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UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER GROUP IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The purpose of the present report is to seek from the Security Council its urgent approval, on a contingency basis, of an enlargement of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) and the addition of armed personnel to its strength in order to enable it to play a part in the voluntary demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance.
2. The members of the Security Council will recall that on 7 August 1989 the five Central American Presidents signed, at Tela, Honduras, a joint plan which provided, inter alia, for the voluntary demobilization, repatriation or relocation of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance and their families (S/20778, annex I). On 28 August 1989, I addressed to the President of the Security Council a letter (S/20856) concerning the requests made of the United Nations by the five Presidents in that regard. In that letter I pointed out, in particular, that the tasks of collecting the weapons, matériel and military equipment of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance would need to be entrusted to military units equipped with defensive weapons. The Council's approval of the points made in my letter was conveyed in the President's letter of 20 September 1989 (S/20857).
3. It will further be recalled that in the Declaration signed at San Isidro de Coronado, Costa Rica, on 12 December 1989 (S/21019, annex), the five Presidents requested, inter alia, that the mandate of ONUCA should be expanded in connection with any demobilization of irregular forces that might be agreed in the region.
4. Shortly after the elections that took place in Nicaragua on 25 February 1990, I was asked by the Nicaraguan Government and by the Nicaraguan Opposition National Union (UNO) to consult with them about the manner in which ONUCA could assist with regard to the transition process in Nicaragua. Consultations accordingly began at Managua on 1 March, with the United Nations side being represented by the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs and the Chief Military Observer of ONUCA. Consultations have since continued intensively, with a leading role being played by Mr. Iqbal Riza, until recently Chief of the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVE), and now Alternate Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central American peace process.

5. In the course of these consultations, a broad level of agreement has been reached on the modalities set out in paragraph 6 below. It is recognized by all concerned that the demobilization will have to be voluntary.

6. The modalities on which agreement has been reached in principle in the consultations at Managua, subject of course to the approval of the Security Council, are as follows:

(a) ONUCA will be responsible for implementing the military aspects of the implementation of the Tela accord, i.e., for taking delivery of the weapons, matériel and military equipment, including military uniforms, of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance; the International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV), set up pursuant to the Tela accord, will be responsible for implementation of the civilian aspects, i.e., for the repatriation, or relocation elsewhere, of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance, for their resettlement and for the subsequent monitoring of their welfare, including material assistance;

(b) Members of the Nicaraguan resistance who are in Honduras at the time of demobilization will be demobilized at the existing camps of the resistance in that country, where they will hand over their weapons, matériel and military equipment, including military uniforms, to ONUCA; as soon as each member of the resistance has handed over his or her weapons, etc., he or she will become the responsibility of CIAV, which will arrange for his or her repatriation and resettlement without delay;

(c) As regards members of the Nicaraguan resistance who are in Nicaragua at the time of demobilization, ONUCA will establish, and ensure the security of, temporary assembly points both in Nicaragua itself and at certain locations in Costa Rica close to that country's border with Nicaragua. The locations of the temporary assembly points will be broadcast by all possible means, including the Nicaraguan resistance's own communications, and members of the Nicaraguan resistance will be told to report to the nearest assembly point where ONUCA will take delivery of their weapons, matériel and military equipment, including military uniforms; thereafter they will become the responsibility of CIAV, which will arrange for their repatriation and resettlement without delay;

(d) ONUCA will ensure the security of the temporary assembly points in Nicaragua as long as demobilized members of the Nicaraguan resistance remain at them awaiting resettlement;

(e) The weapons, matériel and military equipment, including military uniforms, handed over to ONUCA by the members of the Nicaraguan resistance will be held in safe custody by ONUCA until their final disposal is decided upon by the five Central American Presidents, in accordance with the Tela accord. ONUCA would, however, destroy on the spot any items which are considered to be in a dangerous condition.

7. The results of the consultations at Managua have been communicated to the Governments of Costa Rica and Honduras, which have agreed in principle to their territory being used, on a temporary basis, for the demobilization of members of the Nicaraguan resistance in accordance with the modalities described above and

which will be asked to confirm their agreement as soon as the recommendations in the present report have been approved by the Security Council. The Governments of El Salvador and Guatemala, the two other parties to the Central American peace process, have also been kept informed, as has the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States in his capacity as a member of CIAV.

8. It will be clear to the members of the Security Council that the role envisaged for ONUCA in this process goes beyond its existing mandate, which is to verify, on the spot, compliance by the five Central American Governments with the security undertakings contained in the Guatemala Agreement (also known as the "Esquipulas II agreements"), namely cessation of aid to irregular forces and insurrectionist movements operating in the region and the non-use of the territory of one State for attacking others. If the Security Council agrees, it may wish to approve this enlargement of ONUCA's mandate, as well as the temporary addition of armed personnel to its strength (all existing ONUCA personnel are unarmed). Armed personnel will be required to take delivery of the weapons, matériel and military equipment, including military uniforms, of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance, to transport them to secure locations, to ensure their safe custody there until their final disposal is decided upon by the five Central American Presidents and to ensure the security of the assembly points which will be temporarily established in Nicaragua.

