10-25-1989

State Department Complains About Lack Of Neutrality By U.N. Commission Charged With Overseeing Contra Dismantlement

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen

Recommended Citation

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.
State Department Complains About Lack Of Neutrality By U.N. Commission Charged With Overseeing Contra Dismantlement

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General
Published: Wednesday, October 25, 1989

On Oct. 12, members of the International Commission on Verification and Support (CIAV), created at the behest of the Tela summit agreement to oversee the dismantlement of the contra army, met face-to-face for the first time with 2,500 contra fighters at their camp in Yamales, Honduras. The commission, comprised of United Nations and Organization of American States officials, urged the contras to repatriate to Nicaragua. A UN official, Francesc Vendrell, addressed the 2,500 armed contras standing in formation. In an extemporaneous speech, he said, "You are Nicaraguans, patriots and people of Nicaragua. Don't let yourselves become the subject of a policy that perhaps has already become an anachronism, and don't stay here to be abandoned by a country that once helped you." Some of the contras were reportedly surprised by Vendrell's statement. Observers in Nicaragua and elsewhere were bemused by the contras' reactions, since the very high probability of no more US aid for the contra war is well-known, and taken for granted by Nicaraguan opposition parties, and Central American governments. State Department officials quickly asserted that the UN was not maintaining a neutral position in carrying out its task. Secretary of State James Baker sent a letter to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar expressing "deep concern" that the commission had violated its pledge to remain neutral. US officials reiterated the charge that the contras had reason to fear for their safety if they returned to Nicaragua at this time. By Oct. 19, a spokesperson for Perez de Cuellar expressed regret that the remarks by commission members in Honduras led to misunderstandings. [Basic data from 10/20/89 report by Nicaragua Network (Washington, DC); New York Times, 10/21/89]

-- End --