



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/44/210

5 April 1989

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Forty-fourth session
Item 34 of the preliminary list*

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL
PEACE AND SECURITY AND PEACE INITIATIVES

Letter dated 5 April 1989 from the Secretary-General addressed
to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that I have received a letter from His Excellency Mr. Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, referring to the Joint Declaration adopted by the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua on 14 February 1989, following their meeting at Costa del Sol, El Salvador. In that Declaration, the President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega Saavedra, announced a series of measures, including the amendment of the electoral laws and the laws regulating freedom of expression, information and public opinion, as well as the opening of an initial four-month period for the preparation, organization and mobilization of parties and, immediately after that period, a further six-month period of political activity at the end of which elections would be held for the offices of President, Vice-President and representatives to the National Assembly, municipalities and the Central American Parliament. The elections would be held no later than 25 February 1990, unless the Government and opposition political parties decided, by mutual consent, that they should be held at another date.

The Declaration also stated that international observers, in particular the representatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, would be invited to be present in all electoral districts during the two stages mentioned, in order to "verify that the electoral process is genuine".

* A/44/50/Rev.1.

On the basis of the foregoing, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua has requested me to establish a group of international observers whose mission would be to verify that the measures announced by the Government of Nicaragua are implemented and that the electoral process is genuine during every stage. The Government of Nicaragua would "accord special attention and importance to the reports and recommendations issued by the Group".

As you know, although the United Nations has participated in the observation and supervision of elections in various Non-Self-Governing Territories or in the context of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), it has not been the practice to do so in respect of independent States. Indeed, on a number of occasions over the years, we have declined invitations from Member States to that effect.

However, in this specific case, the request involves special factors which should be taken into account. This is, indeed, not a request by a single Member State, but one which has the support of the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, as illustrated by the Joint Declaration which they adopted in El Salvador on 14 February 1989. The request therefore clearly belongs in the context of the Central American peace efforts deriving from the Guatemala procedures of 7 August 1987. The General Assembly, in its resolution 43/24 of 15 November 1988, requested me "to afford the fullest possible support to the Central American Governments in their efforts to achieve peace, especially by granting the assistance requested ... for the strengthening and effective functioning of the essential verification machinery". Finally, it would not simply be a matter of being present at the time of the elections, but of verifying "that the ... process is genuine" in all electoral districts and throughout the 10-month duration of that process.

Because of these special factors, we should give the most careful attention to the request of the Government of Nicaragua, in the knowledge that, if the United Nations were to agree to meet that request, there would be no effect on established practice, nor would a precedent be set for possible further requests.

It is true that I informed the General Assembly, when it considered resolution 43/24, that I did not foresee any financial implications for the time being. Obviously, acceptance by the United Nations of this task, if it is to be carried out as seriously and as exhaustively as would be required, would entail unanticipated expenditure. For this reason, I wish to inform you that, if a decision is taken to meet the request of the Government of Nicaragua, I would be obliged to enter into financial commitments in accordance with the authority entrusted to me under General Assembly resolution 42/227, and would report to the Assembly accordingly at its forty-fourth session.

(Signed) Javier PEREZ DE CUELLAR
