted by the Government of the United States of America, the response of the Government of Honduras, contained in an official communication of 9 December 1986, does not correspond to the sense of responsibility called for by the present situation. That note, while affirming in bellicose tones that Honduran armed forces will repel with all their strength the purported Nicaraguan aggression, also states:

"this is not the moment...to request foreign monitoring on our borders."

In conclusion, my Government appeals once again to the United States Government to put an end once and for all to its policy of fanning the flames of confrontation and war in Central America, to halt its attacks against my country, to stop involving Central American Governments in its policy against Nicaragua and to heed the ruling of the International Court of Justice, for it is only in that way that peace will become a reality in Central America.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Nicaragua for the kind words she addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Honduras, upon whom I now call.

Mr. MARTINEZ ORDÓÑEZ (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): Before beginning my statement to the Council, I should like to express to you, Sir, how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over the meetings of the Council this month. For us, your presence here is indeed a guarantee that the Council will deal effectively with the very important matters before it. My delegation would also like to extend its fraternal congratulations to Sir John Thomson, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, who presided so efficiently over the Council's work last month.

Once again the Security Council is meeting at the request of the delegation of the Government of Nicaragua to consider events that have worsened the situation in the Central American region. The Council's consideration of the situation that has

(Mr. Martinez Ordoñez, Honduras)

been created in the border areas between our country and Nicaragua is fully justified. Nevertheless, it is surprising that it should be the representatives of the country responsible for the worsening of the situation who have requested this meeting.

Indeed, the responsibility of the Nicaraguan Government for the worsening situation by virtue of its acts of patent aggression against our country has been duly reported and confirmed by the international press. Indeed, even in those instances where the press is not friendly to my country and Government, it has been unable to conceal the fact that the Government of Nicaragua, in committing its irresponsible aggression against Honduras, has inflicted upon itself conditions which my Government has consistently endeavoured to avoid and forestall. However, perhaps we should not be surprised that Nicaragua should attempt, as it has so often done in the past, to make use of international organizations in its desire to create publicity designed to cover up the truth with false and distorted statements.

The facts - which, for obvious reasons, I must clarify before the Council and for the benefit of international public opinion - speak for themselves. Without any departure from the truth, they are as follows:

Since the beginning of this year, both verbally and in writing, my Government has been requesting the Government of Nicaragua to halt the incursions by the Sandinist Army into the territory of Honduras, particularly when, as members of the Council will recall, more than 2,000 Sandinist soldiers violated our territorial integrity in March of this year, a fact that was publicly recognized by Commandante Ortega himself. Similar attacks occurred again in November and in December of this year, to such an extent that the presence of elements of the Sandinist People's Army within Honduran territory has become virtually permanent.

(Mr. Martínez Ordoñez, Honduras)

The Government of Nicaragua has turned a deaf ear to our repeated requests that it withdraw its troops to its own territory. In talks with high officials of the Sandinist Government, in a desire to prevent more serious consequences, high officials of my Government have repeatedly drawn attention to the danger of the situation. Nicaragua has irresponsibly always denied the facts, just as its representative has today in the Council.

In our view, it is inconceivable that the commanders of the troops in the northern sector of Nicaragua should act for such a long time without the knowledge of, and instructions from, Managua. In any event, if that happened, it cannot be denied that the central Sandinist Government should have taken action, in view of our constant requests, to end the violations of our sovereignty and the incursions into our national territory.

