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UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER GROUP IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Report of the Secretary-General

1. On 4 May 1990, the Security Council adopted resolution 654 (1990), the operative paragraphs of which read as follows:

"1. Approves the report of the ~~Secretary-General~~ contained in document S/21274 and addendum 1:

"2. Decides to extend, under its authority, the mandate of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) as defined in resolutions 644 (1989), 650 (1990) and 653 (1990), for a further period of six months, that is until 7 November 1990, on the understanding as expressed by the Secretary-General in his report (S/21274), that ONUCA's tasks of monitoring the cease-fire and separation of forces in Nicaragua and **demobilizing** members of the Nicaraguan resistance will lapse with the completion of the demobilisation process not later than 10 June 1990, and bearing in mind the need to continue to monitor expenditures carefully during this period of increasing demands on peace-keeping resources:

"3. Welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General to promote the achievement of a negotiated political solution to the conflict in El Salvador;

"4. Requests the Secretary-General to keep the Security Council fully informed of further developments and to report on all aspects of ONUCA's operations before the expiry of the current mandate period and in particular to report to the Council not later than 10 June concerning the completion of the demobilization process."

2. I reported to the Security Council on ONUCA's performance of its tasks of monitoring the cease-fire and separation of forces in Nicaragua and demobilising the **members** of the Nicaraguan resistance in **my** reports of 4 June 1990 (S/21341), 8 June 1990 (S/21349) and 29 June 1990 (S/21379). **Some** residual activities undertaken by **ONUCA** in this connection are described in paragraph 10 below.

3. The present **report**, which is submitted in response to the request made by the Security Council in paragraph 4 of its resolution 654 (1990), contains an account of **ONUCA's** operations during the period 7 May to 26 October 1990. It also contains my recommendations on the future of ONUCA, which take into account the experience gained in the implementation of its mandate up to the present time.

Command. composition and deployment

4. The command of ONUCA continues to be exercised by the Chief Military Observer, Major-General Agustin **Quesada Gómez** (Spain).

5. As of October 1990, the military strength of **ONUCA** was 413, made up as follows:

United Nations military observers

Brazil	21
Canada	45
Colombia	12
Ecuador	21
India	21
Ireland	31
Spain	59
Sweden	21
Venezuela	23
Subtotal	<u>254</u>

Naval squadron

Argentina	29
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Air unit

Canada	<u>130</u>
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Total	<u>413</u>
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In addition to the above, five civilian medical officers, five medical assistants and four pilots provided by Germany are currently assisting ONUCA in its mission.

6. A squadron of four fast patrol boats (**FPBs**) provided by the Government of Argentina began operating in the Gulf of Fonseca on 29 June 1990. The squadron and its crew of 29 Argentine naval officers and men are based at the naval verification centre (NVC) established by **ONUCA** at San Lorenzo (Honduras). The **NVC** is staffed by nine military observers who carry out patrols in and around the Gulf **on board the FPBs**. Since the **NVC** and the **FPB** squadron are operating in the territorial waters of three countries, namely El Salvador, Honduras and **Nicaragua**, it is independent of Observer Group Honduras and comes under the direct command of the Chief Military Observer.

7. Ninety international **and 93 locally recruited civilian** staff members **are** serving with ONUCA. In **addition**, there are **12 civilian aircrew and maintenance** personnel for **four** helicopters **chartered** from a commercial firm.

8. **As indicated in my report** of 27 April 1990 (S/21274), **ONUCA's** deployment as of that date consisted of a headquarters at **Tegucigalpa**, **liaison offices at each of the five capitals**, **13 verification centres and three operational patrol posts**. The number of **verification centres now stands at 18**. The number of operational patrol posts **has remained unchanged**, although two are now **in** different locations.

9. The table below, and the annexed map, **show** the deployment of ONUCA as of late October 1990,

	<u>Liaison offices</u>	<u>Verification centres</u>	<u>Operational posts</u>
Costa Rica	San José	San José El Platanar	
El Salvador	San Salvador	San Salvador San Miguel	
Guatemala	Guatemala City	Guatemala City Esquipulas Cuilapa Jutiapa	
Honduras	Tegucigalpa	Tegucigalpa Choluteca Danli Sta. Rosa de Copán La Esperanza San Lorenzo	Las Trojes Guarita
Nicaragua	Managua	Managua Esteli Ocotal Chinandega	Potosi

