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Ecuadoran Military Rejects Peruvian Weapons Reduction Proposal

by Erika Harding
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On Jan. 29, the Peruvian government submitted a proposal to Quito calling for a bilateral 50% reduction in weapons and military personnel to mark the 50th anniversary of the Rio Treaty which ended a two-year war between the two nations. Ecuadoran Defense Minister Jorge Felix rejected the offer Jan. 30 on grounds that "it does not guarantee a balance of military forces" between the two. According to Felix, "If they [Peru] have 10 guns and we've got two, and we both reduce the number of guns by 50%, they'll have five and we'll have one the relation of the two forces has not changed...Ecuador wants to see a balance between the two forces, so the security of both sides can be guaranteed." The minister said he had previously suggested to the Peruvian government that both countries sign an agreement to abstain from resorting to force in attempts to resolve ongoing border disputes. Such an agreement, he added, "is a fundamental requirement that would enable the Ecuadoran government to seriously consider the Peruvian proposal to reduce both armed forces by 50%." According to a recent report published by the Military Strategy magazine, Peruvian military expenditures surpass those of any other Andean country. The report said Peru spent US$2.3 billion on weapons acquisition in 1990, compared to Ecuador's US$234 million. (Source: Inter Press Service, 01/30/92)

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