The border situation worsened considerably over the last weekend, as a result of the actions of the Sandinist People's Army. On Thursday, 4 December, at 1800 hours, at the moment of sunset, approximately 200 soldiers of the Sandinist People's Army attacked an observation post of the Honduran army located in an area called Las Mielas, 7 kilometres from the border and obviously within Honduran territory, in the Department of El Paraiso. The 15 soldiers at the post defended it courageously in a battle that lasted until 1 a.m. on 5 December. Then, in view of the attackers' numerical superiority, they decided to withdraw, and during the withdrawal elements of the Sandinist army captured the Honduran soldiers Alfonso Urraco Diaz and Oswaldo Lopez Andrade, who are still being held, a matter which is the direct responsibility of the Government of Nicaragua. Corporal Orlando Cruz Gutierrez and the soldiers Edil de Jesus Paguada and Luis Alfredo Aplicano were wounded in the battle. During the action the Sandinist army also seized from the Honduran observation post military equipment belonging to our armed forces.

(Mr. Martínez Ordoñez, Honduras)

At the same time as that action was taking place the Sandinist People's Army attacked the Honduran villages of Macuengales, Buena Vista and La Esperanza, small villages of Honduran peasants, purely civilian, who are in the local government area of Las Trojes, in the same Department of El Paraíso. There was also another series of attacks against other small Honduran villages in the area. So far my Government has been unable to determine the human losses and the material damage caused by the attacks.

Even before the events that I have described, Soviet-built helicopters, which only the Government of Nicaragua owns in our region, flew over Honduran territory in the area of Boca del Español, near the places where those attacks took place.

As the members of the Council will easily understand, the Government and the people of Honduras found the situation intolerable, and energetic action on our part was needed to put an end to them.

Despite the offence against our national dignity, the Honduran Government once again demonstrated its peaceful and conciliatory approach, trying through diplomatic means to prevent a worsening of the situation. With that in mind, on 6 December my country's Foreign Ministry complained to the Foreign Ministry of Nicaragua about the brutal attack by the Sandinist People's Army on the Honduran civil population of the villages I have mentioned, stating that, if adequate and justified measures were not taken, as set out in its note, the armed forces of Honduras would be obliged to carry out their constitutional duty to defend the national territory and sovereignty of our country. The Government of Honduras, in its Foreign Ministry note, called on the Government of Nicaragua immediately to withdraw all Sandinist troops from our national territory. It also called for the return of the two captured Honduran soldiers and of the equipment removed from the Honduran military post by the Sandinist army and for adequate compensation for the damage done.

(Mr. Martinez Ordoñez, Honduras)

As usual, the Government of Nicaragua completely denied that Sandinist troops were on Honduran territory, leaving our Government with no alternative but to take appropriate and legitimate action. Wishing to draw out the matter, the Government of Nicaragua suggested to the Honduran Government - and the representative of Nicaragua has just mentioned this again here - that a United Nations and Contadora Group commission be sent to avoid any worsening of the situation, which clearly was being caused by its own actions. Given the circumstances I have described, it must be clear to the Council that such an approach was absolutely unacceptable to my country and that what was required was the immediate withdrawal of the invading troops from our territory.

When matters reached that point, the Honduran Government ordered the Honduran air force to take all the necessary measures to remove the invading soldiers from our territory and to transport elements of our own national army, using our own resources and those supplied at our request by the Government of the United States of America, to a place near the areas in which the events were occurring, enabling them to advance by land without exceeding the legal limits which the United States Government had imposed on the assistance requested. These Honduran troops are proceeding in accordance with instructions to co-operate in the clean-up operation undertaken by the Honduran air force. Both are acting under the precise orders of the commander of the armed forces of Honduras, General Huberto Regalado Hernandez, to proceed strictly within national territory and not to halt until the last Sandinist soldier leaves our territory. The military action being undertaken will end when that happens, and not before.

It will not escape the notice of the members of the Council that the facts I have stated show that the Government of Nicaragua is violating the principles of international law contained in international agreements and in the United Nations

(Mr. Martinez Ordoñez, Honduras)

Charter, particularly in Article 2, which sets out the obligation of all Member States to:

"refrain ... from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations."

It should also be clear that our country, in defending itself against actions which clearly constitute aggression, is thereby exercising a right enshrined in the Charter.

