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News Summary

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 1986 -- 6 a.m. EST EDITION

TODAY'S HEADLINES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Crocker Condemns Ban On S. African Activists -- The Reagan Administration's leading expert on African affairs yesterday condemned the South African government for "banning" two black anti-apartheid activists and said Pretoria's stated willingness to negotiate with blacks was a sham.
(Washington Post, Washington Times)

Habib/Central America -- Philip Habib met with President Duarte Wednesday and said the United States will give "enthusiastic support" to the Salvadoran leader's recent Central American peace proposal.
(Washington Post, UPI)

NATIONAL NEWS

Tax Overhaul Bill Would Raise Taxes On Gasoline, Cigarettes -- The chairman of the Senate Finance Committee is unveiling a far-reaching plan for overhauling the federal income tax -- a proposal that would be paid for in part by regular increases in taxes on gasoline, cigarettes and alcoholic beverages.
(Washington Post, Washington Times, AP, UPI)

Rodino Blasts Meese On Handling Of EPA -- Sparks flew at a House Judiciary Committee hearing yesterday as Chairman Peter Rodino criticized Attorney General Meese for not seeking an independent investigation into accusations that the Administration wrongfully withheld EPA documents from Congress in 1983.
(Washington Post, Washington Times)

NETWORK NEWS (Wednesday Evening)

CHALLENGER -- Sources close to the search operation say that the flight deck from the Challenger was recovered, and it did contain remains of the astronauts.

HABIB -- Special envoy Philip Habib arrived in El Salvador to begin a Central American trip.

U.S. TRADE DEFICIT -- Final figures for 1985 showed the U.S. foreign trade deficit hit an all-time high of \$124.3 billion.

LEFT BEHIND

Among the books in the Marcos's glass-paneled library were "Power Politics," "The Party's Over," and "Fun While it Lasted."

(Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3/9)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

REAGAN SAYS HE MIGHT USE PART OF SDI BEFORE SYSTEM IS COMPLETE

President Reagan said yesterday that he might favor partial early deployment of a missile defense shield before the entire system was developed if that proved feasible and he "could work out" arrangements with U.S. allies and the Soviet Union.

(Charles Corddry, Baltimore Sun, A1)

REPORT SAYS REAGAN WILLING TO CONSIDER SUMMIT AFTER ELECTIONS

President Reagan said Wednesday he is willing to delay a meeting with Soviet leader Gorbachev until December, although he still hopes a summer summit date can be worked out, a published report said.

Reagan also discounted a Soviet warning that the summit could be threatened by a U.S. order to reduce Soviet staff at the United Nations, the Baltimore Sun said in Thursday's editions. Despite the lack of a firm summit date and a lack of recent arms control progress, Reagan said he was optimistic about U.S.-Soviet relations. (AP)

President Would Agree To Delay Summit To Dec.

President Reagan declared a willingness yesterday to delay this year's Soviet-American summit meeting until after the U.S. congressional elections in November.

State Department officials, meantime, said the Soviets had been told that the President was open to a December date for the summit talks, but preferred to meet Mikhail Gorbachev here in June or July.

(Stephen Broening, Baltimore Sun, A1)

ADMINISTRATION SAYS U.S. NEEDS NUCLEAR TESTING FOR INDEFINITE FUTURE

President Reagan will resist demands from Congress and a panel of international leaders to seek a comprehensive nuclear test ban with the Soviet Union because testing is essential for the nation's security, Administration arms control analysts say.

Reagan on Wednesday denounced a House-passed resolution calling on him to negotiate a total ban on nuclear tests, saying it does not "serve the interests of the United States, our allies and our friends" and would undercut his efforts to make progress on the issue.

(Gregory Nokes, AP)

Nuclear Test Ban Resolution Undercuts U.S., Reagan Says

President Reagan yesterday told Robert Dole that a House resolution urging a ban on nuclear tests doesn't "serve the interests of the United States, our allies and our friends."

The House passed the nonbinding resolution -- calling on the Administration to negotiate a total ban on nuclear testing -- by a vote of 268-148 on Feb. 26.

(Jeremiah O'Leary, Washington Times, A3)

MARCOS DOCUMENTS WILL BE RELEASED TO HILL, MANILA PROBES

The Reagan Administration agreed yesterday to give congress and Philippine investigators copies of 1,500 sensitive documents brought to Hawaii by Ferdinand Marcos and considered crucial to recouping the hidden wealth amassed abroad by the deposed president.

Copies of the documents -- which senior Administration officials described as a road map for investigators trying to unravel a Marcos fortune estimated as high as \$10 billion -- will be given to Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.), who had threatened to subpoena the records, according to Administration sources. Solarz said he expects to receive the documents by the end of the week.

