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White House says response against terrorism will vary

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration said Wednesday its response to terrorists and governments that support them "will be proportionate to the losses incurred," but it gave no indication it is contemplating any imminent action to avenge recent attacks on Americans in El Salvador and elsewhere.

In yet another warning similar to those issued in the wake of terrorist incidents in the Middle East and Central America, presidential spokesman Larry Speakes said, "The United States will not tolerate terrorist actions against our citizens. We will be prepared to take steps."

"We have outlined in firm tones

our policy on attacking terrorist centers or those responsible for terrorist attacks," Speakes told reporters at a White House briefing. "That policy remains. The governments responsible understand that. We will take appropriate action."

"The level of our response," he added, "will be proportionate to the losses incurred. Those that perpetrate such incidents, or governments that support state-sponsored terrorism, are on notice."

Asked if his use of the term "proportionate response" indicates the United States would avenge "an eye for an eye, a life for a life," Speakes said, "We'll make those judgments at the time."

Asked when the United States might act, he replied, "Wait and see."

The administration has been warning of its intention to retaliate against terrorism since President Reagan took office in January 1981, when he pledged "swift and effective retribution" against those who violate international standards of behavior.

Similar "notices" to terrorists have been posted in the wake of the recent hijacking of TWA Flight 847 and the murder of one of its passengers, the sidewalk cafe murders in San Salvador and a rash of terrorist bombings that followed around the world.

Speakes refused to respond directly to a New York Times report that the administration considered attacking a Nicaraguan training base in retaliation for the murder of six Americans in El Salvador last month. But its publication prompted him to issue the latest warning.

In a report similar to others published earlier elsewhere, the Times quoted unidentified State and Defense Department officials as saying a plan was discussed at senior levels in the White House to launch an air strike against a Nicaraguan base where American officials believed one or more of the gunmen were trained.

Union head won't be prosecuted

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department, against the wishes of its field prosecutors and Labor Department union investigators, has decided not to seek the indictment of Teamsters president Jackie Presser, government sources say.

Terry Eastland, the top spokesman for Attorney General Edwin Meese III, refused to confirm or deny that the department had decided against asking a grand jury in Cleveland to indict Presser in connection with the panel's investigation of an alleged "ghost payroll" scheme at Teamster Local 507 there.

But federal law enforcement sources, who agreed to discuss the politically sensitive case involving President Reagan's lone major union supporter only on the grounds they remain unidentified, said prosecutors in the field had been told there would be no attempt to indict Presser.

About six months ago, the Justice Department's field prosecutors had recommended to officials in Wash-

ington that Presser's indictment be sought.

Presser, 58, who continues as secretary-treasurer of his hometown Cleveland local as well as president of the 1.8 million-member international labor union, said Wednesday: "Thank God that it's over. I'm happy with the outcome."

A senior department official,

"You'll have to ask the Justice Department why" Presser won't be prosecuted. — an unidentified Labor Department source, who was dissatisfied that Teamsters president Jackie Presser was not being prosecuted.

without confirming that the case had been dropped, did say Wednesday that Attorney General Edwin Meese III, who had close ties to Presser during his years as a key White House aide to President Reagan, had taken himself out of any decision-making in the case.

For nearly three years, the grand jury in Cleveland had been looking

into allegations that people were paid for no-show jobs at the union local.

Presser had steadfastly denied that he was guilty of any wrongdoing.

In November 1983, Allen Friedman, Presser's uncle, was sentenced in the case to three years in prison on a conviction of embezzling

the only scenario in which the Labor Department would have no probe pending against Presser would be one in which the Justice Department had decided against asking for his indictment.

The Labor Department's racketeering office shares responsibility with the Justice Department for investigating union corruption.

Investigators with the Cleveland office of the Labor Department unit had been involved in the investigation of Local 507 from the outset.

But a department source said the agency's role is now over and that its investigators "will not spend 10 seconds on this case."

This source, expressing anger over the decision, said "you'll have to ask the Justice Department why" Presser will not be prosecuted.

