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News Summary

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 1987 -- 6 a.m. EDT EDITION

TODAY'S HEADLINES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Plan To Protect Kuwaiti Ships Postponed -- With congressional alarm rising, the Reagan Administration has put off for several weeks its plan to extend American military protection to Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. (Christian Science Monitor, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Washington Times, AP, Reuter, UPI)

IRAN-NICARAGUA

Former Ambassador To Costa Rica Describes Involvement In Contra Cause -- Lewis Tambs testified that when he began his job as U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica in July 1985 Oliver North instructed him to "open up the southern front" for the contras. (Los Angeles Times, USA Today, Washington Post, Copley, Newhouse, Scripps Howard)

NATIONAL NEWS

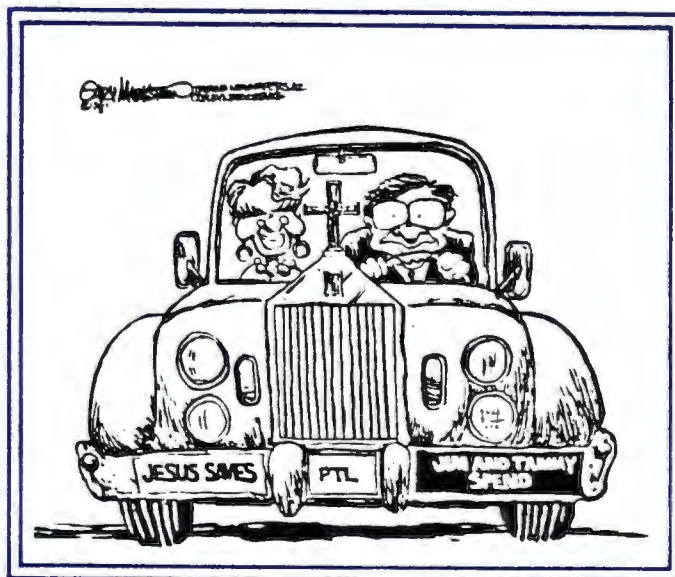
Reagan Moving Closer To Mandatory AIDS Testing -- President Reagan, armed with unanimous recommendations from his Cabinet, is moving toward publicly supporting expanded medical testing as part of a government strategy to curb the spread of AIDS. (Washington Times, UPI)

NETWORK NEWS (Thursday Evening)

PERSIAN GULF -- President Reagan and Congress are deeply divided on American policy in the Persian Gulf.

IRAN-CONTRA -- Lewis Tambs said he was ordered to use his post as ambassador to help the contras open a military front in Southern Nicaragua.

AIDS -- President Reagan is moving toward approval of a national AIDS testing program for some groups.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

TANKER ESCORT PLAN ENVISIONS CONVOYS Hill To Get Report On Gulf Situation

President Reagan will be presented with a military plan for protecting Kuwaiti tankers under the American flag in the Persian Gulf that envisions a convoy of three or four tankers being escorted under U.S. naval protection about every 10 days, Administration sources said.

Responding to criticism on Capitol Hill, Secretary Weinberger and National Security Adviser Carlucci told Senate leaders that the escorts will not begin for several weeks, allowing time for a report to Congress, which it has requested, before the convoys begin. Previously, the White House had said the escorts could begin as soon as next week.

After meeting with House and Senate leaders, the Administration agreed to comply with legislation that requires the report to Congress but stops short of invoking the War Powers Resolution, which would effectively give Congress a veto over future deployments.

The military plan, prepared in part by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also calls for the tankers to receive any necessary air protection from U.S. warplanes based on carriers outside the Gulf, the sources said. If this plan is accepted, there would be no need to ask Saudi Arabia to allow U.S. aircraft to use its airstrips to protect the ships, the sources said.

(David Hoffman & Don Oberdorfer, Washington Post, A1)

Reagan Plans To Ask Allies To Share Task Of Protecting Oil Tankers In Persian Gulf

President Reagan, responding to growing unhappiness in Congress about his plan to increase naval escorts in the Persian Gulf, intends to ask allies to share the task of protecting oil tankers.

In meetings with congressional Republicans, President Reagan promised to raise the issue of joint efforts to protect Gulf shipping at a summit meeting of leaders from seven industrialized nations in Venice, Italy, that starts June 8.

The Republican lawmakers had argued that Western Europe and Japan, which obtain a much larger percentage of their oil imports from the Persian Gulf than does the U.S., should share the cost and risk of protecting tankers from attacks stemming from the Iran-Iraq war. "There are a number of Republicans who expressed reservations about whatever our policy there may be, and particularly why we don't extract a sharing of responsibility from our allies," said Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole.

(Gerald Seib & Robert Greenberger, Wall Street Journal, A54)

Japan Disputes U.S. Tack In Gulf

Japanese government officials and policymakers show little enthusiasm for the Reagan Administration's approach to protecting shipping routes in the Persian Gulf.

Though Japan has greater dependence on oil coming out of the Gulf than does any other major industrial nation, Tokyo is cool to calls to back an expanded military patrol effort. Diplomatic efforts, Japanese officials believe, may prove more fruitful than a show of military strength that might antagonize Iran.

(Daniel Sneider, Christain Science Monitor, A1)

Republicans Ask Reagan To Charge Allies Fees For Escorting Tankers

Republican leaders, expressing reservations about U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf, asked President Reagan to charge allies a fee for escorting oil tankers through the volatile waterway.

At the same time, the White House negotiated an agreement with Speaker Jim Wright that the House would pass a resolution demanding information on U.S. military rules of engagement but would drop further calls for invocation of the War Powers Act.

In another development, Speaker Wright told reporters Saudi Arabia has agreed to provide radar intelligence information from its U.S.-built AWACS radar surveillance planes. (UPI)

Hill Demands To Know Plans For Gulf

Congressional leaders demanded an Administration explanation of U.S. military plans to protect Kuwaiti ships in the volatile Persian Gulf, with several lawmakers charging that President Reagan has kept Congress in the dark.

Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd called on the Administration to postpone making any new commitments in the Gulf until there has been a full report to Congress on the USS Stark incident and new U.S. military planning to protect naval forces in the region.

(Jennifer Spevacek, Washington Times, A6)

Shultz Requests Permission From Arab States To Use Landing Facilities

Secretary Shultz said the Administration has begun talking to Arab states about using their airfields for U.S. fighters protecting ships in the Persian Gulf.

Shultz...said he thought the idea of protecting ships in the volatile waterway with American planes based on carriers was expensive and probably economically unworkable.

In the past, the U.S. has asked several Arab countries, including Oman and Saudi Arabia, for landing rights, but they have refused because of political reasons.

"The situation has changed and they are looking at it again," Shultz said. (UPI)

Plan To Protect Kuwaiti Ships Postponed

With congressional alarm rising, the Reagan Administration has put off for several weeks its plan to extend American military protection to Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf, Pentagon officials and Sen. Sam Nunn said.

Iran's ambassador to the U.N., Said Rajaie-Khorassani, ...said the U.S. is "looking for trouble" by stepping up its military presence in the Gulf.

Secretary Shultz...said "the United States has no intention and will not get directly involved in the Iran-Iraq war." (Norman Black, AP)

Iranian President Says Tehran Will Confront Superpowers

LONDON -- Iranian President Ali Khamenei has said the U.S. will be humiliated in any confrontation with Iran in the Persian Gulf, Iran's national news agency IRNA reported.

Iran will confront the "expansionist presence of the superpower" in the Gulf and has expressed confidence that "U.S. imperialism will retreat with humiliation," IRNA quoted him as saying. (Reuter)

Kuwait Oil Tankers Not On Iran's List Of Shipping Targets

Iran warned that ships in the Persian Gulf carrying items it has deemed contraband will be attacked but not those vessels transporting Kuwaiti oil.

A spokesman for Iran's mission at the U.N. said Tehran would confiscate goods aboard ships plying Gulf waters that "contribute to the strengthening of the war machine of Iraq."

Iran has declared a list of items as prohibited, according to Reagan Administration officials. "This does not include Kuwaiti oil exports," the Iranian spokesman said.

The spokesman declined to say whether Iran would consider Kuwaiti oil being shipped on behalf of Iraq as contraband. Both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are believed to be selling an estimated 750,000 barrels of oil a day in an effort to fulfill Iraqi oil contracts that Baghdad has been unable to live up to because of its almost 7-year-old war with Iran.

(James Dorsey & Warren Strobel, Washington Times, A1)

U.S. Escorts Likely To Trigger Iranian Response, Experts Say

A U.S. commitment to protect Kuwaiti ships in the Persian Gulf is likely to lead to Iranian military and terrorist responses that could require a massive deployment of U.S. military power to the region, current and former military leaders warned.

A few extra ships to protect Kuwaiti tankers "is plenty to put up a bluff," said Stansfield Turner, former Navy commander of Mediterranean forces and CIA director, "but what happens if they call it? We have to have thought through what we'll do."

Elmo Zumwalt, a former chief of naval operations, said the U.S. would not only need "at least two carriers" in the region if land bases cannot be used but also would require submarines to guard against Soviet or other hostile submarines.

(George Wilson, Washington Post, A20)

Soviet Ships Boost Superpower Role

BAGHDAD -- The Soviet Union has dispatched three mine sweepers to the Persian Gulf in a new incremental buildup of Soviet and American naval forces along the periphery of the Iran-Iraq war, military and diplomatic sources reported.

The military significance of separate Soviet and American decisions this month to expand their roles in protecting shipping in the Gulf is uncertain; but politically, they are likely to work in favor of Iraq, according to Western and Third World diplomatic sources here.

(Jim Hoagland, Washington Post, A1)

Iraq Says Pilot Never Heard Stark's Warnings

Iraq has told U.S. investigators that its pilot claims he did not hear any warnings from the USS Stark before firing two Exocet missiles at the frigate and killing 37 sailors, members of Congress were told by Pentagon officials.

Rep. Bill Nichols, chairman of the investigations subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, told reporters after a briefing by officials representing the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the single French-built F-1 Mirage used in the mistaken attack had been modified to carry two of the deadly missiles, one under each wing. (UPI)

SOVIETS DASH PROPOSAL FOR CUTBACKS IN TROOPS

EAST BERLIN -- Soviet officials rebuffed Western proposals to reduce the number of Soviet troops stationed in Central Europe, as Soviet leader Gorbachev discussed arms control with Warsaw Pact leaders at their annual summit meeting.

A Soviet spokesman said there would be no unilateral withdrawal of Soviet troops from Central Europe, and Soviet officials said the next arms control proposals should come from the West. (Washington Times, A1)

U.S. WORLD INFLUENCE SEEN SLIPPING IN GORBACHEV ERA

MOSCOW -- An unusual coincidence of international politics -- a young Soviet leader peppering the globe with disarmament and other proposals while an aging American President has been weakened by foreign policy scandals -- is creating an impression that Washington is losing ground to Moscow in global influence.

That is the overwhelming view expressed here by a score of senior Moscow-based diplomats from Western Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, and echoed in a number of recent opinion polls, even in countries closely allied with the U.S.

(News Analysis, Gary Lee, Washington Post, A27)

THE VENICE SUMMIT

President Reagan departs Wednesday for Venice, Italy, and his seventh economic summit meeting with America's leading trading partners, but the gathering is expected to produce few, if any, dramatic new achievements.

The fading glory and diminishing political powers of most of the seven world leaders who will participate in the summit -- including Reagan -- insures a climate "not conducive to a lot of economic risk-taking at this time," said a senior Administration official.

Trade tensions and the falling U.S. dollar will get some attention, but the war in the Persian Gulf, chances for a U.S.-Soviet arms deal, and the threat of a worldwide epidemic of AIDS are expected to crowd economic issues into the background when the talks open June 8, according to senior U.S. officials and European diplomats. (Miles Benson, Newhouse)

U.S. TO SEEK CHANGE IN BAKER PLAN
'Menu Of Options' Will Be Proposed

The U.S. will propose a modification to improve the Baker debt plan at the Venice economic summit, Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs Allen Wallis said.

Wallis said the U.S. will suggest strengthening the debt strategy by having commercial banks draw on a "menu of options," or alternatives to new lending called for in the original plan put forward by Treasury Secretary Baker in 1985. (Hobart Rowen, Washington Post, F1)

BELGIAN LEADER FEARS ECONOMIC DEPRESSION

Belgian Prime Minister Wilfried Martens met President Reagan in advance of next month's economic summit and said he fears an economic depression if the summit fails.

"We hope that the Venice summit will be a success and I will ask the President to use all his influence to make it a success," Martens told reporters before meeting with the President. "I fear that if the Venice Summit is not a success, we will enter a period of recession, depression. His role is vital." (UPI)

SECURITY OFFICIALS MEET ON ANTITERRORISM PLANS

PARIS -- Top antiterrorism officials from the major noncommunist nations met under extraordinary security precautions in what was described as an intensified effort to increase cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

The gathering, organized hastily at French and West German initiative, was interpreted as a victory for the Reagan Administration, which has pushed for such high-visibility antiterrorism coordination.

"We have participated in what we hope is the first of a series of such meetings," Attorney General Meese, who led the U.S. delegation. (Edward Cody, Washington Post, A27)

Antiterrorism Struggle Finds New Momentum Ahead Of Summit

PARIS -- Attorney General Meese has announced a new Western initiative that would extend European antiterrorism cooperation across the Atlantic and Pacific.

Speaking at the end of the heavily-guarded meeting of top law enforcers from nine Western nations in the French interior ministry, Meese said the issue is now on the agenda for annual summits of the "Big Seven" non-communist industrial countries.

"The message for the Venice Summit is that each of us will brief the respective heads of state and particularly will bring in what is an essentially new dimension of organized effort in the summit context of the ministers of justice and interior," Meese said.

(Barbara Bright, Reuter)

BRITISH DIPLOMAT SEIZED IN TEHRAN

LONDON -- Britain's No. 2 diplomat in Iran was kidnapped in Tehran by six gunmen who crashed their car into the envoy's auto and dragged him away in front of his wife and infant son, authorities said.

Edward Chaplin, 36, the second-ranking diplomat at the British Interests Section, was driving on a Tehran highway when a car behind forced him to stop, a Foreign Office spokesman said.

"Six armed men came from the car and forcibly dragged him away," the spokesman said. "He was assaulted, but no shots were fired."

(UPI)

BRITISH CAMPAIGN FOCUSES ON REAGAN

Comment About Labor's 'Grievous Errors' Finds Kinnock Defensive

LONDON -- President Reagan took center stage in Britain's vitriolic election campaign today, as his description of the Labor Party's antinuclear defense plans as "grievous errors" brought quick agreement from Prime Minister Thatcher, and Labor suggestions that Reagan had been "mobilized" as a weapon for her campaign.

Labor leader Neil Kinnock, who is trying to unseat Thatcher in the June 11 elections, said her Conservative Party was getting "pressurized" by Labor's advances in public opinion polls, and might have sought to enlist Reagan on the sensitive defense issue.

(Karen DeYoung, Washington Post, A27)

HIGH-RANKING CUBAN OFFICER DEFECTS WITH FAMILY TO U.S.

Plane Lands At Key West Naval Air Base

A man described by U.S. officials as the deputy chief of staff of Cuba's armed forces defected to the U.S., flying a small plane and with his wife and three children aboard to the U.S. naval air station in Key West, Florida.

U.S. officials said they think that the man is Brig. Gen. Rafael del Pino Diaz, making him the highest Cuban military officer publicly identified as defecting from the communist island nation in this decade.

Patrick Korten, a Justice Department spokesman, said last night that "until his departure from Cuba he was identified as the deputy chief of staff of the Cuban defense ministry and the former chief of the Cuban air force."

(Joe Pichirallo & Julia Preston, Washington Post, A1)

FRATERNIZATION CHARGES FILED AGAINST MARINE

Ex-Guard Accused Of Affair With Soviet

Staff Sgt. Robert Stufflebeam, a former Marine Corps guard at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, was accused of going to an off-limits bar, consorting with two Soviet women, having an affair with one of them and lying about it, the Marine Corps said.

The charges against Stufflebeam, 25, were presented at a pretrial hearing at Quantico base where two other Marines in the Moscow sex-for-secrets scandal are being held. (UPI story, Washington Post, A9)

IRAN — NICARAGUA

EX-ENVOY SAYS NORTH TOLD HIM TO AID CONTRAS Objective Was To Open A 'Southern Front'

Former U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica Lewis Tambs said that in mid-1985 he was directed by White House aide Lt. Col. Oliver North -- then part of a secret three-man group managing the Reagan Administration's policy in support of the contras -- to assist the rebels in opening a "southern front" against the Nicaraguan forces.

Committee members want to question Abrams (scheduled to appear before the congressional committees next week) to learn whether the RIG, which included North, Abrams and a CIA representative, reported to higher authorities, such as Secretary Shultz and the President, or whether it operated alone to provide deniability to higher officials.

Abrams' testimony is also expected to be controversial because of conflicts that committee members said exist between what Tambs said in public yesterday and what Abrams had said earlier in a still unreleased private deposition to the committees.

(Walter Pincus & Dan Morgan, Washington Post, A1)

Former U.S. Ambassador To Costa Rica Testifies He Was Ordered By North To Open Up A Southern Front In Nicaragua

Lewis Tambs testified that he was dispatched to his diplomatic post in Costa Rica with instructions from former White House aide Oliver North to help the contra rebels open up a "southern" military front in neighboring Nicaragua.

In attempting to comply with the directive, Tambs said he assumed he was carrying out the policy of President Reagan...

Asked by Mark Belnick, executive assistant to the chief counsel for the Senate Iran-contra committee, whether he wasn't concerned about pursuing a course that would be in "some conflict with the Boland amendment."

"They have a saying in the Foreign Service: That when you take the king's shilling, you do the king's bidding," replied Tambs.

(Finlay Lewis, Copley)

Former Ambassador To Costa Rica Describes Involvement In Contra Cause

Lewis Tambs testified that when he began (his position as U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica) in July 1985 Oliver North instructed him to "open up the southern front" for the contras.

Tambs testified that Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams heard details of his activities helping the contras at a meeting of U.S. officials in Panama in September 1985. Tambs said he assumed the local CIA station chief provided the late CIA Director William Casey with all the details as well.

But Sen. Daniel Inouye...said that Abrams has told the congressional committees in a deposition that he can't recall any discussions with Tambs about the contra air strip at the Panama meeting. Abrams also said he wasn't aware the air strip was under construction at that time, Inouye said.

(Walter Friedenberg & Lance Gay, Scripps Howard)

Three U.S. Agencies Encouraged 'Southern Front,' Tambs Testifies

The Reagan Administration not only helped supply arms and money to the contra rebels, but at least three U.S. agencies also encouraged the creation of a separate rebel army to wage war against the Marxist Sandinista government, according to new testimony.

The fighting force known as the "southern front" was set up in late 1985 and assisted through much of 1986 by U.S. diplomats and intelligence officers as well as then National Security Council aide Oliver North, the House-Senate committee learned.

Lewis Tambs, the former U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica, publicly revealed the plan and his role in setting up the southern front army.

(Robert Gettlin & Robert Lewis, Newhouse)

Iran Probe Told Of Sacrificed Careers

Former U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Lewis Tambs accused high-ranking Administration officials of sacrificing their subordinates' careers to save their own, and disputed Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams' claims of ignorance about Tambs' assignment to assist Nicaragua's contras.

"The field officers who went forward are not being backed up by the superiors who gave them orders," Tambs complained.

"What I find to be disconcerting, to put it mildly, is to see officers who were carrying out what they believed to be orders from their legitimate superiors now, in effect, seeing their careers sacrificed."

