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Letter dated 15 February 1985 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Nicaragua to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to write to you for the purpose of conveying to you the text of an official communiqué issued by the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua in connection with the suspension of the meeting of the Contadora Group scheduled for 14 and 15 February of this year.

"The Government of Nicaragua herewith announces to its people and the international community that the Contadora negotiating process, sponsored by the Governments of Mexico, Colombia, Panama and Venezuela for the noble purpose of achieving peace and security for the Central American countries through solemn international commitments and the strictest compliance with the principles of non-intervention, self-determination of peoples and refraining from the threat or use of force in relations between States, is at present seriously jeopardized by the irresponsible and militaristic policy of the Government of the United States, which, rejecting dialogue and negotiation, is attempting to impose its will through military force.

"The world as a whole has had an opportunity to observe throughout the difficult and protracted Contadora process the attitude of Nicaragua and the positive contributions made by the Nicaraguan Government in order to strengthen that process and ensure its successful conclusion.

"As soon as the Contadora Declaration of 9 January 1983, by which the Contadora Group was constituted, had been issued, Nicaragua offered the Group its unqualified support and requested the representatives of the 88 countries assembled in Managua on the occasion of the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting concerning Latin America and the Caribbean of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to back that Declaration. Such backing manifested itself in the historic final communiqué of the meeting, which provided the Contadora process with unprecedented international support barely five days after the Declaration had been issued.

"In that same year, Nicaragua, as part of its consistent endeavour to strengthen the peace initiative of the Contadora Group, introduced a draft resolution before the United Nations Security Council on 19 May 1983. That effort resulted in resolution 530 (1983), in which the Security Council:

- '1. Reaffirms the right of Nicaragua and of all the other countries of the area to live in peace and security, free from outside interference;
- '2. Commends the efforts of the Contadora Group and urges the pursuit of those efforts;
- '3. Appeals urgently to the interested States to co-operate fully with the Contadora Group, through a frank and constructive dialogue, so as to resolve their differences;
- '4. Urges the Contadora Group to spare no effort to find solutions to the problems of the region and to keep the Security Council informed of the results of these efforts;
- '5. Requests the Secretary-General to keep the Council informed of the development of the situation and of the implementation of the present resolution.'

"Consistent with its desire for peace, its demonstrated support for the Contadora process and its compliance with Security Council resolution 530 (1983), Nicaragua has made every effort to ensure that the Contadora Group will achieve the objective sought, in all justice, by the Nicaraguan people, the Central American peoples and the international community as a whole. Accordingly, on 15 October 1983, Nicaragua formally submitted to the Contadora Group its proposal for a legal basis for guaranteeing the peace and security of the States of Central America, which consisted of four draft agreements based on the fundamental principles enshrined in international law which must regulate relations between States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and in the spirit of the Document of Objectives of the Fourth Joint Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Contadora Group and of the Central American countries. Subsequently, at the Joint Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Contadora Group and of the Central American countries, held at Washington on 14 November 1983, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Contadora Group stated that they were having difficulty in making headway because, despite the Group's repeated requests for suggestions from all the Central American Ministries of Foreign Affairs concerning ways of putting into effect what had been agreed in the Document of Objectives through compromises, only Nicaragua had submitted proposals, and it was difficult for the Group to reconcile the positions of five countries when only one of the countries was making proposals and the other four were remaining silent. In the light of those exigencies, the Central American countries decided to set 1 December as the deadline for the submission of specific and detailed proposals. Despite this decision, Nicaragua was again the only country to fulfil its obligations and it submitted proposals which supplemented those made on 15 October, thereby covering the whole of the Document of Objectives. A perusal of all those documents will reveal to the entire world how serious Nicaragua is.

"Because of the lack of performance and co-operation in the Contadora endeavour on the part of other Central American countries, the Contadora Group

proposed a new working method which, to quote the words of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Contadora Group, after 'an intense process of consultations and a broad exchange of views with all the Central American Governments' culminated in the submission on 7 September 1984 of a new version of the Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America. That document, according to the Contadora Group itself, reflects 'the observations and comments which the five Central American Governments have put forward concerning the draft Act'. Accordingly, at the meeting on 6 and 7 September last year, the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group said that the work of the Commissions and the Technical Group was considered to be concluded, and it stated in the letter of transmittal of the Act that 'the Central American Governments should now display the political will needed to give legal force to the commitments formulated during this process. The signing of the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America should provide the basis for security and coexistence governed by mutual respect which is essential for guaranteeing the political and economic stability so desired by the peoples of the area'.

"In the aforementioned letter of transmittal, the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group declared: 'In the light of the persistent threat to peace, we believe that the Governments of the region must expedite the process of assuming the legal commitments contained in the Contadora Act'.

