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## **Agrarian Question & Assimilation Of Former Nicaraguan Contras Into Civilian Life: Summary Of Recent Developments**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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May 24: Three former contra leaders addressed a meeting of Nicaraguan professionals concerning the prospects for reintegration of demobilized contras into civilian life. Oscar Sobalbarro (Ruben) warned that unless agrarian problems are resolved, democracy is at risk. He called for the creation of a judicial commission to resolve land tenure conflicts, rapid conclusion of land appraisal and title registration, and approval of the Agrarian Reform Institute's charter. According to Sobalbarro, of the 22,000 former contras who demobilized last year, about 10,000 have obtained access to land, but lack titles. Some of the land, he added, is not cultivable. The former rebels require 1.4 million ha., said Sobalbarro, but have received only 215,963 ha. Rodolfo Ampie (Invisible) said 60% of the land made available by the government for former contras' use is claimed by former owners, and/or is inaccessible. According to a report by Nicaragua Network, former contra leader Kaliman recently accused Sobalbarro of failure to account for \$180,000 given to him by the Organization of American States (OAS) demobilization group, and for a fleet of vehicles provided by the US in exchange for surface-to-air missiles. Kaliman said, "The 3,000 men under my command wander around without a place to live, while leaders like Ruben walk arm-in-arm with the big bourgeoisie of Managua." According to Kaliman, former contras have seized 33 private plots, and will not relinquish them up until the government responds to their demands. May 27: Maj.Gen. Joaquin Cuadra appeared before a National Assembly committee representing armed forces chief Gen. Humberto Ortega to clarify statements Ortega made accusing Vice President Virgilio Godoy of encouraging the rearming of former contra groups. Cuadra said that Ortega was unable to appear before the commission for "reasons beyond his control." President of the legislative Defense and Interior committee Frank Duarte asserted that Gen. Ortega must appear in person July 5 to explain his comments concerning the vice president. Cuadra attributed the rearming of former contras in northern Nicaragua to their economic plight. He asserted that "certain political sectors" were manipulating the situation for their own purposes. May 28: Gustavo Tablada, director of the Nicaraguan Agrarian Reform Institute, told members of the National Assembly that from July 23, 1990 through April 25, 1991, the government turned over 255,500 ha. to about 12,000 former contras. At present, said Tablada, only 60,000 Nicaraguans are demanding access to land. He added that since July 19, 1979, about 2.45 million ha. of land have been redistributed to Nicaraguan agricultural workers. Citing official figures, the Associated Press reported that 84,835 ha. of farmland have been distributed to 9,300 demobilized contras, leaving 10,700 counterparts without land. [Basic data from 05/24/91 report by Nicaragua Network (Washington, DC); AFP, 05/24/91; ACAN-EFE, 05/27/91, 05/28/91; AP, 05/28/91]

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