

Bush administration to lift Nicaraguan sanctions

WASHINGTON - The Bush administration, savoring the defeat of leftist President Daniel Ortega, promised Tuesday to lift sanctions soon against Nicaragua and assemble "significant and meaningful" aid to rebuild its shattered economy.

President Bush met at the White House with congressional leaders including Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., who said post-Ortega assistance probably would cost hundreds of millions of dollars over five years.

Nunn suggested creating an "emerging democracy account" of foreign aid for countries such as Nicaragua, Panama and the fledgling democracies in Eastern Europe.

The White House said it liked the idea if it meant the administration would have more flexibility in the way the United States dispenses foreign aid.

To the surprise of the administration, Ortega was defeated in Sunday's presidential election by opposition newspaper publisher Violeta Chamorro, who was backed by the United States.

The vote sets the stage for the first democratic transfer of power ever in Nicaragua, with Chamorro taking office April 25 from Ortega's revolutionary government.

Bush summoned congressional leaders to the White House to chart a new strategy for dealing with a country viewed for a decade as a U.S. adversary.

"The president indicated that there would be a dramatic and swift change in policy," said Sen. Alan Cranston, D-Calif., the assistant Democratic leader, after meeting with Bush. "What we can do in terms of aid depends upon what Congress can find, along with the administration, in a very tight budget situation."

Without providing a figure, White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater promised that U.S. assistance would be substantial.

"The United States' commitment is strong and enduring," Fitzwater said. "We will develop an aid package for Nicaragua that will be significant and meaningful. The democratic aspirations of the Nicaraguan people deserve our support and they will have it."

Fitzwater said the United States was examining "the full range of economic options aimed at reintegrating Nicaragua into the international economy."

He said Bush would discuss Nicaragua's needs this weekend at a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, whose country has become the world's largest donor of foreign aid.

Nunn also said U.S. aid for emerging democracies should be sizable.

"After all, we spent trillions and trillions of dollars, hundreds of billions of dollars, defending the free world waiting for this day, and now that we've arrived at this day, I think we should not be shortsighted in our approach," Nunn said.

In a message that seemed primarily aimed at the Contra rebels long supported by the Reagan and Bush administrations, Fitzwater urged restraint in the post-election period. He reiterated a U.S. call that there be an immediate cease-fire "under U.N. supervision and that it be strictly respected by all sides."

"We have always anticipated that the resistance would demobilize and repatriate under conditions of political freedom and personal security," Fitzwater said.

In contrast to the skepticism the

Ortega demands Contra disbanding before peaceful transfer of power

MANAGUA, Nicaragua - President Daniel Ortega demanded the immediate disbanding of U.S.-backed Contra rebels and set tough conditions Tuesday for a peaceful transfer of power to the coalition that won the elections.

"A change of government does not mean the end of the revolution," he told thousands of cheering supporters after a meeting of Sandinista party leaders.

Ortega said the party would relinquish power because of the election loss Sunday, but would defend the gains of the revolution.

"The Sandinista National Liberation Front demands the immediate demobilization and disarming of the Contras so there can be a peaceful transition," he read from a statement by the party leadership.

It said the Sandinistas would "defend the integrity and professionalism of the army and the police forces."

President-elect Violeta Barrios de Chamorro and her United National Opposition alliance have promised to eliminate the military draft and reduce the size of the armed forces.

Control of the military and police is considered the most delicate issue in a power transfer. They are closely identified with the Sandinista party and the army is known as the Sandinista People's Army, not the Nicaraguan army.

Rafael Solis, a military commander, said earlier Tuesday the Sandinistas would not give up control of the armed forces and police unless the Contras were disbanded.

Rank-and-file Sandinistas held demonstrations and some denounced the election results, while grudgingly saying they would accept the party's loss. Others urged Ortega not to give up power.

Solis said of the Contras: "They have to come back without arms."

This is a necessity in Nicaragua. We need this in order to continue discussions about our army."

He urged Chamorro's coalition to press for disbanding the Contras, who have been fighting, particularly with the backing of the former Reagan administration, to overthrow the leftist Sandinistas since 1981.

Chamorro took 55 percent of the vote to Ortega's 40, with returns from 82 percent of the total precincts counted.

Solis said during a break in the Sandinista meeting that "if UNO decides to privatize the banking system it could be an irresponsible act that starts a war."

Solis said control of the military and police would have to be negotiated, but he did not elaborate.

One of Chamorro's closest advisers, former Contra leader Alfredo Cesar, said Monday the question of the armed forces was the most crucial point of the transition.

White House has applied to statements by Ortega, the administration appeared eager to accept his promise of a smooth transition of power.

"We have the words of President Ortega about wanting a peaceful and effective transition, and we fully expect that to occur," Fitzwater said.

At the State Department, spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said that prior suggestions of Sandinista un-

willingness to turn over power were made in the heat of the campaign and that, so far as the administration knows, no such statements have been made since the elections.

Fitzwater said the administration would respond to the changes in Nicaragua's government with a series of steps designed to normalize relations.

"We intend to lift economic sanc-

tions soon," he said, referring to a series of economic and trade sanctions in place since 1985.

Fitzwater also said that "we would expect to return an ambassador there" and that "we are looking at U.S. economic assistance."

Bush also invited Chamorro to send economic aides to Washington to discuss the aid package and economic restructuring, Fitzwater said.

Exxon indicted for oil spill, could be fined \$700 million

WASHINGTON - The Justice Department announced a five-count indictment against Exxon Corp. and its shipping subsidiary Tuesday night in the Exxon Valdez oil spill that fouled Alaska's coast last year.

