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HOUSE LOOSENS RULES ON NICARAGUAN REBEL AID
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The House on Tuesday approved a compromise bill that allows the Reagan administration to send aircraft and ground vehicles to Nicaraguan rebels as long as the equipment is not equipped "to inflict serious bodily harm or death."

The bill, approved 387-21, also would provide sophisticated radios to the rebels, but would continue a ban against the CIA advising or training them in their 4-year-old war against Nicaragua's leftist government.

The Senate is expected to give the bill final approval later this week. It will then go to President Reagan for his signature.

Last summer, Congress agreed to resume \$27 million in non-lethal aid to the rebels and permitted the CIA to share intelligence with the rebels, but barred additional U.S. support.

The bill approved Tuesday clarifies those provisions and slightly loosens constraints on U.S. aid. It allows the CIA to give the rebels special secure radios and train them in transmitting CIA-supplied intelligence about Nicaraguan government forces to rebel base camps.

The bill also states that the \$27 million can be spent to buy "transportation equipment ... so long as no modifications are made ... designed to be used to inflict serious bodily harm or death."

Congressional sources said that provision clears the way for the administration to send planes, helicopters, ambulances and trucks to the rebels even if the vehicles are used later to transport military equipment or troops.

Until now, a special State Department office established to distribute that aid has refused to spend the money to buy vehicles for the rebels, using the funds mostly for food, medicine and clothing.

Although supporting the compromise bill, House Republicans said they hoped Congress would remove all restrictions on U.S. aid to the rebels if Reagan, as expected, proposes a resumption of direct, military assistance early next year.

Denouncing the Nicaraguan government as a Soviet satellite, Rep. Dick Cheney, R-Wyo., a House Intelligence Committee member, urged Congress to "remove the restrictions which hobble the president in protecting U.S. interests in Central America."

But Rep. Ted Weiss, D-N.Y., said he feared that repeated steps toward easing limits on Nicaraguan rebel aid are "taking us closer and closer to direct military involvement."

Overall, the debate of the 1986 intelligence authorization bill was much less heated than previous battles over Reagan's policy of using the CIA to train and supply the rebels. The CIA backed the guerrillas covertly from 1981 until 1984, when Congress cut off the assistance.

The intelligence authorization bill also sets levels for worldwide U.S. spending on the CIA and other intelligence agencies, but those figures are kept secret.

Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, said that in the new bill, the substantial growth in intelligence spending that has occurred during the 1980s is "substantially slowed."