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News Summary

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 1986 -- 6 a.m. EST EDITION
TODAY'S HEADLINES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

U.S./Libya -- American warplanes knocked out a Libyan missile site and disabled two guided-missile patrol boats on Monday after Libya fired at least six missiles at U.S. jets operating below Khadafy's "line of death" in the Gulf of Sidra, Administration officials said.

(Washington Post, Washington Times, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Baltimore Sun, AP, UPI)

Military Sources Say 1,000 Sandinistas Trapped In Honduras -- About 1,000 Nicaraguan soldiers chased hundreds of U.S.-backed rebels from Nicaraguan territory into southern Honduras and were trapped Monday about 12 miles inside the country, military sources said.

(Washington Post, Washington Times, AP, UPI)

U.S. Embassy In Tokyo Attacked By Missiles, No Damage Reported -- Two missiles were fired at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo today but did not cause any damage, police at the mission told Reuters.

(Reuter, AP)

NATIONAL NEWS

Civil Rights Chief Boosts Salary, Other Pay -- Clarence Pendleton has turned his part-time post as chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights into a nearly full time job that paid him \$67,344 last year, although that amounts to less than half his income from outside ventures.

(Washington Post)

NETWORK NEWS (Monday Evening)

U.S./LIBYA -- Combat over, on and around the Gulf of Sidra today.

NICARAGUANS IN HONDURAS -- A Nicaraguan fighting force of approximately 1500 is reported to have crossed the border into Honduras.

HINCKLEY -- John Hinckley today was back in court.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

U.S. PLANES RETALIATE FOR LIBYAN ATTACK

U.S. warplanes yesterday attacked a Libyan antiair craft site and two guided missile patrol boats after Libya fired at least four SA5 missiles at Navy aircraft that had crossed "the line of death" drawn by Muammar Qaddafi across the Gulf of Sidra, White House and Defense Department officials announced.

On Capitol Hill, there was generally bipartisan support for the U.S. raid. Neither White House nor Pentagon officials described the incidents as acts of war, and there was little immediate reaction from U.S. allies and adversaries abroad.

(George Wilson, Washington Post, A1)

U.S., Citing Libyan Fire, Reports Attacking Missile Sites And Setting 2 Ships Ablaze

American and Libyan forces clashed today in and around the disputed waters off the Libyan coast.

Pentagon officials said three American ships penetrated to a point within 40 miles of the Libyan coast -- more than halfway into the Gulf of Sidra but well outside the 12-mile limit recognized by the United States.

(Bernard Weinraub, New York Times, A1)

U.S. Strikes Libyan Mainland After Missile Attack On Navy Jets As Mediterranean Conflict Escalates

The U.S. conflict with Libya seriously escalated as Navy jet fighters for the first time attacked a military site on the Libyan mainland.

If the U.S. doesn't carry attacks further and Col. Qadhafi doesn't prompt further action by trying to retaliate, Arab diplomats believe the U.S. attack may solidify the Libyan leader's position at home and certainly prompt a universal Arab condemnation of the U.S. actions.

(Frederick Kempe, Wall Street Journal, A3)

Libya, U.S. Duel In Gulf Of Sidra

U.S. naval aircraft operating over the disputed Gulf of Sidra yesterday attacked two missile-armed, high-speed Libyan patrol boats and a surface-to-air missile site on the coast of Libya after Libyan forces fired several Soviet-supplied missiles "without provocation" at U.S. warplanes, U.S. officials said.

(Robert Timberg & Vernon Guidry, Baltimore Sun, A1)

Weinberger Says Exercise Will Continue As Planned

U.S. Navy planes sank a Libyan patrol boat in the Gulf of Sidra, severely damaged another, and bombed an anti-aircraft missile site on the Libyan mainland yesterday.

"We're still doing what we said we were going to do," Secretary Weinberger said. "We'll continue to do it, and if anyone interferes with us, we'll take appropriate responsive action."

(Jeremiah O'Leary & Walter Andrews, Washington Times, A1)

U.S./Libya

U.S. warships patrolling the Gulf of Sidra today below Khadafy's self-proclaimed "line of death" are under orders to retaliate if attacked by Libyan forces, officials say.

"This was not an act to provoke a response or humiliate Khadafy," Larry Speakes said. Speakes said U.S. forces are prepared for further action. "Because of these numerous Libyan missile launches and indications that they intend to continue air and missile attacks on U.S. forces, we consider all approaching Libyan forces to have hostile intent," he said. (Richard Gross, UPI)

U.S./Libya

American warplanes knocked out a Libyan missile site and disabled two guided-missile patrol boats on Monday after Libya fired at least six missiles at U.S. jets operating below Khadafy's "line of death" in the Gulf of Sidra, Administration officials said.

Secretary Weinberger said the retaliatory strikes had been conducted without any loss of U.S. men or equipment, but Larry Speakes said "there are no apparent survivors" on one of the Libyan vessels, which he said normally carries a crew of 27. (Norman Black, AP)

LIBYA SAYS IT DOWNED 3 U.S. PLANES

Libya claimed yesterday to have shot down three U.S. warplanes that had violated the air space over its waters and, in a broadcast last night, threatening to "strike mercilessly" with its missiles against the American Sixth Fleet and "make the Mediterranean into a sea of fire."

In Washington, however, the Pentagon said no planes had been lost. (Richard Homan, Washington Post, A14)

LIBYA CALLS FOR ASSASSINATION OF AMERICANS

Libya, vowing revenge in the wake of its clashes with U.S. warplanes along Khadafy's "line of death," called today for the assassination of Americans "experts and consultants" throughout the Arab world.

The country went on full-scale alert and Libya radio said Khadafy's forces were organizing "suicide squads" to retaliate against America's "arrogance and haughtiness." (Al Webb, UPI)

Libya Calls For Execution Of American Spies In Arab Countries

LONDON -- Libyan Radio called today for the execution of Americans it said were "spies" posing as experts and consultants in Arab countries.

The radio, monitored by the BBC, said the whole Arab nation would soon be "racing toward the battlefield and crowding toward the war against America." (Reuter)

REAGAN DEFERS "JUDGEMENT CALL" TO MILITARY

President Reagan is keeping tabs on developments in the Mediterranean but any judgement call on further action against Libya is up to his military commanders, a White House spokesman says.

Reagan gave a broad go-ahead for U.S. naval maneuvers to cross Khadafy's "line of death" in the Gulf of Sidra 11 days before American and Libyan forces clashed, Larry Speakes told reporters.

(Helen Thomas, UPI)

TERRORISM PROVIDED CATALYST

Terrorist attacks on the Rome and Vienna airports last December and the installation of Soviet-built anti-aircraft missiles in Libya before that provided the catalyst for President Reagan to launch a military challenge to Muammar Qaddafi, Administration officials said yesterday.

The detailed planning for yesterday's action began shortly after the Dec. 27 airport attacks and was carried out with the expectation that Libya would strike at U.S. forces if they crossed Qaddafi's "line of death" in the Gulf of Sidra. Officials said the SA5A missile site at Surt had been targeted in advance for retaliation if Libyan had fired on American planes.

Although the White House claimed yesterday that the purpose of the naval exercise was solely to demonstrate freedom of navigation in an international waterway, officials said privately that the exercise was planned with a realization that it might provide a military confrontation with Qaddafi and a chance to underscore Reagan's determination to deal firmly with international terrorism.

(David Hoffman & Lou Cannon, Washington Post, A1)

HILL GIVES CAUTIOUS SUPPORT

Democratic leaders of the House and Senate last night supported the U.S. military action against Libya, but House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Dante Fascell (D-Fla) suggested President Reagan may have violated the War Powers Act by failing to consult with Congress in advance.

Tip O'Neill said Reagan was "on the right course." And Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va) agreed that the U.S. should respond militarily when fired upon in international waters.

"Based on the briefing given me at the White House, the American planes attacked by Libya today were on peaceful mission in international waters," said O'Neill in a prepared statement.

(Helen Dewar & Milton Coleman, Washington Post, A1)

In Divided Congress, Some Say U.S. Provoked Libya

Some congressional Democrats accused the Reagan Administration yesterday of needlessly provoking the attacks on U.S. warplanes over the Gulf of Sidra, but most lawmakers applauded the military's retaliation against the Libyans.

(Baltimore Sun, A1)

U.S. RAISES TERRORISM VIGILANCE

U.S. security officials reacted calmly to yesterday's events in the Gulf of Sidra, somewhat increasing their vigilance but otherwise continuing anti-terrorist measures implemented three years ago.

Sen. Patrick Leahy expressed concern that the confrontation might spark Libyan attempts to carry out terrorist actions in the United States.

(Mark Tapscott, Washington Times, A8)

OFFICIALS CERTAIN OF ATTACKS, BUT OTHER FACTS REMAIN UNCLEAR

The United States has "numerous corroborative evidence and sightings" that Libya had fired missiles at U.S. planes before the United States launched a retaliatory attack, Secretary Weinberger said yesterday.

Despite that note of certainty, several questions about yesterday's engagement remained unanswered last night.

(Fred Hiatt, Washington Post, A13)

SCHOLARS SAY U.S. ACTION SEEMS LEGAL

The U.S. government's assertion that most of the Gulf of Sidra consists of international waters where American vessels have the right to navigate and to defend themselves appears to be backed up by international legal opinion and precedent, legal scholars said last night.

These experts added that they would have to know more about the circumstances of yesterday's clash between U.S. and Libyan forces before they could say whether the United States had acted totally in accordance with international law.

(John Goshko, Washington Post, A14)

WHITE HOUSE EXPRESSES FULL CONFIDENCE IN WILSON

President Reagan has full confidence in William Wilson, his longtime friend and ambassador to the Vatican, the White House said yesterday, but it did not know in advance of a Wilson mission to Libya that drew a rebuke from Secretary Shultz.

Larry Speakes, who was unusually guarded yesterday in discussing Wilson's activities, said, "There were no authorized missions...either at the ambassadorial level or any other level" to Muammar Qaddafi in January, the time when Wilson traveled to Tripoli. Reagan learned of Wilson's trip "after the fact," Speakes said.

