4-26-1989

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Contras Renege On Pledge To Suspend Commander With Record Of Human Rights Abuses

by Deborah Tyroler
Category/Department: General
Published: Wednesday, April 26, 1989

In March contra leaders agreed to suspend Jose Benito Bravo Centeno ("Commander Mack") as head of contra intelligence after an investigation of his and others' human rights abuse records. Deputy Asst. Secretary of State Cresencio Arcos warned that if the contras did not suspend Bravo, US aid would be cut. Unidentified contra sources told the Washington Post that the agreement has since been ignored, and reporters who visited rebel bases in Yamales during the second week of April said Bravo was seen working in strategic command headquarters. In March, Bravo and five others were convicted by a contra tribunal in a case involving the torture and murder of suspected Nicaraguan government infiltrators of contra bases. The six were sentenced to be expelled from the contra movement, but the case is pending appeal to the civilian directorate of the Nicaraguan Resistance. In a letter to the directorate this month, three US congresspersons Democrats Ike Skelton (Mo.) and Charles W. Stenholm (Tex.) and Republican Rod Chandler (Wash.) said that the tribunal's verdict against Bravo and the five others "makes possible continued US support for the Nicaraguan Resistance." (Basic data from Washington Post, 04/18/89)

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