



CIA ADMITS TIES TO CONTRA DRUG DEALERS (House of Representatives - July 17, 1998)

[Page: H5847]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. **Waters**) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Today I renew my call on CIA Director George Tenant to immediately release the CIA Inspector General's classified report on the allegations of CIA involvement with Contra drug trafficking. I also call, once again, on the gentleman from Florida (Mr. **Porter Goss**), chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, to hold prompt public hearings on the findings of these reports.

Today's New York Times, front page, put it bluntly. 'CIA says it used Nicaraguan rebels accused of drug tie.' The times reported that, and I quote again, 'The Central Intelligence Agency continued to work with about two dozen Nicaraguan rebels and their supporters during the 1980s despite allegations that they were trafficking in drugs.'

The Times finally reported the explosive truth that the Senate investigators and investigative journalists alike have been telling the American people for nearly 15 years.

This front page confirmation of CIA involvement with Contra drug traffickers evidently came from a leak of the still classified CIA review of the allegations stemming from Gary Webb's 1996 Dark Alliance series. Webb's series and his recent book details the CIA's involvement with Contra drug trafficking, including ties to south central Los Angeles' largest crack cocaine network. Until today, the CIA has vehemently denied the charges. But, apparently, even the CIA is having trouble hiding the truth from the American people.

The leaked CIA report remains classified, sitting at the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, because the CIA refuses to declassify a report full of what are being described as devastating revelations of CIA involvement with known Contra drug traffickers.

I have repeatedly called for the public release of these CIA reports, and I applaud Senator **Kerry** in calling for the immediate public release of the CIA Inspector General's reports. Senator **Kerry** has worked for 15 years to bring truth, having chaired the Senate investigation that first uncovered the sordid details of Contra drug trafficking in the 1980s.

There is no conceivable reason to keep this report classified. It is tantamount to protecting drug dealers. This administration should call on the CIA to immediately release the report of the Contra drug network. The Contras were a creation of the Reagan-Bush administration and run by Reagan's CIA and Oliver North. This

administration can and should reveal the truth and put an end to this terrible affair. I cannot understand why a CIA report which details the illegal efforts of Reagan-Bush administration officials to protect the involvement of top-level Contras in drug trafficking should continue to be protected.

Although today's New York Times story is somewhat confusing to follow, the story includes some explosive details. Perhaps the most amazing revelation from these leaks is the admission that the CIA knew of drug trafficking allegations against the infamous Legion of September 15 Contra organization.

This group included the key Contra military commanders, including the Contra's top military commander Enrique Bermudez, and was the core of the most famous of the Contra armies, the FDN. They were comprised of a group of violent ex-bodyguards of Nicaraguan dictator Somoza. And they had proven themselves among the worst human rights violators in the entire Contra-era war.

The Times somewhat inaccurately reported this organization was disbanded, they said, in 1982. Of course, the Legion of September 15 had, by then, been merged into the FDN. That is the Contra army. So we now know that the CIA knowingly worked with Contra rebels involved in drug dealing, including the core of the FDN.

We also know that the CIA and Attorney General had a secret Memorandum of Understanding that allowed drug trafficking by CIA assets to go unreported to law enforcement. This, of course, was confirmed in documents I submitted for the **Record** in May. And we know that CIA officials at the highest levels knew of the Contra drug trafficking activities. What we do not know yet are the many damaging details of the 500-plus-page CIA report. The American people must be able to see this report for themselves.

We forced these investigations. A lot of people said, oh, there was nothing to it. The first half of the CIA reports were unleashed, and that is when we determined the Memorandum of Understanding existed that they did not have to report drug trafficking.

[Page: H5848]

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