(Don Oberdorfer & Lou Cannon, Washington Post, A14)

NICARAGUANS SAID TO CROSS INTO HONDURAS

MEXICO CITY -- More than 1,000 Nicaraguan troops have crossed into Honduras to battle anti-Sandinista guerrillas, in the largest incursion into Honduran territory in the four-year-old conflict between Nicaragua and the rebels, according to diplomatic sources in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa.

Earlier today, in Washington, a senior Administration official said the United States had received preliminary reports of a major Nicaraguan incursion involving well over 1,000 Nicaraguan troops."

(Robert McCartney, Washington Post, A1)

Military Sources Say 1,000 Sandinistas Trapped In Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras -- About 1,000 Nicaraguan soldiers chased hundreds of U.S.-backed rebels from Nicaraguan territory into southern Honduras and were trapped Monday about 12 miles inside the country, military sources said.

Sources, speaking on condition they not be identified, said the Sandinista troops were trapped on Mount Capire after chasing the Contra rebels into Honduras on Sunday. They did not say how the Nicaraguan soldiers had been trapped or who had trapped them.

(Freddy Cuevas, AP)

Contras Pursued Into Honduras By Sandinista Troops

Two crack Sandinista battalions numbering 1,600 troops crossed the Honduran border in pursuit of anti-communist resistance forces on Saturday and have been engaged in heavy fighting for the past three days, intelligence sources said yesterday.

One of the 800-man Nicaraguan battalions was pinned down in a crossfire between two rebel forces totalling 1,500 men and seemed in danger of being mauled, according to one source.

(Roger Fontaine & James Morrison, Washington Times, A1)

Honduras/Nicaragua

A State Department official said Monday that up to 1,500 Nicaraguan troops had crossed into Honduras and President Reagan reportedly will ask Congress Tuesday for \$20 million in military aid to Honduras.

NBC News reported Monday night that Honduras formally asked the United States for military assistance, but White House officials refused to confirm or deny the reports.

ABC News "Nightline," citing congressional sources, reported early Tuesday that Reagan planned to send Congress a letter Tuesday requesting \$20 million in military aid to Honduras. (UPI)

Honduras/Nicaragua

A State Department official said Monday that up to 1,500 Nicaraguan troops had crossed into Honduras, but Honduran officials said they were unaware of such a crossing and Nicaragua denied it.

A senior Administration official, requesting anonymity, told reporters at the White House earlier there was a "report today of a very large Sandinista incursion into Honduras." (UPI)

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CONTRA BILL COMPROMISE SOUGHT

Senate Republican and Democratic leaders, seeking to avoid a bitter partisan fight and a close vote that could send a "wrong message" to Central America, urged a compromise yesterday on aid to the contras in Nicaragua.

The White House plan would allow immediate purchase of weapons, including portable surface-to-air missiles, not require direct negotiations between the Sandinistas and the U.S. government and permit Congress only an advisory vote on releasing the final \$75 million in aid.

(Milton Coleman & Lou Cannon, Washington Post, A9)

SANDINISTA REGIME IS THREAT, SAY NEIGHBORS

Four out of five Hondurans and Costa Ricans -- citizens of the two Central American countries that share borders with Nicaragua -- Believe that Nicaragua's Sandinista government is a military threat and should be toppled, according to a news poll, conducted by an affiliate of the Gallup organization for the U.S. government.

(Glenn Garvin, Washington Times, A1)

U.S. EMBASSY IN TOKYO ATTACKED BY MISSILES, NO DAMAGE REPORTED

Two missiles were fired at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo today but did not cause any damage, police at the mission told Reuters.

Japan's Jiji Press news agency said the Imperial Palace also was attacked but did not give details. Police at the embassy said the missiles were fired from a car.

(Reuter)

U.S. Embassy/Japan

TOKYO -- Home-made bombs were fired at the U.S. Embassy and the Imperial Palace Tuesday, and one projectile exploded 500 yards from Emperor Hirohito's living quarters, police said. No injuries were reported.

At least three bombs fashioned from cans were fired at the Imperial Palace and another three were aimed at the U.S. Embassy building about 1 p.m. (11 p.m. EST Monday).

Three rockets were fired from a car parked outside the U.S. Embassy at the same time, one landing near the main entrance of the gate, a second in the embassy's inner courtyard, police said. The whereabouts of the third rocket fired at the embassy had not been established. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage, the police spokesman said.

(UPI)

BASES ACCORD WITH TURKEY ELUDES SHULTZ

ANKARA -- U.S. officials said today that Secretary Shultz, who met renewed Turkish pressure today for increased economic assistance, is not expected to reach a new agreement on American bases here during his visit ending Tuesday.

Turkey seeks economic concessions in parallel with talks on the U.S. basing agreement, which technically expired last year. Both sides emphasized that the expired accord remains in force.

(Joanne Omang, Washington Post, A11)

SALE TO SAUDIS LOSES CRITIC

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee has told the Administration that it will not actively oppose President Reagan's proposed \$354 million sale of advanced missiles to Saudi Arabia, AIPAC sources and Administration officials said yesterday.

(John Goshko, Washington Post, A7)

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NATIONAL NEWS

HOUSE MONEY BILL IS "VETO BAIT," BUDGET DIRECTOR MILLER ASSERTS

President Reagan's budget director yesterday described as "veto bait" an omnibus appropriations bill that the House Democratic leadership is eyeing as a vehicle for any compromise on aid to the rebels in Nicaragua.

"All the cats and dogs make this bill totally unacceptable.... This is so loaded down it is veto bait," OMB Director Miller said in an interview.

(Helen Dewar, Washington Post, A7)

CIVIL RIGHTS CHIEF BOOSTS SALARY, OTHER PAY

Clarence Pendleton has turned his part-time post as chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights into a nearly full time job that paid him \$67,344 last year, although that amounts to less than half his income from outside ventures.

That is among the findings in an unreleased GAO report that found widespread mismanagement at the commission. The report also said that political groups, oil companies, television networks and other sources improperly paid some of Pendleton's travel.

(Howard Kurtz, Washington Post, A1)

HINCKLEY REQUEST FOR NEW PRIVILEGES DENIED

A federal judge rejected yesterday a request by presidential assailant John Hinckley that he be transferred to a less restrictive ward at St. Elizabeths Hospital and be allowed to leave the hospital grounds by himself one day each month for downtown visits.

(Karlyn Barker, Washington Post, A4)

MARCOS LEAVES HONOLULU AIR FORCE BASE

HONOLULU -- Deposed president Marcos moved from his heavily guarded bungalow on Hickam Air Force Base into Honolulu last night, U.S. officials said. Marcos and his wife and a small party left the base, on the outskirts of Honolulu, and apparently are moving into a private residence.

(Reuter)

BUSH: SOME VIEWS DIFFER FROM REAGAN'S

Vice President Bush said yesterday that he has "some differences with the people and approaches" of the Reagan Administration but that he would not publicize them just to satisfy those who question his independence and integrity as a political figure.

"I know the insatiable desire to know where I differ with [President] Reagan," he said in an interview with Washington Post, but he added that he would not follow the 1980 example of former vice president Mondale in specifying his differences with the president under whom he served.

(David Broder, Washington Post, A5)

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SUBS MAY BE DRY-DOCKED

A top-level White House group is expected to endorse today temporarily dry-docking two Poseidon nuclear submarines for as long as a year rather than ordering them dismantled in May as required by the SALT II treaty, according to informed sources.

Under a plan that appears to have support throughout the normally argumentative arms-control community, the submarines could be refurbished and returned to patrols after one year, depending on the arms-control situation and Soviet missile levels at that point, sources said.

(Walter Pincus, Washington Post, A7)

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NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Monday Evening, March 24, 1986)

U.S./LIBYAN CONFRONTATION

CBS's Dan Rather: Combat over, on and around the Gulf of Sidra today.

U.S. Navy jets flew into airspace Libya's Muammar Kaddafi says is his. They were fired on. Three attacks; a total of six Soviet-made missiles fired by the Libyans, but apparently they all missed. Then Navy jets retaliated against the land-based missile sites. They also attacked two Libyan ships, at least one last seen on fire and sinking. U.S. officials said there were no American casualties, no U.S. planes or ships reported hit. They also say "this is not war."

(ALL NETS LEAD)

CBS's Bill Plante: Administration officials tell CBS News tonight that they knew from the beginning that Libya would probably fire on U.S. forces because of the U.S. plan to come so close to Libya's 12-mile limit. Nevertheless, the White House spokesman was maintaining today that the U.S. was not looking for a fight.

(Larry Speakes: "This was not an act designed to provoke a response or humiliate Kaddafi. The exercise was one among many in a global program in support of the traditional maritime rights, which if we do not assert from time to time, tend to be eroded and encroached upon.")

At this point, sources say they do not know how much damage the Navy inflicted on the surface-to-air missile battery, or whether any of the Soviet advisers who are normally present at those missile batteries were in fact there. The White House intends to continue the same pattern of activity now for at least several more days. "If they shoot missiles, we'll take them out", said one official. "If they send up planes, we'll shoot them down." No dissent from that policy was reported when Congressional leaders met with staff members here this afternoon, though some individual congressmen are reportedly upset. The White House has 48 hours to report to Congress under the War Powers Act.

Rather: How far is President Reagan prepared to go with this, and why this hard-line stance just now?

Plante: They say it's because the U.S. wants to exercise its right of passage; to make its point. It also has to do with the projection of American power, to impress the Soviets and the rest of the world.

CBS's David Martin reports from the Pentagon that American warplanes were seen this morning, as they took off from the Saratoga, and two other aircraft carriers, triggering a chain of events in the Gulf of Sidra, which led to the most violent confrontation yet between the U.S. and Libya's Muammar Kaddafi. U.S. officials said Kaddafi got the worst of it.

(TV: U.S. Aircraft taking off.)

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Martin continues:

The Libyans fired two long-range anti-aircraft missiles at American planes, which had crossed below Kaddafi's so-called line of death, into the disputed waters of the Gulf of Sidra. The planes were out of range and the missiles fell harmlessly into the sea. Libya also sent out jet fighters toward the American fleet, but they were intercepted. At 12:45 p.m., the Libyan anti-aircraft battery at Sirte fired three more missiles at U.S. planes. At 1:14 p.m. the Sirte battery fired one more missile. At 2:36 p.m., it is now evening in the Gulf of Sidra, and the U.S. aircraft fired two anti-ship missiles at a Libyan missile patrol boat near the line of death. Secretary Weinberger and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William Crowell arrived at the White House at 2:30 p.m. for a meeting. At 3:06 p.m. U.S. planes fired two missiles, which homed in on the radar signals emitted by the Libyan SA-5 missile site. According to Secretary Weinberger, the site was destroyed. At 4:19 p.m., U.S. warplanes hit a second missile patrol boat as it headed toward the fleet. Pentagon officials are now preparing for the possibility that Kaddafi will attempt to retaliate for these strikes by ordering new terrorist attacks against the U.S. For that reason, bodyguards have been assigned to both the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations.

