

U.S. Senator

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ZORINSKY ACCUSES CIA OF DELIBERATELY WITHHOLDING INFORMATION

Washington, D.C.....Senator Edward Zorinsky (D.-Neb.) today accused the Central Intelligence Agency of deliberately withholding information on the salaries it pays to the Nicaraguan Contras.

Zorinsky said he asked CIA representatives for the magnitude of the salaries in a classified Capitol Hill briefing in mid-March.

A month later, a highly classified one-sentence response was provided that Zorinsky termed "a clear evasion of my question."

"Like a slick lawyer, they chose to interpret my question so narrowly that there was no room for a substantive response," he said.

"Their response was a deliberate attempt to withhold information from a U.S. senator, the ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee with responsibility for Central America," Zorinsky added.

Zorinsky termed the incident symptomatic of the "game playing and the deceit" characterizing U.S. policy in Nicaragua and all of Central America.

"Is it any wonder why the Congress fought and beat down the President's request to provide further funding for the Contras?" he said. "Is it any wonder why proposals were being circulated by Democrats and Republicans alike which would have kept the money out of the CIA's hands, even for so-called humanitarian assistance...?"

Zorinsky said "an honest, forthright relationship between the CIA, the entire Executive Branch for that matter, and the Congress, would be a good first step in getting U.S. policy in Central America back on the right track."

Statement
Senator Edward Zorinsky
Tuesday, April 30, 1985

People may wonder why, during the debate last week in the Congress over the funding of the contras in Nicaragua, there was so much skepticism and outright distrust expressed about the Central Intelligence Agency. The fact of the matter is that this skepticism and distrust emanates directly from dealing with the CIA and my latest experience with the Agency serves to illustrate this. Stated clearly and simply, you can't get a straight answer out of the Agency. Officials chose to evade the obvious intent of a question I posed to them on the funding in order to hide the obvious truth.

During a classified briefing on Central America before the Committee on Foreign Relations on March 19, I asked CIA representatives how much we pay members of the contras. What are their salaries? They didn't have the answer at hand and said they would forward it to me. About three weeks later, an Agency official, through staff, gave an answer over the phone but was told to make a formal response in writing. Finally, a month after my question was asked, a response was transmitted to me under highly sensitive security classification that necessitated its storage in the files of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. It was classified too sensitive to be stored in the files of the Foreign Relations Committee. But it was a one-sentence response and a total non-answer. The Agency's response was a clear evasion of my question, because like a slick lawyer, they chose to interpret my question so narrowly that there was no room for a substantive response. They gave me only what they had to under their strict interpretation of the question, even

though they knew full well what I wanted. Their response was a deliberate attempt to withhold information from a U.S. Senator, the ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee with responsibility for Central America.

This is just one example of the game playing and the deceit which has characterized the issue of U.S. policy in Central America, especially in Nicaragua. Is it any wonder why the Congress fought and beat down the President's request to provide further funding for the contras? Is it any wonder why proposals were being circulated by Democrats and Republicans alike which would have kept the money out of the CIA's hands, even for so-called humanitarian assistance, by having it channeled to the Red Cross or the UN's refugee agency?

One of the reasons why our policy in Nicaragua is in a shambles is because of this lack of trust stemming from deliberate evasion and deceit on the part of the CIA. An honest, forthright relationship between the CIA, the entire Executive Branch for that matter, and the Congress, would be a good first step in getting U.S. policy in Central America back on the right track.

Legislators say Reagan sparked no surge

Fewer Midlanders Responsible

By Gabriella Stern
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

Washington — Four years ago, Sen. J.J. Exon said of President Reagan, "It looks like we finally have a president who is a leader instead of a jellyfish."

Yesterday, Exon, D-Neb., said, "The president's proposals are not receiving the automatic, knee-jerk approval they once did."

In 1981, Exon was commenting on the president's first televised appeal for support for federal budget cuts. Today, the senator was referring to Reagan's 1985 appeal — a week ago — on behalf of his 1985 plan to cut government spending.

Zorinsky said in a letter to the Nebraska office last week that he had received 100 telegrams and 100 letters from Nebraska office last week.

"It was light compared to what we used to receive," Exon said this week.

Other Nebraska officeholders also said Tuesday that Reagan's message last week did not generate a significant response from the public.

In February 1981, The World-Herald reported that hundreds of Nebraskans, most of them supporting the president, wrote and telephoned their congressmen.

"There was no surge in mail as a result of his speech," Sen. Edward Zorinsky, D-Neb., said Tuesday. In 1981,

Zorinsky Criticizes CIA, Alleges Stonewalling on Contra 'Salaries'

By Gabriella Stern
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

Washington — Sen. Edward Zorinsky criticized the CIA Tuesday for "withholding information on the salaries it pays to the Nicaraguan contras."

The Nebraska Democrat said he asked two CIA officials to reveal the amount paid to contras at a closed Senate committee hearing in mid-March.

The CIA response, which came several weeks later, was "a non-answer," Zorinsky said, and was classified so it could not be released to the public.

In an interview Tuesday, Zorinsky said the CIA should give him a complete response, one that is available to the public because "in no way does it endanger the security of our country."

Zorinsky, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he wanted to know how much money contras have received from the United States. He said he wanted to know in order to determine whether the rebels are fighting the Sandinista government or fighting for personal financial gain.

'Motivation'

"I want to know how much is patriotic motivation and how much is economic motivation," Zorinsky said.

A CIA spokesman said Tuesday that

the agency would not reply to Zorinsky's criticisms.

"We have no comment on the senator's statement. If he has any questions regarding CIA activities or operations, then he should take it up with Senate Select Committee on Intelligence," said Patti Volz of the CIA.

Zorinsky said he learned the CIA had paid salaries to the contras from congressional appropriations money in past years.

"I knew they were being paid but what amounts," he said. "Providing ammunition and arms and materiel for war is a lot different from the measurement of the motivation of an army fighting for money."

He described the agency's action as "a clear evasion of my question. I'm a slick lawyer, they chose to interpret the question so narrowly that there was room for a substantive response."

"Their response was a deliberate attempt to withhold information from U.S. senators."

Zorinsky said he could not reveal the CIA response, but said it did amount to a sufficient answer.

'Non-Answer'

"It was a one-sentence response a total non-answer."

That kind of attitude, he said, encourages widespread suspicion of the CIA by members of Congress and the public.

"Is it any wonder why the Congress fought and beat down the President's request to provide further funding for the contras? Is it any wonder why proposals were being circulated by Democrats and Republicans alike who would have kept the money out of the CIA's hands, even for so-called humanitarian assistance?"

Zorinsky said Congress stopped financing the contras about a year ago. He said his question concerned any salaries paid before and since that time. He said he was interested in the matter "because it would indicate, if indeed, they are (paying contras), if we're hiring a mercenary army, why we're being led to believe they (contras) are ... returning their country to people."

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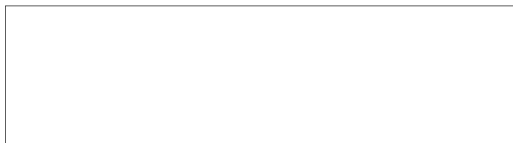
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