10-12-1989

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John Neagle

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Mini-summit Of 3 Major Coca-producer Nations, Group Of 8 Summit In Ica, Peru: Summary

by John Neagle  
Category/Department: General  
Published: Thursday, October 12, 1989

On Oct. 11-12, presidents of Group of 8 (G-8) nations convened in Ica, Peru, to discuss broad policy questions in the areas of regional economic integration, foreign debt, democratic government, and combatting the drug trade. Peruvian President Alan Garcia called a special closed-door "mini-summit" of the region's major coca-producer nations Bolivia, Colombia, Peru for Oct. 10 in Ica. Foreign ministers met to organize details of the summit agenda in Trujillo on Oct. 9-10. Ica is located about 313 km. south of Lima, and Trujillo, 540 km. north of the capital. G-8 member-nations are Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Panamanian participation was suspended in February 1988, when President Eric Arturo Delvalle was deposed following an attempt to retire Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega. The Group of 8, also known as the Rio Group, was established in November 1986. Oct. 8: Notimex reported that the Peruvian government plans to sign separate bilateral accords with Argentina and Brazil at the ministerial level meetings create consultative commissions on foreign debt, drug trafficking, environmental problems, and economic integration. Oct. 9: The meeting sites and agendas for the foreign ministers' meetings preceding the summit were changed at the last minute as part of the Peruvian government's security measures. Early Monday, AFP reported that Peruvian Foreign Minister Guillermo Larco Cox confirmed that President Alan Garcia will propose excluding Panama from G-8 as long as Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega remains in power. Then, on Monday evening, Larco Cox denied press reports that he had gone on record in support of expelling Panama from G-8, preferring instead that Panama be maintained under its current status of "suspension." According to Notimex, the foreign ministers were divided into two factions on how to handle the Panama problem. The "radical" faction headed by Peru and supported by Uruguay and Brazil would prefer that Panama be simply expelled from the organization. This position, however, is not expressed publicly. A "moderate" faction headed by Mexico, and supported by Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela opts for maintaining Panama's suspended status to avoid polarization among G-8 member-nations. The argument here is that G-8 needs to focus on more important issues in building Latin American integration. Unidentified diplomatic sources cited by Notimex said that the G-8 will approve a proposal by Mexico to invite Cuba to be reincorporated into the Organization of American States (OAS). The foreign ministers reportedly supported placing the proposal on the summit agenda. Cuba was expelled from OAS participation in 1962. The Mexican proposal also included invitations to Canada and Belize to join the OAS. Notimex cited unidentified diplomatic sources who said that Mexico continues to reject a proposal to create an international paramilitary force to combat drug trafficking. Other unidentified G-8 member-nations support this proposal. Next, Mexico reportedly proposed a long-term initiative toward disarmament of "conventional forces" in Latin America. Oct. 10: In a communique, the Venezuelan government announced President Carlos Andres Perez's four major objectives at the summit: 1) expulsion of Panama from G-8; 2) resolutions on cooperative efforts to obtain foreign debt principal or interest reduction, new financing mechanisms to guarantee development objectives, and gradual normalization of relations with the international finance system; 3) support for Venezuela's proposed special United Nations
session on international cooperation in anti-drug trafficking programs, and initiatives to formalize
the political will of drug producer and consumer nations in emphasizing non-coercive measures;
and 4) new and expanded international cooperative efforts on environmental preservation, based on
Latin American nations’ sovereign right to administer their own natural resources. In Ica, President
Alan Garcia, Colombian President Virgilio Barco and Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora met for
six hours to discuss common problems and strategies as Latin America's major producer nations of
cocaine. As part of US President George Bush's recently announced anti-drug program, Washington
has allocated $270 million to the three countries for coca cultivation reduction, strengthening of
law enforcement agencies, and related projects. Garcia emphasized that the drug problem is not
only, or even primarily, one of law enforcement. For Latin America in particular, he said, the drug