Rather: What is it now that the Defense Department now expects to happen?

David: We have exercises that continue until April 1, and they will continue going into the area of the Gulf of Sidra, and not only with airplanes but also with surface ships. As Larry Speakes said during his White House briefing, the Pentagon now considers any approaching Libyan aircraft or ships to be hostile. That means the rules of engagement have been changed. No longer does the U.S. have to be fired on before they can fire back. All they need to see is what they believe to be a hostile intent. So obviously, the potential for further violence is very high.

CBS's Doug Tunnell reports from Libya that the Kaddafi-controlled TV news tonight gave Libya's version of the story; reporting what amounts to a Libyan military victory, and claiming an American attack on a civilian target. The Libyan broadcast said Libyan forces shot down two American warplanes at midday today, and a third this evening. Then, the broadcast claimed, American forces rocketed the town of Sirte. But from Kaddafi, no comment.

(TV: Kaddafi among cheering Libyans.)

His so-called "line of death" has proved a popular P.R. line among his people, and his policy of standing up to America has brought fellow Arabs flocking to Tripoli to stand beside Kaddafi; his stature at home and abroad among Arabs enhanced by an American armada off the coast. Few here have any illusions about the military superiority of the American fleet. Security has been bolstered here at the barracks in Tripoli where Kaddafi spends most of his time. However misguided the missile, Kaddafi has kept his promise to fight along the line of death. And what had been a long war of words with America has rapidly turned into something else.

Rather: Doug, how do you assess the mood tonight in Tripoli?

Tunnell: Libya's capital, Green Square, is lit up almost like a carnival. The harbor is also quiet; you can just barely make out the lights on a Soviet cruiser. There are no great signs of tension here, or of eminent danger.

Rather: Any indication that any Soviets were injured or killed in today's action?

Tunnell: Absolutely none. No reports of any casualties, Soviet or Libyan.

ABC's Peter Jennings: American military maneuvers off the coast of Libya. The Libyans attack; the U.S. strikes back. It's been a long time in the making, and it finally happened. The U.S. and Libya have been shooting at each other. No Americans have been hurt. No American plane or ship has been damaged. The Libyans have not been so fortunate. The fighting began today in the Gulf of Sidra, off the Libyan coast. By the end of today, the United States had attacked the Libyan mainland.

ABC's Steve Sheperd: Carrier-based Navy fighters came under fire this morning from two long-range SA-5 Soviet-built missiles based at Sirte, on the central Libyan coast. They both missed by a distance of miles. Shortly thereafter, two Libyan MiG-25s were intercepted by U.S. fighters, as the MiGs approached the U.S. fleet. They were driven off without a shot being fired. That was followed by another launch of two SA-5s from Sirte, which again missed. That was enough hostile fire for U.S. forces, and a counterstrike was ordered. An A-7 attack aircraft off the U.S.S. Saratoga fired two high-speed anti-radiation missiles. The missiles -- designed to home in on enemy radar -- destroyed the radar units controlling the SA-5s in Sirte, effectively eliminating 12 missile batteries. There are no reports about casualties in the missile site; there is some concern about possible Soviet losses. Russians were not believed to be operating the missiles, but have been in the area, conducting training. At about the same time as the attack on Sirte, an A-6 attack plane off the U.S.S. America fired two harpoon anti-ship missiles, at a Libyan fast-attack missile patrol boat. The boat was hit, caught fire, and was last seen sinking. There were no apparent survivors. Another missile boat, this one operating out of Benghazi, was also attacked and damaged, but just how seriously has not been determined. There were no U.S. losses of any kind in today's action. In Washington late this afternoon, Secretary Weinberger strongly defended U.S. actions.

(Secretary Weinberger: "We were fired on and hostile acts committed by very lethal missiles while we were in international waters by Libyan forces, and we have responded.")

At the time of today's operation, U.S. ships and planes were operating south of what Libyan leader Kaddafi calls his line of death. A boundary enclosing the Gulf of Sidra. Kaddafi claims the gulf is Libyan territory, and has promised to defend it.

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Sheperd continues:

The U.S. and most other countries say the gulf is international water, and that everyone has a right to sail there. Five times this year, the U.S. Navy has conducted exercises off the coast of Libya. But this weekend marked the first time that the U.S. Navy ships and planes had crossed Kaddafi's line of death, and actually sailed into the Gulf of Sidra.

Jennings: As the action reportedly continued this afternoon, the President and his National Security advisors met at the White House. The policy for now, as they're apparently calling it, is limited retaliation.

ABC's Sam Donaldson: Press Secretary Larry Speakes, in announcing the U.S. retaliatory action, stressed that it was limited, surgical, and in response to Libyan attack.

(Speakes: "I can't characterize it as war. It was a peaceful, navigational exercise in international waters by the United States, that we went in not intending to make a provocation. Simply exercising our right to operate in international waters.")

Speakes denied that the point of the U.S. Naval exercise was, as some critics suspect, primarily to provoke Kaddafi to fire first, so as to give the U.S. an excuse to fire back.

(Speakes: "This was not an act designed to provoke a response or to humiliate Kaddafi. Our instructions to the fleet, and to those American servicemen that are operating with the fleet, that if they're fired upon or if they're attacked, then they are to defend themselves.")

Speakes said the Soviet Union was notified last week of the U.S. intention to conduct maneuvers in the area, but was not notified in advance today that the U.S. was going to take retaliatory action. He suggested the maneuvers -- and U.S. intention to fire back when fired upon -- would continue.

(Speakes: "We now consider all approaching Libyan forces to have hostile intent.")

Congressional leaders were briefed at the White House this afternoon on the action, and the first ones to comment, approved.

(Rep. Michel: "I think we're certainly within our rights to cross over that line, and do what we did.")

(Sen. Warner: "Our planes came under attack, clearly without any provocation by the U.S. armed forces. The President made the correct decision.")

Whether the U.S. Naval exercise was designed in the hope of provoking Kaddafi or not, it is no secret that the President has been looking for a way to punish the Libyan leader. And it is also no secret here tonight that U.S. officials are delighted that today, Kaddafi had his nose bloodied.

ABC's Barrie Dunsmore: The significance of hitting this target includes several points. It is Kaddafi's home town; it's a strategic point along the gulf, where Kaddafi is said to have a command submarine constantly there on standby. As long as the confrontation with the U.S. doesn't get totally out of hand, Kaddafi stands to gain from standing up to the American giant.

NBC's Tom Brokaw: The United States and Libya are approaching a state of war tonight. It began early this morning, when Libya began firing Soviet-made surface-to-air missiles at American military planes, operating over the Gulf of Sidra past what Kaddafi calls the line of death. And that touched off some pitched battles. The Libyans fired six missiles, in all, in three separate incidents, according to U.S. officials. All of them missed. Then the U.S. struck back. A U.S. Navy attack plane took out a Libyan missile patrol boat approaching U.S. forces in the area. Then, another Navy plane attacked a Libyan missile base at Sirte, knocking it out. Finally, another Libyan patrol boat was hit and stopped in the northeast corner of the gulf.

NBC's Fred Francis reports that the American retaliation came out of the Mediterranean darkness. Pentagon officials said they expect the Libyan Air Force -- which is grounded at night -- to respond at dawn. At the White House, spokesman Larry Speakes left no doubt that what the U.S. reaction would be.

(Speakes: "Because of these numerous Libyan missile launches, and indications that they intend to continue air and missile attacks on U.S. forces, we now consider all approaching Libyan forces to have hostile intent.")

(Secretary Weinberger: "After hostile attacks have been committed, then you don't take any risks or wait until you're fired on six or eight more times when real damage could be done.")

Secretary Weinberger insists that this is still just an exercise, but with three aircraft carriers, 27 warships and 240 warplanes in the area, this is clearly a very limited, and maybe a lopsided war with Libya going on just now. They do expect a Libyan response in the morning; the Libyans have MiG-25s, a very formidable jet fighter, but they are outgunned by the Sixth Fleet and all those warplanes.

NBC's Bonnie Anderson reports from Libya that Libyan armed forces claimed that three U.S. aircraft were shot down, but the broadcast did not mention the American retaliatory attack. A later radio broadcast called on Arab countries to destroy all American interests and everything American. Libya might respond to today's events with terrorism, as its armed forces are no match for the Sixth Fleet.

Brokaw: So far, congressional reaction to the U.S. military moves has been largely supportive of the Administration.

(Sen. Thurmond: "It seems to me that when our country is pursuing a course that we have a right to pursue, and we're fired upon by the biggest terrorists in the world, it seems to me that we ought to stand together.")

(Sen. Proxmire: "We have to assert the fact that international waters remain international; that we're going to sail in them; we're not going to be intimidated -- certainly not by a tinhorn dictator like Kaddafi.")

(Sen. Warner: "The President made the correct decision, protecting the lives of American service personnel.")

Speaker O'Neill also said the actions were justified, but the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Dante Fascell, said they do raise serious questions. Fascell said the Administration failed to consult Congress about these actions.

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Brokaw: After all these rhetorical confrontations with Kaddafi, why now on this military showdown?

NBC's Andrea Mitchell: reports that this was planned for months, ever since Kaddafi declared in December that that was the "line of death." The only question was when to do it. There were reasons in the region. Kaddafi has been putting increasing pressure on the Sudan; he has also been putting pressure on Chad. And also, the U.S. really wanted to make a show of force to show that this country would not be intimidated by Kaddafi.

Brokaw: Isn't there concern, however, that Kaddafi will touch off still another wave of terrorism in the world?

Mitchell: There is, and our embassies around the world have been put on alert to watch out for any possible signs of terrorism.

Brokaw: What have we said to the Soviets?

