

NBC NIGHTLY NEWS  
13 May 1984

EL SALVADOR/  
CUBA

HART: President Reagan's national security adviser, Robert McFarlane, said today that Cuba is planning to double its aid to El Salvador's guerrillas, building up to a big guerrilla offensive this fall. More from Andrea Mitchell.

MITCHELL: National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane predicted a fall offensive by Cuban-supported guerrillas to bring down the government of El Salvador, an offensive as big as the 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam. ROBERT C. MCFARLANE (National Security Adviser, From NBC Meet the Press): ...Evidence that accumulated in the past six weeks suggests that conscious decision has been made and the indications are that the Cuban decision to seek to roughly double the level of effort of the rebels in Salvador right now.

MITCHELL: Intelligence sources say there are now 10,000 guerrillas in El Salvador and that they have already started recruiting new forces for the fall campaign. The administration believes this will help justify its covert operations in neighboring Nicaragua. MCFARLANE: Do the American people really want their president to have no other option than to go to war or to do nothing? I don't think so.

MITCHELL: But many House Democrats say Congress will not approve more covert aid. REP. HARRY REID (D-Nevada): We've generally agreed that if we're going to help those countries we're going to give them money, put conditions on them as best we can, but no covert aid.

MITCHELL: Meanwhile the loser in the El Salvador election, Roberto D'Aubuisson is trying to discredit the results because of reports that the CIA spent \$2 million to defeat him. Administration officials are worried about a right-wing coup there which they say would be the end of the ball game for U.S. policy in Central America. Andrea Mitchell, NBC News, at the White House.