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News Summary

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1985 -- 6 a.m. EST EDITION

TODAY'S HEADLINES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

After Six Years, No Sign of Change in Afghanistan Involvement -- Six years after the Soviet military intervened in Afghanistan, the state-run media offered a heavy dose of commentary on the war-torn country but gave no sign the Kremlin will pull its 115,000 soldiers out.

(Washington Times, AP, Reuter)

White House Denies Shultz is Leaving -- The White House denied reports Secretary Shultz is about to leave his job, and a spokesman said President Reagan has the "fullest confidence" in the Cabinet secretary.

(Washington Post, Washington Times, UPI)

NATIONAL NEWS

Health Care for Veterans Reported Under Budget Ax -- President Reagan's draft budget for fiscal 1987 would cut spending on health care benefits for veterans, the New York Times reported today.

(Reuter)

Baker Chided About Using Social Security Trust Fund -- Secretary Baker appears to have broken the law by using Social Security trust funds to keep the government running while Congress acted to raise the debt ceiling, the comptroller general said.

(Washington Post, UPI)

NETWORK NEWS (Thursday Evening)

SOVIET-ISRAELI RELATIONS -- There are fresh indications the Soviet Union may be ready to resume diplomatic ties with Israel.

SYRIA/ISRAEL -- In private, U.S. officials say the situation that is developing between Syria and Israel is serious and potentially explosive.

CHRISTMAS SALES -- A gain of \$1.5 billion in sales nationwide in December alone came despite a shopping season six days shorter than last year.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

AFGHAN WAR MOVES INTO SEVENTH YEAR; SOVIET SIGNALS ARE MIXED, BUT OFFER LITTLE HOPE OF END

The latest diplomatic signals sent by the Soviet Union on a negotiated solution in Afghanistan are too faint to raise hopes for a quick settlement of the 6-year-old conflict, according to diplomatic sources. While some believe the Soviets want to crush the Moslem resistance and virtually depopulate Afghanistan, others suggest the Russians might be looking for a way to disengage from the war that today enters its seventh year in what many see as a military stalemate.

Some Western experts estimated the Soviets and their allies control no more than 10% of the country. Reports from diplomatic sources in Islamabad say Soviet morale in Afghanistan is low because of the brutal nature of the war and the poor conditions in which Soviet soldiers must live. On the other hand, the morale of the Islamic resistance is high.

(James Morrison, Washington Times, A1)

Kabul Broadens Government Base on War Anniversary

ISLAMABAD -- The Soviet-backed Afghan government has broadened its base by bringing several non-communists into the cabinet on the sixth anniversary of Soviet military intervention. Kabul Radio said Thursday night that 14 men were named to government posts after approval by the Revolutionary Council Presidium headed by President Karmal. Most, including a new deputy premier, were from outside his ruling party and belonged to various ethnic groups.

Western diplomats reported tighter security in Kabul ahead of the anniversary, with Soviet troops often patrolling streets and protection for communist leaders the most thorough ever witnessed.

(Raja Asghar, Reuter)

After Six Years, No Sign of Change in Afghanistan Involvement

MOSCOW -- Six years after the Soviet military intervened in Afghanistan, the state-run media offered a heavy dose of commentary on the war-torn country but gave no sign the Kremlin will pull its 115,000 soldiers out.

A documentary broadcast this week on Soviet television contrasted the superpowers' gifts to Afghan children. The Soviets provided school supplies, while "American uncles" gave bombs disguised as flashlights, pens and ordinary rocks, the report said. The film and commentaries seemed to indicate that Moscow is holding fast to its support of the Kabul government in putting down the Moslem insurrection.

Kremlin motives for giving the war a higher public profile are unclear. Western, Arab and Asian diplomats in Moscow say the broader, though still limited, coverage could be an attempt to steel the population for a protracted involvement in the war, which U.S. officials estimate has already taken 10,000 Soviet lives.

