

PBS MACNEIL/LEHRER NEWS HOUR
13 March 1984

NICARAGUA/U.S. MACNEIL: In Washington, the Reagan administration won a tactical victory in its battle for more military aid to the CIA-backed rebels fighting the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. The Senate Intelligence Committee agreed to let the administration spend \$7 million of the \$21 million it has requested for aid to the contras and to put the other \$14 million into a CIA contingency fund.

EL SALVADOR/
U.S. AID

MACNEIL: But tomorrow the administration faces a biggest test, when the Senate Appropriations Committee votes on \$93 million in emergency aid to El Salvador. U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering saw President Reagan today and said U.S. aid to El Salvador has thus far been insufficient. THOMAS PICKERING (U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador): What we have provided in the past has been enough merely to buy a continued stalemate in the changing military situation in El Salvador. Sixty million dollars in a country like El Salvador on an annual basis has been just enough to buy a continued stalemate. The question is, is clearly what kind of assistance is required just to keep Salvador afloat, ah, for the next, ah, for the next period of the fiscal year, to say nothing of the urgent request to try to provide an increase in assistance to do what should have been done years ago and what continues to need to be done as to provide more security. A third of their military force, roughly, has been trained and equipped by the United States after this four years. So there is still a long, long way to go to reach anything like what would be considered to be favorable or helpful, with respect, ah, to the military forces. And a military force that's one-third trained and one-third equipped is basically not a very effective military force. So the, the issue is now, for El Salvador--I can't speak for Central America as a whole--is there, is there sufficient willingness on the part of the Congress,

ah, working with us on this particular issue to provide the assistance necessary, the bare minimum of assistance necessary to get through the election process, an extremely important process, and through the remainder of the year, ah, on the basis of just, you know, a stay-alive kind of assistance.

WOODRUFF: Tomorrow, the administration's request for emergency military aid for El Salvador is on the agenda of two congressional committees, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and the House Foreign Affairs Committee. To assess congressional reaction to the emergency aid package, we turn to the Senate Majority

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