

## 10. Letter dated 27 November 1989 from the Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

### Letter dated 28 November 1989 from the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

#### Initial proceedings

##### **Decision of 8 December 1989 (2897th meeting): statement by the President**

By a letter dated 27 November 1989 addressed to the President of the Security Council,<sup>1</sup> the representative of El Salvador requested an urgent meeting of the Council to consider actions by the Government of Nicaragua, which he contended constituted breaches of the regional agreements concluded by the Central American Presidents — specifically, the “Procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America” (Esquipulas II Agreement);<sup>2</sup> the Joint Declaration of the Central American Presidents (Tesoro Beach Agreement);<sup>3</sup> and the Tela Declaration of 7 August 1989.<sup>4</sup> His Government believed that, unless those serious breaches of the Central American agreements were brought to an end, peace in Central America would be threatened and a regional conflict might be unleashed.

By a letter dated 28 November 1989 addressed to the President of the Security Council,<sup>5</sup> the representative of Nicaragua requested that the scope of the urgent meeting of the Council be expanded to include consideration of the grave repercussions which the serious deterioration of the situation in El Salvador was having on the peace process in Central America.

At its 2896th meeting, on 30 November 1989, the Council included the two above-mentioned letters in its agenda. Following the adoption of the agenda, the President (China) noted that, in keeping with past practice and as agreed in the Council’s prior consultations, he had requested the Secretariat to make the necessary technical arrangements to permit the

representatives of El Salvador and Nicaragua to show in the Council chamber audio-visual material<sup>6</sup> relating to the item under consideration. The President then invited the representatives of El Salvador and Nicaragua, at their request, to participate in the discussion without the right to vote. The question was considered by the Council at its 2896th and 2897th meetings, on 30 November and 8 December 1989, respectively.

The President also drew the attention of members of the Council to two other letters: a letter dated 22 November 1989 from the representative of Yugoslavia addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a communiqué issued on 20 November by the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the situation in El Salvador;<sup>7</sup> and a letter dated 27 November 1989 from the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela addressed to the Secretary-General, enclosing a communiqué issued on 24 November by their Governments — the member countries of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Concerted Political Action — concerning the situation in El Salvador.<sup>8</sup> In the latter communiqué, the seven Governments expressed concern at the internal conflict in El Salvador, following the break-off of the dialogue between the Salvadorian Government and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), the Salvadorian opposition movement. They urged the immediate cessation of hostilities and the resumption of the national political dialogue. They also called on all States with ties to or interests in the region to

<sup>1</sup> S/20991.

<sup>2</sup> S/19085, annex.

<sup>3</sup> S/20491, annex.

<sup>4</sup> S/20778.

<sup>5</sup> S/20999.

<sup>6</sup> S/PV.2896, p. 6. The videotapes were shown during the course of the statements made by the two representatives.

<sup>7</sup> S/20985.

<sup>8</sup> S/20994.

refrain from intervening in the conflict; and urged cooperation in the efforts to achieve peace within the framework of the Esquipulas II agreements and in conformity with the commitments accepted by the Central American Presidents. They expressed firm support for the efforts of the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States in that regard.

The President remarked, at the beginning of the meeting, that the Council was mindful of the need to encourage efforts at ensuring that the peace process in Central America went forward and that nothing was done which would adversely affect those efforts. For that reason, as agreed in the course of the Council's prior consultations, he appealed to all speakers to show restraint in their statements so as not to disturb the peace process.<sup>9</sup>

The representative of El Salvador stated that his country had turned to the Council to lodge a complaint against the Government of Nicaragua because of serious acts of aggression for which the Sandinista regime was responsible. He stated that that regime was supplying weapons and military equipment to the irregular forces of El Salvador and providing them with military training. Such conduct was contrary to the Central American agreements, which established a total ban on Government aid to irregular forces operating in certain States. It was also in violation of the principle of non-intervention. He warned that El Salvador did not want the situation to lead to actions of legitimate self-defence and called on the Council to put an end to those violations of the Central American agreements so as to ensure that the conflict did not spread in the region. It should shoulder its primary responsibility by making an effective and impartial contribution to corroborating the substance of El Salvador's charges. If the Council were to decide to send a fact-finding mission, El Salvador would cooperate with it fully. In any case, El Salvador stressed the need for strict compliance with the Central American agreements: El Salvador would not "stand idly by" if the Sandinista regime did not end its interventionist policy. He noted that this was the first time that his country had resorted to the Council, which had become the "guarantor" of compliance with the agreements by virtue of its resolutions 637 (1989) and 644 (1989). He cautioned that violations of the agreements would render them "null and void", which

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<sup>9</sup> S/PV.2896, p. 6.

would block, and even set back, the process of peace and socio-economic development in the region. He concluded by insisting that the Central Americans had to resolve the crisis themselves. In that connection, El Salvador considered that it was worth holding a presidential summit meeting at a date to be renegotiated.<sup>10</sup>