Honduras could in all justice and right have requested this meeting of the Security Council. It did not do so because when the Central American Governments agreed to seek a solution to the crisis in our region through the Contadora process we formally undertook not to have recourse to any other body or forum while that process was under way, and Honduras is a country that is proud to keep its word, despite the repeated violations of that commitment by the Government of Nicaragua, in this forum and others of the United Nations system.

(Mr. Martinez Ordoñez, Honduras)

I have drawn to the attention of the Council the strict orders under which the armed forces of Honduras are acting. I can fully assure the Council that these orders have not been violated, and will not be violated by the various units in our national army.

As further proof not only of the presence of Sandinist troops in Honduras, but also that their presence is part of a premeditated plan executed with full knowledge that Honduran territory was being invaded, I cite the fact that the clean-up operation carried out by our armed forces yielded many identification cards that were left behind by members of the Sandinist army in their flight, or that were taken from them, and also an important document entitled, "Combat instructions to ensure the success of the General Benjamin Zeledon operation". It is dated 3 December and signed by Lieutenant Pedro Rios.

That document proves incontrovertibly that the operation undertaken by the Sandinist army was carried out with the full knowledge that it was to take place on Honduran territory. Moreover, artillery forces were based near our border in advance in order to support the operation. This is clear evidence of a premeditated plan one for which the Government of Honduras cannot evade its responsibility.

I have requested my Government to send me those documents urgently, and my Permanent Mission will make them available to the Council, if it so requests. Furthermore, if this serious situation continues, my Government will, in due course, submit this and other evidence to the relevant international bodies.

The Government of Nicaragua, perhaps in an attempt to put a smokescreen over the events in our border area, has claimed to be the victim of certain air attacks. According to one report an attempt was made to destroy a landing strip, which because of the inefficiency of the attackers, was not damaged.

(Mr. Martinez Ordoñez, Honduras)

To avoid any twisted interpretation of the situation, I should like to point out to the Council that the Honduran air force has no responsibility whatsoever for that alleged action. In any event, the rigorous training of the Hondurans who serve in our air force, makes it inconceivable that they would be so incompetent had they carried out that action. I am making this comment in my brief account of the facts only because there have been insinuations in the press to the effect that such actions might have been part of Honduran operations.

Our position is clear. Even when the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, Don Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann, in a telex dated 8 December, claimed that Honduran aircraft had attacked positions of the Sandinist People's Army on Nicaraguan territory, the Foreign Ministry of my country responded to him as follows:

"First, the Government of Honduras rejects your Government's accusation that Honduran aircraft attacked positions of the Sandinist People's Army on Nicaraguan territory. The Honduran Air Force, in fulfilment of the constitutional responsibility of the armed forces to provide for the defence of our national territory and its sovereignty, took action on the sixth of this month, against positions of the Sandinist Army on Honduran territory in the areas of Maquengales, Buena Vista and La Esperanza, jurisdiction of Trojes, in the Department of El Paraiso.

"Secondly, in spite of the fact that in defence of our national territory and of the sovereignty and honour of our Republic, the armed forces need not announce their action in advance, in the evening of Saturday, the sixth of this month, our Secretary of State contacted the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry to denounce attacks by the Sandinist People's Army on Honduran positions in Maquengales, Buena Vista and La Esperanza, and announced that if they did not

(Mr. Martinez Ordoñez, Honduras)

withdraw their troops from Honduran territory, the Honduran armed forces would take action. In view of the Nicaraguan Government's rejection of our protest and the false affirmation that there were no Sandinist troops on Honduran territory, our country's air force took appropriate action against positions of the Sandinist People's Army on Honduran territory. At no time did the Honduran Air Force attack positions of the Sandinist People's Army on Nicaraguan territory.

"The affirmation by that Government to that effect is part of an enormous campaign of disinformation and misinformation that Governments of the Soviet bloc are financing for the benefit of the Government of Nicaragua in a clear demonstration of the dependence of that fraternal country on Powers outside our continent.