trafficking problem has many economic and political dimensions that must be met at present, and
assuming consumer countries achieve drug demand reduction, in the future. In addition to Garcia,
Bolivian and Colombian politicians have reiterated coca production can successfully be substituted
by other crops only if growers are assured of relatively stable markets and reasonable prices for
the substitutes. Garcia and Barco have said recently that economic development assistance and
the removal of trade barriers are also required on the part of the US and other cocaine consumer
nations as part of a global "solution" to the drug problem. In a communique read by Garcia to
hundreds of reporters at the end of the meeting, the three presidents said they had agreed to invite
President Bush and the 12-member European Economic Community (EEC) to a drug summit in
Latin America that would take place within 90 days. Next, the communique said both production
and consumption of cocaine must be addressed, reflecting the Latin American leaders' concern
over the Bush administration's prioritizing of police and military actions to deal with the drug
trade. The presidents suggested details of the summit be worked out at a Nov. 20 meeting of lower-
level officials in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Bush accepted, as did French President Francois Mitterrand.
France currently holds the rotating presidency of the EEC. Garcia has been promoting inclusion
of European nations as active participants in stemming the cocaine trade. He says that if the US
is successful in slowing the flow of cocaine over its borders, traffickers will shift their focus to
Europe. Notimex reported that the Bolivian president's brief presence during the G-8 proceedings
led to renewed discussion of whether the organization will consider the entry of new members.
According to the Mexican government news agency, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay favor the
inclusion of other Latin American nations. Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile and Jamaica have requested that
G-8 consider including them in its activities. In addition to the annual presidential summit, the
Rio Group has organized periodic meetings of foreign ministers, economy and finance ministers,
and UN ambassadors to discuss issues of mutual concern. This year, the seven nations initiated
a similar series of meetings for respective ministers of culture. AFP reported that a battalion of
300 soldiers guarded the Las Dunas Hotel, site of the meeting, and 3,000 plainclothes policemen
circulated the city. Notimex said that 20,000 soldiers had been deployed in and around Ica. A bomb
exploded before dawn Oct. 10 in Trujillo, where five foreign ministers were meeting to prepare the
summit agenda. It went off at the offices of a public housing agency, damaging the building but
causing no injuries. Police said no group claimed responsibility. Ica suffered two brief blackouts
Tuesday morning, but officials said technical problems caused them, not sabotage. Oct. 11: In
opening statements, the presidents urged that the US and Europe balance police actions to cut the
production and trafficking of drugs with efforts reduction drug addiction. Venezuelan President
Perez and the other presidents made clear they did not share Bush's focus on police action as the
best way to fight the drug trade. "The more demand grows in the North, the more production will
grow in the South. Police actions will be useless unless demand is reduced," Perez said. In the
words of Uruguayan President Julio Maria Sanguinetti, "The problem is not only in Medellin. It is also in the streets of New York City." Perez said that Panama's military government is a "masked dictatorship." In his opening remarks, Peruvian President Garcia said he wished to "express publicly the Peruvian people's and the Peruvian government's repudiation and condemnation of the military dictatorship." In his speech, Sarney mentioned the need for normalizing the inter-American system and, in a clear reference to Argentina's dispute with Britain over the Malvinas-Falklands islands, for the elimination of all vestiges of colonialism throughout the continent. Garcia announced that no new members would be brought into G-8 at this time. In attendance at the summit were Perez, Sanguinetti, Garcia, Barco, Jose Sarney of Brazil, Carlos Menem of Argentina and Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico. Other topics on the summit agenda were Central America's conflicts, the regional foreign debt burden and environmental damage to the Amazon. At the conclusion of the summit's first day, Presidents Sarney and Menem told Notimex that they supported the reincorporation of Cuba into the OAS. (Basic data from Prensa Latina, 10/06/89; AFP, 10/09/89, 10/10/89; Notimex, 10/08-11/89; AP, 10/11/89; Xinhua, 10/10/89)

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