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Deborah Tyroler

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## **Nicaragua: Security Forces, Peace Commissions To Facilitate Contra Demobilization, Repatriation**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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According to a communique made public Aug. 11, the Defense Ministry has ordered Nicaraguan soldiers to open contacts with contra fighters toward facilitating their immediate demobilization. The communique said that the contras had been left "practically without orders and direction." Nicaraguan forces were ordered to communicate to the contras that Nicaraguan security forces and civilian government officials will provide all guarantees of safety for contra units or individuals who are disposed to enter into contact with them. Next, the Nicaraguan army pledges to facilitate formal amnesty procedures for contras who prefer to do so at their camps in Honduras. The communique said that the government would proceed immediately to reactivate the peace commissions, comprised of religious, humanitarian organizations and others "to permit security guarantees for the encounters and fulfillment of the Tela [summit] agreement." Peace commissions were established in the wake of the cease-fire between the government and contras with the objective of establishing contact with contra fighters interested in the government's amnesty program. At present, 60 of these commissions exist, located in the north, northwest and central regions of the country. On Aug. 15, government officials announced that an estimated 300 commissions are to be established throughout the country by early September. In addition to facilitating contra repatriation, the commissions are to participate in monitoring the electoral process in collaboration with international observers. (Basic data from Notimex, 08/11/89; Xinhua, 08/15/89)

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