Mitchell: We filed the formal notification, but we also went through the diplomatic channels to draw attention to that notification of our exercises. And I'm told there have been some very tough warnings to the Soviets in recent days that their support of Kaddafi was going to lead to trouble.

COMMENTARY

George Will: Episodes like this remind Americans of what they buy with their defense budget. They buy, among other things, aircraft carriers.... Symbols of America's status as a superpower.... They enable the U.S. to project power around the world.... As this episode demonstrates, only the U.S. can do it, and without an international policeman, there is no international law.... An episode like this enables the United States to ... puncture these hot-air balloons. (ABC-2)

NICARAGUANS IN HONDURAS

Rather: A Nicaraguan fighting force of approximately 1500 is reported to have crossed the border into Honduras during the past 24 hours. The report of this Sandinista armed foray into Honduras comes from U.S. intelligence sources, contacted by CBS News after some of President Reagan's aides began telling journalists and congressmen that the Sandinistas have made a move. No official indication of exactly what the U.S. believes this force may be up to. (CBS-2)

Jennings: Reports in Washington and from Central America tonight say the Sandinista government in Nicaragua has sent a large number of troops across the border into Honduras to search for contra forces operating in the area.

ABC's Peter Collins reports that today the Sandinistas and contras are engaged in the heaviest fighting ever to break out in Honduran territory between the contras and Sandinistas. As many as 2,000 Sandinista troops have crossed from Nicaragua and penetrated 15 to 20 miles inside Honduras. They have surrounded two contra base camps out of the half dozen in this pocket of Honduran territory. One of these Sandinista targets is a training area for young recruits. U.S. intelligence sources say this camp was assaulted four times over the weekend. The Honduran government, which does not admit that the contra camps are on its territory, denies there is any fighting.

(ABC-7)

Brokaw: A senior Administration official said that the U.S. has received reports of a large-scale crossing of the Honduran border by Nicaraguan troops. The official said that these reports are incomplete and unconfirmed, but there are indications that it was the largest incursion ever by Nicaragua into Honduras.

(NBC-2)

SAKHAROV ON SDI

Jennings reports that Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov said it's impossible to create a dependable system, and it could only be tested in all-out nuclear war. That will satisfy some people in the Kremlin. (ABC-4)

REAGANS ON U.S.S.R.

Jennings: ABC's Barbara Walters has just had a long conversation with the President and the First Lady. Among the topics discussed were U.S.-Soviet relations, and the President's long-held views about Soviet behavior.

ABC's Barbara Walters: (to President): A few years ago, you said that the Soviet Union was the "evil empire," that it was our greatest threat to peace. Do you still think it is, or is it something else?

(President: "Well, I have tactfully tried to quiet down now, because we are trying to talk and arrive at some agreements. I do not regret at all saying those things.")

Walters: Still think they're the greatest to peace?

President: "Yes -- until by deed, not alone word -- they prove that they are willing to get along in the world with countries that have other systems and other forms of government." (ABC-6)

HINCKLEY

Rather: John Hinckley, the man who shot President Reagan and three other people five years ago this month, today was back in court. Hinckley argued that he is no longer mentally ill. He told the judge he was entitled to less supervision and one day a month outside the mental hospital on his own. Motion denied. (CBS-5; ABC-8; NBC-7)

EDITORIALS/COLUMNISTS

NICARAGUA/HOUSE VOTE ON CONTRA AID

Contra Votes -- "The contra war is dirty. It is little. It has to be bolstered by diplomacy as well as defensive weapons. The contras are the only effective argument given the Sandinistas, and they are the best argument against the Democrats' approach: If there is anything worse than a 'dirty little war,' it is a dirty big war that aid to the contras would have avoided."

(Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3/23)

Check On The Contras -- "There will be 'contra' aid eventually. Despite last week's defeat of President Reagan's \$100 million aid request in the House of Representatives, something more than the considerable moral support of the White House will emerge in a conference compromise after the Senate lines up on the issue this week, presumably on the President's side.... The fact is, once again the President has suffered a tactical defeat and must turn to more poised Republican allies in the Senate to recoup. Over to them."

(Christian Science Monitor, 3/24)

Wisdom At Work -- "The House showed wisdom and courage in voting down President Reagan's request for \$100 million in aid for anti-government rebels in Nicaragua, the contras. Now the 222-member majority that stalled the Administration's covert war against the Sandinistas must make sure that Reagan does not undermine efforts by the Latin American allies to resolve the Central American crisis through negotiations. It took courage for the House members, who are facing an election later this year, to resist the crude redbaiting and falsehoods that Reagan and his surrogates used to try to stampede the contra aid through Congress.... The best hope for bringing peace to Central America in the short run, and more democracy in the long run, is to let the Contadora Group go about its important work without U.S. interference." (Los Angeles Times, 3/21)

The House Votes No -- "The \$100 million would have been more than wasted money. Approving the request would have given the President a dangerous aura of invincibility. He would have had every right to intercept an affirmative vote as giving him broad authority to pursue a war in Central America.... It is sad to see the debate on this issue revolve around who supports communism and who opposes it. For in reality, the divisions have less to do with ideology than with poverty vs. wealth. Central America will not be immunized against communism by an injection of U.S. arms. It will be by economic assistance geared toward development in the private and public sectors." (Hartford Courant, 3/21)

House Democrats Cheer One Small Step For Tyranny -- "The cheer that House Democrats gave the vote against aid to those fighting for freedom in Nicaragua will echo for months, possibly years.... In the meantime, thousands of refugees wait outside Nicaragua for some faint hope of freedom. Nicaraguan leaders whose vision for decades has been democracy endure the deprivation of abandonment by the only country capable of making their dream come true."

(Dayton Journal Herald, 3/22)

Editorials/Columnists (continued)

The Contra Battle Goes On -- "It was a fracas that never should have happened. Support for the contras should have been covert. And the Administration should have been given the discretion to provide it without having to put President Reagan on television to plead his case."

(Chicago Tribune, 3/24)

Time Out For Nicaragua -- "America's leaders last week gained another chance to liberate their policy from simplistic analogies. Nicaragua's gained another chance to escape discredited dogma. There is no need for another war of intervention or cycle of tyranny to prove the verdict of recent history: this hemisphere's future belongs to democrats."

(New York Times, 3/23)

Did The Sky Just Fall? -- "If we are fortunate, the 'non-partisan' House, having chastened the Republican President, will devise some compromise of its own, arm the contras, and arrest America's incontinent and feckless descent. But we may be unfortunate. As Saul Bellow once remarked, 'a great deal of intelligence can be invested in ignorance when the need for illusion is deep.'"

(Washington Times, 3/21)

Try Again -- "President Reagan and the contras lost yesterday. But President Reagan's policy of giving insurgent Nicaraguans what they need to liberate their country is still the only credible option. Odds are, Congress will eventually agree if Mr. Reagan persists, as we know he will."

(San Diego Union, 3/21)

Not A Penny For The Contras -- "Perhaps by next month, when the U.S. House again takes up the matter of aid to the contra rebels in Nicaragua, some of the stench will have lifted from the unedifying debate. The level of hyperbole and misinformation that have accompanied President Reagan's proposal is rare even for Washington. It would be justice deserved if the shrillness of the campaign was in part responsible for the proposal's defeat in the House yesterday.... Give the homegrown Contadora peace process a chance. Give not a penny to the contras." (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 3/21)

Nicaragua Problem Just Won't Go Away -- "All Reagan sought -- and will continue to seek -- is aid for Nicaraguan rebels who risk their lives to reclaim a revolution betrayed. They face an uphill struggle, under the best of circumstances. Now some will die -- unnecessarily -- because Congress denied them aid."

(New York Post, 3/21)

Latin Policy Vacuum -- "The United States, however, cannot afford to act on the basis of bruised political feelings. Somehow, it has to find a way to define its own interests, decide how to achieve them and stick to a bipartisan course of action that Latin democracies can depend on."

(Baltimore Sun, 3/21)

Editorials/Columnists (continued)

What Foreign Policy Now? -- "In the end, the biggest problem of Congressional control of foreign policy will be that it forces the nation to extremes. Congress has insisted that any military initiative be the subject of a massive public spectacle. Congress has vetoed aiding the contras willing to fight on their own against the Nicaraguan communists. Congress is vetoing all the options except surrender or invasion. We must all wait to see what Commander in Chief O'Neill and Secretary Barnes decide when that choice can no longer be postponed." (Wall Street Journal, 3/21)

Round Two -- "Some of us think that the Latin negotiating route, which includes the use of economic, political and diplomatic pressure, offers a better answer than military action, but it is undeniable that to date diplomacy remains a paper project." (Washington Post, 3/21)

Reagan, Senate Toughness Needed On Aid To Contras -- "We won't go so far as to label Thursday's House defeat of aid for Nicaraguan rebels a dark day in Congress or a victory for those tolerant of communist consolidation. We must say, however, that the choice by 222 House members to delay, obstruct and equivocate -- in the absence of a definable alternative -- is the behavior of the ostrich.... Aid to the contras sends such a strong message to Managua that it might prevent the use of American troops. Further delays imposed by Congress weaken the contras and encourage Soviet and Nicaraguan adventurism." (Atlanta Journal, 3/21)

Put Away The Megaphone On Guns For The Contras -- "Is bloodying the Sandinistas' noses the only object? Are the contras the only answer? The House stuck its doubts last week. It was a bright day for democracy. Will the Senate -- will the President -- see the light?" (Philadelphia Inquirer, 3/23)

Common Sense Wins Out Over A Mistaken Aid Package -- "It was a mistake for Mr. Reagan to have made Thursday's vote such a litmus test of patriotism. Moreover, it was a gross tactical error to have offered his artless compromise at the eleventh hour because it was seen for exactly what it was: a deal that would save face for the president and allow the mugwumps to appear gung-ho and cautious at the same time. It is clear that some members of the House bought the deal to escape the wrath of the President and the real or imagined outrage of their constituencies." (Detroit Free Press, 3/21)

The Reagan Doctrine -- "To survivors of the Argentine or Brazilian or Chilean torture chambers, Reagan's attempt to take credit for the 'democratic revolution' sweeping across this continent must appear the height of cynicism. The American people do believe in human rights and do oppose tyranny in all its forms; they deserve a government that acts on those beliefs." (Boston Globe, 3/22)



News Summary

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 1986 -- 6 a.m. EST EDITION
TODAY'S HEADLINES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

U.S./Libya -- American warplanes knocked out a Libyan missile site and disabled two guided-missile patrol boats on Monday after Libya fired at least six missiles at U.S. jets operating below Khadafy's "line of death" in the Gulf of Sidra, Administration officials said.