(Karen Tumulty & Sara Fritz, Los Angeles Times, A1)

North's Gang 'Couldn't Shoot Straight'

It's a wonder Oliver North's covert supply network stayed a secret as long as it did.

Between rancorous infighting -- and operational bumbling -- North's network was barely off the ground in September 1986 before it was exposed a month later by the downing over Nicaragua of a plane carrying weapons and flier Eugene Hasenfus.

Testimony during the fourth week of the Iran-contra hearings unveiled tales of bitter turf wars, comical oversights and quick fixes.

(Leslie Phillips, USA Today, A4)

REAGAN CAN FIRE WALSH, HILL TOLD

Senate Panel Reveals Justice Dept. Reply To Hypothetical Question

President Reagan could order independent counsel Lawrence Walsh to grant Lt. Col. Oliver North immunity from prosecution in the Iran-contra affair and would have "good cause" to fire Walsh if he refused to obey, according to the Justice Department.

"An independent counsel must follow the lawful direction of the President," Assistant Attorney General John Bolton informed a Senate Governmental Affairs subcommittee in writing last week in response to a hypothetical question posed by the panel. Justice Department spokesman Terry Eastland affirmed that this was the department's official position.

(George Lardner, Washington Post, A16)

Justice Aide Holds Reagan Has Power To Fire Walsh

A Justice Department official told Congress that President Reagan could order independent counsel Lawrence Walsh to grant immunity from prosecution to Lt. Col. Oliver North and that the President could fire Walsh if he refused to do so.

The statement, by Assistant Atty. Gen. John Bolton, immediately raised the hackles of some members of Congress, who said they believe that the Reagan Administration is threatening another "Saturday Night Massacre," the label given to the October, 1973, firing of Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox by a Justice official acting under orders from former President Nixon.

But Bolton's statement was immediately played down by other department officials, who expressed partisan anger at Sen. Carl Levin for asking Bolton what they called "loaded hypothetical questions." They said that Reagan had no intention of forcing Walsh to grant immunity to North or of seeking Walsh's dismissal. (Robert Jackson, Los Angeles Times)

SO FAR, IRAN HEARINGS BEAR OUT BUSH'S LIMITED ROLE

After almost four weeks of congressional hearings on the Iran-contra scandal, no evidence has come to light implicating Vice President Bush in the elaborate operation organized to supply arms and money to the Nicaraguan contra rebels. Although Bush is a close foreign policy adviser to the President and a member of the National Security Council, his role in the whole Iran-contra affair remains enigmatic.

If the Iran-contra hearings produce no damaging revelations, Bush will still face the political challenge of distancing himself from the weakened Reagan Administration while not abandoning his loyalty to the President and his policies. Many political analysts believe the Vice President, despite his present organizational strength, will not be able to walk away with the nomination unless he can carve out and sell his own vision of the presidency.

(Charlotte Saikowski, Christian Science Monitor, A1)

EDITOR'S NOTE: "Week Four Of The Testimony," appears in The Washington Post, A17.

NATIONAL NEWS

REAGAN MOVING CLOSER TO MANDATORY AIDS TESTING

President Reagan, armed with unanimous recommendations from his Cabinet, is moving toward publicly supporting expanded medical testing as part of a government strategy to curb the spread of AIDS.

The dimensions of that program -- who would be subject of testing and under what circumstances -- remain unclear, complicated by issues of law and public policy that have been thrust onto the national stage by the AIDS epidemic.

However, Administration officials expect Reagan to embrace recommendations received from the Cabinet-level Domestic Policy Council and announce his position as early as Sunday, when he delivers the keynote address at a fund-raising dinner intended to raise \$500,000 or more for AIDS research. (Norman Sandler, UPI)

Bennett, Koop End AIDS Feud

Education Secretary Bennett and Surgeon General Koop ended a longstanding feud over expanded AIDS testing, with Koop endorsing a broad-based package of routine tests for the deadly disease.

They include routine testing for federal prisoners, Veterans Administration hospital patients and immigrants, sources said.

In addition, the President's Domestic Policy Council also urged the President to publicly persuade states to test marriage license applicants, hospital patients, prisoners in state and local facilities and patients at venereal disease clinics. (Willis Witter, Washington Times, A3)

PRESIDENT WILL HIT THE ROAD IN BUDGET DISPUTE

Escalating confrontation with congressional Democrats over the budget deficit, President Reagan declared that he will tour the country this summer and fall to make speeches against what he called the emerging Democratic "tax and spend" budget.

Ringling familiar themes in his Administration's economic policies, Reagan spoke before a sympathetic National Assn. of Manufacturers convention and denounced trade protectionism, new tax increases and critics who claim that the nation is losing its industrial steam.

At next month's international economic summit in Venice, Reagan said, he will reassure the nation's key trading partners that the U.S. will rein in its budget deficit in exchange for their efforts to spur faster economic growth to absorb more U.S. exports.

(Oswald Johnston, Los Angeles Times, A4)

Reagan Renews His Pledge To Stymie Any Tax Increases

President Reagan renewed his pledge to veto any proposed tax increases and to oppose congressional attempts to make further cuts in defense spending.

Reagan told a group of GOP congressional leaders that he "looked forward" to battling "the deficit spenders in Congress," adding that he would "not accept any attempt to trap me into either raising taxes or gutting defense." (Willis Witter & Karen Riley, Washington Times, A3)

DEMOCRATS START TOUGH BID TO INCREASE TAX REVENUES

House Democrats began the process of looking for taxes to raise with the grim realization that they will get no help from Republicans in the House or the White House.

In a meeting of Democratic members of the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, 21 legislators discussed such options as higher excise taxes, higher energy taxes and higher estate taxes. Although there was no attempt to agree on the substance of a tax package, there was a general feeling that a tax-increase bill could be approved by the committee, according to some of those present.

(Anne Swardson, Washington Post, F1)

WHITE HOUSE MAY BACK AWAY FROM OZONE PACT

The Reagan Administration is reconsidering its strong call for international controls on chlorofluorocarbons to protect Earth's stratospheric ozone and prevent skin cancers, and is weighing instead a public relations campaign to encourage the use of sunglasses and skin lotion, Administration sources said.

The new White House review, prompted largely by Interior Secretary Hodel, has thrown into doubt a tentative agreement among 31 nations to freeze production of chlorofluorocarbons at current levels and reduce their use by 20 percent over the next decade.

Sources said that opposition to the proposed agreement has been rising within the Reagan Administration, particularly among Interior Department officials who believe that the accord would violate President Reagan's philosophy of minimal government regulation.

(Cass Peterson, Washington Post, A1)

DEAVER PERJURY TRIAL DELAYED UNTIL COURT RULES ON LAW Special Counsels' Constitutionality Disputed

A federal judge postponed the perjury trial of former White House aide Michael Deaver until after an appeals court decides his constitutional challenge of the independent counsel law.

U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson also delayed ruling on a request from the independent counsel in the case, Whitney North Seymour, to subpoena Canadian Ambassador Allan Gotlieb and his wife Sondra -- a move that prompted a formal protest from Canada and was spurned by the State Department.

"We are pleased by the judge's decision," said Deaver attorney Randall Turk, "because we believe the statute is unconstitutional and that issue should be resolved before needlessly going to trial."

No new trial date was set.

(UPI story, Washington Post, A16)

U.S. JUDGE DEFENDS SPECIAL COUNSEL ACT AS CONSTITUTIONAL

HOT SPRINGS, Va. -- The federal judge in charge of appointing independent counsels offered a passionate defense of the constitutionality of the independent counsel law before an audience that included his colleagues who are to weigh that question.

Speaking at the annual D.C. Circuit judicial conference, Senior Judge George MacKinnon, who heads the three-judge panel that selects independent counsels, said the Ethics in Government statute "has worked well in the past and I think it will work well in the future."

(Ruth Marcus, Washington Post, A16)

VOTE ON NOMINEE IS DELAYED OVER TRAVEL RECORD

A conservative senator has put a hold on the Administration's nomination to be an assistant secretary at the Health and Human Services Department because of questions about eight official trips she took to areas near where her son was playing in college football games.

Sen. Gordon Humphrey said that the trips by Jean Elder, acting assistant secretary in charge of the Office of Human Development Services, appear "unethical" and that he will block a vote on her nomination until he receives an explanation.

(Howard Kurtz, Washington Post, A4)

2 AGENCIES COLLIDE OVER SUMMER AIR SAFETY

NTSB Chairman Burnett Says FAA Is Trying
To Run System 'Up To The Red Line'

The chairman of the nation's safety watchdog agency pushed again for reductions in air traffic during the peak summer travel season that begins next week, while the head of the FAA said that public debate about air safety is becoming needlessly "alarmist."

"The bottom line is, the FAA is trying to run the system up to the red line," Jim Burnett, chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, told a Senate subcommittee in his strongest criticism yet of the FAA. "We don't need to play a game of chicken. We need to run the system on cool instead of hot. We need to build a margin of safety."

"We will not allow the system to become critical," FAA Administrator Donald Engen said in rejecting again that safety may diminish with anticipated increases in summer traffic and summer storms.

(Laura Parker, Washington Post, A10)

NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Thursday Evening, May 28, 1987)

PERSIAN GULF POLICY

NBC's Tom Brokaw: Eleven days after the attack on the USS Stark, President Reagan and Congress are deeply divided tonight on American policy in the Persian Gulf. At issue is the President's plan to get the U.S. more involved in the Gulf by protecting Kuwaiti oil tankers.

NBC's Andrea Mitchell: Even Republican leaders are jumping ship -- telling the President they disagree with his Persian Gulf policy.

(Sen. Robert Dole: "(There) were a number of Republicans (who) expressed reservations about whatever our policy may be there and particularly why we don't extract a sharing of the responsibility from our allies and perhaps impose a fee on the Japanese and West Germans for escort service.")

Aides say that the President will not consider charging a fee, that it would be too much like turning U.S. sailors into mercenaries. In Congress, both parties want the President to wait before assuming responsibility for the safety of Kuwaiti tankers next week.

(Sen. Robert Byrd: "No new commitment should be entered into, in my opinion, until we are completely satisfied that a militarily effective plan, based on capabilities as well as past practices with an insurance factor for the unpredictable, has been developed and will be implemented.")

Sources say that the National Security Council is considering a plan for limited air cover, relying on Saudi pilots except for occasional U.S. patrols flown from carriers outside the Gulf. Military analysts say that could be very risky.... But the President will consider a plan tomorrow to ask the Saudis for more support from AWACS and help in flying refueling planes. Sources tell NBC News the new military proposal also calls for adding three ships to the five now in the Persian Gulf task force, limiting the escorts to a maximum of four Kuwaiti tankers a week, and concentrating U.S. air cover over the Strait of Hormuz. The White House is trying to avoid the appearance of a big military buildup. Secretary Weinberger is said to feel that White House officials are too worried about satisfying Congress and not concerned enough about giving the forces in the Gulf the support they need.

Brokaw: And the AP is reporting tonight that Pentagon officials are now saying that the Reagan Administration has put off for several weeks its plan to send U.S. military protection to Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. As for the USS Stark, Pentagon officials are telling NBC News tonight that U.S. investigators will not be permitted to interview that Iraqi pilot who fired on the ship....

NBC's Rick Davis from Iraq: Admiral David Rogers, along with his team of investigators and Iraqi officers, went into another meeting tonight -- they are trying to get to the details of the attack on the Stark and how to prevent attacks in the future....

-more-

Davis continues:

(Rogers: "We've had a very professional exchange. We've had differences -- we are ironing out those differences. In fact, have ironed out most of those differences. So, I think that by the next 24 hours or so we will be able to make a wrap up statement about the attacks themselves.")

.... Some diplomats and military analysts say the Iraqis may fear that whatever they tell the Americans will be turned over to their enemies.... (NBC-2)

ABC's Peter Jennings: This was the day in Washington when a number of political heavyweights in Congress, including leaders from the President's own party, decided they really were worried about the President's decisions in the Persian Gulf. And after expressing their concern in person, the White House has said that consultation with Congress will be the result. The most immediate concern to a wide array of politicians and the military is the President's decision to give American flag protection to those Kuwaiti oil tankers.

ABC's Sam Donaldson: Administration officials hurried up to Capitol Hill late today to sign onto a new promise to consult Congress on the Persian Gulf policy. House Speaker Wright announced that a bill will be introduced next week, with Administration support, requiring a full report within seven days of passage, so that Congress--

(Rep. Wright: "Will be fully informed as to the extent of plans, extent of our commitments, extent of the involvements that we have or contemplate having with other allied forces whose interests are at stake, how much we expect them to cooperate, exactly what plans we have for the protection of U.S. military force.")

This morning Congressional Republican leaders saw President Reagan and Senator Dole said they told him the American people have reservations about the policy.

(Sen. Dole: "But I don't believe we've yet explained any real reason that we should be providing free escort service to every other country (that) depends on that part of the country for its oil supply.")

Dole and others suggested U.S. allies be charged an escort fee to see their oil safely through the Gulf. Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the idea would be considered and he said the President will discuss the Gulf policy with the allies at the economic summit next month in Venice. Today's deal between the White House and Congress appears to give both sides what they want. The President does not have to report under the War Powers Act as to what's going on with U.S. forces in the Gulf -- something he does not want to do; but by passing new legislation, the Congress gets a full report anyway. Meanwhile the mission continues. Mr. Reagan yesterday gave final approval to the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers with the U.S. flag. And he has now authorized U.S. forces to fire onto Iranian territory against any Iranian missile that fires at them.

Jennings: In the Persian Gulf, the Pentagon team that has been in Baghdad investigating the attack on the USS Stark is getting ready to come home. While there are still some unanswered questions, we have certainly learned more about the attack.

ABC's Bob Zelnick reports on the investigation of Admiral David Rogers and the details which have been made available. (ABC-2)

CBS's Bob Schieffer: There is nothing official yet, but sources say the Reagan Administration has backed off, at least temporarily, from its plan to put Kuwaiti tankers in the Persian Gulf under U.S. protection. The decision came as U.S. policy in the Gulf was under sharp attack today from both Republicans and Democrats in Congress.

CBS's David Martin: Pentagon officials say the controversial escorting of Kuwaiti oil tankers will not begin for another month.... The Navy needs more time to put additional ships into the Persian Gulf -- ships which have not yet left their home port. The Pentagon must also determine exactly what kind of air cover to provide U.S. ships in the Gulf.... Another factor -- Congressional uproar which grew louder today as General Robert Perry gave a closed-door hearing an entirely new account of the attack on the Stark. Perry said it appears that the Stark did not broadcast its first warning to stay away until 15 seconds after the Iraqi pilot fired the first of two Exocet missiles. Previously, U.S. officials had said the Stark issued two warnings before the Iraqi pilot fired. Today's disclosure was an eye-opener.

(Rep. Hopkins: "I suspect he had already fired the missile before we even said anything to him.")

...Pentagon officials are increasingly critical of the performance of the ship's captain, saying he does not appear to have taken any of the standard precautions a prudent commander should have. Iraqis have told Defense Department investigators their pilot spoke English and was very experienced and that he thought the Stark was in a war zone. Before it leaves Iraq tomorrow, the Pentagon team hopes to reach a notification agreement that will prevent future cases of mistaken identity.

Terence Smith: The White House sent National Security Advisor Frank Carlucci and Defense Secretary Weinberger to Capitol Hill late today.... The result -- a Presidential promise to deliver a full report of military plans within a week.

(Rep. Wright: "The White House and his representatives acknowledge and fully accept and respect the responsibility that they have to the Congress.")

Earlier members of the President's own party took their complaints to the White House.

(Sen. Dole: "There were a number of Republicans (who) expressed reservations about whatever our policy may be there, but I don't believe we've yet explained any real reason that we should be providing free escort service to every other country (that) depends on that part of the world for its oil supply.")

Because most of the oil from the Gulf goes to other nations...some Senators suggested that the U.S. charge an escort fee in exchange for protection by American ships. The President promised to raise the issue at the upcoming seven-nation economic summit in Venice. While discussions about military strategy in the Gulf continued at the White House, the Senate Democratic leader said the President should delay the buildup because his policy faces strong public opposition.

(Sen. Byrd: "Haven't we learned that any policy that puts our sons and daughters out there on the edge has to have the support of the American people?")

Tomorrow the President will convene his top level National Security Planning Group for a thorough review of Persian Gulf strategy.

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Smith continues: He's expected to make the key decisions on the U.S.' role and report them to Congress before leaving for the Venice summit next Wednesday.

Schieffer: The head of a U.S. military team in Iraq reported good progress today in the two countries' joint investigation of the attack on the Stark. Admiral David Roger said that there is still some differences of opinion over what happened in the Gulf on the night of the missile strike, but he said the Iraqis have been very forthcoming and that the inquiry could be wrapped up by tomorrow. (CBS-Lead)

IRAN-CONTRA HEARINGS

Brokaw: At the Congressional Iran-contra hearings today, former U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, Lewis Tambs, testified that he was ordered to use his post to help the contras open a military front in Southern Nicaragua. He said he received that order from White House aide Oliver North at a time when U.S. assistance to the contras was officially banned by Congress. Tambs said that he assumed any instruction from North came from his superiors. (NBC-3)

ABC's Brit Hume: Tambs said that in 1985, with official U.S. aid to the contras banned, he got orders from Oliver North to open a southern front for the contras....

(Tambs: "My assumption was that any instruction he gave me came from, obviously, his superiors.")

Specifically, he said, that meant a small Administration task force on Central America that included North and Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, whom Tambs appeared to directly contradict on the question of when Abrams knew what.

(Inouye: "He has testified that he does not recall discussing this assignment with you at the Sept. 85 Central American Chiefs of Mission Conference. But you are convinced that at that time he did discuss it with you, as you have testified?"

Tambs: "Yes, sir.")

Abrams may testify as early as tomorrow. Earlier, former CIA man Felix Rodriguez, who worked in the contras supply network was questioned about leads he provided the committee in testimony yesterday. Today, most of the leads went nowhere. For example, he said he told Oliver North that exposure of the contra supply network would cause a scandal worse than Watergate. But today he said all he meant by that was that two key figures in the network -- Richard Secord and Thomas Clines had been publicly linked to Edwin Wilson, the ex-CIA man convicted of selling weapons to Libya.

(Sen. Hatch: "You have testified that you did not trust Gen. Secord and Thomas Clines because of their prior association with Edwin Wilson. Did you have any direct evidence of wrongdoing on their part or only a suspicion of guilt based on association?"

Rodriguez: "I had nothing specific.")

Guilt by association or not, some members wanted to hear all about why Rodriguez decided to post armed guards at one point on contra aircraft.

(Sen. Tribble: "The question is, 'Who are you concerned about?'"

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Hume continues:

Rodriguez: "Well, sir, I was concerned that we would receive orders from the owner -- which you know is Secord -- and take the airplanes somewhere else."

Sen. Rudman: "So they were not only arms dealers, they were making \$50,000-\$60,000 on people who were risking their lives. So they were arms dealers and they were also flesh-peddlers -- were they not?"

Rodriguez: "That's what it (would) look like.")

Fellow Republican McClure took issue with that -- calling it conviction by indirection. Still, some on the committee seemed determined, above all, to discredit Secord. (ABC-5)

Schieffer: The Justice Department told Congress today that President Reagan has a legal right to order Special Prosecutor Lawrence Walsh to grant Oliver North immunity from prosecution. What's more, the Justice Department said if Special Prosecutor Walsh refused, the President could fire him. The Justice Department stressed that it was just giving a legal opinion and that President Reagan has no plans to do any of this.

