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Texas A&M The Battalion

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Beach Dance

Cadets in Squadron 5 play Hacky Sack Wednesday in the Quadrangle during the Corps of Cadets

beach day. Everyone in the Corp was encouraged to dress and act as if they were at the beach.

Photo by MICHAEL SANCHEZ

Reagan sends Habib to Central America

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Reagan, trying to bolster his case for military aid for Nicaraguan rebels, sent special envoy Philip Habib to Central America on Wednesday and said critics who claim the United States is not interested in a negotiated settlement "are making ridiculous noises."

There was renewed talk about compromise between the White House and Congress on the \$100 million package Reagan has proposed, but administration officials said privately the president had not heard any proposals he deemed acceptable.

Reagan, himself, said he was not trying to signal a willingness to compromise but would listen to any offer. He did not rule out the possibility of delaying delivery of aid for up to 75 days, to give negotiations a chance.

"We're continuing to talk about all possibilities like that," Reagan said. Yet, presidential spokesman Larry Speakes said, "We're not inter-

ested in anything short of getting the president's package approved, without restrictions."

Habib's mission drew fire from Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega.

"He (Reagan) is trying to impress on international public opinion that he is interested in a negotiated solution, but what he really wants to do is complement his policy of war and terrorism against Nicaragua," Ortega said in Managua.

Habib's three-nation itinerary

does not include a stop in Nicaragua. "You don't go where you're not invited," Reagan said.

The Nicaraguan embassy in Washington, however, said Habib was welcome in Managua "if the administration honestly wants to negotiate."

Reagan said Habib has the authority to visit Nicaragua for talks with the Sandinista regime "if any-

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Proposed Contra aid troubles Latin America

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — While President Reagan pushes for approval of \$100 million in aid to Nicaragua's Contra rebels, Latin American nations concerned about escalating violence in the region are voicing increasing support for diplomatic solutions.

Even in South America, where four nations are giving renewed vigor to the lagging Contadora peace effort, there is concern that violence could trickle down to affect all.

Argentine Foreign Minister Dante Caputo said last week that South American nations would be naive to think they could remain unaffected by a spreading conflict in Central America.

"An outbreak of war would produce a rarification of hemispheric relations, something which we don't want," Caputo said. "This is also going to produce a strong polarization of public opinion; we are going to see Argentines against Argentines."

Mexico, Colombia, Panama and Venezuela formed the Contadora group in January 1983,

taking the name from the Panamanian resort island where the first meeting was held. They argue that, although no concrete results have been achieved, the threat of a generalized war in Central America has been averted during the negotiations.

The effort appeared to founder by late last year, but revived at a January meeting in Caraballeda, Venezuela, attended also by the South American support group of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Peru.

In a document titled "Caraballeda Message for Peace and Democracy," the ministers said the Contadora group offers the only hope to overcome "the arms race, foreign intervention and the politics of force" in Central America.

In a recent interview with the Washington Post, Colombian President Belisario Betancur said, "An initiative such as that which Reagan has taken to ask for \$100 million from Congress is mistaken. I know that the American government knows that Latin America has its own language, and that language is expressed through Contadora."

OMB proposes cuts in research funds

By MONA L. PALMER
Staff Writer

The federal Office of Management and Budget has proposed to reduce the amount of money universities can claim as administrative costs of federally sponsored research.

Don Bugh, director of systems analysis and special projects, said Texas A&M's administrative cost consists of general, department, sponsored project and student administrations.

The cost is included in the overhead, or indirect cost, of research, he said.

Effective April 1, the sum of these four administrative costs can't exceed 26 percent of the project's total research cost, he said.

Bugh said the revision is a two-year phase-in ceiling that ultimately will result in a 20 percent cap by April 1, 1987.

"The idea here is to save the federal government money," Bugh said. "They believe this will save them \$200 million annually."

Currently, A&M charges 38 percent of its total project cost to overhead, and the administrative portion is less than 20 percent, he said.

Jo Ann Treat, president of A&M's research foundation, said the revision won't affect A&M this year or next year and said the University's administrative costs are lower because A&M isn't as bureaucratic as other institutions.

Treat said the difficulty in the revision is in the precedent it sets.

"This is one rather large step in the direction of putting caps on cost elements — some of those (caps) may hurt us," she said.

Treat said the 26 percent cap also doesn't consider variations in universities.

Duwayne Anderson, associate provost for research, said the revision is complex and easily misunderstood. Several universities will complain on the basis of misunderstanding, he said.

But many universities also are complaining about the process and the fact that the revision came as an order and intrudes upon university affairs, he said.

Mike Lytle, special assistant to the chancellor for federal relations, said universities usually have a say on the

revisions and give input before the proposals are released.

But this time the proposal came as a shock to the universities and the OMB gave universities 30 days to comment on the change, he said.

Lytle said the OMB can act on the comments or choose not to.

A congressional hearing is scheduled for Thursday to discuss the OMB's revision, he said. The hearing won't change the revision, but it will show congressional interest in the issue, Lytle said.

"It's a review, oversight and inquiry into the problem," he said.

Treat said the OMB disregarded congressional orders that requires it

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Sources say NASA brought more remains, debris ashore

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The salvage ship USS Preserver steamed into port Wednesday night and what sources said were more remains of Challenger's astronauts were loaded into three ambulances and driven to a hospital.

