

3-27-1992

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Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Nicaragua: Government Officials & Opposition Party Leaders Discuss Means To Reduce Political Conflict." (1992). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/7240>

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Nicaragua: Government Officials & Opposition Party Leaders Discuss Means To Reduce Political Conflict

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, March 27, 1992

On March 16, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) issued a press release summarizing results of a March 14 meeting of party leaders and government officials. Participants at the 10-hour meeting included Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo, army chief Gen. Humberto Ortega, senior police and military officers. The main objective of the conference was to discuss means of heading off several threatened strikes, and to analyze the situation in the northern region where combined recompa and recontra forces continue to carry out protest actions, including the occupation of highways and towns. According to the FSLN statement, the Front and the government agreed to work together in efforts to deal with the economic crisis, described as achieving stability and "economic recovery with social justice." FSLN leaders urged the government to dedicate more resources to job creation, implement additional measures aimed at arresting the dramatic decline in living standards, and act to ensure recovery of over 80,000 weapons in the hands of civilians. Antonio Lacayo, coordinator of the government's economic team, asserted that the administration will continue to implement structural adjustment measures. He reiterated the need for maintaining monetary stability in order to facilitate economic recovery. Since mid-February, FSLN general secretary Daniel Ortega had repeatedly warned of an impending "social explosion," result of widespread hunger and poverty. An estimated 700,000 members of the labor force are currently unemployed. According to Ortega, "a large-scale social explosion would overwhelm the government's capacity to administratively or politically run the country." Ortega told reporters that the meeting with government officials had been productive. He added, "We all came away convinced of the need to launch a joint action, with the government in the lead." (Basic data from Notimex, 03/16/92)

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