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Guatemala-mexico Bilateral Accords: Summary

by Steven Ranieri

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On Feb. 12, Guatemalan Foreign Minister Alvaro Arzu and Mexican counterpart Fernando Solano signed an agreement under which the two governments were committed to opening negotiations to restructure Guatemala's \$70 million debt to Mexico within the next 30 days. The restructuring will include swapping part of the debt for shares in Guatemalan state-run enterprises slated for privatization. Additional highlights of bilateral accords are summarized below. * Acceleration of talks and deadlines on implementation of free trade pact. * Joint anti-narcotics program. * Creation of bilateral task groups on exploration and exploitation of natural gas and coal; electricity infrastructure; and, hydroelectric power development. * The Mexican government has offered to conduct a feasibility study for the construction of a new border checkpoint station at Tecun-Uman, Guatemala/Hidalgo, Mexico. * Approval of a bilateral accord on air transport is recommended. Guatemala City is particularly interested in using Mexico's satellite telecommunications facilities for expanding communications in rural areas. However, Guatemalan officials have requested preferential rates. (Sources: Notimex, 02/12/91; AFP, 02/13/91; ACAN-EFE, 02/11/91, 02/13/91)

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