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ON PAGE 1APHILADELPHIA INQUIRER  
13 April 1984

# CIA said to be planning for Nicaragua pullout

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WASHINGTON — The CIA has begun preparing contingency plans for a withdrawal of most of the estimated 6,000 counterrevolutionaries, or contras, operating inside Nicaragua, according to congressional sources, because of serious problems facing President Reagan's two chief Central America programs.

"We have been advised that the CIA already has begun to look at the option of pulling out the contras," a source in one congressional intelligence committee said yesterday.

"It is possible that this means that the CIA has concluded that the Congress simply won't release any more money and that it's best to be ready to get those people out of there so they're not killed."

The House prepared last night to join the Senate in denouncing the CIA-backed mining of principal Nicaraguan seaports. It also was expected to kill a request for \$21 million in emergency covert military aid to the Nicaraguan insurgents and cut the \$62 million in Reagan's El Salvador program in half.

The Senate voted Tuesday to approve a nonbinding resolution calling for a halt to the minelaying. On Wednesday, the House Foreign Affairs Committee overwhelmingly approved a similar nonbinding resolution.

House Democratic leaders also said yesterday they would seek deep cuts in new aid to the region.

The committee source said that if Congress did not approve more money for the covert operation, the current operational fund of \$24 million would be exhausted by the end of May or early June.

Only a week ago, Reagan had scored a major victory for his Central America policies when the Republican-led Senate voted 76-19 to approve the funds for the contras in Nicaragua and for El Salvador.

But the atmosphere of bipartisanship on Central America was poisoned over the weekend by disclosures of direct CIA involvement in the mining.

The House Democrats yesterday said they wanted to cut emergency

aid to El Salvador to \$32 million — little more than half the \$62 million Reagan said was absolutely essential for the war against leftist rebels — and end United States assistance to the contras.

In addition, 13 Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee asked Attorney General William French Smith to appoint a special prosecutor to determine if the administration violated the law by sending covert aid to the contras.

Led by panel Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D., N.J.), the Democrats said Reagan and other high officials might have violated the Neutrality Act in aiding the rebels. The law forbids U.S. citizens from supporting or taking part in a military action against a foreign country with whom the U.S. is not at war.

It was not expected that the request would be honored at the Justice Department, which has 30 days in which to reply.

Congressional sources said yesterday that if Congress did not provide the \$21 million for the contras, the entire covert operation would have to be shut down. The CIA, under current agreements with Congress, is prohibited from dipping into contingency funds to continue financing the program.

However, one administration source said earlier in the week that Reagan was so committed to the Nicaraguan operation that it was conceivable that such a rule could be circumvented, either by simply using contingency funds, regardless of agreements with Congress, or by channeling covert money to the contras through a third country, such as Honduras, El Salvador or even Israel.

The 6,000 contras are part of an estimated total of 15,000 rebels, operating in Nicaragua but also from bases in neighboring Honduras and Costa Rica, who receive U.S. support.

As for El Salvador, administration officials hinted strongly yesterday that if Congress did not provide the \$62 million for the Salvadoran armed forces, Reagan would declare an emergency and dip into discretionary funds to dispatch the aid.

Senate Majority Leader Howard H. Baker Jr. (R., Tenn.) supported the anti-mining resolution, but said yesterday that he favored continued U.S. assistance to the Nicaraguan insurgents and believes a majority of the Senate agreed with him. The Senate voted against an amendment last week to reject the \$21 million requested by Reagan for the contras.

House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. (D., Mass.) said, however, that he and other Democratic leaders in the House were determined to eliminate further aid to the Nicaraguan guerrillas and sharply reduce emergency military aid to El Salvador.

When reporters in Dallas, where President Reagan spoke yesterday shouted that the Senate was against him, he replied, "What else is new?"

In other developments, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee postponed until after Congress returns April 23 from its Easter recess any action on the administration's five-year economic and military aid plan for Central America. The committee is deadlocked over proposed conditions for regional aid.

The looming battle between the House and Senate over whether to continue covert U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan guerrillas will be fought in a joint conference committee assigned to draft the final compromise of a spending bill that includes funds for Central America.

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The Senate grafted onto the bill the emergency money for Nicaraguan rebels and the military aid to El Salvador, which is battling leftist insurgents which the United States charges are supplied with arms by the Nicaraguan government.

"I think it [the bill] can be salvaged," Baker said, but "I don't think we are going to mine any more harbors."

O'Neill said he and senior Democrats on the Appropriations and Foreign Affairs Committees had agreed

to try to eliminate the Nicaraguan rebel funds and cut Salvadoran aid to \$32 million. That figure would include \$20 million for ammunition and \$12 million for ambulance and medical evacuation helicopters.

The speaker said this would be enough to keep the Salvadoran army operating through 1984 in its battle against Marxist-led guerrillas.

However, O'Neill said Secretary of State George P. Shultz, when told about the decision to cut aid, expressed opposition and said he doubt-

ed that Reagan would accept it.

House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D., Texas) said that although he personally wanted more money for El Salvador, "realistically speaking the \$32 million is the most we can get from the House." He said he had urged the administration to accept it.

Originally the administration sought \$93 million for El Salvador but agreed to \$62 million to secure Senate approval.

*The Associated Press also contributed to this article.*