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News Summary

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 1986 -- 6 a.m. EST EDITION

TODAY'S HEADLINES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

U.S. Navy Planes To Begin Operations North Of Libya -- The warplane operations, scheduled to begin last night, were described by one official as "part of the war of nerves" between President Reagan and Col. Qaddafi. (Washington Post, Washington Times, UPI, AP, Reuter)

Bush Calls Gaddafi A Liar, Attacks New York Governor -- "We've got Gaddafi's number. We know that he's a liar when he says he had nothing to do with the slaughter at the Rome and Vienna airports," the Vice President said. (Reuter)

NATIONAL NEWS

Vice President Accuses Cuomo Of Playing Down Ethnic Strides -- Bush accused Cuomo of trying to play down the achievements and hardships of ethnic Americans. (Washington Post, New York Times, AP, Reuter, UPI)

Senators Warn Reagan On Deficit -- Senate Republicans delivered a blunt warning to President Reagan that he "should not wait" to accept a deficit-reduction package. (Washington Post, UPI, AP)

NETWORK NEWS (Thursday Evening)

LIBYA -- First the U.S. imposed sanctions. Tonight -- U.S. show show of strength Act II.

MARCOS -- There is strong new evidence suggesting Marcos' hero image may be a product of his own imagination.

CONSUMER SPENDING -- The Commerce Department reported that consumer spending jumped a full two percent in December.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

U.S. NAVY PLANES TO BEGIN OPERATIONS NORTH OF LIBYA

The Reagan Administration Thursday ordered two aircraft carrier battle groups in the Mediterranean to begin flight operations north of Libya, Defense Department officials said. The warplane operations, scheduled to begin from the carriers USS Saratoga and USS Coral Sea last night, were described by one Administration official Thursday as "part of the war of nerves" between the Reagan Administration and the Libyan leader, Col. Muammar Qaddafi.

(Bob Woodward/George Wilson, Washington Post, A1)

6th Fleet Maneuvers Under Way In Libya --

The U.S. Navy began maneuvers off the Libyan Coast Thursday, but Pentagon spokesmen stressed they would not cross a line previously established by Qaddafi as Libyan territory. One official characterized the exercises as an expression of U.S. resolve," but said it in no way presaged a military attack on Libya.

(Walter Andrews, Washington Times, A1)

U.S. Warplanes Patrolling Off Libya

"We are sending them (the Libyans) a strong message," one official said. "We want to keep them on their toes. They're starting to lean back in their chairs. We want to let them know we're serious." (UPI)

U.S. Carriers Steam Toward Libyan Coast To Conduct 'Flight Operations'

But another source within the Pentagon, when asked about the U.S. plans, said, "You could look at it as thumbing our nose at Khadafy and telling him that we consider this international airspace and if he wants to make something of it, come on out and try." (Norman Black, AP)

U.S. Sending Message To Libya With Carrier Jet Flights

The planes from the Coral Sea and Saratoga were scheduled to begin the operations late Thursday U.S. time, and commercial air and ship traffic and Mediterranean nations, including Libya, were given notice to keep clear. (Reuter)

BUSH CALLS GADDAFI 'A LIAR,' ATTACKS NEW YORK GOVERNOR

NEW YORK -- Vice President Bush Thursday night called Gaddafi a liar and accused New York Gov. Cuomo, whom he might face in a general election, of creating political divisiveness.

"We've got Gaddafi's number. We know that he's a liar when he says that he had nothing to do with the slaughter of 18 people at the Rome and Vienna airports..." (Andrew Geller, Reuter)

-more-

OIL PRICES CONTINUING SLIDE FOLLOWING SAUDI WARNING

A renewed warning of an oil price war by Saudi Arabia's energy minister helped keep oil prices downward Thursday, for the sixth day in a row, to well below \$20 a barrel. The selling began Thursday in Europe after Ahmed Zaki Yamani, the Saudi oil minister, warned of an unrestrained price war unless Great Britain and other producers outside the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries agree with OPEC to limit oil production. (Peter Behr, Washington Post, A1)

