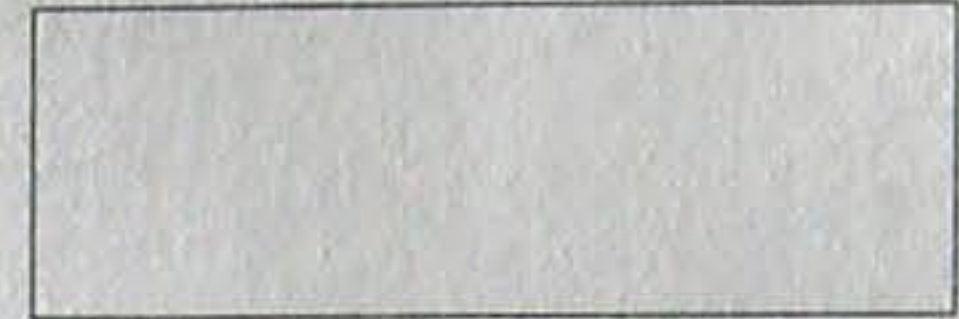




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PANAMA: Regional Security Plan

President Royo is promoting an inter-American security system, parallel with the OAS, that presumably would exclude the US, but it has not gained wide hemispheric backing. [redacted]

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The proposal by Royo--a strong critic of the US position in the Falklands conflict--was first outlined in his speech to the UN General Assembly's special session on disarmament last month. He repeated it this week during his visit to Venezuela, when he also disclosed plans for a meeting of foreign ministers next December in Panama to include Cuba but not the US. [redacted]

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Royo's initial proposal for a new security system was endorsed by Venezuela and Nicaragua. Other countries have put forward a number of alternatives, including Peru's suggestion that any new hemispheric organization should include both the US and Cuba. Opposition to a new system has come principally from Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay, Costa Rica, and El Salvador. [redacted]

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Comment: Despite some public support for Royo's initiative immediately after the fighting in the Falklands, the lack of wider acceptance within the Latin American community may force Royo to reconsider his scheme. [redacted]

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Most Latin American governments are likely to be interested in seeking a redefinition of inter-American relations that would help them strengthen their bilateral and multilateral bargaining positions with the US. They probably would not oppose a conference that emphasizes general consultations on Latin American political and security-related matters. [redacted]

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