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Bush Paraguay Land Grab Incites Unease

Asuncion, Oct 18 (Prensa Latina) The land grab project of US President George W. Bush in Chaco, Paraguay, has generated considerable discomfort both politically and environmentally.

The news circulating the continent about plans to buy 98,840 acres of land in Chaco, Paraguay, near the Triple Frontier (Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay) is the talk of

the town in these countries.

Although official sources have not confirmed the information that is already public, the land is reportedly located in Paso de Patria, near Bolivian gas reserves and the Guaraní indigenous water region, within the Triple Border.

Alto Paraguay Gov. Erasmo Rodríguez Acosta revealed he heard that part of the land purchase consists of an ecological reserve (Fundación Patria), with which Bush is affiliated.

In its interview with Rodríguez Acosta, neike.com.py reported that he does not have documentation of this affiliation and it could not communicate either with the foundation or with the National Rural Development and Land Institute, in charge of these state lands.

Concern increased last week with the arrival of Bush's daughter, Jenna, and a source from the Physical Planning Department saying that most of the Chaco region belongs to private companies.

Luis D'Elia, Argentina's undersecretary for Land for Social Habitat, says the matter raises regional concern because it threatens local natural resources.

He termed it "surprising" that the Bush family is trying to settle a few short miles from the US Mariscal Estigarribia Military Base.

Argentinean Adolfo Pérez Esquivel warned that the real war will be fought not for oil, but for water, and recalled that Acuífero Guaraní is one of the largest underground water reserves in South America, running beneath Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay (larger than Texas and California together).

"The southern US states are already struggling with water shortages," asserted the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Orlando Castillo, Paraguay Peace and Justice Service member, recalled the US military buildup in Chaco under a bilateral agreement.

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