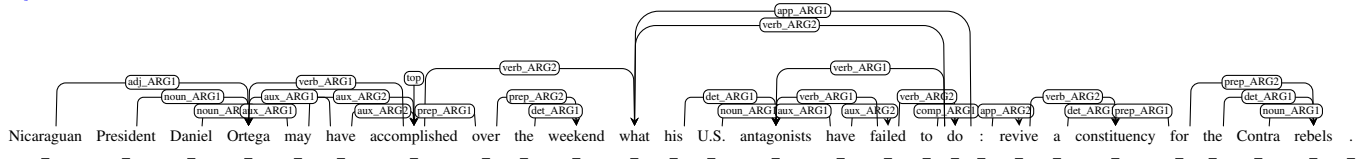
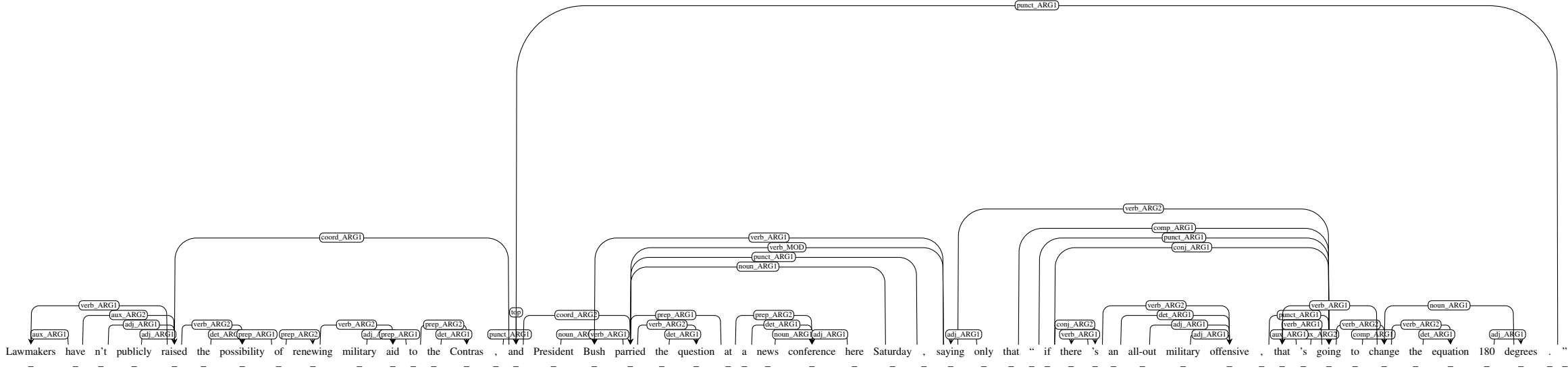