(Keith Richburg & Dale Russakoff, Washington Post, A1)

U.S. FAVORS BLACK RULE IN S. AFRICA

A senior State Department official said yesterday that the Reagan Administration favors black majority rule in South Africa and regards members of the militant black African National Congress as "freedom fighters" in their battle against the white apartheid regime.

Testifying before the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Africa, Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker was asked by its chairman, Rep. Howard Wolpe (D-Mich), whether the Administration supported "the creation of a system based on [black] majority rule and the protection of [white] minority rights."

"I think that's inherent from everything we've said," Crocker replied. "Does that mean [black] majority rule?" Wolpe persisted. "Yes," replied Crocker.

(David Ottaway, Washington Post, A1)

Crocker Condemns Ban On S. African Activists

The Reagan Administration's leading expert on African affairs yesterday condemned the South African government for "banning" two black anti-apartheid activists and said Pretoria's stated willingness to negotiate with blacks was a sham.

But Chester Crocker defended President Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement" with the white-minority government and denied that it had failed.

(Reuter story, Washington Times, A4)

SPANIARDS VOTE TO REMAIN IN NATO

MADRID -- Spain's electorate, by a decisive majority, today endorsed the country's membership in NATO in a surprising vote that apparently reflected strong, last-minute warnings by Socialist Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez about the consequences of a withdrawal from the alliance.

(Tom Burns, Washington Post, A1)

Spaniards Vote To Stay In NATO

MADRID, Spain -- Spaniards voted Wednesday to keep their country in NATO in a surprise victory for the pro-European policies of socialist Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, official results showed.

With 99.5 percent of the ballots counted, returns showed 52.5 percent of the voters favored the government's decision to keep Spain in NATO, said the official vote-counting center.

(Susan Linnee, AP)

HABIB DEPARTS ON DIPLOMATIC MISSION

President Reagan sent special envoy Philip Habib to Central America yesterday in what aides said was an attempt to dramatize U.S. diplomatic efforts when the Administration is at least 30 House votes short of obtaining a \$100 million aid package for the Nicaraguan rebels.

Asked whether he was using Habib's mission as "a cover" for his attempt to obtain military aid for the rebels, Reagan replied that critics of his proposal "have been making ridiculous noises for a long time, and that's one of the most ridiculous."

(Lou Cannon & Edward Walsh, Washington Post, A11)

Habib/Central America

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador -- Philip Habib met with President Duarte Wednesday and said the United States will give "enthusiastic support" to the Salvadoran leader's recent Central American peace proposal.

The diplomatic troubleshooter told reporters after his meeting with Duarte the Salvadoran president's proposal, which links the civil wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador, "is a good one. We give it our enthusiastic support."

(Raul Beltrhan, UPI)

REAGAN AND CONTRA AID: PUTTIN' ON THE BLITZ

President Reagan, driving to build support to arm the anti-Sandinista rebels, has a show-and-tell session today with captured weapons from Central America to prove the Nicaraguan government exports revolution.

In his push to rally public support for a \$100 million aid package, Reagan will stage his display in the lobby of the State Department -- complete with Soviet, Chinese, Czech and American weapons seized while being smuggled to leftist guerrillas in El Salvador and Honduras.

(Helen Thomas, UPI)

WHITE HOUSE REBUFFS DOLE'S CONTRA PLOY

Reagan Described As In No Mood To Compromise

Robert Dole yesterday offered the hint of a compromise on aid to the Nicaraguan resistance, despite a White House vow to fight on for the full \$100 million President Reagan wants to arm the resistance to the Marxist Sandinistas.

Larry Speakes said the Administration is not in the mood for compromise. "We're not interested in getting anything short of the President's package approved, without restrictions," Mr. Speakes said.

(Christopher Simpson & Mary Belcher, Washington Times, A1)

REAGAN KEEPS OPTION TO ADD TO "CONTRA" AID

President Reagan said yesterday that the 18 months' worth of military aid he wants to give insurgents in Nicaragua may not be enough to accomplish American aims there and that he might have to return to Congress at the end of that period for additional funds.

(Robert Timberg, Baltimore Sun, A1)

OFFICIALS: U.S. BASES IN HONDURAS ARE TEMPORARY

Pentagon officials say U.S. troops presence in Honduras is "temporary and indefinite" and will end when the region is free of the perceived threat posed by the Nicaraguan government.

The two officials told the House military construction appropriations subcommittee Wednesday that the "temporary" troops are there to train Honduran forces, give assurance of U.S. military aid and warn Nicaragua against aggression.

(Eliot Brenner, UPI)

U.S. INTRODUCES MEASURE CRITICAL OF CHILE AT U.N. MEETING

GENEVA -- The United States has introduced its first draft resolution criticizing the Chilean government and said today private appeals to Chile to improve its human rights record had failed.

The decision to push for a resolution against Chile is in sharp contrast to previous years when the U.S. delegation worked hard to limit public criticism of the military government of Gen. Pinochet, who seized power in 1973.