CBS's Phil Jones:

(Sen. Inouye: "You got your marching orders on the opening of the southern front from Col. North?"

Tambs: "Yes, sir."

Sen. Inouye: "You did not get this direction from the Secretary of State?"

Tambs: "No, sir.")

That was the candid admission today from former Ambassador Tambs, explaining how he got involved in a military operation for the Nicaraguan contras at a time when the law prohibited direct or indirect government assistance....

(Tambs: "Col. North asked me go down and open up the southern front.... Mr. North was working for the National Security Council, and obviously my assumption was that any instruction he gave me came from, obviously, his superiors.")

Tambs argued that he had not broken the Boland amendment.

(Tambs: "It forbade the use of appropriated U.S. government funds to aid the freedom fighters and any aid in opening the southern front would come from what we casually call 'private, patriotic Americans.'...No, that's Ollie's term -- he liked that one.")

Another witness, former CIA agent Felix Rodriguez, who was also involved in the contra airlift, talked today about distrust of the Americans running the operation, including retired Gen. Richard Secord.... (CBS-3)

AIDS

Brokaw: It appears tonight that President Reagan is now moving toward approval of a national AIDS testing program mandatory for some people, voluntary for others. While consideration of the AIDS testing program is underway at the highest levels of the White House, health officials now estimate that 179,000 Americans will die by 1991 of the disease. And the numbers will go dramatically higher after that.

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NBC's Chris Wallace: The program the President is expected to approve would mean AIDS testing for millions of Americans. Top Administration officials came to the White House today to submit the plan. And Mr. Reagan indicated strong support. Officials tell NBC News that at the federal level, the plan calls for mandatory testing of all federal prisoners and immigrants. It also calls for developing routine testing in veterans' hospitals. "Routine" means the test would be given automatically, but not to people who strongly object. As for the states, they would be encouraged to test all people getting marriage licenses, patients in hospitals and drug clinics and all state prisoners. It would be up to the states whether testing would be mandatory. Officials tell NBC News the President was the plan's strongest supporter -- saying at one point, "We have an obligation to protect innocent citizens; we ought to do everything we can." But the issue of mandatory testing is controversial. Supporters say it's necessary to deal with a terrible health problem that keeps spreading. (Rep. Dannemeyer: "Routinely, we've been testing people to get a marriage license for a venereal disease called syphilis. Have you heard any protests about people from civil libertarian groups about having that test in our system?")

Civil libertarians worry about an invasion of privacy and they aren't the only ones protesting. Health officials, including Surgeon General Coop say that mandatory testing would scare away some of the people most in need of help.

(Surgeon General Coop from March 24: "A lot of the people that you would be trying to identify would slip through the net because it never can be that tight.")

Despite his reservations, officials say Coop backed today's plan, after the original plan for mandatory testing was softened to routine testing in most cases. Meanwhile, there's another controversy over the President's plan to appoint a commission on AIDS. Advisors say Mr. Reagan does not intend to appoint any gays. Top researchers say that's an outrage and that they will boycott the commission. Gay activists say the White House is more concerned with right-wing politics than public health.

(Ben Schaltz, National Gay Alliance: "To exclude the gay community from a presidential commission on AIDS is the moral equivalent of excluding the Jewish community for a commission on the Holocaust.")

The mix of politics and public health will continue. The President is expected to announce his new testing plan at a dinner this Sunday honoring Dr. Coop, whose views on AIDS Mr. Reagan has often overruled.

NBC's Robert Bazell reports on doctor's belief that testing is a key to controlling the disease. (NBC-Lead, CBS-6)

CUBAN DEFECTOR

Schieffer: A top officer in the Cuban military took a freedom flight to the U.S. today. The defector has just been identified in Washington.

CBS's Rita Braver: Describing it as a major break for U.S. intelligence, officials here say a top-ranking Cuban military official has defected to the U.S.

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Braver continues: The man is identified as Brig. Gen. Rafael de Pino Diaz -- said to be the number two man in the defense ministry and the former chief of the Cuban Air Force. The Immigration Service says he and his family flew into Key West Naval Air Station about 2 p.m. asking for asylum. The FBI has been called in to provide security for the family and sources say a check is now being conducted to be sure the man is who he claims to be....

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

AIRLINE SAFETY

ABC's Bettina Gregory: The chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board renewed and redoubled his charge the FAA must cut back on the number of flights this summer or dangerously increase the potential for another midair collision.

(Jim Burrett, Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board: "The FAA, I believe, is trying to run the system up to the red line. And I'm not in favor of that. I think that we don't need to play a game of chicken to see how close we can get.")

The FAA says, while it's not cutting down the number of flights, it has the summer situation under control.

(Donald Engen, FAA spokesman: "As you and I are sitting here, sir, we are reducing the flow of air traffic.")...

(Sen. Hollings: "If Sherman, rather than marching through Georgia, had landed at the airport, we would have won that war.")

But the FAA has a new computer....

(Egen: "This will allow us to forecast what traffic will be in the future. It will enable us to identify the overloaded sectors before then become overloaded.")

Although this new computer gives the FAA a new overview of problems in the nation's control towers, it's still being testing. And the Safety Board argues it won't be ready to solve air traffic problems this summer.

(ABC-4)

DEAVER

Jennings: A federal judge in Washington has postponed the perjury trial of Michael Deaver, the former aide to President Reagan, until an appeals court can rule on Deaver's challenge to the independent counsel. Deaver's lawyers have argued that the law which provides for an independent counsel is unconstitutional. Deaver is accused of lying about his lobbying activities after leaving the White House.

(ABC-7)

EDITORIALS/COLUMNISTS

VENICE SUMMIT

Venice In The Spring -- "Inevitably, President Reagan will pledge once again to reduce the U.S. budget deficit. Inevitably, everyone will promise to fight the menace of protectionism. And, inevitably, there will be a diplomatic statement about the need for continuing discussions to consider the possibility of thinking about further dialogue to find ways to limit the volatility of exchange rates. If that all sounds familiar, it should. Many of the same promises were made after last year's summit, and the results remain hard to see.... There's not much likelihood of earth-shattering news from Venice..... The whole business of economic summitry makes little sense unless there is some reasonable prospect of accord. Otherwise, summits serve only to excite expectations that are left unfulfilled, making people everywhere even more concerned about the state of the world economy."
(Journal of Commerce, 5/28)

USS STARK

...Begin With Why U.S. Ships Are In The Gulf -- "This time the President can't get by with reciting flag-waving rhetoric.... Ronald Reagan is going to have to be clear and precise -- why he's raising the stakes in the Gulf, what we do if a U.S. ship is hit or sunk, how far he'll go toward war. Reagan has more skeptics than he probably imagines.... A long series of Reagan Administration tragic and comic misadventures make people wonder: Do the guys at the top know what the hell they're doing? ...Waiting for the President's answers, remember the disconsolate captain of the USS Stark, his ship turned into a fireball by a missile that struck without warning in the night. 'I don't know whether it was my fault, a systems malfunction, or an act of God,' he said. That's why the Senate and a confused public want the President to turn on the radar. Don't blindside us, Ron."
(Sandy Grady, Miami Herald, 5/27)

Playing Policeman To The World -- "Nothing succeeds like excess. By pushing every cold war tendency to a new limit, President Reagan has succeeded in showing Congress and the country the grave risks of an overly ambitious foreign policy. That was not his intention, but it may be his lasting achievement.... Reaganism may appear in retrospect as a rich young nation's last fling before the acceptance of maturity with its wise constraints and modest expectations."

(William V. Shannon, Boston Globe, 5/27)

But What If Iran Attacks Us? -- "The question remains: how does the Administration plan to protect the tankers? How does it intend to retaliate if the Iranians attack a tanker or its naval escort? What is the worst the Iranians might do and how would America respond? Without better answers, there is no hope of getting the necessary bipartisan support in Congress and in the country for this risky but defensible new policy."

(Philadelphia Inquirer, 5/28)

USS STARK (continued)

U.S. Ships Imperiled In Interest Of Japan, Europe -- "If this country is going into the bodyguard business, the least we should ask is to be paid for it.... We spend money and risk lives so that Kuwait and Japan and European nations can keep making money.... If we're going to put our expensive military hardware and the lives of our sailors and pilots on the line, why shouldn't we be compensated by those who are making the profit?"
(Mike Royko, Kansas City Times, 5/26)

Spread The Risk In The Gulf -- "It is time to internationalize the naval protective force in the Persian Gulf to make clear Western nations will act in concert to maintain the flow of oil vital to their economies.... The United States also should undertake diplomatic initiatives to bring an end to the war itself. Such initiatives should include consultations with the Soviet Union, which is supplying arms to Iraq. Peace in the Persian Gulf is in the interest of all nations."
(Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 5/21)

U.S. Doesn't Need More In Gulf -- "President Reagan's call for an even stronger U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf is a case of misguided priorities.... Putting American flags on Kuwaiti ships seems like an open invitation to calculated confusion.... The duty of the President remains one of protecting U.S. interests.... To provoke a test of that commitment by flying the U.S. flag through a danger zone would only create another blot on the image Reagan wants to protect."
(Milwaukee Sentinel, 5/23)

Times To Account For Gulf Aims -- "President Reagan does risk making the war our scrap with his decision to give American-flag status to 11 Kuwaiti vessels.... If the intent of Washington's deepening involvement is to convince Iran of the futility of its war with Iraq so that it will agree to a cease-fire, then the effort is worth pursuing. But we must be on guard for sparks that ignite a U.S.-Iranian conflict or for preventable disaster such as befell the Stark."
(Atlanta Journal, 5/23)

Sitting Ducks On The Persian Gulf -- "The attack on the Stark -- for whatever reason or reasons it was successful -- should cause a critical reappraisal of the presence of U.S. naval vessels in the Gulf.... It seems foolhardy to position the Stark or other naval vessels as sitting ducks in the Persian Gulf, just awaiting a similar attack."
(Baton Rouge States-Times, 5/20)

Middle East Turmoil -- "The Middle East is too crucial a region for the United States to sit idly by and allow the Soviets to gain dominance there. It is true that the United States needs to maintain a strong relationship with Israel. But we also must cultivate a better understanding of the needs and desires of the Arab nations, which too often have wound up on the short end of our diplomatic efforts in the region."
(Fort Worth Star Telegram, 5/19)

Saudis Get Bum Rap In Stark Affair -- "For us to call two Saudi pilots and their ground controllers to track down the Iraqi culprit in the Stark incident was to propose the unacceptable.... Trying to blame others in this case the Saudis, for what may turn out to be our own errors of commission and omission is becoming an all-too-common American habit. The finger-pointers ought to grow up."
(Atlanta Constitution, 5/25)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

USS STARK

"In regard to the attack on the USS Stark, why do we continue to allow the President to use American military personnel as pawns in the dangerous games he wants to play?"

(Helen Bower, Birmingham, Birmingham News, 5/22)

"If we were all crewmen on the USS Stark, and the ship's defense systems were President Reagan's Star Wars system, and the Iraqi Exocet were a Soviet missile attack, we would all be dead now, wouldn't we?"

(Byrd Kranisk, Beverly, Boston Globe, 5/25)

"We are in the Persian Gulf (in harm's way) for that old and noble purpose, freedom of the seas, a concept that has been with us for so long that we have forgotten that it is not a law of nature... This is the cause for which 37 of the Stark's crew gave their lives. And for the same cause, more may yet be called upon to sacrifice much."

(Edward J. Lorenz, Watertown, Hartford Courant, 5/25)

"The purpose of our presence in the Persian Gulf is not a commercial dependency; it is, as every patriotic professional knows, to counter the Soviet threat.... If the U.S. taxpayer is to believe that the Navy is in the Persian Gulf to protect the importance of crude oil and other commercial interests on the high seas, then our 37 servicemen did in fact die in vain."

(John S. Stedman, Point Loma, San Diego Tribune, 5/22)

"Surely Europe and Japan could spare some [military protection] to defend their oil supplies. But there is no talk of a joint NATO-Japanese task force to keep the Gulf open. There are no offers from Europe or Japan to 're-flag' Kuwaiti tankers under their colors. It seems that we Americans are expected to provide not only the chief but all the braves as well. And then people complain about us 'decoupling' from Europe and Japan!"

(Micheal D. Jones, Bowie, Md., Washington Times, 5/27)

IRAN-CONTRA HEARINGS

"I have personally been moved to both pride and tears by the heroism, patriotism and dedication to the ideals of this country of Messrs. Secord, McFarlane and Owen. And I am truly proud of the shining member of my generation -- Lt. Col. Oliver North."

(Sara Goode, Linderhurst, New York Post, 5/27)

"With all these, 'I cannot recall,' or saying, 'no' and then finding a memo saying 'yes,' they want me to cover my ears, mouth and eyes.... These people are our leaders. Leaders of one of the most powerful countries in the world. The incompetents, and I must call them that, because they do not even know what they said five minutes after they say it. And remember, one of those people has his finger on The Button."

(Richard J. Litke, Parma, Cleveland Plain Dealer, 5/25)



News Summary

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 1987 -- 6 a.m. EDT EDITION

TODAY'S HEADLINES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Plan To Protect Kuwaiti Ships Postponed -- With congressional alarm rising, the Reagan Administration has put off for several weeks its plan to extend American military protection to Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. (Christian Science Monitor, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Washington Times, AP, Reuter, UPI)

IRAN-NICARAGUA

Former Ambassador To Costa Rica Describes Involvement In Contra Cause -- Lewis Tambs testified that when he began his job as U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica in July 1985 Oliver North instructed him to "open up the southern front" for the contras. (Los Angeles Times, USA Today, Washington Post, Copley, Newhouse, Scripps Howard)

NATIONAL NEWS

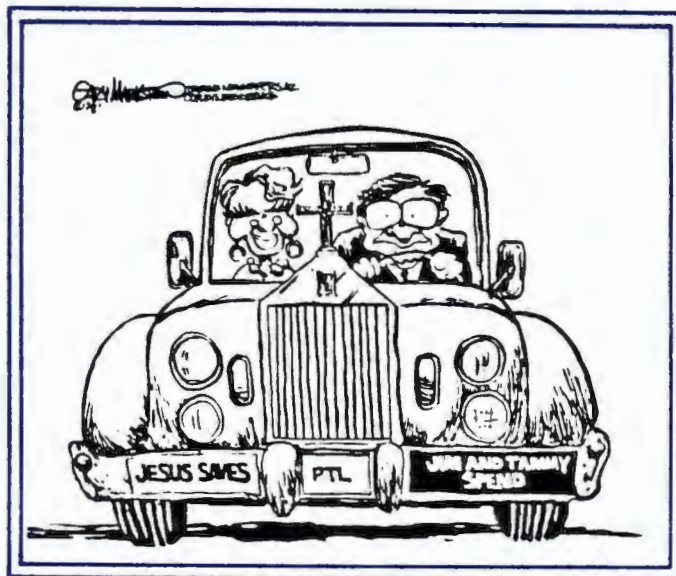
Reagan Moving Closer To Mandatory AIDS Testing -- President Reagan, armed with unanimous recommendations from his Cabinet, is moving toward publicly supporting expanded medical testing as part of a government strategy to curb the spread of AIDS. (Washington Times, UPI)

NETWORK NEWS (Thursday Evening)

PERSIAN GULF -- President Reagan and Congress are deeply divided on American policy in the Persian Gulf.

IRAN-CONTRA -- Lewis Tambs said he was ordered to use his post as ambassador to help the contras open a military front in Southern Nicaragua.

AIDS -- President Reagan is moving toward approval of a national AIDS testing program for some groups.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

TANKER ESCORT PLAN ENVISIONS CONVOYS

Hill To Get Report On Gulf Situation

President Reagan will be presented with a military plan for protecting Kuwaiti tankers under the American flag in the Persian Gulf that envisions a convoy of three or four tankers being escorted under U.S. naval protection about every 10 days, Administration sources said.

Responding to criticism on Capitol Hill, Secretary Weinberger and National Security Adviser Carlucci told Senate leaders that the escorts will not begin for several weeks, allowing time for a report to Congress, which it has requested, before the convoys begin. Previously, the White House had said the escorts could begin as soon as next week.

After meeting with House and Senate leaders, the Administration agreed to comply with legislation that requires the report to Congress but stops short of invoking the War Powers Resolution, which would effectively give Congress a veto over future deployments.

The military plan, prepared in part by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also calls for the tankers to receive any necessary air protection from U.S. warplanes based on carriers outside the Gulf, the sources said. If this plan is accepted, there would be no need to ask Saudi Arabia to allow U.S. aircraft to use its airstrips to protect the ships, the sources said.

(David Hoffman & Don Oberdorfer, Washington Post, A1)

Reagan Plans To Ask Allies To Share Task Of Protecting Oil Tankers In Persian Gulf

President Reagan, responding to growing unhappiness in Congress about his plan to increase naval escorts in the Persian Gulf, intends to ask allies to share the task of protecting oil tankers.

In meetings with congressional Republicans, President Reagan promised to raise the issue of joint efforts to protect Gulf shipping at a summit meeting of leaders from seven industrialized nations in Venice, Italy, that starts June 8.

The Republican lawmakers had argued that Western Europe and Japan, which obtain a much larger percentage of their oil imports from the Persian Gulf than does the U.S., should share the cost and risk of protecting tankers from attacks stemming from the Iran-Iraq war. "There are a number of Republicans who expressed reservations about whatever our policy there may be, and particularly why we don't extract a sharing of responsibility from our allies," said Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole.

(Gerald Seib & Robert Greenberger, Wall Street Journal, A54)

Japan Disputes U.S. Tack In Gulf

Japanese government officials and policymakers show little enthusiasm for the Reagan Administration's approach to protecting shipping routes in the Persian Gulf.

Though Japan has greater dependence on oil coming out of the Gulf than does any other major industrial nation, Tokyo is cool to calls to back an expanded military patrol effort. Diplomatic efforts, Japanese officials believe, may prove more fruitful than a show of military strength that might antagonize Iran.

(Daniel Snider, Christain Science Monitor, A1)

Republicans Ask Reagan To Charge Allies Fees For Escorting Tankers

Republican leaders, expressing reservations about U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf, asked President Reagan to charge allies a fee for escorting oil tankers through the volatile waterway.

At the same time, the White House negotiated an agreement with Speaker Jim Wright that the House would pass a resolution demanding information on U.S. military rules of engagement but would drop further calls for invocation of the War Powers Act.

In another development, Speaker Wright told reporters Saudi Arabia has agreed to provide radar intelligence information from its U.S.-built AWACS radar surveillance planes. (UPI)

Hill Demands To Know Plans For Gulf

Congressional leaders demanded an Administration explanation of U.S. military plans to protect Kuwaiti ships in the volatile Persian Gulf, with several lawmakers charging that President Reagan has kept Congress in the dark.

Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd called on the Administration to postpone making any new commitments in the Gulf until there has been a full report to Congress on the USS Stark incident and new U.S. military planning to protect naval forces in the region.

(Jennifer Spevacek, Washington Times, A6)

Shultz Requests Permission From Arab States To Use Landing Facilities

Secretary Shultz said the Administration has begun talking to Arab states about using their airfields for U.S. fighters protecting ships in the Persian Gulf.

Shultz...said he thought the idea of protecting ships in the volatile waterway with American planes based on carriers was expensive and probably economically unworkable.

In the past, the U.S. has asked several Arab countries, including Oman and Saudi Arabia, for landing rights, but they have refused because of political reasons.

