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News Summary

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1986 -- 6 a.m. EST EDITION

TODAY'S HEADLINES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Reagan Opens Campaign For Aid To Contras -- President Reagan launched an all-out effort yesterday to wrest \$100 million in military and humanitarian aid from Congress for Nicaragua's anti-Sandinista rebels.

(Washington Post, Washington Times)

Reagan Nearing Approval Of Arms Control Counteroffer -- President Reagan is nearing approval of a counterproposal that seeks to hasten movement toward agreement on medium-range missiles.

(UPI)

NATIONAL NEWS

Miller: Reagan Made A Deal On Military Buildup -- James Miller insists President Reagan struck a deal last year for a continued military buildup, despite congressional disagreement and a report that forecasts sharp Pentagon cuts if the acrimony continues.

(Washington Post, UPI)

Defense Panel Said To Seek Major Reforms -- The Pentagon bureaucracy would be slashed and billions of dollars could be saved annually under recommendations for defense reform that a blue-ribbon commission will make to President Reagan next week, commission sources say.

(Baltimore Sun, Washington Post)

NETWORK NEWS (Tuesday Evening)

CHALLENGER INVESTIGATION -- New allegations from aerospace engineers NASA, who insist the disaster may go beyond a failure of hardware.

CONTRA AID PACKAGE -- President Reagan told congressional leaders he wants to provide \$100 million to the contras.

ANGOLA AID -- The Administration said aid is being sent to rebels fighting Angola's government.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Bad Idea?

In response to Congressman Ted Weiss's statement that severe budget cuts "will force us to dismantle the Federal Government, step by step, until there is little left," I believe a growing number of people in this country feel that this is exactly what needs to be done.

James C. Warnes
Athens, Ga.

TIME, FEBRUARY 24, 1986

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

U.S. WARNS MARCOS TO MAKE REFORMS

Philip Habib has warned President Marcos that he must make democratic reforms and share power with opposition forces headed by Corazon Aquino or risk losing U.S. military and economic aid, Administration officials said yesterday.

These officials did not specify how Marcos should or could accomplish these goals, particularly in view of the opposition's refusal thus far to consider a place in his government. The officials emphasized that President Reagan had not decided whether aid should be withheld and would not reach a conclusion until he receives a report from Habib, expected late this week.

(Lou Cannon & Joanne Omang, Washington Post, A1)

ANTI-MARCOS PRESSURE MOUNTING IN CONGRESS

Congressional pressure mounted today for an end to United States assistance to the Philippine Government of President Marcos, but the White House said it was "far premature" to cut off aid and close the two United States military bases there.

The growing emotion on Capitol Hill was demonstrated tonight when the Senate agreed to vote Wednesday on a resolution condemning the "widespread fraud" in the Philippine voting and requesting President Reagan to convey the Senate's findings to Marcos.

(Bernard Weinraub, New York Times, A1)

PRESIDENT LAUNCHES EFFORT FOR \$100 MILLION CONTRA AID

President Reagan launched a new drive yesterday for a \$100 million aid package to rebels fighting the Sandinista government of Nicaragua, including a resumption of military aid. But congressional Democrats immediately expressed opposition and White House officials acknowledged that the proposal would be Reagan's most difficult legislative battle this year.

The Administration is seeking \$30 million in overt, nonlethal aid, such as clothing and medical supplies, and \$70 million in covert military assistance for the contras, officials said. Congress barred military aid in 1984 but last year approved \$27 million in nonlethal assistance, which expires March 31.

(David Hoffman, Washington Post, A1)

Reagan Opens Campaign For Aid To Contras

President Reagan launched an all-out effort yesterday to wrest \$100 million in military and humanitarian aid from Congress for Nicaragua's anti-Sandinista rebels.

The President did not rule out the possibility of a negotiated settlement between the Marxist Sandinista regime and the rebels. But, he said, "there are many ways in which a democratic outcome can be achieved in Nicaragua." (Jeremiah O'Leary & Mary Belcher, Washington Times, A1)

WHITE HOUSE: NICARAGUA ON A "DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN"

The White House, gearing up for a fight with Congress over secret military aid to Nicaraguan rebels, says the Marxist Sandinista regime has launched a "campaign of disinformation" to sway public opinion. Larry Speakes said Tuesday, "we're quite well aware of a plan by the Sandinista government -- a very sophisticated, very carefully drawn plan that might be titled: 'How to influence the United States Congress against providing additional aid for the opposition in Nicaragua.'"

He said the plan "also calls for a campaign of misinformation about the success or failure of the contra forces there...and some tactics they would use in order to influence the Congress both now and at the time of a vote. It's carefully worked out and a highly professional plan to influence the American people," he said. (Ira Allen, UPI)

COVERT AID TO SAVIMBI "IN MOTION," U.S. SAYS

A top Reagan Administration official said yesterday "the decision has been made" and the "process is in motion" to provide Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi with military assistance in his struggle against the Marxist Angolan government.

Appearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Chester Crocker asked for "a clear statement from Congress" supporting a continuing U.S. commitment to "negotiated resolutions in southern Africa" but also warning that the United States will not tolerate other countries taking advantage of the policy "to pursue their own aggressive ends."

(David Ottaway & Patrick Tyler, Washington Post, A8)

Reagan Decides to Send Weapons to Angola Rebels

The Reagan Administration told Congress today that it had decided to provide rebels in Angola with antiaircraft and antitank missiles. The purpose, Administration officials say, is to prevent the Communist-backed Angolan Government from achieving "a military solution."

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Chester Crocker, for the first time acknowledged publicly what had been unofficially reported -- that there has been a basic Administration decision to provide covert military aid to the rebel forces led by Jonas Savimbi.

(Bernard Gwertzman, New York Times, A1)

GULF OF SIDRA OPERATIONS SAID POSSIBLE NEXT MONTH

The United States may take advantage of the arrival of a third aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean next month to conduct flight operations over the disputed Gulf of Sidra, Pentagon sources said yesterday. The sources, who agreed to discuss the matter only if not identified, said the two carriers now in the Mediterranean would conduct another limited operation near the Libyan coastline in early March.

A second operation is being planned in late March when the carrier USS America arrives to join the USS Coral Sea and USS Saratoga, and that operation may include a "shallow incursion" in the gulf, one source said.

(Howard Kurtz, Washington Post, A12)

REAGAN NEARING APPROVAL OF ARMS CONTROL COUNTEROFFER

President Reagan, responding to the Soviet's latest arms control offer, is nearing approval of a counterproposal that seeks to hasten movement toward agreement on medium-range missiles. Larry Speakes said Tuesday that Reagan "will be considering in the next several days" a proposal that reflects consultations with allies in Europe and Asia and an interagency group of advisers.

Officials said that by the end of this week or early next week, Reagan is expected to offer the counterproposal in the form of a letter to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The letter probably will be coupled with a simultaneous or near-simultaneous offering of the proposal at the arms control talks in Geneva, and a public announcement.

