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

Letter dated 1 October 1984 from the Permanent Representative  
of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you, as an annex to this letter, the text of the joint communiqué of the ministerial meeting held in San José, Costa Rica, on 28 and 29 September 1984, attended by the Ministers of the European Community and its Member States, Portugal and Spain, the States of Central America and the States of the Contadora Group.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 25.

(Signed) Fernando ZUMBADO  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE  
MINISTERIAL MEETING OF  
SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

1. A Conference of Foreign Ministers was held in the city of San Jose, Costa Rica, on 28/29 September 1984, between the European Community and its Member States, Portugal and Spain, the States of Central America and the Contadora States.

2. The Conference was attended by :

For the European Community

H.E. Mr. Peter Barry, T.D.  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland  
President of the Council

H.E. Mr. Giulio Andreotti  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy

H.E. Mr. Robert Goebbels  
State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg

H.E. Mr. Hans Van Den Broek  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

H.E. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs  
of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

H.E. Mr. Leo Tindemans  
Minister of External Relations of Belgium

H.E. Mr. Uffe Ellemann-Jensen  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

H.E. Mr. Hans-Dietrich Genscher  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany

H.E. Mr. Yannis Haralambopoulos  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece

H.E. Mr. Claude Cheysson  
Minister of External Relations of France

H.E. Mr. Edgard Pisani  
Member of the Commission of the European Communities

For Portugal

H.E. Mr. Jaime Gama  
Minister of External Relations

For Spain

H.E. Mr. Fernando Morán López  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

For Central America

H.E. Mr. Fernando Andrade Díaz-Durán  
Minister of External Relations of Guatemala

H.E. Mr. Jorge E. Tenorio  
Minister of External Relations of El Salvador

H.E. Mr. Egardo Paz Barnica  
Minister of External Relations of Honduras

H.E. Mr. Miguel D'Escoto Brockman  
Minister of the Exterior of Nicaragua

H.E. Mr. Carlos José Gutiérrez Gutiérrez  
Minister of External Relations and Religion of Costa Rica

For the Contadora Group

H.E. Mr. Augusto Ramírez Ocampo  
Minister of External Relations of Colombia

H.E. Mr. Bernardo Sepúlveda Amor  
State Secretary of External Relations of Mexico

H.E. Mr. Oydan Ortega-Durán  
Minister of External Relations of Panama

H.E. Mr. Isidro Morales Paúl  
Minister of External Relations of Venezuela

Observer for the Permanent Secretariat of the Secretariat of  
the General Treaty for the Economic Integration of Central  
America

Mr. Rodolfo Trejos Donaldson

3. Inspired by a consciousness of their shared cultural heritage and of their common attachment to the ideals and values enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the participating countries have inaugurated through this Conference a new structure of political and economic dialogue between Europe and Central America. They are convinced that this dialogue, and the increased practical cooperation that it will engender, will reinforce the efforts of the countries of Central America themselves, with the support of the Contadora States, to bring an end to violence and instability in Central America and to promote social justice, economic development and respect for human rights and democratic liberties in that region.

4. A comprehensive discussion took place between the Ministers of the Ten Member States of the European Community and those of the Central American Countries on the political, economic and cultural relations between them and agreements were reached on the future development of those relations. They have agreed that further meetings in this dialogue should take place at regular intervals. The level of such meetings, whether at ministerial or official level, will be determined in the light of circumstances. The Foreign Ministers of Spain and Portugal associated themselves with these agreements.

5. The Foreign Ministers exchanged views on current regional and international problems and developments, and in particular the situation in Central America. They expressed their preoccupation at the conditions and acts which gravely disturb the peace and security of the Central American region, and agreed on the necessity for the Governments of the area to intensify negotiations which lead to mutual understanding and permanent stability.

6. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the objectives of peace, democracy, security and economic and social development, and political stability in Central America and were united in the view that the problems of that region cannot be solved by armed force, but only by political solutions springing from the region itself. In this conviction they affirmed their support for the pacification measures which are being developed in the Contadora process. They expressed their conviction that this process represents a genuinely regional initiative and the best opportunity to achieve a solution to the crisis through political undertaking aimed at the achievement of the aims set out in the "document of objectives" approved by all the Governments of the region on 9 September 1983. They noted with satisfaction the progress achieved so far towards such a solution, and that the revised draft Contadora Act for Peace and Cooperation in Central America is a fundamental stage in the negotiating process for the attainment of peace in the region. They called on the States concerned to continue to make every effort to bring the Contadora process rapidly to final fruition through the signature of a comprehensive agreement which would bring peace to the region. They were agreed on the necessity for a practical commitment to the implementation of any such agreement by all the states in the region and all other countries which have interests there, and on the necessity for the verification and control of that implementation.

7. The European Countries expressed their willingness to support, within their capabilities and if requested, the efforts of those states to which it falls to implement the provisions of any agreement.

8. The Ministers discussed the international economic situation and, in particular, economic and trade relations and cooperation between the European Community and Central America.

9. The Ministers agreed that the current international economic situation should be regarded as particularly difficult. In this context, they underlined the problems concerning the external indebtedness of the developing countries and the wider economic, trade and social implications of continued indebtedness for those countries. Within this framework, the Central American Ministers stressed that in present circumstances debt servicing by the countries of Central America is even more burdensome given increased interest rates and deteriorating prices for those products which make up the bulk of their exports. The Community Ministers and those of Portugal and Spain declared themselves ready to assist the countries of Central America, in the appropriate framework, in the pursuit of policies aimed at solving these problems.

