



OSCAR ARIAS SÁNCHEZ (BORN 1940)

Oscar Arias Sánchez won the respect of leaders and humanitarians everywhere for bringing peace to Central America. Born in 1940, he studied in the United States and then earned a law degree in Costa Rica.

Elected president of Costa Rica in 1986, Arias Sánchez immediately put the world on notice that he intended to restore peace in Central America by disentangling the region from the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. In a series of meetings with the presidents of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, Arias Sánchez pressed to resolve the turmoil and end outside influence in Central America. He eventually gained approval of his peace plan, which called for each country to limit the size of their armies, assure freedom of the press, and hold free and open elections. The plan was successful and, with the signing of the accords, fighting in the region came to an end.



In 1987, President Oscar Arias Sánchez received the Nobel Peace Prize for bringing peace to the region and used the monetary award to establish the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress. During his presidency, he frequently ventured into the public without entourage or fanfare to listen to the concerns of the citizenry. After the conclusion of his first term in office, he continued to be a “man of the people,” promoting human security and development on many fronts. In 2006, he was again elected president of Costa Rica and today continues to champion peace and human rights.

“The more freedom we enjoy, the greater the responsibility we bear, toward others as well as ourselves.”

OSCAR ARIAS SÁNCHEZ