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Wright hails peace plan 'good faith'

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GRAPEVINE, Texas — (UPI) — House Speaker Jim Wright, D-Texas, met Friday with three Nicaraguan rebel leaders and said he believes all sides in Central America are acting in "good faith" on two proposals to end Nicaragua's civil war.

Wright met for 90 minutes with three leaders of the contra directorate — Alfredo Cesar, Alfonso Robelo and Aristides Sanchez.

Wright later said the United States and the contras were willing to "give peace a chance" in Nicaragua.

Cesar said the contras were "stopping the shooting to give a chance for the peace proposal" but warned that the rebels would not abandon military readiness while negotiating with Nicaragua's Marxist-led Sandinista government.

Wright emphasized the good faith dealings of the contras, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and other parties in the Central American peace process.

"We're assuming Ortega is operating in good faith," Wright said. "We're working on the assumption that all the partners are acting in good faith. We're going to give peace a chance."

Wright met with the contra leaders a day after their private meeting with President Reagan in Los Angeles. The contra leaders asked for more U.S. aid after Sept. 30, when the current \$100 million aid appropriation expires.

But they asked that military aid funds be placed in escrow and released only if Nicaragua fails to abide by a peace plan signed Aug. 7 by five Central American countries, including Nicaragua.

The contras would still receive humanitarian assistance and wage their war against Nicaragua's Marxist-led Sandinista government with available arms and weapons placed in the aid pipeline before the Sept. 30 cutoff.

Wright said he favors continuing humanitarian aid to the region.

"We have a long-term, lasting interest in Central America," he said. "Not just because of the war, but because of the ancient enemies of man — against poverty, malnutrition and illiteracy."

Reagan tentatively endorsed the aid proposal Thursday in a Los Angeles meeting that drew demonstrators to his hotel.



Wright