

4-5-1989

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Honduran Congress Approves Legislation Authorizing Indefinite Joint Military Maneuvers With U.S.

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Wednesday, April 5, 1989

On the evening of March 29, the Honduran Congress approved legislation that effectively authorizes joint US- Honduran military maneuvers for an indefinite period. The vote concluded five months of secret talks among Honduran Defense and Foreign Ministry officials, and representatives of the US State Department and the Pentagon. The accord between the two nations is known as Protocol 11, and complements a bilateral agreement signed in May 1954 which has been used to provide legal authority for the increased US military presence in Honduras since 1981. Under Protocol 11, objectives of future war games are to develop capabilities for joint military operations, expand Honduran defense capabilities, maintain and strengthen military cooperation, provide training in a tropical environment, create a strong military infrastructure, and implement civil action programs to improve relations between civilians and soldiers. The protocol states that joint military exercises are to be drafted and approved on an annual basis. Both sides will have their own commander-in-chief for the all joint operations. Next, the protocol states that costs of Honduran participation in the war games may be defrayed by US funds. (Basic data from Xinhua, 03/31/89)

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