

National

Reagan says no new Vietnam

United Press International
WASHINGTON — President Reagan says no U.S. combat forces will be sent to El Salvador, and he believes Soviet talk of a superpower summit would carry more weight if linked to a promise to end "imperialism" in places like Central America.

Those were the two major points to emerge from a one hour, Oval Office interview with CBS News correspondent Walter Cronkite.

The dialogue televised Tuesday night contained Reagan's first substantive comments on the simmering strife in El Salvador and on

critics' warnings the conflict — with its potential for greater U.S. involvement — resembles the Vietnam quagmire in its earliest stages.

For the country, Reagan offered assurances. For the Kremlin, more tough talk.

On El Salvador, where 54 American military advisers have been sent, Reagan offered a forecast historians surely will date and mark: "I certainly don't see any likelihood of us going in with fighting forces."

On the summit proposed last week by Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev, he said, "I think it would help bring about such a meeting if the Soviet Union revealed it is willing to moderate its imperialism, its aggression — Afghanistan would be an example. We could talk a lot better if there was some indication they truly wanted to be a member of the peace-loving nations of the world, the free world."

Reagan said he would not make Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan "a hard and fast condition" for a summit, but, "I'm just saying in discussing with our allies, it would make it a lot easier if we were able to say, 'Well, now look, they've shown some signs of moderating their real imperialistic course.'"

There is no parallel between El Salvador and Vietnam for Americans, Reagan contended, but there is one between El Salvador and Afghanistan for the Russians. "Without actually using Soviet troops," said the president, "in effect the Soviets are trying to do

the same thing in El Salvador they did in Afghanistan, but by using proxy troops through Cuba and guerrillas."

When Secretary of State Alexander Haig talked of cutting off arms shipments to the guerrillas at the "source," Reagan said, he meant intercepting the weaponry before it reaches its destination. "I don't think in any way he was suggesting an assault on Cuba," he said.

Should the Salvadoran regime fall to Cuban-trained rebels, Reagan indicated American advisers would leave. "If that government is no longer there," he said, "we're not going there without an invitation."

He said the United States will continue diplomatic efforts "to bring this violence to a halt and to make sure we do not just sit passively by and let this hemisphere be invaded by outside forces."

The president repeated his desire to negotiate mutual arms reductions with Kremlin leaders, but only after they show "they are willing to discuss that."

And he did not back off his Jan. 29 news conference statement the Soviets would lie or cheat to gain their objectives. Instead, he added to it: "They can resort to lying or stealing or cheating or even murder if it furthers their cause."

"They have never denied the truth of what I said," Reagan declared, adding, "I've been interested to see he (Brezhnev) has suggested having a summit meeting since I said that."

Housing costs twice prices of 7 years ago

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The average new house in the United States now costs about \$76,000 — double the posted price of just seven years ago, the Commerce Department says.

This, coupled with high mortgage rates, may explain why the sale of single-family houses in January slipped to an estimated 34,000, down 6.4 percent from December.

The department reported Tuesday the average new house in

January cost \$76,300, offering buyers almost the same structure they could have purchased in 1974 for \$38,900.

A year ago that same house would have cost \$67,700, the department said.

Steven Berman, a department analyst, said the figures show houses being built now are being equipped with fewer extras and have smaller floor plans than in past years.

The median price for a new single-family house in January was \$67,200, down 0.9 percent from December and the second straight month of slight price declines.

But Berman says at least four months in one direction are needed to establish a trend and it would be premature to say that housing prices overall are falling.



The moose is loose
This 15 foot 2,000 pound moose has recently found a new home on the Tri State Sporting Goods roof. After high winds had knocked him over when he stood on the ground, breaking his antler, the owners had him put on and securely fastened him to the roof.

