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Cruz Ready To Resign; Says Fdn & Cia Obstruct Process Of Bringing Military Under Civilian Control

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

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According to Elaine Sciolino of the New York Times (01/29/87), Arturo Cruz has informed the State Department and his political associates that he intends to resign. In a Jan. 23 meeting with Elliott Abrams, said sources close to Cruz on Jan. 28, he reportedly indicated that he believed the contra umbrella organization, United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO), remained unfairly dominated by leaders of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN). FDN is the contra army headed by Alfonso Calero, and was formed by the CIA in Honduras five years ago. In the conversation with Abrams, Cruz complained that Calero and the CIA have together obstructed changes agreed upon last May that would bring the military under civilian control, democratize the contra movement and add a political-diplomatic dimension to the contra cause. Abrams reportedly told him he should not resign, and promised to try and obtain more US support for political changes within the contra movement. If Cruz resigns, the coalition of contra groups under UNO would be dealt a severe blow. Moreover, his resignation could jeopardize the Reagan administration's request for another \$105 million in contra aid to be debated in Congress this year. In the past Congress has indicated renewed financing would be contingent on the unification of the contra groups. Cruz told the TIMES over the phone from his home in Miami that while he has not yet resigned, he would not allow himself "to become a hostage to an unbearable situation." He reportedly denied press reports that he had requested Abrams for Calero's resignation. "This is totally cockeyed, totally ludicrous. I haven't asked for anyone's resignation. Whatever problems we may have in the Nicaraguan opposition, it's among Nicaraguans and calls for solutions by Nicaraguans. I am not negotiating anything. I am not playing a crisis game." Last week seven commanders of contra groups in southern Nicaragua issued a communique distributed Jan. 27 in Costa Rica, announcing their withdrawal from UNO because they had received no US military aid. They said promises of "immediate and massive military aid" last May have not been fulfilled. They added, "We have become victims of deception and an attempt to destroy the southern forces."

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