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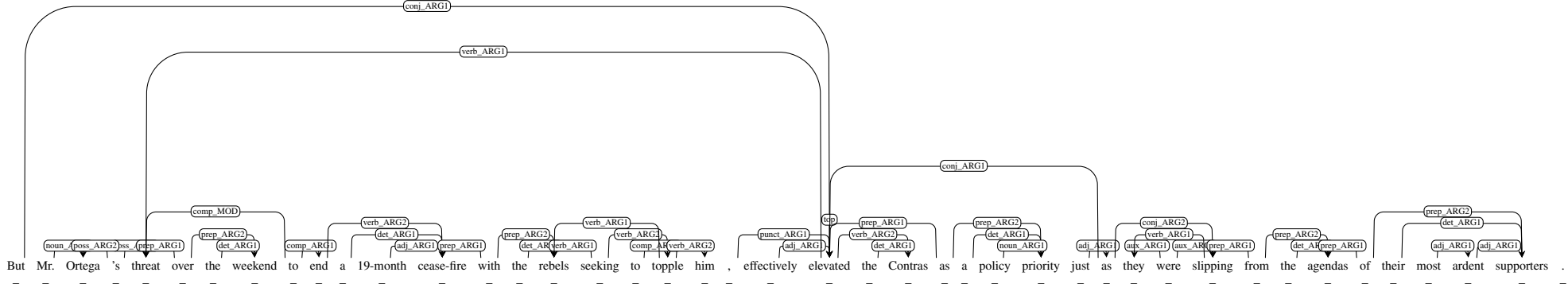
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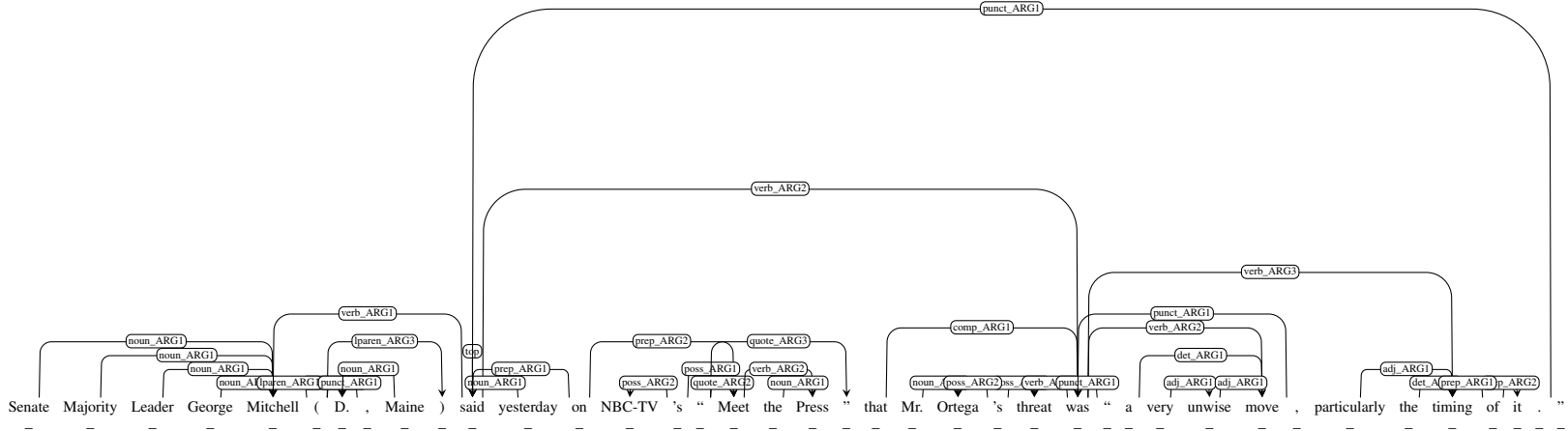
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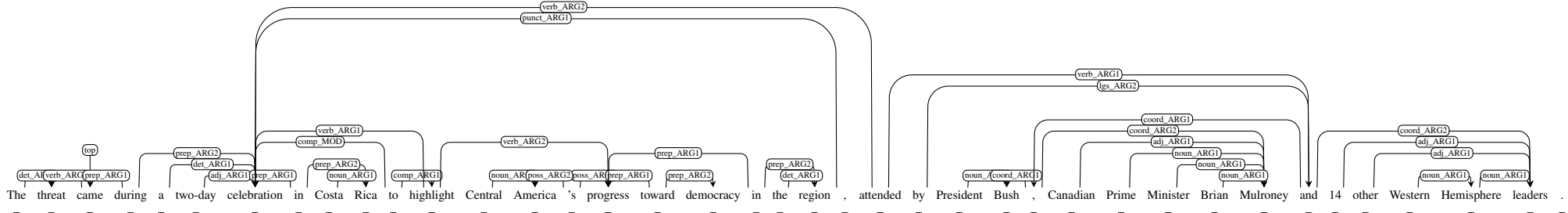
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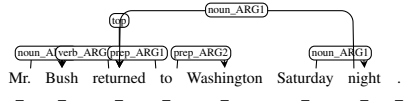
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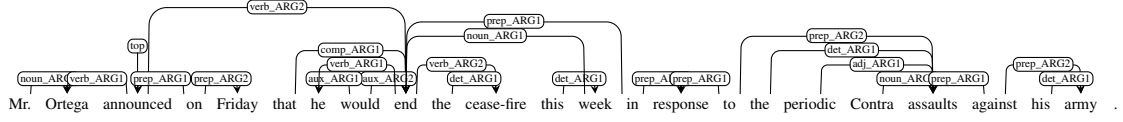
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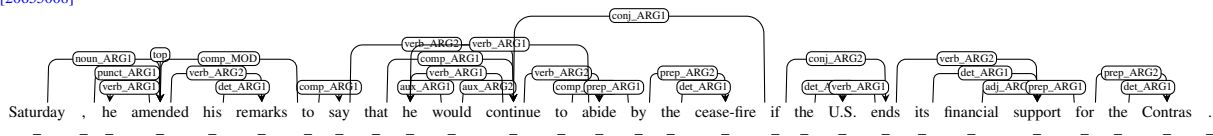
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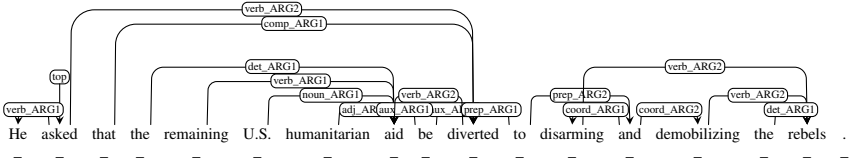
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[20655008]



[20655009]



[20655010]

Not only did Mr. Ortega 's comments come in the midst of what was intended as a showcase for the region , it came as Nicaragua is under special international scrutiny in anticipation of its planned February elections .

[20655011]

Outside observers are gathering in Nicaragua to monitor the registration and treatment of opposition candidates .

[20655012]

And important U.S. lawmakers must decide at the end of November if the Contras are to receive the rest of the \$ 49 million in so-called humanitarian assistance under a bipartisan agreement reached with the Bush administration in March .

[20655013]

The humanitarian assistance , which pays for supplies such as food and clothing for the rebels amassed along the Nicaraguan border with Honduras , replaced the military aid cut off by Congress in February 1988 .

[20655014]

While few lawmakers anticipated that the humanitarian aid would be cut off next month , Mr. Ortega 's threat practically guarantees that the humanitarian aid will be continued .

[20655016]

Sen. Dole also said he hoped for unanimous support for a resolution he plans to offer tomorrow denouncing the Nicaraguan leader .

[20655018]

" The administration should now state that if the { February } election is voided by the Sandinistas ... they should call for military aid . " said former Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams .

[20655019]

" In these circumstances , I think they 'd win . "

[20655020]

Sen. Mitchell said that congressional Democrats intend to honor the March agreement to give non-lethal support to the Contras through the February elections , although he added that the agreement requires that the Contras not initiate any military action .

[20655021]

Mr. Ortega 's threat to breach the cease-fire comes as U.S. officials were acknowledging that the Contras have at times violated it themselves .

[20655022]

