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INITIATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-third year

Letter dated 1 March 1988 from the Permanent Representative
of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to convey to you the communiqué issued by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Contadora and Support Groups at the end of the third ordinary meeting of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Concerted Political Action held at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 24 to 26 February 1988.

That communiqué refers to an evaluation of the Central American situation and the prospects which the peace process offers.

I request that this note and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Enrique PENALOSA
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Communiqué issued on 26 February 1988 at Cartagena de Indias,
Colombia by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the
Contadora and Support Groups

1. We again emphasize the enormous value of the contribution made to the peace process by the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua when they signed the procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America. Whether democracy, peace, development and self-determination can be achieved in the region depends on the maintenance and deepening of this political will, as does the removal of the obstacles which still hamper the genuine settlement of disputes.
2. This last acquires special relevance in view of the urgent need to make progress in the area of security in the Central American isthmus, since aggressive confrontations, the arms race, destabilizing actions and the violation of international law persist in the region.
3. Recent developments indicate a growing conviction that aid to irregular forces operating in the region must cease. We hope that this trend will strengthen and that all commitments will be fulfilled unilaterally, unconditionally and immediately, whether they are aimed at the consolidation of pluralist democracies in the region or they refer to aspects of security provided for in the Guatemala Procedure. This has been affirmed by the Central American Presidents themselves.
4. To attain those ends, and in accordance with the appeal made in San Salvador by the Central American Governments that the Security Commission should convene next March, the Contadora Group reaffirms its readiness to participate, in exercise of its mediating function and with the backing of the Support Group, in the continuation of the negotiations on outstanding security matters, as stated in section 7 of the Guatemala Procedure:
 - (a) Commitments as regards weapons and military forces;
 - (b) Commitments as regards military manoeuvres;
 - (c) Procedural and operational matters in relation to the rules or regulations of the Verification and Control Commission in the area of security;
 - (d) Measures for the disarmament of the irregular forces who are prepared to avail themselves of the amnesty decrees.
5. The success of such negotiations, as of the entire peace process, depends not only on the political will of the Central American Governments but also on the strict observance of the Guatemala Procedure by the countries with ties and interests in the region.

6. If there is to be progress in the peace process, there must be an impartial and objective verification procedure to monitor the fulfilment of commitments, and for this an appropriate framework of national and international machinery is essential.

Such verification is particularly important when it comes to matters relating to security and to political commitments capable of creating conditions designed to consolidate democracy in the region.

The report of the International Verification and Follow-up Commission has provided a clear and impartial analysis of the regional situation. In view of the commitments outstanding, there is a pressing need to agree on specific new arrangements concerning the verification process.

7. Economic and social inadequacies undermine the stability of political institutions in Central America and threaten the goal of independent and sovereign development. It is therefore imperative that the economic co-operation afforded to the region be expanded and that support be extended for the reconstruction of its economies. Accordingly, the Contadora and Support Groups call on the international community to participate in an international emergency co-operation programme for the Central American countries, as provided for in the Acapulco Commitment.

8. We reaffirm the legitimate appeal that the legal order be fully respected, as an essential basis for peaceful coexistence in the region. We are also convinced that the peaceful settlement of disputes in Central America is a legitimate aspiration of the Latin American countries. As our Presidents stated in the Acapulco Commitment, peace and stability in Central America are priorities for our Governments. At stake are not only the strengthening of democracy and the development in freedom of the Central American peoples, but also the national interests of our countries.

Accordingly, we, the Contadora and Support Groups, confirm our determination to continue to work actively, on the basis of consensus, for regional peace.
