

7 June 1983

ARTICLE APPEARED

PAGE A-1

Democrats Act To Curb Foes Of Nicaragua

By Joanne Omang
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Democratic majority of the House Foreign Affairs Committee yesterday abandoned efforts to reach a compromise with committee Republicans on how to control covert U.S. aid to guerrillas fighting the leftist Sandinista government in Nicaragua, and began moving instead to ban such aid.

Ending a futile week of negotiations in a stormy debate, the Democrats held firm against a series of Republican amendments that would have gutted a bill sponsored by the committee chairman, Rep. Clement J. Zablocki (D-Wis.), and Rep. Edward P. Boland (D-Mass.) to stop spending for "supporting, directly or indirectly, military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua by any nation, group, organization or individual." They said they expect to approve the bill today.

President Reagan has said he would veto any prohibition on covert U.S. help for paramilitary and military groups opposing the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

Rep. Robert J. Lagomarsino (R-Calif.) voiced the views of most committee Republicans when he said the

Boland-Zablocki bill would "straitjacket the president."

"The only guerrillas that get help in this world are communist guerrillas," said Rep. Henry J. Hyde (R-Ill.). "We're about to do great service to the Soviet Union and the communist doctrine... We're going to make it safe to be a communist guerrilla and we're going to make it... terminal to be a guerrilla in the hills of Nicaragua."

The bill, an amendment to the Intelligence Authorization Act, also would authorize overt U.S. assistance of up to \$80 million over the next two years "to the government of any friendly country in Central America" to curtail arms flows to leftist guerrillas fighting the U.S.-supported government of El Salvador.

The bill was originally seen as a ~~political~~ political will by Democrats that would put them on record in opposition to Reagan's policies in Central America, according to a Democratic staff aide.

But, according to sources, concern grew among Democrats about departing from traditional bipartisanship in foreign policy after Reagan hinted in his April 24 speech to Congress that Democrats would be held responsible in the 1984 elections for any communist gains in Central America.

Efforts to reach some kind of an agreement with Republicans to control U.S. support for rebels in Nicaragua began last week in the hope that Republican concurrence would force Reagan to take notice. However, Rep. Lee H. Hamilton (D-Ind.), who led the compromise effort, yesterday rejected all the proposed GOP amendments. "All

the world knows what the United States is doing in Nicaragua and we refuse to admit it," Hamilton said. "We are held up to ridicule."

The Democrats turned back, 21 to 12, a key amendment by Rep. William S. Broomfield (R-Mich.) that would have cut off the U.S. aid to the anti-Sandinista guerrillas only when Nicaragua ended its support for the leftist rebels in El Salvador.

Rep. Stephen J. Solarz (D-N.Y.) said the amendment was "clearly designed to permit the administration to proceed along the path it has been following."

He was interrupted by Rep. Gerald B.H. Solomon (R-N.Y.) who protested that the committee "is about to sell the United States of America

down the drain in aiding and abetting of communism in this hemisphere."

After Democrats protested, Solomon said he had not intended to impugn their patriotism.

Broomfield lamented the party-line nature of the debate. "The country is going to suffer because we haven't been able to resolve our differences," he said.

In a hallway news conference, a representative of a Nicaraguan rebel group said he met last weekend with State Department officials and found them "receptive."

"We're not asking the United States for troops or weapons," said Adolfo Calero of the Nicaraguan Democratic Front. "We just need little bitty rifles and bazookas."