"The situation has changed and they are looking at it again," Shultz said. (UPI)

Plan To Protect Kuwaiti Ships Postponed

With congressional alarm rising, the Reagan Administration has put off for several weeks its plan to extend American military protection to Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf, Pentagon officials and Sen. Sam Nunn said.

Iran's ambassador to the U.N., Said Rajaie-Khorassani, ...said the U.S. is "looking for trouble" by stepping up its military presence in the Gulf.

Secretary Shultz...said "the United States has no intention and will not get directly involved in the Iran-Iraq war." (Norman Black, AP)

Iranian President Says Tehran Will Confront Superpowers

LONDON -- Iranian President Ali Khamenei has said the U.S. will be humiliated in any confrontation with Iran in the Persian Gulf, Iran's national news agency IRNA reported.

Iran will confront the "expansionist presence of the superpower" in the Gulf and has expressed confidence that "U.S. imperialism will retreat with humiliation," IRNA quoted him as saying. (Reuter)

Kuwait Oil Tankers Not On Iran's List Of Shipping Targets

Iran warned that ships in the Persian Gulf carrying items it has deemed contraband will be attacked but not those vessels transporting Kuwaiti oil.

A spokesman for Iran's mission at the U.N. said Tehran would confiscate goods aboard ships plying Gulf waters that "contribute to the strengthening of the war machine of Iraq."

Iran has declared a list of items as prohibited, according to Reagan Administration officials. "This does not include Kuwaiti oil exports," the Iranian spokesman said.

The spokesman declined to say whether Iran would consider Kuwaiti oil being shipped on behalf of Iraq as contraband. Both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are believed to be selling an estimated 750,000 barrels of oil a day in an effort to fulfill Iraqi oil contracts that Baghdad has been unable to live up to because of its almost 7-year-old war with Iran.

(James Dorsey & Warren Strobel, Washington Times, A1)

U.S. Escorts Likely To Trigger Iranian Response, Experts Say

A U.S. commitment to protect Kuwaiti ships in the Persian Gulf is likely to lead to Iranian military and terrorist responses that could require a massive deployment of U.S. military power to the region, current and former military leaders warned.

A few extra ships to protect Kuwaiti tankers "is plenty to put up a bluff," said Stansfield Turner, former Navy commander of Mediterranean forces and CIA director, "but what happens if they call it? We have to have thought through what we'll do."

Elmo Zumwalt, a former chief of naval operations, said the U.S. would not only need "at least two carriers" in the region if land bases cannot be used but also would require submarines to guard against Soviet or other hostile submarines.

(George Wilson, Washington Post, A20)

Soviet Ships Boost Superpower Role

BAGHDAD -- The Soviet Union has dispatched three mine sweepers to the Persian Gulf in a new incremental buildup of Soviet and American naval forces along the periphery of the Iran-Iraq war, military and diplomatic sources reported.

The military significance of separate Soviet and American decisions this month to expand their roles in protecting shipping in the Gulf is uncertain; but politically, they are likely to work in favor of Iraq, according to Western and Third World diplomatic sources here.

(Jim Hoagland, Washington Post, A1)

Iraq Says Pilot Never Heard Stark's Warnings

Iraq has told U.S. investigators that its pilot claims he did not hear any warnings from the USS Stark before firing two Exocet missiles at the frigate and killing 37 sailors, members of Congress were told by Pentagon officials.

Rep. Bill Nichols, chairman of the investigations subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, told reporters after a briefing by officials representing the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the single French-built F-1 Mirage used in the mistaken attack had been modified to carry two of the deadly missiles, one under each wing. (UPI)

SOVIETS DASH PROPOSAL FOR CUTBACKS IN TROOPS

EAST BERLIN -- Soviet officials rebuffed Western proposals to reduce the number of Soviet troops stationed in Central Europe, as Soviet leader Gorbachev discussed arms control with Warsaw Pact leaders at their annual summit meeting.

A Soviet spokesman said there would be no unilateral withdrawal of Soviet troops from Central Europe, and Soviet officials said the next arms control proposals should come from the West. (Washington Times, A1)

U.S. WORLD INFLUENCE SEEN SLIPPING IN GORBACHEV ERA

MOSCOW -- An unusual coincidence of international politics -- a young Soviet leader peppering the globe with disarmament and other proposals while an aging American President has been weakened by foreign policy scandals -- is creating an impression that Washington is losing ground to Moscow in global influence.

That is the overwhelming view expressed here by a score of senior Moscow-based diplomats from Western Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, and echoed in a number of recent opinion polls, even in countries closely allied with the U.S.

(News Analysis, Gary Lee, Washington Post, A27)

THE VENICE SUMMIT

President Reagan departs Wednesday for Venice, Italy, and his seventh economic summit meeting with America's leading trading partners, but the gathering is expected to produce few, if any, dramatic new achievements.

The fading glory and diminishing political powers of most of the seven world leaders who will participate in the summit -- including Reagan -- insures a climate "not conducive to a lot of economic risk-taking at this time," said a senior Administration official.

Trade tensions and the falling U.S. dollar will get some attention, but the war in the Persian Gulf, chances for a U.S.-Soviet arms deal, and the threat of a worldwide epidemic of AIDS are expected to crowd economic issues into the background when the talks open June 8, according to senior U.S. officials and European diplomats. (Miles Benson, Newhouse)

U.S. TO SEEK CHANGE IN BAKER PLAN
'Menu Of Options' Will Be Proposed

The U.S. will propose a modification to improve the Baker debt plan at the Venice economic summit, Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs Allen Wallis said.

Wallis said the U.S. will suggest strengthening the debt strategy by having commercial banks draw on a "menu of options," or alternatives to new lending called for in the original plan put forward by Treasury Secretary Baker in 1985. (Hobart Rowen, Washington Post, F1)

BELGIAN LEADER FEARS ECONOMIC DEPRESSION

Belgian Prime Minister Wilfried Martens met President Reagan in advance of next month's economic summit and said he fears an economic depression if the summit fails.

"We hope that the Venice summit will be a success and I will ask the President to use all his influence to make it a success," Martens told reporters before meeting with the President. "I fear that if the Venice Summit is not a success, we will enter a period of recession, depression. His role is vital." (UPI)

SECURITY OFFICIALS MEET ON ANTITERRORISM PLANS

PARIS -- Top antiterrorism officials from the major noncommunist nations met under extraordinary security precautions in what was described as an intensified effort to increase cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

The gathering, organized hastily at French and West German initiative, was interpreted as a victory for the Reagan Administration, which has pushed for such high-visibility antiterrorism coordination.

"We have participated in what we hope is the first of a series of such meetings," Attorney General Meese, who led the U.S. delegation.

(Edward Cody, Washington Post, A27)

Antiterrorism Struggle Finds New Momentum Ahead Of Summit

PARIS -- Attorney General Meese has announced a new Western initiative that would extend European antiterrorism cooperation across the Atlantic and Pacific.

Speaking at the end of the heavily-guarded meeting of top law enforcers from nine Western nations in the French interior ministry, Meese said the issue is now on the agenda for annual summits of the "Big Seven" non-communist industrial countries.

"The message for the Venice Summit is that each of us will brief the respective heads of state and particularly will bring in what is an essentially new dimension of organized effort in the summit context of the ministers of justice and interior," Meese said.

(Barbara Bright, Reuter)

BRITISH DIPLOMAT SEIZED IN TEHRAN

LONDON -- Britain's No. 2 diplomat in Iran was kidnapped in Tehran by six gunmen who crashed their car into the envoy's auto and dragged him away in front of his wife and infant son, authorities said.

Edward Chaplin, 36, the second-ranking diplomat at the British Interests Section, was driving on a Tehran highway when a car behind forced him to stop, a Foreign Office spokesman said.

"Six armed men came from the car and forcibly dragged him away," the spokesman said. "He was assaulted, but no shots were fired."

(UPI)

BRITISH CAMPAIGN FOCUSES ON REAGAN

Comment About Labor's 'Grievous Errors' Finds Kinnock Defensive

LONDON -- President Reagan took center stage in Britain's vitriolic election campaign today, as his description of the Labor Party's antinuclear defense plans as "grievous errors" brought quick agreement from Prime Minister Thatcher, and Labor suggestions that Reagan had been "mobilized" as a weapon for her campaign.

Labor leader Neil Kinnock, who is trying to unseat Thatcher in the June 11 elections, said her Conservative Party was getting "pressurized" by Labor's advances in public opinion polls, and might have sought to enlist Reagan on the sensitive defense issue.

(Karen DeYoung, Washington Post, A27)

HIGH-RANKING CUBAN OFFICER DEFECTS WITH FAMILY TO U.S.

Plane Lands At Key West Naval Air Base

A man described by U.S. officials as the deputy chief of staff of Cuba's armed forces defected to the U.S., flying a small plane and with his wife and three children aboard to the U.S. naval air station in Key West, Florida.

U.S. officials said they think that the man is Brig. Gen. Rafael del Pino Diaz, making him the highest Cuban military officer publicly identified as defecting from the communist island nation in this decade.

Patrick Korten, a Justice Department spokesman, said last night that "until his departure from Cuba he was identified as the deputy chief of staff of the Cuban defense ministry and the former chief of the Cuban air force."

(Joe Pichirallo & Julia Preston, Washington Post, A1)

FRATERNIZATION CHARGES FILED AGAINST MARINE

Ex-Guard Accused Of Affair With Soviet

Staff Sgt. Robert Stufflebeam, a former Marine Corps guard at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, was accused of going to an off-limits bar, consorting with two Soviet women, having an affair with one of them and lying about it, the Marine Corps said.

The charges against Stufflebeam, 25, were presented at a pretrial hearing at Quantico base where two other Marines in the Moscow sex-for-secrets scandal are being held. (UPI story, Washington Post, A9)

IRAN — NICARAGUA

EX-ENVOY SAYS NORTH TOLD HIM TO AID CONTRAS Objective Was To Open A 'Southern Front'

Former U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica Lewis Tambs said that in mid-1985 he was directed by White House aide Lt. Col. Oliver North -- then part of a secret three-man group managing the Reagan Administration's policy in support of the contras -- to assist the rebels in opening a "southern front" against the Nicaraguan forces.

Committee members want to question Abrams (scheduled to appear before the congressional committees next week) to learn whether the RIG, which included North, Abrams and a CIA representative, reported to higher authorities, such as Secretary Shultz and the President, or whether it operated alone to provide deniability to higher officials.

Abrams' testimony is also expected to be controversial because of conflicts that committee members said exist between what Tambs said in public yesterday and what Abrams had said earlier in a still unreleased private deposition to the committees.

(Walter Pincus & Dan Morgan, Washington Post, A1)

Former U.S. Ambassador To Costa Rica Testifies He Was Ordered By North To Open Up A Southern Front In Nicaragua

Lewis Tambs testified that he was dispatched to his diplomatic post in Costa Rica with instructions from former White House aide Oliver North to help the contra rebels open up a "southern" military front in neighboring Nicaragua.

In attempting to comply with the directive, Tambs said he assumed he was carrying out the policy of President Reagan...

Asked by Mark Belnick, executive assistant to the chief counsel for the Senate Iran-contra committee, whether he wasn't concerned about pursuing a course that would be in "some conflict with the Boland amendment."

"They have a saying in the Foreign Service: That when you take the king's shilling, you do the king's bidding," replied Tambs.

(Finlay Lewis, Copley)

Former Ambassador To Costa Rica Describes Involvement In Contra Cause

Lewis Tambs testified that when he began (his position as U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica) in July 1985 Oliver North instructed him to "open up the southern front" for the contras.

Tambs testified that Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams heard details of his activities helping the contras at a meeting of U.S. officials in Panama in September 1985. Tambs said he assumed the local CIA station chief provided the late CIA Director William Casey with all the details as well.

But Sen. Daniel Inouye...said that Abrams has told the congressional committees in a deposition that he can't recall any discussions with Tambs about the contra air strip at the Panama meeting. Abrams also said he wasn't aware the air strip was under construction at that time, Inouye said.

(Walter Friedenberg & Lance Gay, Scripps Howard)

Three U.S. Agencies Encouraged 'Southern Front,' Tambs Testifies

The Reagan Administration not only helped supply arms and money to the contra rebels, but at least three U.S. agencies also encouraged the creation of a separate rebel army to wage war against the Marxist Sandinista government, according to new testimony.

The fighting force known as the "southern front" was set up in late 1985 and assisted through much of 1986 by U.S. diplomats and intelligence officers as well as then National Security Council aide Oliver North, the House-Senate committee learned.

Lewis Tambs, the former U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica, publicly revealed the plan and his role in setting up the southern front army.

(Robert Gettlin & Robert Lewis, Newhouse)

Iran Probe Told Of Sacrificed Careers

Former U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Lewis Tambs accused high-ranking Administration officials of sacrificing their subordinates' careers to save their own, and disputed Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams' claims of ignorance about Tambs' assignment to assist Nicaragua's contras.

"The field officers who went forward are not being backed up by the superiors who gave them orders," Tambs complained.

"What I find to be disconcerting, to put it mildly, is to see officers who were carrying out what they believed to be orders from their legitimate superiors now, in effect, seeing their careers sacrificed."

(Karen Tumulty & Sara Fritz, Los Angeles Times, A1)

North's Gang 'Couldn't Shoot Straight'

It's a wonder Oliver North's covert supply network stayed a secret as long as it did.

Between rancorous infighting -- and operational bumbling -- North's network was barely off the ground in September 1986 before it was exposed a month later by the downing over Nicaragua of a plane carrying weapons and flier Eugene Hasenfus.

Testimony during the fourth week of the Iran-contra hearings unveiled tales of bitter turf wars, comical oversights and quick fixes.

(Leslie Phillips, USA Today, A4)

REAGAN CAN FIRE WALSH, HILL TOLD

Senate Panel Reveals Justice Dept. Reply To Hypothetical Question

President Reagan could order independent counsel Lawrence Walsh to grant Lt. Col. Oliver North immunity from prosecution in the Iran-contra affair and would have "good cause" to fire Walsh if he refused to obey, according to the Justice Department.

"An independent counsel must follow the lawful direction of the President," Assistant Attorney General John Bolton informed a Senate Governmental Affairs subcommittee in writing last week in response to a hypothetical question posed by the panel. Justice Department spokesman Terry Eastland affirmed that this was the department's official position.

(George Lardner, Washington Post, A16)

Justice Aide Holds Reagan Has Power To Fire Walsh

A Justice Department official told Congress that President Reagan could order independent counsel Lawrence Walsh to grant immunity from prosecution to Lt. Col. Oliver North and that the President could fire Walsh if he refused to do so.

The statement, by Assistant Atty. Gen. John Bolton, immediately raised the hackles of some members of Congress, who said they believe that the Reagan Administration is threatening another "Saturday Night Massacre," the label given to the October, 1973, firing of Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox by a Justice official acting under orders from former President Nixon.

But Bolton's statement was immediately played down by other department officials, who expressed partisan anger at Sen. Carl Levin for asking Bolton what they called "loaded hypothetical questions." They said that Reagan had no intention of forcing Walsh to grant immunity to North or of seeking Walsh's dismissal. (Robert Jackson, Los Angeles Times)

SO FAR, IRAN HEARINGS BEAR OUT BUSH'S LIMITED ROLE

After almost four weeks of congressional hearings on the Iran-contra scandal, no evidence has come to light implicating Vice President Bush in the elaborate operation organized to supply arms and money to the Nicaraguan contra rebels. Although Bush is a close foreign policy adviser to the President and a member of the National Security Council, his role in the whole Iran-contra affair remains enigmatic.

If the Iran-contra hearings produce no damaging revelations, Bush will still face the political challenge of distancing himself from the weakened Reagan Administration while not abandoning his loyalty to the President and his policies. Many political analysts believe the Vice President, despite his present organizational strength, will not be able to walk away with the nomination unless he can carve out and sell his own vision of the presidency.

(Charlotte Saikowski, Christian Science Monitor, A1)

EDITOR'S NOTE: "Week Four Of The Testimony," appears in The Washington Post, A17.

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NATIONAL NEWS

REAGAN MOVING CLOSER TO MANDATORY AIDS TESTING

President Reagan, armed with unanimous recommendations from his Cabinet, is moving toward publicly supporting expanded medical testing as part of a government strategy to curb the spread of AIDS.

The dimensions of that program -- who would be subject of testing and under what circumstances -- remain unclear, complicated by issues of law and public policy that have been thrust onto the national stage by the AIDS epidemic.

However, Administration officials expect Reagan to embrace recommendations received from the Cabinet-level Domestic Policy Council and announce his position as early as Sunday, when he delivers the keynote address at a fund-raising dinner intended to raise \$500,000 or more for AIDS research. (Norman Sandler, UPI)

Bennett, Koop End AIDS Feud

Education Secretary Bennett and Surgeon General Koop ended a longstanding feud over expanded AIDS testing, with Koop endorsing a broad-based package of routine tests for the deadly disease.

They include routine testing for federal prisoners, Veterans Administration hospital patients and immigrants, sources said.

In addition, the President's Domestic Policy Council also urged the President to publicly persuade states to test marriage license applicants, hospital patients, prisoners in state and local facilities and patients at venereal disease clinics. (Willis Witter, Washington Times, A3)

PRESIDENT WILL HIT THE ROAD IN BUDGET DISPUTE

Escalating confrontation with congressional Democrats over the budget deficit, President Reagan declared that he will tour the country this summer and fall to make speeches against what he called the emerging Democratic "tax and spend" budget.

Ringling familiar themes in his Administration's economic policies, Reagan spoke before a sympathetic National Assn. of Manufacturers convention and denounced trade protectionism, new tax increases and critics who claim that the nation is losing its industrial steam.

At next month's international economic summit in Venice, Reagan said, he will reassure the nation's key trading partners that the U.S. will rein in its budget deficit in exchange for their efforts to spur faster economic growth to absorb more U.S. exports.

(Oswald Johnston, Los Angeles Times, A4)

Reagan Renews His Pledge To Stymie Any Tax Increases

President Reagan renewed his pledge to veto any proposed tax increases and to oppose congressional attempts to make further cuts in defense spending.

Reagan told a group of GOP congressional leaders that he "looked forward" to battling "the deficit spenders in Congress," adding that he would "not accept any attempt to trap me into either raising taxes or gutting defense." (Willis Witter & Karen Riley, Washington Times, A3)

DEMOCRATS START TOUGH BID TO INCREASE TAX REVENUES

House Democrats began the process of looking for taxes to raise with the grim realization that they will get no help from Republicans in the House or the White House.

In a meeting of Democratic members of the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, 21 legislators discussed such options as higher excise taxes, higher energy taxes and higher estate taxes. Although there was no attempt to agree on the substance of a tax package, there was a general feeling that a tax-increase bill could be approved by the committee, according to some of those present.

(Anne Swardson, Washington Post, F1)

WHITE HOUSE MAY BACK AWAY FROM OZONE PACT

The Reagan Administration is reconsidering its strong call for international controls on chlorofluorocarbons to protect Earth's stratospheric ozone and prevent skin cancers, and is weighing instead a public relations campaign to encourage the use of sunglasses and skin lotion, Administration sources said.

The new White House review, prompted largely by Interior Secretary Hodel, has thrown into doubt a tentative agreement among 31 nations to freeze production of chlorofluorocarbons at current levels and reduce their use by 20 percent over the next decade.

Sources said that opposition to the proposed agreement has been rising within the Reagan Administration, particularly among Interior Department officials who believe that the accord would violate President Reagan's philosophy of minimal government regulation.

