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Costa Rican President Welcomes New U.S. Central America Policies

by Deborah Tyroler

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Costa Rican President Oscar Arias was scheduled to meet with President Bush in Washington on April 4. Costa Rican Information Minister Guido Fernandez told AFP on April 2 that a major source of optimism regarding regional peace efforts is the gentlemen's agreement between the White House and the Congress on contra aid announced March 24. Fernandez said the accord "promises a period of constructive and dynamic negotiations from the US administration in its policy on Central America." The minister added that Arias considers the agreement to be the best that could have been reached, and was enthusiastic about Washington urging contra leaders to return to Nicaragua and rejoin the political process. Bush and Arias were expected to discuss recent US policy initiatives, the implementation of the Feb. 14 Central American summit accords, possible cooperation against drug trafficking and money laundering, and the US debt relief initiative known as the Brady Plan. Costa Rica's foreign debt totals some \$4 billion. (Basic data from AFP, 04/02/89)

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