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CIA OVERSPENT CONGRESSIONAL LIMIT IN NICARAGUA, COMMITTEE SAYS
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THE HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE SAYS THE CIA EXCEEDED A $24 MILLION CONGRESSIONAL LIMIT ON AID TO REBELS FIGHTING THE LEFTIST GOVERNMENT OF NICARAGUA BUT DID NOT INTEND TO ''EVADE THE LAW.''

IN A STATEMENT FOLLOWING A CLOSED-DOOR MEETING WITH CIA OFFICIALS WEDNESDAY, THE DEMOCRAT-CONTROLLED COMMITTEE SAID IT TOLD CIA OFFICIALS IT WAS DISTURBED BY THE OVERSPENDING AND WOULD GIVE ''EVER CLOSER SCRUTINY TO CIA BUDGET AND ACCOUNTING PRACTICES.''

SEN. DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN, D-N.Y., CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE, WHICH MET WITH CIA OFFICIALS ON THE SUBJECT TUESDAY, SAID THE PANEL WAS SATISFIED WITH THEIR EXPLANATION BUT WOULD ASK CIA LAWYERS FOR A LEGAL OPINION.

MOYNIHAN SAID THE AMOUNT SPENT ON THE OPERATION WAS ''CONSIDERABLY LESS'' THAN $1 MILLION IN EXCESS OF THE LIMIT. THE HOUSE COMMITTEE STATEMENT ALSO SAID IT WAS LESS THAN $1 MILLION.

MEANWHILE, SENATE MAJORITY LEADER HOWARD H. BAKER JR., R-TENN., SAID THE SENATE WILL ACT SOON, PROBABLY NEXT WEEK, ON ITS DISAGREEMENT WITH THE HOUSE OVER WHETHER TO GIVE THE CIA AN ADDITIONAL $21 MILLION FOR THE NICARAGUAN OPERATION.

THE SENATE HAS ALREADY APPROVED THE FUNDS AS PART OF A $1.1 BILLION EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION BILL FOR VARIOUS GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS. THE HOUSE APPROVED THE OTHER APPROPRIATIONS, INCLUDING $62 MILLION IN MILITARY AID FOR EL SALVADOR, BUT REFUSED ANY MONEY FOR THE NICARAGUAN UNDERCOVER AID.

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE SAID IT QUESTIONED CIA OFFICIALS ABOUT ''CERTAIN TYPES OF EXPENSES SUCH AS PERSONNEL AND SOME OVERHEAD COSTS'' THAT THE AGENCY HAD NOT COUNTED TOWARD THE $24 MILLION LIMIT.

''A MAJORITY OF THE COMMITTEE BELIEVES THAT THE STATUTE IS UNAMBIGUOUS AND THAT SUCH EXPENDITURES SHOULD HAVE BEEN INCLUDED UNDER THE CAP,'' THE STATEMENT SAID.

''THE FACT THAT THE AGENCY NEVER QUESTIONED ITS ROUTINE ACCOUNTING PRACTICES IN THIS CASE DISTURBS THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMITTEE. THIS WAS MADE CLEAR TO AGENCY OFFICIALS.''