(Matthew Quinn, UPI)

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION REPORTS ON MIAs

A Congressional team returning from two days of talks with Vietnamese officials in Hanoi has brought back the first official evidence that some men listed as missing in action are alive in southeast Asia.

The nine-man delegation was expected to hold a news conference today to report on the trip, during which a Vietnamese deputy foreign minister conceded, for the first time, that some Americans may be living in Vietnam by their own choice. According to the delegation, however, the foreign minister claimed the Vietnamese government is not aware of any specific cases of U.S. servicemen remaining in Indochina.

(Jim Anderson, UPI)

CAR BOMB EXPLODES AT U.S. EMBASSY

LISBON -- A bomb placed under the car of a U.S. Embassy employee exploded at the gates of the embassy complex in Lisbon today shortly after it was discovered in a routine check, embassy officials and police said. No one was hurt.

Embassy spokesman Dan Traub said Portuguese security guards operating a checkpoint at the gate ordered the area cleared when they spotted a suspicious device under the employee's car. Shortly afterwards a blast ripped through the car, he said.

(Peter Wise, Washington Post, A28)

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NATIONAL NEWS

NASA OFFICIALS NOT TOLD OF KEY PRELAUNCH DATA

William Rodgers told Donald Regan last Friday that he was "appalled" to learn that key information about the shuttle's condition had not reached top space agency officials before the disastrous Jan. 28 launch, Administration sources said yesterday.

The sources said Rodgers called Regan to inform him of a statement, which was issued Saturday, saying the decision-making process at NASA may have been "flawed," and ordering top officials who participated in the launch decision not to take part in the investigation.

(Kevin Klose & David Hoffman, Washington Post, A1)

MEMO REVEALS MEESE DOUBTS ABOUT GUN BILL

An internal Treasury Department memo says Attorney General Meese believes a gun deregulation bill is flawed and unnecessary, despite official Reagan Administration support. But Meese denies he is bucking the White House and contends he supports the bill, which is opposed by police organizations but supported by the National Rifle Association and allied gun owner groups.

The Jan. 24, 1986, file memorandum, obtained by the Associated Press, said Meese believes the bill could weaken current law, which provides an automatic prison term for gun-toting federal felons. According to the memo, Meese also believes the Administration has solved problems in current law that made the bill necessary in the first place.

(Larry Margasak, AP)

DEFENSE REPORT'S TONE DIVIDES PANEL

President Reagan's Blue Ribbon Panel on Defense Management shelved a 100-page report that conservative Republican members considered too negative in its characterizations of Secretary Weinberger's Pentagon, according to commission sources.

Commission sources said the dispute centers on stylistic issues, and that the panel has reached a consensus on the need for far-reaching reforms to overhaul Pentagon acquisition policy, streamline its decision-making and increase the advisory powers of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(Michael Weisskopf, Washington Post, A1)

Defense Panel Said To Seek Major Reforms

The Pentagon bureaucracy would be slashed and billions of dollars could be saved annually under recommendations for defense reform that a blue-ribbon commission will make to President Reagan next week, commission sources say.

The panel is scheduled to meet in Washington tomorrow to put the final touches on its interim proposals and to try to agree on a report that spells out what is wrong and substantiates the need for reforms.

(Charles Corddry, Baltimore Sun, A1)

CBO ESTIMATES AUTOMATIC DEFENSE CUT WOULD BE \$49 MILLION

Congressional budget authorities estimated yesterday that President Reagan's \$320.3 billion defense budget would have to be reduced by \$49 billion if automatic spending cutbacks are triggered this fall under the new Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget-balancing law.

It was the first official projection from Congress of defense appropriations cutbacks that would be required under Gramm-Rudman-Hollings for fiscal 1987. As such, the numbers were quickly seized by Budget Committee leaders as new ammunition in the push for a budget compromise, possibly including tax increases, to avert the automatic cuts. (Helen Dewar & Edward Walsh, Washington Post, A5)

Miller: Reagan Made A Deal On Military Buildup

James Miller insists President Reagan struck a deal last year for a continued military buildup, despite congressional disagreement and a report that forecasts sharp Pentagon cuts if the acrimony continues. Reagan says his budget meets the Gramm-Rudman balanced budget act goal of a \$144 billion deficit in the year beginning Oct. 1 while increasing military spending by 8.2 percent above inflation.

"The President does believe he struck a deal," Miller told [House Budget Committee Chairman] Gray's committee Tuesday, "that by going along he was going to get that defense spending (hike)."

(Elaine Povich, UPI)

BROCK PREDICTS HILL WON'T ACT ON TRADE BILL IN '86

BAL HARBOUR, Fla. -- Secretary Block predicted today that despite the nation's record \$148 billion foreign trade deficit in 1985, Congress will not pass major trade legislation this year.

"If we could find some common ground on trade to improve this country's competitive circumstances, I think it would be wonderful," Brock said. "It is difficult for me to believe that it is possible, given the environment today, particularly in Congress."

(Peter Pearl, Washington Post, A8)

BUSING HALT SEEN IN 150 DISTRICTS

William Bradford Reynolds said yesterday that more than 150 school districts may be eligible to sue to end court-ordered desegregation plans because of a recent federal court ruling, but he said the Administration will not use that decision to launch a campaign against busing.

Reynolds praised the ruling, made earlier this month by the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, which upheld an end to busing elementary pupils in Norfolk. But he said "there are no surprises" in it, and described it as no more than an outline of procedures a school system must follow to free itself from court desegregation decrees.

(D'Vera Cohn, Washington Post, A14)

HERITAGE FOUNDATION ACCUSES STATE OF "DERAILING" REAGAN

State Department bureaucrats "derailed and betrayed" President Reagan's doctrine of helping anticommunist rebels and stopping Soviet adventurism, an influential conservative think tank charged in a new report.

In a bitter indictment of the agency that implements foreign policy, the Heritage Foundation detailed a "distressing and embarrassing gap" between the President's public speeches and the State Department's practices.

(James Morrison, Washington Times, A3)

REGAN ON IACOCCA: "I DON'T HATE HIS GUTS"

Donald Regan, even though he drives a Mercury, says he had nothing to do with the firing of Lee Iacocca as head of a Statue of Liberty commission. Hodel "hired him, therefore he can fire him," Regan said Tuesday, insisting there was no consultation with the White House before Iacocca was axed.

"I had nothing to do with Lee Iacocca," Regan, the President's No. 1 adviser, said. "I do not hate his guts." In an interview with UPI and AP, Regan also denied another story alleging he disliked Iacocca so much that he asked that his chauffeur-driven White House car not be a Chrysler. "I just don't happen to like Chryslers," he explained. "I drive a Mercury."

