

ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 December 1986

STAT

NEWSDAY: CIA AIRLIFTING ARMS TO NICARAGUA
NEW YORK

FILE ONLY

A newspaper reported today that heavily armored helicopters of the Central Intelligence Agency flew ammunition and explosives to rebels in Nicaragua last spring despite a congressional ban.

Newsday reported that an unidentified source who flew on one of the missions said that the helicopters made several flights a week during March, April and May from a base in Aguacate, Honduras.

Newsday said the base is a CIA-controlled airstrip that serves as headquarters of the rebels, known as Contras, near the Nicaraguan border.

The paper identified its source as a civilian who was a former member of the U.S. Army Special Forces. At the time he flew into Nicaragua, he was working in Honduras and El Salvador for a company hired by the State Department to provide non-military aid to the rebels, the paper said.

Newsday said an unidentified congressional investigative source corroborated the source's report Tuesday.

The Reagan administration has said that no U.S. personnel violated a ban on crossing from Honduras to Nicaragua. The CIA declined comment and referred all questions to congressional oversight committees.

STAT David Holliday, a spokesman for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said he was not aware of any reason to doubt that the CIA respected congressional prohibitions against operating in Nicaragua.

But according to Newsday, the source said that on his flight into Nicaragua the helicopter landed and remained in Nicaraguan territory for "a couple of minutes." The crew threw out food and "this plastic stuff ... plastic explosives," the source said.