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SANDINISTAS' FOES AND EL SALVADOR WIN A SENATE VOTE

MILLIONS IN AID IS BACKED

76-to-19 Tally Is a Major but Expected Reagan Victory —New O'Neill Warning

By HEDRICK SMITH
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 5 — The Senate approved \$61.75 million today in emergency military aid for El Salvador and \$21 million in funds for Nicaraguan rebels.

The vote was 76 to 19, with 53 Republicans and 26 Democrats supporting the Administration-backed compromise bill.

Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut was the only Republican to join 18 Democrats in opposing the aid package, among them Senator Christopher J. Dodd of Connecticut.

All four senators from New York and New Jersey voted for the bill.

Strong Opposition Predicted

The passage of the legislation was regarded by many Administration supporters as an important, although anticipated, victory for President Reagan after his recent defeat on efforts to have a school prayer amendment to the Constitution passed in the Senate and after delays on his nomination of Edwin Meese 3d, his White House counselor, to become Attorney General.

Nonetheless, Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. gave fresh warning today that the Central American aid legislation would face strong opposition when it moved to the House of Representatives, where many Democrats have said they prefer to await the outcome of the next round of presidential voting in El Salvador before approving more American aid to that country.

"I am opposed to any military aid," he told reporters. "I am against further money to Nicaragua and funding for El Salvador." But he acknowledged that the House Democratic leadership was divided on the issue and that the majority leader, Jim Wright of Texas, favored more aid to El Salvador.

Stiff Senate Opposition

Last year majorities in the House voted against a bill to provide aid to Nicaraguan rebels, channeled through the Central Intelligence Agency. In the last three days of Senate debate the Nicaraguan part of the aid package encountered stiffer opposition and ran into more Republican defections than the Administration's request for more aid to El Salvador.

Before the final vote today, the Republican majority rejected the two attempts by Democrats to impose conditions on aid to the Nicaraguan rebels and American military construction in Honduras on the ground that creeping American involvement in the region would draw the United States toward military intervention.

With Republicans accusing liberal Democrats of "election-year snake oil," the Republican leadership picked up five crucial conservative Democratic votes to defeat a proposal by Senator Carl Levin of Michigan to bar aid to any Central American group "which is known by the U.S. Government to have as one of its intentions the violent overthrow" of a Central American government.

In the 50-to-44 vote, Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato, Republican of New York, was the only senator from New York, New Jersey or Connecticut who voted to kill the amendment. The other five senators from the region supported the bill.

Senator Levin asserted that his amendment merely tried to embody the policy of the President, who reaffirmed in a letter to the Senate majority leader, Howard H. Baker Jr., on Monday that the United States "does not seek to destabilize or overthrow the Government of Nicaragua; nor to impose any particular form of government there." he said the amendment would also "emphasize the sincerity of our stated policy."

The only Republican to speak against the proposal was the Republican whip, Senator Ted Stevens, of Alaska, who charged that this was yet another effort by the Democrats to cut off all aid to the Nicaraguan rebels.

"This is an amendment that will bring about the execution of 8,000 people who have sought to put pressure on that fantastic base of military power in Central America," he said. "I talked to those partisans. There is no question they would like to overthrow their Government. They would not get any money under this amendment."

But, quoting the President's letter, he insisted that the overthrow of the Sandanista regime in Nicaragua was not the Administration's objective. His argument brought a rebuttal from Senator Daniel K. Inouye, the Hawaii Democrat who worked out the compromise on the level of aid to El Salvador. Without the Levin amendment, he contended, American backing for Nicaraguan rebels would violate the charter of the Organization of American States and the guidelines of Congressional intelligence committees.

"What I am trying to say, very simply, is that we cannot have a document saying we are against murder and provide money to someone else to commit murder," Senator Inouye said. "We would be responsible for that act. Likewise, if we know that the contras are out to overthrow the Government of Nicaragua, we have no business providing funds to that group."