(Helen Thomas, UPI)

FORMER HOSTAGE

MILWAUKEE -- One of the hostages aboard the TWA plane hijacked last June said Tuesday he owed his quick release to Ronald Reagan, and if Jimmy Carter had been president "we'd still be there." Peter Hill said he backs the President's stand on dealing with terrorists, adding Reagan has been more effective than Carter was during his tenure.

"All I know is that President Reagan got us out of there. Whatever he did was right," said Hill. "If it had been Carter, we'd still be there." Hill spoke at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for the campus organization for Israel.

(UPI)

EDITOR'S NOTE: "First Family Ties," a review of Patti Davis' book "Home Front," appears on page B1 of the Washington Post Style Section.

NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Tuesday Evening, February 18, 1986)

CHALLENGER INVESTIGATION

CBS's Dan Rather: New allegations from aerospace engineers inside and outside NASA, who insist the space shuttle Challenger disaster may go beyond a failure of hardware to politicized bureaucratic judgement. Allegations from people familiar with NASA's "go-no-go" decision-making process on the fatal launch day. People who have now told CBS News that the "go" decision for lift-off in frigid weather was a victory for bad politics over good science and engineering sense.

CBS's Eric Engberg reports serious charges were leveled today by engineers who had worked on the shuttle. As one put it, "the engineering judgements had been overridden by political decisions." One source said "pressures on NASA to meet the shuttle's ambitious schedule" were to blame for what he says was for the "cutting of corners." The President's Commission investigating the accident has still not determined whether the O-Ring seals failed. Chairman William Rogers and Vice Chairman Neil Armstrong appeared before a Senate Committee today, expressing optimism that a cause could be determined quickly. (CBS-Lead)

ABC's Lynn Sherr reports that under persistent questioning by Sen. Hollings, Dr. William Graham said he had no evidence that Morton Thiokol had advised against lift-off.

(Sen. Hollings: "Is there any evidence to support that report?
Graham: "No, Senator, the evidence is in the other direction.")
Later they conceded the rocket maker had had concerns, but signed off. At today's hearings, NASA acknowledged a potential problem. (ABC-2)

NBC's Robert Hager reports that a source on the Presidential Commission investigating the accident told NBC News ... Thiokol had run tests, only recently, which indicated the rockets O-rings would not perform well in colder temperatures. The Presidential Commission said it will soon hold a public session to question both NASA and Morton Thiokol officials to find out just who said what before launch. (NBC-2)

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REAGAN CONTRA AID PACKAGE

Rather: Up to now, the U.S. Congress has barred military assistance to the Nicaraguan contras, but President Reagan today told congressional leaders he wants that ban to end, so the United States can provide \$100 million to the contras, most of it military aid.

(President: "The resistance has continued to grow, and is operating deep inside Nicaragua, but we have to do more to help them. As I've said before, you can't fight attack helicopters piloted by Cubans with band-aids and mosquito nets.")

(Sen. Lugar: "We have to make a decision whether we're going to have a Soviet base on this continent or not, and essentially, we're going to have one if the contras are not successful in reordering the government of Nicaragua.") (CBS-8)

NBC's Tom Brokaw: President Reagan today unveiled a plan for increased U.S. aid to the contras, the U.S.-backed rebels fighting Nicaragua's Sandinista government. Declaring that they can't do battle with what he called "band-aids and mosquito nets," the President said he wants to give them \$70 million in unrestricted military aid, and \$30 million in so-called humanitarian aid. (NBC-6)

MILITARY AID TO ANGOLA

Rather: The Reagan Administration today made its clearest statement yet that military aid is being sent to rebels fighting the government of Angola. That, from top State Department official Chester Crocker, who said, "The process is in motion." (CBS-9)

PHILIPPINES UNREST

CBS's David Jackson: Radical anti-Marcos and anti-American groups took to the streets today, taking advantage of a tense political climate. Aquino followers were out, too, picketing a government TV station, and burning pro-Marcos newspapers. Corazon Aquino's drive to force Marcos out is underway. From bonfires to boycotts of Marcos's businesses. And the Philippine Peso suffered its worst one-day decline in 15 years. Aquino does not intend to stop until she's President. He says he won't be driven out, and can handle anything the opposition comes up with, even if he has to rely on the army, one of his biggest power bases. (CBS-10; ABC-7)

NBC's Tom Brokaw reports that Marcos was closeted all day in an emergency cabinet meeting. Special U.S. envoy Philip Habib, meanwhile, continued his round of meetings with Philippine officials, trying to calm the potentially explosive situation there. Two powerful members of Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar and House Asian Subcommittee Chairman Stephen Solarz, have agreed to begin hearings to consider cutting off all U.S. aid to the Marcos government. (NBC-4)

ISRAELI STRIKE

Rather: Hundreds of Israeli troops swarmed through the villages of Southern Lebanon for a second day, supported by jet fighters and helicopters in the air, and gunboats on the sea. Lebanon called the operation an "outright new invasion." Israel called it an "effective search for kidnapped Israeli soldiers" and said it would end soon.
(CBS-3; NBC-9; ABC-5)

U.S. EMBASSY IN PORTUGAL BOMBED

Rather: A scare, but no injuries or serious damage today, as a car bomb went off at the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon, Portugal. The State Department says security guards conducting a routine check found the bomb in the truck of a car driven by an Embassy employee. They took the car to a safe area, where it exploded. This was the third attack in little more than a year aimed at the high-security U.S. Embassy compound.
(CBS-5)

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EDITORIALS/COLUMNISTS

PHILIPPINE ELECTION/PRESIDENT MARCOS

Disown Marcos -- "Like the shah of Iran, the Somozas, and the Duvaliers before him, Marcos has passed the point where any ally's intercession can save him. His stubborn refusal to relinquish power seems likely to plunge the Philippines into a series of paralyzing national strikes. But the U.S. needn't look beyond its own selfish interests to find justification for disowning Marcos -- and it needn't apologize for doing so."

(Miami Herald, 2/18)

Pressure Marcos By Withholding Aid -- "We must convince Marcos that he can't wink away fraud. But there is no clear course for us. If the fraud was as pervasive as our observer-team believes, a recount is useless. A quick, new election conducted by a neutral agency with full power to assure the integrity of the ballot would be ideal. But that isn't likely. So what should the USA do? What can we do? We must push the Philippines toward peaceful, progressive change; toward strong leadership that respects the voice and vote of the people. So we must withhold our aid and use all diplomatic means to convince Marcos that he is a man without a mandate."

(USA Today, 2/18)

Philippine Damage Control -- "Having stumbled and fumbled -- reportedly under the direction of chief of staff Donald Regan, who fed Reagan his lines -- the White House reportedly intends to remain silent on the Philippines for 19 days, until special envoy Philip Habib returns from Manila. That would be a silence heard around the world, and especially on the 7000 Philippine islands. It is important that leading senators of both parties have set out, as best they can, to undo the damage."