"Thirdly, it must not be forgotten that in writing and verbally our Government, since the beginning of this year, has been asking the Government of Nicaragua to withdraw its troops from Honduran territory, especially when over 2,000 soldiers of the Sandinist People's Army violated that territory in March, and again in November and December of this year. The presence of the Sandinist People's Army on Honduran territory has become almost permanent. The Government of Nicaragua has lent a deaf ear to the demands of the Honduran Government to withdraw its troops. A number of the highest officials of the Sandinist Government have been told verbally of the danger of the situation which Nicaragua has irresponsibly denied. But time ran out. As of the sixth of this month the armed forces of Honduras will have to use all their might to repel and drive out the troops of the Sandinist People's Army that are penetrating and violating our national territory.

(Mr. Martinez Ordoñez, Honduras)

"Fourthly, this is not the time, Mr. Minister, to request foreign monitoring of our borders. This is the time to act responsibly and with a view to the best interests of our peoples. The military attacks and terrorist actions by the Sandinist People's Army cannot frighten our people, nor can they reduce the ability of our armed forces to respond with force, valour and firmness to the aggression by an army financed, organized, trained, directed, equipped and supplied by the Soviet Union and its satellites.

"Fifthly, my Government reiterates its constant appeal for prudence and for peace; it will continue in its determination to find a political solution to the crisis in the Central American region, beginning with respect for the borders of our respective States and the consolidation of democracy in all the countries of the area, especially in Nicaragua, where the citizens have temporarily lost every trace of freedom."

This response by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of my country makes our position absolutely clear to the Council, and with the sense of responsibility of a country respectful of its commitments under the United Nations Charter, we affirm, even in these grave circumstances, our will to explore the path towards peace with dignity in that Central American region which is so dear to us.

It is in a way significant that this meeting of the Council is being held on the day when our Organization is dedicating itself to human rights. In spite of the fact that we are not a signatory of the Organization's agreements on refugees, our country has opened its doors to them and shares its scarce resources with the thousands of Nicaraguans who are fleeing their country because of the constant violation of those rights by the Sandinist Government. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees can testify to that.

(Mr. Martinez Ordoñez, Honduras)

It is those men and women fleeing from the violations of the Government of Nicaragua and the violence of the civil war unleashed in that country by Nicaraguans, not content with the path that has been taken by their country, that are challenging the stance of the Sandinist Government, which seeks to place responsibility on others for its own arbitrary actions.

The Sandinist Government has even gone to the extreme of trying to justify military action in territories clearly and legally under the sovereignty of neighbouring States and has reacted by requesting this meeting, claiming to be the victim, when in fact it is the offender.

My delegation is confident in the good judgement of the members of this Council and is convinced that they will not allow a smokescreen to turn night into day, a lie into truth, a crime into a meritorious action.

If human rights are the issue, it would be a good idea for the autocrats that are governing Nicaragua to remember those of the humble Honduran peasants who have seen their property destroyed and their lives threatened by the actions of an army that has no right to be on their national territory, a territory in defence of which the Government, people and armed forces of Honduras will not retreat by a single step.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Honduras for his kind words addressed to me.

Since no other representative has indicated a desire to speak at this stage of our deliberations, I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

Today, if my count is correct, is the fourteenth time the Sandinistas have requested the convening of the Security Council to listen to their shopworn complaints and propaganda.

(The President)

It is with an overwhelming sense of disbelief that I address the Council today. Once again the Sandinistas have sought to convene this Council for a patently false and cynical complaint against their neighbours and the United States. This is consistent with the pattern of Nicaraguan abuse of this body to which we have unfortunately become accustomed.

Yet again Nicaragua is seeking to portray itself as the innocent victim in a situation in which it is in fact the aggressor. This version of events flies in the face of every piece of reliable reporting out of the region in the last week. It is an act of astonishing duplicity and arrogance to attack one's neighbour, lie about one's actions at every opportunity, and then accuse a third party of perpetrating or master-minding the entire event.

