

**WORLD AND NATION**

**Civilian nominee wins Brazilian presidency**

Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil — Opposition leader Tancredo Neves, a 74-year-old centrist politician who has pledged to "change Brazil," today was elected the nation's first civilian president in 21 years.

The Electoral College gave Neves, an opposition party leader, the 344th of its 686 votes after nearly two hours of voting, guaranteeing his victory. News media predicted Neves' final total would be close to 500.

Neves, who in 50 years of politics has held offices ranging from city councilman to prime minister, defeated Congressman Paulo Maluf, 53, candidate of the military-backed party.

Celebrations immediately began in South America's most populous country. Outside the twin-domed Congress building where the election took place, thousands of Neves backers cheered, ignited firecrackers and honked car horns. They waved green-and-yellow Brazilian flags and chanted "Tancredo, Tancredo, Tancredo!"

Even before the voting started, Maluf made a conciliatory statement. He said he felt "victorious," because "my candidacy helped redemocratize Brazil."

President Gen. Joao Figueiredo, 67, author of a plan to gradually phase out military rule in Brazil, followed the voting from a hospital bed in Rio de Janeiro, where he was recovering from a back operation.

Both candidates promised to restore presidential elections by popular vote of the nation's 134 million people. Among the staggering problems facing the winner are a foreign debt of more than \$100 billion, inflation running at about 220 percent annually and high unemployment.

**Retail sales down slightly in December**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Retail sales slipped slightly in December, but the nation's factories were humming to a sharply faster beat and analysts said the two government reports together spell more relief for the economy.

Except for sagging business in new-car showrooms, the December decline of 0.1 percent in retail sales reported Tuesday by the Commerce Department would have been a 0.5 percent increase — even after the raw figures were adjusted downward to account for the Christmas shopping season.

For all of 1984, retail sales were up 10.4 percent over the previous year.

The Federal Reserve's industrial production report, meanwhile, showed that output at the nation's factories, mines and utilities shot up 0.6 percent in December, the biggest increase in five months.

"The two pieces together are just confirmation of our view that the economy did touch bottom in October and has been growing at a pretty healthy rate since then," said Robert Wharton Econometrics in Philadelphia.

While the government was plugging two more pieces into the economic puzzle, the nation's largest banks cut their prime interest rate a quarter point to 10.5 percent and the stock market continued on an upward roll that started last week.

The prime rate is now at its lowest level in 17 months and the stock market the highest since November.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes said: "The economic record in industrial production and retail sales for 1984 is an indication that continued economic growth is in store for the coming year. Coupled with declining interest rates, this speaks well for the American economy."

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige noted that retail sales rose at an annual rate of 10.5 percent during the last three months of the year, but he acknowledged that pace might not be sustained.

**Senate expected to question Meese**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The leading Senate critic of Edwin Meese III said Tuesday "disturbing questions remain" about the attorney general-designate's ethical conduct and promised to raise them when the Senate Judiciary Committee resumes hearings Jan. 29.

"I will raise additional questions prompted by the (independent counsel's) report," Metzbaum said, referring to the investigation that found no basis for prosecuting Meese but did not address whether he violated ethics regulations.

Metzbaum would not comment on specific topics he planned to raise. But Democratic sources in the Senate Judiciary Committee said they ranged from Meese's Army Reserve promotion to his financial

relationship with people who received federal jobs.

The sources spoke only on condition they not be identified.

Majority Republican senators said in recent interviews they believe the president should get his choice and Democrats, without committing their votes, say they expect confirmation.

After allegations of improper conduct were made against the presidential counselor during hearings last March, an independent counsel was appointed under the Ethics in Government Act and a special grand jury convened.

Washington lawyer Jacob A. Stein, the counsel, reported on Sept. 20 there was no basis to prosecute Meese, but declined to say whether he thought Meese's actions violated conflict of interest regulations.

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