(Cass Peterson, Washington Post, A1)

DEAVER PERJURY TRIAL DELAYED UNTIL COURT RULES ON LAW Special Counsels' Constitutionality Disputed

A federal judge postponed the perjury trial of former White House aide Michael Deaver until after an appeals court decides his constitutional challenge of the independent counsel law.

U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson also delayed ruling on a request from the independent counsel in the case, Whitney North Seymour, to subpoena Canadian Ambassador Allan Gotlieb and his wife Sondra -- a move that prompted a formal protest from Canada and was spurned by the State Department.

"We are pleased by the judge's decision," said Deaver attorney Randall Turk, "because we believe the statute is unconstitutional and that issue should be resolved before needlessly going to trial."

No new trial date was set. (UPI story, Washington Post, A16)

U.S. JUDGE DEFENDS SPECIAL COUNSEL ACT AS CONSTITUTIONAL

HOT SPRINGS, Va. -- The federal judge in charge of appointing independent counsels offered a passionate defense of the constitutionality of the independent counsel law before an audience that included his colleagues who are to weigh that question.

Speaking at the annual D.C. Circuit judicial conference, Senior Judge George MacKinnon, who heads the three-judge panel that selects independent counsels, said the Ethics in Government statute "has worked well in the past and I think it will work well in the future."

(Ruth Marcus, Washington Post, A16)

VOTE ON NOMINEE IS DELAYED OVER TRAVEL RECORD

A conservative senator has put a hold on the Administration's nomination to be an assistant secretary at the Health and Human Services Department because of questions about eight official trips she took to areas near where her son was playing in college football games.

Sen. Gordon Humphrey said that the trips by Jean Elder, acting assistant secretary in charge of the Office of Human Development Services, appear "unethical" and that he will block a vote on her nomination until he receives an explanation.

(Howard Kurtz, Washington Post, A4)

2 AGENCIES COLLIDE OVER SUMMER AIR SAFETY

NTSB Chairman Burnett Says FAA Is Trying
To Run System 'Up To The Red Line'

The chairman of the nation's safety watchdog agency pushed again for reductions in air traffic during the peak summer travel season that begins next week, while the head of the FAA said that public debate about air safety is becoming needlessly "alarmist."

"The bottom line is, the FAA is trying to run the system up to the red line," Jim Burnett, chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, told a Senate subcommittee in his strongest criticism yet of the FAA. "We don't need to play a game of chicken. We need to run the system on cool instead of hot. We need to build a margin of safety."

"We will not allow the system to become critical," FAA Administrator Donald Engen said in rejecting again that safety may diminish with anticipated increases in summer traffic and summer storms.

(Laura Parker, Washington Post, A10)

NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Thursday Evening, May 28, 1987)

PERSIAN GULF POLICY

NBC's Tom Brokaw: Eleven days after the attack on the USS Stark, President Reagan and Congress are deeply divided tonight on American policy in the Persian Gulf. At issue is the President's plan to get the U.S. more involved in the Gulf by protecting Kuwaiti oil tankers.

NBC's Andrea Mitchell: Even Republican leaders are jumping ship -- telling the President they disagree with his Persian Gulf policy.

(Sen. Robert Dole: "(There) were a number of Republicans (who) expressed reservations about whatever our policy may be there and particularly why we don't extract a sharing of the responsibility from our allies and perhaps impose a fee on the Japanese and West Germans for escort service.")

Aides say that the President will not consider charging a fee, that it would be too much like turning U.S. sailors into mercenaries. In Congress, both parties want the President to wait before assuming responsibility for the safety of Kuwaiti tankers next week.

(Sen. Robert Byrd: "No new commitment should be entered into, in my opinion, until we are completely satisfied that a militarily effective plan, based on capabilities as well as past practices with an insurance factor for the unpredictable, has been developed and will be implemented.")

Sources say that the National Security Council is considering a plan for limited air cover, relying on Saudi pilots except for occasional U.S. patrols flown from carriers outside the Gulf. Military analysts say that could be very risky.... But the President will consider a plan tomorrow to ask the Saudis for more support from AWACS and help in flying refueling planes. Sources tell NBC News the new military proposal also calls for adding three ships to the five now in the Persian Gulf task force, limiting the escorts to a maximum to four Kuwaiti tankers a week, and concentrating U.S. air cover over the Strait of Hormuz. The White House is trying to avoid the appearance of a big military buildup. Secretary Weinberger is said to feel that White House officials are too worried about satisfying Congress and not concerned enough about giving the forces in the Gulf the support they need.

Brokaw: And the AP is reporting tonight that Pentagon officials are now saying that the Reagan Administration has put off for several weeks its plan to send U.S. military protection to Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. As for the USS Stark, Pentagon officials are telling NBC News tonight that U.S. investigators will not be permitted to interview that Iraqi pilot who fired on the ship....

NBC's Rick Davis from Iraq: Admiral David Rogers, along with his team of investigators and Iraqi officers, went into another meeting tonight -- they are trying to get to the details of the attack on the Stark and how to prevent attacks in the future....

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Davis continues:

(Rogers: "We've had a very professional exchange. We've had differences -- we are ironing out those differences. In fact, have ironed out most of those differences. So, I think that by the next 24 hours or so we will be able to make a wrap up statement about the attacks themselves.")

.... Some diplomats and military analysts say the Iraqis may fear that whatever they tell the Americans will be turned over to their enemies.... (NBC-2)

ABC's Peter Jennings: This was the day in Washington when a number of political heavyweights in Congress, including leaders from the President's own party, decided they really were worried about the President's decisions in the Persian Gulf. And after expressing their concern in person, the White House has said that consultation with Congress will be the result. The most immediate concern to a wide array of politicians and the military is the President's decision to give American flag protection to those Kuwaiti oil tankers.

ABC's Sam Donaldson: Administration officials hurried up to Capitol Hill late today to sign onto a new promise to consult Congress on the Persian Gulf policy. House Speaker Wright announced that a bill will be introduced next week, with Administration support, requiring a full report within seven days of passage, so that Congress--

(Rep. Wright: "Will be fully informed as to the extent of plans, extent of our commitments, extent of the involvements that we have or contemplate having with other allied forces whose interests are at stake, how much we expect them to cooperate, exactly what plans we have for the protection of U.S. military force.")

This morning Congressional Republican leaders saw President Reagan and Senator Dole said they told him the American people have reservations about the policy.

(Sen. Dole: "But I don't believe we've yet explained any real reason that we should be providing free escort service to every other country (that) depends on that part of the country for its oil supply.")

Dole and others suggested U.S. allies be charged an escort fee to see their oil safely through the Gulf. Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the idea would be considered and he said the President will discuss the Gulf policy with the allies at the economic summit next month in Venice. Today's deal between the White House and Congress appears to give both sides what they want. The President does not have to report under the War Powers Act as to what's going on with U.S. forces in the Gulf -- something he does not want to do; but by passing new legislation, the Congress gets a full report anyway. Meanwhile the mission continues. Mr. Reagan yesterday gave final approval to the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers with the U.S. flag. And he has now authorized U.S. forces to fire onto Iranian territory against any Iranian missile that fires at them.

Jennings: In the Persian Gulf, the Pentagon team that has been in Baghdad investigating the attack on the USS Stark is getting ready to come home. While there are still some unanswered questions, we have certainly learned more about the attack.

ABC's Bob Zelnick reports on the investigation of Admiral David Rogers and the details which have been made available. (ABC-2)

CBS's Bob Schieffer: There is nothing official yet, but sources say the Reagan Administration has backed off, at least temporarily, from its plan to put Kuwaiti tankers in the Persian Gulf under U.S. protection. The decision came as U.S. policy in the Gulf was under sharp attack today from both Republicans and Democrats in Congress.

CBS's David Martin: Pentagon officials say the controversial escorting of Kuwaiti oil tankers will not begin for another month.... The Navy needs more time to put additional ships into the Persian Gulf -- ships which have not yet left their home port. The Pentagon must also determine exactly what kind of air cover to provide U.S. ships in the Gulf.... Another factor -- Congressional uproar which grew louder today as General Robert Perry gave a closed-door hearing an entirely new account of the attack on the Stark. Perry said it appears that the Stark did not broadcast its first warning to stay away until 15 seconds after the Iraqi pilot fired the first of two Exocet missiles. Previously, U.S. officials had said the Stark issued two warnings before the Iraqi pilot fired. Today's disclosure was an eye-opener.

(Rep. Hopkins: "I suspect he had already fired the missile before we even said anything to him.")

...Pentagon officials are increasingly critical of the performance of the ship's captain, saying he does not appear to have taken any of the standard precautions a prudent commander should have. Iraqis have told Defense Department investigators their pilot spoke English and was very experienced and that he thought the Stark was in a war zone. Before it leaves Iraq tomorrow, the Pentagon team hopes to reach a notification agreement that will prevent future cases of mistaken identity.

Terence Smith: The White House sent National Security Advisor Frank Carlucci and Defense Secretary Weinberger to Capitol Hill late today.... The result -- a Presidential promise to deliver a full report of military plans within a week.

(Rep. Wright: "The White House and his representatives acknowledge and fully accept and respect the responsibility that they have to the Congress.")

Earlier members of the President's own party took their complaints to the White House.

(Sen. Dole: "There were a number of Republicans (who) expressed reservations about whatever our policy may be there, but I don't believe we've yet explained any real reason that we should be providing free escort service to every other country (that) depends on that part of the world for its oil supply.")

Because most of the oil from the Gulf goes to other nations...some Senators suggested that the U.S. charge an escort fee in exchange for protection by American ships. The President promised to raise the issue at the upcoming seven-nation economic summit in Venice. While discussions about military strategy in the Gulf continued at the White House, the Senate Democratic leader said the President should delay the buildup because his policy faces strong public opposition.

(Sen. Byrd: "Haven't we learned that any policy that puts our sons and daughters out there on the edge has to have the support of the American people?")

Tomorrow the President will convene his top level National Security Planning Group for a thorough review of Persian Gulf strategy.

Smith continues: He's expected to make the key decisions on the U.S.' role and report them to Congress before leaving for the Venice summit next Wednesday.

Schieffer: The head of a U.S. military team in Iraq reported good progress today in the two countries' joint investigation of the attack on the Stark. Admiral David Roger said that there is still some differences of opinion over what happened in the Gulf on the night of the missile strike, but he said the Iraqis have been very forthcoming and that the inquiry could be wrapped up by tomorrow. (CBS-Lead)

IRAN-CONTRA HEARINGS

Brokaw: At the Congressional Iran-contra hearings today, former U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, Lewis Tambs, testified that he was ordered to use his post to help the contras open a military front in Southern Nicaragua. He said he received that order from White House aide Oliver North at a time when U.S. assistance to the contras was officially banned by Congress. Tambs said that he assumed any instruction from North came from his superiors. (NBC-3)

ABC's Brit Hume: Tambs said that in 1985, with official U.S. aid to the contras banned, he got orders from Oliver North to open a southern front for the contras....

(Tambs: "My assumption was that any instruction he gave me came from, obviously, his superiors.")

Specifically, he said, that meant a small Administration task force on Central America that included North and Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, whom Tambs appeared to directly contradict on the question of when Abrams knew what.

(Inouye: "He has testified that he does not recall discussing this assignment with you at the Sept. 85 Central American Chiefs of Mission Conference. But you are convinced that at that time he did discuss it with you, as you have testified?"

Tambs: "Yes, sir.")

Abrams may testify as early as tomorrow. Earlier, former CIA man Felix Rodriguez, who worked in the contras supply network was questioned about leads he provided the committee in testimony yesterday. Today, most of the leads went nowhere. For example, he said he told Oliver North that exposure of the contra supply network would cause a scandal worse than Watergate. But today he said all he meant by that was that two key figures in the network -- Richard Secord and Thomas Clines had been publicly linked to Edwin Wilson, the ex-CIA man convicted of selling weapons to Libya.

(Sen. Hatch: "You have testified that you did not trust Gen. Secord and Thomas Clines because of their prior association with Edwin Wilson. Did you have any direct evidence of wrongdoing on their part or only a suspicion of guilt based on association?"

Rodriguez: "I had nothing specific.")

Guilt by association or not, some members wanted to hear all about why Rodriguez decided to post armed guards at one point on contra aircraft.

(Sen. Tribble: "The question is, 'Who are you concerned about?'"

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Hume continues:

Rodriguez: "Well, sir, I was concerned that we would receive orders from the owner -- which you know is Secord -- and take the airplanes somewhere else."

Sen. Rudman: "So they were not only arms dealers, they were making \$50,000-\$60,000 on people who were risking their lives. So they were arms dealers and they were also flesh-peddlers -- were they not?"

Rodriguez: "That's what it (would) look like."

Fellow Republican McClure took issue with that -- calling it conviction by indirection. Still, some on the committee seemed determined, above all, to discredit Secord. (ABC-5)

Schieffer: The Justice Department told Congress today that President Reagan has a legal right to order Special Prosecutor Lawrence Walsh to grant Oliver North immunity from prosecution. What's more, the Justice Department said if Special Prosecutor Walsh refused, the President could fire him. The Justice Department stressed that it was just giving a legal opinion and that President Reagan has no plans to do any of this.

CBS's Phil Jones:

(Sen. Inouye: "You got your marching orders on the opening of the southern front from Col. North?"

Tambs: "Yes, sir."

Sen. Inouye: "You did not get this direction from the Secretary of State?"

Tambs: "No, sir.")

That was the candid admission today from former Ambassador Tambs, explaining how he got involved in a military operation for the Nicaraguan contras at a time when the law prohibited direct or indirect government assistance....

(Tambs: "Col. North asked me go down and open up the southern front.... Mr. North was working for the National Security Council, and obviously my assumption was that any instruction he gave me came from, obviously, his superiors.")

Tambs argued that he had not broken the Boland amendment.

(Tambs: "It forbade the use of appropriated U.S. government funds to aid the freedom fighters and any aid in opening the southern front would come from what we casually call 'private, patriotic Americans.'...No, that's Ollie's term -- he liked that one.")

Another witness, former CIA agent Felix Rodriguez, who was also involved in the contra airlift, talked today about distrust of the Americans running the operation, including retired Gen. Richard Secord.... (CBS-3)

AIDS

Brokaw: It appears tonight that President Reagan is now moving toward approval of a national AIDS testing program mandatory for some people, voluntary for others. While consideration of the AIDS testing program is underway at the highest levels of the White House, health officials now estimate that 179,000 Americans will die by 1991 of the disease. And the numbers will go dramatically higher after that.

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NBC's Chris Wallace: The program the President is expected to approve would mean AIDS testing for millions of Americans. Top Administration officials came to the White House today to submit the plan. And Mr. Reagan indicated strong support. Officials tell NBC News that at the federal level, the plan calls for mandatory testing of all federal prisoners and immigrants. It also calls for developing routine testing in veterans' hospitals. "Routine" means the test would be given automatically, but not to people who strongly object. As for the states, they would be encouraged to test all people getting marriage licenses, patients in hospitals and drug clinics and all state prisoners. It would be up to the states whether testing would be mandatory. Officials tell NBC News the President was the plan's strongest supporter -- saying at one point, "We have an obligation to protect innocent citizens; we ought to do everything we can." But the issue of mandatory testing is controversial. Supporters say it's necessary to deal with a terrible health problem that keeps spreading. (Rep. Dannemeyer: "Routinely, we've been testing people to get a marriage license for a venereal disease called syphilis. Have you heard any protests about people from civil libertarian groups about having that test in our system?")

Civil libertarians worry about an invasion of privacy and they aren't the only ones protesting. Health officials, including Surgeon General Coop say that mandatory testing would scare away some of the people most in need of help.

(Surgeon General Coop from March 24: "A lot of the people that you would be trying to identify would slip through the net because it never can be that tight.")

Despite his reservations, officials say Coop backed today's plan, after the original plan for mandatory testing was softened to routine testing in most cases. Meanwhile, there's another controversy over the President's plan to appoint a commission on AIDS. Advisors say Mr. Reagan does not intend to appoint any gays. Top researchers say that's an outrage and that they will boycott the commission. Gay activists say the White House is more concerned with right-wing politics than public health.

(Ben Schaltz, National Gay Alliance: "To exclude the gay community from a presidential commission on AIDS is the moral equivalent of excluding the Jewish community for a commission on the Holocaust.")

The mix of politics and public health will continue. The President is expected to announce his new testing plan at a dinner this Sunday honoring Dr. Coop, whose views on AIDS Mr. Reagan has often overruled.

NBC's Robert Bazell reports on doctor's belief that testing is a key to controlling the disease. (NBC-Lead, CBS-6)

CUBAN DEFECTOR

Schieffer: A top officer in the Cuban military took a freedom flight to the U.S. today. The defector has just been identified in Washington.

CBS's Rita Braver: Describing it as a major break for U.S. intelligence, officials here say a top-ranking Cuban military official has defected to the U.S.

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Braver continues: The man is identified as Brig. Gen. Rafael de Pino Diaz -- said to be the number two man in the defense ministry and the former chief of the Cuban Air Force. The Immigration Service says he and his family flew into Key West Naval Air Station about 2 p.m. asking for asylum. The FBI has been called in to provide security for the family and sources say a check is now being conducted to be sure the man is who he claims to be....

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

AIRLINE SAFETY

ABC's Bettina Gregory: The chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board renewed and redoubled his charge the FAA must cut back on the number of flights this summer or dangerously increase the potential for another midair collision.

(Jim Burrett, Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board: "The FAA, I believe, is trying to run the system up to the red line. And I'm not in favor of that. I think that we don't need to play a game of chicken to see how close we can get.")

The FAA says, while it's not cutting down the number of flights, it has the summer situation under control.

(Donald Engen, FAA spokesman: "As you and I are sitting here, sir, we are reducing the flow of air traffic.")...

(Sen. Hollings: "If Sherman, rather than marching through Georgia, had landed at the airport, we would have won that war.")

But the FAA has a new computer....

(Egen: "This will allow us to forecast what traffic will be in the future. It will enable us to identify the overloaded sectors before then become overloaded.")

Although this new computer gives the FAA a new overview of problems in the nation's control towers, it's still being testing. And the Safety Board argues it won't be ready to solve air traffic problems this summer.

(ABC-4)

DEAVER

Jennings: A federal judge in Washington has postponed the perjury trial of Michael Deaver, the former aide to President Reagan, until an appeals court can rule on Deaver's challenge to the independent counsel. Deaver's lawyers have argued that the law which provides for an independent counsel is unconstitutional. Deaver is accused of lying about his lobbying activities after leaving the White House.

(ABC-7)

EDITORIALS/COLUMNISTS

VENICE SUMMIT

Venice In The Spring -- "Inevitably, President Reagan will pledge once again to reduce the U.S. budget deficit. Inevitably, everyone will promise to fight the menace of protectionism. And, inevitably, there will be a diplomatic statement about the need for continuing discussions to consider the possibility of thinking about further dialogue to find ways to limit the volatility of exchange rates. If that all sounds familiar, it should. Many of the same promises were made after last year's summit, and the results remain hard to see.... There's not much likelihood of earth-shattering news from Venice..... The whole business of economic summitry makes little sense unless there is some reasonable prospect of accord. Otherwise, summits serve only to excite expectations that are left unfulfilled, making people everywhere even more concerned about the state of the world economy."
(Journal of Commerce, 5/28)

USS STARK

...Begin With Why U.S. Ships Are In The Gulf -- "This time the President can't get by with reciting flag-waving rhetoric.... Ronald Reagan is going to have to be clear and precise -- why he's raising the stakes in the Gulf, what we do if a U.S. ship is hit or sunk, how far he'll go toward war. Reagan has more skeptics than he probably imagines.... A long series of Reagan Administration tragic and comic misadventures make people wonder: Do the guys at the top know what the hell they're doing? ...Waiting for the President's answers, remember the disconsolate captain of the USS Stark, his ship turned into a fireball by a missile that struck without warning in the night. 'I don't know whether it was my fault, a systems malfunction, or an act of God,' he said. That's why the Senate and a confused public want the President to turn on the radar. Don't blindside us, Ron."
(Sandy Grady, Miami Herald, 5/27)

Playing Policeman To The World -- "Nothing succeeds like excess. By pushing every cold war tendency to a new limit, President Reagan has succeeded in showing Congress and the country the grave risks of an overly ambitious foreign policy. That was not his intention, but it may be his lasting achievement.... Reaganism may appear in retrospect as a rich young nation's last fling before the acceptance of maturity with its wise constraints and modest expectations."