U.S. Attorney General Dick Thornburgh and deputies said that if Exxon is convicted on all counts, criminal fines could total as much as \$1.6 million.

However, the government could also seek as much as \$700 million more under federal laws that allow recovery of twice the amount of the proven loss caused by the spill, U.S. Attorney Mark Davis of Alaska told a Justice Department news conference.

Thornburgh said the indictment was presented to the grand jury after a proposed plea deal fell through. However, he did not rule out the possibility of a deal in the future.

Assistant Attorney General Dick Stewart said the federal indictment, brought by a grand jury in Anchorage, accused Exxon Corp. and its shipping subsidiary of two felonies and three misdemeanors.

The felonies, each of which carry a maximum fine of \$500,000, accuse the company of violating the Port and Waterways Safety Act

and the Dangerous Cargo Act. The latter charge alleges that Exxon "willfully and knowingly violated a regulation prohibiting any person from being engaged on a crew if such person is known to be physically or mentally incapable of performing his or her duties."

Joseph Hazelwood, captain of the Exxon Valdez, faces criminal charges in a separate action in Alaska, accused of being drunk and letting his ship get away from him.

The three misdemeanor counts accuse Exxon of:

- Violating the Clean Water Act by illegally discharging pollutants into Prince William Sound.

- Unlawfully discharging refuse, the oil.

- Violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a count which stems from the deaths of more than 36,000 birds as a result of oil pollution.

Each of the misdemeanor counts carries a maximum penalty of \$200,000, the Justice officials said.

The Exxon Valdez accident resulted in the worst oil spill in U.S. history with 11 million gallons of crude soiling Prince William Sound and long stretches of Alaska's coastal waters and shoreline.

Gorbachev convinces legislature to approve more powerful post

MOSCOW - A determined and at times angry Mikhail Gorbachev on Tuesday rapped through the Soviet legislature his proposal for a more powerful presidency that progressive lawmakers warned could become a dictatorship.

Gorbachev, his voice rising as his temper frayed, accused his critics of engaging in "cheap demagoguery." The Soviet leader recognized lawmakers and revoked their right to speak apparently at whim during the often-stormy debate.

He hailed the Supreme Soviet's final and overwhelming approval of his proposal as "a great political event." But lawmaker Leonid Sukhov, a Ukrainian taxi driver, warned: "The way the voting went today is the same way presidential power will be."

After only two days of discussion, spread over two weeks, the Supreme Soviet voted 347-24 with 43 abstentions to approve creation in principle of a national presidency with a five-year term, to replace the government post now held by Gorbachev, whose formal title is Supreme Soviet chairman.

The bill was remanded to committees to consider the dozens of amendments offered by deputies during debate.

Subject to final approval by the legislature's parent body, the Congress of People's Deputies, the president will be granted powers to veto laws, unilaterally declare states of emergency, and name the prime minister, according to a copy of the bill shown to Western reporters.

Gorbachev, who chaired the legislature's proceedings, emphasized he has not yet been elected president and said he has even considered refusing the office, but few expect the 58-year-old Communist Party chief not to be chosen.

The presidency would give Gor-

bachev a new and stable power base at a time when his 20 million-member party's popularity and prestige are waning.

Progressive lawmakers strongly objected to concentrating so much power in one leader's hands and what they called Gorbachev's undue haste in pressing the issue on the Supreme Soviet. But other legislators said mounting economic, social and ethnic woes prove the need for a strong leader.

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We need a person who can have real power . . . the quicker the better.

Ubaidullaeva
Soviet lawmaker

"We are tired of social tension. When are you going to put the country in order?" lawmaker Rano Ubaidullaeva of Uzbekistan said her constituents were demanding. "We need a person who can have real power . . . the quicker the better."

But Anatoly Sobchak rejected the demand for "a strong hand" voiced by some. "We are deciding the question of appointing a nationwide gendarme," the Leningrad jurist said. He told the 542-member legislature: "All our decisions can be crossed out by the president."

Sobchak and another member of the progressive Inter-Regional Group of Moscow, said the Sergei Stankevich of Minsk, said the new president would tilt the balance of power toward the head of state to the detriment of the new working legislature,

which has functioned for less than a year.

"We know all too well from the history of our country how dangerous is the concentration and super-concentration of power and authority in one place," said Stankevich, who has studied the U.S. Constitution.

Visibly stung by some lawmakers' insinuations that the new office was being tailor-made for him, Gorbachev exclaimed: "This is not serious. This is cheap demagoguery!"

"We're talking about the president's power, about constitutional changes," he said. "What does Gorbachev have to do with this?"

He repeated previous assurances that there would be more than one candidate for the office, and added: "Sometimes I have an outrageous thought, in order to prove that this (the political system) is not being adjusted for somebody . . . to decline if my name is on the list of candidates."

But he said such an act would be "cowardice." The new presidency, he said, was vital for the success of his economic and social reform drive, known as "perestroika."

According to the draft bill on the presidency shown to reporters, the holder of the office must be a Soviet citizen at least 35 years old. The president will be directly elected by the voters, the bill stipulates, but the jurist who presented it to the Supreme Soviet said the procedure will be different the first time.

Vladimir Kudryavtsev, a vice president of the Academy of Sciences, said the first president will be elected by the Congress to a four-year term, because it would take too long to prepare a nationwide election. The president's term would thus expire along with those of the 2,250 members of the Congress, who were elected last year.

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