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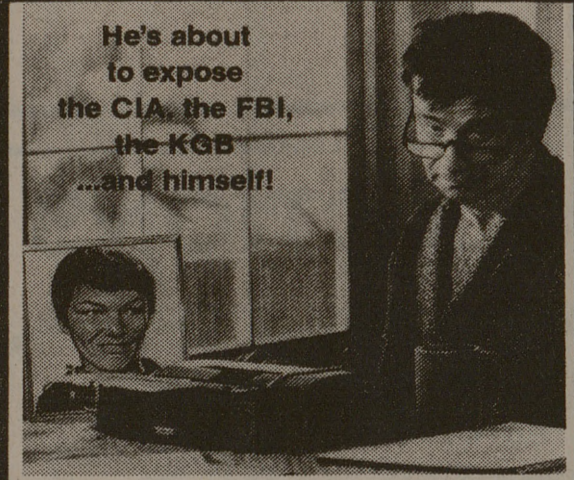
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Fed chief sees price drops

United Press International
WASHINGTON — If Congress approves the necessary budget cuts to offset the administration's proposed tax reductions, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul

Volcker says inflation could decline almost to 8 percent next year.

Volcker told the House Ways and Means Committee Tuesday, "I don't think the administration's inflation estimate (of 8.3 percent) for next year is unreasonable if we stick to our guns."

That means budget cuts must come first — or at the very least in tandem — with tax cuts, he said. The inflation rate was 12.4 percent in 1980.

Today, the committee was to question more economic experts on the feasibility of President Reagan's plan to cut taxes and federal spending as a means of reviving the economy before it begins drafting its own tax cut.

One of the scheduled witnesses was Arthur Laffer, father of the "supply-side" economics that form the basis of the administration's strategy.

On Tuesday, Volcker told the panel he supports the administration's policies but sees the possibility of another recession this year. However, he said, "I do not see any signs of it right at the moment."

"The linchpin of the whole economic program is early, and past standards, massive program of cutting back the upward spiral of federal expenditures," Volcker said.

"Those spending cutbacks necessary to clear the way for able tax reductions and to permit early progress toward the balanced budget, he said, larger the spending cuts, the better the prospect for turning inflation."

Private and administration economists attribute much of the economy's ill health to declining productivity, caused in part by lagging business investment to place and modernize machinery. The administration's plan to accelerate the depreciation schedule for business investment which enjoys wide support in Congress — is designed to meet that trend.

But because the business tax will be linked to a more controversial and time-consuming personal tax cut — and perhaps even sensitive budget cuts — these some fear needed investment will be delayed until the final tax package is passed.

Cronkite has final presidential talk

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Walter Cronkite, conducting his last interview with a president as the nation's top-rated TV anchorman, pressed Ronald Reagan on several points to make sure viewers knew "the way it is."

Cronkite, 64, leaves his center seat on the set of CBS Evening News Friday, ending a 19-year stint that made him the dean of American anchormen.

President Reagan provided a sentimental farewell Tuesday night during an hour-long Oval Office interview.

"I know you must be having a little nostalgia — the many presidents you've covered in this room," Reagan said, waving his hands around the office.

"Indeed so, sir," Cronkite replied, sitting face-to-face with Reagan before the fireplace. "It's been a long time now. I was counting on it's eight presidents. It's been a remarkable period in our history. Well, may I express appreciation," the president said. "You always been a pro."

"I only regret that I'm stepping down from the evening news at a time when you're bringing such drama to our government again in your efforts to turn it around," Cronkite added. "Thank you, sir."

That was the polite side. During the rest of the interview, Cronkite pressed Reagan for his reasoning on aiding El Salvador, why he had been getting tough with the Soviets at a time when "the whole world favors negotiations to end the arms race and his proposals to programs that provide milk to children and pregnant women."

Despite the tough questions, Cronkite's voice never strayed from a reassuring, friendly tone. His questions were punctuated with a respectful, "Sir."

"I'm satisfied," said Reagan when asked how the interview had gone. "The interviewer never is," said Cronkite.

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