Operations

10. As indicated in paragraph 2 above and **as** I informed the Security Council in my report of 29 June 1990 (S/21379), the demobilisation of the Nicaraguan Resistance, which had commenced at La Kiatará, Honduras, on 16 April 1990, was essentially completed on 28 June 1990. Even though **all** the "security zones" established for the purpose of demobilisation were closed down by that date, individuals and small groups belonging to the Nicaraguan Resistance continued for **some** days to present

themselves to be **demobilized** at locations where ONUCA observers were present. Thus, between 29 June and 6 July 1990, **an** additional 510 members of the Nicaraguan Resistance were demobilized and 282 additional weapons were **handed over for** destruction. After ONUCA **ceased** its involvement in the demobilization process, the Government of Nicaragua assumed responsibility for the **demobilization** of any remaining members of the Nicaraguan Resistance, while the **International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV)** **continued** to handle the civilian aspects of the process.

11. The tables in annexes I, II **and III contain corrected and** final figures for, respectively, the members of **the** Nicaraguan Resistance demobilized by ONUCA in **Honduras**, those similarly demobilized in **Nicaragua** and **weapons handed over to ONUCA** in each of the two countries.

12. As members of the Security **Council** will recall, a Venezuelan infantry battalion was temporarily attached to ONUCA, under arrangements approved by the Council in its resolution 653 (1990) of 20 April 1990, to handle the additional operational responsibilities falling on ONUCA as a result of its role in the demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan Resistance. These responsibilities included taking delivery of **the weapons, matériel and** military equipment handed over to ONUCA by the members of the Nicaraguan Resistance and the subsequent destruction of those items. They also included the provision of security inside the "security **zones**" established for the purpose of the demobilization. Having successfully completed its tasks, the Venezuelan battalion was repatriated to Venezuela during the period 19 June-4 July 1990.

13. The demobilization operation required substantial changes in the deployment of ONUCA's military observers from the middle of April until the end of June 1990. During the peak period of the operation, **some** 122 observers, or 48 per cent of a total strength of 255 **observers**, were **deployed in Nicaragua** to perform tasks connected with the demobilization. Regular patrolling and other activities relating to ONUCA's original mandate had to be significantly reduced during this period as a consequence of this temporary redeployment of manpower to Nicaragua.

14. Following **the** completion of the demobilization, it was **decided**, after consultation with the Government of Nicaragua, **that** ONUCA would continue, as a temporary measure, to maintain a presence in those areas in which large numbers of demobilized members of the Nicaraguan Resistance and their dependants were being resettled, so as to help to encourage a sense of **security and confidence** among the population. Temporary verification centres were accordingly established at Matagalpa, Juigalpa and Puerto Cabezas in the first half of July. As envisaged from the outset, however, these centres were gradually phased out during September and all had **been** closed by 15 **October**. As another confidence-building measure, ONUCA has monitored the repatriation of relatives of former members of the Nicaraguan **Resistance from** Honduras to Nicaragua under CIAV auspices.

15. The majority of those ONUCA observers who had been temporarily assigned to Nicaragua have now returned to existing verification centres or to new ones that have been established in the mission area in line with the general concept of phase IV, as described in my report of 11 October 1989 to the Council (S/20895, para. 23). As shown in the table in paragraph 9 above, however, the Chief Military

Observer has decided, on the basis of further reconnaissance and taking into account changing political realities in the mission area, that some of the locations originally intended for the verification centres should be revised,

16. During July the Observer Groups in the five countries, having been largely restored to their planned strength following the demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan Resistance, were again able to concentrate their efforts on ONUCA's original mandate, which requires them to patrol areas where violations of the Esquipulas II security undertakings (see S/19085, annex) seem most likely to occur. Patrolling is again being carried out, on a daily basis, by land, air and sea as well as, occasionally, by river. During the last six months patrols by land vehicles have covered some 458,300 km, while patrolling by helicopter has totalled some 570 flying hours. Since it became operational on 29 June 1990, the naval unit at San Lorenzo has carried out 1,180 hours of patrolling. In spite of such intensive patrolling, however, no violations of the Esquipulas II security undertakings were detected by the military observers of ONUCA. In this connection, the difficult geographic and climatic conditions, which for a while seriously curtailed flying hours and rendered most secondary roads impassable, continued to have a negative impact on ONUCA's ability to carry out its mandate.

