

III. We call upon the governments of the "Group of Eight" countries to reintegrate Panama into the group.

IV. We declare that we have created among the participants of this meeting an ad hoc commission which will fundamentally serve to:

a) Promote compliance with the 1977 Torrijos-Carter Treaties by means of public campaigns.

b) Counteract the campaign of disinformation and defamation against Panama.

c) Bring this declaration before the Latin American Parliament so that this organization, in accordance with its basic principles, will become an effective mechanism of pressure towards the United States, on Panama's behalf.

Signed by 150 Latin American parliamentarians from 15 countries, representing 47 political parties.

Ecuador National Congress resolution

The plenary of the legislative commissions, considering:

● That the Government and People of Panama have been the object of a permanent aggression and threat of interven-

tion on the part of the United States for the past several years;

● That this entire campaign is directed at revising the Torrijos-Carter Treaties, seeking thereby to prolong the presence of military bases in that country beyond the year 2000; and

● That it is the duty of the National Congress to defend the sovereignty and right to self-determination of peoples.

Agrees:

1. To express solidarity to the Panamanian People and Government, today under attack and threatened by foreign military intervention;

2. To condemn the United States' interference in the internal affairs of Panama, which violates the principle of self-determination of peoples; and,

3. To call upon the Governments of Panama and the United States to faithfully and fully comply with the Torrijos-Carter Treaties.

Quito, June 15, 1989

(signed)

Nicolás Issa Obando, President of the National Congress
Dr. Carlos Jaramillo Díaz, General Secretary

U.S. goofs in Panama

A major gaffe was committed by the U.S. military Southern Command when its soldiers detained 150 senators and representatives from the national Congresses of 15 nations, who were in Panama participating in the "Conference of Latin American Parliamentarians for Panama." The detention of the lawmakers, widely publicized by Ibero-America's news media, led to widespread condemnation of the U.S. government for its "arrogant behavior" and its violations of the 1977 Panama Canal treaties. In Ibero-America, not only do elected representatives enjoy immunity from search or arrest, but the lawmakers charge that they were "intimidated, insulted, and subjected to offensive" behavior by the U.S. soldiers.

The incident occurred on June 18 as the lawmakers and an entourage of journalists were on their way to the Panamanian town of Veracruz, located near Howard Air Force Base of the U.S. Southern Command. A Panamanian highway which passes through the base provides the only access to Veracruz. When the buses carrying the lawmakers passed through the base, U.S. soldiers stopped the caravan, accusing the passengers of "taking photographs in a restricted area." When the lawmakers protested that they were in Panamanian territory, and that the troops were denying them the right to free passage, guar-

anteed in the Panama Canal treaties, one of the soldiers denied that right existed. "You may be in Panama, but this is a U.S. military base and it does not belong to you," she stated.

The soldiers offered to let the lawmakers continue, but not four major Brazilian journalists (Neri Vitor, Dilimar Francou, Cesar Moura Damota, and Ascanio Aurelio) nor Panamanian newspaperman Luis Aurelio. When that offer was rejected, the soldiers detained the entire group for almost an hour, until U.S. military officers of higher rank agreed to allow them to continue.

Venezuela's largest daily, *Ultimas Noticias*, ran this headline on June 19: "U.S.A. Troops Carry Out Aggression Against Venezuelan Lawmakers in Panama." Similar headlines appeared throughout Ibero-America and Europe.

The State Department contributed to the ill will by insisting that the soldiers were justified in mistreating the lawmakers. The troops had the right to detain them, "because they were on United States military territory," asserted the U.S. Embassy in Venezuela in a statement issued June 19, even though the incident took place on a highway which, according to the canal treaty, is not restricted, and belongs to Panama.

Only the Venezuelan government of Carlos Andrés Pérez took the U.S. side in the incident, in a June 19 Foreign Ministry statement saying the lawmakers themselves were to blame "for arguing with the soldiers."