

World & Nation

Nicaraguan cardinal expected to accept mediator's role

Washington (NC) — Nicaragua's Cardinal Miguel Obando Bravo was expected to accept appointment as the mediator in talks between the Sandinista government and Nicaraguan rebel leaders on a cease-fire mandated by the Central American peace accord, according to a variety of sources.

But the cardinal expressed some reluctance about taking the job, which he said in a homily during Sunday Mass November 8 would be difficult without God's help. He also said that "perhaps by the end of the week it will be a certainty" he would accept.

"If God does not illuminate minds and move hearts, we are going to face unvarying fixed positions," he said in the homily. Without "a certain flexibility the mediation will continue for months on end," he said.

Cardinal Obando Bravo said he was also asked by a member of the rebel, or contra, leadership to mediate.

Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega appointed the cardinal to the mediating post on November 6, despite the churchman's history as a leading critic of the government and his accusations that the Sandinistas repress the Catholic Church.

"He has shown his willingness to assume this task, which is so important and so transcendent for peace in our country," Ortega said announcing the appointment after a 40-minute meeting with the cardinal.

Cardinal Obando Bravo is chairman of the National Reconciliation Commission, a panel established under the peace accords to monitor civil rights and other provisions of the accord signed by the five Central American nations which took effect November 5.

The contras, politically and financially backed by the U.S. government, consider the cardinal their own. They have circulated

leaflets with his picture and the notation, "Cardinal Obando is with us."

The rebels have announced a three-point agenda for cease-fire talks.

They want the right to control territory in which rebel troops operate, the right to supply the troops with non-combat supplies, and the right to unimpeded radio links with units in the field.

Meanwhile, the head of a Central American human rights group said that Honduras and El Salvador are resisting a regional peace accord to avoid increased pressure for improving rights protections.

Ramon Custodio Lopez, head of the Costa Rica-based Central American Commission for the Defense of Human Rights, also said the October 26 death-squad-style murder of Herbert Anaya, head of the Salvadoran

Human Rights Commission, was part of an effort to sabotage the pact.

The killing, he said, "has the intention in El Salvador — and we've already seen the effect — of a suspension of the dialogue between the Salvadoran guerrillas and government."

Custodio said that Honduras and El Salvador are placing obstacles in the way of forming national peace commissions mandated by the August 7 regional peace accord because they fear the commissions "could become a forum in which the human rights groups and relatives of the disappeared could present their complaints."

Under the terms of the peace plan, signed by the five Central American states, each signatory is to form a national commission to verify compliance with provisions of the accord dealing with amnesty, human rights and democratic elections.



1987 Wedding Guide

Grid of 100+ small advertisements for wedding services including dressmaking, hotels, newspapers, florists, photographers, caterers, consultants, dancers, decorations, limousines, musicians, and more.