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U.S. Again Rejects Bilateral Talks With Nicaragua

by Deborah Tyroler

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In response to a July 19 statement made by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega in reference to direct talks between Washington and Managua, State Department spokesperson Phyllis Oakley told reporters on July 20 that the Reagan administration would not engage in such talks as long as the Sandinistas are not negotiating with the Nicaraguan Resistance. She noted, "We are incredulous at Ortega's call for direct talks with the United States." According to the spokesperson, the problems facing Central America "are not bilateral US-Nicaraguan concerns." They are instead issues between the Sandinistas and Nicaraguan people, and between Nicaragua and its neighbors, she said. Oakley said the Sandinistas would use bilateral talks with the US to avoid negotiations with the "Central American democracies." She added that direct discussions with the US would "also undercut any talks between the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Resistance."

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