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Central American Foreign Ministers Reach Agreement On U.N. Monitoring Force

by Deborah Tyroler

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On March 30, foreign ministers from El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua convened at a resort hotel outside San Jose to discuss details for a final agreement on organizing United Nations task forces to verify security provisions under the regional peace accord. Unidentified diplomats cited by the New York Times said UN mobile unit detachments would consist of four to five unarmed observers. Detachments would be stationed in each Central American country. The total verification force would number at least 160. The mobile units would investigate allegations of military activity or support for "irregular forces." The detachments could initiate investigations on their own, and would also respond to complaints by governments. UN representative Alvaro de Soto told Notimex that "winds were favorable," as the ministers had already reached virtual agreement on all important points of the plan. The last draft of the plan for the observer force is expected in April from UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar. Finally, the plan is scheduled to go before the UN Security Council for debate by mid-May. Other issues scheduled for debate during the two-day meeting were dismantlement of the contra forces camped in Honduras, and a regional anti-drug trafficking plan. Unidentified Honduran diplomats told Notimex that their government had presented to the ministers a plan to demobilize not only the Nicaraguan contra army, but also Salvadoran guerrilla forces, said to operate in the Honduran-Salvadoran border area. (Basic data from AP, Notimex, 03/30/89; New York Times, 03/31/89)

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