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U.N. Secretary General Says Central American Peace Accord Stalled

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In an opening address May 29 to an international conference on Central American refugees in Guatemala City, UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar said progress toward resolving the regional crisis has been stalled by a dispute between Nicaragua and Honduras over a World Court case. Because of the dispute, said Perez, he has been unable to commence preparations for sending a UN peacekeeping force to the area to monitor compliance with the 1987 peace plan, known as Esquipulas II. Unless the peace process advances, said the secretary general, his efforts to assist approximately two million Central American refugees and displaced are unlikely to succeed. Violence drove people from their homes, and only its long-term reduction will provide incentive for the refugees to return. In Nicaragua's suit filed at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Honduras is accused of aiding the contras. Managua also demands compensation for the damage and loss of life caused by the contras. Honduran Foreign Minister Carlos Lopez Contreras, in an exchange of letters with his Nicaraguan counterpart this month, accused Nicaragua of breaking a "gentlemen's agreement" to withdraw its suit against Honduras. Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto responded by accusing Honduras of trying to "sabotage" the peace plan. (Basic data from New York Times, 05/30/89)

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