(William V. Shannon, Boston Globe, 5/27)

But What If Iran Attacks Us? -- "The question remains: how does the Administration plan to protect the tankers? How does it intend to retaliate if the Iranians attack a tanker or its naval escort? What is the worst the Iranians might do and how would America respond? Without better answers, there is no hope of getting the necessary bipartisan support in Congress and in the country for this risky but defensible new policy."

(Philadelphia Inquirer, 5/28)

USS STARK (continued)

U.S. Ships Imperiled In Interest Of Japan, Europe -- "If this country is going into the bodyguard business, the least we should ask is to be paid for it.... We spend money and risk lives so that Kuwait and Japan and European nations can keep making money.... If we're going to put our expensive military hardware and the lives of our sailors and pilots on the line, why shouldn't we be compensated by those who are making the profit?"
(Mike Royko, Kansas City Times, 5/26)

Spread The Risk In The Gulf -- "It is time to internationalize the naval protective force in the Persian Gulf to make clear Western nations will act in concert to maintain the flow of oil vital to their economies.... The United States also should undertake diplomatic initiatives to bring an end to the war itself. Such initiatives should include consultations with the Soviet Union, which is supplying arms to Iraq. Peace in the Persian Gulf is in the interest of all nations."
(Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 5/21)

U.S. Doesn't Need More In Gulf -- "President Reagan's call for an even stronger U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf is a case of misguided priorities.... Putting American flags on Kuwaiti ships seems like an open invitation to calculated confusion.... The duty of the President remains one of protecting U.S. interests.... To provoke a test of that commitment by flying the U.S. flag through a danger zone would only create another blot on the image Reagan wants to protect."
(Milwaukee Sentinel, 5/23)

Times To Account For Gulf Aims -- "President Reagan does risk making the war our scrap with his decision to give American-flag status to 11 Kuwaiti vessels.... If the intent of Washington's deepening involvement is to convince Iran of the futility of its war with Iraq so that it will agree to a cease-fire, then the effort is worth pursuing. But we must be on guard for sparks that ignite a U.S.-Iranian conflict or for preventable disaster such as befell the Stark."
(Atlanta Journal, 5/23)

Sitting Ducks On The Persian Gulf -- "The attack on the Stark -- for whatever reason or reasons it was successful -- should cause a critical reappraisal of the presence of U.S. naval vessels in the Gulf.... It seems foolhardy to position the Stark or other naval vessels as sitting ducks in the Persian Gulf, just awaiting a similar attack."
(Baton Rouge States-Times, 5/20)

Middle East Turmoil -- "The Middle East is too crucial a region for the United States to sit idly by and allow the Soviets to gain dominance there. It is true that the United States needs to maintain a strong relationship with Israel. But we also must cultivate a better understanding of the needs and desires of the Arab nations, which too often have wound up on the short end of our diplomatic efforts in the region."
(Fort Worth Star Telegram, 5/19)

Saudis Get Bum Rap In Stark Affair -- "For us to call two Saudi pilots and their ground controllers to track down the Iraqi culprit in the Stark incident was to propose the unacceptable.... Trying to blame others in this case the Saudis, for what may turn out to be our own errors of commission and omission is becoming an all-too-common American habit. The finger-pointers ought to grow up."
(Atlanta Constitution, 5/25)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

USS STARK

"In regard to the attack on the USS Stark, why do we continue to allow the President to use American military personnel as pawns in the dangerous games he wants to play?"

(Helen Bower, Birmingham, Birmingham News, 5/22)

"If we were all crewmen on the USS Stark, and the ship's defense systems were President Reagan's Star Wars system, and the Iraqi Exocet were a Soviet missile attack, we would all be dead now, wouldn't we?"

(Byrd Kranisk, Beverly, Boston Globe, 5/25)

"We are in the Persian Gulf (in harm's way) for that old and noble purpose, freedom of the seas, a concept that has been with us for so long that we have forgotten that it is not a law of nature... This is the cause for which 37 of the Stark's crew gave their lives. And for the same cause, more may yet be called upon to sacrifice much."

(Edward J. Lorenz, Watertown, Hartford Courant, 5/25)

"The purpose of our presence in the Persian Gulf is not a commercial dependency; it is, as every patriotic professional knows, to counter the Soviet threat.... If the U.S. taxpayer is to believe that the Navy is in the Persian Gulf to protect the importance of crude oil and other commercial interests on the high seas, then our 37 servicemen did in fact die in vain."

(John S. Stedman, Point Loma, San Diego Tribune, 5/22)

"Surely Europe and Japan could spare some [military protection] to defend their oil supplies. But there is no talk of a joint NATO-Japanese task force to keep the Gulf open. There are no offers from Europe or Japan to 're-flag' Kuwaiti tankers under their colors. It seems that we Americans are expected to provide not only the chief but all the braves as well. And then people complain about us 'decoupling' from Europe and Japan!"

(Micheal D. Jones, Bowie, Md., Washington Times, 5/27)

IRAN-CONTRA HEARINGS

"I have personally been moved to both pride and tears by the heroism, patriotism and dedication to the ideals of this country of Messrs. Secord, McFarlane and Owen. And I am truly proud of the shining member of my generation -- Lt. Col. Oliver North."

(Sara Goode, Linderhurst, New York Post, 5/27)

"With all these, 'I cannot recall,' or saying, 'no' and then finding a memo saying 'yes,' they want me to cover my ears, mouth and eyes.... These people are our leaders. Leaders of one of the most powerful countries in the world. The incompetents, and I must call them that, because they do not even know what they said five minutes after they say it. And remember, one of those people has his finger on The Button."

(Richard J. Litke, Parma, Cleveland Plain Dealer, 5/25)



News Summary

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 1987 -- 6 a.m. EDT EDITION

TODAY'S HEADLINES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Plan To Protect Kuwaiti Ships Postponed -- With congressional alarm rising, the Reagan Administration has put off for several weeks its plan to extend American military protection to Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. (Christian Science Monitor, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Washington Times, AP, Reuter, UPI)

IRAN-NICARAGUA

Former Ambassador To Costa Rica Describes Involvement In Contra Cause -- Lewis Tambs testified that when he began his job as U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica in July 1985 Oliver North instructed him to "open up the southern front" for the contras. (Los Angeles Times, USA Today, Washington Post, Copley, Newhouse, Scripps Howard)

NATIONAL NEWS

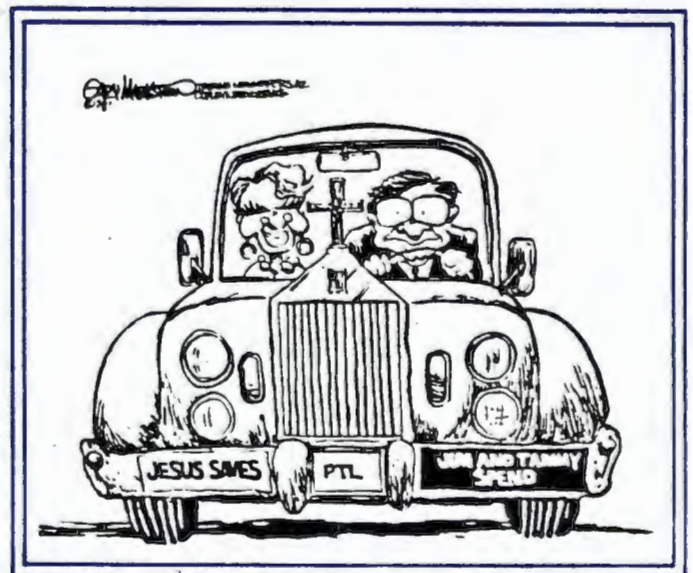
Reagan Moving Closer To Mandatory AIDS Testing -- President Reagan, armed with unanimous recommendations from his Cabinet, is moving toward publicly supporting expanded medical testing as part of a government strategy to curb the spread of AIDS. (Washington Times, UPI)

NETWORK NEWS (Thursday Evening)

PERSIAN GULF -- President Reagan and Congress are deeply divided on American policy in the Persian Gulf.

IRAN-CONTRA -- Lewis Tambs said he was ordered to use his post as ambassador to help the contras open a military front in Southern Nicaragua.

AIDS -- President Reagan is moving toward approval of a national AIDS testing program for some groups.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

TANKER ESCORT PLAN ENVISIONS CONVOYS Hill To Get Report On Gulf Situation

President Reagan will be presented with a military plan for protecting Kuwaiti tankers under the American flag in the Persian Gulf that envisions a convoy of three or four tankers being escorted under U.S. naval protection about every 10 days, Administration sources said.

Responding to criticism on Capitol Hill, Secretary Weinberger and National Security Adviser Carlucci told Senate leaders that the escorts will not begin for several weeks, allowing time for a report to Congress, which it has requested, before the convoys begin. Previously, the White House had said the escorts could begin as soon as next week.

After meeting with House and Senate leaders, the Administration agreed to comply with legislation that requires the report to Congress but stops short of invoking the War Powers Resolution, which would effectively give Congress a veto over future deployments.

The military plan, prepared in part by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also calls for the tankers to receive any necessary air protection from U.S. warplanes based on carriers outside the Gulf, the sources said. If this plan is accepted, there would be no need to ask Saudi Arabia to allow U.S. aircraft to use its airstrips to protect the ships, the sources said.

(David Hoffman & Don Oberdorfer, Washington Post, A1)

Reagan Plans To Ask Allies To Share Task Of Protecting Oil Tankers In Persian Gulf

President Reagan, responding to growing unhappiness in Congress about his plan to increase naval escorts in the Persian Gulf, intends to ask allies to share the task of protecting oil tankers.

In meetings with congressional Republicans, President Reagan promised to raise the issue of joint efforts to protect Gulf shipping at a summit meeting of leaders from seven industrialized nations in Venice, Italy, that starts June 8.

The Republican lawmakers had argued that Western Europe and Japan, which obtain a much larger percentage of their oil imports from the Persian Gulf than does the U.S., should share the cost and risk of protecting tankers from attacks stemming from the Iran-Iraq war. "There are a number of Republicans who expressed reservations about whatever our policy there may be, and particularly why we don't extract a sharing of responsibility from our allies," said Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole. (Gerald Seib & Robert Greenberger, Wall Street Journal, A54)

Japan Disputes U.S. Tack In Gulf

Japanese government officials and policymakers show little enthusiasm for the Reagan Administration's approach to protecting shipping routes in the Persian Gulf.

Though Japan has greater dependence on oil coming out of the Gulf than does any other major industrial nation, Tokyo is cool to calls to back an expanded military patrol effort. Diplomatic efforts, Japanese officials believe, may prove more fruitful than a show of military strength that might antagonize Iran. (Daniel Snider, Christain Science Monitor, A1)

Republicans Ask Reagan To Charge Allies Fees For Escorting Tankers

Republican leaders, expressing reservations about U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf, asked President Reagan to charge allies a fee for escorting oil tankers through the volatile waterway.

At the same time, the White House negotiated an agreement with Speaker Jim Wright that the House would pass a resolution demanding information on U.S. military rules of engagement but would drop further calls for invocation of the War Powers Act.

In another development, Speaker Wright told reporters Saudi Arabia has agreed to provide radar intelligence information from its U.S.-built AWACS radar surveillance planes. (UPI)

Hill Demands To Know Plans For Gulf

Congressional leaders demanded an Administration explanation of U.S. military plans to protect Kuwaiti ships in the volatile Persian Gulf, with several lawmakers charging that President Reagan has kept Congress in the dark.

Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd called on the Administration to postpone making any new commitments in the Gulf until there has been a full report to Congress on the USS Stark incident and new U.S. military planning to protect naval forces in the region.

(Jennifer Spevacek, Washington Times, A6)

Shultz Requests Permission From Arab States To Use Landing Facilities

Secretary Shultz said the Administration has begun talking to Arab states about using their airfields for U.S. fighters protecting ships in the Persian Gulf.

Shultz...said he thought the idea of protecting ships in the volatile waterway with American planes based on carriers was expensive and probably economically unworkable.

In the past, the U.S. has asked several Arab countries, including Oman and Saudi Arabia, for landing rights, but they have refused because of political reasons.

"The situation has changed and they are looking at it again," Shultz said. (UPI)

Plan To Protect Kuwaiti Ships Postponed

With congressional alarm rising, the Reagan Administration has put off for several weeks its plan to extend American military protection to Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf, Pentagon officials and Sen. Sam Nunn said.

Iran's ambassador to the U.N., Said Rajaie-Khorassani, ...said the U.S. is "looking for trouble" by stepping up its military presence in the Gulf.

Secretary Shultz...said "the United States has no intention and will not get directly involved in the Iran-Iraq war." (Norman Black, AP)

Iranian President Says Tehran Will Confront Superpowers

LONDON -- Iranian President Ali Khamenei has said the U.S. will be humiliated in any confrontation with Iran in the Persian Gulf, Iran's national news agency IRNA reported.

Iran will confront the "expansionist presence of the superpower" in the Gulf and has expressed confidence that "U.S. imperialism will retreat with humiliation," IRNA quoted him as saying. (Reuter)

Kuwait Oil Tankers Not On Iran's List Of Shipping Targets

Iran warned that ships in the Persian Gulf carrying items it has deemed contraband will be attacked but not those vessels transporting Kuwaiti oil.

A spokesman for Iran's mission at the U.N. said Tehran would confiscate goods aboard ships plying Gulf waters that "contribute to the strengthening of the war machine of Iraq."

Iran has declared a list of items as prohibited, according to Reagan Administration officials. "This does not include Kuwaiti oil exports," the Iranian spokesman said.

The spokesman declined to say whether Iran would consider Kuwaiti oil being shipped on behalf of Iraq as contraband. Both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are believed to be selling an estimated 750,000 barrels of oil a day in an effort to fulfill Iraqi oil contracts that Baghdad has been unable to live up to because of its almost 7-year-old war with Iran.

(James Dorsey & Warren Strobel, Washington Times, A1)

U.S. Escorts Likely To Trigger Iranian Response, Experts Say

A U.S. commitment to protect Kuwaiti ships in the Persian Gulf is likely to lead to Iranian military and terrorist responses that could require a massive deployment of U.S. military power to the region, current and former military leaders warned.

A few extra ships to protect Kuwaiti tankers "is plenty to put up a bluff," said Stansfield Turner, former Navy commander of Mediterranean forces and CIA director, "but what happens if they call it? We have to have thought through what we'll do."

Elmo Zumwalt, a former chief of naval operations, said the U.S. would not only need "at least two carriers" in the region if land bases cannot be used but also would require submarines to guard against Soviet or other hostile submarines.

(George Wilson, Washington Post, A20)

Soviet Ships Boost Superpower Role

BAGHDAD -- The Soviet Union has dispatched three mine sweepers to the Persian Gulf in a new incremental buildup of Soviet and American naval forces along the periphery of the Iran-Iraq war, military and diplomatic sources reported.

The military significance of separate Soviet and American decisions this month to expand their roles in protecting shipping in the Gulf is uncertain; but politically, they are likely to work in favor of Iraq, according to Western and Third World diplomatic sources here.

(Jim Hoagland, Washington Post, A1)

Iraq Says Pilot Never Heard Stark's Warnings

Iraq has told U.S. investigators that its pilot claims he did not hear any warnings from the USS Stark before firing two Exocet missiles at the frigate and killing 37 sailors, members of Congress were told by Pentagon officials.

Rep. Bill Nichols, chairman of the investigations subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, told reporters after a briefing by officials representing the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the single French-built F-1 Mirage used in the mistaken attack had been modified to carry two of the deadly missiles, one under each wing. (UPI)

SOVIETS DASH PROPOSAL FOR CUTBACKS IN TROOPS

EAST BERLIN -- Soviet officials rebuffed Western proposals to reduce the number of Soviet troops stationed in Central Europe, as Soviet leader Gorbachev discussed arms control with Warsaw Pact leaders at their annual summit meeting.

A Soviet spokesman said there would be no unilateral withdrawal of Soviet troops from Central Europe, and Soviet officials said the next arms control proposals should come from the West. (Washington Times, A1)

U.S. WORLD INFLUENCE SEEN SLIPPING IN GORBACHEV ERA

MOSCOW -- An unusual coincidence of international politics -- a young Soviet leader peppering the globe with disarmament and other proposals while an aging American President has been weakened by foreign policy scandals -- is creating an impression that Washington is losing ground to Moscow in global influence.

That is the overwhelming view expressed here by a score of senior Moscow-based diplomats from Western Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, and echoed in a number of recent opinion polls, even in countries closely allied with the U.S.

(News Analysis, Gary Lee, Washington Post, A27)

THE VENICE SUMMIT

President Reagan departs Wednesday for Venice, Italy, and his seventh economic summit meeting with America's leading trading partners, but the gathering is expected to produce few, if any, dramatic new achievements.

The fading glory and diminishing political powers of most of the seven world leaders who will participate in the summit -- including Reagan -- insures a climate "not conducive to a lot of economic risk-taking at this time," said a senior Administration official.

Trade tensions and the falling U.S. dollar will get some attention, but the war in the Persian Gulf, chances for a U.S.-Soviet arms deal, and the threat of a worldwide epidemic of AIDS are expected to crowd economic issues into the background when the talks open June 8, according to senior U.S. officials and European diplomats. (Miles Benson, Newhouse)

U.S. TO SEEK CHANGE IN BAKER PLAN
'Menu Of Options' Will Be Proposed

The U.S. will propose a modification to improve the Baker debt plan at the Venice economic summit, Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs Allen Wallis said.

Wallis said the U.S. will suggest strengthening the debt strategy by having commercial banks draw on a "menu of options," or alternatives to new lending called for in the original plan put forward by Treasury Secretary Baker in 1985. (Hobart Rowen, Washington Post, F1)

BELGIAN LEADER FEARS ECONOMIC DEPRESSION

Belgian Prime Minister Wilfried Martens met President Reagan in advance of next month's economic summit and said he fears an economic depression if the summit fails.

"We hope that the Venice summit will be a success and I will ask the President to use all his influence to make it a success," Martens told reporters before meeting with the President. "I fear that if the Venice Summit is not a success, we will enter a period of recession, depression. His role is vital." (UPI)

SECURITY OFFICIALS MEET ON ANTITERRORISM PLANS

PARIS -- Top antiterrorism officials from the major noncommunist nations met under extraordinary security precautions in what was described as an intensified effort to increase cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

The gathering, organized hastily at French and West German initiative, was interpreted as a victory for the Reagan Administration, which has pushed for such high-visibility antiterrorism coordination.

"We have participated in what we hope is the first of a series of such meetings," Attorney General Meese, who led the U.S. delegation.

