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ON PAGE 7-AMIAMI HERALD  
6 August 1985

# U.S. may resume aid to Latin police forces

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WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration has assembled a new \$53 million military and police assistance program to help U.S. allies in Central America combat terrorism, according to a confidential State Department memorandum.

The program would provide additional military aid and, for the first time in years, police training in El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama, said the 15-page memo submitted to National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane.

Congress banned U.S. training of policemen abroad in the early 1970s because of allegations that U.S. advisers taught torture techniques to foreign police forces.

The memo said the Regional Counter-Terrorism Program would include \$27 million in military aid and \$26 million in police assistance. A breakdown showed that El Salvador would receive the largest amount, \$22 million, followed by \$11 million for Honduras, \$9 million for Costa Rica, \$6 million for Panama and \$5 million for Guatemala.

The police part of the program would involve the creation of anti-terrorist units and bomb squads, and the delivery of new bomb detection and disposal equipment, night vision devices, weapons, police cruisers, trucks and helicopters, the document said. The Justice Department would coordinate the police part of the program, it added.

A State Department spokesman confirmed the program proposal but said that it may undergo a final review just before it is submitted to Congress, sometime after it reconvenes Sept. 4.

Administration sources, who gave The Herald a copy of the memo, said the White House will justify the plan as its first concrete response to the June 19 guerrilla slaying of four U.S. Marines at a San Salvador sidewalk cafe.

"The June 19 terrorist attack,"

said the memo's opening paragraph, "provoked a reassessment of the ability of our allies in Central America to meet the terrorist threat. We determined that the friendly governments in the area lack adequate means to counter this threat. It is in our mutual interests to provide additional assistance to them."

The sources said the aid package is also part of the administration's reply to what it perceives as a growing "terrorist" threat from leftist-ruled Nicaragua. In mid-July, U.S. officials said they had intelligence information indicating that Nicaragua was involved in planned terrorist attacks against Americans living in Honduras. Managua denied the charge, and no such attack took place.

They said the White House hopes Congress will approve the program by Sept. 30 so that it can disburse the funds during the current fiscal year, which ends on that day.

Congressional aides aware of the program said it may face some resistance in the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives because of the provisions for

police training and aid to Guatemala, where human rights violations are alleged to be continuing.

Although Congress last month partially lifted the police training ban for El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica, it has not done so for other countries. It also withheld any further U.S. military aid to Guatemala until a civilian government is in place.

The memo indicated that the White House would seek waivers for police training elsewhere and persuade Congress to permit early delivery of aid to Guatemala, arguing that "terrorists" could disrupt its November election.

McFarlane and other senior administration officials approved the project Friday at an interagency meeting in which the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department, the Agency for International Development and the National Security Council supported the \$53-million plan, the sources said.

The memo showed, however, that the Pentagon backed a much higher price tag for the combined economic and military aid program — \$481.7 million.