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TAGS: MASS, XK
SUBJECT: CENTRAL AMERICA IN THE CONGRESS

1. FOLLOWING IS A STATUS REPORT ON LEGISLATION AFFECTING OUR INTERESTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA:

2. ON MARCH 14 THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE AN ADMINISTRATION REQUEST FOR 93 MILLION DOLLARS IN SUPPLEMENTAL FY-1984 MILITARY AID FOR EL SALVADOR, AFTER DEFEATING BY 16-13 A PROCEDURAL AMENDMENT OFFERED BY SENATOR INOUE THAT WOULD HAVE DEFERRED CONSIDERATION OF THE EL SALVADOR AMENDMENT. THE SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS WERE ATTACHED AS AN AMENDMENT TO A BILL PROVIDING 150 MILLION DOLLARS IN EMERGENCY FOOD AID FOR AFRICA WHICH HAD PASSED THE HOUSE EARLIER. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS EXPLAINED THEY HAD RESORTED TO THIS PROCEDURE SINCE THE FY-84 MILITARY AID REQUEST FOR EL SALVADOR WAS SERIOUSLY UNDERFUNDED IN THE SECOND CONTINUING RESOLUTION OF NOVEMBER 1983; IT NOW APPEARS THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES WILL NOT MARK UP THE FY-84 SUPPLEMENTAL FOREIGN AID APPROPRIATIONS UNTIL JUNE; AND THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR THE REQUESTED MILITARY AID IN EL SALVADOR TO HELP ASSURE THE SECURITY OF THE ELECTIONS.

3. ON MARCH 15 THE FULL SENATE APPROVED AN AMENDMENT OFFERED BY SENATOR DANFORTH TO THE LOW-INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE BILL TO ADD ON 90 MILLION DOLLARS IN EMERGENCY FOOD AID FOR AFRICA. THIS ACTION, TAKEN BY VOICE VOTE, STRIPPED THE AFRICA FOOD AID BILL WITH ITS EL SALVADOR AMENDMENT INCLUDED OF MOST OF THE FOOD AID COMPONENT, LEAVING THE BILL MAINLY AN EL SALVADOR EMERGENCY AID MEASURE WITH VARIOUS OTHER CONTROVERSIAL AMENDMENTS INCLUDED.

4. CENTRAL AMERICA INITIATIVE: AFTER EXTENDED DEBATE AMONG THE DEMOCRATS ON THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE ON MARCH 14 VOTED TO SPLIT OFF THE CENTRAL AMERICA PORTION OF THE FOREIGN AID BILL AND REPORT OUT TWO SEPARATE BILLS. A WORLDWIDE FOREIGN AID AUTHORIZATION BILL, EXCLUDING CENTRAL AMERICA, WAS REPORTED OUT ON MARCH 15. ACTION ON THE COMMITTEE'S VERSION OF A CENTRAL AMERICA AID BILL -- WHICH IS LIKELY TO BE CLOSE TO THE TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE DRAFT OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE SUBCOMMITTEE -- WAS DEFERRED UNTIL

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AFTER THE MARCH 25 ELECTIONS IN EL SALVADOR.

5. FUTURE ACTION: AS NOTED ABOVE, THE EL SALVADOR EMERGENCY AID REQUEST IS EXPECTED TO REACH THE SENATE FLOOR SOMETIME THIS WEEK. THE HELMS SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WILL HOLD HEARINGS ON THE CENTRAL AMERICA INITIATIVE ON MARCH 20. THE FULL FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WILL BEGIN ITS MARK-UP OF THE WORLDWIDE FOREIGN AID BILL, OF WHICH THE CENTRAL AMERICA PACKAGE IS A PART, A WEEK LATER ON MARCH 27. HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FASCELL HAS NOT INDICATED WHEN THE COMMITTEE WILL CONSIDER THE CENTRAL AMERICA AID BILL; NOR HAS THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP YET SCHEDULED FLOOR ACTION ON THE WORLDWIDE BILL (EXCLUDING CENTRAL AMERICA). SHULTZ
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