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Nicaraguan Interior Minister Opens Jails To Counter "lies" Regarding Number Of Contra Collaborator Prisoners

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Aug. 22, Interior Minister Tomas Borge opened Nicaraguan jails to inspection by international organizations and the foreign press to prove there are only 1,440 contras imprisoned in Nicaragua. Groups receiving invitations to count prisoners were the International Red Cross, Amnesty International, Americas Watch, and the Inter-American Human Rights Committee (affiliated with the Organization of American States). (See CAU 08/16/89 for report on prison population by President Daniel Ortega.) Lino Hernandez, chairperson of the Permanent Human Rights Committee in Nicaragua, has claimed on numerous occasions that 6,000 contras and contra collaborators are languishing in Nicaraguan jails. This claim has also been reiterated by the US government and contra spokespersons. Borge described such claims as "lies." (Basic data from AFP, 08/22/89)

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