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## **Bush Administration Urges Soviet Union To Cut Off Aid To Nicaragua, Or Apply Conditions To Aid**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

*Category/Department: General*

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On March 29, an unidentified administration official told the New York Times that the Bush administration is urging Soviet leader Mikail Gorbachev to use his April 2-5 visit to Havana to signal "willingness" to cooperate on Nicaragua. Specifically, Gorbachev has reportedly been requested to consider cutting off assistance to Managua, or to "condition" future aid on "democratic reforms" in Nicaragua. Next, the official indicated that Washington will be looking for Gorbachev to use his influence to persuade Nicaragua and Cuba to halt support for what he called "subversion" in El Salvador and elsewhere in Central America. Costa Rican Information Minister Guido Fernandez told the Times in a telephone interview from San Jose: "It is our belief that now that the United States has assumed a policy toward Central America that will give a real chance for peace...It is time for the Soviets to suspend any military aid to Nicaragua in order to contribute to the creation of an environment propitious to a peace settlement in Central America. "If the Soviets now keep supplying arms to Central America to be used in Nicaragua, or through Cuba to guerrilla movements in El Salvador and Guatemala, it is going to be very difficult for Central Americans to promote a real peace." Rep. David E. Bonier (D-Mich.), chief deputy whip in the House and head of the Democratic Task Force on Central America, said: "I think Gorbachev has a real opportunity in his discussions with Castro to signal a shift away from a military effort in Nicaragua to a more economic bent especially in light of the bipartisan accord reached last week and the fact that the administration is clearly emphasizing a policy of diplomacy and encouraging the contras to enter the electoral process. In light of all that, we should expect from Gorbachev some positive moves." In Vienna three weeks ago, when Secretary of State James Baker met with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze, he reportedly requested that Moscow cut aid to Nicaragua, or condition it on compliance with the Central American peace accords. The Soviet minister reportedly responded that his government would consider such action only if the US reduced military aid to its allies in the region. Baker dismissed such a bargain. (Basic data from New York Times, 03/30/89)

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