"After a careful study of the proposal submitted officially by the Contadora Group on 7 September and in response to the Group's urgent appeal to proceed with the signing of the Act at the earliest possible date, Nicaragua, despite the sacrifice which it represented to our Government to accept all the points in that instrument, taking into account the political, economic and military aggression waged by the United States against Nicaragua - which is known the world over as the 'covert war' - on 21 September 1984 communicated to the Presidents of the countries forming the Contadora Group its decision to sign immediately and without any modification the proposed Act of 7 September, agreeing fully with the Contadora Foreign Ministers, who stated in their letter of transmittal that 'negotiating implies yielding some ground in order to secure the ultimate objective which is considered essential'. For Nicaragua this ultimate, essential objective is peace in the Central American region, peace which our peoples demand as an indispensable condition for undertaking the tasks of our political, social and economic development. For the sake of this peace, Nicaragua chose not to put forward even the amendments it could have suggested in accordance with what had been stated by the Foreign Ministers, in the belief that such a step could be used to hamper the signing of the Act through futile discussions which would in no way affect the substance of the proposed instrument, since according to the Contadora Foreign Ministers the substance of their proposal was no longer negotiable.

"The announcement that Nicaragua had decided to sign the Act produced an immediate and abrupt reaction from the Government of the United States, which forced the Governments of Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica to withdraw their initial acceptance of and support for the Act. This fact was amply demonstrated with the publication of an official document of the United States

ational Security Council, dated 30 October 1984, the text of which asserts that 'following intensive U.S. consultations with El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica, the Central American [sic] submitted a counterdraft to the Contadora states on Oct. 20, 1984'. The text goes on to state that the counterdraft reflects many of the concerns of the United States, and that it 'shifts concern within Contadora to a document broadly consistent with U.S. interests'. This affirmation enables the United States Government, in the same document, to claim victory, declaring that 'we have effectively blocked Contadora Group efforts to impose ... a revised Contadora Act'. In due course Nicaragua indicated that the interventionist policy of the United States had undermined the Contadora process in that it not only had blocked the possibility of signing the Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America but also constituted a blow from which, in our view, the Contadora negotiation process would find it difficult to recover. In keeping with its policy of blocking the Contadora process, the Government of the United States has had recourse to the Costa Rican news media, which it has continued to use in order to foment hostility in the region and to denigrate the Contadora process in order, through a campaign which by its virulence could have been orchestrated only by the Central Intelligence Agency, to put pressure on the Government of Costa Rica to make its future participation in the Contadora process conditional upon acceptance by Nicaragua of arbitrary demands, with a view to rectifying a non-existent violation of the right of asylum without using the settlement machinery provided for.

"It is therefore ironic that Costa Rica, a country which has become noted for its most flagrant and systematic violation of the norms and principles of the right of asylum, should seek to justify its failure to continue the Contadora process, adducing arguments which lack the slightest foundation. There is no doubt that the repeated proof of the desire of Nicaragua to arrive at agreements for a peaceful solution within the Contadora framework have induced the Government of Costa Rica to conclude that Nicaragua, having been attacked by the United States, could be the subject of any kind of pressure and blackmail, since it is - as senior officials of the Government of Costa Rica have indicated - the country most interested in signing a peace agreement within the Contadora framework.

"This latest manoeuvre, which has forced suspension of the meeting convened by the Contadora Group for 14 and 15 February, to which Nicaragua had sent a delegation, testifies to the fact that the Government of the United States not only succeeded in effectively blocking the Contadora process but also completely negated the viability of a process which requires that all the countries involved should be able to take their own decisions on the basis of their national interests, without intervention or diktat from third States.

"Such an attitude on the part of the United States Government is all the more serious, coming as it does after that Government's unilateral decision to break off indefinitely the bilateral talks in Manzanillo, and its disavowal of the competence of the International Court of Justice in the request submitted by Nicaragua, withdrawing, in an unprecedented step, half-way through the hearing of the case filed by Nicaragua.

"It is obvious that what the United States Government is attempting to achieve by means of its interventionist policy, which it conceals by blackmailing several Central American Governments involved in the negotiation process, is to confront Nicaragua through these Governments, thus seeking to evade its direct responsibility for the breakdown of a negotiation process which it would consider viable only in the event that the negotiations were to respond fully to the requirements of its policy of violating the international legal order and the United Nations Charter.

"These facts make it clear that the only means of averting a breakdown or standstill in the Contadora process is for the United States Government to agree to resume as soon as possible the bilateral dialogue with Nicaragua in Manzanillo, and to comply with the measures of protection ordered by the International Court of Justice, in order to provide the basis for negotiations which would permit normalization of relations among all our countries. Only by attaining this objective will the Central American countries be able to move forward without any United States interference in or pressure on the Contadora process, and thus lay a foundation for security and coexistence based on mutual respect, a situation that is indispensable for ensuring the peace and the political and economic stability so desired by the peoples of Central America.

"Nicaragua reiterates its support for the Contadora process and consequently reaffirms its desire to continue to participate in that process, for the sake of which it will continue to make all the necessary efforts to achieve the resumption by the United States of the bilateral talks in Manzanillo, a task which is fully supported by Contadora and the entire international community.

"Nicaragua also reiterates its full and unswerving attachment to the norms of international coexistence and peaceful settlement of disputes enshrined in the United Nations Charter and its respect for the International Court of Justice."

I should be grateful if you would have this communication circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Julio ICAZA GALLARD
Ambassador
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