(Reuter story, Washington Post, A29)

U.S., In Reversal, Faults Chileans Over Rights Issue

The United States, in a reversal of policy, today expressed concern over the human rights situation in Chile. It called on other countries to support a United Nations resolution condemning the Chilean rights record.

(Bernard Gwertzman, New York Times, A1)

REPUBLICANS, DEMOCRATS NEGOTIATING OVER ACID RAIN BILL

Some House Republicans are negotiating with key Democrats in an effort to compose an acid rain control bill before President Reagan's meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, sources close to the negotiations say.

Reagan meets Mulroney next Tuesday in Washington, and acid rain will be on their agenda since much of Canada's acid rain is created by U.S. pollutants. A commitment of House Republicans to a plan to reduce emissions that cause acid rain could increase pressure on the White House to support new legislation.

(Guy Darst, AP)

Reagan Is To Back Steps On Acid Rain

President Reagan will endorse a report calling for action to curb acid rain, Administration officials said today. The report says acid rain is crossing the border between the United States and Canada and causing environmental, economic and social damage.

(Philip Shabecoff, New York Times, A1)

NATIONAL NEWS

SENATE TAX PLAN CALLED MORE GENEROUS TO POOR

The tax plan developed by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Bob Packwood (R-Ore) would give a larger tax cut to poor taxpayers than the House version, but other groups of taxpayers would receive similar tax reductions under both plans, congressional sources said yesterday.

(Anne Swardson, Washington Post, A9)

Early Criticism Greet Tax Reform Plan

Bob Packwood's tax reform plan would tap a new source of business revenue to pay for \$62 billion in tax changes, but critics already are asking whether the public would end up footing the bill.

Packwood, who was to make his entire plan public today, spent much of Wednesday in a second round of private briefings on the proposal for committee members.

(Joseph Mianowany, UPI)

Tax Overhaul Bill Would Raise Taxes On Gasoline, Cigarettes

The chairman of the Senate Finance Committee is unveiling a far-reaching plan for overhauling the federal income tax -- a proposal that would be paid for in part by regular increases in taxes on gasoline, cigarettes and alcoholic beverages.

The proposal by Sen. Bob Packwood, which was still undergoing revision late Wednesday, would reduce the income taxes of most Americans and raise the burden on corporations.

(Jim Luther, AP)

Packwood Seeks To Raise Excise Taxes

Bob Packwood will introduce a proposal for overhauling the nation's tax system today that includes \$62 billion in additional excise taxes on everything from wine and beer to aviation fuel and tobacco.

According to congressional sources familiar with the package, Mr. Packwood would obtain some of the additional revenue by altering the way excise taxes are calculated.

(Karen Riley, Washington Times, A1)

REAGAN SAYS HE NEVER PRESSURED NASA TO MEET LAUNCH SCHEDULE

President Reagan says the White House never pressured NASA to meet any schedules for launching space shuttles, stating, "I am not a scientist and they are," a published report says.

Reagan's comments, made Wednesday in an interview with the Baltimore Sun, came as the White House disclosed that weeks before the shuttle Challenger disaster, NASA asked the President to highlight the Challenger mission in his State of the Union speech by calling it "the ultimate field trip" of an American school teacher.

(AP)

HOUSE VOTES ON REAGAN'S BUDGET

Democratic leaders decided to subject President Reagan's budget to an almost certain defeat in the House today -- a move Republicans charged was a political exercise designed simply to embarrass the President.

In the Senate, budget leaders were moving in a bipartisan way to fashion an alternative to Reagan's budget, but on the House side the political sniping continued. (Elaine Povich, UPI)

MEESE SETS DECISION ON EPA PROBE

Attorney General Meese will decide by the end of April whether to seek independent counsel to examine allegations that Administration officials withheld EPA documents from Congress three years ago.

Meese told the House Judiciary Committee yesterday that the Justice Department has begun a preliminary investigation of a 1,284 page report issued by the panel in December. Chairman Peter Rodino (D-N.J.) has repeatedly criticized Meese for not complying with the committee's recommended appointment of an independent counsel.

(Howard Kurtz, Washington Post, A4)

Rodino Blasts Meese On Handling Of EPA

Sparks flew at a House Judiciary Committee hearing yesterday as Chairman Peter Rodino criticized Attorney General Meese for not seeking an independent investigation into accusations that the Administration wrongfully withheld EPA documents from Congress in 1983.

"The committee report involves your long-time associates, most of whom worked for the department and [whom] you now oversee," Mr. Rodino said. "The American people have a right to have the facts in the committee report reviewed by an impartial observer...without any preconceived notions."

(John McCaslin, Washington Times, A3)

MEESE SAYS HE'S "COMFORTABLE" WITH COMPROMISE GUN BILL

Attorney General Meese, under fire from law enforcement for supporting easing gun laws, has told a House committee he feels comfortable with a compromise gun bill on its way to the House floor.