17. During the period covered by the present report, ONUCA was informed of one complaint concerning alleged violations of the Esquipulas II Agreement. On 23 October 1990, ONUCA personnel in Managua were told by senior Nicaraguan officials that they had received a complaint from the Government of El Salvador that at three locations near Managua there were radio transmitters which were used by the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) to send coded and uncoded messages to El Salvador. The Nicaraguan authorities asked ONUCA to be present at their investigation of this complaint. In accordance with its mandate, ONUCA accompanied Nicaraguan security personnel when they searched the locations complained about, in order to verify the Nicaraguan Government's compliance with its obligations under the Esquipulas II Agreement. No transmitters were found at any of the three locations.

18. In addition, on one occasion ONUCA was informed by the Honduran authorities that, on 29 August 1990, at a crossing point on the Honduran-Nicaraguan border, the Honduran army had seized an illegal shipment of weapons and ammunition. ONUCA received the full co-operation of the Honduran Government and was given access to the results of its investigation.

19. From its base in San Lorenzo, Honduras, the NVC carries out daily patrols of the Gulf of Fonseca and its approaches in the Pacific Ocean. The observations made are recorded and entered into a data base which ONUCA is building up in order to establish patterns of traffic and identify any deviations from such traffic which might be of relevance to its mandate. The FPBs have also made liaison visits to the naval bases maintained in or near the Gulf by the three littoral countries.

20. In order to provide additional air support during the demobilization in Nicaragua, the strength of ONUCA's air wing was increased during this period by four medium helicopters, which were chartered from a commercial firm. This raised the total strength of the air wing to 1 fixed-wing aircraft and 16 helicopters.

While demobilization was in progress, eight of **ONUCA's helicopters** operated as a separate detachment in Managua. At the end of June the air wing returned to its previous strength of 1 fixed-wing aircraft and 12 helicopters. Over the past six months the fixed-wing aircraft has flown a total of **some 845 hours** (including one medical evacuation to **Miami** and another to **Panama City**), while the helicopters have logged approximately **5,230 flying hours**. On 27 June 1990, **ONUCA** personnel were able to render immediate assistance when two helicopters of the Nicaraguan **air** force collided at San Pedro de **Lovago** at the end of a ceremony marking the demobilization of the leaders of the Nicaraguan Resistance. Several members of the helicopter crews and passengers who sustained injuries as a result of the collision were evacuated in **ONUCA** helicopters.

21. In order to **meet** additional requirements during the demobilization of the Nicaraguan Resistance, the medical unit of **ONUCA** was strengthened by the temporary addition of three doctors and three medical assistants. During this period **most** of the medical unit's efforts were focused on the provision of essential services in the "**security zones**", where medical and sanitary conditions were frequently unsatisfactory. Apart from the treatment of the routine and emergency medical problems of **ONUCA** personnel, the unit's activities covered preventive medicine, vaccinations and the establishment of an emergency evacuation **system**. The unit also co-operated with the Honduran health authorities in a vaccination campaign in inaccessible rural areas and in a feeding project for Honduran children.

Relations with the parties

22. **ONUCA** has continued to receive excellent co-operation from the Governments of the five host countries. **I** am happy to be able to inform the Security Council that all five Governments **have** now accepted, with minor amendments, the proposals that **I** made in November 1989 concerning the status of **ONUCA** in each of the five countries.

Financial aspects

23. By its resolution **44/44** of 7 **December** 1989, the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for **ONUCA** at a rate not to exceed **\$4,524,100 gross (\$4,389,500 net)** per month for the 12-month period beginning 7 **May** 1990, should the Security Council decide to continue the Group beyond the period of six months authorized under its resolution 644 (1989). By its resolution 654 (1990) of 4 **May** 1990, the Security Council extended the mandate of **ONUCA** to 7 November 1990. Should the Council decide to extend **ONUCA** beyond its current mandate period, the costs to the United Nations for maintaining **ONUCA** during a six-month extension period **would** be within the commitment authorized by the Assembly in its resolution **44/44**, assuming continuance of the Group's existing strength and responsibilities,

24. At the beginning of October 1990, unpaid assessed contributions to the **ONUCA** Special Account for the mandate periods ending 7 November 1990 amounted to **\$5.7 million**.

Observations

25. The early part of the mandate period, which is about to end, was dominated by ONUCA's role in the demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan Resistance. After a difficult start in April and May, that operation was successfully concluded by the end of June and marked an important step forward in the process of national reconciliation in Nicaragua. This success illustrated the varied role that ONUCA can play in advancing the Central American peace process, provided always that it has the backing of the Security Council and receives the co-operation of all the parties concerned.

