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Deborah Tyroler

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Honduras: Potential Changes Within Military High Command

by Deborah Tyroler

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In statements to reporters on Feb. 12, Honduran legislators said Deputy Carlos Sosa Coello of the Innovation and Unity Party (PINU) and other opposition congresspersons had introduced a bill that would eliminate the armed forces chief post. If approved, the bill would transfer authority currently held by the armed forces chief to the defense minister. Armed forces chief Gen. Luis Alonso Discua confirmed that military authorities are also studying a proposal to eliminate the post. Leadership within the military is exercised by the Armed Forces Superior Council (COSUFA), comprised of 36 senior officers from all service branches. The armed forces chief heads COSUFA. On Feb. 19, daily newspaper El Tiempo published an extensive account of a possible reshuffling of officers, and structural changes within the military high command. The report said Gen. Discua recently struck a deal with young officers, mostly lieutenant colonels, who belong to the military academy's 12th graduating class. The deal specifies the officers will be promoted to strategic posts including command of key military battalions. In exchange, the young officers are to support Discua's proposal to reform armed forces internal regulations in order to eliminate the armed forces chief post. When his term as armed forces chief expires in late 1992, Discua would be eligible to serve as defense minister. According to El Tiempo, Discua's plan is premised on the transfer of influential colonels (members of the academy's 8th and 9th graduating classes) to embassies abroad as military attaches or to posts within the armed forces which do not exercise command over troops. (Basic data from Notimex, 02/12/92; Agencia Centroamericana de Noticias-Spanish news service EFE, 02/19/92)

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