(Washington Post, Washington Times, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Baltimore Sun, AP, UPI)

Military Sources Say 1,000 Sandinistas Trapped In Honduras -- About 1,000 Nicaraguan soldiers chased hundreds of U.S.-backed rebels from Nicaraguan territory into southern Honduras and were trapped Monday about 12 miles inside the country, military sources said.

(Washington Post, Washington Times, AP, UPI)

U.S. Embassy In Tokyo Attacked By Missiles, No Damage Reported -- Two missiles were fired at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo today but did not cause any damage, police at the mission told Reuters.

(Reuter, AP)

NATIONAL NEWS

Civil Rights Chief Boosts Salary, Other Pay -- Clarence Pendleton has turned his part-time post as chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights into a nearly full time job that paid him \$67,344 last year, although that amounts to less than half his income from outside ventures.

(Washington Post)

NETWORK NEWS (Monday Evening)

U.S./LIBYA -- Combat over, on and around the Gulf of Sidra today.

NICARAGUANS IN HONDURAS -- A Nicaraguan fighting force of approximately 1500 is reported to have crossed the border into Honduras.

HINCKLEY -- John Hinckley today was back in court.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

U.S. PLANES RETALIATE FOR LIBYAN ATTACK

U.S. warplanes yesterday attacked a Libyan antiair craft site and two guided missile patrol boats after Libya fired at least four SA5 missiles at Navy aircraft that had crossed "the line of death" drawn by Muammar Qaddafi across the Gulf of Sidra, White House and Defense Department officials announced.

On Capitol Hill, there was generally bipartisan support for the U.S. raid. Neither White House nor Pentagon officials described the incidents as acts of war, and there was little immediate reaction from U.S. allies and adversaries abroad.

(George Wilson, Washington Post, A1)

U.S., Citing Libyan Fire, Reports Attacking Missile Sites And Setting 2 Ships Ablaze

American and Libyan forces clashed today in and around the disputed waters off the Libyan coast.

Pentagon officials said three American ships penetrated to a point within 40 miles of the Libyan coast -- more than halfway into the Gulf of Sidra but well outside the 12-mile limit recognized by the United States.

(Bernard Weinraub, New York Times, A1)

U.S. Strikes Libyan Mainland After Missile Attack On Navy Jets As Mediterranean Conflict Escalates

The U.S. conflict with Libya seriously escalated as Navy jet fighters for the first time attacked a military site on the Libyan mainland.

If the U.S. doesn't carry attacks further and Col. Qadhafi doesn't prompt further action by trying to retaliate, Arab diplomats believe the U.S. attack may solidify the Libyan leader's position at home and certainly prompt a universal Arab condemnation of the U.S. actions.

(Frederick Kempe, Wall Street Journal, A3)

Libya, U.S. Duel In Gulf Of Sidra

U.S. naval aircraft operating over the disputed Gulf of Sidra yesterday attacked two missile-armed, high-speed Libyan patrol boats and a surface-to-air missile site on the coast of Libya after Libyan forces fired several Soviet-supplied missiles "without provocation" at U.S. warplanes, U.S. officials said.

(Robert Timberg & Vernon Guidry, Baltimore Sun, A1)

Weinberger Says Exercise Will Continue As Planned

U.S. Navy planes sank a Libyan patrol boat in the Gulf of Sidra, severely damaged another, and bombed an anti-aircraft missile site on the Libyan mainland yesterday.

"We're still doing what we said we were going to do," Secretary Weinberger said. "We'll continue to do it, and if anyone interferes with us, we'll take appropriate responsive action."

(Jeremiah O'Leary & Walter Andrews, Washington Times, A1)

U.S./Libya

U.S. warships patrolling the Gulf of Sidra today below Khadafy's self-proclaimed "line of death" are under orders to retaliate if attacked by Libyan forces, officials say.

"This was not an act to provoke a response or humiliate Khadafy," Larry Speakes said. Speakes said U.S. forces are prepared for further action. "Because of these numerous Libyan missile launches and indications that they intend to continue air and missile attacks on U.S. forces, we consider all approaching Libyan forces to have hostile intent," he said. (Richard Gross, UPI)

U.S./Libya

American warplanes knocked out a Libyan missile site and disabled two guided-missile patrol boats on Monday after Libya fired at least six missiles at U.S. jets operating below Khadafy's "line of death" in the Gulf of Sidra, Administration officials said.

Secretary Weinberger said the retaliatory strikes had been conducted without any loss of U.S. men or equipment, but Larry Speakes said "there are no apparent survivors" on one of the Libyan vessels, which he said normally carries a crew of 27. (Norman Black, AP)

LIBYA SAYS IT DOWNED 3 U.S. PLANES

Libya claimed yesterday to have shot down three U.S. warplanes that had violated the air space over its waters and, in a broadcast last night, threatening to "strike mercilessly" with its missiles against the American Sixth Fleet and "make the Mediterranean into a sea of fire."

In Washington, however, the Pentagon said no planes had been lost. (Richard Homan, Washington Post, A14)

LIBYA CALLS FOR ASSASSINATION OF AMERICANS

Libya, vowing revenge in the wake of its clashes with U.S. warplanes along Khadafy's "line of death," called today for the assassination of Americans "experts and consultants" throughout the Arab world.

The country went on full-scale alert and Libya radio said Khadafy's forces were organizing "suicide squads" to retaliate against America's "arrogance and haughtiness." (Al Webb, UPI)

Libya Calls For Execution Of American Spies In Arab Countries

LONDON -- Libyan Radio called today for the execution of Americans it said were "spies" posing as experts and consultants in Arab countries.

The radio, monitored by the BBC, said the whole Arab nation would soon be "racing toward the battlefield and crowding toward the war against America." (Reuter)

REAGAN DEFERS "JUDGEMENT CALL" TO MILITARY

President Reagan is keeping tabs on developments in the Mediterranean but any judgement call on further action against Libya is up to his military commanders, a White House spokesman says.

Reagan gave a broad go-ahead for U.S. naval maneuvers to cross Khadafy's "line of death" in the Gulf of Sidra 11 days before American and Libyan forces clashed, Larry Speakes told reporters.

(Helen Thomas, UPI)

TERRORISM PROVIDED CATALYST

Terrorist attacks on the Rome and Vienna airports last December and the installation of Soviet-built anti-aircraft missiles in Libya before that provided the catalyst for President Reagan to launch a military challenge to Muammar Qaddafi, Administration officials said yesterday.

The detailed planning for yesterday's action began shortly after the Dec. 27 airport attacks and was carried out with the expectation that Libya would strike at U.S. forces if they crossed Qaddafi's "line of death" in the Gulf of Sidra. Officials said the SA5A missile site at Surt had been targeted in advance for retaliation if Libyan had fired on American planes.

Although the White House claimed yesterday that the purpose of the naval exercise was solely to demonstrate freedom of navigation in an international waterway, officials said privately that the exercise was planned with a realization that it might provide a military confrontation with Qaddafi and a chance to underscore Reagan's determination to deal firmly with international terrorism.

(David Hoffman & Lou Cannon, Washington Post, A1)

HILL GIVES CAUTIOUS SUPPORT

Democratic leaders of the House and Senate last night supported the U.S. military action against Libya, but House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Dante Fascell (D-Fla) suggested President Reagan may have violated the War Powers Act by failing to consult with Congress in advance.

Tip O'Neill said Reagan was "on the right course." And Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va) agreed that the U.S. should respond militarily when fired upon in international waters.

"Based on the briefing given me at the White House, the American planes attacked by Libya today were on peaceful mission in international waters," said O'Neill in a prepared statement.

(Helen Dewar & Milton Coleman, Washington Post, A1)

In Divided Congress, Some Say U.S. Provoked Libya

Some congressional Democrats accused the Reagan Administration yesterday of needlessly provoking the attacks on U.S. warplanes over the Gulf of Sidra, but most lawmakers applauded the military's retaliation against the Libyans.

(Baltimore Sun, A1)

U.S. RAISES TERRORISM VIGILANCE

U.S. security officials reacted calmly to yesterday's events in the Gulf of Sidra, somewhat increasing their vigilance but otherwise continuing anti-terrorist measures implemented three years ago.

Sen. Patrick Leahy expressed concern that the confrontation might spark Libyan attempts to carry out terrorist actions in the United States.

(Mark Tapscott, Washington Times, A8)

OFFICIALS CERTAIN OF ATTACKS, BUT OTHER FACTS REMAIN UNCLEAR

The United States has "numerous corroborative evidence and sightings" that Libya had fired missiles at U.S. planes before the United States launched a retaliatory attack, Secretary Weinberger said yesterday.

Despite that note of certainty, several questions about yesterday's engagement remained unanswered last night.

(Fred Hiatt, Washington Post, A13)

SCHOLARS SAY U.S. ACTION SEEMS LEGAL

The U.S. government's assertion that most of the Gulf of Sidra consists of international waters where American vessels have the right to navigate and to defend themselves appears to be backed up by international legal opinion and precedent, legal scholars said last night.

These experts added that they would have to know more about the circumstances of yesterday's clash between U.S. and Libyan forces before they could say whether the United States had acted totally in accordance with international law.

(John Goshko, Washington Post, A14)

WHITE HOUSE EXPRESSES FULL CONFIDENCE IN WILSON

President Reagan has full confidence in William Wilson, his longtime friend and ambassador to the Vatican, the White House said yesterday, but it did not know in advance of a Wilson mission to Libya that drew a rebuke from Secretary Shultz.

Larry Speakes, who was unusually guarded yesterday in discussing Wilson's activities, said, "There were no authorized missions...either at the ambassadorial level or any other level" to Muammar Qaddafi in January, the time when Wilson traveled to Tripoli. Reagan learned of Wilson's trip "after the fact," Speakes said.