U.S. Crude Oil Prices Recover From Some Earlier Losses

NEW YORK -- News the Soviet Union halted oil sales to some Western customers and forecasts of colder weather buoyed U.S. crude oil prices this afternoon, U.S. traders and brokers said. However, prices did not recover enough to bring them all the way back from a \$1.50 a barrel slump this morning and the key West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil was trading at \$19.95 a barrel late Thursday with buyers at \$19.90. (Reuter)

FLOW OF NONLETHAL CONTRA AID RESUMES AFTER 3-MONTH HALT

Nonlethal U.S. aid to rebels fighting the Nicaraguan government is moving again after being halted in October, knowledgeable State Department officials said Thursday. The officials said earlier efforts to send the medicine, clothing and other supplies directly to the international airport at Tegucigalpa, Honduras, had been abandoned.

(Joanne Omang, Washington Post, A2)

U.N. CRITIC NAMED TO DIRECT U.S. POLICY ON WORLD BODY

The Reagan Administration, apparently determined to continue its policy of defending Western values in world forums, is about to name yet another critic of the United Nations to a high-level post at the State Department. Roger Brooks, 37, will leave the Heritage Foundation to direct U.S. policy on the United Nations and other international groups.

The appointment is expected to be announced today.

"When they find out at the U.N. that Brooks is going to State, they'll have to put a net under the U.N., because they'll be jumping off the 38th floor," a veteran U.N. diplomat said.

(Ralph Hallow, Washington Times, A1)

U. S. ENVOY ENDS EUROPE MISSION WITH NOTHING TO SHOW

THE HAGUE -- U.S. Envoy John Whitehead ended his whirlwind bid to pressure European allies to cut links with Libya today with nothing concrete to show for his efforts. But he said he hoped the allies would in time take fresh steps against international terrorism. (Reuter)

REAGAN TO VISIT INDONESIA, MOCHTAR SAYS

JAKARTA -- President Reagan will visit Indonesia at the end of April for talks with President Suharto, Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja said Friday. Mochtar said he hoped the visit would coincide with a proposed meeting of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) foreign ministers in Bali. (Reuter)

NEW DOUBTS ON MARCOS' WAR ROLE

Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos has claimed for decades that he led a band of anti-Japanese guerrillas during World War II, but the U.S. Army rejected his claim right after the war, according to documents in the U.S. archives.

Documents in the archives suggest that Marcos actually worked on behalf of Philippine politicians who collaborated with the Japanese occupation of the islands from 1942 to 1944.

(John Sharkey, Washington Post, A1)

Battered Marcos Reputation Suffers Another Major Blow

The U.S. reputation of President Marcos has suffered another blow only two weeks before he faces a national election, with the disclosure of official American records saying that he faked a distinguished war record. (Reuter)

MARCOS CALLS ALLEGATIONS 'SMEAR' CAMPAIGN

MANILA -- President Marcos Thursday reacted angrily to U.S. press reports that his World War II exploits were fabricated, attributing the charges to a "smear campaign" by his political opponents here and urging guerrilla veterans here to prove them wrong.

(William Branigan, Washington Post, A24)

U.S. OBSERVERS MAY MONITOR PHILIPPINE ELECTIONS

Despite "several factors which are troubling" to the Administration, the White House seems to favor sending election observers next month to the Philippines to monitor the voting, officials say. Sen. Lugar (R-Ind.) was to announce today whether he would be willing to head a team of observers to monitor the elections. (Matthew Quinne, UPI)

PERES HOLDS MIDNIGHT MEETING WITH U.S. MEDIATOR MURPHY

LONDON -- Israeli Prime Minister Peres held a midnight meeting with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy in another attempt to make a breakthrough in Middle East peace contacts, Israeli officials said. (Reuter)

WICK SAYS MOSCOW MAY HALT JAMMING

Soviet officials may take a fresh look at their jamming of Western radio broadcasts as a result of the superpowers' new cultural exchange agreement, USIA Director Charles Wick said yesterday. His eight-day visit to Moscow and Leningrad to advance plans for the "people-to-people" exchanges ended Tuesday. (Carol Innerst, Washington Times, A4)

REPLY TO GORBACHEV ARMS OFFER PLANNED

President Reagan is planning to respond to Soviet leader Gorbachev's recent letter containing wide-ranging arms-control proposals with one of his own that emphasizes seeking reductions of U.S. and Soviet intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe, according to U.S. officials.