26. ONUCA has now reverted to its original mandate. The nature of that mandate has become more widely understood in the region. It is to verify compliance by the five Central American Governments with the security undertakings each of them gave the others in the Esquipulas II Agreement, namely to cease aid to irregular forces and insurgent movements operating in the region and to prevent the use of its territory for attacks on other States. ONUCA's role is thus one of verification. It does not have the authority or the capacity to prevent by physical means either the movement of armed persons or warlike material across borders or other violations of the security undertakings in the Esquipulas II Agreement. These are tasks that fall within the competence of the security forces of the Governments concerned.

27. It was originally thought that ONUCA might have some capacity to detect violations of the security undertakings, which it could then take up with the Government or Governments concerned. In practice, however, it quickly became clear that ONUCA's detective capacity is very limited. This is partly because of the nature of the terrain, climatic conditions and similar factors. But it is mainly due to the fact that an international peace-keeping operation cannot undertake the detection of clandestine activities without assuming functions that properly belong to the security forces of the country or countries concerned, not least because they require armed personnel to carry them out. Governments have sometimes agreed that an armed United Nations peace-keeping operation should implement such a mandate on their territory. But this is not the case in Central America and ONUCA is not staffed or equipped for the detection of clandestine activities.

28. ONUCA's method of operation, as it has developed during the past year, nevertheless enables it to play an important part in ensuring that the five Governments comply with the security undertakings in the Esquipulas II Agreement. This method of operation is, essentially, to maintain a regular and visible presence in those parts of the region where breaches of the undertakings would seem most likely to occur. Through frequent patrolling of these areas, by vehicle, horse, helicopter and boat as appropriate, ONUCA acquaints itself with the people and the governmental authorities at the local level. It becomes familiar with the normal pattern of activity in the areas concerned and improves its ability to notice departures from the pattern, which could indicate that violations of the security undertakings were taking place. It is in this way that ONUCA is able to perform the preventive or deterrent function referred to in paragraph 8 of my report of 11 October 1989 (S/20895). This was never envisaged as physical prevention or deterrence: the idea was, rather, that ONUCA's presence would make it more difficult for activities contrary to the Esquipulas II Agreement to be carried out.

29. **ONUCA's** presence also provides a means whereby Governments can take up with each other, **through** an impartial third party, complaints about violations **of** the security undertakings. **As** reported above, this facility was used only once during the current mandate period. This reflects the **welcome** improvement that has taken place in intergovernmental relations in the *region*, as **a** result of which it is now normal for Governments to resolve such issues through direct **contact between** themselves.

30. In the light of **ONUCA's** experience so far and of recent developments in the region, I have given careful thought to the future of **ONUCA**, in consul **tation** with the five Governments and with the Chief Military **Observer of ONUCA**. I learned in mid-September that the five Governments wanted an extension of **ONUCA's** mandate for six months. This was subsequently confirmed in a letter dated 29 September 1990 addressed to me by the Foreign Ministers of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

31. In recent consultations in New **York**, I informed the five Governments that I agreed that it was important to maintain a United Nations military presence in the region in order to support the Central American peace process. I had accordingly been studying what recommendation to make to the Security Council concerning **ONUCA's** future mandate. On the basis of recommendations received from the Chief Military Observer, I had **come** to the conclusion that **ONUCA** should maintain its current method **of** operation. There should continue to be an Observer Group in each of the five countries, with verification centres to undertake regular patrols in areas where there seemed to be the greatest possibility of violations of the undertakings in the Esquipulas II Agreement. However, following the end **of** the conflict in **Nicaragua** **and** the demobilisation of the members of the Nicaraguan Resistance, it would be possible to close **some** of the verification centres whose tasks were primarily related to the Nicaraguan conflict. This would permit a reduction of approximately 40 per cent in the number of military observers currently assigned to **ONUCA**, without impairing its ability to carry out the mandate assigned to it. These proposals proved to **be** acceptable to each of the five countries.

32. It is possible that, as the Central American peace process develops, other tasks **may** emerge that the Governments concerned might wish **ONUCA** to undertake. **Any** such enlargement **of ONUCA's** mandate would of **course** require a decision of the **Security Council**. A possible verification role for **ONUCA** has been mentioned during current discussions between the **Central American Governments** that could lead to an eventual agreement on regional arms control and disarmament, but it would be premature for **me to make any recommendation on** this to the Security Council at the present stage. **As** regards **my** current efforts to achieve a negotiated political solution to the conflict in El Salvador, **members** of the Security Council will recall that, in **my statement** at the Council's informal consultations on **3 August 1990**, I said that I had concluded that verification or observation of the implementation of the various aspects of such a **settlement** would **most** appropriately be carried out as an integrated whole rather than as separate enterprises. It would follow that verification of the military aspects would be undertaken by a military component in that inte~~y~~rated whole rather than by **ONUCA**.

