

Budget rewards defense, but calls for welfare cuts

WASHINGTON — President Reagan's budget proposes spending more on the military than ever in history during peacetime, while slashing expenditures for human needs. It would spend more than \$201 million on Texas military projects and threatens Texas welfare payments — already second-lowest in the nation. The budget proposal was defended by Republican Sen. John Tower and assailed by Texas Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby. Hobby denounced Reagan's proposed 18 percent increase in defense spending, calling such a move incredible. State Democrat Party Chairman Bob Slagle said Reagan's policies have led to high unemployment and a depressed economy, which the Republicans can expect to pay for at the polls in November.

"If Reagan doesn't get a turnaround in the economy by the middle of this year — and it's obvious he won't — then he and a lot of Republicans are in a great deal of trouble," Slagle said. Tower, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Reagan's record \$215.9 billion military budget proposal is certain to trickle down into Texas. Reagan sent Congress the biggest peacetime military budget in history Saturday. It contains military construction projects in Texas totaling more than \$201 million for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1. "Texas military installations play a very significant and visible role in our national defense capability, and I am most hopeful that the Senate will approve these suggested improvements," Tower said.

The Reagan budget proposal contains cuts in welfare programs totaling nearly \$26 billion, of which \$11.7 billion are in basic benefit or so-called "entitlement" programs such as Medicare, federal pensions and food stamps. "We've never had much abuse in our Texas programs," Human Resources Commissioner Marlin Johnson said. "Any kind of further cuts are going to cause us to make further cuts in services. That's all there is to it." Dallas Republican state Sen. John Leedom said welfare budget cuts would affect the lazy, not the needy. "We'll take care of the truly needy," he said, "but we're spending billions taking care of those who don't want to work." In Reagan's military proposal, the largest proposed outlay would go to Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth, which

would receive \$49.5 million to expand its hospital. In addition, the strategic bomber base would receive \$5.3 million for billets and a new training site. The biggest Army allocation would go for \$39 million worth of "maintenance modernization" at Red River Depot near Texarkana, where the Army refurbishes armored vehicles and artillery. Fort Bliss at El Paso — the Army's air defense center — would get \$21.3 million for training facilities and maintenance shops. The Navy's biggest recipient in Texas would be Corpus Christi Naval Air Station: \$2.8 million to build fuel storage tanks and install radar. Reagan's request amounts to a \$33.1 billion increase over his peacetime record \$182.8 billion budget for fiscal 1982. Of his total projected spending for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 29 cents of every dollar is targeted for defense.

Body in Laredo field may be missing priest

LAREDO — Authorities Monday were trying to determine if the decomposed body of a man who was shot once in the head was that of a Corpus Christi priest who disappeared Jan. 8 in Laredo. The body was found across the border in a field near Nuevo Laredo late Saturday. The man had been tied with barbed wire and shot once in the head. Officials say it may be the body of the Rev. Simon Thomas Flores, 44, a priest at Christ the King Church in Corpus Christi. Flores disappeared while in Laredo for a conference with the Rev. Vladimir Manente of the San Francisco Xavier Church. Manente told officials Flores left the church for a walk around town Jan. 8. Dr. Francisco Gonzalez, a Laredo pathologist, said he believes the body is that of Flores. He said the hair color was the same, and the height was about 6-foot-2, Flores' height. "All of our findings correspond to the description of the priest," Gonzalez said. "The glasses found near the body are the same as the glasses in a picture of the priest." But Laredo police investigators said the body was clad in brown trousers and a brown sweater. Manente said Flores was wearing black trousers and a blue sweater when he left the church.

Flores had left his luggage and car at Manente's church. Also causing officials to question the identity was the discovery of a key to a room at the Hotel Del Rio, considered the best hotel in Nuevo Laredo. The room was not registered to Flores at the time of the murder, officials said. A spokesman in the Laredo police department said officials were awaiting Flores' dental records from Trenton, N.J., to determine if the body was that of the priest's. He said the records were expected some time this week. Debbie Flores, a part time secretary at Christ the Kings Church in Corpus Christi, said the Rev. Juan Ayerbe had gone to Laredo Sunday to assist authorities in making an identification. Ms. Flores is not related to the missing priest. "Yesterday (Sunday) we were very optimistic it was not Father

Flores," she said. "We would have said no that's not him. But there have been a lot of coincidental incidences since then. The body had dentures in the front missing and Father Flores had dentures." Ms. Flores said the priest had been at Christ the King Church since September. He grew up in the Victoria area, went to seminary in Spain and joined the Trinitarian Friars order in Trenton, N.J. "People are fairly upset, particularly since police said there were signs he may have been tortured," she said. "When he was missing, we had rosaries before the masses. Most of the congregation, I think was pessimistic we would ever hear anything at all about him. But the fathers remained optimistic he would be found, and found in good condition. "I still think they are clinging to that optimism that the body will not be Father Flores."

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