

Central America and the Caribbean - 1983

Issue

Central America and the Caribbean—on the United States being a good neighbor.

Background

Although itself born out of a revolution, the United States often sees and reacts to the turmoil of social inequity, poverty, illiteracy and the struggle for an acceptable government as another ground for East-West confrontation. While the aim of the United States in Central America is for stable and democratic nations, military aid to groups within the area, from whatever source, given directly or indirectly, cannot achieve this goal. Only by overcoming massive social, economic and political injustices can a climate conducive for the development of peace and political stability be achieved.

While reports by both individuals and groups who have visited the areas of conflict in Central America may be confusing and contradictory in regard to what is actually occurring, one cannot question that instability, war, terrorism, violation of human rights, death and destruction are a reality.

Resolution

We sympathize with the suffering of the men, women and children in countries in Central America in which instability, war, acts of terrorism, death and destruction surround them. Urgently we plead that:

- 1) The Contadora Group (Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Mexico) be encouraged and given every opportunity to win cooperation toward peace in the area.
- 2) Central America not be viewed primarily as another place for East-West confrontation. It should be viewed as a region with grave problems which can be more effectively solved with economic and technical assistance rather than by military means.
- 3) The United States, Cuba, the U.S.S.R. or any other country, directly or indirectly do not seek to destabilize governments, engage in direct military intervention or use any country as a staging place for crossing borders with military or rebel forces.
- 4) The United States and all governments and parties concerned shall strictly encourage observance of human rights and withhold assistance when violations continue.
- 5) Cuba's proximity to the United States suggests the need for direct relations between the two nations. Direct diplomatic relations with a nation do not imply approval but allow for the advance of mutual interests.
- 6) The United States, when responding to appeals for assistance, should seek every available avenue of negotiation, whether through the Organization of American States (OAS), smaller regional entities, or through the good offices of its Allies, to avoid a return to what has been termed gunboat diplomacy.
- 7) In this geographic area, as in all regions of the world, it is imperative that representatives of the media be freely admitted at all times so that free press of democratic nations shall be able to inform the public of their observations, whether or not these conform to releases of governmental agencies.