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NETHERLANDS/
WORLD COURT

RATHER: In the Hague, the World Court issued a ruling today that Nicaragua welcomed as, and I quote, 'the first condemnation of American imperialistic policies in Central America,' end quote. But the ruling, nonbinding, but important in the battles of international public opinion, didn't carry much weight with U.S. officials, as we hear from State Department correspondent Bill McLaughlin.

MCLAUGHLIN: The 15 judges of the International Court of Justice in the Hague unanimously ordered the U.S. to stop mining Nicaragua's harbors. The court also ruled the U.S. should respect Nicaragua's sovereignty and stop backing rebels seeking to overthrow the Sandinista government. The immediate comment at the State Department was that the court's ruling would not affect U.S. policy. JOHN HUGHES (State Department spokesman): Our initial reaction is that nothing contained in the measures indicated by the court is inconsistent with current United States policy or activities with respect to Nicaragua.

(File tape) MCLAUGHLIN: That seemed to mean that since the CIA has already stopped the mining operation of Nicaragua's ports, the court ruling comes too late, but it would not, said sources here, stop the U.S. from backing the rebels in Nicaragua. One high-ranking State Department source dismissed the ruling out of hand. Most people here, said the source, don't pay attention to the World Court. The ruling came after President Reagan's speech last night, in which he said Nicaragua was in the grip of a Communist reign of terror that could spread revolution to the U.S. border. That brought an angry response from Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, who said the president's speech was filled with slanders and lies and vowed that Nicaragua would not bow to U.S. pressure. President Reagan also warned that left guerrillas would topple the Salvadoran government unless Congress approved additional military aid, an appeal echoed by the man who appears to be El Salvador's new president. JOSE NAPOLEON DUARTE (President contender, El Salvador): The country is not capable, having this economical situation, is not capable of supporting the expense that a war means.

MCLAUGHLIN: CBS News has learned that the State Department has told the CIA that President Reagan's claims must be backed up by facts and to do that the CIA should release classified information it has to support charges

of Nicaragua's involvement in El Salvador's civil war. Bill McLaughlin, CBS News, the State Department.