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Deborah Tyroler

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## **Nicaragua: National Dialogue Postponed**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On Dec. 3 during a press conference in Managua, Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo said the national dialogue, to include representatives of the government, the Nicaraguan Opposition Union (UNO) party coalition, and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), had been postponed until January 1992 at the earliest. According to Lacayo, the dialogue had originally been scheduled to take place before Christmas. Leaders of the 14 parties within the UNO coalition, however, have been unable to reach agreement on agenda items. Next, Lacayo rejected a proposal by UNO leaders for three months of preparatory talks between UNO politicians and government officials prior to national dialogue meetings. UNO leaders have proposed a 13-point agenda for the meetings focused on the following issues: causes of the national crisis; compliance with UNO's government program; constitutional reforms; disarmament; maintenance of public order; the armed forces; economic recovery; and, property relations. Both the executive branch and the FSLN have asserted that they will oppose any proposals to substantially modify the constitution. At a press conference on Dec. 5, FSLN general secretary Daniel Ortega urged UNO leaders to put aside their differences so that the dialogue could be held before Christmas. Ortega reiterated full FSLN support for the talks. He said such talks are urgently needed in order to identify national solutions to avoid further political violence, and "mitigate" widespread hunger. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 12/03/91; Agence France-Presse, 12/05/91)

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