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## **Guatemala: Encounter Between Rebels & Businesspersons Postponed**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On Aug. 21, unidentified sources cited by AFP announced that a meeting between representatives of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) and Guatemala's private business sector, scheduled to begin Aug. 23 in Vancouver (Canada), had been postponed until the following week. An unidentified leader of the Coordinating Committee of Financial, Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Associations (CACIF) cited by AFP confirmed the postponement. Meanwhile, the principal organizer of talks with the rebels, the National Reconciliation Commission, indicated that "nothing official" regarding a postponement had been received. In an interview published Aug. 21 by daily newspaper Prensa Libre, Defense Minister Gen. Leonel Bolanos asserted that the rebels must disarm and join the "political process." According to Bolanos, Cuban President Fidel Castro has provided support to the Guatemalan rebels since 1961 "as an act of vengeance" for Guatemalan participation in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. He added that in 1961 the Guatemalan government became a target of armed and ideological aggression. The general claimed that in 1981 the rebels counted on the support of 360,000 persons, of which 9,000 were armed. In the same year, armed forces personnel numbered 12,000. After the 1982 coup, said Bolanos, the army regained control, and at present, the guerrillas have no more than 1,000 persons in arms. (Basic data from AFP, 08/21/90)

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