

6-8-1990

Nicaragua: Update On Contra Demobilization, Notes On Contra Presence In Honduras

Deborah Tyroler

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

Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Nicaragua: Update On Contra Demobilization, Notes On Contra Presence In Honduras." (1990).
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/4102>

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.

Nicaragua: Update On Contra Demobilization, Notes On Contra Presence In Honduras

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, June 8, 1990

June 3: Notimex reported that hundreds of contras and thousands of their family members remain in Yamales, El Paraiso department, Honduras. "Undercover" journalists traveled to the area to confirm the contra presence. Two months ago, contra leaders reported that approximately 40,000 family members resided in the Yamales area. The UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) said hundreds had been moved to temporary refugee camps. A Honduran soldier told Notimex that armed contras are entering the Guangolona mountain area, near Arenales, located 5 km. from the Rio Coco on the Nicaraguan-Honduran border. June 4: Notimex reported that contras in Yamales, Honduras, turned in their uniforms to the Honduran army in the presence of UN peacekeeping forces (ONUCA). The ceremony was confirmed by Ulrich von Blumenthal, adjunct delegate for Honduras to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Von Blumenthal said that both the ONUCA and the International Verification and Support Commission (CIAV) distributed civilian clothes to the contras who turn in uniforms. He added that by the weekend, there should be no more uniformed contras in the area. The UNHCR representative mentioned that 22,000 Nicaraguan refugees are currently under UN protection. June 5: In El Almendro, located near Managua, the contras' top military commander, Israel Galeano, told reporters that of 15,000 contra fighters, only 6,000 have weapons to surrender in the demobilization process. As of Tuesday, slightly more than 4,700 had been disarmed. Most of the weaponry turned over to ONUCA was in poor condition. ONUCA spokespersons said that a few days ago the contras began surrendering weapons in reasonably good condition, although the UN peacekeepers continue to question the absence of larger quantities of material, and larger numbers of sophisticated weaponry. In response to a question about the contras retaining part of their arsenal, Galeano said, "We have not received weapons for three years." He added that the contras plan to retain some weaponry to "equip" their own police force in communities set aside for demobilized contras by the government. According to Galeano, the demobilization is proceeding somewhat more slowly than the ONUCA and others would prefer because contras without weapons were not received by ONUCA for demobilization. "They want us to surrender weapons we don't have," he said. Galeano claimed that in El Almendro, 500 armed contras remain to be demobilized. Another 700 contras without rifles are in the security zone, he said, but have not been permitted to go through the demobilization process. June 6: Honduran residents of the Yamales area told reporters that despite official reports about the departure of all armed contras from the area, many remain and are engaged in criminal activity. In the last few days, they said, contras were responsible for eight armed robberies. The Hondurans told AFP that small armed bands of contras clad in army fatigues come and go freely, and even stop to chat with Honduran soldiers at observation posts and identification checkpoints. They complained that Honduran civilians do not enjoy the same freedom of movement. Hondurans traveling in the area in vehicles or riding pack animals are subjected to detailed inspections by soldiers. Local residents said that least 50 armed contras have returned to Honduras in the last few days through Tapalchi and Cerro la Guangolona, Las Trojes municipality, El Paraiso department. Finally, AFP was told the contras are also stealing weapons, medical equipment, car parts and other

items supplied by the US Agency for International Development. Notimex reported that as of June 6, about 5,530 contras had been disarmed. On June 5, a total of 784 contras surrendered their weapons. On Wednesday, an estimated 2,800 contras were observed traveling in caravans heading south from Esteli (200 km. north of Managua). Described as elite troops, the contras were riding aboard Nicaraguan army trucks, accompanied by CIAV and ONUCA observers, and EPS commander for the northern region, Maj. Daniel Pozo. Amadeo Rivera, known as Cmdr. Wilmer, told reporters that he and other contras were moving south "to facilitate the demobilization," since ONUCA forces in northern Nicaragua are inadequate to handle their numbers. An unofficial unidentified source quoted by AFP said that the contras intend to regroup their forces in the area where the government has designated "development poles" for contra settlement. (Basic data from Notimex, 06/03/90, 06/04/90, 06/06/90; AFP, 06/05/90, 06/06/90)

-- End --