One Administration concern is that Gorbachev may have linked progress in medium-range missile reductions to a concession in Reagan's SDI, the "Star Wars" research program, the officials said.

(Walter Pincus, Washington Post, A28)

BYRD SUGGESTS GORBACHEV ADDRESS A JOINT MEETING

Sen. Byrd (D-W. VA) said Thursday that Mikhail Gorbachev should be invited to address a joint meeting of Congress when he meets with President Reagan later this year. (AP story, Washington Post, A28)

Reagan Supports Address Of Congress By Gorbachev

President Reagan likes the idea of Gorbachev's joining him in addressing a joint session of the Congress to be broadcast live in the United States and in the Soviet Union, according to Sen. Byrd.

(Thomas Brandt, Washington Times, A2)

Reagan-Gorbachev Joint Session Suggested

Byrd wants Gorbachev to address Congress at the conclusion of their second summit meeting, which has been tentatively planned for later this year. Under Byrd's proposal, the invitation to Gorbachev would have a hook in it. The Soviets would have to agree to carry Reagan's speech on prime time television. (Dale Nelson, AP)

INDIAN HOTEL FIRE KILLS 38, INCLUDING ONE AMERICAN

NEW DEHLI -- A fire that raged through a luxury hotel before today killed at least 38 persons, including one American, Indian officials said. An American identified by a hospital source as Richard Arnell was seriously injured. (AP story, Washington Post, A23)

NATIONAL NEWS

VICE PRESIDENT ACCUSES CUOMO OF PLAYING DOWN ETHNIC STRIDES

Vice President Bush accused Gov. Mario Cuomo Thursday of trying to play down the achievements and hardships of ethnic Americans and with representing a party that advocates "the same old politics of divisiveness and resentment.

Bush, a likely Republican candidate for President in 1988, singled out Cuomo, a potential Democratic rival, in a speech prepared for a Conservative Party in New York. (AP story, Washington Post, A4)

Bush Accuses Cuomo Of Fostering Divisiveness With Bias Complaint

He's telling us to ignore the millions of blacks, Jews, Irish, Italians, Latins and Poles who shattered the bonds of discrimination," said the Vice President, a potential Cuomo rival, in a speech prepared for delivery at a Conservative Party fund-raising dinner at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in Manhattan. (Frank Lynn, New York Times, A1)

Bush Hits Cuomo's Politics Of Divisiveness And Resentment

Without specifically naming Cuomo, Bush criticized "liberal politicians" who seem very confused about who are the real victims of crime," saying: "They seem to think that we should take pity on a cold-blooded murderer sentenced to the electric chair for taking the life of a policeman."

(John Shanahan, AP)

Bush, Looking For Conservative Backing, Blasts Cuomo

Mr. Bush added: "I can tell you one thing about the difference between a liberal politician and a conservative one: "Gov. Ronald Reagan kept cop killers in jail."

Cuomo later replied, "There are few things more amusing in the world of politics than watching moderate Republicans charging to the right in pursuit of greater glory."

But Bush clearly won the hearts and minds of his audience.

(Andrew Geller, Reuter)

BUSH TOPS BILLING FOR LIBERTY FOUNDATION 'SUMMIT'

WASHINGTON -- Vice President Bush tops the billing of a two-day "summit meeting" called by the Rev. Jerry Falwell to set the agenda for his Liberty Foundation, the newly-created political arm of the Moral Majority. Bush, endorsed by Falwell for the 1988 presidential election, was to address leaders of the Liberty Foundation today. The summit opened at a private reception Thursday night at a Capitol Hill hotel.

(Leon Daniel, UPI)

GOP SENATORS WARN REAGAN ON DEFICIT

Senate Republicans delivered a blunt warning to President Reagan Thursday that he "should not wait" until the 11th hour" to accept a compromise deficit-reduction package, possibly including tax increases, according to Administration and congressional sources.

(David Hoffman/Helen Dewar, Washington Post, A1)

Gramm-Rudman May Hit Social Security

Senate Republican leaders, in a repeat of last year's two most controversial budget issues, suggest Congress may have to consider taxes or Social Security curbs to meet the severe requirements of Gramm-Rudman. Sen. Dole, when asked Thursday if anything other than Social Security was safe from budget cuts, said, "Who said that was sacred?"