(Don Oberdorfer & Lou Cannon, Washington Post, A14)

NICARAGUANS SAID TO CROSS INTO HONDURAS

MEXICO CITY -- More than 1,000 Nicaraguan troops have crossed into Honduras to battle anti-Sandinista guerrillas, in the largest incursion into Honduran territory in the four-year-old conflict between Nicaragua and the rebels, according to diplomatic sources in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa.

Earlier today, in Washington, a senior Administration official said the United States had received preliminary reports of a major Nicaraguan incursion involving well over 1,000 Nicaraguan troops."

(Robert McCartney, Washington Post, A1)

Military Sources Say 1,000 Sandinistas Trapped In Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras -- About 1,000 Nicaraguan soldiers chased hundreds of U.S.-backed rebels from Nicaraguan territory into southern Honduras and were trapped Monday about 12 miles inside the country, military sources said.

Sources, speaking on condition they not be identified, said the Sandinista troops were trapped on Mount Capire after chasing the Contra rebels into Honduras on Sunday. They did not say how the Nicaraguan soldiers had been trapped or who had trapped them.

(Freddy Cuevas, AP)

Contras Pursued Into Honduras By Sandinista Troops

Two crack Sandinista battalions numbering 1,600 troops crossed the Honduran border in pursuit of anti-communist resistance forces on Saturday and have been engaged in heavy fighting for the past three days, intelligence sources said yesterday.

One of the 800-man Nicaraguan battalions was pinned down in a crossfire between two rebel forces totalling 1,500 men and seemed in danger of being mauled, according to one source.

(Roger Fontaine & James Morrison, Washington Times, A1)

Honduras/Nicaragua

A State Department official said Monday that up to 1,500 Nicaraguan troops had crossed into Honduras and President Reagan reportedly will ask Congress Tuesday for \$20 million in military aid to Honduras.

NBC News reported Monday night that Honduras formally asked the United States for military assistance, but White House officials refused to confirm or deny the reports.

ABC News "Nightline," citing congressional sources, reported early Tuesday that Reagan planned to send Congress a letter Tuesday requesting \$20 million in military aid to Honduras. (UPI)

Honduras/Nicaragua

A State Department official said Monday that up to 1,500 Nicaraguan troops had crossed into Honduras, but Honduran officials said they were unaware of such a crossing and Nicaragua denied it.

A senior Administration official, requesting anonymity, told reporters at the White House earlier there was a "report today of a very large Sandinista incursion into Honduras." (UPI)

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CONTRA BILL COMPROMISE SOUGHT

Senate Republican and Democratic leaders, seeking to avoid a bitter partisan fight and a close vote that could send a "wrong message" to Central America, urged a compromise yesterday on aid to the contras in Nicaragua.

The White House plan would allow immediate purchase of weapons, including portable surface-to-air missiles, not require direct negotiations between the Sandinistas and the U.S. government and permit Congress only an advisory vote on releasing the final \$75 million in aid.

(Milton Coleman & Lou Cannon, Washington Post, A9)

SANDINISTA REGIME IS THREAT, SAY NEIGHBORS

Four out of five Hondurans and Costa Ricans -- citizens of the two Central American countries that share borders with Nicaragua -- Believe that Nicaragua's Sandinista government is a military threat and should be toppled, according to a news poll, conducted by an affiliate of the Gallup organization for the U.S. government.

(Glenn Garvin, Washington Times, A1)

U.S. EMBASSY IN TOKYO ATTACKED BY MISSILES, NO DAMAGE REPORTED

Two missiles were fired at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo today but did not cause any damage, police at the mission told Reuters.

Japan's Jiji Press news agency said the Imperial Palace also was attacked but did not give details. Police at the embassy said the missiles were fired from a car. (Reuter)

U.S. Embassy/Japan

TOKYO -- Home-made bombs were fired at the U.S. Embassy and the Imperial Palace Tuesday, and one projectile exploded 500 yards from Emperor Hirohito's living quarters, police said. No injuries were reported.

At least three bombs fashioned from cans were fired at the Imperial Palace and another three were aimed at the U.S. Embassy building about 1 p.m. (11 p.m. EST Monday).

Three rockets were fired from a car parked outside the U.S. Embassy at the same time, one landing near the main entrance of the gate, a second in the embassy's inner courtyard, police said. The whereabouts of the third rocket fired at the embassy had not been established. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage, the police spokesman said.

(UPI)

BASES ACCORD WITH TURKEY ELUDES SHULTZ

ANKARA -- U.S. officials said today that Secretary Shultz, who met renewed Turkish pressure today for increased economic assistance, is not expected to reach a new agreement on American bases here during his visit ending Tuesday.

Turkey seeks economic concessions in parallel with talks on the U.S. basing agreement, which technically expired last year. Both sides emphasized that the expired accord remains in force.

(Joanne Omang, Washington Post, A11)

SALE TO SAUDIS LOSES CRITIC

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee has told the Administration that it will not actively oppose President Reagan's proposed \$354 million sale of advanced missiles to Saudi Arabia, AIPAC sources and Administration officials said yesterday.

(John Goshko, Washington Post, A7)

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NATIONAL NEWS

HOUSE MONEY BILL IS "VETO BAIT," BUDGET DIRECTOR MILLER ASSERTS

President Reagan's budget director yesterday described as "veto bait" an omnibus appropriations bill that the House Democratic leadership is eyeing as a vehicle for any compromise on aid to the rebels in Nicaragua.

"All the cats and dogs make this bill totally unacceptable.... This is so loaded down it is veto bait," OMB Director Miller said in an interview.

(Helen Dewar, Washington Post, A7)

CIVIL RIGHTS CHIEF BOOSTS SALARY, OTHER PAY

Clarence Pendleton has turned his part-time post as chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights into a nearly full time job that paid him \$67,344 last year, although that amounts to less than half his income from outside ventures.

That is among the findings in an unreleased GAO report that found widespread mismanagement at the commission. The report also said that political groups, oil companies, television networks and other sources improperly paid some of Pendleton's travel.

(Howard Kurtz, Washington Post, A1)

HINCKLEY REQUEST FOR NEW PRIVILEGES DENIED

A federal judge rejected yesterday a request by presidential assailant John Hinckley that he be transferred to a less restrictive ward at St. Elizabeths Hospital and be allowed to leave the hospital grounds by himself one day each month for downtown visits.

(Karlyn Barker, Washington Post, A4)

MARCOS LEAVES HONOLULU AIR FORCE BASE

HONOLULU -- Deposed president Marcos moved from his heavily guarded bungalow on Hickam Air Force Base into Honolulu last night, U.S. officials said. Marcos and his wife and a small party left the base, on the outskirts of Honolulu, and apparently are moving into a private residence.

(Reuter)

BUSH: SOME VIEWS DIFFER FROM REAGAN'S

Vice President Bush said yesterday that he has "some differences with the people and approaches" of the Reagan Administration but that he would not publicize them just to satisfy those who question his independence and integrity as a political figure.

"I know the insatiable desire to know where I differ with [President] Reagan," he said in an interview with Washington Post, but he added that he would not follow the 1980 example of former vice president Mondale in specifying his differences with the president under whom he served.

(David Broder, Washington Post, A5)

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SUBS MAY BE DRY-DOCKED

A top-level White House group is expected to endorse today temporarily dry-docking two Poseidon nuclear submarines for as long as a year rather than ordering them dismantled in May as required by the SALT II treaty, according to informed sources.

Under a plan that appears to have support throughout the normally argumentative arms-control community, the submarines could be refurbished and returned to patrols after one year, depending on the arms-control situation and Soviet missile levels at that point, sources said.

(Walter Pincus, Washington Post, A7)

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NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Monday Evening, March 24, 1986)

U.S./LIBYAN CONFRONTATION

CBS's Dan Rather: Combat over, on and around the Gulf of Sidra today.

U.S. Navy jets flew into airspace Libya's Muommar Kaddafi says is his. They were fired on. Three attacks; a total of six Soviet-made missiles fired by the Libyans, but apparently they all missed. Then Navy jets retaliated against the land-based missile sites. They also attacked two Libyan ships, at least one last seen on fire and sinking. U.S. officials said there were no American casualties, no U.S. planes or ships reported hit. They also say "this is not war."

(ALL NETS LEAD)

CBS's Bill Plante: Administration officials tell CBS News tonight that they knew from the beginning that Libya would probably fire on U.S. forces because of the U.S. plan to come so close to Libya's 12-mile limit. Nevertheless, the White House spokesman was maintaining today that the U.S. was not looking for a fight.

(Larry Speakes: "This was not an act designed to provoke a response or humiliate Kaddafi. The exercise was one among many in a global program in support of the traditional maritime rights, which if we do not assert from time to time, tend to be eroded and encroached upon.")

At this point, sources say they do not know how much damage the Navy inflicted on the surface-to-air missile battery, or whether any of the Soviet advisers who are normally present at those missile batteries were in fact there. The White House intends to continue the same pattern of activity now for at least several more days. "If they shoot missiles, we'll take them out", said one official. "If they send up planes, we'll shoot them down." No dissent from that policy was reported when Congressional leaders met with staff members here this afternoon, though some individual congressmen are reportedly upset. The White House has 48 hours to report to Congress under the War Powers Act.

Rather: How far is President Reagan prepared to go with this, and why this hard-line stance just now?

Plante: They say it's because the U.S. wants to exercise its right of passage; to make its point. It also has to do with the projection of American power, to impress the Soviets and the rest of the world.

CBS's David Martin reports from the Pentagon that American warplanes were seen this morning, as they took off from the Saratoga, and two other aircraft carriers, triggering a chain of events in the Gulf of Sidra, which led to the most violent confrontation yet between the U.S. and Libya's Muommar Kaddafi. U.S. officials said Kaddafi got the worst of it.
(TV: U.S. Aircraft taking off.)

