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Despite "reservations," U.S. Does Not Plan To Veto Plans For U.N. Central America Observer Force

by Deborah Tyroler

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On March 21 at a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs international operations subcommittee, Secretary of State James Baker expressed reservations about plans by the United Nations to field an observer force to monitor fulfillment of the Central American peace accord. Baker said, "We want to...see what the Secretary General believes would be appropriate. We want to be sure that it is not something that could be used to legitimate a continued transfer of material and support to the guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front in El Salvador. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) called on Baker to support the peace accord, and said he hoped the Secretary's reservations do not translate into a veto on the creation of the observer force. As one of five members of the UN Security Council, the US has veto power over Council decisions. Baker asserted that the US does not intend to veto the plan. He repeated that the UN force should monitor not only the Nicaraguan contras, but also alleged shipments of Nicaraguan military aid to Salvadoran guerrillas. In February, the governments of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador called on the United Nations to provide observers to verify implementation of a regional peace plan originally signed in Guatemala City in August 1987. In February the presidents at a summit in El Salvador developed an accord calling for Honduras and Nicaragua to draft a plan within 90 days to disband contra rebels based in Honduras. Nicaragua agreed to move elections up nine months to February 25, 1990 and implement democratic reforms. The foreign ministers of the five countries are due to meet in late March in Costa Rica to approve measures taken by the United Nations to organize the observer force. The UN plan is to place some 220 people, including some 100 military observers, throughout Central America. The five countries have asked Canada, Spain and West Germany to furnish the personnel. (Basic data from AFP, 03/21/89)

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