(UPI)

REAGAN TO DISCUSS TAX OVERHAUL WITH PACKWOOD

President Reagan is meeting with the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee to call for major changes in a big tax-overhaul bill passed by the House. The President wants a \$2,000 exemption for all Americans, less of a new tax bite on businesses, and -- to pay for those changes -- repeal of the deduction allowed for state and local taxes paid.

(Jim Luther, AP)

GOP's FIRST '88 VOLLEYS ARE OVER CAMPAIGN LAW

The early skirmishing for the 1988 GOP presidential nomination has turned, in part, to a series of legal confrontations before the Federal Election Commission, which has the power to force alterations in basic fund-raising and spending some potential candidates are using.

Yesterday, the FEC issued an opinion specifically to former Sen. Howard Baker that, if applied to all potential candidates, would appear to rule out practices being used by such Baker competitors as Vice President Bush and Rep. Kemp.

(Thomas Edsall, Washington Post, A5)

New Rules Could Complicate Presidential Campaigning

In a ruling sought by supporters of former Sen. Baker, who may seek the Republican presidential nomination in 1988, the FEC said many of the travel and staff costs now being paid by PACs should be paid by exploratory committees set up for the sole purpose of testing the waters for a presidential campaign.

(Reuter)

BUCHANAN MEMO OFFERS TIPS TO OFFSET ATTACKS ON BUDGET

White House Communications Director Patrick Buchanan in a Jan. 17 memorandum urged President Reagan's Cabinet secretaries to bombard Congress with public pressure supporting the President's spending blueprint. However, Speaker O'Neill, apparently wanting the Administration to take full credit for unpopular cuts, said, "As the budget-cutting parade begins, the President deserves to be the grand marshall." (George Archibald/Thomas Brandt, Washington Times, A3)

REAGAN COUNCIL TO ATTACK HIRING ILLEGAL ALIENS

President Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers is expected to tell Congress that the economic benefits of international migration do not justify employment of illegal aliens, a White House official said Thursday. The report is expected to be presented to Congress next month.

(AP story, Washington Post, A6)

DILIGENCE URGED ON MAYORS COPING WITH URBAN AID CUTS

Secretary Pierce said Thursday the nation's mayors need to work harder to cope with sharp cuts in urban aid funds. "I think they can work with it. I don't think they've tried hard enough yet to do this job," Pierce said in an interview. (Isaiah Poole, Washington Times, A4)

BLACKS NOT BENEFICIARIES OF RECOVERY, GROUP SAYS

Black America has been left out of the nation's economic recovery and, because of high unemployment and increasing poverty, is verging on permanent exclusion from the nation's economic life, the National Urban League charged yesterday in its annual State of Black America report.

The report criticized the Reagan Administration's civil rights policies, which it said have brought enforcement of civil rights to a "standstill." It added that the Administration has acted as a "Rambo-like destroyer of civil rights gains."

(Juan Williams, Washington Post, A7)

Urban League Raps Reagan About 'Voodoo Civil Rights'

Mr. Jacob criticized the Administration for what he called "voodoo civil rights" and its efforts to modify a 20-year-old executive order requiring government contractors to have affirmative action programs.

(AP story, Washington Times, A4)

Urban League

"If the Administration wants to be a 'Rambo-like' destroyer of civil rights gains, it should not pretend that its efforts are good for black citizens or that they reflect the colorblind society that we have yet to become.

(UPI)

EPA SEEKS TOTAL BAN OF ASBESTOS

The Environmental Protection Agency launched an effort Thursday to halt all uses of asbestos in the United States within 10 years, starting with a ban on asbestos-permeated cement pipes, fittings, floor and roofing material and a heat-resistant clothing made of the cancer-causing substance.
(Cass Peterson, Washington Post, A1)

EPA Seeks To Ban Asbestos Products Over 10-Year Span

The proposal, which could become law within a year, would immediately ban five commonly used construction products that contain about one-third to one-half of the 240,000 metric tons of asbestos used each year in the United States.

