

As Delivered

"THE TIME FOR PEACE IS NOW"

Remarks of Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi  
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SPECIAL SESSION ON THE SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR  
PERMANENT COUNCIL, ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
September 13, 1991

The legacy of 12 years of war in El Salvador is painfully evident to all of us here at the Organization of American States. This is a war that has had many victims but no victors.

From the outset of the conflict, the OAS has followed developments through this Permanent Council and the General Assembly. In 1988, the General Assembly actually met in El Salvador. From the beginning, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has reported on the impact of the war on the human rights of Salvadorans. In 1989, our Secretary General had to be rescued from a hostage-like situation. This year, he and the Democracy Unit have worked hard to facilitate the efforts of Salvadorans seeking the strengthening of electoral democracy.

The victims in this prolonged conflict include thousands of dead -- many of them not combatants, but citizens caught in the cross fire of battle, used as hostages and shields, assassinated in terror campaigns unleashed by fanatics of the left and the right. Thousands have fled their country or been displaced within it.

The full cost of this 12-year war's devastation to El Salvador's economy may be incalculable: the destruction of physical assets including infrastructure, the flight of capital from the country, the diminished productivity of the work force, the distortions created by maintaining a wartime footing. One conservative estimate puts the cumulative damage at \$2 billion -- but the real loss has been human.

It is true that, since the onset of the war, El Salvador has managed to conduct six nationwide elections considered free and fair -- but voting has required civic and physical courage and the act of political choice has been cheated, not at the ballot box, but outside by the stubborn willfulness of those committed to the dead end of armed struggle.

After all this devastation and suffering, after the loss of a decade and perhaps a generation, Salvadorans in all walks of life have said: enough, let there be peace, let us get on the business of living, the building of a future. More than one million Salvadorans voted last March in elections for local and legislative offices -- peace was their message. And peace is the mandate with which President Cristiani has approached the conference table in talks with the FMLN.

## The Peace Process

The Salvadoran people are not alone in seeking peace.

El Salvador's neighbors in Central America are with them. Repeatedly the Central American presidents have affirmed their solidarity with President Cristiani and the people of El Salvador, most recently in San Salvador in July just before the Guadalajara Summit.

The United States too supports fully all efforts to resolve the conflict in accordance with the Esquipulas process and the principles of the OAS Charter. On March 24, 1989 the President and the Secretary of State joined formally with the leaders of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives to emphasize that peace in El Salvador and in Central America is not a partisan matter.

The OAS has played an important peacemaking role by observing the March 10 elections, helping the Salvadoran people to "take their political differences to the ballot box" as Secretary of State Baker put it in thanking Secretary General Baena Soares for his leadership. A war begun in the absence of freedom can only be resolved in freedom.

At the United Nations, Secretary General Perez de Cuellar has accepted the critical task of facilitating the talks between the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN; his efforts reach a critical point next week with the holding of talks at UN Headquarters in New York.

The "Friends of the Secretary General" -- Spain, Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia -- have worked hard for a successful outcome.

Beyond the hemisphere, the European Community, Japan and others are rallying with us through the Partnership for Democracy and Development to support El Salvador and its Central American neighbors to carry through the political and economic reforms that will consolidate the peace.

It is, finally, worth explicit notice that the constitutional authorities of the Soviet Union are cooperating with the peace process and with the efforts of the Secretary General of the United Nations.

So the discovery three weeks ago inside the populous city of San Salvador of an FMLN arms cache that includes weapons of greater range and destructiveness than those which have been previously deployed is a blow to all these hopes. Now is the time to direct all efforts to the cause of peace. Now is not the time to introduce and deploy greater firepower in the pursuit of war.

This massing of arms, especially of the more sophisticated type we have seen today, in the capital city recalls the events of November and December 1989, which were for many of us a composite of the conflict at its worst: a massive guerrilla assault on the capital, the government and its elected leaders; the assassination of Ignacio Ellacuria, his colleagues, housekeeper and her 15-year old daughter; the wanton unleashing of urban violence and counterviolence.

This war must end. Our distinguished colleague, the Ambassador of El Salvador, has made clear his government's continued interest in peace and specifically its willingness to negotiate in good faith with the leaders of the FMLN.

For the United States, let me say that our commitment to the peace process is firm and undiminished. The human cost of the war has been too high, the investment in peace too great, and the prospect of a new beginning for El Salvador too attractive to allow the bad faith of a minority within a minority to disrupt our efforts.

The United States is committed to peace in El Salvador. Since the spring of 1980, when the Government of El Salvador began wide-ranging reforms, the United States has unflinchingly supported efforts to build a free society in El Salvador. Our support for the cause of freedom includes military assistance, just as it includes everything possible to mobilize for peace.

It does not now help the cause of peace to gloss over the bad faith of those who bring the latest technology of death into the city of San Salvador. My government supports the draft resolution before the Permanent Council today. My government supports it because the resolution supports the United Nations' renewed efforts to bring an end to the war. My government supports it because it recognizes that a lasting peace requires the full participation of all Salvadorans in the political life of the country within a framework of law, democracy, and respect for human rights. The signal successes of OAS/CIAC in the resettlement of the Nicaraguan Resistance bring implicit authority to this call, for they set an optimistic precedent for the future reintegration of combatants into the public and private life of El Salvador.

So, in these critical senses, the resolution is fully acceptable. I would add, however, that the introduction of SAM-14s to San Salvador at a time when the negotiations are going on, at a time when democracy and political solutions are advancing throughout the world, even in the most embittered of conflicts such as those in Angola and Cambodia, is profoundly disturbing. It poses a special challenge to all of El Salvador's friends and neighbors. I do not believe this text before us fully meets this challenge. I will nonetheless vote for it when the time comes, and I recognize and welcome the effort by the Rio Group to develop it as a consensus document.

## Hopes for the Future

Let me close by saying that profound and sweeping change is the global order of the day. The world is remaking itself in peace under the impetus of freedom. As much as any other country anywhere, El Salvador must have its chance to take full advantage of opportunities created by the emerging world dynamic.

El Salvador's potential for development -- for an economic take-off with benefits to every sector of society -- has been obscured by the obvious effects of war. Yet careful reading of the economic data reveals something quite remarkable. In spite of the war, the devastation, the damage, and the suffering, El Salvador has done better than anyone could expect. Real economic growth climbed 3.5 percent in 1990 and should reach 4.5 percent this year. That is faster than population growth (at 2 to 2.5 percent); it is the highest growth rate in Central America, and -- I might add -- it is faster than growth in the United States. Taking the longer view, Salvadoran entrepreneurs have boosted non-traditional textile exports from \$13 million in 1983 to some \$70 million in 1990. And, Salvadoran workers in the United States remit about \$700 million a year to El Salvador.

If El Salvador can beat the averages under the worst of conditions, imagine what will happen if it can put its conflicts to rest. Mr. Chairman, the time for peace is now, and the sooner the better.

Thank you very much.