(Carol Williams, AP)

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PERES: SYRIAN SAMs BACK

JERUSALEM -- Prime Minister Peres said that Syria has moved surface-to-air missile batteries back into Lebanon, but he said Israel was determined not to fuel an escalation of tension over the issue. Peres said Israel is seeking to return to the "status quo," apparently meaning that diplomatic efforts again are under way to try to persuade President Assad to order the removal of the missiles from Lebanon's central Bekaa Valley.

Speaking to Israeli newspaper editors at a luncheon in Tel Aviv, Peres denied reports there had been a Syrian troop buildup at the strategic Golan Heights, and that the Israeli government was trying to avoid making any statements that could lead to a deterioration in the atmosphere between the two countries.

(William Claiborne, Washington Post, A19)

Missiles Threaten a Confrontation, Peres Warns Syria

Israeli military officials claimed the Syrian missiles threatened Israel's ability to stage reconnaissance flights over Lebanon. The flights are used to obtain intelligence on planned guerrilla raids against Israeli targets.

(UPI story, Washington Times, A1)

SOVIETS LOBBY AMERICAN JEWS ON EMIGRATION

Soviet diplomats secretly have told almost every major American Jewish organization over the last year that there is a possibility of Moscow restoring diplomatic relations with Israel and allowing greatly increased numbers of Soviet Jews to emigrate to Israel by next spring, representatives of the organizations said. The representatives said the dominant feeling among people active in efforts to aid Soviet Jewry is that the Soviet Union has been engaged in a campaign to improve its image in this country. They added that the Soviet approaches have been reported to the Israeli government and said Jerusalem appears to share the view that the Soviet effort probably is a public relations ploy rather than a signal of a major policy shift.

(John Goshko, Washington Post, A1)

HUSSEIN CURBS FUNDAMENTALISTS

AMMAN -- King Hussein's traditional good relations with the influential Moslem Brotherhood movement have become strained recently over his decision to curb the spread of Islamic fundamentalism here. There are strong indications that Hussein acted because he had come to the conclusion that the Moslem Brotherhood, a fundamentalist Sunni organization that already holds influential positions in several key areas of Jordan's government, posed a serious threat to his own policies, especially his U.S.-backed initiative toward Middle East peace negotiations between a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and Israel.

Hussein's move, which has been described by government officials as a "warning" rather than a crackdown, has been accompanied by the departure of several fundamentalists from influential government positions and by parliamentary approval earlier this month of government-sponsored legislation aimed at preventing inflammatory preaching in mosques.

(Samira Kavar, Washington Post, A21)

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LEBANESE MILITIAS STUDY SYRIAN PLAN TO END WAR

BEIRUT -- Lebanon's three most powerful warring militias moved toward giving final sanction to a Syrian-sponsored plan initialed Wednesday to end their 10-year civil war. Official government sources said representatives of the militias of the Amal, the Druze and the Christian Lebanese Forces initialed a final draft of the Syrian-sponsored peace plan in Damascus.
(Peter Smerdon, Washington Post, A21)

WORRIES VOICED AS MIDEAST MODERATES TURN ELSEWHERE FOR ARMS

Some U.S. officials and other Middle East specialists are concerned that the failure of the U.S. to meet major arms requests this past year from two of its traditional Arab allies, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, is likely to have serious adverse military and political implications for Washington in the years to come, particularly in the Persian Gulf region.

Administration officials said the White House intends to try to go ahead with the Jordanian arms sale in March, but pro-Israeli groups have already laid plans to attempt to derail the sale once again. They also said the Administration will submit a vastly reduced arms request for Saudi Arabia sometime in 1986 but no decision has been taken as to when.