(Christopher Simpson, Washington Times, A5)

VA's WALTERS ABOUT TO QUIT, SOURCES SAY

Harry Walters, head of the Veterans Administration for the past three years, plans to resign this month, government sources said Thursday. The leading candidate to replace Walters, sources said, is Selective Service Director Thomas Turnage.
(Washington Post, A17)

Walters Leaving As VA Chief

Harry Walters is leaving as head of the Veterans Administration as the agency faces a period of reducing many benefits to the nation's 30 million military veterans. Walters, 49, a former West Point football star credited with improving morale in government's largest independent agency, was expected to leave the agency by the end of the month to return to business.
(AP)

UNTERS VISIT WITH PRESIDENT No. 3

Al Unser, Sr. and his brother Bobby are veterans at racing and chatting with the nation's leaders. Both have met Presidents Nixon and Ford. But for Al, Jr., though not a rookie in racing circles since 1983, this chief executive stuff was all new.

"It was a rare treat," Al, Sr. said.

(Dave Sell, Washington Post, C1)

EDITOR'S NOTES: 'Finance Committee Faces Taxing Agenda For Weekend Retreat,' page A14 of the Washington Post. 'The President's Health: Public vs. Private Rights,' Washington Post, 'Encouraging Whistle Blowers,' Washington Post, A17. 'Three For The Launch,' D4 of the Washington Post.

NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Thursday Evening)

LIBYA

CBS's Dan Rather: First the United States imposed economic sanctions against Libya. Then American warships were rerouted to the Mediterranean and U.S. officials threatened an attack. Tonight -- U.S. show of strength act III. David Martin reports on a new show of more resolve in the air and on the sea.

CBS's David Martin: Starting tonight the U.S. Mediterranean fleet, including the aircraft carriers Coral Sea and Saratoga, will conduct a one week campaign of increasing military pressure against Libya's Moammar Qaddafi. The American fleet has filed public notice it will conduct air operations over an area stretching the entire length of the Libyan coast. The area includes the disputed Gulf of Sidra, which Qaddafi claims as his own, but which the U.S. insists is international waters. Much of the area is within range of Libya's newly installed long-range anti-aircraft missiles, which according to intelligence reports are on the verge of becoming operational. Just last week two Libyan Migs buzzed an American jet flying well outside the zone where U.S. planes will be operating for the next seven days. Several Soviet warships, plus an intelligence trawler and a command and control ship, are believed to be relaying intelligence about American fleet movements to the Libyan armed forces. The U.S. Navy conducts an exercise like this about once a year. But informed sources say this exercise was ordered by the White House. It was timed to coincide with the end of Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead's largely unsuccessful attempt to persuade the European allies to go along with U.S. economic sanctions against Libya. Pentagon officials say that over the next seven days they expect the U.S. fleet to test just how close to the Libyan coast it can operate without drawing an armed reaction from Qaddafi. The aim, they say, is either to expose Qaddafi's threats as empty rhetoric, or to provoke a response that would give the U.S. an excuse to strike back. (CBS-1)

ABC's Peter Jennings: In Washington it may be seen as a show of resolve, Libya's Col. Qaddafi is surely going to see it as a provocation. The United States has ordered its two aircraft carrier battle groups in the Mediterranean to hold a major exercise off the Libyan coast. Civilian air traffic controllers in the region have been told there will be intense military flight operations in the area. And what is the Reagan Administration's intention?

ABC's John McWethy: The aircraft carriers Saratoga and Coral Sea along with at least a dozen other American ships will begin the exercise off the coast of Libya tomorrow. It is scheduled to run for a week. The U.S. only acknowledges that Libya's territorial waters extend 12 miles from its coast. The exercise area runs from the middle of the Mediterranean to that 12 mile limit.

