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Drug tests in offices supported by panel

WASHINGTON — Drug trafficking is organized crime's most lucrative enterprise and constitutes a national emergency that should be met with workplace drug testing and aggressive intervention by the U.S. military, a presidential panel concluded Monday.

In a report to President Reagan, the Commission on Organized Crime said the U.S. drug problem has become a threat to national security and justifies drastic measures such as drug testing in the workplace.

The study says government contracts should not be awarded to companies that fail to implement drug testing programs.

At a news briefing, the commission's deputy director, Rodney B. Smith, stopped short of saying that working Americans should undergo drug testing, but added, "We're saying to every employer in the nation that you should consider the availability of drug testing."

Smith acknowledged that the tests are not 100 percent accurate and that there was concern among commission members about employees unfairly losing their jobs as a result.

But he said drug testing technology can be improved and that losing a job unfairly "is one small issue in a much larger issue."

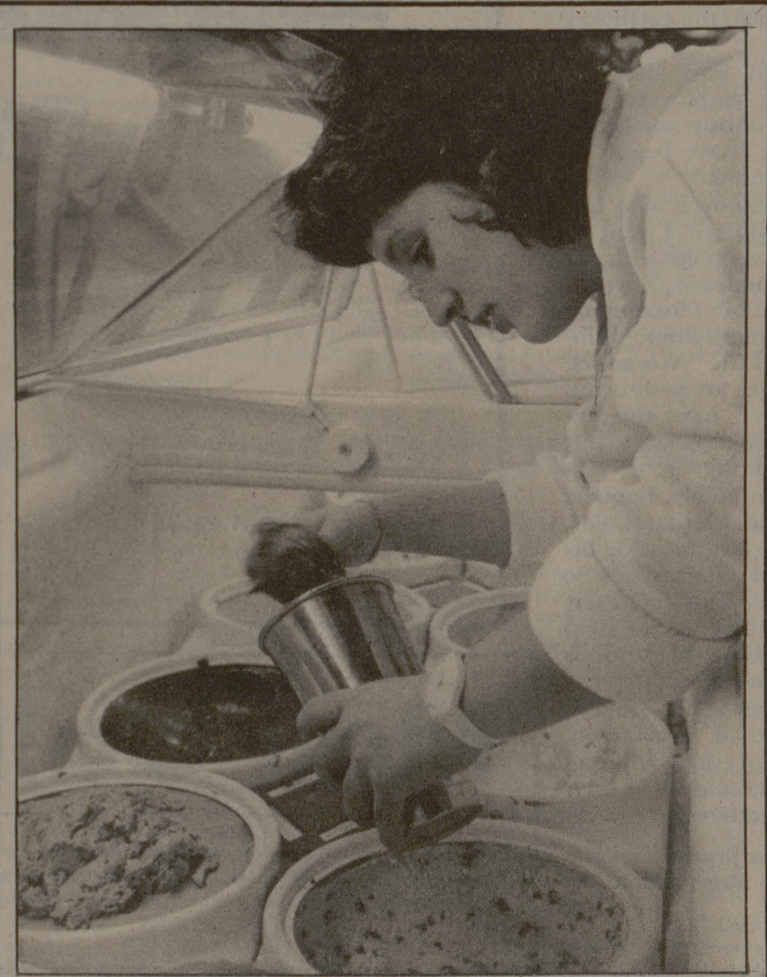


Photo by JOANIE PATE

What's The Scoop?

Denise Johnson, a sophomore economics major dips ice cream to make a shake at a local ice cream parlor.

Astronaut angry flaw in booster concealed

Associated Press

SPACE CENTER, Houston — NASA's astronaut corps was not informed that engineers had been concerned for more than two years about the shuttle's solid rocket boosters, and a senior shuttle commander said Monday he was "angry" about that.

Astronaut Henry Hartsfield, one of four astronauts who broke a month-long silence to talk to reporters Monday, said he learned about a problem with seals on the solid rocket boosters only after Challenger blew up on Jan. 28.

"I was angry about it," he said. "Still am."

Hartsfield and three colleagues — Vance Brand, Gordon Fullerton and Joe Engle — all veteran shuttle commanders, said they were never made aware of any parts of the shuttle called "criticality 1," whose failure would have resulted in a catastrophic loss.

Fullerton said the astronauts didn't have the time to examine each system aboard the complex shuttle. He explained that "there's an implied trust (in the engineers) in flying on the shuttle."

None of the four would agree that there was a flaw in NASA's launch decision process, as has been charged by the presidential commission investigating Challenger's accident.

Hartsfield said he felt it was too early to say the system was flawed,

but added that he was concerned about reports that critical engineering concerns about the solid rocket boosters never reached the top levels of NASA.

