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Nicaragua: More On Aftermath Of Feb. 25 Election

by Deborah Tyroler

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Feb. 28: During a meeting with members of international solidarity organizations, President Daniel Ortega said the US government must respect the Nicaraguan revolution's accomplishments. He added that if the US attempts to roll back such achievements, it would "provoke a bigger confrontation in Nicaragua..." Ortega said that had the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) won the elections, the US would have continued "questioning the viability of Sandinismo." For the past 10 years, he added, the US has relentlessly enforced a policy of economic exhaustion against Nicaragua, including blocking development loans in multilateral financial agencies. The president pointed out that it was the FSLN, not UNO nor the sectors it represents, that established democracy, a new style of economic development geared toward meeting the needs of the majority, and a non-aligned foreign policy all for the first time in Nicaraguan history. He said, "The big question is this: did the FSLN make the revolution to maintain itself as the only governing party in Nicaragua; or did the FSLN make the revolution to open a democratic space that never before existed in this country?" The victory of the National Opposition Union (UNO), said Ortega, at least will give Nicaragua a breather from certain kinds of US harassment. He pointed out that the Sandinistas remain the largest single party in Nicaragua, and will be able to defend themselves and the revolution's achievements in the National Assembly. He predicted that when Violeta Barrios de Chamorro's term is up, Nicaraguans are likely to be interested in change once again. Ortega met with some 2,000 persons from approximately 120 solidarity organizations from several countries at the Olof Palme convention center. At a press conference, president-elect Barrios de Chamorro said that under the constitution, "I'm the one who gives orders here." She was referring to the transition process, and remarks by President Ortega on the necessity of maintaining the integrity and professionalism of the Sandinista Popular Army, and the Interior Ministry. According to Barrios de Chamorro, Ortega's remarks about the security forces and the name of the army conflicted with what he told her in private during a Feb. 26 meeting. "[The FSLN government leaders] have to turn over everything. The minister of defense will be a civilian," she said. The FSLN's transition team is headed by Defense Minister Gen. Humberto Ortega. President-elect Barrios de Chamorro's team is led by Antonio Lacayo, her son-in-law and campaign manager. At the same press conference, vice president-elect Virgilio Godoy asserted that pro-Sandinista "internacionalistas" will have to leave, unless they "come to work." In addition, members of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) will have to leave Nicaragua, because the new government wishes "to contribute to pacification in Central America." Godoy has emphatically asserted that the UNO government will not negotiate the continuity of the FSLN at the top levels of the new administration. March 1: AP cited Juan Carlos Medina, 18, as saying that 40 of 60 young men in his air force unit, posted at the main air base at Managua's international airport, deserted this week. He said, "They took our weapons away on Monday and didn't give them back. Maybe they didn't trust us...They gave me an unsigned weekend pass. I changed into my (civilian) clothes and just walked off base...Nobody asked me any questions. But I'm not going back." A military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AP that President Ortega had ordered the military not to stop draftees from leaving. According to Notimex, the president-elect's economic adviser Francisco Mayorga has asserted that there will be no mass dismissals when the new government takes over April 25. No Nicaraguan, he

said, will lose a job because of his/her "political colors." (Basic data from AFP, UPI, 02/28/90; AP, Notimex, 02/28/90, 03/01/90)

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