(Boston Globe, 2/18)

A Falling Dictator -- "How could President Reagan make such a blunder when the stakes are so high? Is it that he simply has a congenital affinity for the kind of authority Marcos represents? That he can rationalize that as long as the authoritarian is anti-communist, as long as he seems to serve U.S. interests in the short run, we can blink and wink at all manner of brutality and ruthlessness? Is Reagan still captivated by the kind of muddled thinking of Jeane Kirkpatrick, who...was still bawling it was only the 'liberals' in the U.S. who were after Marcos? Marcos' determination to hang on demonstrates the bankruptcy and ultimately the danger of drawing tortured semantic distinctions, as Kirkpatrick does, between 'authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.'"

(Baltimore Evening Sun, 2/17)

The Message To Marcos -- "Mr. Reagan's public position has the ring of practicality rather than ideology. The United States cannot force Mr. Marcos to follow any specific alternative, but it can apply pressure that might be sufficient to persuade him to yield to the inevitable."

(Chicago Tribune, 2/14)

(Editorials/Columnists continued)

DUVALIER IN EXILE

Where To Dump Dictators -- "There is no reason, of course, to let fleeing dictators shop around for maximum comfort. Liberia's offer should be reconsidered if Mr. Duvalier's safety there can be reasonably assured. Nor need he be promised access to every American bank account he may have established. And a dictator in asylum should be stripped of any right to engage in the politics of the country he fled or settles in. But if his flight was worth celebrating, as it was, those who arranged it must also provide a landing place." (New York Times, 2/18)

ARMS LIMITATIONS

Reagan's Live 'Zero Option' -- "President Reagan's once-derided 'zero option' proposal to eliminate U.S. and Soviet intermediate-range missiles from Europe is more alive than ever following Senator Edward Kennedy's talks in Moscow with Kremlin chief Mikhail Gorbachev.... Having gained so much momentum, President Reagan should try to nail down a ban on Soviet and U.S. missiles in Europe without having it enmeshed in pre-summit maneuvering. To obtain a 'zero option' would be his most important arms control achievement to date." (Baltimore Sun, 2/17)

Responding to Gorbachev's Peace Offensive -- "Timing isn't everything in arms control negotiations, but it's not insignificant either. And given the peace offensive Mikhail Gorbachev has been conducting since he took over in the Kremlin, it's just about time for a serious peace counteroffensive from President Ronald Reagan.... Gorbachev can be expected to keep up the pressure for an agreement before his summit meeting with Reagan later this year. There's no doubt that the president, by hanging tough, has pushed the Soviets to make improvements over what they were offering much earlier in the negotiations. The question is how much more he can realistically expect before he finally must cut a deal." (Newsday, 2/14)

GRAMM-RUDMAN

Time to Reload -- "The President's determination not to compromise his fairy-tale fiscal principles leaves lawmakers little alternative but to reload the Gramm-Rudman gun. The simplest way to repair its adjudged Constitutional defect would be to shift from the comptroller to the Executive Branch the authority to determine when automatic spending cuts are required. That solution remains unsavory to many lawmakers, who prefer to reserve to Congress the final say in setting deficit targets. But the President's unwillingness to propose a realistic budget, combined with the court ruling, makes the decision inevitable. Mr. Reagan and Congress are fiscal gluttons, equally unable to follow a sensible diet. Booby-trapping the refrigerator may be the only way out." (Miami Herald, 2/13)

(Editorials/Columnists continued)

GRAMM-RUDMAN

Give the President a Razor -- "President Reagan has demanded that Congress give him power to go at spending legislation with a razor rather than an executioner's ax. Congress is reluctant to submit itself to the death of a thousand cuts, but what Congress fears is the best argument for giving the President the authority he seeks.... The line-item veto would give the President a chance to impose some discipline on the unruly gaggle in Congress. It would not be unlimited. Congress could punish the President if he pushed his authority too far -- in fact, it could even repeal the provision granting him the power. The problems with granting the President a line-item veto have been overblown. The danger to the orderly processes of government today does not come from the line-item veto but rather from the lack of it." (Chicago Tribune, 2/17)

FARM CRISIS

More Money For Farms -- "President Reagan's new farm budget asks what his previous agriculture budgets have asked -- a step back from the fiscal abyss of open-ended farm welfare schemes and a return to a farm economy run on free market principles.... But this is one area in which Congress again will want to push the Administration into greater spending. What Congress ought to do is to give the President the farm budget. It is, if anything, more than enough." (Chicago Tribune, 2/15)

Drastic Agriculture Reform Needed, And May Be Coming -- "President Reagan's Economic Report to Congress contained a significant passage saying 'we will continue to press for further agricultural reform.' ...The minimum income approach has been suggested before; the basic idea was proposed in the Truman administration in the 1950s but never adopted. There are problems with it, but they are social and political; the economic logic of it is sound. The social problem is how we determine how many farm families we actually need; the political problem is that Congress could put the benefits so high that we would end up with another costly welfare program. But the merits of a particular plan will have to be fudged when the details are filled in and a bill is presented; the general idea is one that definitely ought to be explored. Indeed, this may be the only humane way to make a gradual transition to a completely free market in agriculture." (Atlanta Journal, 2/16)

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FOREIGN MEDIA REACTION

PHILIPPINE ELECTION

"The first task of the Reagan Administration is to tell Mr. Marcos in no uncertain terms that if the outcome can be shown conclusively to be a sham, a dignified and peaceful departure is what the democratic world would expect of him."
(Sunday Times, Great Britain)

"Phillip Habib's...task is a difficult one, since there is no agreement inside the U.S. Administration, as indicated by Washington's dangerous waverings....Habib's first task in Manila was in fact to restore order in the U.S. Embassy."
(Corriere della Sera, Italy)

"Nothing came of Habib's talks [Monday] with Marcos and Corazon Aquino....But observers noted that, on his way home, the U.S. envoy looked grim. It is true that his mission, theoretically -- according to Ronald Reagan's desire -- was to encourage the two adversaries to 'work together.' But this is impossible."
(Le Matin, France)

"There is a general feeling that Habib is very unlikely to be able to contribute anything to defusing the politically critical situation."
(Allgemeine, West Germany)

"It is impossible to find one single sensible reason how the unpopular dictator (Marcos) could serve the interests of the United States and consequently of the West. On the contrary, he and his family are such an obvious burden that one wonders where the next U.S. air force carrier is now that it is so badly needed."
(Helsingin Sanomat, Finland)

"The Filipinos who felt they had been betrayed by their American friends, [Monday] received an encouraging message from the White House. President Reagan said the election had been marred by fraud, and he questioned Marcos' victory. This statement can only mean that the United States from here on will increase its support of the Filipinos who fight for human rights and democracy."
(Aftenposten, Norway)

"Ronald Reagan has realized that the ruler of the Philippines has no future....Marcos' last election has brought the Philippines into a hopeless situation. Even the United States sees no way out."
(Die Presse, Austria)

"If, after Mr. Habib's visit, Mr. Reagan still sticks to his 'impartial policy,' it will best be seen here as accepting the Marcos status quo, and acceptance of a rigged election."
(Irish Times, Ireland)

"The Americans will have to accept the fact that there is no alternative to the departure of Mr. Marcos from office. Perhaps, indeed, they have already accepted it. The real motive behind the dispatch of the U.S. State Department's veteran trouble-shooter, Mr. Phillip Habib, may be to negotiate....a 'golden parachute' for Mr. Marcos."
("World Today", Moscow TV)

"The emphasis of U.S. policy toward the Philippines in the future should be on giving priority to the lives of the Filipino people, rather than on maintaining the Marcos administration. The United States must not repeat the stupidity of Vietnam and Iran."
(Mainichi, Japan)

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OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Bad Idea?