The representative of Nicaragua contended that El Salvador's allegations were simply a "cover-up" for the real causes of the tragedy which had long beset the Salvadorian people. They could not be attributed to external factors allegedly attempting to destabilize the internal situation in El Salvador. Nor could they be ascribed to the internal opposition movement, FMLN. Responsibility lay, rather, with the Government of El Salvador, an "insensitive oligarchy" and a "repressive" army. It was they who were responsible for the exploitation and repression of the Salvadorian people and for the attacks on the civilian population, involving most recently the deaths of trade unionists and Jesuit priests. The United States also bore responsibility for those human rights abuses because of its continued military assistance to the Government of El Salvador. He stated that El Salvador was, moreover, in breach of its obligations under the Central American agreements as it was incapable of fostering reforms and of entering into serious negotiations with FMLN to find a political solution to the conflict. By bringing the matter to the Council, it was bypassing and deliberately endangering the machinery established by the agreements. Nicaragua had never done this, despite the fact that El Salvador was still engaged in "aggression" against Nicaragua — as was the United States — in continuing to provide assistance to the Nicaraguan "counter-revolutionaries" (the so-called *contras*). Such action was in violation of El Salvador's commitments under the Central American agreements, which required that those forces be demobilized, disarmed and repatriated. The grave deterioration of the situation in El Salvador and that country's conduct posed a serious threat to the Central American peace process. The speaker asked the Council urgently to take the measures necessary to guarantee basic human rights in El Salvador and to promote measures towards an agreed ceasefire and the commencement of effective, substantive negotiations between the Government of El Salvador and FMLN, as required by the Central American agreements. He drew attention to his

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<sup>10</sup> S/PV.2896, pp. 6-23.

delegation's draft resolution<sup>11</sup> to that end, as submitted to the President of the Council. He also called on the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States to use or continue to use their good offices to guarantee the holding of the summit of the Central American Presidents scheduled for early December.<sup>12</sup>

The representative of El Salvador, in a further statement, rejected the accusations made by the representative of Nicaragua, and emphasized his Government's constitutional commitment to human rights.<sup>13</sup>

The representative of the United States regretted that he had to speak to denounce as baseless the charges made by Nicaragua against his country. The FMLN "war" on the democratically elected Government of El Salvador had escalated dramatically, fuelled by the Governments of Nicaragua and Cuba. In violation of the Central American agreements, the Government of Nicaragua continued to supply weaponry to FMLN. He appealed to that Government to abide by the spirit of those agreements and stressed that, for its part, the United States supported the process of democratization and peace enshrined in the Esquipulas agreements. Its economic, military and humanitarian assistance to El Salvador was aid directed to a constitutionally elected Government in support of the peace process and used to offset guerrilla damage and attacks on the economy and infrastructure. As regards United States aid to the Nicaraguan "resistance", all lethal aid had ceased, in compliance with the Esquipulas process; the Tela Accords specifically allowed for the provision of humanitarian assistance. He concluded by affirming that the United States stood by its commitment to support the democratically elected Government of El Salvador in its struggle against the Sandinista-supported violent and terrorist tactics of FMLN.<sup>14</sup>

The representative of Nicaragua, in a further statement, urged the United States to stop interfering in

Nicaragua's internal politics and to encourage the opportunities for Central Americans themselves to solve their own problems.<sup>15</sup>

At the 2897th meeting, held on 8 December 1989 in accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, the President said that, following consultations among the members of the Council, he had been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:<sup>16</sup>

The members of the Security Council, after hearing statements by the representatives of El Salvador and Nicaragua at the 2896th meeting of the Security Council, on 30 November 1989, express their grave concern over the present situation in Central America, in particular over the numerous acts of violence resulting in loss of lives and sufferings of the civilian population.

The members of the Council reiterate their firm support for the Esquipulas process of peaceful settlement in Central America and appeal to all States to contribute to the urgent implementation of the agreements reached by the five Central American Presidents. In this regard the members of the Council welcome the announcement by the five Central American Presidents to meet on 10 and 11 December at San José, Costa Rica, in order to discuss within the framework of the Esquipulas peace process, solutions to the problems confronting them.

The members of the Council consider that it is primarily the responsibility of the five Central American Presidents to find solutions to the regional problems, in accordance with the Esquipulas agreements. Therefore, they reiterate their appeal to all States, including those with links to the region and interests in it, to refrain from all actions that could impede the achievement of a real and lasting settlement in Central America through negotiations.

The members of the Council urge all parties concerned to cooperate in the search for peace and a political solution.

The members of the Council also express their firm support for the efforts being made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States in the peace process. In particular, they reiterate their full support for the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the exercise of the missions entrusted to him by the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as for the early deployment of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America.

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<sup>11</sup> S/21000.

<sup>12</sup> S/PV.2896, pp. 24-52.

<sup>13</sup> S/PV.2896, p. 52.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53-56.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56-58.

<sup>16</sup> S/21011.