

# National / State

American presence guaranteed

## AWACS deal confirmed

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Alexander Haig announced Thursday the United States and Saudi Arabia have reached an understanding guaranteeing an American "presence" in the 1990s on AWACS radar planes sold to the Saudis.

Haig, seeking to ease congressional opposition to the \$8.5 billion arms deal, described the agreement as an "understanding" during an open hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. After, he met for 2.5 hours with a panel behind closed doors.

One of the key points, he said, that "only carefully screened Saudi and U.S. nationals will be permitted to be involved with the aircraft" — the five Airborne Warning and Control System planes to be sold to Saudi Arabia.

The administration formally submitted the arms package to Congress Thursday.

The issue of an American presence together with Saudi personnel after the AWACS are delivered in 1985 has been a key sticking point in gaining congressional approval for the sale. Congress could block the deal by a majority vote of both houses within 30 days.

For several months we have been working with the Saudis to develop arrangements that will meet the concerns that the Congress has expressed about the proposed arms sales to Saudi Arabia," Haig told the committee.

These discussions have now been concluded," he said. "We believe that the resulting understanding which will come into effect after consummation of the

sale will ensure the security of the AWACS system, and the degree of continuing U.S. participation in Saudi AWACS operations that respond to the fundamental concerns about the sale raised during the course of our consultations with the Congress.

There were hints during the morning that changes in the package had been made. Presidential counselor Edwin Meese said there had been "adaptations," and Foreign Relations Chairman Charles Percy, R-Ill., was told by aides there had been "major changes" in Haig's statement from what the committee had seen Wednesday night.

Beyond the main provision on personnel, Haig said the "understanding" with the Saudis includes these points:

- "There will be complete data sharing with the United States on a continuing basis.
- "There will be no sharing of AWACS data with any other parties without U.S. consent.
- "There will be no operation of Saudi AWACS outside Saudi airspace.
- "Extensive and elaborate security measures for safeguarding equipment and technology.
- "U.S. inspection teams will monitor the performance of all equipment associated with the AWACS sale.
- "Special facilities will be constructed to provide round-the-clock security protection against unauthorized entry.
- "All of the agreed arrange-

ments for protecting the security of AWACS must be approved by the United States at least one year before any AWACS are delivered to the Saudis."

In an apparent move to have more time to study and negotiate, Reagan Wednesday delayed for-

mal notification of the proposed deal to Congress.

High-ranking Saudi officials have warned they will not accept changes in control of the aircraft and have said a congressional veto would harm Saudi-American relations.

## Reagan's restrictions victimize 97,000 Texans

United Press International  
AUSTIN — Tighter federal restrictions made 97,000 Texans ineligible for welfare benefits, Wednesday, the commissioner of the Department of Human Resources said.

The mandatory reductions resulted from the Omnibus Reconciliation Act signed by President Reagan in August. The measure tightened eligibility re-

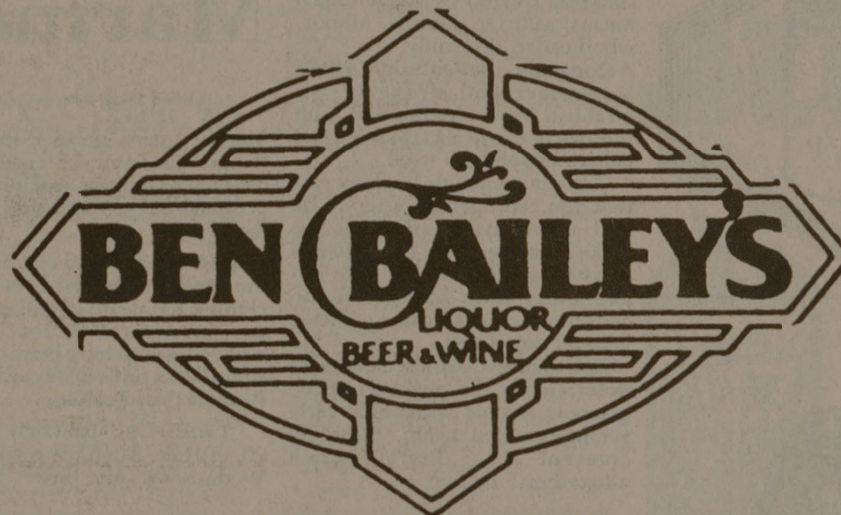
quirements for food stamps and aid to families with dependent children.