(Edward Cody, Washington Post, A27)

Antiterrorism Struggle Finds New Momentum Ahead Of Summit

PARIS -- Attorney General Meese has announced a new Western initiative that would extend European antiterrorism cooperation across the Atlantic and Pacific.

Speaking at the end of the heavily-guarded meeting of top law enforcers from nine Western nations in the French interior ministry, Meese said the issue is now on the agenda for annual summits of the "Big Seven" non-communist industrial countries.

"The message for the Venice Summit is that each of us will brief the respective heads of state and particularly will bring in what is an essentially new dimension of organized effort in the summit context of the ministers of justice and interior," Meese said.

(Barbara Bright, Reuter)

BRITISH DIPLOMAT SEIZED IN TEHRAN

LONDON -- Britain's No. 2 diplomat in Iran was kidnapped in Tehran by six gunmen who crashed their car into the envoy's auto and dragged him away in front of his wife and infant son, authorities said.

Edward Chaplin, 36, the second-ranking diplomat at the British Interests Section, was driving on a Tehran highway when a car behind forced him to stop, a Foreign Office spokesman said.

"Six armed men came from the car and forcibly dragged him away," the spokesman said. "He was assaulted, but no shots were fired."

(UPI)

BRITISH CAMPAIGN FOCUSES ON REAGAN

Comment About Labor's 'Grievous Errors' Finds Kinnock Defensive

LONDON -- President Reagan took center stage in Britain's vitriolic election campaign today, as his description of the Labor Party's antinuclear defense plans as "grievous errors" brought quick agreement from Prime Minister Thatcher, and Labor suggestions that Reagan had been "mobilized" as a weapon for her campaign.

Labor leader Neil Kinnock, who is trying to unseat Thatcher in the June 11 elections, said her Conservative Party was getting "pressurized" by Labor's advances in public opinion polls, and might have sought to enlist Reagan on the sensitive defense issue.

(Karen DeYoung, Washington Post, A27)

HIGH-RANKING CUBAN OFFICER DEFECTS WITH FAMILY TO U.S.

Plane Lands At Key West Naval Air Base

A man described by U.S. officials as the deputy chief of staff of Cuba's armed forces defected to the U.S., flying a small plane and with his wife and three children aboard to the U.S. naval air station in Key West, Florida.

U.S. officials said they think that the man is Brig. Gen. Rafael del Pino Diaz, making him the highest Cuban military officer publicly identified as defecting from the communist island nation in this decade.

Patrick Korten, a Justice Department spokesman, said last night that "until his departure from Cuba he was identified as the deputy chief of staff of the Cuban defense ministry and the former chief of the Cuban air force."

(Joe Pichirallo & Julia Preston, Washington Post, A1)

FRATERNIZATION CHARGES FILED AGAINST MARINE

Ex-Guard Accused Of Affair With Soviet

Staff Sgt. Robert Stuffbeame, a former Marine Corps guard at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, was accused of going to an off-limits bar, consorting with two Soviet women, having an affair with one of them and lying about it, the Marine Corps said.

The charges against Stuffbeame, 25, were presented at a pretrial hearing at Quantico base where two other Marines in the Moscow sex-for-secrets scandal are being held. (UPI story, Washington Post, A9)

IRAN — NICARAGUA

EX-ENVOY SAYS NORTH TOLD HIM TO AID CONTRAS Objective Was To Open A 'Southern Front'

Former U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica Lewis Tambs said that in mid-1985 he was directed by White House aide Lt. Col. Oliver North -- then part of a secret three-man group managing the Reagan Administration's policy in support of the contras -- to assist the rebels in opening a "southern front" against the Nicaraguan forces.

Committee members want to question Abrams (scheduled to appear before the congressional committees next week) to learn whether the RIG, which included North, Abrams and a CIA representative, reported to higher authorities, such as Secretary Shultz and the President, or whether it operated alone to provide deniability to higher officials.

Abrams' testimony is also expected to be controversial because of conflicts that committee members said exist between what Tambs said in public yesterday and what Abrams had said earlier in a still unreleased private deposition to the committees.

(Walter Pincus & Dan Morgan, Washington Post, A1)

Former U.S. Ambassador To Costa Rica Testifies He Was Ordered By North To Open Up A Southern Front In Nicaragua

Lewis Tambs testified that he was dispatched to his diplomatic post in Costa Rica with instructions from former White House aide Oliver North to help the contra rebels open up a "southern" military front in neighboring Nicaragua.

In attempting to comply with the directive, Tambs said he assumed he was carrying out the policy of President Reagan...

Asked by Mark Belnick, executive assistant to the chief counsel for the Senate Iran-contra committee, whether he wasn't concerned about pursuing a course that would be in "some conflict with the Boland amendment."

"They have a saying in the Foreign Service: That when you take the king's shilling, you do the king's bidding," replied Tambs.

(Finlay Lewis, Copley)

Former Ambassador To Costa Rica Describes Involvement In Contra Cause

Lewis Tambs testified that when he began (his position as U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica) in July 1985 Oliver North instructed him to "open up the southern front" for the contras.

Tambs testified that Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams heard details of his activities helping the contras at a meeting of U.S. officials in Panama in September 1985. Tambs said he assumed the local CIA station chief provided the late CIA Director William Casey with all the details as well.

But Sen. Daniel Inouye...said that Abrams has told the congressional committees in a deposition that he can't recall any discussions with Tambs about the contra air strip at the Panama meeting. Abrams also said he wasn't aware the air strip was under construction at that time, Inouye said.

(Walter Friedenberg & Lance Gay, Scripps Howard)

Three U.S. Agencies Encouraged 'Southern Front,' Tambs Testifies

The Reagan Administration not only helped supply arms and money to the contra rebels, but at least three U.S. agencies also encouraged the creation of a separate rebel army to wage war against the Marxist Sandinista government, according to new testimony.

The fighting force known as the "southern front" was set up in late 1985 and assisted through much of 1986 by U.S. diplomats and intelligence officers as well as then National Security Council aide Oliver North, the House-Senate committee learned.

Lewis Tambs, the former U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica, publicly revealed the plan and his role in setting up the southern front army.

(Robert Gettlin & Robert Lewis, Newhouse)

Iran Probe Told Of Sacrificed Careers

Former U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Lewis Tambs accused high-ranking Administration officials of sacrificing their subordinates' careers to save their own, and disputed Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams' claims of ignorance about Tambs' assignment to assist Nicaragua's contras.

"The field officers who went forward are not being backed up by the superiors who gave them orders," Tambs complained.

"What I find to be disconcerting, to put it mildly, is to see officers who were carrying out what they believed to be orders from their legitimate superiors now, in effect, seeing their careers sacrificed."

(Karen Tumulty & Sara Fritz, Los Angeles Times, A1)

North's Gang 'Couldn't Shoot Straight'

It's a wonder Oliver North's covert supply network stayed a secret as long as it did.

Between rancorous infighting -- and operational bumbling -- North's network was barely off the ground in September 1986 before it was exposed a month later by the downing over Nicaragua of a plane carrying weapons and flier Eugene Hasenfus.

Testimony during the fourth week of the Iran-contra hearings unveiled tales of bitter turf wars, comical oversights and quick fixes.

(Leslie Phillips, USA Today, A4)

REAGAN CAN FIRE WALSH, HILL TOLD

Senate Panel Reveals Justice Dept. Reply To Hypothetical Question

President Reagan could order independent counsel Lawrence Walsh to grant Lt. Col. Oliver North immunity from prosecution in the Iran-contra affair and would have "good cause" to fire Walsh if he refused to obey, according to the Justice Department.

"An independent counsel must follow the lawful direction of the President," Assistant Attorney General John Bolton informed a Senate Governmental Affairs subcommittee in writing last week in response to a hypothetical question posed by the panel. Justice Department spokesman Terry Eastland affirmed that this was the department's official position.

(George Lardner, Washington Post, A16)

Justice Aide Holds Reagan Has Power To Fire Walsh

A Justice Department official told Congress that President Reagan could order independent counsel Lawrence Walsh to grant immunity from prosecution to Lt. Col. Oliver North and that the President could fire Walsh if he refused to do so.

The statement, by Assistant Atty. Gen. John Bolton, immediately raised the hackles of some members of Congress, who said they believe that the Reagan Administration is threatening another "Saturday Night Massacre," the label given to the October, 1973, firing of Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox by a Justice official acting under orders from former President Nixon.

But Bolton's statement was immediately played down by other department officials, who expressed partisan anger at Sen. Carl Levin for asking Bolton what they called "loaded hypothetical questions." They said that Reagan had no intention of forcing Walsh to grant immunity to North or of seeking Walsh's dismissal. (Robert Jackson, Los Angeles Times)

SO FAR, IRAN HEARINGS BEAR OUT BUSH'S LIMITED ROLE

After almost four weeks of congressional hearings on the Iran-contra scandal, no evidence has come to light implicating Vice President Bush in the elaborate operation organized to supply arms and money to the Nicaraguan contra rebels. Although Bush is a close foreign policy adviser to the President and a member of the National Security Council, his role in the whole Iran-contra affair remains enigmatic.

If the Iran-contra hearings produce no damaging revelations, Bush will still face the political challenge of distancing himself from the weakened Reagan Administration while not abandoning his loyalty to the President and his policies. Many political analysts believe the Vice President, despite his present organizational strength, will not be able to walk away with the nomination unless he can carve out and sell his own vision of the presidency.

(Charlotte Saikowski, Christian Science Monitor, A1)

EDITOR'S NOTE: "Week Four Of The Testimony," appears in The Washington Post, A17.

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NATIONAL NEWS

REAGAN MOVING CLOSER TO MANDATORY AIDS TESTING

President Reagan, armed with unanimous recommendations from his Cabinet, is moving toward publicly supporting expanded medical testing as part of a government strategy to curb the spread of AIDS.

The dimensions of that program -- who would be subject of testing and under what circumstances -- remain unclear, complicated by issues of law and public policy that have been thrust onto the national stage by the AIDS epidemic.

However, Administration officials expect Reagan to embrace recommendations received from the Cabinet-level Domestic Policy Council and announce his position as early as Sunday, when he delivers the keynote address at a fund-raising dinner intended to raise \$500,000 or more for AIDS research. (Norman Sandler, UPI)

Bennett, Koop End AIDS Feud

Education Secretary Bennett and Surgeon General Koop ended a longstanding feud over expanded AIDS testing, with Koop endorsing a broad-based package of routine tests for the deadly disease.

They include routine testing for federal prisoners, Veterans Administration hospital patients and immigrants, sources said.

In addition, the President's Domestic Policy Council also urged the President to publicly persuade states to test marriage license applicants, hospital patients, prisoners in state and local facilities and patients at venereal disease clinics. (Willis Witter, Washington Times, A3)

PRESIDENT WILL HIT THE ROAD IN BUDGET DISPUTE

Escalating confrontation with congressional Democrats over the budget deficit, President Reagan declared that he will tour the country this summer and fall to make speeches against what he called the emerging Democratic "tax and spend" budget.

Ringling familiar themes in his Administration's economic policies, Reagan spoke before a sympathetic National Assn. of Manufacturers convention and denounced trade protectionism, new tax increases and critics who claim that the nation is losing its industrial steam.

At next month's international economic summit in Venice, Reagan said, he will reassure the nation's key trading partners that the U.S. will rein in its budget deficit in exchange for their efforts to spur faster economic growth to absorb more U.S. exports.

(Oswald Johnston, Los Angeles Times, A4)

Reagan Renews His Pledge To Stymie Any Tax Increases

President Reagan renewed his pledge to veto any proposed tax increases and to oppose congressional attempts to make further cuts in defense spending.

Reagan told a group of GOP congressional leaders that he "looked forward" to battling "the deficit spenders in Congress," adding that he would "not accept any attempt to trap me into either raising taxes or gutting defense." (Willis Witter & Karen Riley, Washington Times, A3)

DEMOCRATS START TOUGH BID TO INCREASE TAX REVENUES

House Democrats began the process of looking for taxes to raise with the grim realization that they will get no help from Republicans in the House or the White House.

In a meeting of Democratic members of the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, 21 legislators discussed such options as higher excise taxes, higher energy taxes and higher estate taxes. Although there was no attempt to agree on the substance of a tax package, there was a general feeling that a tax-increase bill could be approved by the committee, according to some of those present.

(Anne Swardson, Washington Post, F1)

WHITE HOUSE MAY BACK AWAY FROM OZONE PACT

The Reagan Administration is reconsidering its strong call for international controls on chlorofluorocarbons to protect Earth's stratospheric ozone and prevent skin cancers, and is weighing instead a public relations campaign to encourage the use of sunglasses and skin lotion, Administration sources said.

The new White House review, prompted largely by Interior Secretary Hodel, has thrown into doubt a tentative agreement among 31 nations to freeze production of chlorofluorocarbons at current levels and reduce their use by 20 percent over the next decade.

Sources said that opposition to the proposed agreement has been rising within the Reagan Administration, particularly among Interior Department officials who believe that the accord would violate President Reagan's philosophy of minimal government regulation.

(Cass Peterson, Washington Post, A1)

DEAVER PERJURY TRIAL DELAYED UNTIL COURT RULES ON LAW Special Counsels' Constitutionality Disputed

A federal judge postponed the perjury trial of former White House aide Michael Deaver until after an appeals court decides his constitutional challenge of the independent counsel law.

U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson also delayed ruling on a request from the independent counsel in the case, Whitney North Seymour, to subpoena Canadian Ambassador Allan Gotlieb and his wife Sondra -- a move that prompted a formal protest from Canada and was spurned by the State Department.

"We are pleased by the judge's decision," said Deaver attorney Randall Turk, "because we believe the statute is unconstitutional and that issue should be resolved before needlessly going to trial."

No new trial date was set. (UPI story, Washington Post, A16)

U.S. JUDGE DEFENDS SPECIAL COUNSEL ACT AS CONSTITUTIONAL

HOT SPRINGS, Va. -- The federal judge in charge of appointing independent counsels offered a passionate defense of the constitutionality of the independent counsel law before an audience that included his colleagues who are to weigh that question.

Speaking at the annual D.C. Circuit judicial conference, Senior Judge George MacKinnon, who heads the three-judge panel that selects independent counsels, said the Ethics in Government statute "has worked well in the past and I think it will work well in the future."

(Ruth Marcus, Washington Post, A16)

VOTE ON NOMINEE IS DELAYED OVER TRAVEL RECORD

A conservative senator has put a hold on the Administration's nomination to be an assistant secretary at the Health and Human Services Department because of questions about eight official trips she took to areas near where her son was playing in college football games.

Sen. Gordon Humphrey said that the trips by Jean Elder, acting assistant secretary in charge of the Office of Human Development Services, appear "unethical" and that he will block a vote on her nomination until he receives an explanation.

(Howard Kurtz, Washington Post, A4)

2 AGENCIES COLLIDE OVER SUMMER AIR SAFETY

NTSB Chairman Burnett Says FAA Is Trying
To Run System 'Up To The Red Line'

The chairman of the nation's safety watchdog agency pushed again for reductions in air traffic during the peak summer travel season that begins next week, while the head of the FAA said that public debate about air safety is becoming needlessly "alarmist."

"The bottom line is, the FAA is trying to run the system up to the red line," Jim Burnett, chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, told a Senate subcommittee in his strongest criticism yet of the FAA. "We don't need to play a game of chicken. We need to run the system on cool instead of hot. We need to build a margin of safety."

"We will not allow the system to become critical," FAA Administrator Donald Engen said in rejecting again that safety may diminish with anticipated increases in summer traffic and summer storms.

(Laura Parker, Washington Post, A10)

NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Thursday Evening, May 28, 1987)

PERSIAN GULF POLICY

NBC's Tom Brokaw: Eleven days after the attack on the USS Stark, President Reagan and Congress are deeply divided tonight on American policy in the Persian Gulf. At issue is the President's plan to get the U.S. more involved in the Gulf by protecting Kuwaiti oil tankers.

NBC's Andrea Mitchell: Even Republican leaders are jumping ship -- telling the President they disagree with his Persian Gulf policy.

(Sen. Robert Dole: "(There) were a number of Republicans (who) expressed reservations about whatever our policy may be there and particularly why we don't extract a sharing of the responsibility from our allies and perhaps impose a fee on the Japanese and West Germans for escort service.")

Aides say that the President will not consider charging a fee, that it would be too much like turning U.S. sailors into mercenaries. In Congress, both parties want the President to wait before assuming responsibility for the safety of Kuwaiti tankers next week.

(Sen. Robert Byrd: "No new commitment should be entered into, in my opinion, until we are completely satisfied that a militarily effective plan, based on capabilities as well as past practices with an insurance factor for the unpredictable, has been developed and will be implemented.")

Sources say that the National Security Council is considering a plan for limited air cover, relying on Saudi pilots except for occasional U.S. patrols flown from carriers outside the Gulf. Military analysts say that could be very risky.... But the President will consider a plan tomorrow to ask the Saudis for more support from AWACS and help in flying refueling planes. Sources tell NBC News the new military proposal also calls for adding three ships to the five now in the Persian Gulf task force, limiting the escorts to a maximum to four Kuwaiti tankers a week, and concentrating U.S. air cover over the Strait of Hormuz. The White House is trying to avoid the appearance of a big military buildup. Secretary Weinberger is said to feel that White House officials are too worried about satisfying Congress and not concerned enough about giving the forces in the Gulf the support they need.

Brokaw: And the AP is reporting tonight that Pentagon officials are now saying that the Reagan Administration has put off for several weeks its plan to send U.S. military protection to Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. As for the USS Stark, Pentagon officials are telling NBC News tonight that U.S. investigators will not be permitted to interview that Iraqi pilot who fired on the ship....

NBC's Rick Davis from Iraq: Admiral David Rogers, along with his team of investigators and Iraqi officers, went into another meeting tonight -- they are trying to get to the details of the attack on the Stark and how to prevent attacks in the future....

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Davis continues:

(Rogers: "We've had a very professional exchange. We've had differences -- we are ironing out those differences. In fact, have ironed out most of those differences. So, I think that by the next 24 hours or so we will be able to make a wrap up statement about the attacks themselves.")

.... Some diplomats and military analysts say the Iraqis may fear that whatever they tell the Americans will be turned over to their enemies.... (NBC-2)

ABC's Peter Jennings: This was the day in Washington when a number of political heavyweights in Congress, including leaders from the President's own party, decided they really were worried about the President's decisions in the Persian Gulf. And after expressing their concern in person, the White House has said that consultation with Congress will be the result. The most immediate concern to a wide array of politicians and the military is the President's decision to give American flag protection to those Kuwaiti oil tankers.

ABC's Sam Donaldson: Administration officials hurried up to Capitol Hill late today to sign onto a new promise to consult Congress on the Persian Gulf policy. House Speaker Wright announced that a bill will be introduced next week, with Administration support, requiring a full report within seven days of passage, so that Congress--

(Rep. Wright: "Will be fully informed as to the extent of plans, extent of our commitments, extent of the involvements that we have or contemplate having with other allied forces whose interests are at stake, how much we expect them to cooperate, exactly what plans we have for the protection of U.S. military force.")

This morning Congressional Republican leaders saw President Reagan and Senator Dole said they told him the American people have reservations about the policy.

(Sen. Dole: "But I don't believe we've yet explained any real reason that we should be providing free escort service to every other country (that) depends on that part of the country for its oil supply.")

