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CIA Said to Broker Accords on Dividing Anti-Sandinista Aid

Nicaraguan Indians Cite Agency Role

By Brian Barger
Associated Press

Central Intelligence Agency officers have brokered two agreements this year on how rival U.S.-backed insurgent groups should divide privately raised military supplies, three Nicaraguan Indian rebel leaders said yesterday.

The leaders, active in Misura, the main coalition of Indians fighting Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government, said the CIA officers in Honduras brokered the agreements struck with the larger Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) in February and June.

The CIA's reported role came after Congress banned the agency from "supporting, directly or indirectly, military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua." Congress passed the ban, known as the Boland amendment, in October.

Two congressional panels plan next month to examine whether the Reagan administration complied with the ban, particularly after reports that the White House National Security Council helped the rebels raise money and offered military advice.

Rep. George E. Brown Jr. (D-Calif.), a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, said the panel is aware of "continuing contacts" between the CIA and the rebels but lacks "specific knowledge" about those discussions.

The CIA has "been giving lip service to the Boland amendment but not fully complying with it," he said. "The [administration's] legal eagles are interpreting all of the laws in a way to favor the policies of the president."

While refusing to comment on the Indian leaders' assertions, CIA spokeswoman Patti Volz said the agency is "complying with congressional obligations and restrictions."

Despite the agreements, the Indian leaders said, the FDN has failed to live up to commitments and has used its grip on supplies to gain control of the Indian movement on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. As a result, they said, the Indians' military campaign has been crippled in recent months.

The leaders, interviewed by the Associated Press, were Teofilo Archibald Wilson, a political director of Misura; Effrain Smith, a member of the Misura military high command and top commander of the Misura-aligned Southern Indigenous Creole Community (SICC), and Charles Hodgson, an SICC political leader. They said their troops face serious shortages of food, uniforms and military equipment.

Bosco Matamoros, the FDN's representative here, denied the charge. "We have always lived up to our obligations," he said. "We have always helped out the other groups when they are in need."

The Indian leaders' remarks underscore continuing divisions among U.S.-backed rebels.

The leaders said the CIA-brokered agreement last February called for providing Misura with 25 percent of the estimated $1 million a month raised by the FDN in the name of all the rebel factions.

"We complained to the [CIA] last February," Wilson said. "We would talk to the [CIA], and [the CIA] would talk to" FDN leader Adolfo Calero.

Hodgson and Smith confirmed Wilson's account of discussions with the CIA.

Wilson also said private U.S. donors supporting his group have used a U.S. logistical network established by the FDN to funnel the aid but said the FDN often did not pass on the funds and supplies.

Hodgson, whose group shares supplies with and fights alongside Misura, said "we lose at least 70 percent of supplies" channeled through the FDN network.

In a telephone interview from Dallas where he is receiving medical treatment, Wilson said, "There are several things that were sent to Misura, but the FDN has taken it. When they give us something, it is very little.

"When we ask the FDN for supplies, they say no, but then go behind our backs and give it to our soldiers. They do this to undermine our group. The FDN now has more men on the Atlantic Coast than our forces," he said.

"We need boots and uniforms and food and medicine," Wilson said. "We don't have any helicopters or airplanes either. The FDN has many, but they won't share anything with us."

After the February agreement, he said, Misura's aid share eventually rose from $2,500 a month to $7,500 a month. Before last year's congressional ban, the CIA in Honduras gave Misura $80,000 a month, he said.

Wilson said discussions with the CIA in June resulted in agreement "for the FDN to give us seven plane loads of supplies, but so far we have received only two, of ammunition."

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