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Deborah Tyroler

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Commission For Recovery & Development Proposes \$2 Billion In Foreign Aid Per Year For Central America

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Feb. 15 in a communique issued in Washington, the International Commission for Central American Recovery and Development said that the agreement reached at the summit in El Salvador constituted a positive step in the pacification of the region. On the same day, the Commission released a plan for the economic recovery of the region involving the expenditure of \$2 billion per year over a five-year period. The financing, according to the plan, would be derived from contributions by the international community. Donor nations would be expected to guarantee that Central American nations receive unilateral trade concessions. The commission was created in December 1987, and is comprised of 47 intellectuals, economists and politicians from Japan, Europe and the Americas. Its principal objective is to organize economic support for the peace process as outlined in the 1987 regional accord. US Sen. Terry Sanford (D-NC) played a major role in the Commission's creation. According to Notimex (02/15/89), the Commission's report is similar in substance and objectives to separate plans prepared several months ago by the United Nations and the Mexican government. The plan's objectives are employment creation, increased productivity and investment, fiscal and monetary policy reform, export promotion and economic cooperation among Central American and donor nations. Assuming progress regarding these objectives within the next three years, the Commission expects that the flow of Central American refugees to other nations would be halted; the extreme poverty experienced by millions of Central Americans would be reduced, and displacement of persons within their respective countries. On Feb. 15 in Washington, Nicaraguan businessperson Enrique Dreyfus told AFP that Japan had pledged \$1.5 billion in aid to Central America over the next three years. He added that Nicaragua and another unspecified nation will not be included in the program. Dreyfus, a member of the private International Commission for Central American Recovery and Development, was reporting on the pledge by Japanese members of the international panel. Dreyfus told AFP it was unclear if the \$500 million per year would come from Japan's government or private sector, but said the Japanese officials made repeated references to the plan in panel meetings last week in Guatemala. Presidents of the Commission, Arthur Levitt, who heads the American Stock Exchange, and Sonia Picado, director of the Inter-American Human Rights Institute, delivered the organization's financial aid program to the five Central American presidents. Commission members in San Salvador told reporters that its economic cooperation program for Central America has already been endorsed by 70 members of the US Congress. (Basic data from Enfoprensa's Informacion de Guatemala, 01/17-23/89; Notimex, 02/12/89; AFP, 02/15/89)

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