33. I accordingly recommend to the Security Council that the mandate of **ONUCA** should be extended for a further period of six months, that is until 7 May 1991, and that its **tasks** and method of operation should continue to be those recommended in my report of 11 October 1989 (S/20895), which was approved by the Council in its resolution **644 (1989)** of 7 November 1989.

34. If the Security Council approves the above recommendation, it will be my intention to reduce **ONUCA's** strength of military observers to 158 by mid-December. The deployment described in paragraph 9 above would be revised as follows: the liaison **offices and** verification centres in each of the five capitals would be merged to form in each case an Observer Group headquarters, which would **have a reserve** patrolling capacity; outside the capitals, the number of verification centres would be reduced to eight (including the NVC), with four operational patrol posts attached to them. **ONUCA's** air wing would also be reduced by six helicopters to a strength of one fixed-wing aircraft and six helicopters. The helicopters would all be obtained by commercial contract, thus permitting repatriation of almost all of the Canadian air unit which has hitherto provided the bulk of **ONUCA's** helicopter support.

35. As a result of this reduction in the size of **ONUCA**, it would no longer be appropriate for the command to be exercised by an officer in the rank of Major-General. If, therefore, the Security Council approves the recommendations in the present report, it would be my intention to reduce the level of the Chief Military Observer's post to Brigadier-General. Major-General **Agustin Quesada Gómez**, who has performed his duties with such distinction both in the initial establishment of **ONUCA** and in carrying out the operational tasks described in my present report and in my previous reports to the Council, would return to his country's service before the end of 1990. After the usual consultation with the five Central American Governments, I would then seek the consent of the Security Council to the appointment of a new Chief Military Observer in the rank of Brigadier-General.

36. Finally, I wish to pay tribute to the Chief Military Observer of **ONUCA**, Major-General **Agustin Quesada Gómez**, and to all the men and women under his command, both military and civilian, for the manner in which they have carried out their duties during the mandate period that is about to end. Their performance was especially impressive during the demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan Resistance, an operation which required ingenuity and improvisation and very long hours of **work**, in difficult climatic and geographical conditions. Their contribution to the restoration of peace in Central America has reflected great credit on themselves, on their countries and on the United Nations.

Annex I

Members of the Nicaraguan Resistance demobilized
in Honduras

6 July 1990

<u>Location</u>	<u>Armed</u>	<u>unarmed</u>	<u>Total</u>
Danli	0	474	474
La Kiatara	217	78	295
Las Vegas	0	17	17
Yamales a/	0	1 574	1 574
Zacatal a/	<u>0</u>	<u>399</u>	<u>399</u>
Total	<u>217</u>	<u>2 422</u>	<u>2 639</u>

a/ Although all the personnel demobilized at Yamales and Zacatal were unarmed, 384 weapons were handed over separately to ONUCA at Yamales and 41 at Zacatal. They are included in the totals in annex III.

Annex II

Members of the Nicaraguan Resistance demobilized
in Nicaragua

6 July 1990

<u>Location</u>	<u>Armed</u>	<u>Unarmed</u>	<u>Total</u>
Zone 1	2 108	138	2 246
Zone 2	1 220	413	1 633
Zone 3	2 150	405	2 555
Zone 4	3 067	172	3 239
Zone 5 ^{a/}	5 077	1 327	6 404
Zone 6	1 335	105	1 440
Zone 7	147	25	172
Zone 8	977	582	1 559
El Cedro	262	81	343
Estelí/Matagalpa Verification Centre	<u>18</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>23</u>
Total	<u>16 361</u>	<u>3 253</u>	<u>69 1 4</u>

^{a/} The figures for zone 5 include those demobilized at San Pedro de Lovago on 27 June 1990.

Annex III

Weapons handed over to ONUCA by members of the
Nicaraguan Resistance

6 July 1990

<u>Type of weapon</u>	<u>Honduras</u>	<u>Nicaragua</u>	<u>Total</u>
Small arms (includes AK 47s, other assault rifles, rifles and light machine-guns)	512	14 632	15 144
Heavy machine-guns	2	2	4
Mortars (includes light and medium mortars)	28	109	137
Grenade launchers (includes RPG-7s and LAWs)	83	1 199	1 282
Grenades (all types)	570	763	1 333
Mines (all types)	4	142	146
Missiles	37	82	119
	(9 "Redeye") (28 "SAM-7s")	("Redeye")	

