

Department investigates steel dumping charges

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Commerce Department will investigate charges by seven American steel companies that 11 foreign nations have been selling steel in this country below cost, a practice known as "dumping."

The department made the announcement Monday night, hours before the midnight deadline for Secretary Malcolm Baldrige to decide whether to start the investigations. The domestic steel firms filed petitions Jan. 11 seeking the probes. The firms charged that the nations sold steel in the United States below cost. The U.S. firms want special duties imposed against steel from these nations.

Members of the industry said Britain, France, Belgium, West Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, Brazil, Spain, South Africa and Roma-

nia have given their steel producers subsidies of \$50 to \$300 a ton.

The American companies said the subsidies are coming just as they are trying to modernize and cope with the recession.

The anti-dumping investigations will determine whether imported steel is being sold below fair value on the domestic market. The duty investigations will determine whether the imported steel is being subsidized by foreign governments.

The firms sought 132 anti-dumping duty investigations. The department said 16 were withdrawn and "seven petitions were dismissed because the supporting evidence was not sufficient to meet the statutory standards for initiation."

Baldrige said: "We have closely examined each case of alleged

dumping or subsidization. We were adequately supported by a few were not. In all the dismissed imports have been significant for several years in number of cases there has been no imports at all."

The complaints were filed jointly with the U.S. International Trade Commission at the Commerce Department. They directly affect the U.S. steel industry, its 350,000 workers and steel producers in countries.

The Commerce Department is required to decide within 90 days of filing whether a petition merits initiation of an investigation.

The next step on the 109 new investigations will be a preliminary ruling by the ITC, due Feb. 25. The commission opens hearings today.

White House counselor discusses budget cuts

United Press International
WASHINGTON — White House counselor Edwin Meese Tuesday acknowledged that President Reagan's new budget will seek savings from social programs previously immune from his drive to slash federal spending.

In advance of a new budget battle brewing on Capitol Hill, Meese defended the administration's decision to zero in on programs among those comprising the "social safety net" Reagan promised to retain for the poor.

The Washington Post, quoting from a draft version of the

budget Reagan submits to Congress Monday, said Tuesday the president will propose deep new cuts in programs such as Medicaid, food stamps and subsidized housing.

The reductions envisioned "are not cuts in the programs, those programs," Meese said on NBC's "Today" show. Administration officials have complained there is too little control over annual increases in the costs of the programs, some of which are tied to inflation.

"You know, those are open-ended spending programs, in which the increase each year is beyond the ability of the Congress' appropriations committees to control," Meese said. "And that's what we're working at."

The draft budget shows a cut of \$2 billion from Medicaid, \$2.4 billion from the food stamp

program and \$1.2 billion from Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the Post said.

Budget Director David Stockman said Reagan will propose billions of dollars in savings through spending reductions and new management initiatives in order to reduce the deficit.

Congressional sources said Monday that Stockman's management initiatives will be an effort to root out waste and fraud — and will be aimed particularly at the Pentagon, where the administration hopes to convince Congress it can achieve savings without resorting to budget cuts.

The sources said the plan is to provide Congress with a vehicle, probably in the form of a special commission, to eliminate waste from military spending — there by taking some of the heat of Reagan to cut the Pentagon budget.

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