(News Analysis by David Ottaway, Washington Post, A22)

CRASH TROOPS HAD 'SECRET BASE,' SOVIETS SAY

MOSCOW -- Tass charged 248 U.S. peace-keeping troops who were killed in a plane crash on their way home for Christmas were coming from a secret Rapid Deployment "forward strike base." U.S. government spokesmen immediately branded the Soviet charge as "sick," "disinformation" and "patently ridiculous." Tass said the crash has shown Arab countries "that a forward strike base of the Pentagon has been secretly established in the heart of the Middle East to keep within its gunights all of this vast region."
(UPI story, Washington Times, A5)

TRANSCRIPTS TIED TO JEFFRIES HAD STRATEGIC DATA

The classified transcripts allegedly delivered to the Soviet Union by accused spy Randy Miles Jeffries came from a congressional hearing that included discussion of U.S. nuclear war fighting plans, operating areas of Trident submarines in the Pacific Ocean and the vulnerability of U.S. computer and telephone systems to Soviet eavesdropping, according to a declassified version of the session.

(Ruth Marcos and Fred Hiatt, Washington Post, A1)

SIX BLACKS KILLED IN SOUTH AFRICA; TRIBAL FIGHTING EASES OFF

JOHANNESBURG -- Another six blacks died in racial and political violence, four of them in the Cape Town area. Meanwhile, an uneasy calm returned to a squatter community near Durban where 53 blacks died in fighting between Zulu and Xhosa tribesmen on Christmas day.

(Allister Sparks, Washington Post, A1)

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WHITE HOUSE DENIES SHULTZ IS LEAVING

The White House denied reports Secretary Shultz is about to leave his job, and a spokesman said President Reagan has the "fullest confidence" in the Cabinet secretary. White House aides said they knew of no pressure to oust Shultz. And presidential spokesman Edward Djerejian said Shultz "is very much on board." (UPI story, Washington Post, A2)

SENTIMENT BUILDS THAT SHULTZ SHOULD LEAVE CABINET SOON

At a White House Christmas party for top government officials, Secretary Shultz told an acquaintance that there were a lot of people present who want him out of the Administration. Indeed, there appears to be accelerating sentiment, mostly among hard-liners, that Shultz should be replaced. It is not clear how widespread that attitude is, and Shultz seems to have retained the confidence of President Reagan. One well-placed official, who believes the secretary should be let go, said it is a "close call" as to whether he will be.

The President, one official said, was at the point of firing Shultz a year ago on the advice of hardliners who were upset when Shultz replaced a number of conservative ambassadorial appointees with career diplomats. Shultz was spared when two conservatives in the government whose opinions Mr. Reagan values came to his defense.

Conservatives, in particular, are dissatisfied with Shultz's stand on arms control and his perceived reluctance to provide assistance to the anti-communist rebels in Angola. (George Gedda, Washington Times, A3)

NICARAGUA REBELS LINKED TO DRUG TRAFFICKING

Nicaraguan rebels operating in northern Costa Rica have engaged in cocaine trafficking, in part to help finance their war against Nicaragua's leftist government, according to U.S. investigators and American volunteers who work with the rebels. These sources said the smuggling involves individuals from the largest of the U.S.-backed contra groups, the FDN, and the ARDE, as well as a splinter group known as M3.

(Brian Barger and Robert Parry, AP story, Washington Post, A22)

JAPAN'S BUDGET EXPECTED TO CURB TRADE SURPLUS

TOKYO -- Prime Minister Nakasone is scheduled to meet with his Cabinet Saturday to whip into final shape Japan's budget for the fiscal year beginning next April. The final product is likely to demonstrate an effort by the government to stimulate domestic demand as a way of reducing the country's huge trade surplus with the U.S. and other trading partners. The Diet is expected to pass the budget with little or no amendments when it comes to a vote in late March or early April.

(Timothy Elder, Washington Times, A6)

EDITOR'S NOTE: John Goshko's article, "U.S. Leads Campaign to Bolster OAS," appears on page A22 of The Washington Post.

NATIONAL NEWS

HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS REPORTED UNDER BUDGET AX

NEW YORK -- President Reagan's draft budget for fiscal 1987 would cut spending on health care benefits for veterans, the New York Times reported today. The Times said the budget would cut the cost of the benefits by reducing the number of people treated and by requiring insurance companies to help pay the cost.

