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THE NEW YORK TIMES  
24 April 1984

## U.S. Officials Cite Cuba-Backed Drive In Urging Latin Aid

By PHILIP TAUBMAN  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 23 — The Reagan Administration, citing intelligence information about a Cuban-sponsored guerrilla offensive in El Salvador this fall, is planning a major drive to gain Congressional approval of increased aid to El Salvador and to Nicaraguan rebels, senior officials said today.

Saying they remain optimistic that increased aid can be approved next month despite the recent furor over American involvement in the mining of Nicaraguan harbors, the officials said their strategy will attempt to refocus attention on the Cuban and Soviet threat in the region and, by contrast, the growth of democracy in El Salvador.

The officials said they expected President Reagan to give a major speech on Central America in May after he returns from his trip to China.

As part of the Administration's campaign, senior officials have begun to talk openly in recent days about intelligence information indicating that Cuba is preparing a large increase in aid to Salvadoran guerrillas to lay the groundwork for a fall offensive.

"We know for a fact that Castro wants to double the number of guerrillas by September in hopes that a big offensive will hurt Reagan's prospects in the election," a senior official said.

The information, which is said to come from a reliable Cuban source, indicates that Fidel Castro would like to raise the number of guerrillas from the current level of about 7,000 to 14,000 and provide them with weapons and ammunition to sustain a monthlong offensive during the last month of the American Presidential election campaign.

Some Administration officials who oppose Mr. Reagan's policies in Central America said today that they questioned the reliability of the intelligence report.

"It's very convenient right now to have that information," a national security official said. "I don't think it's fabricated but I'm not sure it's worth the weight we're going to give it."

In addition to re-emphasizing the Soviet and Cuban threat, a theme that Mr. Reagan has stressed ever since taking office, Administration officials hope to use next month's presidential runoff election in El Salvador as a lever with Congress.

### Duarte Victory Expected

The election, scheduled for May 8, matches José Napoleón Duarte, the candidate of the Christian Democratic Party, against Robert d'Aubuisson of the National Republican Alliance. Administration officials have made no secret of their preference for Mr. Duarte, who is regarded as a left-of-center candidate. Mr. d'Aubuisson, whose party represents the far right, has been linked to death squads and is widely distrusted in Congress.

Expecting a Duarte victory, Administration officials are considering asking him to come to Washington immediately after the election to make an appeal to Congress for additional assistance.

"One thing Congress can't resist is an election," a senior Administration official said, "and assuming we have a fair and open one that elects Duarte, we should be able to prevail in getting more aid for El Salvador."

Before leaving for the Easter recess 10 days ago, the Senate approved \$52 million in additional military aid to El Salvador, two-thirds of the amount requested by Mr. Reagan. The House did not act on the bill.

During the recess, Mr. Reagan drew \$32 million for El Salvador out of Pentagon contingency funds.

The Administration hopes that the election results in El Salvador will also move the House to approve the aid to El Salvador.

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