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Deborah Tyroler

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Nicaragua: Notes On Opposition Activities & Statements

by Deborah Tyroler

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* In a pastoral letter dated Sept. 17, Nicaragua's Roman Catholic bishops said, "Nicaraguans shouldn't lean toward passive defeatism, we should do everything we can to see the terms of the accord are met." * Sept. 22: After a three-hour meeting with President Ortega, Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo announced the reshaping of the local commissions that will extend the work of the national reconciliation commission into the countryside. The local commissions will be under the control of the national reconciliation commission headed by Obando, and also of the bishops in each department. The cardinal refused to accept restrictions on what could be discussed in meetings between contra field commanders and local commission representatives who will contact them in the countryside. [Obando left Sept. 27 for a month-long trip to Rome at the invitation of Pope John Paul II. In his absence, the national commission will be run by Vice President Sergio Ramirez.] * Sept. 24: Erick Ramirez, president of the opposition Social Christian Party, was allowed into Managua's Model Jail to visit eight of 20 Social Christian political prisoners. Ramirez said Sandinista authorities informed him the other 12 were no longer in that jail, then refused to tell relatives where the prisoners were. * Sept. 27: 3,000 sympathizers of the Social Christian Party marched through the streets of Managua to celebrate the party's 30th anniversary. The government did not interfere during the demonstration. According to Ramirez, on Sunday night 18 Social Christian men were detained and hastily drafted into the Sandinista Popular Army as they returned to their rural homes. The march was the party's largest since the Sandinistas came to power in 1979, Ramirez said. [The Sandinista party easily turned out a crowd of 8,000 for a march Sept. 30 in support of the peace plan.] * At a Sept. 29 press conference, Carlos Huembes, president of the Nicaraguan Democratic Coordinator (CDN), said, "We greeted this accord with joy and with doubts. Today we still have more doubts than joy." The CDN, formed in 1980, is a coalition of opposition political parties, labor and business groups. (Basic data from WASHINGTON POST, 10/01/87)

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