The report said Harry Walters, the administrator of the Veterans Administration, had warned the OMB that cutbacks could result in a reduced quality of medical care for former members of the armed forces. The draft budget would require many veterans to show financial need to receive care, the Times reported. (Reuter)

BAKER CHIDED ABOUT USING SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

Secretary Baker appears to have broken the law by using Social Security trust funds to keep the government running while Congress acted to raise the debt ceiling, the comptroller general said in a letter released Thursday. But Comptroller Charles Bowsher, in a letter to Rep. James Jones, chairman of the House Social Security subcommittee, suggested that Baker had not "acted unreasonably." The letter, sent early this month, was in response to questions submitted to Bowsher by Jones in regard to the use of Social Security funds to meet government costs in September-through-November. A GAO report said Baker was "required to act in a complex and fluid situation" and had "many other duties to carry out" at the time. (UPI story, Washington Post, A2)

PENTAGON ORDERS CUTBACK ON 'UNPRICED ORDERS' POLICY

The military services have been ordered to cut their backlog of "unpriced orders" from defense contractors, a policy one member of Congress said gives manufacturers a "license to steal." The Defense Department said it directed the services to cut the "unpriced orders" backlog by 32% for spare parts that have no price designated beforehand. Release of the directive came two days after Rep. Dingell, a harsh Pentagon critic, charged that "unpriced orders" put the government in a virtual no-win situation and is nothing short of "a license to steal."

(Richard Gross, UPI)

FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD PUTS OFF JUNK BOND RULE

The Federal Reserve Board has decided to delay proposed new regulations cracking down on the use of so-called junk bonds to finance corporate takeovers. The central bank said it would instead hold public hearings on the issue January 8. (Reuter)

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CONSUMERS LEAGUE GIVES CONGRESS A SO-SO REPORT CARD

The National Consumers League gave the Reagan Administration and the Senate a "D" for their performance on consumer-related activities in 1985, but marked a "C" for the House. The non-profit membership group, in its so-called "Consumer Report Cards," said 1985 "was a year of virtual inaction" by Congress and the Administration on consumer issues.

Linda Golodner, the league's executive director, said the league has been concerned in recent years with the Administration's general belief that the marketplace can regulate itself. "Administration support of deregulation has been so wholehearted that the Consumer Product Safety Commission now is headed by a man who believes that purely voluntary standards will assure our safety; the role of the Environmental Protection Administration has been seriously eroded; and the Federal Aviation Administration operates with too few inspectors and air traffic controllers." (Janet Staihar, AP)

CLASSICISTS SNUBBING BENNETT

When 1,000 classics scholars descend on Washington today for their annual convention, one proponent of classical values will be notably absent. Secretary Bennett, who during his term in the Reagan Administration has regularly invoked Plato, Aristotle, Homer and Vergil to promote a "back-to-basics" educational agenda, was voted down as guest speaker by a special committee of the American Philological Association, a 116-year-old society representing classicists in North America.

"He holds controversial attitudes toward education and scholarship, and we felt that by inviting him it would be interpreted as a political statement," said committee member Erich Gruen, a professor of classics at the University of California at Berkeley. Several classicists who plan to attend the convention said that, while they appreciate Bennett's advocacy of classical studies as part of a liberal arts education, they worry that his notion of classical scholarship is outdated, elitist and exclusive.

(Alison Muscatine, Washington Post, A3)

PRESIDENT'S TRIP

After a quiet Christmas at the White House, President and Mrs. Reagan are leaving for California to wind up 1985 with old friends and continue their tradition of celebrating New Year's Eve in Palm Springs. The President will end his vacation Jan. 3 when he flies to Mexico for a meeting with President de la Madrid before returning to Washington later the same day. The two leaders are expected to discuss various issues of mutual concern, including immigration and border problems, Mexico's heavy foreign debt and continuing strife in Central America, where Mexico has attempted to play peacemaker for several years. (Michael Putzel, AP)

FIRST LADY PULLS REINS ON PRESIDENTIAL TRAVEL

First Lady Nancy Reagan reportedly thinks President Reagan spent too much time on the road last year and wants the number of official trips reduced drastically in 1986. White House officials expect there will be more trips than usual to the ranch and fewer working trips. The word at the White House is that Mrs. Reagan put her foot down after her 74-year-old husband went on the road about twice a week in September and October to plug for tax-reform legislation.

