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BELIZE

BH-GT DISPUTE

GOVERNMENT REJECTS LATEST GUATEMALAN CLAIM

FL142107 Bridgetown CANA in English 2035 GMT 14 Jan 83

[Text] Belize City, 14 Jan CANA-REUTER -- Belize's sovereignty and territorial integrity are not up for negotiation, a spokesman for the prime minister's office said today. He was commenting on Guatemalan President Efraim Rios Montt's statement on Wednesday that Guatemala had reduced its long-standing claim for the whole of Belize to the southern fifth of the country. However, the spokesman said that even though the Guatemalan claim to Belize was unfounded, Belize was not opposed to providing Guatemala free access to the Caribbean.

He also suggested Belize and Guatemala could draw up joint programmes for economic cooperation. But there would be no compromise on the question of ceding territory or diminution of Belize's sovereignty, he said.

Belize, a former British colony, gained independence 16 months ago. Guatemala said earlier this week that it would hold talks on January 24 in New York with Belize and Britain.

PRICE PROTESTS SALE OF U.S. ARMS TO GUATEMALA

FL142358 Bridgetown CANA in English 2235 GMT 14 Jan 83

[Text] Belmopan, Belize, Jan 14, CANA-REUTER -- Belize today publically protested the United States lifting of a five-year arms embargo to neighbouring Guatemala saying it could provide that country with arms to use against Belize. Belizean Prime Minister George Price today published the country's protest in the government gazette.

It said that he officially presented his objection to newly accredited U.S. Ambassador to Belize Malcolm Barnebey on January 10, just three days after the U.S. lifted the Guatemalan arms embargo. The arms embargo, originally imposed by the Carter administration for the country alleged human rights violations, was ended when the U.S. State Department announced it would allow Guatemala to buy 6.3 million dollars worth of U.S. Defence Department spare parts and other equipment for its air force. The embargo was lifted because of what the U.S. said were "significant steps" taken by Guatemala's present government to end human rights abuses.

But Prime Minister Price said he feared the resumption of arms sales and equipment to Guatemala as a threat to Belizean security. Guatemala harbours a long-standing claim to Belizean territory and has refused to recognise its independence gained 16 months ago from Britain.

Under an agreement with the Belizean Government Britain still maintains 1,800 troops in its former colony as well as a squadron of Harrier jump-jets, Scorpion tanks and Rapier missiles as a deterrent to Guatemalan aggression. But British hopes for a settlement of the Belize dispute rose following Guatemala's apparent easing of its territorial claim, informed sources in London said today.

Guatemalan president Efraim Rios Montt said on Wednesday his government would drop its demand for sovereignty over Belize and would only press for the southern one fifth of the country. Earlier today Belize stated that it was willing to provide Guatemala with free access to its ports on the Caribbean Sea its economic zone but it would under no circumstances compromise on the cessation or diminution of its sovereignty,

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Talks between Great Britain, Belize and Guatemala are scheduled to open on January 24 in New York.

Meanwhile tensions between the countries were underscored today when relatives of four Guatemalan fishermen claimed that the fishermen were arrested by an English patrol boat off a small island near Belizean waters. The relatives said the men were taken to and jailed in the Belizean port town of Punta Gorda. So far there has been no official government reaction to the families claims from either Belize or Guatemala.

EL SALVADOR

DEFENSE MINISTER RESIGNATION RUMORS DENIED

PA162043 Paris AFP in Spanish 1924 GMT 16 Jan 83

[Text] San Salvador, 16 Jan (AFP) -- The eventual resignation of Gen Jose Guillermo Garcia, Salvadoran defense minister, within 3 months, was denied today by persons close to the high officer. The same sources said that it was "too early to talk about a resignation" by Garcia. The rumors regarding his resignation persisted in political circles, following the solution of the crisis created by the rebellion of a high officer in the northern department of Cabanas.

Political circles have said that Garcia's resignation could have been part of the agreement which the high command reached with Col Sigifredo Ochoa, the officer who rebelled and threatened not to relent until Garcia resigned. Ochoa had accused Garcia of corruption.

Ochoa has been mentioned in relation to rightist leader Roberto d'Aubuisson. The colonel, who commanded the 1,200-man Sensuntepeque garrison in Cabanas Department, rebelled on 8 January, after he received an order transferring him to the Salvadoran Embassy in Uruguay.

After 6 days he changed his attitude. So far, nothing has been said about the agreement he reached with the Salvadoran authorities.

"There is no reason for Minister Garcia to resign," a person close to Garcia said in response to a question. However, he did say that "such a decision could take place any moment." In his most recent news conference, President Alvaro Magana said that ministers do not have a fixed term in office and that "just as the defense minister could be changed, the same could occur with other officials; for this reason there are cabinet changes at the end of the year."

HEAVY FIGHTING, CASUALTIES REPORTED IN TEJUTLA

PA140510 San Salvador EL DIARIO DE HOY in Spanish 13 Jan 83 pp 2, 30

[Text] The struggle to evict the terrorists from Tejutla continued yesterday with heavy fighting, according to unofficial reports. This town, located in Chalatenango Department, was seized by subversives on Saturday night after heavy fighting left a large number of casualties (dead and wounded) including army troops and extremists. It was previously reported that in its bid to dislodge the terrorists the army was using troops from the 4th Infantry Brigade, stationed in El Paraiso.

It was also reported unofficially there that the subversives dynamited several electric towers and that Chalatenango Department was left without electricity. However, this report was not confirmed.

The two previous nights, the inhabitants of towns in northern El Salvador sighted many helicopters without lights. They were probably taking supplies to the troops who are fighting in the Tejutla area.