

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 2

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# Jesse fears 2d Vietnam

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Panama City—The Rev. Jesse Jackson, beginning a four-nation mission for "peace and justice," warned yesterday that Central America could become "another Vietnam" as early as this fall and called for establishment of a Western Hemisphere "war-free zone from Canada to Cuba."

He also renewed his charge that the CIA directed attempt to topple the Marxist government of Nicaragua by mining its harbors violated international law. But, questioned by reporters, Jackson did not voice similar criticism of Nicaraguan and Cuban attempts to overthrow the government of El Salvador.

"We have seen signs that war in Central America is escalating," Jackson said at an airport news conference on arrival here. "This summer may be our last chance to work for peace before a fall offensive."

If such an offensive were to happen, Jackson warned, it would be a "war more devastating than Vietnam that would spread like brushfire," tearing apart the social fabric of both the United States and Central America. Jackson gave no details beyond saying "It's evident that if the present tension continues, the fighting will continue."

"WE MUST MOVE beyond the last ugly act," he declared, "and make this radical decision to give peace a chance."

The Democratic presidential candidate arrived in this capital city yesterday morning following an all-night flight from Chicago. Besides Panama, Jackson will visit El Salvador, Nicaragua and Cuba, where he is scheduled to confer for three hours on Tuesday with Cuban President Fidel Castro.

A scheduled address here by Jackson to representatives of the four Contadora nations was shelved, though Jackson insisted he will speak to most of their representatives during his tour.

Jackson's mission—the third foray into international diplomacy of his unorthodox campaign, following visits to Syria and Mexico—came at Castro's invitation. The purpose of the six-day trip, Jackson said, will be to help break the "ciclo de dolor"—cycle of pain—that divides nations.

THOUGH JACKSON is not expected to make any significant diplomatic impact in the region, he said yesterday he will attempt to persuade Castro to release some 21 political prisoners who have been held in Cuban jails for as long as 15 to 20 years. Castro has made similar gestures in the past and conceivably could give

Jackson something concrete to show for a trip some of his critics have dismissed as showboating.

On his arrival here at Omar Torrijos airport, Jackson and his entourage were serenaded by grade schoolers, the boys in ornate white shirts, or *camisillas*; the girls in colorful native dresses called *polleros*. Jackson himself was in a dark blue *guayabera* suit.