In response to Congressman Ted Weiss's statement that severe budget cuts "will force us to dismantle the Federal Government, step by step, until there is little left," I believe a growing number of people in this country feel that this is exactly what needs to be done.

James C. Warnes
Athens, Ga.

TIME, FEBRUARY 24, 1986

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

U.S. WARNS MARCOS TO MAKE REFORMS

Philip Habib has warned President Marcos that he must make democratic reforms and share power with opposition forces headed by Corazon Aquino or risk losing U.S. military and economic aid, Administration officials said yesterday.

These officials did not specify how Marcos should or could accomplish these goals, particularly in view of the opposition's refusal thus far to consider a place in his government. The officials emphasized that President Reagan had not decided whether aid should be withheld and would not reach a conclusion until he receives a report from Habib, expected late this week.

(Lou Cannon & Joanne Omang, Washington Post, A1)

ANTI-MARCOS PRESSURE MOUNTING IN CONGRESS

Congressional pressure mounted today for an end to United States assistance to the Philippine Government of President Marcos, but the White House said it was "far premature" to cut off aid and close the two United States military bases there.

The growing emotion on Capitol Hill was demonstrated tonight when the Senate agreed to vote Wednesday on a resolution condemning the "widespread fraud" in the Philippine voting and requesting President Reagan to convey the Senate's findings to Marcos.

(Bernard Weinraub, New York Times, A1)

PRESIDENT LAUNCHES EFFORT FOR \$100 MILLION CONTRA AID

President Reagan launched a new drive yesterday for a \$100 million aid package to rebels fighting the Sandinista government of Nicaragua, including a resumption of military aid. But congressional Democrats immediately expressed opposition and White House officials acknowledged that the proposal would be Reagan's most difficult legislative battle this year.

The Administration is seeking \$30 million in overt, nonlethal aid, such as clothing and medical supplies, and \$70 million in covert military assistance for the contras, officials said. Congress barred military aid in 1984 but last year approved \$27 million in nonlethal assistance, which expires March 31.

(David Hoffman, Washington Post, A1)

Reagan Opens Campaign For Aid To Contras

President Reagan launched an all-out effort yesterday to wrest \$100 million in military and humanitarian aid from Congress for Nicaragua's anti-Sandinista rebels.

The President did not rule out the possibility of a negotiated settlement between the Marxist Sandinista regime and the rebels. But, he said, "there are many ways in which a democratic outcome can be achieved in Nicaragua." (Jeremiah O'Leary & Mary Belcher, Washington Times, A1)

WHITE HOUSE: NICARAGUA ON A "DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN"

The White House, gearing up for a fight with Congress over secret military aid to Nicaraguan rebels, says the Marxist Sandinista regime has launched a "campaign of disinformation" to sway public opinion. Larry Speakes said Tuesday, "we're quite well aware of a plan by the Sandinista government -- a very sophisticated, very carefully drawn plan that might be titled: 'How to influence the United States Congress against providing additional aid for the opposition in Nicaragua.'"

He said the plan "also calls for a campaign of misinformation about the success or failure of the contra forces there...and some tactics they would use in order to influence the Congress both now and at the time of a vote. It's carefully worked out and a highly professional plan to influence the American people," he said. (Ira Allen, UPI)

COVERT AID TO SAVIMBI "IN MOTION," U.S. SAYS

A top Reagan Administration official said yesterday "the decision has been made" and the "process is in motion" to provide Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi with military assistance in his struggle against the Marxist Angolan government.

Appearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Chester Crocker asked for "a clear statement from Congress" supporting a continuing U.S. commitment to "negotiated resolutions in southern Africa" but also warning that the United States will not tolerate other countries taking advantage of the policy "to pursue their own aggressive ends."

(David Ottaway & Patrick Tyler, Washington Post, A8)

Reagan Decides to Send Weapons to Angola Rebels

The Reagan Administration told Congress today that it had decided to provide rebels in Angola with anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles. The purpose, Administration officials say, is to prevent the Communist-backed Angolan Government from achieving "a military solution."

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Chester Crocker, for the first time acknowledged publicly what had been unofficially reported -- that there has been a basic Administration decision to provide covert military aid to the rebel forces led by Jonas Savimbi.

(Bernard Gwertzman, New York Times, A1)

GULF OF SIDRA OPERATIONS SAID POSSIBLE NEXT MONTH

The United States may take advantage of the arrival of a third aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean next month to conduct flight operations over the disputed Gulf of Sidra, Pentagon sources said yesterday. The sources, who agreed to discuss the matter only if not identified, said the two carriers now in the Mediterranean would conduct another limited operation near the Libyan coastline in early March.

A second operation is being planned in late March when the carrier USS America arrives to join the USS Coral Sea and USS Saratoga, and that operation may include a "shallow incursion" in the gulf, one source said.

(Howard Kurtz, Washington Post, A12)

REAGAN NEARING APPROVAL OF ARMS CONTROL COUNTEROFFER

President Reagan, responding to the Soviet's latest arms control offer, is nearing approval of a counterproposal that seeks to hasten movement toward agreement on medium-range missiles. Larry Speakes said Tuesday that Reagan "will be considering in the next several days" a proposal that reflects consultations with allies in Europe and Asia and an interagency group of advisers.

Officials said that by the end of this week or early next week, Reagan is expected to offer the counterproposal in the form of a letter to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The letter probably will be coupled with a simultaneous or near-simultaneous offering of the proposal at the arms control talks in Geneva, and a public announcement.

(Matthew Quinn, UPI)

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION REPORTS ON MIAs

A Congressional team returning from two days of talks with Vietnamese officials in Hanoi has brought back the first official evidence that some men listed as missing in action are alive in southeast Asia.

The nine-man delegation was expected to hold a news conference today to report on the trip, during which a Vietnamese deputy foreign minister conceded, for the first time, that some Americans may be living in Vietnam by their own choice. According to the delegation, however, the foreign minister claimed the Vietnamese government is not aware of any specific cases of U.S. servicemen remaining in Indochina.

