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Costa Rican & Honduran Presidents Announce Decision To Opt Out Of Contadora, Revive OAS And Rio Pact

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After a brief meeting between Honduran President Jose Azcona and Costa Rican counterpart, Oscar Arias, in San Jose on Nov. 5, a joint statement was released announcing that both nations will abstain from participating in future meetings of Contadora and its Support Group. This decision was justified by the Nicaraguan suit against the two nations before the U.N. International Court of Justice. Nonetheless, Azcona and Arias reiterated their support for the Contadora peace process, while pointing out that obtaining peace through Contadora will be "difficult." Meanwhile, a Costa Rican government official, Jose Francisco Cordero, told representatives of the Second World Congress of Youths for Peace in San Jose that the Arias administration is seeking to revive inter-American institutions such as the Organization of American States (OAS) to negotiate with the parties involved in the regional conflict. Cordero stated that Contadora lacked the political and diplomatic force of the OAS. In the same vein, Costa Rican Foreign Minister Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto claimed that San Jose is also considering the possibility of invoking the Rio Pact if the conflict escalates in the near future. The Inter-American Reciprocal Assistance Treaty (IRAT), also known as the Rio Pact, was employed to legitimize the US invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965. Madrigal will attend the 16th General Assembly of the OAS in Guatemala City, beginning on Nov. 10. Costa Rica and Honduras are expected to request OAS action in the regional conflict.

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