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Deborah Tyroler

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Nicaraguan President Receives Promises Of Aid From Greece & Sweden

by Deborah Tyroler
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On April 29, President Daniel Ortega met with Swedish Premier Ingvar Carlsson to discuss the Central American peace process, and his government's economic aid needs. Carlsson pledged to increase Swedish aid to Nicaragua by 40 million kronor ($6.3 million), bringing the 1989-90 total to 285 million kronor ($44.6 million). Stockholm is to host an international forum on Nicaragua on May 11 to 13. President Ortega said he hoped the forum would agree to a further $250 million in credit for Nicaragua's economic reconstruction. In a letter composed in Stockholm, Ortega criticized Costa Rican counterpart Oscar Arias for requiring Nicaragua to meet standards that violate the Feb. 14 accord reached by the region's five presidents in El Salvador. Nicaragua's National Assembly recently approved electoral and media legislation to facilitate participation of all parties in the upcoming elections, as prescribed in the accord. Arias has described the new laws as inadequate since they "do not permit an balanced participation among all domestic political forces necessary for genuinely free and fair elections." The Costa Rican leader was reportedly supporting statements made by the "Group of 14" opposition parties. Swedish Premier Carlsson said, "It is easier for Arias to condemn Nicaragua than to condemn the United States. He has not yet denounced the new US financing of $67 million to maintain the contras..." At a press conference in Athens on May 2, Ortega urged the US to halt its interventionist policy in Central America. He said, "There is a general problem between the United States and developing countries in Latin America, particularly with those Washington considers to be its courtyard. Nicaragua is a victim of Washington's interventionist policy. "We have not seen much difference between the policy pursued by President George Bush and that of former President Ronald Reagan." Ortega concluded by asserting that his government does "not wish to be an enemy of the US," and is continually striving for a new type of relationship with Washington. During his visit in Greece, Ortega met with President Christos Sartzetakis, Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, and political party leaders. Papandreou reportedly assured Ortega that his government will support peace and democratization in Central America, and the reconstruction of Nicaragua's economy. President Ortega is on a European tour which includes Spain, France, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Greece, Britain and West Germany. (Basic data from AFP, Notimex, 04/30/89; Xinhua, 05/02/89)

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