

Wright says CIA seeks to provoke Sandinistas

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Jim Wright said Tuesday the Central Intelligence Agency has admitted using undercover operatives in Nicaragua to stir up public protest, hoping the leftist Sandinista government will overreact.

"We have received clear testimony from CIA people that they have deliberately done things to provoke an overreaction on the part of the government in Nicaragua," Wright, D-Texas, told reporters in answer to a question at his daily news conference.

In a subsequent interview, Wright said agency personnel, under questioning from members of Congress,

said they had "sought to generate vigorous demonstrations. . . . Agents of our government have assisted in organizing the kinds of anti-government demonstrations that have been calculated to stimulate and provoke arrests."

CIA spokeswoman Sharon Basso declined to confirm or deny Wright's information. "We do brief Congress, but wouldn't discuss that publicly," she said.

Wright said he did not know whether a July 10 demonstration at Nandaime, south of Managua, that resulted in some 40 arrests, was a result of the U.S. provocations. The

anti-Sandinista Contra rebels are asking for release of those prisoners as a gesture of good faith before resuming high-level peace talks with the government.

David Holliday, a spokesman for the Senate Intelligence Committee, said the committee held two days of hearings the week after the Nandaime unrest and was satisfied that there had been no U.S. government involvement in that particular protest.

Managua expelled the U.S. ambassador to Nicaragua, Richard Melton, and seven other diplomats on July 11, charging they were engaging in

"state terrorism" and were trying to undermine the government.

Wright said it is clear that the CIA has been behind some of the public unrest that has led to government crackdowns on the opposition and worsened the atmosphere for faltering peace discussions between the two sides.

"It has been foolish of the Sandinistas to respond to those provocations," Wright said, referring to the shutting down of opposition media outlets such as the newspaper La Prensa and Radio Catolica, a church-run radio station.

"I've made that unmistakably clear to people in Nicaragua. They have to demonstrate their commitment to the democratization they have announced" in earlier peace agreements, he said.

But Wright also condemned the U.S. interference. "I do not believe it is the proper role of our government to try to provoke riots . . . or deliberately to try to antagonize governing officials into foolish overreactions," he said.

"We should be using the influence of the United States to encourage the peace process, not discourage it."

More indictments predicted

WASHINGTON — NASA's inspector general said Tuesday he expects more indictments charging aerospace manufacturers with certifying falsely that bolts used on the space shuttles had been properly tested.

Bill Colvin said he had been assured by engineers that there are no defective bolts in critical areas on the shuttle Discovery, which is to be launched Sept. 29 from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

"We are looking at false certification," he said. "That does not necessarily mean they are defective."

The Los Angeles Times quoted Darrell Lee, president of Lee Aerospace Products of Simi Valley, Calif., as saying his company is one of many under investigation.

Colvin said it would not be appropriate for him to discuss Lee Aerospace. No charges have been filed against the firm.

"At this point in time our interest is in fasteners," Colvin said. "I

would expect more indictments."

Ron Bledsoe, chief of the quality engineering division at the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., said the false certifications were uncovered during an audit in February and March.

"There are some of Lee Aerospace's bolts on the shuttle, we know that," he said. "We've actually gone in and evaluated where these bolts were and in any critical application, we conducted extensive stress analysis and determined there was no safety issue."

Bledsoe said the shuttle's right booster contains 614 Lee bolts and the left booster has 595 and that Lee bolts account for 60 percent of the 2,000 bolts inside the rockets.

"Even with those bolts that were in there, I couldn't say we would have a problem with them," Bledsoe said. "But they just didn't meet all the requirements we have. We want to assure ourselves all bases are covered."

Dukakis calls for more health coverage

Democrat Michael Dukakis proposed a broad health insurance program for American workers Tuesday and told Republican rival George Bush "it's about time you came out from behind that flag" and addressed the issue. Bush draped himself in patriotism, visiting the nation's largest flag manufacturer.

Dukakis, seeking support from working people, said the federal government should enact legislation requiring most employers to provide basic health insurance benefits for employees and dependents.

"I think it's time we did something," said Dukakis. He said he wanted to extend health insurance to all Americans, and that the first step would be to provide it to working people through their employers.