"If it did happen that way, I am troubled," he said.

Hartsfield said he felt NASA was under no extraordinary pressure to launch any of the shuttle missions and said that before one of his

flights he was given a choice of proceeding despite a computer problem or waiting for the problem to be fixed. He decided to delay the flight and said there was no pressure to change his decision.

Brand said he believes the astronaut corps should have been advised about the engineering concerns in-

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NASA considers return to throwaway rockets

WASHINGTON — With only three space shuttles remaining and customers lined up for the next decade, NASA is thinking about returning to the throwaway rockets the shuttle had rendered nearly obsolete.

In the meantime, acting NASA administrator William Graham has ordered modifications on the shuttle Discovery to enable it to carry space probes that use powerful Centaur rockets to reach distant planets. Two such spacecraft were to have been launched in May; one to explore the sun, and the other to explore the planet Jupiter.

The Ulysses spacecraft to the sun was to have been launched

from Challenger. The Jupiter probe, called Galileo, was to have been aboard Atlantis, which also had been modified to accommodate the Centaur rocket.

NASA said, "Schedulers have been instructed to evaluate alternative approaches based on 12- or 18-month delays before resumption of space shuttle flights."

It added that special attention is being paid to payloads involving national security and those with specific scientific deadlines, such as the Ulysses and Galileo missions, which can only be launched when Earth and Jupiter are in proper position.

State senators told year-end debt may reach \$600 million

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Facing a \$1.3 billion budget shortfall, House lawmakers decided Monday to lay off some staff members while senators heard predictions the state may be forced to write up to \$600 million in hot checks by year's end.

Treasurer Ann Richards told a rare caucus of Senate members, called to discuss the oil price dilemma, "Right now, money is going out faster than it is coming in."

"By mid-December, we will have paid out almost \$2 billion more than the state's General Revenue Fund has in the Treasury. This puts the state into a serious financial crunch."

If oil prices — and oil tax revenues — remain at lower than anticipated levels, state government may find itself asking banks to honor checks for which funds won't be immediately available, Richards said.

While up to \$1.4 billion could be transferred from other state funds to help cover the checks, she said, several hundred million still might remain outstanding.

"We are working on short-term, temporary solutions designed to get us through critical periods of a few days' duration," she said. "Should these measures fail to cover

"We are working on short-term, temporary solutions designed to get us through critical periods. . . ."

Ann Richards, state treasurer.

the state's obligations, the Treasury would have to enter into some variation on an old-style arrangement used in the past which calls for the state banks to honor hot warrants."

Earlier in the day, the House Administration Committee voted to slash House spending by nearly \$7 million over the next 18 months and lay off 8 percent of the House permanent staff.

Committee chairman Mike Millsap said the action is designed both to help the state cope with the projected \$1.3 billion shortfall and to warn state agencies to pare their own budgets.

"Failure to undertake similar measures across state government may only presage a cut in more basic services," Millsap said.

The cuts totaled 19 percent of the House

administrative budget. Gov. Mark White has asked all state agencies to reduce spending by 13 percent through Aug. 31, 1987.

Such cuts are necessary, officials say, to absorb revenue losses brought about by the severe plunge in oil prices over the last two months that led Comptroller Bob Bullock to reduce the state's income estimate by \$1.3 billion.

Millsap, D-Fort Worth, said the House reductions will save \$6.89 million.

"All of the (cuts) involved difficult choices, and none of them were arrived at without serious thought and careful planning," he said.

Some key cuts include:

- Laying off 8 percent of the 166-member permanent House staff.
- Freezing House hiring and limiting replacement of employees lost through attrition to one out of four.
- Eliminating funding for legislative caucuses and the House Study Group, the independent research organization that has provided analysis of legislation and other issues before lawmakers. Several study group employees also would be let go.
- Postponing the 3 percent employee pay raise scheduled for Sept. 1.

"I think whistling in the dark is what we're doing if we don't do something right away."

Sen. John Traeger, D-Seguin.

• Restricting travel by lawmakers and staff.

Millsap indicated that Monday's spending cuts might not be the last.

"This is not the last time we're going to meet to take action," he said.

The committee's decision to eliminate funds for the House Study Group brought protest from Rep. Ernestine Glossbrenner, D-Alice, chairman of the study group.

Glossbrenner said she hoped "the committee was not using the fiscal crisis as an excuse to take control of the independent research group."

In the Senate, that chamber's administration committee approved a 13 percent spending cut — but no layoffs in its permanent staff.

However, Sen. Roy Blake, D-Nacogdoches, committee chairman, said the plan

to save some \$2.88 million would include a hiring freeze and elimination of the planned 3 percent employee raise.

Gov. White has insisted that state agencies can eliminate the potential budget deficit through spending cuts, and he has refused to call a special legislative session to deal with the problem.

