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Colombia: M-19 Pledges To Bring Other Guerrilla Groups Into Peace Process

by John Neagle

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On Feb. 19 in Ibague (200 km. west of Bogota), talks between government officials and leaders of the April 19 Movement (M-19) rebels ended with a promise by the guerrillas to organize direct talks in early March to persuade other rebel groups to declare a cease-fire for negotiations with the government of President Virgilio Barco. Also participating in the talks in Ibague were representatives of the Liberal, Conservative and Patriotic Union parties. In January, M-19 commander Carlos Pizarro Leon-Gomez said that all rebel organizations under the umbrella group, the National Guerrilla Coordinator (CNG), desired a "return to institutional normalcy." The CNG includes the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), the Popular Liberation Army (ELP), Free Homeland (PL), and the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT). The Barco government has refused to negotiate with FARC, asserting that the organization "has not shown a true desire for peace." (Basic data from AFP, 02/19/89)

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