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Martin continues:

The Libyans fired two long-range anti-aircraft missiles at American planes, which had crossed below Kaddafi's so-called line of death, into the disputed waters of the Gulf of Sidra. The planes were out of range and the missiles fell harmlessly into the sea. Libya also sent out jet fighters toward the American fleet, but they were intercepted. At 12:45 p.m., the Libyan anti-aircraft battery at Sirte fired three more missiles at U.S. planes. At 1:14 p.m. the Sirte battery fired one more missile. At 2:36 p.m., it is now evening in the Gulf of Sidra, and the U.S. aircraft fired two anti-ship missiles at a Libyan missile patrol boat near the line of death. Secretary Weinberger and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William Crowell arrived at the White House at 2:30 p.m. for a meeting. At 3:06 p.m. U.S. planes fired two missiles, which homed in on the radar signals emitted by the Libyan SA-5 missile site. According to Secretary Weinberger, the site was destroyed. At 4:19 p.m., U.S. warplanes hit a second missile patrol boat as it headed toward the fleet. Pentagon officials are now preparing for the possibility that Kaddafi will attempt to retaliate for these strikes by ordering new terrorist attacks against the U.S. For that reason, bodyguards have been assigned to both the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations.

Rather: What is it now that the Defense Department now expects to happen?

David: We have exercises that continue until April 1, and they will continue going into the area of the Gulf of Sidra, and not only with airplanes but also with surface ships. As Larry Speakes said during his White House briefing, the Pentagon now considers any approaching Libyan aircraft or ships to be hostile. That means the rules of engagement have been changed. No longer does the U.S. have to be fired on before they can fire back. All they need to see is what they believe to be a hostile intent. So obviously, the potential for further violence is very high.

CBS's Doug Tunnell reports from Libya that the Kaddafi-controlled TV news tonight gave Libya's version of the story; reporting what amounts to a Libyan military victory, and claiming an American attack on a civilian target. The Libyan broadcast said Libyan forces shot down two American warplanes at midday today, and a third this evening. Then, the broadcast claimed, American forces rocketed the town of Sirte. But from Kaddafi, no comment.

(TV: Kaddafi among cheering Libyans.)

His so-called "line of death" has proved a popular P.R. line among his people, and his policy of standing up to America has brought fellow Arabs flocking to Tripoli to stand beside Kaddafi; his stature at home and abroad among Arabs enhanced by an American armada off the coast. Few here have any illusions about the military superiority of the American fleet. Security has been bolstered here at the barracks in Tripoli where Kaddafi spends most of his time. However misguided the missile, Kaddafi has kept his promise to fight along the line of death. And what had been a long war of words with America has rapidly turned into something else.

Rather: Doug, how do you assess the mood tonight in Tripoli?

Tunnell: Libya's capital, Green Square, is lit up almost like a carnival. The harbor is also quiet; you can just barely make out the lights on a Soviet cruiser. There are no great signs of tension here, or of eminent danger.

Rather: Any indication that any Soviets were injured or killed in today's action?

Tunnell: Absolutely none. No reports of any casualties, Soviet or Libyan.

ABC's Peter Jennings: American military maneuvers off the coast of Libya. The Libyans attack; the U.S. strikes back. It's been a long time in the making, and it finally happened. The U.S. and Libya have been shooting at each other. No Americans have been hurt. No American plane or ship has been damaged. The Libyans have not been so fortunate. The fighting began today in the Gulf of Sidra, off the Libyan coast. By the end of today, the United States had attacked the Libyan mainland.

ABC's Steve Sheperd: Carrier-based Navy fighters came under fire this morning from two long-range SA-5 Soviet-built missiles based at Sirte, on the central Libyan coast. They both missed by a distance of miles. Shortly thereafter, two Libyan MiG-25s were intercepted by U.S. fighters, as the MiGs approached the U.S. fleet. They were driven off without a shot being fired. That was followed by another launch of two SA-5s from Sirte, which again missed. That was enough hostile fire for U.S. forces, and a counterstrike was ordered. An A-7 attack aircraft off the U.S.S. Saratoga fired two high-speed anti-radiation missiles. The missiles -- designed to home in on enemy radar -- destroyed the radar units controlling the SA-5s in Sirte, effectively eliminating 12 missile batteries. There are no reports about casualties in the missile site; there is some concern about possible Soviet losses. Russians were not believed to be operating the missiles, but have been in the area, conducting training. At about the same time as the attack on Sirte, an A-6 attack plane off the U.S.S. America fired two harpoon anti-ship missiles, at a Libyan fast-attack missile patrol boat. The boat was hit, caught fire, and was last seen sinking. There were no apparent survivors. Another missile boat, this one operating out of Benghazi, was also attacked and damaged, but just how seriously has not been determined. There were no U.S. losses of any kind in today's action. In Washington late this afternoon, Secretary Weinberger strongly defended U.S. actions.

(Secretary Weinberger: "We were fired on and hostile acts committed by very lethal missiles while we were in international waters by Libyan forces, and we have responded.")

At the time of today's operation, U.S. ships and planes were operating south of what Libyan leader Kaddafi calls his line of death. A boundary enclosing the Gulf of Sidra. Kaddafi claims the gulf is Libyan territory, and has promised to defend it.

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Sheperd continues:

The U.S. and most other countries say the gulf is international water, and that everyone has a right to sail there. Five times this year, the U.S. Navy has conducted exercises off the coast of Libya. But this weekend marked the first time that the U.S. Navy ships and planes had crossed Kaddafi's line of death, and actually sailed into the Gulf of Sidra.

Jennings: As the action reportedly continued this afternoon, the President and his National Security advisors met at the White House. The policy for now, as they're apparently calling it, is limited retaliation.

ABC's Sam Donaldson: Press Secretary Larry Speakes, in announcing the U.S. retaliatory action, stressed that it was limited, surgical, and in response to Libyan attack.

(Speakes: "I can't characterize it as war. It was a peaceful, navigational exercise in international waters by the United States, that we went in not intending to make a provocation. Simply exercising our right to operate in international waters.")

Speakes denied that the point of the U.S. Naval exercise was, as some critics suspect, primarily to provoke Kaddafi to fire first, so as to give the U.S. an excuse to fire back.

(Speakes: "This was not an act designed to provoke a response or to humiliate Kaddafi. Our instructions to the fleet, and to those American servicemen that are operating with the fleet, that if they're fired upon or if they're attacked, then they are to defend themselves.")

Speakes said the Soviet Union was notified last week of the U.S. intention to conduct maneuvers in the area, but was not notified in advance today that the U.S. was going to take retaliatory action. He suggested the maneuvers -- and U.S. intention to fire back when fired upon -- would continue.

(Speakes: "We now consider all approaching Libyan forces to have hostile intent.")

Congressional leaders were briefed at the White House this afternoon on the action, and the first ones to comment, approved.

(Rep. Michel: "I think we're certainly within our rights to cross over that line, and do what we did.")

(Sen. Warner: "Our planes came under attack, clearly without any provocation by the U.S. armed forces. The President made the correct decision.")

Whether the U.S. Naval exercise was designed in the hope of provoking Kaddafi or not, it is no secret that the President has been looking for a way to punish the Libyan leader. And it is also no secret here tonight that U.S. officials are delighted that today, Kaddafi had his nose bloodied.

ABC's Barrie Dunsmore: The significance of hitting this target includes several points. It is Kaddafi's home town; it's a strategic point along the gulf, where Kaddafi is said to have a command submarine constantly there on standby. As long as the confrontation with the U.S. doesn't get totally out of hand, Kaddafi stands to gain from standing up to the American giant.

NBC's Tom Brokaw: The United States and Libya are approaching a state of war tonight. It began early this morning, when Libya began firing Soviet-made surface-to-air missiles at American military planes, operating over the Gulf of Sidra past what Kaddafi calls the line of death. And that touched off some pitched battles. The Libyans fired six missiles, in all, in three separate incidents, according to U.S. officials. All of them missed. Then the U.S. struck back. A U.S. Navy attack plane took out a Libyan missile patrol boat approaching U.S. forces in the area. Then, another Navy plane attacked a Libyan missile base at Sirte, knocking it out. Finally, another Libyan patrol boat was hit and stopped in the northeast corner of the gulf.

NBC's Fred Francis reports that the American retaliation came out of the Mediterranean darkness. Pentagon officials said they expect the Libyan Air Force -- which is grounded at night -- to respond at dawn. At the White House, spokesman Larry Speakes left no doubt that what the U.S. reaction would be.

(Speakes: "Because of these numerous Libyan missile launches, and indications that they intend to continue air and missile attacks on U.S. forces, we now consider all approaching Libyan forces to have hostile intent.")

(Secretary Weinberger: "After hostile attacks have been committed, then you don't take any risks or wait until you're fired on six or eight more times when real damage could be done.")

Secretary Weinberger insists that this is still just an exercise, but with three aircraft carriers, 27 warships and 240 warplanes in the area, this is clearly a very limited, and maybe a lopsided war with Libya going on just now. They do expect a Libyan response in the morning; the Libyans have MiG-25s, a very formidable jet fighter, but they are outgunned by the Sixth Fleet and all those warplanes.

NBC's Bonnie Anderson reports from Libya that Libyan armed forces claimed that three U.S. aircraft were shot down, but the broadcast did not mention the American retaliatory attack. A later radio broadcast called on Arab countries to destroy all American interests and everything American. Libya might respond to today's events with terrorism, as its armed forces are no match for the Sixth Fleet.

Brokaw: So far, congressional reaction to the U.S. military moves has been largely supportive of the Administration.

(Sen. Thurmond: "It seems to me that when our country is pursuing a course that we have a right to pursue, and we're fired upon by the biggest terrorists in the world, it seems to me that we ought to stand together.")

(Sen. Proxmire: "We have to assert the fact that international waters remain international; that we're going to sail in them; we're not going to be intimidated -- certainly not by a tinhorn dictator like Kaddafi.")

(Sen. Warner: "The President made the correct decision, protecting the lives of American service personnel.")

Speaker O'Neill also said the actions were justified, but the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Dante Fascell, said they do raise serious questions. Fascell said the Administration failed to consult Congress about these actions.

Brokaw: After all these rhetorical confrontations with Kaddafi, why now on this military showdown?

NBC's Andrea Mitchell: reports that this was planned for months, ever since Kaddafi declared in December that that was the "line of death." The only question was when to do it. There were reasons in the region. Kaddafi has been putting increasing pressure on the Sudan; he has also been putting pressure on Chad. And also, the U.S. really wanted to make a show of force to show that this country would not be intimidated by Kaddafi.

Brokaw: Isn't there concern, however, that Kaddafi will touch off still another wave of terrorism in the world?

Mitchell: There is, and our embassies around the world have been put on alert to watch out for any possible signs of terrorism.

Brokaw: What have we said to the Soviets?