9. If the Security Council agrees to the recommendations in the present report and if agreement is reached on the voluntary demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance considerable additional responsibilities will fall on ONUCA. In these circumstances I believe that the implementation of phase IV of the deployment of ONUCA should begin as soon as possible. Members of the Security Council will recall from paragraph 23 of my report of 11 October 1989 on the establishment of ONUCA (S/20895) that it was recommended, and the Security Council agreed, that the timing of phase IV should be determined in the light of the progress and results achieved during the first three phases and of other relevant factors. Deployment of phase III began on 28 February 1990 and is almost complete, although there is a shortfall of 21 military observers because of the inability of some of the existing contributors to ONUCA to provide the full complement of officers requested of them.

10. The full strength originally envisaged for ONUCA, namely 260 military observers, will now be needed to enable the group both to fulfil its original verification mandate and to assist in the new duties recommended for ONUCA in the present report. In the latter context I envisage that ONUCA military observers will play a part both in assisting the demobilization process itself and, through constant patrolling, in maintaining a sense of confidence and security in those areas of Nicaragua to which the demobilized members of the Nicaraguan resistance will return.

11. Implementation of this recommendation will require an additional 119 military observers, i.e., the shortfall of 21 from phase III and the 98 originally envisaged for phase IV. Given the inability of existing contributors to make more officers available, it will be necessary to enlarge the composition of ONUCA. I have begun informal consultations with certain Member States in this regard and will approach

the five Central American Governments and thereafter the Security Council in the usual way once it is confirmed that the Member States concerned are ready in principle to make officers available.

12. When I gave the members of the Security Council a preliminary briefing on these matters on 9 March 1990, members of the Council asked that my written report to the Council should indicate the likely duration of a demobilization operation and the likely extra costs to the Organization. Assuming (as the present report does throughout) that demobilization is voluntarily accepted by the leaders and other members of the Nicaraguan resistance, it should be possible to complete the process in a period of four to six weeks, provided that a rapid decision is taken by the five Central American Presidents on the final disposal of the weapons, matériel and military equipment, including military uniforms, of the Nicaraguan resistance. Allowing for deployment and withdrawal, this indicates that the additional troops might be required for a period of about two months.

13. The numbers of additional troops required will depend on a variety of factors, including the quantities of weapons, etc., that ONUCA will take over and guard, the extent of the camps of the Nicaraguan resistance in Honduras and the number of assembly points established in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Not all these details are yet available but the preliminary estimate of the Chief Military Observer of ONUCA is that he will require a lightly armed infantry battalion consisting of at least four rifle companies plus headquarters elements. This is likely to total about 800 men or possibly more, depending on the extent to which it is self-sufficient logistically. ONUCA might also require, on a temporary basis, some specialized logistic personnel. In informal consultations the Government of Venezuela, which already contributes military observers to ONUCA, has agreed in principle to provide such a battalion, if the Security Council approves the recommendations in the present report.

14. It is not yet possible to make an accurate estimate of the additional costs to the Organization without fuller information about the exact number of additional troops required, about the extent to which the unit or units concerned would be self-sufficient logistically and about the sources of additional logistical support that would have to be provided by the United Nations. A rough estimate is that the cost of reinforcing ONUCA with an infantry battalion of 800 men for a period of two months might be in the range of \$7 million to \$9 million, excluding the costs of helicopter support. The latter are particularly sensitive to the details of the operational plan and the numbers and locations of personnel and equipment to be demobilized; if the helicopters were to be provided by the United Nations, the costs could be very substantial. If the Security Council gives the approval requested in the present report, the necessary financing authorization will be sought as soon as possible from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. As regards implementation of phase IV of the deployment of ONUCA, there will be no additional costs to the Organization, as financial provision has already been made in the existing budget of ONUCA.

15. In this context, I feel obliged to draw to the Security Council's attention the fact that, of the \$40.4 million apportioned among Member States for ONUCA by the General Assembly on 7 December 1989, only \$5.4 million, or less than

14 per cent of that amount, has so far been received. It will be clear to the members of the Security Council that, if the expanded activities recommended in the present report are to be undertaken by ONUCA, it is essential that all Member States that have not done so pay without delay their assessed contributions with respect to ONUCA.

16. The voluntary demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance is an essential element in the Central American peace process. Specific provision was made for it in the Tela accord of 7 August 1989 whose objectives were reaffirmed in the Declaration signed by the five Central American Presidents at San Isidro de Coronado on 12 December 1989. In recent days it has become clear that both the present Government and the Government-elect in Nicaragua attach importance to voluntary demobilization as part of the process of transferring power, following the elections in that country. If, as I fervently hope, it proves possible for all the parties concerned to reach early agreement on a plan based on the modalities described in the present report, the United Nations will have to move quickly to deploy the additional personnel and material resources which ONUCA will need to carry out the role envisaged for it. It is for this reason that I am asking the Security Council to approve now, on a contingency basis, this enlargement of ONUCA's mandate and the addition of armed personnel to its strength. This is on the clear understanding that, as already indicated in the present report, the additional troops will not actually be deployed until the necessary political conditions are fulfilled, namely an agreement by all concerned for the voluntary demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance.

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