(Jim Anderson, UPI)

CAR BOMB EXPLODES AT U.S. EMBASSY

LISBON -- A bomb placed under the car of a U.S. Embassy employee exploded at the gates of the embassy complex in Lisbon today shortly after it was discovered in a routine check, embassy officials and police said. No one was hurt.

Embassy spokesman Dan Traub said Portuguese security guards operating a checkpoint at the gate ordered the area cleared when they spotted a suspicious device under the employee's car. Shortly afterwards a blast ripped through the car, he said.

(Peter Wise, Washington Post, A28)

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NATIONAL NEWS

NASA OFFICIALS NOT TOLD OF KEY PRELAUNCH DATA

William Rodgers told Donald Regan last Friday that he was "appalled" to learn that key information about the shuttle's condition had not reached top space agency officials before the disastrous Jan. 28 launch, Administration sources said yesterday.

The sources said Rodgers called Regan to inform him of a statement, which was issued Saturday, saying the decision-making process at NASA may have been "flawed," and ordering top officials who participated in the launch decision not to take part in the investigation.

(Kevin Klose & David Hoffman, Washington Post, A1)

MEMO REVEALS MEESE DOUBTS ABOUT GUN BILL

An internal Treasury Department memo says Attorney General Meese believes a gun deregulation bill is flawed and unnecessary, despite official Reagan Administration support. But Meese denies he is bucking the White House and contends he supports the bill, which is opposed by police organizations but supported by the National Rifle Association and allied gun owner groups.

The Jan. 24, 1986, file memorandum, obtained by the Associated Press, said Meese believes the bill could weaken current law, which provides an automatic prison term for gun-toting federal felons. According to the memo, Meese also believes the Administration has solved problems in current law that made the bill necessary in the first place.

(Larry Margasak, AP)

DEFENSE REPORT'S TONE DIVIDES PANEL

President Reagan's Blue Ribbon Panel on Defense Management shelved a 100-page report that conservative Republican members considered too negative in its characterizations of Secretary Weinberger's Pentagon, according to commission sources.

Commission sources said the dispute centers on stylistic issues, and that the panel has reached a consensus on the need for far-reaching reforms to overhaul Pentagon acquisition policy, streamline its decision-making and increase the advisory powers of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(Michael Weisskopf, Washington Post, A1)

Defense Panel Said To Seek Major Reforms

The Pentagon bureaucracy would be slashed and billions of dollars could be saved annually under recommendations for defense reform that a blue-ribbon commission will make to President Reagan next week, commission sources say.

The panel is scheduled to meet in Washington tomorrow to put the final touches on its interim proposals and to try to agree on a report that spells out what is wrong and substantiates the need for reforms.

(Charles Corddry, Baltimore Sun, A1)

CBO ESTIMATES AUTOMATIC DEFENSE CUT WOULD BE \$49 MILLION

Congressional budget authorities estimated yesterday that President Reagan's \$320.3 billion defense budget would have to be reduced by \$49 billion if automatic spending cutbacks are triggered this fall under the new Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget-balancing law.

It was the first official projection from Congress of defense appropriations cutbacks that would be required under Gramm-Rudman-Hollings for fiscal 1987. As such, the numbers were quickly seized by Budget Committee leaders as new ammunition in the push for a budget compromise, possibly including tax increases, to avert the automatic cuts. (Helen Dewar & Edward Walsh, Washington Post, A5)

Miller: Reagan Made A Deal On Military Buildup

James Miller insists President Reagan struck a deal last year for a continued military buildup, despite congressional disagreement and a report that forecasts sharp Pentagon cuts if the acrimony continues. Reagan says his budget meets the Gramm-Rudman balanced budget act goal of a \$144 billion deficit in the year beginning Oct. 1 while increasing military spending by 8.2 percent above inflation.

"The President does believe he struck a deal," Miller told [House Budget Committee Chairman] Gray's committee Tuesday, "that by going along he was going to get that defense spending (hike)."

(Elaine Povich, UPI)

BROCK PREDICTS HILL WON'T ACT ON TRADE BILL IN '86

BAL HARBOUR, Fla. -- Secretary Block predicted today that despite the nation's record \$148 billion foreign trade deficit in 1985, Congress will not pass major trade legislation this year.

"If we could find some common ground on trade to improve this country's competitive circumstances, I think it would be wonderful," Brock said. "It is difficult for me to believe that it is possible, given the environment today, particularly in Congress."

(Peter Pearl, Washington Post, A8)

BUSING HALT SEEN IN 150 DISTRICTS

William Bradford Reynolds said yesterday that more than 150 school districts may be eligible to sue to end court-ordered desegregation plans because of a recent federal court ruling, but he said the Administration will not use that decision to launch a campaign against busing.

Reynolds praised the ruling, made earlier this month by the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, which upheld an end to busing elementary pupils in Norfolk. But he said "there are no surprises" in it, and described it as no more than an outline of procedures a school system must follow to free itself from court desegregation decrees.

(D'Vera Cohn, Washington Post, A14)

HERITAGE FOUNDATION ACCUSES STATE OF "DERAILING" REAGAN

State Department bureaucrats "derailed and betrayed" President Reagan's doctrine of helping anticommunist rebels and stopping Soviet adventurism, an influential conservative think tank charged in a new report.

In a bitter indictment of the agency that implements foreign policy, the Heritage Foundation detailed a "distressing and embarrassing gap" between the President's public speeches and the State Department's practices.

(James Morrison, Washington Times, A3)

REGAN ON IACOCCA: "I DON'T HATE HIS GUTS"

Donald Regan, even though he drives a Mercury, says he had nothing to do with the firing of Lee Iacocca as head of a Statue of Liberty commission. Hodel "hired him, therefore he can fire him," Regan said Tuesday, insisting there was no consultation with the White House before Iacocca was axed.

"I had nothing to do with Lee Iacocca," Regan, the President's No. 1 adviser, said. "I do not hate his guts." In an interview with UPI and AP, Regan also denied another story alleging he disliked Iacocca so much that he asked that his chauffeur-driven White House car not be a Chrysler. "I just don't happen to like Chryslers," he explained. "I drive a Mercury."

(Helen Thomas, UPI)

FORMER HOSTAGE

MILWAUKEE -- One of the hostages aboard the TWA plane hijacked last June said Tuesday he owed his quick release to Ronald Reagan, and if Jimmy Carter had been president "we'd still be there." Peter Hill said he backs the President's stand on dealing with terrorists, adding Reagan has been more effective than Carter was during his tenure.

"All I know is that President Reagan got us out of there. Whatever he did was right," said Hill. "If it had been Carter, we'd still be there." Hill spoke at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for the campus organization for Israel.

(UPI)

EDITOR'S NOTE: "First Family Ties," a review of Patti Davis' book "Home Front," appears on page B1 of the Washington Post Style Section.

NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Tuesday Evening, February 18, 1986)

CHALLENGER INVESTIGATION

CBS's Dan Rather: New allegations from aerospace engineers inside and outside NASA, who insist the space shuttle Challenger disaster may go beyond a failure of hardware to politicized bureaucratic judgement. Allegations from people familiar with NASA's "go-no-go" decision-making process on the fatal launch day. People who have now told CBS News that the "go" decision for lift-off in frigid weather was a victory for bad politics over good science and engineering sense.

CBS's Eric Engberg reports serious charges were leveled today by engineers who had worked on the shuttle. As one put it, "the engineering judgements had been overridden by political decisions." One source said "pressures on NASA to meet the shuttle's ambitious schedule" were to blame for what he says was for the "cutting of corners." The President's Commission investigating the accident has still not determined whether the O-Ring seals failed. Chairman William Rogers and Vice Chairman Neil Armstrong appeared before a Senate Committee today, expressing optimism that a cause could be determined quickly. (CBS-Lead)

ABC's Lynn Sherr reports that under persistent questioning by Sen. Hollings, Dr. William Graham said he had no evidence that Morton Thiokol had advised against lift-off.

(Sen. Hollings: "Is there any evidence to support that report?

Graham: "No, Senator, the evidence is in the other direction.")

Later they conceded the rocket maker had had concerns, but signed off. At today's hearings, NASA acknowledged a potential problem.

(ABC-2)

NBC's Robert Hager reports that a source on the Presidential Commission investigating the accident told NBC News ... Thiokol had run tests, only recently, which indicated the rockets O-rings would not perform well in colder temperatures. The Presidential Commission said it will soon hold a public session to question both NASA and Morton Thiokol officials to find out just who said what before launch.

(NBC-2)

REAGAN CONTRA AID PACKAGE

Rather: Up to now, the U.S. Congress has barred military assistance to the Nicaraguan contras, but President Reagan today told congressional leaders he wants that ban to end, so the United States can provide \$100 million to the contras, most of it military aid.

(President: "The resistance has continued to grow, and is operating deep inside Nicaragua, but we have to do more to help them. As I've said before, you can't fight attack helicopters piloted by Cubans with band-aids and mosquito nets.")

(Sen. Lugar: "We have to make a decision whether we're going to have a Soviet base on this continent or not, and essentially, we're going to have one if the contras are not successful in reordering the government of Nicaragua.") (CBS-8)

NBC's Tom Brokaw: President Reagan today unveiled a plan for increased U.S. aid to the contras, the U.S.-backed rebels fighting Nicaragua's Sandinista government. Declaring that they can't do battle with what he called "band-aids and mosquito nets," the President said he wants to give them \$70 million in unrestricted military aid, and \$30 million in so-called humanitarian aid. (NBC-6)

MILITARY AID TO ANGOLA

Rather: The Reagan Administration today made its clearest statement yet that military aid is being sent to rebels fighting the government of Angola. That, from top State Department official Chester Crocker, who said, "The process is in motion." (CBS-9)

PHILIPPINES UNREST

CBS's David Jackson: Radical anti-Marcos and anti-American groups took to the streets today, taking advantage of a tense political climate. Aquino followers were out, too, picketing a government TV station, and burning pro-Marcos newspapers. Corazon Aquino's drive to force Marcos out is underway. From bonfires to boycotts of Marcos's businesses. And the Philippine Peso suffered its worst one-day decline in 15 years. Aquino does not intend to stop until she's President. He says he won't be driven out, and can handle anything the opposition comes up with, even if he has to rely on the army, one of his biggest power bases. (CBS-10; ABC-7)

NBC's Tom Brokaw reports that Marcos was closeted all day in an emergency cabinet meeting. Special U.S. envoy Philip Habib, meanwhile, continued his round of meetings with Philippine officials, trying to calm the potentially explosive situation there. Two powerful members of Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar and House Asian Subcommittee Chairman Stephen Solarz, have agreed to begin hearings to consider cutting off all U.S. aid to the Marcos government. (NBC-4)

ISRAELI STRIKE

Rather: Hundreds of Israeli troops swarmed through the villages of Southern Lebanon for a second day, supported by jet fighters and helicopters in the air, and gunboats on the sea. Lebanon called the operation an "outright new invasion." Israel called it an "effective search for kidnapped Israeli soldiers" and said it would end soon.
(CBS-3; NBC-9; ABC-5)

U.S. EMBASSY IN PORTUGAL BOMBED

Rather: A scare, but no injuries or serious damage today, as a car bomb went off at the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon, Portugal. The State Department says security guards conducting a routine check found the bomb in the truck of a car driven by an Embassy employee. They took the car to a safe area, where it exploded. This was the third attack in little more than a year aimed at the high-security U.S. Embassy compound.
(CBS-5)

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EDITORIALS/COLUMNISTS

PHILIPPINE ELECTION/PRESIDENT MARCOS

Disown Marcos -- "Like the shah of Iran, the Somozas, and the Duvaliers before him, Marcos has passed the point where any ally's intercession can save him. His stubborn refusal to relinquish power seems likely to plunge the Philippines into a series of paralyzing national strikes. But the U.S. needn't look beyond its own selfish interests to find justification for disowning Marcos -- and it needn't apologize for doing so."

(Miami Herald, 2/18)

Pressure Marcos By Withholding Aid -- "We must convince Marcos that he can't wink away fraud. But there is no clear course for us. If the fraud was as pervasive as our observer-team believes, a recount is useless. A quick, new election conducted by a neutral agency with full power to assure the integrity of the ballot would be ideal. But that isn't likely. So what should the USA do? What can we do? We must push the Philippines toward peaceful, progressive change; toward strong leadership that respects the voice and vote of the people. So we must withhold our aid and use all diplomatic means to convince Marcos that he is a man without a mandate."

(USA Today, 2/18)

Philippine Damage Control -- "Having stumbled and fumbled -- reportedly under the direction of chief of staff Donald Regan, who fed Reagan his lines -- the White House reportedly intends to remain silent on the Philippines for 19 days, until special envoy Philip Habib returns from Manila. That would be a silence heard around the world, and especially on the 7000 Philippine islands. It is important that leading senators of both parties have set out, as best they can, to undo the damage."

(Boston Globe, 2/18)

A Falling Dictator -- "How could President Reagan make such a blunder when the stakes are so high? Is it that he simply has a congenital affinity for the kind of authority Marcos represents? That he can rationalize that as long as the authoritarian is anti-communist, as long as he seems to serve U.S. interests in the short run, we can blink and wink at all manner of brutality and ruthlessness? Is Reagan still captivated by the kind of muddled thinking of Jeane Kirkpatrick, who...was still bawling it was only the 'liberals' in the U.S. who were after Marcos? Marcos' determination to hang on demonstrates the bankruptcy and ultimately the danger of drawing tortured semantic distinctions, as Kirkpatrick does, between 'authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.'"

(Baltimore Evening Sun, 2/17)

The Message To Marcos -- "Mr. Reagan's public position has the ring of practicality rather than ideology. The United States cannot force Mr. Marcos to follow any specific alternative, but it can apply pressure that might be sufficient to persuade him to yield to the inevitable."

