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O.a.s. & UN United Nations Join Forces In Search Of Peaceful Resolution To Central American Conflict

by Deborah Tyroler

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Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Jose Baena Soares, announced Nov. 19 an unprecedented initiative by the United Nations and the OAS to jointly employ respective organizational mechanisms to prevent generalized war in the Central American region. The action was proposed by UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar in response to the military escalation in Central America occurring in recent months. The UN-OAS joint initiative involves the use of "the entire arsenal of peaceful measures that the two organizations can mobilize for the maintenance of peace." Both Baena Soares and Perez de Cuellar met with diplomats from the five Central American nations, as well as diplomatic representatives of Contadora (Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Uruguay) nations before announcing the initiative. Baena Soares told the 13 diplomats that the measures under consideration are included in the OAS charter, which constitutes a regional organization of the UN. He pointed out that neither organization could act without the previous consent of the countries involved. The peace plan, which in some aspects would require approval by the UN Security Council, could in special circumstances demand the application of the Rio Pact on a continental scale. The UN indicated willingness to send its well-known "Blue Helmets," i.e., international peacekeeping force, to the area if necessary. In addition, the OAS has experience in this type of peacekeeping force, exemplified in its actions during the 1969 "Soccer War" between Honduras and El Salvador. At that time the OAS dispatched military observer forces to establish and maintain a neutral zone consisting of three leagues on either side of the two countries' mutual border. (Basic data from AP, 11/19/86)

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