David Margolis, a highly regarded Justice Department career attorney who heads the criminal division's organized crime section and supervises the strike forces around the country, said Wednesday:

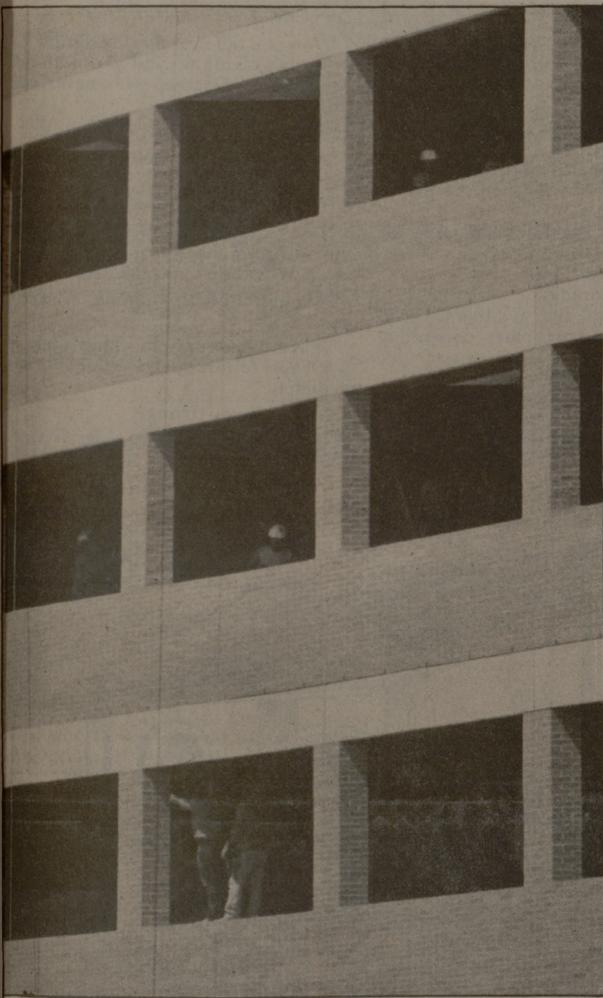


Photo by GREG BAILEY

Hollywood Squares?

Construction workers prepare a side of the Physics building for its windows. Work began on the new facility in March 1984 and is scheduled to be completed around the middle of January 1986.

Construction on schedule for Clayton Williams, Jr. Center

By BRIAN PEARSON
Staff Writer

Construction on a proposed \$7 million building, which will benefit students, faculty and former students is on schedule, an Association of Former Students representative said Wednesday.

Randy Matson, executive director of the association, said the 59,000-square-foot Clayton Williams Jr. Center is still expected to be completed in September 1986.

"It will be a very functional build-

ing not only for former students — but for faculty, staff and students to use," Matson said.

Located at the corner of Jersey Street and Houston Street, the center will be the office for the 35-member staff of the former students' association. Matson said there are about 120,000 former students.

The proposed center is marked in the 1984-85 Campus Directory's map of the University campus.

Matson said the building will provide a meeting place after games, and rooms can be reserved for grad-

uation ceremonies and other University activities.

"We'll have the capability of having banquets, receptions and those types of things for former students and people on campus," Matson said.

Matson said the semicircular-shaped center will be designed to represent the beliefs that Texas A&M stands for.

"We wanted something that represents the strength and tradition that the association and A&M has, so the building committee felt like the

semicircular-shaped building with Roman architecture and big columns would exemplify that," Matson said. "The white marble will make it very attractive."

Sections of the aerobics track and the flying disc golf course have been altered because of the five-acre construction site.

He said current alternate routes of the track, which loop around the Floral Test Gardens, have been established to keep joggers from running on adjacent streets, but "90 per-

cent" still insist on running along Jersey Street.

"It's crazy, but that's what they want to do," he said.

An improved version of the aerobics track is expected to be completed by Aug. 5, Matson said. He said some sections of the track will be temporary until the building is finished.

"I think the track will be better than the old one once it's finished," he said.

Matson said the location for the center was chosen so that it would be

close to the Memorial Student Center and Kyle Field.