However, Sen. John Traeger, D-Seguin, said Monday that failure to call a special session could have dire consequences next year if oil prices continue to drop.

"I guarantee you that if that deficit continues to mount, by the time they meet next year we're going to be in stark terror as far as meeting the state budget," Traeger said.

"They better do something now and get some money coming in," he said. "There isn't any short cut or magic."

Traeger said a special session should be called and the sales tax raised to 5 percent from the current 4 1/2 percent to raise the needed money.

"It's whether you want to gut up now and anticipate it or wait until you get into a big hole," he said. "I think whistling in the dark is what we're doing if we don't do something right away."

Reagan seeks jump in Contras' funding

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Reagan called on Congress Monday to support \$100 million in assistance to anti-communist rebels in Nicaragua, saying those who resist will be held "fully accountable by history."

Reagan said that if the Sandinista government achieves final victory, it would "open up the possibility of Soviet military bases on America's doorstep, threaten the security of the Panama Canal and inaugurate a vast migration march to the United States by hundreds of thousands of refugees."

Reagan said that if Congress rejects his request for \$70 million in direct military assistance and \$30 million in non-lethal humanitarian aid, it would mean "consolidation of a privileged sanctuary for terrorists and subversives just two days' driving time from Harlingen."

U.S. assistance to the Contras

now is limited to \$27 million in non-lethal aid, which expires at the end of March.

Rep. Dave McCurdy, D-Okla., a key moderate on the House Intelligence Committee who supported humanitarian aid for the Contras last year, said Monday he will oppose the administration's new request.

McCurdy said nearly all the House members who could be expected to go either way, will likely vote against the proposal. He added, however, that he believes a compromise package probably will emerge from the Congress after the current request is defeated.

McCurdy said the administration is seeking a disproportionate amount of money for the Contras compared with the economic development funding it is requesting for Nicaragua's democratic neighbors.

Opposition to confirm presidency

Aquino gains Loyalist support

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Leaders of Ferdinand E. Marcos' political party pledged Monday to cooperate with Corazon Aquino and to have her presidency confirmed by the National Assembly, in which they hold two-thirds of the seats.

The nation's central bank said it was taking legal action to recover documents and money Marcos took with him last Wednesday when he fled the country he had ruled for 20 years.

Demonstrations were reported in two Manila suburbs and a province north of the capital against Aquino's decision to replace some local officials before their terms expire.

In another development, guerrillas of the communist New People's Army killed 15 policemen and four civilians in an ambush in the Bicol region of southern Luzon Island, the Philippine Constabulary said.

At least 23 people have been

killed in rebel attacks that began at the weekend.

After a daylong caucus of the Marcos party, the New Society Movement, its leaders said they recognized the legitimacy of Aquino's government and were ready to have the National Assembly confirm "this fact that cannot be denied."

The National Assembly proclamation that Marcos had defeated Aquino in the Feb. 7 presidential election led to a military rebellion and civil uprising that forced the 68-year-old former president to flee.

Charges of fraud came from independent observers, the nation's Roman Catholic bishops and foreign governments, including that of the United States.

Blas Ople, who was labor minister under Marcos, said: "If Mrs. Aquino seeks constitutional legitimacy, then she's entitled to that. We . . . genuinely welcome that."

The caucus also drafted a resolution asking Aquino to stop dismiss-

ing pro-Marcos mayors and provincial governors whose terms expire June 30.

She and Local Government Minister Aquilino Pimentel have been criticized, even by some supporters, for canceling local elections scheduled for May and replacing incumbent officials before their terms expire.

Jose Fernandez, director of the central bank, said government lawyers were applying in Hawaii for a court order stopping further movement of a plane load of possessions Marcos took along when the U.S. Air Force flew his entourage to Hawaii.

Fernandez did not mention Marcos by name, but said he had orders to "recover assets that have been delivered (to Hawaii) which we consider to be in clear violation of existing central bank regulations."

Fernandez did not say what Marcos took with him besides money, but news reports from Washington

have quoted U.S. officials as saying the cargo included boxes of documents believed to contain information about his business dealings.

They also were quoted as saying Marcos took the equivalent of \$1.1 million in Philippine currency.

Taking national currency out of the country without central bank approval is illegal, and Fernandez said there was no such authorization.

Communist insurgents had been relatively inactive since the election. Vice President Salvador Laurel had predicted most of them would lay down their arms when a new government took over.

Aquino said when she was sworn in that some rebel commanders told her they were prepared to surrender to her.

Col. Jovencio Sales, Philippine Constabulary chief of staff in Albay province, said that in addition to those killed, 10 policemen and seven civilians were wounded in Monday's ambush of a military truck.