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Kerry agrees to give contra data to US

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WASHINGTON - In response to a request from the Justice Department, Sen. John F. Kerry has agreed to provide the government with information compiled by his staff that some leaders of the Nicaraguan contras and their American supporters have engaged in criminal wrongdoing.

In a letter to Kerry, Assistant Attorney General John R. Bolton said any evidence developed by Kerry's staff "will be vigorously and expeditiously investigated." Bolton assured Kerry that the information would be treated as "highly sensitive" and all measures taken to protect the sources' confidentiality.

Kerry promised his staff's cooperation in a return letter to Bolton yesterday. Three members of Kerry's staff initially outlined their charges in a meeting May 6 with officials from the Justice Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the State Department.

Since January, Kerry's staff has been investigating allegations of criminal wrongdoing

by officials of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the largest Nicaraguan rebel military force, and the Civilian Military Association, an Alabama-based organization that has provided assistance to the rebels.

In an April 17 letter to Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kerry said his staff has accumulated "first-person evidence and documentation" on allegations regarding drug trafficking, gunrunning, conspiracy to murder, violations of the US Neutrality Act and fraud in the spending of \$27 million in nonlethal aid to the contra guerrillas, who are fighting the Nicaraguan government.

At Kerry's urging, Lugar has agreed to conduct hearings next month on the allegations, which have been strenuously denied by Adolfo Calero, head of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, and Tom Posey, head of Civilian Military Assistance.

Many of the allegations have already been detailed in news articles by the Boston Globe, the Associated Press, The Christian Science Monitor and The Miami Herald. In addition, The San Francisco Examiner reported yesterday that a retired Army general who has raised millions of dollars in private donations for the contras signed an agreement for the United States with Eden Pastora, whose small army of Nicaraguan rebels has resisted joining the three main contra groups receiving US aid.

Under the reported agreement, which the newspaper article said was signed by retired Gen. John Singlaub, the United States promised to supply among other items ammunition and training in explosive and demolition to Pastora's group in exchange for agreeing to unify with the other contra groups. Neither Singlaub nor Pastora could be reached; the State Department had no comment.

The State Department earlier this week denied a report in The Miami Herald that Honduran military officers have been skimming some of the US aid money that was supposedly spent to purchase food and uniforms for the contras. A total of 20,000 uniforms that were purchased from a Honduran supplier with US aid were never delivered to the contras, the article alleged.

A State Department spokesman, Bruce Ammerman, said that only 10,000 of the uniforms were paid for and the State Department has receipts showing they were delivered.