Honduras is the victim of continuing Sandinista aggression. As the Permanent Representative of Honduras has stated so eloquently, a Sandinista army numbering well over 1,000 combat troops has violated Honduran territory in blatant disregard of Honduran sovereignty. The Sandinistas have fired artillery shells and rockets into Honduras in support of ground operations. On 4 December the Sandinistas attacked a Honduran military outpost, wounding Honduran soldiers and taking prisoners.

On 5 December Honduran President Azcona, seeking to avoid further violence and bloodshed, sent a protest to Nicaragua urging Comandante Ortega to withdraw his troops from Honduran soil. Typically, the Sandinistas denied their presence despite their attacks on villages and military outposts well within Honduras and the eyewitness accounts of Honduran civilians. This is all too reminiscent of the events of last March in which our Nicaraguan colleague repeatedly denied the presence of a single Sandinista soldier in Honduran territory, only to be later contradicted by Managua's admissions of massive casualties in Honduras.

(The President)

In response to President Azcona's request, the United States agreed to transport Honduran troops and supplies in nine unarmed United States helicopters from near Tegucigalpa to the Jamastran airfield, located some 25 miles away from the conflict. This logistical assistance was the only part the United States played in the tragic violence in Honduras last week. Allegations by Nicaragua of other United States involvement are not only absurd but completely false.

Nicaragua's latest violation of Honduran territorial integrity is no mere border incident. It is further evidence of the serious threat by the Sandinistas to their neighbours. The massive Soviet-backed military build-up in Nicaragua has encouraged that régime to wage such warfare with impunity. It is this threat that the Central American democracies have sought to counter not by matching force with force but through negotiation of a comprehensive regional agreement which the United States has supported. If the régime in Managua truly desires a negotiated settlement to regional tensions, there are a multitude of venues available to them.

The issue before the Council today is not one between Nicaragua and the United States, however the Nicaraguan representative may seek to portray it. The issue is, as it has been on so many previous occasions, Nicaragua's blatant aggression against its neighbours as evidenced by Sandinista armed incursions into Honduras. Last week when the Hondurans needed us, we were there. I assure you that we are and will be prepared to continue to come to the prompt assistance of the victims of Sandinista aggression.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I call on the representative of Nicaragua.

Mrs. ASTORGA GADEA (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish):

Mr. President, after hearing the representative of Honduras, and after hearing your statement as representative of the United States, we cannot fail to be surprised at

(Mrs. Astorga Gadea, Nicaragua)

the United States insistence that the problems of Central America have been caused by Nicaragua and at its desire to have it believed that Nicaragua is destabilizing Central America and financing counter-revolutionary or subversive groups in other countries - as though Nicaragua were at the core of the problem of Central America.

We also listened attentively to - as I said in my earlier statement - the fabrication by the Government of Honduras, which you, Mr. President, yourself confirmed, to the effect that the Government and army of Nicaragua are constantly attacking Honduras, when, as is known to all the members of the Council and to the international community, the reality is that the only country that has been attacked is Nicaragua. There is clear evidence of this, and there has been a ruling in this regard by the International Court of Justice condemning the United States for its policy of aggression against Nicaragua. The only force in Honduran territory that is not a Honduran force is that of the United States and the counter-revolutionary force created, armed and supplied by the United States Administration.

It is that policy of the Government of the United States that has created and continues to create problems in Central America. That is why we have said that no matter what attempt is still being made to have Nicaragua seem to be the aggressor - even though Nicaragua was bombed last Sunday by aircraft coming from Honduran territory - the truth is completely different. If there is so much evidence of my country's involvement in other countries of Central America, and Honduras in particular, then why have the mechanisms Nicaragua has proposed to the United States and Honduras not been accepted? Why not accept the idea of a fact-finding commission of the Secretary-General of the United Nations going to the area in which it is claimed there are Nicaraguan troops?

