11-8-1989

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Deborah Tyroler

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U.N. Security Approves Creation Of Central America Peacekeeping Force

by Deborah Tyroler
Category/Department: General
Published: Wednesday, November 8, 1989

On Nov. 7 by a unanimous vote, the UN Security Council approved the creation of an international peacekeeping force for Central America, as requested by the region's five presidents. UN Secretary General General Javier Perez de Cuellar said that ONUCA, comprised of 260 observers, becomes operational "immediately" for a six-month period. The Security Council is to evaluate the need for an extension of ONUCA operations in six months. He added that the need for the establishment of the ONUCA has become "greater than ever" in the past few weeks. The purpose of ONUCA is to ensure that "irregular forces" do not use the territory of any Central American nation to launch attacks on another nation. This prohibition is an integral part of the regional peace accords signed by the presidents of El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. After weeks of planning which included visits to all Central American countries, a UN mission submitted a proposal for the establishment of the ONUCA to the Security Council a month ago. According to unidentified UN diplomats cited by Notimex, the US one of five permanent Council members delayed a vote on the proposal by presenting "budgetary objections." Nicaraguan officials have been anxious to see ONUCA on site as soon as possible. Notimex was told by Nicaragua's ambassador to the UN, Alejandro Serrano Caldera, that if the peacekeeping force had been established in a timely fashion, certain recent "incidents" would have been avoided. When asked if the ONUCA will prevent the infiltration of contras from Honduras into Nicaragua, Serrano said that the force was designed precisely to forestall such problems.

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