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Nicaragua: Statements On Transition To New Government

by Deborah Tyroler

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In statements at a teachers' meeting in Managua on March 17, Bayardo Arce, member of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) directorate, said the FSLN would become the opposition, rather than accepting cabinet positions. He said the Sandinistas would not resort to the "dirty tricks" the National Opposition Union (UNO) used against the FSLN in the past. Arce said that giving posts to contras would be a "grave mistake." Next, the FSLN leader said Violeta Barrios de Chamorro's transition team was "pragmatic, mature and positive...They clearly understand what we want, that the contras must be disbanded, and that we are doing our utmost to ensure a peaceful transfer of power." At a press conference at the Caracas (Venezuela) airport on March 18, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said Nicaragua was a powder keg that could explode if the contras are not demobilized by April 25. He said that while the contras continue to exist and the US continues funding them, conditions for a peaceful transition of power do not exist. Ortega called on the US and other nations to assist in contra demobilization, and insisted that the Honduran Army help in dislodging the contra army from national territory. He said he supported an expanded UN peacekeeping force in the disarmament and relocation process. (Basic data from AFP, 03/17/90; Notimex, 03/18/90)

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