McWethy continues: It includes the disputed waters of the Gulf of Sidra, which Libya claims all of as its territorial waters. As yet there is no indication of whether the U.S. Navy intends to fly its aircraft into this disputed area which it does from time to time as a matter of principle. In 1981, of course, Libya intercepted American F-14s making just such a flight and within minutes the two Libyan planes, after firing first, were shot down. There have been no incidents on subsequent flights, but the U.S. continues to be extremely careful when operating anywhere near Libya. Why the exercise now? U.S. officials offer three reasons. One, Pentagon sources say the U.S. is long overdue for an exercise in that part of the Mediterranean. Two, it keeps pressure on Libya's Qaddafi and undoubtedly will force Qaddafi to keep his military on a high state of alert, which is both expensive and draining. And finally, should the U.S. choose to fly its planes into the Gulf of Sidra, it will underscore that America plans to conduct business as usual in what it regards as international waters, almost daring the unpredictable Qaddafi with his new long-range missiles and powerful air force to do something about it. (ABC-1)

NBC's Roger Mudd: To make sure Col. Qaddafi of Libya got the message, the United States served notice today that warplanes from its Mediterranean fleet will soon begin conducting flight operations near his air space. News of the operation to begin next week surfaced when the Navy notified civilian air traffic officials in Tripoli.

NBC's Robin Lloyd: The twenty U.S. warships, including two aircraft carriers and the Yorktown, the electronic warfare control ship, are now moving north of Libya. The Saratoga battle group entered the Mediterranean last week. Pentagon officials say U.S. fighter jets will operate within an area some 130 miles north of the Libyan coast, staying within international airspace. But Pentagon officials say during the week long exercise, the fighter jets may fly over the contested Gulf of Sidra, which Libya claims as its territory. The U.S. doesn't recognize that claim. Two weeks ago, when Libyan fighter jets intercepted a Navy surveillance plane some 120 miles off the coast of Libya, U.S. fighters scrambled off the Coral Sea. U.S. officials say they expect the Libyans will be doubly careful now. They are making it clear that the exercise is intended to warn Libya's leader Moammar Qaddafi to back off his support of terrorists. Still many military experts are critical, saying it underscores the Administration's inability to strike back.

(Edward Luttwak: "The likelihood is that nothing will happen. And ironically that will highlight our impotence because there will be a great display of large and costly ships and many aircraft and absolutely no effect.")

In the midst of these maneuvers, Pentagon officials say Soviet intelligence gathering ships are closely monitoring the U.S. fleet, providing information to the Libyans. Three other Soviet warships, Pentagon officials say, are directly off the coast of Libya. Although they are calling this a routine exercise, Administration officials clearly want to step up the pressure on Qaddafi, one official saying we had three choices, do nothing, go to war, or keep a highly visible military presence in the region. The last one, this official said, keeps all options open. (NBC-1)

ABU NIDAL

Rather reports Italy today issued an international arrest warrant for Palestinian guerrilla leader Abu Nidal charging him with mass-murder in the terror attack at the Rome airport, and Italian officials said they have evidence that Abu Nidal was behind the Vienna airport assault and three other terrorist attacks in Rome last year.

(NBC-6, ABC-3, CBS-2)

MARCOS

Rather reports there is strong new evidence suggesting that Marcos' hero image may be a product of his own imagination.

CBS's Bill Redeker reports he portrays himself as a wartime hero, an image long central to President Marcos' political appeal. He claims he was a guerrilla resistance leader during World War II, that he fought along side the Americans who resisted the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. American Presidents have kept the image alive.

(TV coverage of President Reagan, Sept. 1982: "In World War II Americans and Filipinos fought side by side in the defense of freedom, a struggle in which you Mr. President, personally fought so valiantly.")

But according to documents recently uncovered at the national archives in Washington, the U.S. Army concluded after the war that the claims by Marcos that he had been a guerrilla leader were fraudulent and absurd.

(CBS-3, ABC-4, NBC-2)

CONSUMER SPENDING

Rather reports the Commerce Department today reported that consumer spending, pushed by a strong demand for new cars, jumped a full two percent in December. That's the biggest monthly increase since May 1975, and the report said personal income of Americans rose 1.4% last month, the best showing in almost two years. A spokesman for President Reagan said those figures and I quote "signal a strong first quarter for the national economy."

(CBS-6)

NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

Rather: In its annual assessment of black America, the National Urban League today called the Reagan Administration "a Rambo-like destroyer of civil rights gains." The report said while most whites enjoyed economic recovery, blacks "slipped further and further to the rear of the parade." And a spokesman added if there is any single message we want to send to the President today it is this: Hands off affirmative action.

(ABC-11, CBS-7)

Mudd: The National Urban League today released a harsh assessment of the Reagan Administration's treatment of black America. It charged the Administration is waging war on the nation's civil rights laws and affirmative action programs.