(Mrs. Astorga Gadea, Nicaragua)

Why not go to see the alleged damages so that that whole situation in the border area can be assessed, an opinion rendered and recommendations made?

The main reason for our convening this meeting is to alert the Council to those fabrications and to the obvious pretexts for wider United States involvement in direct action against my country.

The aggression against Nicaragua has been confirmed not only by us but by international agencies, including the International Court of Justice. We were the ones who brought the press to Wiwili and to the surrounding area of Murra so that they could see that those bombings took place. That continues to be Nicaragua's position.

It is in no way in our interest to attack any country. What we seek is understanding with the Government of the United States, since it is that Government which is the main factor of tension and aggression against Nicaragua. Moreover, the efforts of the United States Government to overthrow the legitimately elected Government of Nicaragua have resulted in the involvement of other countries of the Central American region.

But this is not the time for accusations and counter-accusations. Aggression is being committed against Nicaragua. That aggression must end; mechanisms must be found for a solution of the situation within the Contadora framework, the negotiating process now under way, and in bilateral relations between the United States and Nicaragua. Nicaragua reiterates not only its will for peace but also its desire to continue making initiatives, to the United States and to Central American Governments, in an effort to prevent a further deterioration of the situation.

Only yesterday I met with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and suggested to him that, even though the Honduran Government had rejected the

(Mrs. Astorga Gadea, Nicaragua)

proposal that a United Nations fact-finding committee be sent to the border area between Honduras and Nicaragua, perhaps a commission could be sent to the bombed areas to corroborate the facts we have presented. That, I think, is the correct approach. Accusations must be supported by evidence: the burden of proof rests on the accuser, not on the accused.

I reiterate my Government's will for peace and for a negotiated solution with the United States of America and the other countries of the region, since, I repeat, the United States is the main factor in the present crisis in Central America.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Honduras.

Mr. MARTINEZ ORDOÑEZ (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish the words of the representative of Nicaragua were those of her Government. I am sure she is sincere, but the facts do not support her.

It was a matter of our national dignity that my country was unable at the time to accept the on-site presence of a United Nations commission: we could not accept that suggestion unless Nicaragua first agreed to withdraw the Sandinist troops that had invaded our national territory.

Let me clarify some of the statements made by the representative of Nicaragua. First, there are no United States bases in my country. The Palmerola Base to which she referred is under the sovereign administration, management and ownership of the Republic of Honduras. The United States advisers operating at that base do so within the framework of the friendly relations between the United States and my country; they are there at the invitation of my Government.

At the same time, I reiterate here today what we have already stressed in Contadora and in the General Assembly: that in the interest of peace in Central

(Mr. Martinez Ordoñez, Honduras)

America we would agree to the withdrawal of the last military adviser from our territory - even though that would be to the detriment of the training of our limited armed forces of 16,600 troops, including the police. However, Nicaragua must also withdraw its troops.

Secondly, I should like to tell the representative of Nicaragua that my country has not sought to obtain F-15 aircraft. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, in the General Assembly, said that Honduras had a large number of F-5s; that was not the truth. Honduras has in fact considered the possibility of purchasing that type of aircraft to replace obsolete equipment, but none more sophisticated than the F-5.

Furthermore, I should like to tell the Council that with great difficulty, owing to the existing lack of communication, I have obtained from my country documents captured in the clean-up operation that I announced. I now have them before me. I invite the representative of Nicaragua to take a look at them: photocopies of the military identification papers of Sandinist soldiers who were on Honduran territory; photocopies of military instructions dated some days before that attack. For the sake of clarity the information has also been transcribed. I would be very pleased to show them to her.

The PRESIDENT: There are no further names inscribed on my list. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue the consideration of the item on the agenda will be fixed in the course of consultations.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.