Mitchell: We filed the formal notification, but we also went through the diplomatic channels to draw attention to that notification of our exercises. And I'm told there have been some very tough warnings to the Soviets in recent days that their support of Kaddafi was going to lead to trouble.

COMMENTARY

George Will: Episodes like this remind Americans of what they buy with their defense budget. They buy, among other things, aircraft carriers.... Symbols of America's status as a superpower.... They enable the U.S. to project power around the world.... As this episode demonstrates, only the U.S. can do it, and without an international policeman, there is no international law.... An episode like this enables the United States to ... puncture these hot-air balloons. (ABC-2)

NICARAGUANS IN HONDURAS

Rather: A Nicaraguan fighting force of approximately 1500 is reported to have crossed the border into Honduras during the past 24 hours. The report of this Sandinista armed foray into Honduras comes from U.S. intelligence sources, contacted by CBS News after some of President Reagan's aides began telling journalists and congressmen that the Sandinistas have made a move. No official indication of exactly what the U.S. believes this force may be up to. (CBS-2)

Jennings: Reports in Washington and from Central America tonight say the Sandinista government in Nicaragua has sent a large number of troops across the border into Honduras to search for contra forces operating in the area.

ABC's Peter Collins reports that today the Sandinistas and contras are engaged in the heaviest fighting ever to break out in Honduran territory between the contras and Sandinistas. As many as 2,000 Sandinista troops have crossed from Nicaragua and penetrated 15 to 20 miles inside Honduras. They have surrounded two contra base camps out of the half dozen in this pocket of Honduran territory. One of these Sandinista targets is a training area for young recruits. U.S. intelligence sources say this camp was assaulted four times over the weekend. The Honduran government, which does not admit that the contra camps are on its territory, denies there is any fighting. (ABC-7)

Brokaw: A senior Administration official said that the U.S. has received reports of a large-scale crossing of the Honduran border by Nicaraguan troops. The official said that these reports are incomplete and unconfirmed, but there are indications that it was the largest incursion ever by Nicaragua into Honduras. (NBC-2)

SAKHAROV ON SDI

Jennings reports that Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov said it's impossible to create a dependable system, and it could only be tested in all-out nuclear war. That will satisfy some people in the Kremlin. (ABC-4)

REAGANS ON U.S.S.R.

Jennings: ABC's Barbara Walters has just had a long conversation with the President and the First Lady. Among the topics discussed were U.S.-Soviet relations, and the President's long-held views about Soviet behavior.

ABC's Barbara Walters: (to President): A few years ago, you said that the Soviet Union was the "evil empire," that it was our greatest threat to peace. Do you still think it is, or is it something else?

(President: "Well, I have tactfully tried to quiet down now, because we are trying to talk and arrive at some agreements. I do not regret at all saying those things.")

Walters: Still think they're the greatest to peace?

President: "Yes -- until by deed, not alone word -- they prove that they are willing to get along in the world with countries that have other systems and other forms of government." (ABC-6)

HINCKLEY

Rather: John Hinckley, the man who shot President Reagan and three other people five years ago this month, today was back in court. Hinckley argued that he is no longer mentally ill. He told the judge he was entitled to less supervision and one day a month outside the mental hospital on his own. Motion denied. (CBS-5; ABC-8; NBC-7)

EDITORIALS/COLUMNISTS

NICARAGUA/HOUSE VOTE ON CONTRA AID

Contra Votes -- "The contra war is dirty. It is little. It has to be bolstered by diplomacy as well as defensive weapons. The contras are the only effective argument given the Sandinistas, and they are the best argument against the Democrats' approach: If there is anything worse than a 'dirty little war,' it is a dirty big war that aid to the contras would have avoided." (Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3/23)

Check On The Contras -- "There will be 'contra' aid eventually. Despite last week's defeat of President Reagan's \$100 million aid request in the House of Representatives, something more than the considerable moral support of the White House will emerge in a conference compromise after the Senate lines up on the issue this week, presumably on the President's side.... The fact is, once again the President has suffered a tactical defeat and must turn to more poised Republican allies in the Senate to recoup. Over to them." (Christian Science Monitor, 3/24)

Wisdom At Work -- "The House showed wisdom and courage in voting down President Reagan's request for \$100 million in aid for anti-government rebels in Nicaragua, the contras. Now the 222-member majority that stalled the Administration's covert war against the Sandinistas must make sure that Reagan does not undermine efforts by the Latin American allies to resolve the Central American crisis through negotiations. It took courage for the House members, who are facing an election later this year, to resist the crude redbaiting and falsehoods that Reagan and his surrogates used to try to stampede the contra aid through Congress.... The best hope for bringing peace to Central America in the short run, and more democracy in the long run, is to let the Contadora Group go about its important work without U.S. interference." (Los Angeles Times, 3/21)

The House Votes No -- "The \$100 million would have been more than wasted money. Approving the request would have given the President a dangerous aura of invincibility. He would have had every right to intercept an affirmative vote as giving him broad authority to pursue a war in Central America.... It is sad to see the debate on this issue revolve around who supports communism and who opposes it. For in reality, the divisions have less to do with ideology than with poverty vs. wealth. Central America will not be immunized against communism by an injection of U.S. arms. It will be by economic assistance geared toward development in the private and public sectors." (Hartford Courant, 3/21)

House Democrats Cheer One Small Step For Tyranny -- "The cheer that House Democrats gave the vote against aid to those fighting for freedom in Nicaragua will echo for months, possibly years.... In the meantime, thousands of refugees wait outside Nicaragua for some faint hope of freedom. Nicaraguan leaders whose vision for decades has been democracy endure the deprivation of abandonment by the only country capable of making their dream come true." (Dayton Journal Herald, 3/22)

Editorials/Columnists (continued)

The Contra Battle Goes On -- "It was a fracas that never should have happened. Support for the contras should have been covert. And the Administration should have been given the discretion to provide it without having to put President Reagan on television to plead his case."

(Chicago Tribune, 3/24)

Time Out For Nicaragua -- "America's leaders last week gained another chance to liberate their policy from simplistic analogies. Nicaragua's gained another chance to escape discredited dogma. There is no need for another war of intervention or cycle of tyranny to prove the verdict of recent history: this hemisphere's future belongs to democrats."

(New York Times, 3/23)

Did The Sky Just Fall? -- "If we are fortunate, the 'non-partisan' House, having chastened the Republican President, will devise some compromise of its own, arm the contras, and arrest America's incontinent and feckless descent. But we may be unfortunate. As Saul Bellow once remarked, 'a great deal of intelligence can be invested in ignorance when the need for illusion is deep.'"

(Washington Times, 3/21)

Try Again -- "President Reagan and the contras lost yesterday. But President Reagan's policy of giving insurgent Nicaraguans what they need to liberate their country is still the only credible option. Odds are, Congress will eventually agree if Mr. Reagan persists, as we know he will."

(San Diego Union, 3/21)

Not A Penny For The Contras -- "Perhaps by next month, when the U.S. House again takes up the matter of aid to the contra rebels in Nicaragua, some of the stench will have lifted from the unedifying debate. The level of hyperbole and misinformation that have accompanied President Reagan's proposal is rare even for Washington. It would be justice deserved if the shrillness of the campaign was in part responsible for the proposal's defeat in the House yesterday.... Give the homegrown Contadora peace process a chance. Give not a penny to the contras." (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 3/21)

Nicaragua Problem Just Won't Go Away -- "All Reagan sought -- and will continue to seek -- is aid for Nicaraguan rebels who risk their lives to reclaim a revolution betrayed. They face an uphill struggle, under the best of circumstances. Now some will die -- unnecessarily -- because Congress denied them aid."

(New York Post, 3/21)

Latin Policy Vacuum -- "The United States, however, cannot afford to act on the basis of bruised political feelings. Somehow, it has to find a way to define its own interests, decide how to achieve them and stick to a bipartisan course of action that Latin democracies can depend on."

(Baltimore Sun, 3/21)

Editorials/Columnists (continued)

What Foreign Policy Now? -- "In the end, the biggest problem of Congressional control of foreign policy will be that it forces the nation to extremes. Congress has insisted that any military initiative be the subject of a massive public spectacle. Congress has vetoed aiding the contras willing to fight on their own against the Nicaraguan communists. Congress is vetoing all the options except surrender or invasion. We must all wait to see what Commander in Chief O'Neill and Secretary Barnes decide when that choice can no longer be postponed." (Wall Street Journal, 3/21)

Round Two -- "Some of us think that the Latin negotiating route, which includes the use of economic, political and diplomatic pressure, offers a better answer than military action, but it is undeniable that to date diplomacy remains a paper project." (Washington Post, 3/21)

Reagan, Senate Toughness Needed On Aid To Contras -- "We won't go so far as to label Thursday's House defeat of aid for Nicaraguan rebels a dark day in Congress or a victory for those tolerant of communist consolidation. We must say, however, that the choice by 222 House members to delay, obstruct and equivocate -- in the absence of a definable alternative -- is the behavior of the ostrich.... Aid to the contras sends such a strong message to Managua that it might prevent the use of American troops. Further delays imposed by Congress weaken the contras and encourage Soviet and Nicaraguan adventurism." (Atlanta Journal, 3/21)

Put Away The Megaphone On Guns For The Contras -- "Is bloodying the Sandinistas' noses the only object? Are the contras the only answer? The House stuck its doubts last week. It was a bright day for democracy. Will the Senate -- will the President -- see the light?" (Philadelphia Inquirer, 3/23)

Common Sense Wins Out Over A Mistaken Aid Package -- "It was a mistake for Mr. Reagan to have made Thursday's vote such a litmus test of patriotism. Moreover, it was a gross tactical error to have offered his artless compromise at the eleventh hour because it was seen for exactly what it was: a deal that would save face for the president and allow the mugwumps to appear gung-ho and cautious at the same time. It is clear that some members of the House bought the deal to escape the wrath of the President and the real or imagined outrage of their constituencies." (Detroit Free Press, 3/21)

The Reagan Doctrine -- "To survivors of the Argentine or Brazilian or Chilean torture chambers, Reagan's attempt to take credit for the 'democratic revolution' sweeping across this continent must appear the height of cynicism. The American people do believe in human rights and do oppose tyranny in all its forms; they deserve a government that acts on those beliefs." (Boston Globe, 3/22)