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## More On Reactions To Central American Summit Agreement

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

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Aug. 8: According to the New York Times, some Republican congresspersons, including Rep. Mickey Edwards (Okla.), said the agreement has set the stage for a confrontation between the Bush administration and Democrat leaders in Congress whose approval is necessary for continued spending on contra aid after Nov. 30. Edwards is chairperson of the House Republicans' Working Group on Central America. Edwards said, "This agreement is a complete violation of our understanding up to this point that demobilization of the contras and democratization in Nicaragua were going to be simultaneous. It strikes me as a sellout of the contras by the presidents of the Central American countries, who decided to cut their losses, knowing that the contras would not be getting a lot more assistance from the United States." In an interview with the Times, Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-RI), chairperson of the Foreign Relations Committee, said the agreement "could cause some contentiousness." He said it appears likely that "we will be debating the continuation of aid to the contras at the same time the contra infrastructure is supposed to be dismantled" under the plan. Pell added, "I don't want to force the contras back to Nicaragua against their will. But I would like to see aid to the contras ratcheted down as much as possible, as soon as possible." Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT) welcomed the new timetable contra dismantlement, saying that it showed the Central American presidents' "persistent dedication to democracy and peace." Deputy spokesperson for the State Department, Richard Boucher, said the new agreement stipulates that "demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance is a voluntary process which depends on Nicaraguan willingness to create safe, democratic conditions." Contra spokesperson Bosco Matamoros said, "We will not lay down our arms" on the basis of promises from Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. "There have to be negotiations between the resistance and the Sandinista government to insure that democratization and demobilization proceed as part of the same process," he said. Unidentified administration officials cited by the Times said they had no concrete plans at this time to help the contras disband their army and return to Nicaragua. The \$49.7 million aid package approved by Congress in April explicitly permits use of the money to support "voluntary regional relocation" of the contras.

Aug. 9: In an interview with AP, contra spokesperson Bosco Matamoros, who lives in Washington, said that most of the contra fighters will not return to Nicaragua because of fear of revenge by Sandinista supporters. Matamoros said, "These people have seen farmers, relatives, neighbors destroyed, killed by the state security." According to Matamoros, "Nicaragua is fractured. The society is divided. Families are fighting each other." "There is a level of arrogance and a simplistic attitude in some liberal sectors of the United States," Matamoros said. "They believe they provide aid and we exist because of their aid and the only principle we have is because of their aid...That is not it. Nobody on Capitol Hill can say we have to go to Nicaragua and wash their hands of this...[Contra fighters and their families] are not Reagan creatures. They are not the result of an ideological nightmare. They are the result of legitimate grievances, lost land, raped sisters, all the symptoms of a society that is ill." New York Times correspondent Mark Uhlig cited John Biehl, an adviser to Costa Rican President Oscar Arias as saying, "The contra problem at this point has become a problem of

refugees of negotiating where people choose to live." (Basic data from New York Times, 08/09/89, 08/10/89; AP, 08/09/89)

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