"It was by far the best location on campus," he said.

Matson said the money for the center was donated by former students.

When the employees of the association move into their new building, the association's current offices in the MSC will be used by the Texas A&M Development Foundation, he said.

White House

President's lobbyist climbing administrative ladder

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Suddenly he seems to be the third most powerful man in the White House. But outside Washington, few even recognize his name.

W. Dennis Thomas was a White House lobbyist who had worked at the Treasury Department when Donald T. Regan headed that agency.

When Regan took over as White House chief of staff earlier this year, Thomas was regarded by some as a likely candidate for promotion.

But in May, the 41-year-old former congressional aide jumped ship.

He left the relative obscurity of his job as one of the president's men on Capitol Hill to accept a lucrative partnership in the international accounting firm of Touche Ross.

The scuttlebutt was that he

would be making \$200,000 a year plus assorted fringe benefits and bonuses while handling government relations for the firm, which had been looking for someone to fill that job for nearly two years.

A colleague, Cindy Cipriani, said that Thomas "was very well respected in a position of leadership and high visibility" at Touche Ross.

"People work for years and years to become a partner, and partners rarely come from the outside," she said.

David A. Brody, a longtime Washington lobbyist, recalled that he ran into Thomas on the street shortly after the former White House aide left government.

"For once I've got time on my hands," Brody remembers Thomas saying.

But the new executive lasted only 2½ months in his first-ever

non-government post.

On July 15, the day doctors discovered President Reagan had colon cancer, the White House press office distributed a routine personnel announcement to reporters gathered at Bethesda Naval Hospital, where Reagan was a patient.

"The president announced today his intention to appoint W. Dennis Thomas as assistant to the president," the statement said.

Most presidential aides have two titles, one showing rank, the other describing one's job.

But Thomas has only one title — and that one is misleading.

Although he is assistant to the president, his real function is to serve as a key aide and adviser to Chief of Staff Regan, who brought him back into the White House at about one-third of what he reportedly was making at

Touche Ross.

"He's not deputy chief of staff yet, but I bet he will be," said one White House aide, describing Thomas' new role on condition he not be identified.

Hiring Thomas also constituted an indirect admission that the staff structure Regan established last winter just wasn't working very well.

The chief of staff, a former Wall Street executive who brought several bright young underlings with him from Treasury, found himself inundated by details and no one to whom he could comfortably delegate authority.

Thomas, one official said, is Regan's idea of the person he needs for more pragmatic advice.

And Brody called Thomas "a bright, capable young pragmatist. He's not an ideologue. He'll bring valuable insight to that job."

Some Texas teachers ready for March tests

Associated Press

AUSTIN — No Texas teacher in his or her "right mind" wants to take the required competency test but the Association of Texas Professional Educators will not challenge the tests, the group's president said Tuesday.

"The test is going to show us there are good teachers in the state of Texas," said Sue McGarvey, a Hallsville High School teacher. "We need to stop talking about going to court, take the tests and get it behind us."

The Texas State Teachers Association, the state's largest teacher group, has threatened to go to court to challenge the competency test system. All Texas teachers will take the test next March. Teachers must pass the test to remain in the classroom.

The test is a result of HB 72, the 1984 education reform act.

McGarvey said, "No teacher in his or her right mind wants to take that test, but it is here. Our association will obey the law."

ATPE has 42,000 members, mak-

ing it the second largest of the four major teacher groups in Texas.

"We will support the competency test although we do not believe that it is a true evaluation of a teacher's teaching ability," she added. "Students must abide by no-pass, no-play and the exit-level test. How can we give tests to our students when we ourselves refuse to take them?"

ATPE favors a teacher appraisal system based on classroom performance. Teachers who fare poorly on those evaluations should be required to take an exam, according to McGarvey.

ATPE will help teachers prepare both for the subject matter in the test and stress caused by such exams. The group's leaders met here this week.

"Teachers need help with the frustration and emotional pressure of taking the test," McGarvey said.

"It's like an aggravation," she said of most teachers' reaction to the exam. "Of course it's insulting."

"And of course there's a chance I would fail the test. I don't intend to."