10. The Ministers expressed their determination to cooperate in the appropriate international fora with a view to improve the present international economic situation.

11. An effective manner of contributing to the reduction of political tension in Central America would be to support the actions intended to preserve the degree of economic interdependence existing between the countries of the region.

The Community Ministers recognized that the Central American region has a definite development potential through the process of integration and reaffirmed their willingness to support this through the further development of relations between the two regions.

In this connection, the Ministers looked forward to the accession of Portugal and Spain to the European Community and welcomed the contribution between the two regions.

12. The European Ministers and those of the Central American isthmus declared themselves satisfied with the results already produced by their relations and agreed on the need to broaden and deepen these relations. They concentrated more particularly on the areas in which cooperation with the European Community has proved useful for the economic development of the group of Central American countries and where mutual cooperation should be strengthened (specific development projects, particularly agricultural and rural projects with a regional basis, regional integration, trade promotion and generalized preferences).

13. The European and Central American Ministers, in looking ahead to the future, in the perspective of the development of mutual cooperation, recognized the existence of solid ground for cooperation activities, on the basis of equity, respect and mutual benefit, notably along the lines of the following paragraphs.

14. The Community and the group of Central American Countries recognized the need to develop, extend and diversify their mutual trade to the fullest possible extent. In this connection the Ministers considered that the generalized system of preferences could be an appropriate means to encourage the growth of foreign trade and industrialization of the countries concerned. They agreed that the use of the system should be simplified and its benefits be extended.

The Community reaffirmed the importance it attaches to the fundamental objectives of the generalized preferences system and announced its intention, where the development and the application of the system is concerned, of taking into account the interest that will be shown by the Central American countries.

15. Taking account of the importance of economic development for the countries of the Central American region, the Community will do everything possible, within the context of its present and future programmes in support of developing countries, towards the development of the region. These actions should be identified by common agreement, based on the priorities and objectives of the region and should be multilateral in character. The Community declared itself willing to exploit to the full the institutional infrastructure existing in the region.

In addition to aid given on a bilateral basis by Member States of the Community to the countries of the region, the Community will provide technical and financial assistance to Central America, in particular for agricultural, agro-industrial and rural projects. With the aim of promoting regional economic integration and the development of intra-regional trade, it is the intention of the Community to give priority assistance to projects of a regional nature and to help the countries of Central America and their regional institutions through sharing with them the Community's specific experience acquired in matters of integration.

For its part, the group of Central American countries declared itself ready to present specific projects in priority fields, which take into account, inter alia, social welfare aspects.

By way of illustration, mention was made, with regard to projects, of the demands which were presented jointly by the countries of Central America to the international financial community in Brussels in September 1983.

The Central American Ministers emphasized the importance they attach to the reactivation of production and particularly of the production of goods traded within the Central American isthmus. For the purpose of the latter, financial support is required for the countries of the Central American isthmus, preferably through the Banco Centro-americano de Integración Económica (CABEI), so that that support will contribute to the reactivation of the industrial and agricultural sectors of the region.

It is the intention of the Community and of its Member States to give priority to the development of their assistance to regionally-oriented projects and to those of a social nature such as health programmes and those intended to relieve the situation of those who for one reason or another have been compelled to abandon their traditional homes.

16. The Ministers on the two sides considered that economic cooperation represented an area of interest for future relations between the Community and the group of Central American countries. In this context, they mentioned specifically the promotion of business contacts between the two regional groupings, cooperation between public and private national financing instruments in the two regions, as well as scientific, technical and basic training, especially in research fields. The Community Ministers took note of the possibility offered by the CABEI Board of Governors to open its membership to countries outside the region.

In view of the important role assumed by foreign investment in the economic development of Central American countries, the Ministers agreed that the promotion and protection of European investments in Central America are in their mutual interest. In this connection, they stressed the need for an improved climate for investments in the region by appropriate measures of encouraging private investments.

17. The Ministers of the European Community and those of Central America acknowledged the interest in strengthening and giving institutional form to their mutual relations. Acknowledging the importance of strengthening relations, they declared themselves ready to start discussions as soon as possible with a view to negotiating an inter-regional framework cooperation agreement. On the Community side, the agreement would be negotiated in accordance with its established procedures. Both sides considered that the conclusion of an agreement of this type would confirm the political will of both regions to extend and develop their relations and that it would also help to reinforce relations between the Community and Latin America as a whole.

18. The Central American Ministers expressed the view that the appropriate intergovernmental forum for approving the main lines of a regional position as a mechanism for negotiation and follow-up in the economic sphere is the Central American Economic Council, with the participation of a representative from the Government of Panama.

The negotiating body, under the aegis of the Central American Economic Council, will be an ad hoc group composed of delegates from every Government. This body will act in coordination with the group of heads of mission of the countries of the Central American isthmus (GRUCA), with headquarters in Brussels. The SIECA will support the mechanism for negotiation and follow-up and will seek the collaboration of other institutions connected with Central American integration and other regional and international bodies in accordance with the circumstances.

19. The Ministers expressed their conviction that this meeting constitutes a first step in a process which will effectively increase existing cooperation between Central America and Europe.

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