(Jeremiah O'Leary, Washington Times, A3)

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NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

SOVIET-ISRAELI RELATIONS

CBS's Dan Rather: There are fresh indications tonight that the Soviet Union may be ready to resume diplomatic ties with Israel -- indications and a good deal of hope. If it happens, it could have major implications for Middle East peace and the thousands of Soviet Jews trying to get out.

CBS's Bob Simon reports the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations with Israel after the 1967 war. An indication that that could change very soon came today from California. The representative of a prominent Jewish organization said a Soviet diplomat told him Moscow will recognize Israel in February.... In Israel today, everyone denied everything, which oftens means that something is going on. Prime Minister Peres left no doubt that Jerusalem's door to Moscow is wide open.... Israel sent reinforcements to the Golan Heights tonight in response to changes in Syria's deployment of SAM missiles. What Israel wants from Russia -- even more than formal relations -- are the estimated 2.5 to 3 million Jews in the Soviet Union. The issue has left a stain on Gorbachev's image, which Israelis hope he'll want to clear up before he visits Washington next year. And Congress wants Russia to improve its human rights record, before it removes barriers to U.S.-Soviet trade. But what's really waiting in Israel for a Soviet ambassador is a chance for the Russians to get dealt into the peace process. Israel says they've got to recognize us first. (CBS-lead)

SYRIA/ISRAEL

ABC's Peter Jennings reports the issue is Soviet missiles -- those the Syrians have deployed along their border with Lebanon and those the Israelis say the Syrians have deployed inside Lebanon again. According to Syrian radio broadcasts, the Soviet Union has expressed its support for the missiles on Syrian soil.

ABC's John McWethy reports that in private, U.S. officials say the situation that's developing between Syria and Israel is serious and potentially explosive. In public, the State Department again urged calm.... All the missiles, Israel says, jeopardize Israeli recon flights over Lebanon and therefore, must be removed. The Syrians say the Israeli flights are illegal and that the missiles will stay. With U.S. diplomats carrying messages, the Syrians two weeks ago withdrew their missiles from Lebanon, apparently bowing to Israeli pressure. Now, however, the missiles are back in Lebanon and tension is again mounting. As a result, a fierce battle is underway in Israel about whether to destroy the missiles immediately -- risking war. Israeli PM Peres today downplayed the issue. It is that possibility of "something more severe" that the U.S. is trying to head off. Officials concede, however, that there is precious little the U.S. can do other than carry messages, urge calm and watch. (ABC-7)

(Thursday Evening)

NBC's Garrick Utley: There is increased tension tonight between two old enemies in the Middle East. Israel says Syria has deployed new missiles that could knock down its recon flights over Lebanon and limit its monitoring of Lebanese and Palestinian guerrillas.

NBC's Martin Fletcher reports Israeli leaders have accused Syria of breaking an unwritten agreement by installing anti-missiles inside Lebanon that threaten Israel's planes.... Now, Israel is concerned that Syria has a missile network that covers the skies of Lebanon and threatens Israel's recon missions. While stressing to Washington the danger of a clash with Syria, Israeli leaders are low-key in public. Israel hopes Washington will persuade Syria to remove its missiles again. Otherwise, there's a double threat to peace in the region. Israel's worried that Syria will shoot down an Israeli plane. That fear could lead Israel to strike at the missiles first.

Utley to Marvin Kalb: What do officials (at the State Department) say about the situation? Should we be worried about it?

NBC's Marvin Kalb: There is some -- the official-level -- a high-level of concern but no alarm. No task forces have been set up for example. But there is a high-level of concern because this is after all the Middle East. This kind of tension can quickly get out of hand and right now this tension could sabotage Syria's efforts to impose a kind of peace on Lebanon.

