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HOUSE UNIT VOTES AGAINST MORE AID FOR EL SALVADOR

A SETBACK FOR PRESIDENT

Foreign Affairs Subcommittee Also Sets Limit on Help to Anti-Sandinist Rebels

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WASHINGTON, April 12 — A House Foreign Affairs subcommittee dealt a blow to Administration policies on Latin America today, voting to reject a request for additional military funds for El Salvador and to prohibit United States aid to Nicaraguan rebels in the absence of a joint resolution of Congress.

In a spirited session punctuated by a series of voice votes along party lines, the group rejected President Reagan's supplemental request for \$50 million in military aid for El Salvador; reduced from \$56.3 million to \$50 million the military aid request for fiscal 1984 and 1985, and voted to make United States aid conditional on further assurances that American advisers be limited to 55 and that Salvadoran democratic procedures be strengthened.

The subcommittee also adopted a proposal to prohibit any United States aid to Nicaraguan rebels "directly or indirectly" unless specifically requested by the President and approved by both houses of Congress. The measures now go to the full committee.

Majority Said to Approve

Representative Michael D. Barnes, Democrat of Maryland and chairman of the Western Hemisphere Affairs subcommittee, said repeatedly that the actions reflected the views of a majority of the Congress.

But Representative Henry J. Hyde, Republican of Illinois, said that in a single day "we have rendered vulnerable the democratically elected Government of El Salvador and protected the Marxist Government of Nicaragua."

Meanwhile, Senator Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said today, after his committee was briefed by William J. Casey, Director of Central Intelligence, that he was convinced the C.I.A. was not violating "the letter or the spirit" of legislation barring the agency from trying to overthrow the Sandinist Government in Nicaragua.

Operating Within the Law

"There has been a good deal of confusion and misinterpretation in the press recently regarding the issue of whether the C.I.A. is operating within the constraints of the law," Mr. Goldwater said in a statement. "I am convinced that no such activities are being undertaken by the United States Government for the purpose of overthrowing the Government of Nicaragua or for provoking a military exchange between Nicaragua and Honduras."

In other developments, Thomas O. Enders, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the United States had warned the Soviet Union and Cuba against sending advanced fighter aircraft to Nicaragua. He said the Administration had notified Moscow and Havana that "a serious situation" would develop if they increased their military assistance to Nicaragua with the introduction of the fighter aircraft or Cuban combat troops.

Attending the House subcommittee session, James H. Michel, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, declined to give assurances that the Administration was abiding by the charter of the Organization of American States, which prohibits intervention to undermine the government of a member state.

Mr. Michel insisted that "the intelligence committees are the appropriate forum" for a discussion of the United States role in Nicaragua. But he added that "the United States is not acting in violation of U.S. law, to the best of my knowledge."

Operations Called Illegal

Representative Gerry E. Studds, Democrat of Massachusetts, replied, "The O.A.S. charter is a treaty and is the law of the land."

"The covert operations are about as covert as this markup session," he said, adding, "In addition to being illegal, inept and unnecessary, it's doomed to failure."

Mr. Studds said that such operations were doomed "because they were out of character for the American people."

But Mr. Hyde countered:

"If America stands for one thing, it ought to be freedom. It ought to provide a glimmer of hope to people in prisons in Cuba and Poland, to the Vietnam boat people, to the people fighting with sticks and stones in Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, addressing the Senate committee, Mr. Enders said that "it is conceivable that Cuba or the Soviet Union could be tempted to escalate the conflict" in Nicaragua by "introducing modern fighter aircraft or even Cuban combat troops."

"Clearly a dangerous situation would then develop," he said, "unacceptable not only to Central America but to the American nations as a whole. We have communicated to Moscow and Havana how dangerous such a move would be."

Sandinists Are Criticized

In the past the Reagan Administration has reported that Nicaragua, with Soviet and Cuban assistance, was improving and extending airfields to accommodate advanced Soviet fighter planes. The Administration has also said that Nicaraguan pilots were receiving advanced training in Bulgaria and Cuba.

In his testimony, which focused on Nicaragua, Mr. Enders sharply criticized the Sandinist Government for what he said was its failure to pursue negotiating proposals made by the United States and other Central American nations.

Charging that Nicaragua has rejected four different attempts to arrange negotiations about regional conflicts, Mr. Enders said, "The Sandinistas have made their contempt for genuine dialogue — for real negotiations — quite clear."

Mr. Enders also defended anti-Government forces in Nicaragua, saying they enjoyed broad-based support within Nicaragua. While refusing to comment on whether the United States had provided covert support to the rebels, Mr. Enders said the anti-Government forces "are Nicaraguans to the core."

Mr. Enders also provided the committee with new information about arms shipments that the Administration asserts the Soviet Union and Cuba have sent through Nicaragua to guerrillas in El Salvador.