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Forty-fourth yearTHE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA:  
THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE  
AND SECURITY AND PEACE INITIATIVESReport by the Secretary-General

1. This report has been prepared pursuant to Security Council resolution 637 (1989) of 27 July 1989 and General Assembly resolution 44/10 of 24 October 1989.
2. In the preamble to resolution 44/10, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, took note with special satisfaction of the agreements reached by the Central American Presidents at Tela, Honduras, on 7 August 1989 (A/44/451-S/20778), comprising the Tela Declaration, the Joint Plan for the demobilization, repatriation or voluntary relocation in Nicaragua or third countries of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance and their families, as well as assistance for the demobilization of all those involved in armed actions in the countries of the region, when such persons voluntarily request it, and the agreement signed by Honduras and Nicaragua. It also took note of the action taken by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States in support of the agreements of the Central American Presidents, in particular those relating to the establishment and functioning of the International Verification and Follow-Up Commission (CIAV) entrusted with the implementation of the Joint Plan, and recognized the importance of the action taken by me for the establishment of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) in order to set in motion on-site verification machinery in fulfilment of the security commitments emanating from the Esquipulas II Agreements (A/42/521-S/91085, annex) and subsequent declarations. Lastly, it took note of the importance attached to the function of international verification of the electoral processes in the region and my positive response to the invitation from the Government of Nicaragua to establish, within the context of the Central American peace process, a group of observers to verify each and every stage of the electoral process in Nicaragua, and welcomed with interest the agreement signed on 15 September 1989 at Mexico City by the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) to continue the process of dialogue in an effort to reach an understanding through

political agreements that would put an end to the armed conflict by political means in the shortest possible time, as well as to encourage the democratization of the country and to reunify Salvadorian society, and my decision to accept the invitation extended by the parties for the United Nations to participate as a witness in the meeting held at San José from 16 to 18 October 1989.

3. In the operative part of the resolution, the General Assembly commended the desire for peace expressed by the Central American Presidents in the agreement on the "Procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America", signed on 7 August 1987 at Guatemala City at the Esquipulas II summit meeting (A/42/521-S/19085, annex), and in subsequent declarations and agreements, and expressed its strongest support for those agreements; exhorted the Governments to continue their efforts to achieve a firm and lasting peace in Central America and expressed its fervent hopes for the effective implementation of the agreements signed at Tela, Honduras, on 7 August 1989; appealed to the countries which are outside the region but have links with it and interests in it to facilitate the implementation of the agreements concluded by the Central American Presidents and to refrain from any action which might impede such implementation; pledged me its full support in the performance of the functions entrusted to me, at the Tela summit meeting, as a member of CIAV, together with the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and requested me to continue to afford the fullest possible support to the Governments of the region in their efforts to achieve peace, especially by taking the measures necessary for the development and effective functioning of the verification machinery in respect of security, through ONUCA; supported my agreement with the Government of Nicaragua concerning the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission to verify the electoral process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN) (see A/44/375) and requested me to report to it periodically on the Mission's progress; and urged the international community and international organizations to increase their technical, economic and financial co-operation with the Central American countries for the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America (A/42/949, annex).

4. In my last report, dated 9 October 1989 (A/44/344/Add.1-S/20699/Add.1), I described the steps which I and the Secretary General of the Organization of American States had taken to establish CIAV, as well as its timetable, the conditions necessary for its smooth operation and the activities so far carried out.

5. In the past two months CIAV, fulfilling the complex responsibilities entrusted to it under the Joint Plan adopted at Tela, continued to hold frequent consultations with the authorities of the Governments of Nicaragua, Honduras, other Central American countries and the United States of America, as well as with representatives of the Nicaraguan resistance. In addition to such contacts, in New York, Washington, Managua and Tegucigalpa, mention should be made of a visit to camps of the Nicaraguan resistance at Yamales, Honduras, in mid-October. CIAV was also in contact with the the Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast Indigenous Movement.

6. In the course of such talks, CIAV put forward a number of ideas, concerning, inter alia: the need to create a climate of trust in Nicaragua so as encourage a voluntary approach on the part of the Nicaraguan resistance with regard to repatriation; the usefulness of establishing direct contact between the Government of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan resistance; the advisability of visits by CIAV representatives to resistance camps in order to publicize the scope and benefits of the Joint Plan and learn about the existing human and material resources, and in that connection, the need to take a census of the members of the resistance and their relatives; the sending of a survey mission to the area by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the purpose of assessing the personnel and equipment requirements for the collection and custody of arms and other military matériel of the resistance. Towards the end of October, in view of persisting differences between the Government of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan resistance relating to the implementation of the Joint Plan, CIAV proposed that the two parties should hold direct and confidential talks in its presence, according to the provisions of the Joint Plan adopted at Tela.

7. At the same time, there was a breach of the cease-fire in Nicaragua. After denouncing attacks by forces of the Nicaraguan resistance in the interior of the country and a massive infiltration by resistance troops across the border, the Government of Nicaragua announced, with effect from 1 November, its decision not to extend the unilateral declaration of the cease-fire which it had been renewing on a monthly basis since March 1988. In the days preceding the suspension of the cease-fire, I expressed, among other things, my concern, and pointed out that the deterioration of the situation could not fail to have an adverse effect on the Central American peace process as a whole. After various initiatives, a series of meetings between delegations of the Government of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan resistance were held under the auspices of CIAV; they were attended by a representative of the Government of Honduras, in the capacity of an observer, and by Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, in the capacity of a witness. The meetings were held on 9 and 10 November at United Nations Headquarters in New York, and from 13 to 21 November at the headquarters of the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C.

