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SUBJECT War in El Salvador

JUDY MULLER: There are echoes of Vietnam in the corridors of power this morning, unsettling echoes of half-truths, of alleged government deception, of playing politics with war. In this case, the war in El Salvador. A report by Congress's Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus accuses the Reagan Administration of supplying insufficient, misleading, and in some cases false information on aid to that country.

Democratic Congressman George Miller was one of the leaders of the 130-member caucus.

REP. GEORGE MILLER: I think that this dramatically changes the Congress' attitude toward our involvement in El Salvador.

MULLER: More after this message.

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MULLER: A report to be officially released this morning by a bipartisan congressional caucus says economic and military aid to El Salvador is actually prolonging that country's civil war. But the most serious accusation:

REP. MILLER: I think it's clear that the Administration has engaged in a pattern of deception with respect to the Congress and the American people about our involvement in the war and in the prosecution of the military actions in El Salvador.

MULLER: California Democrat George Miller, who says the report charges the following:

REP. MILLER: Unlike the claim of the Administration that economic and humanitarian aid is three-to-one over military aid, in fact, military aid is better than two-to-one over humanitarian aid. Rather than 55 American advisers, which the Congress was told was the limit in El Salvador, it is nearly double that. And in fact, rather than a specific use of American airplanes in El Salvador, we now find that both the number of the planes is greater than the Congress was told and the targets are different than the Congress was told.

MULLER: To be more specific, the report charges that U.S.-supplied planes are indiscriminately bombing civilians targets, villages thought to harbor rebel sympathizers.

Miller says the blame for the inaccurate information lies with the State Department and the Pentagon.

REP. MILLER: Mr. Reagan has told the Congress and the American people certain facts that have been given to him by those two agencies. He believes them to be true. Unfortunately, they just turn out not to be the case.

MULLER: The report, which was based on four months of investigation, calls the misinformation a haunting reminder of congressional-Executive relations during the Vietnam War.