Meese has angered law enforcement organizations because he has supported another gun bill -- backed by the NRA -- that would allow the interstate sale of handguns as well as rifles and shotguns.

(Judi Hasson, UPI)

JUSTICE DEPT. HALTS SCREENING OF HOMOSEXUALS

The Justice Department has decided to stop asking prospective federal prosecutors if they are homosexual, officials said yesterday. Instead, departmental spokesman Patrick Korten said, all applicants for such jobs will be asked "if there is anything in your personal lifestyle that would give us a problem with blackmail." Korten said there will be "no mention of sexual preference" and that the question could pertain to any potentially embarrassing revelations.

(Howard Kurtz, Washington Post, A21)

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SENATORS' TEMPER AND VOICES RISE AT HEARING ON OSHA PANEL NOMINEE

A shouting match erupted between Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) yesterday over the nomination of a Texas corporate lawyer to the three-member panel that oversees health and safety law enforcement in most of the nation's 6 million workplaces.

The exchange over the Reagan Administration's nomination of Robert Rader to the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission came after Metzenbaum and Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill) suggested Rader was unfit for the job because he has sought to undermine the ability of federal inspectors to gain entry to workplaces and enforce safety laws.

(Peter Perl, Washington Post, A21)

REVISING SPACE PROGRAM COULD COST \$5 BILLION

The Congressional Budget Office said yesterday that it could cost an additional \$5 billion over the next five years to diversify the U.S. space program by replacing the shuttle Challenger and building more unmanned booster rockets to carry payloads into space.

(Walter Pincus, Washington Post, A5)

REP. SMITH ASSAILS WEINBERGER ON AIR-TO-AIR MISSILE PROGRAM

Secretary Weinberger is pressing ahead with the \$5.2 billion AMRAAM missile program before the jet combat weapon has been adequately tested, Rep. Denny Smith (R-Ore) charged yesterday.

Smith released documents from the GAO and Pentagon testing office that he said showed the AMRAAM is seriously flawed, needs additional testing and stands little chance of staying within cost projections.

(George Wilson, Washington Post, A6)

SENATE VOTE POSTPONED ON BUDGET AMENDMENT

Senate Republican leaders yesterday agreed to put off action on a constitutional amendment to require balanced budgets as opponents claimed enough votes to defeat the measure.

The apparent turnabout in support for the proposed amendment came as GOP leaders, who had been pushing for a vote last night, switched and moved to postpone it until March 25. (Helen Dewar, Washington Post, A7)

HELICOPTERS GROUNDED OVER SAFETY CONCERNS

The Army said yesterday that it has temporarily grounded both of its newest helicopters, the UH60 Blackhawk and the AH64 Apache, because of safety concerns.

(AP story, Washington Post, A3)

U.S. SEEKS TRUSTEE FOR ROBINS CO.

The Justice Department asked a federal court yesterday to appoint a trustee to run A.H. Robins Co., which it said improperly spent money after filing for voluntary bankruptcy last August.

(Morton Mintz, Washington Post, A1)

REP. WEISS SAYS WHITE HOUSE IMPEDES CHILD ABUSE FIGHT

Despite 1.7 million documented cases of child abuse annually, the Reagan Administration is undermining a small federal antiabuse program with funding cuts, political manipulation of grants and failure to seek the best expert advice, Rep. Ted Weiss (D-N.Y.) charged at a hearing yesterday.

Dody Livingston, commissioner of HHS's Administration for Children, Youth and Families, and Jane Burnley, associate commissioner of the HHS Children's Bureau, who oversee the program, strenuously denied the charges.

(Spencer Rich, Washington Post, A10)

-end of A-Section-

NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Wednesday Evening, March 12, 1986)

NASA/CHALLENGER

CBS's Dan Rather: Pieces of the Challenger cabin and more remains of the seven astronauts were brought to the surface today.

(ALL NETS LEAD)

ABC's Ted Koppel: Publicly NASA is saying very little about the recovery effort, but radio transmissions from the scene suggest it is going well.

NBC's Tom Brokaw: Sources close to the search operation say that the flight deck from the Challenger was recovered from the ocean floor today, and it did contain remains of the astronauts. However, those remains have not been identified.

NASA/WHITE HOUSE PRESSURE?

Koppel: The suggestion that the shuttle may have been launched prematurely because of government pressure got a new twist today: Could some pressure -- in roundabout fashion -- have come from NASA officials trying to coordinate the launch with a major Presidential speech?

ABC's Lynn Sherr: reports when President Reagan delivered his State of the Union address, delayed a week by the Challenger accident, he eulogized the crew of seven, including schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe this way:

(President: "We pause together to mourn and honor the valor of our seven Challenger heroes.")

