

5-1-1987

Abrams Says White House May Request More Than \$105 Million In Contra Aid; Rep. Obey On Need For Sustainable Cenam Policy

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen>

Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Abrams Says White House May Request More Than \$105 Million In Contra Aid; Rep. Obey On Need For Sustainable Cenam Policy." (1987). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/606>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Abrams Says White House May Request More Than \$105 Million In Contra Aid; Rep. Obey On Need For Sustainable Cenam Policy

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, May 1, 1987

On April 28, Asst. Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliott Abrams told a group of Representatives that despite congressional opposition, the Reagan administration plans to present a request for additional contra aid at the end of the summer. Abrams said the request will probably exceed the \$105 million originally cited by the administration, and will cover a two-year period instead of one year. A group of House members met on Tuesday to discuss the administration's request for over \$826 million in economic aid and \$216 million in military assistance for Central America. Rep. David R. Obey (D-Wis.) informed Abrams the administration should design a new policy that is "sustainable" with the advent of a new administration in 1989. The Wisconsin congressman said the United States could not assume a leadership role in the region if it cannot sustain a policy over several administrations. He pointed out that although the Congress had approved \$127 million for the contras since 1985 on the basis of slim majority votes, support continues to be very weak, and the contra aid policy is simply not sustainable. Abrams said he agreed with Obey in that the "Central American democracies" fear more than ever US "inconstancy." But, he said, they also fear the marxist Sandinistas, and therefore, support for the contras is fundamental. Obey stated that while he was not supportive of the Sandinistas, no one he has spoken with in Central America and elsewhere believes that the contras can win. The congressman told his colleagues that the "economic elites" in Central America, particularly in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, must redouble their efforts to achieve economic growth in their countries. In El Salvador, he said, the economic elites are quite good at explaining to the United States why they need more aid, but if one suggests that they support the war with their own taxes, they "call us crazy communists." The congressman added that aid can be employed as a crutch to avoid doing what is necessary, or as a bridge to help in realizing what is necessary. The administration's aid request for Central America breaks down as follows: Belize \$9.3 million in economic aid, and \$1.7 million in military aid; Costa Rica \$102.9 million in economic, and \$2 million in military aid; Honduras \$140 million and \$80 million, respectively; Guatemala \$113 million and \$7 million, respectively; El Salvador \$275.6 million and approximately \$120 million, respectively; and, Panama \$29.3 million and \$3 million, respectively.

-- End --