

(As delivered)

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Remarks of the Permanent Representative
of the United States, Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi

Mr. Chairman:

When the Esquipulas peace process began, it offered hope to the people of Central America for a just and lasting peace. The provisions of what some have called the Arias Plan clearly express fundamental principles for resolving the crisis: national reconciliation, a cessation of hostilities, democratization, free elections, cessation of aid to irregular forces and insurgent movements.

Until a few weeks ago, the world had reason for guarded optimism that this regional peace process could advance; and that it would advance through democratic processes involving all elements of the political spectrum. Now, as we meet, the peace process is in danger.

The critical new fact is the resort to an all-out offensive attack on a legally elected and constituted government; an attack by a small minority in one country, and with the material and ideological support of a party to the peace agreements.

The FMLN's war on the democratically elected government of El Salvador has taken a nakedly military form. Attacks on homes, hotels, Embassies and citizens are acts of terrorism. Taking the war to neighborhoods, as the FMLN has done since November 11, seeks to turn civilians into human shields. The FMLN's actions endanger the lives of even those dedicated to working for peace -- whether it be threats to the lives of the increasing number of Salvadoran citizens who have not only rejected the violent extremes of far left and far right, but have courageously worked to increase democratic political space inside their country or whether it be threats to the lives of foreigners like the members of the mission of peace headed by our Secretary General, Ambassador Baena Soares.

The FMLN's war against democracy is being supplied by one of the parties to the Esquipulas peace accords -- the Government of Nicaragua. Nicaragua has taken a series of actions over the past weeks that are moving Central America away from the agreed principles of the Esquipulas agreements -- peaceful resolution of conflicts, cessation of support for subversion, and democratization. Today, the distinguished

representative of El Salvador presented convincing physical evidence, that Nicaragua is supplying surface-to-air missiles to FMLN insurgents. These weapons constitute a major escalation in the FMLN's war against the people of El Salvador and the government they elected.

This escalation comes in the wake of the Sandinista government's decision to terminate the cease-fire with the Nicaraguan Resistance; a decision which Comandante Ortega announced in late October, ironically at the summit meeting of many of the hemisphere's leaders in Costa Rica to celebrate the centennial of Costa Rican democracy. Over the past few weeks, the Sandinista Army has undertaken offensive operations against the Nicaraguan Resistance and massed troops on the Honduran border, threatening Honduras.

In light of the public commitments of the five Central American Presidents to the peace process, all of them commitments entered into personally by President Ortega, my government is appalled at the Nicaraguan Government's wide-ranging, provocative, and dangerous escalation of the conflict in Central America. The Nicaraguan Government appears to have chosen the path of conflict and subversion, rather than the path of dialogue and democratization to which it committed itself as a party to the peace accords. The Sandinista leaders apparently prefer to devote their energies to engaging in military conflict beyond their borders rather than to guaranteeing a free and fair electoral process inside Nicaragua.

Central America is ready for democracy and peace. The international community has a responsibility to help achieve it. In his statement before the General Assembly two weeks ago, Secretary Baker emphasized that,

"the Soviet Union bears a special responsibility because its arms and money, moving through Cuba and Nicaragua, continue to support violence, destruction, and war... Soviet behavior toward Cuba and Central America remains the biggest obstacle to a full, across the board improvement in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union."

President Bush will raise this issue with President Gorbachev in Malta this weekend. Actions that fuel and escalate the Salvadoran conflict are in direct contravention of the declared support for the Esquipulas process, not only of Cuba and, of course, Nicaragua, but also of the Soviet Union itself.

President Bush will explicitly take up with President Gorbachev the question of Soviet assistance to Fidel Castro.

Castro is responsible for Cuba's supplies to the FMLN. Castro has refused to implement the liberal reforms instituted by the Soviet Union. And under Castro, Cuba remains a totalitarian state. That Cuba continues to work with the Nicaraguan Government and the Salvadoran guerrillas to undermine legitimate, democratically elected governments in Central America is hardly surprising, but it is certainly damning proof of isolation to which Cuba is condemned by its rigidity in a world where democracy is spreading even to what used to be centers of power of world communism.

Mr. Chairman:

Despite the recent escalation of the violence in Central America and its negative impact on regional stability, there is one reason to hope that peace and democratic values will prevail. Our memories of the tens of thousands of victims of the violence in Central America make it imperative that the cruel and wasteful loss of life must be stopped.

The vicious cycle of violence and terror unleashed in El Salvador as a result of the offensive initiated by the FMLN guerrillas has taken a tragic toll. Two days ago, Dr. Francisco Jose Guerrero, former Presidential candidate and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was shot to death in the street. Ten days before that, Father Ignacio Ellacuria and five other Jesuit priests and their staff were savagely murdered in their home. The United States unequivocally condemns these horrid acts. We join the international community in calling for a thorough investigation by the government of El Salvador of these outrages against distinguished civilian leaders and for the just punishment of the authors of these crimes, regardless of their political affiliations.

I say this with a little bit of emotion because I, together with many others here, have lost many friends to the violence in El Salvador. In 1977, El Salvador's Foreign Minister, Mauricio Borgonovo was kidnapped and assassinated; he was my friend. So were Ignacio Ellacuria and "Chachi" Guerrero. I will never forget these men. And just as I will never forget these men, my country and my government cannot and will not abandon its support for human rights and the broadening of effective democracy where there is full respect for political and civil rights for all.

We believe the Esquipulas peace process does provide a framework for a just and lasting settlement. A cessation of hostilities can create a peaceful environment in which to resolve the crisis. Implementation of commitments to refrain from supporting subversion can contribute to the stability and security of the region. The process of dialogue between governments and their armed and unarmed opposition can lead to national reconciliation. The holding of regular and fair

elections in which every citizen of every position and viewpoint can participate without fear in choosing his government can build the confidence required to overcome even the deepest of divisions within societies. The full protection of human rights can create conditions which would enable democracy and then economic development and progress to flourish.

The OAS and the U.N. have undertaken important responsibilities for encouraging and monitoring the peace process. The United States will continue to support the peace process. We will continue to work with the OAS and the U.N. to advance a just settlement. We call upon all interested parties, joining with overwhelming majority of speakers in this room, as well as the international community to adhere scrupulously to the agreements reached by the Central American Presidents.

Thank you.