But ABC News has obtained a text NASA had provided to the White House a month earlier. The draft input -- a routine practice requested from all government agencies -- came from the office of acting NASA administrator William Graham. In assuming a successful launch before the speech, it suggested the President include these comments: "Tonight, while I am speaking to you, a young elementary schoolteacher from Concord, New Hampshire is taking us all on the ultimate field trip, as she orbits the Earth as the first citizen passenger on the space shuttle. Christa McAuliffe's journey is a prelude to the journeys of other Americans, living and working together, in a permanently manned space station in the mid-1990s. Mrs. McAuliffe's week in space is just one of the achievements in space we have planned for the coming year." Today, at the request of ABC News, the White House released the text of the President's planned address. And while it does mention Challenger, there is no reference to Mrs. McAuliffe. Presidential spokesman Larry Speakes said NASA's draft was filed and forgotten.

Sherr continues:

But a number of sources within NASA have suggested that internal pressure -- perhaps accelerated by the idea of inclusion in the President's address -- may have contributed to the fateful decision to launch Challenger. Former NASA general manager Phil Culbertson, who signed the draft input, told ABC News he never felt any pressure to launch because of the scheduled speech. Still, a source close to the Presidential Commission investigating the accident said today the commission is sensitive to the issue of pressures that may be real or perceived by NASA management, and that could influence the way people make decisions. (ABC-2)

CONTRA AID/HABIB

Rather: Special envoy Philip Habib arrived in El Salvador today to begin a Central American trip, that at this point does not include Nicaragua. But earlier, at the White House, President Reagan said Habib would visit Managua if he thinks it would be profitable. (TV Coverage: President Reagan and Habib at the White House.) A Sandinista spokesman said Habib would be welcome "if the Administration honestly wants to negotiate." (CBS-12)

Koppel: President Reagan sent his special envoy Philip Habib off to Central America today. Habib's mission is to pursue a diplomatic settlement in the region, even as the President continues to push for new military aid to the contras.

ABC's Sam Donaldson: Today's White House photo opportunity, in the contra aid battle, featured President Reagan bidding Godspeed to Ambassador Habib, as he departed for Central America to pursue a diplomatic solution. Something Mr. Reagan's Capitol Hill critics claim he has never really sought to achieve.

(Senator Sasser: "The Administration simply has not placed enough emphasis on a negotiated settlement, trying to exhaust all of the diplomatic possibilities.")

Told that the critics believe Habib's trip is a charade, the President reacted angrily:

(President: "Sam, the critics have been making ridiculous noises for a long time, and that's one of the most ridiculous. Nine times we have tried to persuade the Sandinista government to enter into negotiations. And nine times they we've gotten nowhere.")

The President was referring to talks between the U.S. and Nicaragua, that went on from June 1984 until the Administration unilaterally cut them off in January 1985, on the grounds that Nicaragua wasn't serious. On Capitol Hill, the top U.S. General for Central America, John Galvin, sought to clarify his remarks about the contras in The Washington Post. "They're not going to collapse if we don't give them something," which seemed to go against the President's argument.

(President: "Maybe we have a difference of opinion.")

Galvin's clarification went like this:

(General Galvin: "I'll say it again. If the aid is not approved, it doesn't mean they will go down in smoke, or it doesn't mean they'd go up in smoke.

-more-

Donaldson continues:

It means they'll be able to carry on. But what I said was that without that kind of aid, they are not going to be able to be very effective, and the Sandinistas are.")

Tomorrow the public relations battle continues, with the President inspecting communist weapons captured in Central America. He'll be pleased to do that in front of the TV cameras. (ABC-4)

Brokaw: President Reagan today did not let up in his fight for \$100 million in aid for Nicaragua's contras. He accused his critics of making what he called ridiculous noises, and he insisted that he wants a negotiated settlement with Nicaragua. To prove this, he dispatched diplomatic troubleshooter Philip Habib to that region. But he didn't go to all of the countries.

NBC's Chris Wallace: The President sent Habib off on his diplomatic mission with a curious itinerary. Habib will see the leaders of almost every Central American country except Nicaragua. Why not visit the Sandinistas?

(President: "You don't go where you're not invited.")

But with Mr. Reagan trying to convince Congress that he's serious about negotiations, this is no time to talk tough.

(TV Coverage: President and Habib at the White House.)

So the President emphasized Habib may go to Nicaragua -- later.

(President: "If anything comes up that would show that there might be any prospect, or any profit in doing that, I'm sure that he would make that decision.")

If he goes, he will get a cold reception. Nicaraguan President Ortega, who had been lying low to avoid inflaming Congress, today ended his news blackout, attacking Habib's trip as a public relations stunt.

(Ortega: "Mr. Habib's appointment is in fact a method being used to compliment their terrorist policy.")