Also aboard were parts of the flight deck, an astronaut's personal effects and two unused space suits, as well as other debris from the shattered shuttle's cabin, the sources said.

The big vessel docked at Port Canaveral at the Navy's Trident submarine dock, a secure area across a channel away from the public. It had not been expected to return ashore until Thursday.

The remains were transferred to a hospital at nearby Patrick Air Force Base, where other body parts were taken after being recovered Saturday.

Meanwhile, the county medical examiner reported Wednesday that NASA had prevented a legal dispute over the astronauts' bodies by agreeing to let his staff observe the autopsies.

The flight deck was where Challenger's pilot, co-pilot and two of the five other astronauts sat during the shuttle's brief flight.

The spacesuits recovered were aboard in case of an emergency space walk.

The crew member's personal effects were recovered inside a storage locker.

A four-man search submarine, mean-

while, located a piece of solid rocket booster that a Navy spokeswoman said could be from the segment of the right booster believed responsible for the shuttle explosion.

The 4-foot-by-5-foot piece of debris from the rear part of a rocket, weighing 400 to 500 pounds, is believed to contain propellant and part of the external tank attachment ring, Lt. Cmdr. Deborah Burnette said.

Sources had said the medical examiner's office might seek a court order unless the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and Air Force turned over the remains in accordance with state law, which requires the local medical examiner to conduct an autopsy on any person who is slain or dies by accident.

The statutes apply even if deaths occur on federal property, or, as in the case of the Challenger accident, they occur away from any jurisdiction but are brought into one.

Some remains of the astronauts killed when Challenger exploded 73 seconds after launch on Jan. 28 were brought ashore secretly Saturday night and were taken to nearby Patrick Air Force Base for examination by forensic experts, sources said.

Dr. Laudie McHenry, chief medical examiner for Brevard County, said Wednesday: "Since the discovery of the Challenger capsule with its human remains, there has been essentially a blackout of communications between NASA, the Air Force and this office. Two days ago, a conference between representatives of Patrick Air Force Base

Hospital, the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology and the Brevard County medical examiner gave lip service to a coordinated, multiagency investigation, with favorable comments by all present.

"As of 10 a.m. today, March 12, telephone communication from NASA indicates that representatives of the Brevard County medical examiner may be present at the investigations to be performed."

The statement added, "There are no planned lawsuits or court hearings concerning this investigation."

Still and television photos were taken of the newly found booster part and will be brought to shore for development and analysis.

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Nader says insurance industry crisis phony

Associated Press

AUSTIN — The insurance industry has manufactured a phony crisis as the launch pad for a push for new laws that could mean higher profits, Ralph Nader said Wednesday.

"Through a well-orchestrated campaign, the insurance lobby is trying to hoodwink the public, the media and the Legislature into believing that the only way that the industry can continue to insure risks is to limit our basic rights to hold wrongdoers responsible for the harm they cause," Nader said.

An industry spokesman said the crisis that has caused increasing premiums is real, not manufactured. Rick Gentry said

judges and juries have been approving higher awards in liability and personal injury cases.

"We do know there are some funny things going on out there," said Gentry, of the Insurance Information Institute.

He said the Nader claims are based on a fear that "there is some kind of boogey man out there."

"No one in our industry has any desire to inhibit people from being compensated. Our complaint is things are out of balance," Gentry said.

The Southwestern Insurance Information Service said Wednesday the insurance crunch is a result of "a civil justice system bordering on a lottery mentality."

'List not a consumers' guide'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The government on Wednesday put out a list of some 270 hospitals reporting unusually high or low death rates among Medicare patients, but warned would-be patients against using it as a consumers' guide to hospitals.

The list immediately generated debate over whether it smears reputable institutions, provides valuable new information for consumers, or repudiates hospitals with high death rates.

The Health Care Financing Administration, which runs Medicare, released the statistical tables along with a host of precautionary statements that the numbers themselves "have no intrinsic meaning

and, therefore, are unreliable for judging a person's chances of success in a hospital.

That assessment was shared by industry representatives, some of whom called the report unfair, misleading and meaningless.

Jack Owen, executive vice president of the American Hospital Association, said, "It really is of no value to the consumer. You can't tell from the list whether a hospital is good or bad. . . . Our concern is that it will frighten cause apprehension among the elderly."

But others said breakdowns of the mortality figures to show death rates for specific operations, such as coronary bypass surgery, will provide important guidance for patients facing

surgery and trying to choose a hospital — guidance that never before has been made available.

Sidney M. Wolfe, of the Public Citizen Health Research Group, said "What it does is allow people to make choices they were shut out from making in the past."

The data were compiled as part of routine reviews of the care given patients under Medicare, the government health insurance program for the elderly or disabled. The hospitals were picked by a computer as "outliers," hospitals whose death rates fell well outside the projected range.

Some shortcomings in the data were immediately apparent.

One Nevada institution, for example, was cited because it had a death rate of 87.6 percent, while the government's computer said its projected death rate based on diagnoses should have been 22.5 percent.

But the institution is the Adelson Hospice of Las Vegas. A hospice treats only terminally ill patients and the government's computer is not programmed to take that into account.

Owen, of the AHA, said inner-city hospitals also may be unfairly portrayed. Terminally ill patients in wealth communities may choose to hire nurses and go home for their last days, he said, lowering the hospital's death rate; poor patients in inner-city hospitals don't have that option and will die in the hospital.

Hospitals' death rates reported