

CBS EVENING NEWS
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RATHER: Good evening. This is the CBS Evening News, Dan Rather reporting.

CENTRAL AMERICA
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RATHER: Congress and President Reagan today continued their overt battle about Mr. Reagan's covert war against Nicaragua, a war that includes reported CIA-directed mining of Nicaraguan harbors. House Speaker O'Neill called this mining 'terrorism at its worst.' The House Foreign Affairs Committee voted overwhelmingly this afternoon to support a non-binding resolution, similar to one passed by the Senate last night, deploring the harbor mining. Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Dam answered angry committee questions about the action. He refused to acknowledge it, but he defended its legality. KENNETH DAM (Deputy Secretary of State): One of the major, well-recognized exceptions to the general rule that force shouldn't be used is self-defense, including collective self-defense.

RATHER: The mining of ports on both of Nicaragua's coasts now is said to have been halted for the time being, apparently because of the congressional outcry, not because of any actual change in President Reagan's policy. Nicaragua today took newsmen to Puerto Corinto, one of the mining targets, and CBS's Richard Schlesinger went along.

SCHLESINGER: For the first time since the mining began, the government opened Nicaragua's largest port of Corinto to foreign journalists. Nicaraguan officials say they want the world to know that the U.S. is engaged in what they call 'terrorist acts.' Military leaders at the port say last night's U.S. Senate vote condemning the mining proves the Reagan administration acted illegally. Ships are still coming here, but the Sandinista leadership says many have been scared away. The Nicaraguans say the mining has cost this port between \$175- and \$200,000 and has also caused shortages of food, medicine and spare parts. Nicaragua's interior minister, Tomas Borge, calls the mining the gravest act committed against Nicaragua in the almost five years the Sandinistas has ruled here. TOMAS BORGE (Interior Minister), Voice of Interpreter...The objective here is not the boats per se; it's the cutoff of commerce with Nicaragua.

SCHLESINGER: There are some empty shelves in Nicaraguan stores. Signs say, 'No chicken' and 'No milk.' Some spare parts are missing, and some drugs are scarce. But businessmen say the real problem is not the mines; it is that Nicaragua has almost no foreign capital and cannot

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attract foreign investment. The mining, they say, just aggravates the problem. UNIDENTIFIED MAN (Voice of Interpreter): There are no shortages for that reason. There have been shortages since before the revolution began.

SCHLESINGER: The Nicaraguans claim the mines have been removed and Puerto Corinto is safe now, but they are keeping a close eye on U.S. military maneuvers just to the north in Honduras. And they say they would not be surprised if the U.S. begins more operations in their territory soon. Richard Schlesinger, CBS News, Puerto Corinto, Nicaragua.