10-10-1986

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Recommended Citation
Tyroler, Deborah. 'Central American Governments Clash Over Shares In $300 Million U.S. Economic Aid Package.' (1986). https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/48

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Central American Governments Clash Over Shares In $300 Million U.S. Economic Aid Package

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Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, October 10, 1986

Valdes* The $300 million economic aid package approved by the US Congress as part of the contra aid bill has led to major clashes among Central American governments. Apparently, each country wants as large a share of the monies as possible. The Reagan administration, however, has decided to provide Honduras with the lion's share, while Costa Rica is to receive the smallest portion. The Honduran press has reported that the Tegucigalpa government is to receive $90 million. However, in mid-September it was rumored that the amount had been reduced to $80 million while Costa Rica at first promised $50 million is now expected to obtain $60 million. Not one of the Central American governments seems to be very pleased with the amounts allocated them by Washington. This may be the reason why Costa Rica as well as Honduras seem to be reluctant to receive the contras with open arms. They are waiting on more money. In an attempt to resolve the situation, the Reagan administration may respond by reducing the amount of aid earmarked for Panama, El Salvador and Guatemala. [*Prof. Valdes teaches in the sociology department at the University of New Mexico, and is director of the Latin America Data Base (LADB).]

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