Campaign aides said the first phase of Dukakis' program would give benefits to about 22 million people who have none, leaving 15 million or more Americans still awaiting protection under a national health insurance plan.

Bush's campaign derided Dukakis' plan as "socialized medicine" and "a prescription for financial disaster."

Criticizing Bush for what he said was a record of neglect and indifference on health care issues, Dukakis said, "Today he's visiting a flag factory. Mr. Bush, don't you think it's about time you came out from behind that flag and told us what you intend to do to provide basic health care for 37 million of our fellow citizens?"

With their first face-to-face debate just five days away, Dukakis campaigned in Houston and Bowling Green, Ky., while Bush made a brief campaign hop to Bloomfield, N.J., to visit the Annin Flag Co.

"My friends, flag sales are doing well and America is doing well," said Bush, who has stressed patriotism in his campaign and has attacked Dukakis for vetoing a Massachusetts bill that would have required public school teachers to lead students in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The vice president spoke at a rally outside the flag plant. His voice, amplified by loudspeakers, easily drowned out the shouts of several dozen protestors.

Hammering his opponent on economic issues, Bush said Dukakis had "raised taxes several times as governor of Massachusetts and I believe he will raise them again if you elect him president."

"Americans have a new economic power, and I'm not going to let them take that away from you," Bush said, speaking in front of a huge American flag in a state regarded as a key battleground of the presidential race.

The vice president returned to Washington in time to swear in fellow Texan Lauro Cavazos as education secretary, the first Hispanic member of the Cabinet.

Hispanics are a key voter bloc, particularly in states such as California and Texas, and both Bush and Dukakis have pledged to put a Hispanic-American at the Cabinet table.

Demands renewed by Armenians

MOSCOW — An Armenian activist said about 400,000 people jammed the main square of Yerevan Tuesday night and heard renewed demands for Armenian annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh, where reports said a curfew was imposed and a bomb damaged a workers' dormitory.

New violence hit the disputed territory over the weekend, with one man said to have been killed and at least 25 people officially reported injured.

The Armenian activist, Rafael Popoyan, said many residents in the Armenian capital who struck last Friday remained off the job Tuesday, vowing to stay out until the Armenian Supreme Soviet, or parliament, met in new session to reconsider their annexation plea.

In a telephone interview from Yerevan on Tuesday, Popoyan said members of the Karabakh Committee, a group pressing for annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh, told the Yerevan crowd that one-third, or 115 members, of the republic's Supreme Soviet signed a request for a new session.

"At 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, people will be on the square waiting for an official announcement," Popoyan said. He said that according to law, the session must be held if one-third of the Supreme Soviet members request it.

The predominantly Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous region of the republic of Azerbaijan, began agitating in February for annexation to Armenia.

Mutinies spread in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Soldiers from six units ousted their commanders as a revolt spread through the military Tuesday, as the new president appointed a military chief and appealed for an end to the unrest.

Lt. Gen. Prosper Avril, who declared himself president early Sunday following a coup, said Haiti's military government was taking steps to satisfy "the most urgent demands of the members of the armed forces."

But reports of reprisal killings, demonstrations and a rash of military mutinies continued to grow.

"I'm afraid we're on the eve of another insurrection," a government official said privately.

Radio stations said gunmen killed four people in apparent reprisal for the Sept. 11 massacre of 13 people during a Mass at a Roman Catholic church and other atrocities linked to the government of the deposed president, Lt. Gen. Henri Namphy.

Nine other people have been reported killed since Avril seized power. The coup was led by non-commissioned officers and lower-ranking soldiers in Namphy's own presidential guard. Namphy was exiled to the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti.

Soldiers who staged the coup had demanded of the military command that Avril be put in power, that the military be reorganized, and that democratic reforms be brought to Haiti, including free elections, sources said.

During the ceremony outside the National Palace, Avril said he was aware of "numerous problems" within the armed forces, but urged his troops "to stay calm, not to adopt attitudes which may expose the institution to wanton criticisms and affect the spirit of unity and solidarity which the new government is seeking."

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