

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 21A

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
24 May 1984

End to aid to 'contras' is debated

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WASHINGTON — Democrats and Republicans in Congress began negotiations yesterday on a proposal to provide from \$2 million to \$6 million to the CIA to shut down its covert operation supporting anti-Sandinista insurgents in Nicaragua, said House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. (D., Mass.).

Because of the negotiations, he said, a package of \$21 million in emergency aid for the Nicaraguan rebels and \$61.7 million in additional military assistance to El Salvador was being held up. The House had been expected to debate and vote on those funds yesterday.

Meanwhile, Salvadoran President-elect Jose Napoleon Duarte, in a farewell news conference at the National Press Club here, said he planned to remove more Salvadoran military officers in an effort to improve human rights conditions in his country.

"I have asked for changes in some of the military positions ... so that we can work along the lines of our way of thinking," Duarte said.

Duarte had said Tuesday that he would fire Col. Nicolas Carranza, head of the Treasury Police in San Salvador, who has been widely accused of having links to right-wing death squads.

But at his news conference yesterday, Duarte declined to name other military officers he wants dismissed, citing security reasons and a desire to "proceed with extreme caution."

Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth W. Dam told a Senate hearing yesterday that he believed the Salvadoran military would support Duarte and that the incoming president would end death-squad activities.

Dam also told the Senate Appropriations Committee's foreign operations subcommittee that the United States had spent \$8 million in El Salvador to help create a special six-man investigation unit to probe the death squads and to train security personnel to protect jurors, lawyers and judges in human rights cases.

O'Neill told reporters, meanwhile, that Sen. Ted Stevens (R., Alaska) the assistant majority leader, and Rep. Edward P. Boland (D., Mass.), chairman of the House intelligence committee, were seeking to forge an agreement that would force the CIA to withdraw the estimated 15,000 rebels fighting inside Nicaragua.

He said the proposed compromise would involve between \$2 million and \$6 million for the intelligence agency to use in retrieving the counterrevolutionaries.

Aides to O'Neill said the proposal, advanced by Stevens, was initially rejected by Boland. They said Boland believed the administration would not end the operation and instead would use the money to pursue the fighting in Nicaragua.

However, congressional sources said Boland agreed to take a new look at the proposal because of Stevens' apparent willingness to accept legislation that would restrict the funds solely for winding down the 2½-year-old covert program.

House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D., Texas) said he told Secretary of State George P. Shultz and CIA Director William J. Casey that "they cannot expect to pass money for continuing the covert war in Nicaragua in the House and they would be wise to drop that."

Wright said he also warned the two officials that if they pressed for the Nicaragua program, they could jeopardize aid for El Salvador.

Initially the administration had appeared willing to phase out the Nicaragua program, albeit temporarily. But President Reagan indicated strongly in his news conference Tuesday night that he wanted the full \$21 million for the *contras* so they could continue fighting the Sandinistas.