(Chicago Tribune, 2/14)

(Editorials/Columnists continued)

DUVALIER IN EXILE

Where To Dump Dictators -- "There is no reason, of course, to let fleeing dictators shop around for for maximum comfort. Liberia's offer should be reconsidered if Mr. Duvalier's safety there can be reasonably assured. Nor need he be promised access to every American bank account he may have established. And a dictator in asylum should be stripped of any right to engage in the politics of the country he fled or settles in. But if his flight was worth celebrating, as it was, those who arranged it must also provide a landing place." (New York Times, 2/18)

ARMS LIMITATIONS

Reagan's Live 'Zero Option' -- "President Reagan's once-derided 'zero option' proposal to eliminate U.S. and Soviet intermediate-range missiles from Europe is more alive than ever following Senator Edward Kennedy's talks in Moscow with Kremlin chief Mikhail Gorbachev.... Having gained so much momentum, President Reagan should try to nail down a ban on Soviet and U.S. missiles in Europe without having it enmeshed in pre-summit maneuvering. To obtain a 'zero option' would be his most important arms control achievement to date." (Baltimore Sun, 2/17)

Responding to Gorbachev's Peace Offensive -- "Timing isn't everything in arms control negotiations, but it's not insignificant either. And given the peace offensive Mikhail Gorbachev has been conducting since he took over in the Kremlin, it's just about time for a serious peace counteroffensive from President Ronald Reagan.... Gorbachev can be expected to keep up the pressure for an agreement before his summit meeting with Reagan later this year. There's no doubt that the president, by hanging tough, has pushed the Soviets to make improvements over what they were offering much earlier in the negotiations. The question is how much more he can realistically expect before he finally must cut a deal." (Newsday, 2/14)

GRAMM-RUDMAN

Time to Reload -- "The President's determination not to compromise his fairy-tale fiscal principles leaves lawmakers little alternative but to reload the Gramm-Rudman gun. The simplest way to repair its adjudged Constitutional defect would be to shift from the comptroller to the Executive Branch the authority to determine when automatic spending cuts are required. That solution remains unsavory to many lawmakers, who prefer to reserve to Congress the final say in setting deficit targets. But the President's unwillingness to propose a realistic budget, combined with the court ruling, makes the decision inevitable. Mr. Reagan and Congress are fiscal gluttons, equally unable to follow a sensible diet. Booby-trapping the refrigerator may be the only way out." (Miami Herald, 2/13)

(Editorials/Columnists continued)

GRAMM-RUDMAN

Give the President a Razor -- "President Reagan has demanded that Congress give him power to go at spending legislation with a razor rather than an executioner's ax. Congress is reluctant to submit itself to the death of a thousand cuts, but what Congress fears is the best argument for giving the President the authority he seeks.... The line-item veto would give the President a chance to impose some discipline on the unruly gaggle in Congress. It would not be unlimited. Congress could punish the President if he pushed his authority too far -- in fact, it could even repeal the provision granting him the power. The problems with granting the President a line-item veto have been overblown. The danger to the orderly processes of government today does not come from the line-item veto but rather from the lack of it." (Chicago Tribune, 2/17)

FARM CRISIS

More Money For Farms -- "President Reagan's new farm budget asks what his previous agriculture budgets have asked -- a step back from the fiscal abyss of open-ended farm welfare schemes and a return to a farm economy run on free market principles.... But this is one area in which Congress again will want to push the Administration into greater spending. What Congress ought to do is to give the President the farm budget. It is, if anything, more than enough." (Chicago Tribune, 2/15)

Drastic Agriculture Reform Needed, And May Be Coming -- "President Reagan's Economic Report to Congress contained a significant passage saying 'we will continue to press for further agricultural reform.' ...The minimum income approach has been suggested before; the basic idea was proposed in the Truman administration in the 1950s but never adopted. There are problems with it, but they are social and political; the economic logic of it is sound. The social problem is how we determine how many farm families we actually need; the political problem is that Congress could put the benefits so high that we would end up with another costly welfare program. But the merits of a particular plan will have to be fudged when the details are filled in and a bill is presented; the general idea is one that definitely ought to be explored. Indeed, this may be the only humane way to make a gradual transition to a completely free market in agriculture." (Atlanta Journal, 2/16)

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FOREIGN MEDIA REACTION

PHILIPPINE ELECTION

"The first task of the Reagan Administration is to tell Mr. Marcos in no uncertain terms that if the outcome can be shown conclusively to be a sham, a dignified and peaceful departure is what the democratic world would expect of him."
(Sunday Times, Great Britain)

"Phillip Habib's...task is a difficult one, since there is no agreement inside the U.S. Administration, as indicated by Washington's dangerous waverings....Habib's first task in Manila was in fact to restore order in the U.S. Embassy."
(Corriere della Sera, Italy)

"Nothing came of Habib's talks [Monday] with Marcos and Corazon Aquino....But observers noted that, on his way home, the U.S. envoy looked grim. It is true that his mission, theoretically -- according to Ronald Reagan's desire -- was to encourage the two adversaries to 'work together.' But this is impossible."
(Le Matin, France)

"There is a general feeling that Habib is very unlikely to be able to contribute anything to defusing the politically critical situation."
(Allgemeine, West Germany)

"It is impossible to find one single sensible reason how the unpopular dictator (Marcos) could serve the interests of the United States and consequently of the West. On the contrary, he and his family are such an obvious burden that one wonders where the next U.S. air force carrier is now that it is so badly needed."
(Helsingin Sanomat, Finland)

"The Filipinos who felt they had been betrayed by their American friends, [Monday] received an encouraging message from the White House. President Reagan said the election had been marred by fraud, and he questioned Marcos' victory. This statement can only mean that the United States from here on will increase its support of the Filipinos who fight for human rights and democracy."
(Aftenposten, Norway)

"Ronald Reagan has realized that the ruler of the Philippines has no future....Marcos' last election has brought the Philippines into a hopeless situation. Even the United States sees no way out."
(Die Presse, Austria)

"If, after Mr. Habib's visit, Mr. Reagan still sticks to his 'impartial policy,' it will best seen here as accepting the Marcos status quo, and acceptance of a rigged election."
(Irish Times, Ireland)

"The Americans will have to accept the fact that there is no alternative to the departure of Mr. Marcos from office. Perhaps, indeed, they have already accepted it. The real motive behind the dispatch of the U.S. State Department's veteran trouble-shooter, Mr. Phillip Habib, may be to negotiate...a 'golden parachute' for Mr. Marcos."
("World Today", Moscow TV)

"The emphasis of U.S. policy toward the Philippines in the future should be on giving priority to the lives of the Filipino people, rather than on maintaining the Marcos administration. The United States must not repeat the stupidity of Vietnam and Iran."
(Mainichi, Japan)

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