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PEACE INITIATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-third year

Letter dated 25 May 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Honduras
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the note dated 13 May 1988 which the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras, Mr. Carlos López Contreras, sent to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, Mr. Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann.

I should be grateful if you would have the enclosed text circulated as a document of the forty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jorge Ramón HERNÁNDEZ ALCERRO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Note dated 13 May 1988 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs
of Honduras addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs
of Nicaragua

The Government of Honduras vigorously rejects as unfounded and tendentious the proposal of the Government of Nicaragua contained in letter No. 090/88, dated 9 May 1988, to which this note refers:

1. On the morning of Tuesday, 10 May, I learned of the above-mentioned note, before reading it in my office, from a morning newspaper published in San Pedro Sula in which the note appeared, an action which seems to indicate an unfortunate departure by your distinguished Government from the gentlemen's agreement not to conduct diplomacy in the press and to avoid the sensational in dealing with complaints or protests between our two Governments. This approach, which has allowed disagreements between our Governments to be handled in a businesslike manner, has, in my view, yielded good results by maintaining an attitude of calm among the public in our two countries.
2. I am once again obliged to state - although the Government of Nicaragua pretends, for the sake of its political interests, not to hear - that the Government of Honduras is not allowing "the contras to use Honduran territory as a springboard for aggression" against Nicaragua, let alone with the direct or indirect support of the Honduran armed forces.
3. When you assert that my Government "has chosen to deny publicly what the entire world knows to be an irrefutable fact", you are possibly thinking that "the entire world" is made up of the official spokesmen of the Sandinist Government and their mouthpieces outside Nicaragua. Honduras has consistently stated to world public opinion that if the Sandinist Government, which has the largest army in Central America and one of the largest in Latin America, is unable to prevent the "Nicaraguan resistance" from entering and leaving its territory and from operating virtually throughout Nicaragua, it is absurd and stupid to claim that this is the work of the small army of Honduras, which cannot be expected unconditionally to use its own forces to protect and defend the Nicaraguan Government.

Moreover, it is amazing that, while your distinguished Government is negotiating on an equal footing with the "Nicaraguan resistance" to delimit areas within Nicaragua where that armed group is to receive humanitarian assistance, you complain that Honduras is allowing its territory to be used as a sanctuary by the very same "Nicaraguan resistance".

The non-use of territory by insurgent forces is one of the commitments to take harmonious and complementary action within the framework of the delicate balance established in the Esquipulas II Agreement with the aim of ensuring the simultaneous compliance with the entire set of commitments designed to restore normalcy in the region.

4. Neither the people nor the Government of Honduras bears any responsibility whatsoever for the situation of internal conflict which racks Nicaragua. That internal conflict is the direct result of the socio-political and administrative system which the Sandinist Government has imposed upon the Nicaraguan people, and our country is only suffering the consequences of that conflict.

Honduras has, for humanitarian reasons, given refuge to thousands who have fled the violence which prevails in their homeland in search of peace and physical safety, and opposition groups have sought sanctuary in the frontier areas, causing destruction to the property and homes of the Hondurans, who have been forced to abandon their homes to seek tranquillity in the interior of the country. We have suffered armed incursions by the Sandinist People's Army, which has laid mines in the border area resulting in the loss of Honduran lives, the maiming of Honduran inhabitants, the destruction of houses and crops, and other serious damage, for which the Nicaraguan Government is directly responsible.

5. It is true that Honduran security officials have deported various Nicaraguan nationals, not because "they say that they are for peace and compliance with the Sapoa agreements", but because domestic conflicts between Nicaraguans must be settled in their own country. The Honduran authorities will continue to take the same approach - as they have in the past - and not only "now that the Sapoa agreement has been signed and that, for the first time, peace appears to be close at hand".

6. Such a prediction of peace is gratifying to Honduras, as it should be to all Central Americans, although it is clearly and forcefully contradicted by what President Ortega said in a speech on 10 May.

7. Referring to the peace negotiations and the "Nicaraguan resistance", the President, Commander Ortega said, inter alia, that "what is under discussion is how to find a way for these mercenary forces, which have already been defeated, to lay down their arms"; that "they should be grateful that we are not marching them to the guillotine or to a firing squad as they deserve"; that "the truth is that it is very hard for us to put up with them here in Nicaragua, that it will be necessary to order the entire city to be disinfected after that crowd leaves". He further remarked: "let them face facts, let them accept that they have already lost this fight, that they no longer have the power and they never will again"; and said that "if we have not reached an agreement by 30 May and the time-limit has not been extended, then all that is left for us to do is to launch a new military offensive, as we have already said, a bigger offensive against the mercenary forces", that "it will be like an operation 'Danto' multiplied by a million", expressions which clearly show the "profound involvement of your Government in the cause of terrorism, death and destruction against Nicaragua", and your open flouting of the solemn commitment to "take all necessary steps, in accordance with the constitution, to bring about a cease-fire and national reconciliation".

8. The current situation in Central America is a crisis of international dimensions. It is shaped by the internal conflicts in various countries, fanned by outside interference. Seven years of international negotiations with the participation of 13 countries and 2 international organizations, and the prospect

of several European countries playing a role in the settlement, are clear proof that the situation requires an international procedure for a regional settlement, such as Esquipulas II.

Esquipulas II is an instrument of international co-operation which the effort and solidarity of the Central American democracies have offered to the Government of Nicaragua specifically to enable it to resolve its internal conflict. One of the positive effects of Esquipulas II has been the cessation of lethal assistance from the United States to the Nicaraguan resistance.

I do not believe that you can have forgotten that President Napoleon Duarte of El Salvador expressly requested the Government of the United States to terminate military assistance to the "Nicaraguan resistance". Nevertheless, despite the numerous trips which President Daniel Ortega and you yourself have made to the Soviet Union and other countries of the communist bloc, we know of no express and formal request by Nicaragua that the Soviet bloc and the countries in the Americas that are subservient to it should terminate military and logistic assistance to armed groups operating in El Salvador and other Central American countries.

Lastly, you requested the Government of Honduras to provide "precise information as to where, when and how the Nicaraguan 'deportees' had arrived in the United States".

My Government believes that the efficient services which the Nicaraguan embassy in Tegucigalpa has at its disposal should be able to provide it with information on the departure from Honduras of the Nicaraguan citizens in question. As to information on their arrival, it can be requested in Managua from the embassy of the United States, a country with which the Sandinist Government maintains normal diplomatic relations.

9. I have been informed that copies of the note to which I am replying today will be transmitted to the President of the International Court of Justice, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States and the President of the United Nations Security Council, thereby continuing the practice of the distinguished Government of Nicaragua of involving in its internal political problems - not the regional crisis - organizations established under legal instruments which govern peaceful relations among States.

Carlos LOPEZ CONTRERAS
Minister for Foreign Affairs