8. In the report submitted on 5 December to the five Central American Presidents pursuant to the Joint Plan, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States and I were obliged to place on record, much to our regret, that for reasons beyond our control, it had not been possible for us to set in motion the Joint Plan formulaed at Tela. It should be pointed out, however, that preliminary steps have been taken to lay the foundation for subsequent implementation of the Plan, and that it would therefore be useful to persevere. In that connection, attention should be drawn to the measures taken to date in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and the Organization of American States, with a view to preparing a detailed scheme for implementation of the Joint Plan and to permitting us, at the proper time, to appeal to the international community for financial support.

9. As announced in my previous report, on 11 October 1989 I submitted a report to the Security Council (S/20895) recommending the establishment of ONUCA to verify in an impartial manner the fulfilment of the security commitments set forth in sections 5 and 6 of the Guatemala Procedures (A/42/521-S/19085, annex), namely, termination of aid to irregular forces and insurrectionist movements operating in the region, and non-use of territory for attacks on other States. As will be recalled, the establishment of such a mechanism had been requested by the five Central American Presidents under the agreement between the Presidents of Honduras and Nicaragua signed at Tela, Honduras (A/44/451-S/20778, annex II). My proposal to the Council took into account the results and recommendations of the survey mission which I sent to the five countries of the region from 3 to 23 September 1989, and gave specific details regarding the functions that ONUCA was to fulfil, as well as its modus operandi, the personnel required and the phases of its deployment.

10. The Security Council approved the establishment of ONUCA in its resolution 644 (1989) of 7 November 1989 for an initial renewable period of six months and requested me to take the necessary steps to that effect. Following consultations with the parties and with the consent of the Security Council, I proceeded to request military observers from Canada, Colombia, Ireland, Spain and Venezuela; logistics units from Canada and Venezuela and civilian elements from the Federal Republic of Germany (S/20979 and S/20980). Following the same procedure, I appointed Major-General Agustín Quesada Gómez of Spain as Chief Military Observer of ONUCA (S/20981 and S/20982). ONUCA began the deployment of phase I on 2 December 1989 with the departure for Tegucigalpa of an advance contingent composed of approximately 30 officials, as well as civilian support personnel, led by the Chief Military Observer. The team is currently making visits to the five countries of the region with a view to establishing liaison offices in the respective capitals and making the necessary preparations for the subsequent establishment of other verification centres.

11. The General Assembly approved the financing of ONUCA in its resolution 44/44 of 7 December 1989.

12. Since the submission of my last report, ONUVEN has submitted two reports dated 17 October 1989 (A/44/642 and Corr.1) and 7 December 1989 (A/44/834), respectively. The first covers the period from the establishment of the mission up to the beginning of October and describes, inter alia, the functions of the mission, the establishment of the electoral authority, the organization of the political parties and the initiation of the politico-electoral activity. The second covers the period between the months of October and November and includes, inter alia, the voter registration process and the preparation of the electoral rolls, the functioning of the electoral authority and the progress of the electoral campaign and the use of the mass media, as well as the complaints and allegations received by the mission. Twenty-two international observers have joined the staff of ONUVEN already in situ, which has made it possible to establish offices in practically all parts of the country to cover the period of the electoral campaign which began on 4 December.

13. My Personal Representative for the Verification of Elections in Nicaragua visited that country from 18 to 23 October and informed me personally of his assessment of the electoral situation in the country and the functioning of ONUVEN. From the reports that I have received to date, I consider that, in spite of the interruption of the cease-fire, the electoral process in Nicaragua is proceeding in a generally positive way. At the present time, my main reason for concern is the outbreaks of violence that have occurred in the first days of the electoral campaign. I hope that these are isolated incidents and that political passions will remain under control so as to make it possible for the campaign to develop peacefully, thus contributing to the process of democratic construction and national reconciliation to which the country aspires. I am convinced that the holding of honest elections, whose results are respected by all, is the key to the normalization of the situation in this country.

14. I have followed with deep concern the alarming deterioration of the situation in El Salvador. I consider it urgent that substantive conversations be reinitiated between the Government and FMLN with a view to arrival at a just and lasting peace in this tormented country, and I am prepared to make every effort to contribute to that end.

15. At the extraordinary meeting held in San Isidro de Coronado, Costa Rica, from 10 to 12 December, the Central American Presidents signed a declaration (A/44/872-S/21019 and annex) which reinforced the role of the United Nations in the region. The Presidents requested me to ensure the acceleration of the full deployment and the functioning of ONUCA and the expansion of the mandate of ONUCA to include verification of any cessation of hostilities and demobilization of irregular forces that may be agreed upon in the regions. The Presidents also requested me to take the necessary steps for the reinitiation of the dialogue between the Government of El Salvador and FMLN and thereby contribute to its successful development. The Presidents requested me also to make the necessary connections to involve States with interests in the region more directly in the peace effort, within the framework of the Esquipulas II Agreements and subsequent declarations. I am taking the necessary steps to carry out these tasks, which are an indication of the confidence which they have placed in the United Nations. These tasks correspond to the advisability of utilizing already existing international verification mechanisms, particularly ONUCA, in order to underpin the peace process in the region and the need to find procedures or mechanisms for incorporating in it those States which, because of their special connections in the region, have the capacity to promote or frustrate that process. I hope that the decisions adopted by the Central American Presidents will definitively guide the peace process in Central America along the right lines and that the cycle of great expectations and deep disappointments that have characterized it will finally be broken.

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