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Nicaragua: On Contra Demobilization

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On Monday, June 4, 832 contras turned over rifles to UN peacekeepers, a record for one day since the beginning of the demobilization process. As of late Monday, according to a report by AFP, a total of 4,745 contra fighters had been disarmed. Under the most recent agreement between contra leaders and President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro's government, the contras are to a minimum of 500 per day in the seven security zones in order to complete the process by the June 10 deadline. As of June 3, the daily average was 50. International Verification and Support Commission (CIAV) representative Santiago Murray said that at this rate the contra forces will not be disarmed by June 10. Two members of the contra joint chiefs, Miguel Angel Soza (commander Emiliano) and Enrique Zelaya (Doctor Henry, medical chief) turned over AK rifles to UN peacekeepers in El Almendro. Both will represent the contras in government agencies: Soza in the Nicaraguan Repatriation Institute, and Zelaya in the Health Ministry. Contra political advisers Bernardo Pastora and Jose Matus are also to represent the contras in the Agrarian Reform Institute. On June 5, UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar urged the contra commanders to accelerate demobilization of their men in order to meet the deadline date. (Basic data from AFP, 06/04/90; Xinhua, 06/05/90)

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