Utley: Is there any way that any outsider could calm this situation -- perhaps get those missiles moved?

Kalb: Well, at this time, the U.S. and Israel have been trying, and really for a long time, to encourage the Soviet Union to reestablish diplomatic relations with Israel that were broken in '67 war. There have been many recent rumors the Russians intend to do just that. But nobody believes they will act until after the Communist Party Congress in Moscow in late February. If they act then, reestablish relations with Israel, that could lead to a major international conference on the Middle East. And that is a big deal. (NBC-4)

LEBANON

Rather: Late tonight, Israeli PM Peres said that Syria again has shifted its anti-aircraft missile batteries into Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. There was word today though of possible peace agreement among Lebanon's three most powerful militias. Leaders of the Shiite Moslem, Druse and Christian forces now are expected to sign a new pact soon. (CBS-2)

Jennings: In Lebanon today, the Shiite leader, Nabih Berri, said that he and rival militia leaders are going to sign a peace treaty before the end of the year. And much more importantly, for the first time since Lebanon became independent more than forty years ago, the various political, religious communities say they are going to share political power more fairly.

(Thursday Evening)

ABC's Charles Glass reports Syria has been pressing them hard since last October to reach agreement on solving the problems that first led to war in 1975. This document would be the first to be signed by the three main fighting forces in Lebanon. The agreement calls for fundamental changes in Lebanon's 40-year-old of Christian-Moslem power-sharing. It is expected to include first, a change in the present ratio of members of Parliament from six Christians for every five Moslems, to a straight 50-50 split. Second, the Christian president would lose some of his powers. Third, elections for a new Parliament would take place within a year of the signing of this agreement. Finally, the new Parliament would set a transition period during which the Christians would surrender some of their privileges. Even if the agreement is signed, there would still be the problem of implementation. (ABC-6)

CHRISTMAS RETAIL SALES

Utley: It was the day after Christmas and all through the land, accountants and economists were adding up the true meaning of Christmas -- for business. What people spent and on what can indicate where the economy is headed and all of us with it.

NBC's Irving R. Levine reports it is the day that merchants count on to put the frosting on the big Christmas shopping season.... Stores that depend on low- and middle-income Americans report generally disappointing Christmas sales. That's because savings are low, credit card debt is high.... Both rich and poor, Americans seem pretty well spent out for the moment. That portends a sluggish economy for at least the early part of 1986. (NBC-lead)

ABC's Steven Geer reports this is about the last place most Americans would want to be seen today -- a department store. After all, Christmas is supposed to be over, and with it, the need for all that shopping. But there they were at Macy's today, searching out what retailers like to call post-season markdown -- or lined up to exchange the purple necktie from Uncle Morris. (ABC-lead)

CBS's Richard Wagner reports that a gain of \$1.5 billion in sales nationwide in December alone came despite a shopping season six days shorter than last year. To get the business done this year after 1984's disappointing sales, retailers sold aggressively -- they stayed open longer, and more importantly, kept prices low. Consumers were buoyed by an economy that was doing well, and interest rates and unemployment that were going down. They had the money and they spent it. Merchandisers are now looking forward to after-Christmas sales to keep the ball rolling. (CBS-5)

U.S. AUTOS

Jennings reports in yet another attempt to woo buyers away from the foreign imports, General Motors announced today it will once again give 7.9% financing on some of its cars and trucks. Chrysler already has a cut-rate financing program, and shortly after GM's announcement today, Ford said it would follow suit. (ABC-2, NBC-2)

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(Thursday Evening)

AFGHANISTAN -- SIX YEARS LATER

Rather: It has been six years now since Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan -- six years since Moscow installed its own Communist president. These six years have seen the Soviet-installed Afghan government struggle to win the hearts and minds of peasants -- mostly without success. The latest move: today's announcement that some alleged non-communists have been given senior political posts. These six years have seen Moscow battle worldwide condemnation that cuts across political and ideological lines. Today alone -- Britain, China and Iran all said the Soviet occupation must end. Most of all, these have been six years of bloody warfare, with the rebel forces more determined than ever to defeat the Soviet and puppet-Afghan government forces. (Note: Rather continues with a review of the past six years, including extensive warfare footage.) (CBS-3)

ETHIOPIA -- SPECIAL SEGMENT

Utley: In the past year, there has been Foodaid and Liveaid, and Americans have given money to help save starving people there. And that generosity has helped. Now, however, it is time to think about what, if anything, the U.S. should do to provide the long-term financial assistance needed to deal with the underlying problems which caused the hunger in the first place?