And, growing more agitated, Mr. Ortega called the whole U.S. debate over supporting the contras immoral.

(Ortega: "Who gave Congress the power to even discuss the future of an independent nation such as Nicaragua?")

The President was also undercut today by his own top soldier in Central America, who said failing to fund the contras would not bring the disaster Mr. Reagan predicts.

(General Galvin: "If we don't give it to them, it doesn't mean that -- poof! -- they disappear.")

(President: "Uh, maybe we have a difference of opinion.")

Meanwhile, the White House is still exploring a compromise on Capitol Hill. The latest congressional idea: give the contras anti-aircraft missiles now, but delay other military aid 90 days, to allow talks with Nicaragua. But the House Republican leader says compromise only weakens Mr. Reagan's case.

(Rep. Michel: "When you've got a position staked out, and you're drumming up votes for it, uh, don't muddy up the water.")

The President will try to make the issue crystal-clear tomorrow, going to the State Department to see a new exhibit -- a display of weapons, according to Administration officials, that the Sandinistas shipped out of Nicaragua. To spread their revolution. (NBC-4)

ABC NEWS POLL

Koppel: Who is winning the battle for public opinion? Our own ABC News poll, taken last week, found that 59 percent of those responding oppose new military aid for the contras. (ABC-5)

Editor's Note: ABC News correspondent Barry Serafin filed a report from Nicaragua on a group called "Quest for Peace," an American group seeking to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Nicaragua. (ABC-6)

FRENCH ELECTIONS/HOSTAGES

Rather: This coming Sunday is Parliamentary election day in France. Not coincidentally, Sunday is also the deadline for France to meet demands imposed by terrorists in Beirut, holding French hostages and perhaps American hostages, too. (CBS-3; NBC-6)

AND AMERICAN HOSTAGES

Brokaw: Almost overlooked in this latest Mideast hostage crisis are six Americans, who have been held captive in Lebanon for as long as two years, for some of them. Overlooked by just about everyone but the families and the friends of the six.

NBC's Anne Garrels reports that officials say that the Administration, Terry Waite, a Church of England emissary, and Jesse Jackson have come up against the same stonewall with all its contacts: the captors want the release of 17 prisoners in Kuwait, convicted of terrorist bombings. No more, no less. A non-negotiable demand that is unacceptable to Kuwait and the U.S. The State Department believes at least four of the hostages are still alive. In Chicago, a reminder of how long Father Martin Jenko has been held: his sisters prepare for a vigil outside the White House this Sunday. (NBC-7)

SPAIN/NATO VOTE

Rather: Spaniards voted today in a referendum to determine whether Spain would be the first member of NATO ever to pull out. Government projections indicate they voted to stay, by a surprisingly wide margin. Said a pleased White House spokesman, "That's fantastic, that's great!" Today's vote apparently means the four U.S. military bases are safe, at least for now. (CBS-4; ABC-3; NBC-5)

U.S. TRADE DEFICIT

Koppel: Some discouraging news about the nation's balance of trade. Final figures for 1985 showed the U.S. foreign trade deficit hit an all-time high of \$124.3 billion. (ABC-8)

ARMY/UH-60 BLACK HAWK

Rather: The U.S. Army today grounded its entire fleet of 640 front-line, top-of-the-line Black Hawk helicopters for the second time in less than a year. The order follows a training flight crash yesterday near Fort Rucker, Alabama, that killed all three crewmen. (CBS-10)

Brokaw: Today the Army announced that the UH-60 Black Hawk and the AH-64 Apache would be grounded temporarily. (NBC-2)

MISSING PARTS

Brokaw: The Army has another problem. Missing parts, ammunition; weapons -- all kinds of Army gear. The other branches of the military services have the same problem. It adds up to a lot of taxpayer money.

NBC's Fred Francis: reports that a GAO investigator believes that some of what cannot be found is stolen by soldiers. Things like helmets and backpacks -- which end up in pawn shops, and hand grenades and guns, which are sold on the black market. One Army official said, "with millions of different items, it's really impossible to count it all. The GAO couldn't do it, and General Motors couldn't do it." A GAO report is to be released this week by Sen. Wilson. The report is so critical of the services' ability to know what it has and where it is, that one source said it will lead many people to believe that National Security is being compromised by shoddy management. (NBC-3)

MARCOS

Rather: CBS News correspondent Bill Redeker reports from Honolulu that Marcos is now expected to leave Hickam AFB later this evening. Marcos now is expected to take up temporary residence, probably with one of his daughters, in a Honolulu house leased by her. (CBS-14; ABC-7; NBC-8)

SENATE ON RADIO

Rather reports that starting in June, the Senate exchanges will also be available live and in color, as the experiment with radio is expanded to include TV for 45 days. (CBS-16; ABC-14; NBC-12)

PATTI REAGAN DAVIS

Koppel: Bestselling novelists don't usually have a hard time getting guest appearances on TV talk shows. Particularly if they're also members of the first family. But President Reagan's daughter, Patti Davis, seems to be running into unusual difficulties. Maybe it was something she wrote.

