

ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT
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REAGAN/
CENTRAL AMERICA BRINKLEY: Good evening. This is ABC's World News Tonight. Frank Reynolds will be back on Monday. Tonight at 8:00 Eastern time, President Reagan speaks to a joint meeting of Congress to discuss Central America and to tell Congress some things it is not eager to hear and ask for money it is not eager to give. It'll be a sort of test for him. Here's ABC News correspondent Mike von Fremd.

VON FREMD: The president and his advisers are hoping that this speech will convince Congress and the American people that there is a very real threat in Latin America, and before leaving the White House this morning, the president made the final decisions on what he wants to say. Later the president was in New York City to talk to newspaper publishers and give them a preview of tonight's address. REAGAN: We're not accustomed to thinking very much about that region, not accustomed to worrying about possibly a military threat in our own hemisphere. We've almost taken for granted the friendly, independent neighbors that we have, but we can no longer ignore there's a fire started and burning in our front yard, and we must respond with both unity and firmness of purpose.

VON FREMD: As an example of that fire burning in our front yard, the president will talk about these Libyan planes that were trying to smuggle weapons into Nicaragua. Mr. Reagan will warn that Nicaragua, Libya and Cuba are all aiding leftist guerrillas in El Salvador, and he will ask Congress once again to give the government of El Salvador more military aid to fight the communist threat. The president will officially announce that he has selected former Florida Sen. Richard Stone, a Democrat, to be special envoy to El Salvador, but some on Capitol Hill are opposed to Stone because he was once a lobbyist for the former right-wing government of Guatemala. Stone's confirmation, however, seems a certainty, and finally, the president will say, quote, 'Members of Congress and a president have come together in meetings like this to resolve a crisis. I have asked for this meeting in the hope that we can prevent one.' Preventing a crisis in Latin America is the theme of the president's speech, and he is again proposing a hands-on policy of military aid to do it, but his congressional critics, such as Sen. Christopher Dodd who will be speaking immediately after the president, warn of another Vietnam and say it's time for the U.S. to keep its hands off. Mike von Fremd, ABC News, the White House.

MCWETHY: This is John McWethy. El Salvador is the key to America's increased involvement in Central America. Guerrillas there want to overthrow the U.S.-backed government of El