NBC's Robert Hager reports today the Urban League, in its report on the state of black America, called the Administration a Rambo-like destroyer of civil rights gains. The League's chief executive John Jacob:

(Jacob: "If there is any single message we want to send the President today it is this: Hands off affirmative action.")

The President, in his regular radio address last Saturday, talked about minority hiring.

(TV coverage of photos of the President delivering his radio address: "We oppose the use of quotas. We want a color-blind society, a society that, in the words of Dr. King, judges people not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.")

Jacob was particularly critical of that remark.

(Jacob: "For the Administration to associate the name of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with the attempt to destroy affirmative action is obscene.")

Jacob also took issue with the President's statements that blacks had enjoyed a measure of prosperity since he took office. The report said that last year while the national poverty rate declined slightly, black poverty was higher than it was five years ago. While the nation's unemployment rate declined to 7%, black unemployment is still 15%, and for black teenage males a staggering 41%. While nationally family income rose, family income for blacks declined. As the economic recovery continued, the report said, black Americans slipped further and further to the rear of the parade. (NBC-3)

ASBESTOS

Rather reports after years of delays, studies and more studies about asbestos, the EPA today finally did something. It proposed a phaseout period leading up to an outright ban on asbestos products. (CBS-8, ABC-5)

ISRAEL WARNING

Rather reports the U.S. State Department today officially warned of what it sees as increasing conflict in Israel. Clashes involving ultra-orthodox Jewish groups, fundamentalists that the State Department says have the potential for dangerous escalation. (CBS-14)

SPY

Mudd: A former Washington messenger pleaded guilty to espionage today, Randy Jefferies admitting that he had passed U.S. secrets to the Soviet Union. In exchange for the guilty plea, the government dropped other charges against him. (NBC-8, CBS-5)

EDITORIALS/COLUMNISTS

MOB

Is the Mob 'on the Run'? -- "The conviction of five Chicago crime syndicate leaders in Missouri is cause for satisfaction and heartfelt wishes to them all for a long life in prison. This is a notable gain in the fight against organized crime. It should not, however, be mistaken for a decisive victory. ... Mr. Reagan and the Justice Department are entitled to crow over the federal convictions of mob leaders. But if he wants to make faster progress against organized crime, he should start by comparing notes with his own panel of experts and seeing whose conclusions look more convincing." (Chicago Tribune, 1/23)

PHILIPPINES/MARCOS

Marcos Smears -- "The U.S. correctly maintains an impartial stance as the Filipino people wrestle with their future. Fortunately for the U.S., the fate of the two strategic military bases in the Philippines no longer is a campaign issue. Both sides indicate that American use of Subic Bay and Clark Air Force Base can be negotiated when the current leases expire in 1991. ... The most pressing issue several weeks before the Feb. 7 vote, is to guarantee that the rest of the campaign and the balloting itself are conducted fairly. The Reagan Administration should insist without exception that the Philippines government continue to abide by its pledges of a fair election." (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 1/14)

U.S./NICARAGUA AND ANGOLA

Reckless Test -- "President Reagan has made Nicaragua and Angola the measure of American manhood, the test of whether Gorbachev will negotiate with the United States out of respect or dismiss it as 'weak-kneed.' And the only way for Americans to pass the test, according to the President, is to feed arms and ammunition to rebels who are fighting the Marxist governments in Managua and Luanda. That is a reckless prescription. It attaches an undeserved strategic importance to two nations that, at worst, do not threaten fundamental interests of the United States. It manifests a regression to a simplistic anti-communism that is counterproductive because it fails to distinguish between real and imagined threats to national security. Perhaps worst, it risks deepening divisions among the nations truly important to the United States, enhancing the divisions that Gorbachev himself has seemed intent on creating." (Los Angeles Times, 1/23)

SALT II

Adding SALT to the Feud -- "Despite the purported violations, SALT II has proved its usefulness in restraining the arms race. As long as the Soviets don't take advantage of the treaty in such a way as to make it a handicap to the U.S. strategic position, the United States should adhere to the agreement until a better pact between the superpowers on arms control can replace it." (Chicago Tribune, 1/23)