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Ron warns pol Boost Latin aid or take blame

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Washington (News Bureau)—Warning that the security of the United States is gravely threatened by a dangerous rise in Soviet and Cuban activities in Central America, President Reagan last night made a strong plea for congressional approval of his beefed-up military aid program for the war-ravaged region.

In a nationally televised speech from the Oval Office—one that laid the foundation for an election-year assault on the Democrats if increased aid is defeated and the situation in El Salvador worsens—Reagan cautioned the lawmakers they will be to blame for a U.S. failure in Central America if they refuse to okay his aid plan.

Overall, the administration is asking for a \$5 billion, five-year aid program—more aid than all U.S. administrations, Democrat or Republican, have sent to the region in the last 25 years.

Prior to the speech, Reagan's Central American policy got an endorsement from former President Richard Nixon, who told a convention of newspaper editors: "We must not allow the flap over a Mickey Mouse mining incident in Nicaragua to obscure the great issues at stake."

IN EL SALVADOR, the U.S. is backing Jose Napoleon Duarte against a leftist insurgency. U.S. intelligence officials have warned repeatedly over the past several weeks that there is "hard and significant evidence" that Cuban-backed leftist rebels will mount a major offensive this fall. In neighboring Nicaragua, the U.S. supports guerrillas trying to overthrow the Marxist regime in Managua. Reagan supported the efforts of the anti-Sandinista rebels.

In a wide-ranging review of U.S. policy in the region, Reagan used colored charts and graphs to demonstrate the growing strength of Cuban and Soviet influence in Central America and urged Congress to step up the flow of U.S. aid to the region.

A senior administration official, briefing reporters before the Reagan speech, insisted that with strong support from the U.S., Duarte may be able to manage internal chaos in El Salvador and curb the military.

CONGRESS VOTED \$64.8 million in military aid for Salvador for fiscal 1984. Reagan asked for an additional \$93 million in emergency military aid in March. In late April, the Senate passed a bill for \$62 million in aid for Salvador and \$21 million for the rebels fighting to overthrow the Marxist government of Nicaragua. But in the uproar of the CIA role in the mining of Nicaragua harbors the House refused to consider the appropriations.

An administration official warned that if the current U.S. policies do not succeed, the President will be left with only two options: retreat in defeat from the region, or send in U.S. troops to safeguard American borders.