ABC's Gary Shepard: reports that at the heart of the controversy is Patti Davis's just-published 'Home Front.' It is billed as an autobiographical novel; the story of a rebellious girl with a vain, cold, strong-willed mother, and a politically consumed father, who becomes governor of California, and then President of the United States. The catch is, 33-year-old Patti Davis is the real-life daughter of the real-life President. And she's been on a whirlwind national tour promoting the book.

(Davis: "I've said it's not an autobiography. There are some very obvious things that are autobiographical.")

But two scheduled appearances on major talk shows, 'Marv Griffen' and 'The Tonight Show,' were abruptly cancelled only hours before air time, prompting speculation of White House pressure. Davis was interviewed by Phil Donahue, who confirmed he was pressured to drop her, but refused.

(TV Coverage: Donahue interviewing Davis. Donahue (to Davis): "Your folks have got to be, at the very least, very, very nervous." Davis: "Well, probably any parent would be. I think it would probably be very hard for any parent to read their children's innermost thoughts. Which to some degree you have to do in a novel.") Today's Washington Post quotes White House insiders saying the President and Mrs. Reagan were hurt by the book. This morning, Mr. Reagan was asked if he pressured anyone to keep his daughter off the air.

(President: "No, no.")

As for Patti Davis herself, she has retreated to her home here, and is refusing to come out and talk. But that posture may have to change. She's booked on television interview programs next week in San Francisco and Seattle. Unless, of course, she's cancelled again.

(ABC-15)

NBC's Jack Perkins reports that in the book, the first family thinks the daughter is an embarrassment. It's a family consumed by politics. She writes: "Confrontations with my father left me frustrated. I felt that nothing I said made an impression on him...." Patti Davis was scheduled to appear on 'The Tonight Show' last week. At the last minute, hostess Joan Rivers, a friend of Nancy Reagan, cancelled the interview. As Merv Griffen, another Reagan friend, did also.

(Davis: "There was something in it that they found offensive.")

The only public reaction from the White House was the President saying:

(President: "I thought it was interesting fiction.")

(Davis: "Since his taste in fiction usually runs to Westerns, that is probably the supreme compliment!")

(NBC-15)

EDITORIALS/COLUMNISTS

CONTRA AID

Much Venom, Little Evidence -- "Far from demanding U.S. protection against Nicaraguan attack, the democratic Central American nations are renewing their drive for a peaceful settlement of their regional problems. For once, the U.S. should stop pretending that 'Big Brother knows best' and just cheer loudly from the sidelines as Latin America begins to take responsibility for solving its own problems. Certainly the fanatical rhetoric spewing from the White House -- most of it authored by the pompous Buchanan -- is no basis on which to determine our national policy in Central America." (Denver Post, 3/9)

Now Or Never -- "Congressional critics contend that military aid to the contras is an unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of another country and, therefore, endangers the peace process. That's like saying that French assistance to the Americans during the Revolutionary War interfered with the internal affairs of England. Those who oppose aid to the contras are setting the stage for a second Soviet base in this hemisphere. Their selective outrage is reminiscent of the protesters during the 1960s and '70s. They pressed the United States to abandon its allies in Southeast Asia, and then washed their hands of the carnage that followed the American withdrawal. If the protesters prevail this time, they and Congress will bear full responsibility for the spread of communism throughout Central America." (San Diego Union, 3/8)

The President's Contra Campaign -- "Blind ideological competition is the basis of the Administration's excessive military budget. It is also what fuels the President's determination to violently crush a pro-Soviet government in Central America. He intends to demonstrate in Nicaragua, as he did in Grenada, naked American power and the will to use it. Unless prevented by Congress, which does not like or trust the Soviet system any more than the President does, Reagan will do so in violation of this country's principles.... The Sandinistas came to power not because the United States failed to oppose communism in the region, but because American foreign policy supported greedy leaders who helped spread the idea that communism was better than 'democracy.'" (Plain Dealer, 3/10)

DRUG TESTING

Drugs And Testing -- "Drug testing for people in particularly sensitive jobs can be justified. But wholesale testing of American workers -- in the absence of some reason to suspect drug use by an employee -- has the ring of a police-state practice inconsistent with traditional American values.... The Presidential Commission also urges that foreign aid be linked to the efforts of recipient nations to curb drug trafficking. American taxpayers certainly should not assist countries that wink at the production and distribution of drugs earmarked for sale by mobsters here." (Buffalo News, 3/7)

WELFARE REFORM

Reaganites' Cruel Choice For Poor -- "The latest and perhaps cruelest wrinkle in the war on victims of poverty would force those who receive a combination of benefits -- say, Medicaid and Social Security disability and food stamps -- to choose among them; to, in the words of a report by presidential policy advisor Charles D. Hobbs, 'choose and manage benefits to meet their specific needs.'.... Not since public assistance came into being have genuinely poor beneficiaries been asked to choose between food and medicine, transportation and housing, choices that could force those with children to feed and clothe to forego medical care for themselves.... Hobbs' plan purports to free up the non-essential funds needed to 'lift all Americans' out of poverty. In fact, it could keep those hovering at, or a hair's breadth above, the poverty line mired there forever."