Dole and others suggested U.S. allies be charged an escort fee to see their oil safely through the Gulf. Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the idea would be considered and he said the President will discuss the Gulf policy with the allies at the economic summit next month in Venice. Today's deal between the White House and Congress appears to give both sides what they want. The President does not have to report under the War Powers Act as to what's going on with U.S. forces in the Gulf -- something he does not want to do; but by passing new legislation, the Congress gets a full report anyway. Meanwhile the mission continues. Mr. Reagan yesterday gave final approval to the reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers with the U.S. flag. And he has now authorized U.S. forces to fire onto Iranian territory against any Iranian missile that fires at them.

Jennings: In the Persian Gulf, the Pentagon team that has been in Baghdad investigating the attack on the USS Stark is getting ready to come home. While there are still some unanswered questions, we have certainly learned more about the attack.

ABC's Bob Zelnick reports on the investigation of Admiral David Rogers and the details which have been made available. (ABC-2)

CBS's Bob Schieffer: There is nothing official yet, but sources say the Reagan Administration has backed off, at least temporarily, from its plan to put Kuwaiti tankers in the Persian Gulf under U.S. protection. The decision came as U.S. policy in the Gulf was under sharp attack today from both Republicans and Democrats in Congress.

CBS's David Martin: Pentagon officials say the controversial escorting of Kuwaiti oil tankers will not begin for another month.... The Navy needs more time to put additional ships into the Persian Gulf -- ships which have not yet left their home port. The Pentagon must also determine exactly what kind of air cover to provide U.S. ships in the Gulf.... Another factor -- Congressional uproar which grew louder today as General Robert Perry gave a closed-door hearing an entirely new account of the attack on the Stark. Perry said it appears that the Stark did not broadcast its first warning to stay away until 15 seconds after the Iraqi pilot fired the first of two Exocet missiles. Previously, U.S. officials had said the Stark issued two warnings before the Iraqi pilot fired. Today's disclosure was an eye-opener.

(Rep. Hopkins: "I suspect he had already fired the missile before we even said anything to him.")

...Pentagon officials are increasingly critical of the performance of the ship's captain, saying he does not appear to have taken any of the standard precautions a prudent commander should have. Iraqis have told Defense Department investigators their pilot spoke English and was very experienced and that he thought the Stark was in a war zone. Before it leaves Iraq tomorrow, the Pentagon team hopes to reach a notification agreement that will prevent future cases of mistaken identity.

Terence Smith: The White House sent National Security Advisor Frank Carlucci and Defense Secretary Weinberger to Capitol Hill late today.... The result -- a Presidential promise to deliver a full report of military plans within a week.

(Rep. Wright: "The White House and his representatives acknowledge and fully accept and respect the responsibility that they have to the Congress.")

Earlier members of the President's own party took their complaints to the White House.

(Sen. Dole: "There were a number of Republicans (who) expressed reservations about whatever our policy may be there, but I don't believe we've yet explained any real reason that we should be providing free escort service to every other country (that) depends on that part of the world for its oil supply.")

Because most of the oil from the Gulf goes to other nations...some Senators suggested that the U.S. charge an escort fee in exchange for protection by American ships. The President promised to raise the issue at the upcoming seven-nation economic summit in Venice. While discussions about military strategy in the Gulf continued at the White House, the Senate Democratic leader said the President should delay the buildup because his policy faces strong public opposition.

(Sen. Byrd: "Haven't we learned that any policy that puts our sons and daughters out their on the edge has to have the support of the American people?")

Tomorrow the President will convene his top level National Security Planning Group for a thorough review of Persian Gulf strategy.

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Smith continues: He's expected to make the key decisions on the U.S.' role and report them to Congress before leaving for the Venice summit next Wednesday.

Schieffer: The head of a U.S. military team in Iraq reported good progress today in the two countries' joint investigation of the attack on the Stark. Admiral David Roger said that there is still some differences of opinion over what happened in the Gulf on the night of the missile strike, but he said the Iraqis have been very forthcoming and that the inquiry could be wrapped up by tomorrow. (CBS-Lead)

IRAN-CONTRA HEARINGS

Brokaw: At the Congressional Iran-contra hearings today, former U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, Lewis Tambs, testified that he was ordered to use his post to help the contras open a military front in Southern Nicaragua. He said he received that order from White House aide Oliver North at a time when U.S. assistance to the contras was officially banned by Congress. Tambs said that he assumed any instruction from North came from his superiors. (NBC-3)

ABC's Brit Hume: Tambs said that in 1985, with official U.S. aid to the contras banned, he got orders from Oliver North to open a southern front for the contras....

(Tambs: "My assumption was that any instruction he gave me came from, obviously, his superiors.")

Specifically, he said, that meant a small Administration task force on Central America that included North and Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, whom Tambs appeared to directly contradict on the question of when Abrams knew what.

(Inouye: "He has testified that he does not recall discussing this assignment with you at the Sept. 85 Central American Chiefs of Mission Conference. But you are convinced that at that time he did discuss it with you, as you have testified?"

Tambs: "Yes, sir.")

Abrams may testify as early as tomorrow. Earlier, former CIA man Felix Rodriguez, who worked in the contras supply network was questioned about leads he provided the committee in testimony yesterday. Today, most of the leads went nowhere. For example, he said he told Oliver North that exposure of the contra supply network would cause a scandal worse than Watergate. But today he said all he meant by that was that two key figures in the network -- Richard Secord and Thomas Clines had been publicly linked to Edwin Wilson, the ex-CIA man convicted of selling weapons to Libya.

(Sen. Hatch: "You have testified that you did not trust Gen. Secord and Thomas Clines because of their prior association with Edwin Wilson. Did you have any direct evidence of wrongdoing on their part or only a suspicion of guilt based on association?"

Rodriguez: "I had nothing specific.")

Guilt by association or not, some members wanted to hear all about why Rodriguez decided to post armed guards at one point on contra aircraft.

(Sen. Tribble: "The question is, 'Who are you concerned about?'"

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Hume continues:

Rodriguez: "Well, sir, I was concerned that we would receive orders from the owner -- which you know is Secord -- and take the airplanes somewhere else."

Sen. Rudman: "So they were not only arms dealers, they were making \$50,000-\$60,000 on people who were risking their lives. So they were arms dealers and they were also flesh-peddlers -- were they not?"

Rodriguez: "That's what it (would) look like.")

Fellow Republican McClure took issue with that -- calling it conviction by indirection. Still, some on the committee seemed determined, above all, to discredit Secord. (ABC-5)

Schieffer: The Justice Department told Congress today that President Reagan has a legal right to order Special Prosecutor Lawrence Walsh to grant Oliver North immunity from prosecution. What's more, the Justice Department said if Special Prosecutor Walsh refused, the President could fire him. The Justice Department stressed that it was just giving a legal opinion and that President Reagan has no plans to do any of this.

CBS's Phil Jones:

(Sen. Inouye: "You got your marching orders on the opening of the southern front from Col. North?"

Tambs: "Yes, sir."

Sen. Inouye: "You did not get this direction from the Secretary of State?"

Tambs: "No, sir.")

That was the candid admission today from former Ambassador Tambs, explaining how he got involved in a military operation for the Nicaraguan contras at a time when the law prohibited direct or indirect government assistance....

(Tambs: "Col. North asked me go down and open up the southern front.... Mr. North was working for the National Security Council, and obviously my assumption was that any instruction he gave me came from, obviously, his superiors.")

Tambs argued that he had not broken the Boland amendment.

(Tambs: "It forbade the use of appropriated U.S. government funds to aid the freedom fighters and any aid in opening the southern front would come from what we casually call 'private, patriotic Americans.'...No, that's Ollie's term -- he liked that one.")

Another witness, former CIA agent Felix Rodriguez, who was also involved in the contra airlift, talked today about distrust of the Americans running the operation, including retired Gen. Richard Secord.... (CBS-3)

AIDS

Brokaw: It appears tonight that President Reagan is now moving toward approval of a national AIDS testing program mandatory for some people, voluntary for others. While consideration of the AIDS testing program is underway at the highest levels of the White House, health officials now estimate that 179,000 Americans will die by 1991 of the disease. And the numbers will go dramatically higher after that.

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NBC's Chris Wallace: The program the President is expected to approve would mean AIDS testing for millions of Americans. Top Administration officials came to the White House today to submit the plan. And Mr. Reagan indicated strong support. Officials tell NBC News that at the federal level, the plan calls for mandatory testing of all federal prisoners and immigrants. It also calls for developing routine testing in veterans' hospitals. "Routine" means the test would be given automatically, but not to people who strongly object. As for the states, they would be encouraged to test all people getting marriage licenses, patients in hospitals and drug clinics and all state prisoners. It would be up to the states whether testing would be mandatory. Officials tell NBC News the President was the plan's strongest supporter -- saying at one point, "We have an obligation to protect innocent citizens; we ought to do everything we can." But the issue of mandatory testing is controversial. Supporters say it's necessary to deal with a terrible health problem that keeps spreading. (Rep. Dannemeyer: "Routinely, we've been testing people to get a marriage license for a venereal disease called syphilis. Have you heard any protests about people from civil libertarian groups about having that test in our system?")

Civil libertarians worry about an invasion of privacy and they aren't the only ones protesting. Health officials, including Surgeon General Coop say that mandatory testing would scare away some of the people most in need of help.

(Surgeon General Coop from March 24: "A lot of the people that you would be trying to identify would slip through the net because it never can be that tight.")

Despite his reservations, officials say Coop backed today's plan, after the original plan for mandatory testing was softened to routine testing in most cases. Meanwhile, there's another controversy over the President's plan to appoint a commission on AIDS. Advisors say Mr. Reagan does not intend to appoint any gays. Top researchers say that's an outrage and that they will boycott the commission. Gay activists say the White House is more concerned with right-wing politics than public health.

(Ben Schaltz, National Gay Alliance: "To exclude the gay community from a presidential commission on AIDS is the moral equivalent of excluding the Jewish community for a commission on the Holocaust.") The mix of politics and public health will continue. The President is expected to announce his new testing plan at a dinner this Sunday honoring Dr. Coop, whose views on AIDS Mr. Reagan has often overruled.

NBC's Robert Bazell reports on doctor's belief that testing is a key to controlling the disease. (NBC-Lead, CBS-6)

CUBAN DEFECTOR

Schieffer: A top officer in the Cuban military took a freedom flight to the U.S. today. The defector has just been identified in Washington.

CBS's Rita Braver: Describing it as a major break for U.S. intelligence, officials here say a top-ranking Cuban military official has defected to the U.S.

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Braver continues: The man is identified as Brig. Gen. Rafael de Pino Diaz -- said to be the number two man in the defense ministry and the former chief of the Cuban Air Force. The Immigration Service says he and his family flew into Key West Naval Air Station about 2 p.m. asking for asylum. The FBI has been called in to provide security for the family and sources say a check is now being conducted to be sure the man is who he claims to be....

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

AIRLINE SAFETY

ABC's Bettina Gregory: The chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board renewed and redoubled his charge the FAA must cut back on the number of flights this summer or dangerously increase the potential for another midair collision.

(Jim Burrett, Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board: "The FAA, I believe, is trying to run the system up to the red line. And I'm not in favor of that. I think that we don't need to play a game of chicken to see how close we can get.")

The FAA says, while it's not cutting down the number of flights, it has the summer situation under control.

(Donald Engen, FAA spokesman: "As you and I are sitting here, sir, we are reducing the flow of air traffic.")...

(Sen. Hollings: "If Sherman, rather than marching through Georgia, had landed at the airport, we would have won that war.")

But the FAA has a new computer....

(Egen: "This will allow us to forecast what traffic will be in the future. It will enable us to identify the overloaded sectors before then become overloaded.")

Although this new computer gives the FAA a new overview of problems in the nation's control towers, it's still being testing. And the Safety Board argues it won't be ready to solve air traffic problems this summer.

(ABC-4)

DEAVER

Jennings: A federal judge in Washington has postponed the perjury trial of Michael Deaver, the former aide to President Reagan, until an appeals court can rule on Deaver's challenge to the independent counsel. Deaver's lawyers have argued that the law which provides for an independent counsel is unconstitutional. Deaver is accused of lying about his lobbying activities after leaving the White House.

(ABC-7)

-End of B-Section-

EDITORIALS/COLUMNISTS

VENICE SUMMIT

Venice In The Spring -- "Inevitably, President Reagan will pledge once again to reduce the U.S. budget deficit. Inevitably, everyone will promise to fight the menace of protectionism. And, inevitably, there will be a diplomatic statement about the need for continuing discussions to consider the possibility of thinking about further dialogue to find ways to limit the volatility of exchange rates. If that all sounds familiar, it should. Many of the same promises were made after last year's summit, and the results remain hard to see.... There's not much likelihood of earth-shattering news from Venice..... The whole business of economic summitry makes little sense unless there is some reasonable prospect of accord. Otherwise, summits serve only to excite expectations that are left unfulfilled, making people everywhere even more concerned about the state of the world economy."
(Journal of Commerce, 5/28)

USS STARK

...Begin With Why U.S. Ships Are In The Gulf -- "This time the President can't get by with reciting flag-waving rhetoric.... Ronald Reagan is going to have to be clear and precise -- why he's raising the stakes in the Gulf, what we do if a U.S. ship is hit or sunk, how far he'll go toward war. Reagan has more skeptics than he probably imagines.... A long series of Reagan Administration tragic and comic misadventures make people wonder: Do the guys at the top know what the hell they're doing? ...Waiting for the President's answers, remember the disconsolate captain of the USS Stark, his ship turned into a fireball by a missile that struck without warning in the night. 'I don't know whether it was my fault, a systems malfunction, or an act of God,' he said. That's why the Senate and a confused public want the President to turn on the radar. Don't blindside us, Ron."
(Sandy Grady, Miami Herald, 5/27)

Playing Policeman To The World -- "Nothing succeeds like excess. By pushing every cold war tendency to a new limit, President Reagan has succeeded in showing Congress and the country the grave risks of an overly ambitious foreign policy. That was not his intention, but it may be his lasting achievement.... Reaganism may appear in retrospect as a rich young nation's last fling before the acceptance of maturity with its wise constraints and modest expectations."

(William V. Shannon, Boston Globe, 5/27)

But What If Iran Attacks Us? -- "The question remains: how does the Administration plan to protect the tankers? How does it intend to retaliate if the Iranians attack a tanker or its naval escort? What is the worst the Iranians might do and how would America respond? Without better answers, there is no hope of getting the necessary bipartisan support in Congress and in the country for this risky but defensible new policy."

(Philadelphia Inquirer, 5/28)

USS STARK (continued)

U.S. Ships Imperiled In Interest Of Japan, Europe -- "If this country is going into the bodyguard business, the least we should ask is to be paid for it.... We spend money and risk lives so that Kuwait and Japan and European nations can keep making money.... If we're going to put our expensive military hardware and the lives of our sailors and pilots on the line, why shouldn't we be compensated by those who are making the profit?"
(Mike Royko, Kansas City Times, 5/26)

Spread The Risk In The Gulf -- "It is time to internationalize the naval protective force in the Persian Gulf to make clear Western nations will act in concert to maintain the flow of oil vital to their economies.... The United States also should undertake diplomatic initiatives to bring an end to the war itself. Such initiatives should include consultations with the Soviet Union, which is supplying arms to Iraq. Peace in the Persian Gulf is in the interest of all nations."
(Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 5/21)

U.S. Doesn't Need More In Gulf -- "President Reagan's call for an even stronger U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf is a case of misguided priorities.... Putting American flags on Kuwaiti ships seems like an open invitation to calculated confusion.... The duty of the President remains one of protecting U.S. interests.... To provoke a test of that commitment by flying the U.S. flag through a danger zone would only create another blot on the image Reagan wants to protect."
(Milwaukee Sentinel, 5/23)

Times To Account For Gulf Aims -- "President Reagan does risk making the war our scrap with his decision to give American-flag status to 11 Kuwaiti vessels.... If the intent of Washington's deepening involvement is to convince Iran of the futility of its war with Iraq so that it will agree to a cease-fire, then the effort is worth pursuing. But we must be on guard for sparks that ignite a U.S.-Iranian conflict or for preventable disaster such as befell the Stark."
(Atlanta Journal, 5/23)

Sitting Ducks On The Persian Gulf -- "The attack on the Stark -- for whatever reason or reasons it was successful -- should cause a critical reappraisal of the presence of U.S. naval vessels in the Gulf.... It seems foolhardy to position the Stark or other naval vessels as sitting ducks in the Persian Gulf, just awaiting a similar attack."
(Baton Rouge States-Times, 5/20)

Middle East Turmoil -- "The Middle East is too crucial a region for the United States to sit idly by and allow the Soviets to gain dominance there. It is true that the United States needs to maintain a strong relationship with Israel. But we also must cultivate a better understanding of the needs and desires of the Arab nations, which too often have wound up on the short end of our diplomatic efforts in the region."
(Fort Worth Star Telegram, 5/19)

Saudis Get Bum Rap In Stark Affair -- "For us to call two Saudi pilots and their ground controllers to track down the Iraqi culprit in the Stark incident was to propose the unacceptable.... Trying to blame others in this case the Saudis, for what may turn out to be our own errors of commission and omission is becoming an all-too-common American habit. The finger-pointers ought to grow up."
(Atlanta Constitution, 5/25)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

USS STARK

"In regard to the attack on the USS Stark, why do we continue to allow the President to use American military personnel as pawns in the dangerous games he wants to play?"

(Helen Bower, Birmingham, Birmingham News, 5/22)

"If we were all crewmen on the USS Stark, and the ship's defense systems were President Reagan's Star Wars system, and the Iraqi Exocet were a Soviet missile attack, we would all be dead now, wouldn't we?"

(Byrd Kranisk, Beverly, Boston Globe, 5/25)

"We are in the Persian Gulf (in harm's way) for that old and noble purpose, freedom of the seas, a concept that has been with us for so long that we have forgotten that it is not a law of nature... This is the cause for which 37 of the Stark's crew gave their lives. And for the same cause, more may yet be called upon to sacrifice much."

(Edward J. Lorenz, Watertown, Hartford Courant, 5/25)

"The purpose of our presence in the Persian Gulf is not a commercial dependency; it is, as every patriotic professional knows, to counter the Soviet threat.... If the U.S. taxpayer is to believe that the Navy is in the Persian Gulf to protect the importance of crude oil and other commercial interests on the high seas, then our 37 servicemen did in fact die in vain."

(John S. Stedman, Point Loma, San Diego Tribune, 5/22)

"Surely Europe and Japan could spare some [military protection] to defend their oil supplies. But there is no talk of a joint NATO-Japanese task force to keep the Gulf open. There are no offers from Europe or Japan to 're-flag' Kuwaiti tankers under their colors. It seems that we Americans are expected to provide not only the chief but all the braves as well. And then people complain about us 'decoupling' from Europe and Japan!"

(Micheal D. Jones, Bowie, Md., Washington Times, 5/27)

IRAN-CONTRA HEARINGS

"I have personally been moved to both pride and tears by the heroism, patriotism and dedication to the ideals of this country of Messrs. Secord, McFarlane and Owen. And I am truly proud of the shining member of my generation -- Lt. Col. Oliver North."

(Sara Goode, Linderhurst, New York Post, 5/27)

"With all these, 'I cannot recall,' or saying, 'no' and then finding a memo saying 'yes,' they want me to cover my ears, mouth and eyes.... These people are our leaders. Leaders of one of the most powerful countries in the world. The incompetents, and I must call them that, because they do not even know what they said five minutes after they say it. And remember, one of those people has his finger on The Button."

(Richard J. Litke, Parma, Cleveland Plain Dealer, 5/25)