NBC's Henry Champ reports that even though hundreds upon hundreds of tons of grain from around the world pour into their country, these women still scramble for loose kernels. They know how quickly Ethiopia can plunge its people back into starvation. And you don't stop just because you are ahead. The images of Ethiopia have changed: have become chubby faces, bright eyes, even children who laugh. In the camps that only weeks ago held thousands of refugees, now have only a few hundred and some have closed.... This success is a remarkable tribute to the international relief effort. And ironically, relief workers worry that donors may get the impression the job is done. It is estimated that nearly 6 million Ethiopians will need to receive food aid next year -- almost as much food as came into the country over the past 12 months.... Ethiopia does not have the money. The World Bank calls it the poorest country in the world. The U.S. and many other western governments give surplus grain but are not as willing to give money. They don't like Ethiopia's Marxist government and they don't like it when Western trucks supply the hungry while Eastern bloc vehicles take mainly military aid to the army. (NBC-6)

STORYTELLERS FOR PEACE

Utley: Our final story tonight is about stories -- what it takes to tell them. And if they are told well and are interesting and funny, what they can accomplish in establishing a rapport between the storyteller and listener. Nothing new in this, you might say, except when you see who these storytellers and where they are going. NBC's Roger O'Neill reports on "Young Story Tellers For Peace," and their upcoming trip to the Soviet Union. (NBC-10)

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(Thursday Evening)

PESTICIDES

Rather: America is legendary for the quantity and quality of food we produce for ourselves and for the world. Part of what it takes to do this is the use of chemicals to keep crops from dying or going to predators in the field. Trouble is, these chemicals don't always stay in the field. The problem of pesticide drift goes far beyond the farm field -- just how far and how bad nobody even knows.

CBS's Barry Peterson reports the fact is a lot of pesticides are highly toxic or cancer-causing, proven so in animal studies. But there have been no studies to determine the danger to humans exposed over the long-term. The Environmental Protection Agency logged hundreds of cases of human illness because of pesticide drift, but stopped coast-to-coast tracking in 1982 because of budget cuts. The Cropdusters Association says spraying should never be a danger to those nearby. But the group concedes instances where pesticide has drifted up to 80 miles. The EPA, which requires warning about pesticide drift on some labels, has not issued nationwide regulations leaving that to the states. But only eight states directly restrict drift, and only five require any warnings before spraying. (CBS-7)

SOUTH AFRICA/TRIBAL WARFARE

Jennings: For almost 15 months now, the world's attention has been unusually focused on the political struggle in South Africa between blacks and the white-minority government. Less attention has been given to the violence which blacks do to other blacks.... It can also be purely tribal, as it has been in the last few days. Our report tonight is from Peter Sharp of Independent Television News. (Note: Sharp reports on the tribal warfare in South Africa.) (ABC-5)

INCOME TAXES

Jennings: Happy holidays from the Internal Revenue Service: the 1985 tax forms are on the way -- 87 million of them. There is an unusual addition this year: a front page apology from the IRS. No -- not for making us pay but for this year's massive computer foul-up. Some 25,000 Americans are still without their 1984 refund. (ABC-3)

NBC's John Dancy reports the tax forms are going out with an apology. The government of the United States doesn't apologize to its citizens very often, but it is this year. The government says, "We regret the difficulties and inconvenience that resulted." ... When the government doesn't send out refunds on time, it must pay interest on the money to the taxpayers who were suppose to receive the refunds. So far, that has cost \$49 million dollars. (NBC-3)

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