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## Nicaragua: On Contra Demobilization

by Deborah Tyroler

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June 8: The UN Security Council agreed to an extension of the contra demobilization deadline to June 29, responding to a request by the Nicaraguan government. The Council rejected a US proposal that UN peacekeeping forces (ONUCA) confiscate weapons from Nicaraguan civilians, and monitor the reduction in Sandinista Popular Army (EPS) troop strength. June 10: The Sandinista National Liberation Front's official newspaper, *Barricada*, minimized the disarmament of 2,000 contras at a June 9 ceremony in El Almendro, described by President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro as the "end of the war." *Barricada*'s headline on the event read, "Entrega Simbolica de Armas." June 11: Fernando Castenon of the UN's Managua office said that as of Sunday evening, 11,228 contra fighters had disarmed. ONUCA spokespersons said another 10 days may be necessary for the rest of the contras to disarm and be processed. The government agreed to create more than 20 development centers for contra resettlement. Daniel Lozano, chief of operations for the UN-Organization of American States International Verification and Support Commission (CIAV), said: "Only 10% of the demobilized and disarmed rebels here have said they want to go to the development (areas). The rest prefer that we take them home." June 19: Nadia Younes, spokesperson for the UN Secretary General, said about 1,000 contras remain to be disarmed and demobilized. June 20: A spokesperson for ONUCA told Notimex that 15,484 contras had thus far turned over their weapons to the peacekeeping force. The process has been concluded, she said, in five of the eight security zones, including two pertaining to indigenous contra groups, and one used by the "Southern Front." Notimex was told that the ONUCA did not yet have precise information on the number of contras remaining to be disarmed. Notimex cited unofficial sources as saying that contra military leader Israel Galeano would disarm June 26. June 22: In Madrid, Spain, Nicaraguan Interior Minister Carlos Hurtado said the disarmament and demobilization of the contras had been completed, and that only the contra "joint chiefs" remain to be demobilized. He added that the contra leaders would disarm in the following week. According to the minister, existing "disorganized armed groups" are not a threat to national sovereignty, but do represent a "delinquency problem." Hurtado has suggested expanding the country's police forces currently numbering about 5,000 to cope with such criminals. June 26: In Tegucigalpa (Honduras), Nicaraguan Vice President Virgilio Godoy urged an estimated 200,000 Nicaraguans residing in Honduras to return home on a gradual basis. An en masse movement, he said, would be catastrophic, given Nicaragua's already severe unemployment problem, and the sheer incapacity of the government to provide work for large numbers of citizens. The 200,000 figure includes about 40,000 relatives of contra fighters among other refugees, legal residents, and undocumented workers. June 27: Contra military leaders surrendered their weapons at a ceremony in San Pedro Lovago, about 260 km. southeast of Managua. In attendance were President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo and head of the UN peacekeeping force (ONUCA), Spanish Gen. Agustin Quesada. (Basic data from Xinhua, 06/08/90, 06/26/90; Notimex, 06/10/90, 06/20/90, 06/22/90, 06/26/90; Tass, 06/20/90; AP, 06/11/90; Radio Havana Cuba, 06/08/90, from 06/10/90 report by Nicaragua Solidarity Network of Greater New York; AFP, 06/27/90)

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