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Recent Developments In Guatemalan Teachers' Strike

by Deborah Tyroler

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Aug. 10: On Thursday evening, a group of Guatemalan teachers set up a blockade on the "Rodolfo Robles" bridge spanning the Suchiate River on the Guatemalan-Mexican border. Most of Guatemala's public school teachers have been on strike since June 5. (See CAU 08/11/89 for a summary of strike objectives, earlier developments.) Aug. 11: The teachers returned to Guatemala by crossing the river rather than using the bridge. Earlier, they spent several minutes on Mexican territory, expressing fears that they would be forcibly removed by the Guatemalan National Police. As a result of the same concerns, they decided to swim across the river. Aug. 14: In contacts with Mexico's National Education Workers' Coordinator (CNTE), Guatemalan teachers requested the mediation of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari to resolve their conflict with the Guatemalan government. The CNTE announced that it would formally request Salinas' mediation on behalf of the Guatemalan teachers in an Aug. 18 meeting with Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo, and organize a solidarity rally outside the Guatemalan Embassy in Mexico City. Secretary general of Mexico's University Workers' Union (SUNTU), Pablo Sandoval, announced that during the Aug. 18 meeting between Salinas and Cerezo, a SUNTU delegation would travel to Guatemala to demonstrate solidarity with the Guatemalan teachers' strike. Aug. 17: CNTE members staged a three-hour rally outside the Guatemalan Embassy. The teachers delivered a communique to embassy personnel addressed to President Cerezo urging him to reach an accommodation with their Guatemalan counterparts. Embassy spokesperson Abelardo Rodas told Notimex that the teachers' conflict would be resolved next week, but would not involve a salary hike. (Basic data from Notimex, 08/11/89, 08/14/89, 08/14/89)

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