

6-27-1990

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Nicaragua: Military To Be Cut By Half

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Wednesday, June 27, 1990

On June 15, President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro announced plans to reduce military forces by 50% to 41,000 men by Aug. 3. Some senior officers will also be retired. The army would be cut still further in line with progress in demilitarizing neighboring countries. Chamorro also said the army and the Interior Ministry had been ordered to disarm civilians. Defense Minister Humberto Ortega told reporters he would stay in office. He reported that the military cuts were in line with the reduced threat from the contras. Next, Gen. Ortega said that the army would decide which officers will stay on. Presidential spokesperson Antonio Lacayo said the reductions would derive mainly from sending draftees home and reducing the ranks of the militia. He said the reductions would also affect active-duty troops and reserve forces. According to Lacayo, the army numbered 80,000, including reserves, militia and draftees, when President Chamorro was inaugurated in April. (Basic data from DPA, AP, 06/15/90)

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