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Nicaragua Proposes Exchanging Ambassadors With U.S.

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Sept. 30, the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry proposed exchanging ambassadors with the US to begin normalizing diplomatic relations. In July 1988, US ambassador Richard Melton was expelled from Nicaragua after he allegedly helped to organize an opposition demonstration. Washington then expelled ambassador Carlos Tunnerman. Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Hugo Tinoco said "we feel it would be logical to go back to the beginning and exchange ambassadors to justify a staff increase at the U.S. embassy." Tinoco said US charge d'affaires in Managua John Leonard has approached Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge about the staff increase. Leonard said he was pleased with Nicaragua's proposal. Accompanying Leonard at his meeting with Borge were four Republican congresspersons who requested and received permission to visit Nicaraguan jails holding persons charged with counterrevolutionary activities. The interior minister personally accompanied the congresspersons on a tour of two prisons outside Managua. They arrived Sept. 29 to observe preparations for elections and voter registration. (Basic data from AFP, 09/30/89)

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