

CLP

China Vetoes Use of U.N. Personnel to Supervise

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UNITED NATIONS, Jan. 10—China cast its first veto of a Security Council resolution in nearly 25 years tonight, blocking a U.N. peacekeeping mission in Guatemala in retaliation against the Central American nation's support for Taiwan.

China was the lone member of the 15-nation Security Council to vote against a U.S.-sponsored resolution calling for the dispatch of 155 military observers to oversee compliance with a peace accord signed Dec. 29 by Guatemalan President Alvaro Arzu and leftist rebel leaders.

The agreement calls for ending the bloody 36-year conflict during which more than 100,000 people have been killed and another 40,000 have disappeared. If fully

implemented, it would see Guatemala follow Nicaragua and El Salvador in ending the civil wars that made the 1970s and 1980s a time of right-wing death squads, guerrilla warfare, military dictatorship and human rights violations throughout most of Central America.

The opposing factions had looked to the United Nations, which played an important mediating role in bringing about the agreement, to ensure compliance with many of its key provisions such as disarming and demobilizing the rebel forces and ending atrocities against the Indian majority.

Defeat of the plan for U.N. observers means that, for the moment at least, there will be no outside, impartial force to assume this task.

Prompting Beijing's action tonight was its insistence that Taiwan is an integral prov-

ince of China and its policy of actively opposing any country that maintains ties with Taiwan. Guatemala is one of fewer than 30 mostly small, poor countries in Central America and Africa that recognize Taipei instead of Beijing, primarily because they receive substantial economic aid from Taiwan.

As one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, China has the power to veto any decision. And it exercised that power tonight after extensive negotiations that included mediation by the United States and other countries friendly to Guatemala failed to induce the Arzu government to make conciliatory gestures satisfactory to Beijing.

It was the first Chinese veto of a council resolution since 1972. Until now, the mere threat of a Chinese veto has been sufficient to force an offending country to make concessions. Last year, for example, China used

Peace Agreement in Guatemala

a threat to block a U.N. peacekeeping force for Haiti to cause that nation to put the brakes on its developing ties with Taiwan.

The Chinese were especially incensed by Guatemala's four years of support in the U.N. General Assembly for Taiwan's bid to win U.N. membership as a separate country. Further aggravating the situation was Guatemala's action in inviting a Taiwanese representative to the Dec. 29 signing of the peace agreement in Guatemala City.

"We are not going to change our friendship with Taiwan," Pedro Miguel Lamport, the Guatemalan ambassador in Washington, said before tonight's vote.

He said his government had sent a letter to the Security Council, stating that it did not intend to intervene in any country's internal affairs. But, he stressed, that was as far as

Guatemala intends to go in making a gesture toward Beijing.

Members of the Chinese delegation said the Guatemalan move was insufficient and failed to establish a basis for cooperation.

In statements here and in Beijing, China said it favors moving forward on the peace accord and would like to vote for it. But, the statements said, it cannot countenance a country "doing things that harm China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while also asking for China's cooperation in the Security Council."

What further steps might be taken to get U.N. peacekeepers involved was not immediately clear. One possibility is that Guatemala might go to the Organization of American States, a hemispheric grouping in which China is not represented, and ask its members to authorize an observer force.