Because of the new restrictions, 65,000 Texans lost their eligibility for food stamps and another 32,000 no longer are eligible to receive AFDC payments.

Before the new restrictions went into effect, there were 1,290,250 Texans eligible for

food stamps. Johnston said the food stamp program put about \$726.9 million a year into the Texas economy, but that figure will decline to \$660.5 million annually because of the new eligibility restrictions.

Under the new restrictions, a family of four would be ineligible for AFDC payments if its gross income exceeds \$301.50 per month.



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## Social Security out \$60 million

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — John Henry Sydnor of Baltimore died May 1, 1977, but as in the cases of about 8,000 other dead people, his Social Security benefits kept flowing — totaling \$14,287 over four years.

Overall, deceased persons were mailed benefits — for up to 5 years — adding up to more than \$60 million. Investigators believe the money was pocketed by friends, relatives or even Social Security employees.

Social Security Administration chief John Svahn says he is astounded "by the costly blunder, which was disclosed Wednesday.

"The thing that amazes me the most is that no one ever thought about it," Svahn said.

Svahn's son John Henry Sydnor Jr., a respected photographer, took his life last week, just hours after an FBI agent asked Sydnor about his deposit of his father's monthly benefit checks in his own bank account.

Investigators surmised the younger Sydnor succumbed to the temptation created by the government bungle, and was overcome by the damage the incident would do to his reputation.

Federal prosecutors in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and other major cities are picking up the pieces, considering criminal

charges against those who capitalized on the error and kept the payments, which now average \$374 a month.

Richard Kusserow, inspector general for the Department of Health and Human Services whose office began the inquiry, said the costly glitch in SSA's payment system occurred because agency employees failed to follow up on Medicare death reports.

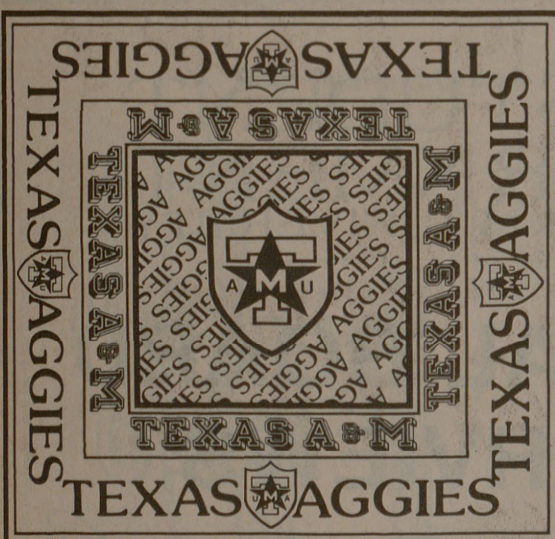
While the Health Care Financing Administration regularly filed reports with the SSA on the death of Medicare patients, they never were matched with payment lists to ensure retirement and disability benefits were cut off, he said.

The longest period of undue payments dated back 15 years to 1966, when Medicare was begun by President Lyndon Johnson.

Kusserow said in some cases relatives simply saved benefit checks — for up to 10 years — and returned them when confronted by investigators.

Department officials said such government checks still are negotiable, and it will be up to United States attorneys to decide whether to seek criminal indictments in those cases.

Kusserow also said investigators are looking into the possibility that Social Security employees who monitor death notices have allowed payments to continue, diverting them to their own accounts.



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