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CONTADORA GROUP AND SUPPORT GROUP - FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING
26 FEBRUARY 1988

Having met in the city of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on 26 February 1988, the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group and Support Group member countries have carried out an evaluation of the situation in Central America, as well as of the prospects offered by the peace process in the region. At the conclusion of their deliberations, the Foreign Ministers issued the following communique:

1. "We underline, once again, the great value of the contribution to the peace process made by the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua when they signed the Procedure for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America. That democracy, peace, development and free determination may be attained in the region depends on the maintenance and deepening of this political will and on the removal of obstacles that are still hindering the genuine resolution of controversies.
2. The latter acquires special relevance in relation to the urgent need to make progress in the area of security in the Central American isthmus, as military confrontations, armamentism, destabilizing actions and violations of international law still persist in the region.
3. Recent events show that there is a stronger belief in that it is necessary for the aid to irregular forces operating in the region to cease. We hope that this tendency will be strengthened and that all undertakings will be kept, unilaterally, unconditionally and immediately, both those that are aimed to the consolidation of pluralist democracies in the region and those which refer to aspects of security foreseen in the Procedure of Guatemala. The Central American Presidents themselves have given assurances of this.
4. In order to reach these aims and in accordance with the appeal made in San Salvador by the Central American Governments for the Security Commission to meet next March, the Contadora Group reaffirms its willingness to participate, carrying out its functions as a mediator and with the backing of the Support Group, in the continuation of negotiations on the points pending agreement on questions of security, in accordance with paragraph 7 of the Procedure of Guatemala:
 - A) Undertakings in matters of armament and military forces.
 - B) Undertakings in matters of military manoeuvres.
 - C) Procedural and operative questions, related to the regulations or statute of the Verification and Control Commission in Matters of Security.

D) Measures for the disarmament of the irregular forces willing to avail themselves of the amnesty decrees.

5. The success of these negotiations, as of the whole peace process, not only requires the political will of the Central American Governments, but also demands the strict fulfilment of the Procedure of Guatemala, where applicable, by the countries with ties and interests in the region.
6. The progress of the peace process makes it necessary to maintain an impartial and objective verification procedure for the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken, for which it is indispensable to have an adequate framework of national and international mechanisms.

This verification is particularly important as regards security aspects and those related to the political undertakings which will lead to the creation of conditions aimed to the consolidation of democracy in the region.

The report of the International Commission of Verification and Follow-up is a clear and impartial description of the regional situation. The undertakings pending fulfilment make it necessary not to delay in the agreement on new specific ways to carry out the verification process.

7. Economic and social insufficiencies threaten the stability of the political institutions of Central America and thwart the aim for an independent and sovereign development. It is therefore imperative to widen the economic cooperation towards that region and to contribute, in a solidary fashion, to the reconstruction of their economies. Therefore, the Contadora and Support Groups summon the international community to participate in an international emergency programme of cooperation for the Central American countries, in accordance with the stipulations of the Acapulco Agreement.
8. We reaffirm the fair demand that legal order be fully respected, as an essential basis for peaceful coexistence in the region. Besides, we are convinced that the peaceful solution of the conflicts in Central America is a legitimate aspiration of the Latin American countries. As our Presidents stated in the Acapulco Agreement: "Peace and stability in Central America are matters of priority to our governments. Not only the consolidation of democracy and the development with free determination of the Central American peoples is at stake, but also the national interests of our countries."

This is why we, the Contadora and Support Groups, give notice of our firm will to continue to actively try to attain peace in the region in an atmosphere of consensus."

* [This unofficial translation was provided by the Mexican Embassy, Canberra.]