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Honduras & El Salvador To Conduct Joint Naval Exercises

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Aug. 11 in Tegucigalpa, Honduran and Salvadoran officials reached an agreement on holding joint naval exercises in the Gulf of Fonseca. Salvadoran navy commander Humberto Villalta told Honduran reporters that the discussion was aimed at expanding military exercises in the Gulf "because Salvadoran guerrillas are supplied with arms and military supplies through Nicaragua."
The US has installed radar facilities in the locale reportedly to detect arms traffic destined to the Salvadoran rebels. Villalta added that the two countries hope to begin joint operations to halt drug trafficking. "Even though to date there is no drug trafficking in the Central American Pacific area, we cannot forget that the region is a bridge for such operations," he said. The officers also discussed the possibility of establishing a joint naval academy with Guatemala. Villalta added that Nicaragua "will also be invited to take part in the project once it has achieved democratization, as it is impossible for one country to maintain a naval academy on its own." (Basic data from Xinhua, 08/11/89, 08/12/89)