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## Nicaragua: President Ortega Orders Cease-fire, Calls On Contras To Immediately Disband

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Feb. 28 in a statement released by his press office, President Daniel Ortega said he had ordered a halt to all offensive military operations. He also insisted that the contras disband immediately in order to facilitate a peaceful transition to the new government. The cease-fire, said the statement, should encourage the contras to demobilize quickly and quietly. Next, the president urged the Honduran government to dismantle contra camps near the Nicaraguan border. The Bush administration was requested to terminate all aid to the contras, and instead provide money to the international commission established by the five regional presidents to oversee contra demobilization. In her first message to the nation as president-elect, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro requested that the contras dismantle because the causes of the war have disappeared, and "now is the time for national reconciliation." Many former contras both fighters and members of the contra political organization are today members and leaders of the National Opposition Union. In Tegucigalpa, contra spokesperson Alejandro Acevedo said Ortega was "crazy," since he and the Sandinista National Liberation Front were no longer in any position to demand that the contras demobilize. He added, "Aspects of the future demobilization will be treated only by...Dona Violeta Chamorro." According to Acevedo, contra leaders have appointed Oscar Sovalbarro (Cmdr. "Ruben"), Cmdr. "Renato," and Cmdr. "Emiliano" to work with the president-elect on demobilization. He asserted that dismantlement is also in order for the Interior Ministry under Tomas Borge, the Defense Ministry under Humberto Ortega, and state security directed by Lenin Cerna. According to Acevedo, the Sandinista Popular Army (EPS) must be dissolved because if it remains intact, "Violeta Chamorro will be a puppet, a decorative figure, and the real power will continue being Sandinismo." The contra spokesperson said that US ambassador to Honduras, Cresencio Arcos, recently met with contra military leaders in Yamales, Honduras. [On Feb. 27, Gen. Agustin Quezada Gomez, head of the UN security observer group in Central America (ONUCA), called on the contras to disband in accordance with the agreement signed by the region's five presidents in 1989. Opposition to the agreement, he said, could be more damaging than beneficial to the contra fighters and their families.] March 1: Top contra military commander Israel Galeano told reporters in Tegucigalpa that the Nicaraguan government's cease-fire should be monitored by the United Nations and the Organization of American States. He asserted that the contras maintained a unilateral cease-fire throughout the electoral process. Galeano said that the first step should be an unconditional cease-fire by the Sandinistas monitored by the UN and the OAS. The second phase, he said, would consist "total demobilization of Nicaragua, not only of the Nicaraguan Resistance." In addition to "total demobilization," said Galeano, the contra delegation will also discuss with Nicaragua's new government guarantees of work and financial support for more than 2,000 contra wounded. He added that the contra delegation will request support for Sandinista wounded as well, "because after all is said and done, all are Nicaraguans." (Basic data from AP, AFP, DPA, Xinhua, 02/28/90; Notimex, 02/18/90, 03/01/90)

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