(Atlanta Constitution, 3/7)

Welfare: Cutting Costs Is Only Part Of The Welfare Solution -- If it really hopes to help strengthen poor families, the Administration must also deal with the fact that the pool of jobs available to marginally skilled people is shrinking. The obvious and immediate answer to that is training programs, but the training, remedial education and child care services that may be necessary to get a welfare recipient a job cost more in the short run than the welfare benefits themselves. It is a cost the country must pay, though, if it hopes to salvage the families and individuals being destroyed by generations of welfare poverty." (Detroit Free Press, 3/8)

TAX AMNESTY

Tax Amnesty Hurts Honest Taxpayers -- "State taxes aren't the same thing as federal taxes. In some states, for example, enforcement against cheats and non-filers was quite lax before amnesty took effect.... Federal tax enforcement is already fairly effective. The IRS comes down hard on tax cheaters every day. Another problem is that tax amnesty could become addictive. If we let the cheats off once, they will be tempted to cheat again, thinking there will be a second free ride later. Amnesty could hook us again and again, tempting millions to cheat and procrastinate, while saying, 'Well, I'll pay up later.' Our whole tax system, which depends on honesty, honor, and voluntary compliance, could be threatened. Finally, and most important, amnesty just isn't fair. Year after year, millions and millions of us have faithfully paid all of the federal income taxes we owe. Some of us have even postponed vacations or house repairs to scrape up enough to pay Uncle Sam on April 15. Is it fair to honest taxpayers to suddenly let dishonest taxpayers off the hook? Of course it isn't."

(USA Today, 3/10)

Amnesty For Tax Cheaters? -- "Honest citizens would certainly be better off if their tax burdens were eased by putting non-payers back on the tax rolls. And many of these non-payers, trapped by their past transgressions, would welcome a chance to start clean again.... The Senate Budget Committee estimates a tax amnesty would produce an \$8.6 billion windfall in fiscal 1987. It is the only revenue-raiser yet found that Mr. Reagan can apply against the deficit without retreating from his stand against no tax increases. Legislators like the fact that the tax amnesty wave began on the state level where 18 states have collected \$800 million over the past four years and are quite pleased with the results."

(Baltimore Sun, 3/7)

FOREIGN MEDIA REACTION

NICARAGUA

"A recent poll demonstrated that more than 60% of the Americans condemn Reagan's policy with opposition tending to increase. In the United States, a president who isolates himself from public opinion...loses authority. Reagan's power lies in an image of return to the severe and solid principles of the founders of America. And this image is being obfuscated."
(Journal de Brasília, Brazil)

"The White House does not appear to be considering another alternative to its present policies toward Nicaragua which provoke -- through the use of strength -- Managua's fortress mentality."
(La Vanguardia, Spain)

"The difficulties the U.S. Administration is encountering...are due mainly to the weakness of its arguments in favor of aid. Nobody takes seriously that if the contras are defeated, Nicaragua would become a threat to U.S. security."
(El Pais, Spain)

"A leading anti-Sandinista political leader, Dr. Arturo Cruz, says he favors a compromise on contra aid which would delay distribution of new military funds while peace talks are attempted with the Nicaraguan Government....His conciliatory remarks indicate that the contras recognize they face a stiff fight in Congress and may get no new aid unless they appear willing to talk to Managua."
(Financial Times, Britain)

"President Reagan has started to make every effort to rock the leftist Ortega Government of Nicaragua following his assistance in the toppling of the Marcos Government and the establishment of the new Aquino Government in the Philippines. These two diplomatic policies appear to differ, but actually, they are on a single rail which could be called a 'new intervention policy.' This is the Reagan Administration's 'third world reorganization policy' which rides the mood of America's new foreign posture."
(Yomiuri, Japan)

"Congressional half-heartedness derives from some hardboiled assessments and some vague apprehensions about the logic of U.S. aid to apparently undeserving or incompetent overseas clients....The most important factor may be that a more assertive Congress has simply reacted against the tendency of the White House to oversell the contras by disingenuously comparing them with the U.S. Founding Fathers....Reagan and his Central America advisors now seem to be reconsidering. Their tactical emphasis is shifting toward a negotiated regional political solution to Nicaragua's internal conflict."
(Sydney Morning Herald, Australia)

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