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Abrams Says Resignation Of Uno Leader Arturo Cruz Heavy Blow To Contra Movement

by Deborah Tyroler

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At a Feb. 11 meeting with more than 200 top university educators at the State Department, Asst. Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliott Abrams said the resignation of Arturo Cruz from the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) would deal a heavy blow to the contra movement. In view of Cruz's reported resignation, Abrams said the contra forces are discussing what constitutes a "better structure, a more effective structure...You must remember that support for the opposition is directly proportional to its effectiveness." At a recent press conference UNO leader Adolfo Calero refused to comment on the resignation stating, instead, that the contras would start heavy infiltration into Nicaragua. He said, "In the next three months we plan to have 15,000 troops in combat positions in over two-thirds of central and eastern Nicaragua." Abrams told the educators, "The contras are effective and the United States cannot afford to ignore their impact." He reiterated his support for the contras, arguing that cutting military aid and relying on a "containment policy" accepting communist rule in Nicaragua while working to block it elsewhere in Central America would threaten democracy in the region. According to Abrams, the US cannot justify pushing "other totalitarian regimes such as Paraguay's or Chile's and leave Nicaragua alone."

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