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Deborah Tyroler

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Six Members Of Seven-man Directorate For New Contra Movement Organization Elected

by Deborah Tyroler

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In Miami, Florida, on May 14, leaders of a newly organized contra movement told reporters they planned to intensify their struggle against the Nicaraguan government, especially on the political front. Alfredo Cesar, member of the directorate of the new group said, "We want to use military action for political solutions, not as an end in itself." Cesar represents the Southern Opposition Bloc (BOS), a small Costa Rica-based left-of-center group. Cesar expressed support of the peace plan sponsored by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, as did three other members of the new directorate. BOS plans to offer modifications to the Arias plan at the Central American summit meeting scheduled for June in Esquipulas, Guatemala. The modifications include: amnesty for combatants, lifting the state of siege in Nicaragua, resupply of the combatants in Nicaragua and evacuation of the wounded. Newly elected members of the directorate said that in recent days they had several meetings with Philip C. Habib, Reagan's special envoy to Central America. This was the fourth major reorganization of the contra leadership in the last four years. The directors of the new group said that reorganization came when the political and military fortunes of the contras were at their lowest ebb. Pedro Joaquin Chamorro said, "We were on the verge of collapse and therefore we decided to join forces." Adolfo Calero, head of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), and Alfonso Robelo, a former Sandinista official were elected members of the new directorate. The directorate also includes Cesar; Chamorro; Aristides Sanchez, an ally of Calero; and, Maria Azucena Ferrey, a Christian Democrat. The seventh member will be elected next month and will be a representative of the Atlantic Coast Indians. During the election of directorate members, it was clear that animosities among contra leaders continue. No one of the directors received a unanimous vote. Calero received only 28 of 54 votes and was elected after several groups threatened to walk out if he was denied a seat. Under the new rules, all contra forces will gradually be integrated into one Nicaraguan Army of Resistance. Robelo said it was too early to gauge the reaction of the US public and Congress to Reagan's request for an additional \$105 million for the contras. "We have to wage a campaign in Latin America, Western Europe and here to show that the Nicaraguan Resistance is a real, democratic, nationalistic alternative to the Marxist regime in Managua." The directors announced that they had received assurances from the State Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service that they would grant Nicaraguan exiles in the United States "extended voluntary departure" status. (Basic data from NEW YORK TIMES, 05/15/87; see CAU 05/13/87 for additional information on contra reorganization.)

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