

Oliver North is named new NRA president



Washington, May 9 (RHC)-- The National Rifle Association, the NRA, has announced that retired U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North will be the next president of the NRA.

Oliver North was a central figure in the Iran-Contra scandal, helping the Ronald Reagan administration circumvent the U.S. Congress to secretly send arms to Iran and use the proceeds to fund the U.S.-backed Contras in Nicaragua. North has also been a Fox News contributor.

North came into the public spotlight when he claimed partial responsibility for the establishment of a covert network which subsequently funneled illegal funds to the Contras. Congress passed the Boland Amendment in 1982, which prohibited the appropriation of U.S. funds by intelligence agencies for the support of the Contras. The money was passed through a shell organization, the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty, to the Palmer National Bank of Washington, DC, and then to the Contras.

In July 1987, North was summoned to testify before televised hearings of a joint congressional committee that was formed to investigate the Iran-Contra scandal. During the hearings, North admitted that he had lied to Congress previously, for which, with other actions, he was later charged. He defended his actions by stating that he believed in the goal of aiding the Contras, whom he saw as freedom fighters against the Sandinistas and said that he viewed the Iran-Contra scheme as a "neat idea." North also admitted shredding government documents related to these activities, when the Iran-Contra scandal became

public.

Oliver North was tried in 1988 and was indicted on 16 felony counts. On May 4, 1989, he was initially convicted of three: accepting an illegal gratuity, aiding and abetting in the obstruction of a congressional inquiry, and ordering the destruction of documents. He never spent a day in jail and his convictions were later dismissed by a federal court.

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