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Poindexter refuses to give details of sales

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan's former national security adviser refused Wednesday to give Congress details of the secret sale of weapons to Iran or the diversion of profits to Nicaraguan rebels. Vice President George Bush contended that the spiraling controversy has harmed the administration, saying, "Clearly, mistakes were made."

Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter became the second recently-departed administration official to invoke the Fifth Amendment in declining to answer questions from the Senate Intelligence Committee.

His one-time aide, Lt. Col. Oliver North, did so on Monday, and committee members said they were considering possibly seeking grants of immunity from prosecution to secure testimony by both men.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., vice chairman of the committee, vowed that lawmakers would piece together the facts "with or without them," and that committee members said that unspecified Cabinet secretaries will be called to the panel's heavily guarded room to testify.

While Congress continued delving into the most serious crisis of the

Reagan presidency, there was increasing pressure for the departure of Donald T. Regan, the president's powerful chief of staff.

But White House spokesman Larry Speakes said Regan has no intention of leaving and said the president "has not asked him to leave."

Regan did not discuss possible staff changes when he spoke to businesswomen in the White House. Instead, he said he hoped the furor would not undercut support for the Contra forces fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

"We cannot let recent events distract us from the cause of those brave fighters for freedom around the world," he said. As his audience applauded, Regan said, "Yes, you did just make my day."

Regan could not have been as pleased with the word he received earlier in the day from key GOP congressional leaders.

One participant, speaking on condition he not be identified by name, said Regan was advised to seek changes in his administration.

Outside the White House, Senate Republican leader Bob Dole of Kan-

Poll: Reagan should resign if lying about arms sales

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly half of the Americans polled by ABC News think President Reagan should resign if he's lying about when he learned about the Contra connection to U.S. arms shipments to Iran, while the rest believe Reagan should not resign even if he has lied, according to the survey.

The survey of 505 Americans, released Wednesday, also found that the president's overall approval rating has dropped nearly 20 points since September to 49 percent. The figure represents the

lowest rating for Reagan since April 1983.

However, the poll found a slight improvement in the president's overall credibility on the arms shipments controversy, with 49 percent saying Reagan has been lying and 47 percent saying he has been telling the truth. The percentage of people who believe the president was 37 percent in an ABC poll on Nov. 19 and 40 percent on Nov. 25.

The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points. It was conducted Tuesday night by telephone.

sas said the message to Reagan was this: "There are going to be more and more stories, every day there will be something new. Some other player will be involved, somebody

the president never even heard of."

Bush's comments came in a speech in which he said he fully supported Reagan's decision to make secret arms sales to Iran, but knew

nothing of the diversion of profits to the Contra forces.

Reagan also says he knew nothing of the diversion of funds until Attorney General Edwin Meese III told him a little more than a week ago.

In voicing strong words of support for Reagan, Bush added, "There is no denying that our credibility has been damaged by this entire episode and its aftermath."

Bush said the shaping of the Iranian policy involved difficult choices and was clouded by the way in which the president's goals were executed, "specifically allegations about certain activities of the National Security Council staff."

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, in France on an official trip, said Reagan received bad advice from aides advising him on a new policy toward Iran. "What he was trying to do was to open an agreement and an arrangement with people whom he had been advised were of a far different character than the people he was quite properly denouncing as being fanatical lunatics in Iran."

"I think unfortunately some of

that advice has not turned out to have been accurate or correct," Weinberger said.

Meanwhile, Transportation Department documents show that a former CIA air transport company, said to have played key roles in both arms sales to Iran and shipments to the Nicaraguan rebels, flew more than 400 tons of cargo this year into an air base used by an American-managed Contra resupply operation.

Southern Air Transport of Miami reported it made 15 flights into a military airport in El Salvador.

The flights coincide with creation of an air resupply wing to carry weapons to the Contra rebels — an effort that government sources said anonymously was managed by North.

While the administration awaited appointment of an independent counsel to investigate the once-secret arms sale to Iran and the funneling of profits through a Swiss bank account to Nicaraguan forces, Senate leaders appeared headed for creation of a single "supercommittee" to conduct its own probe.

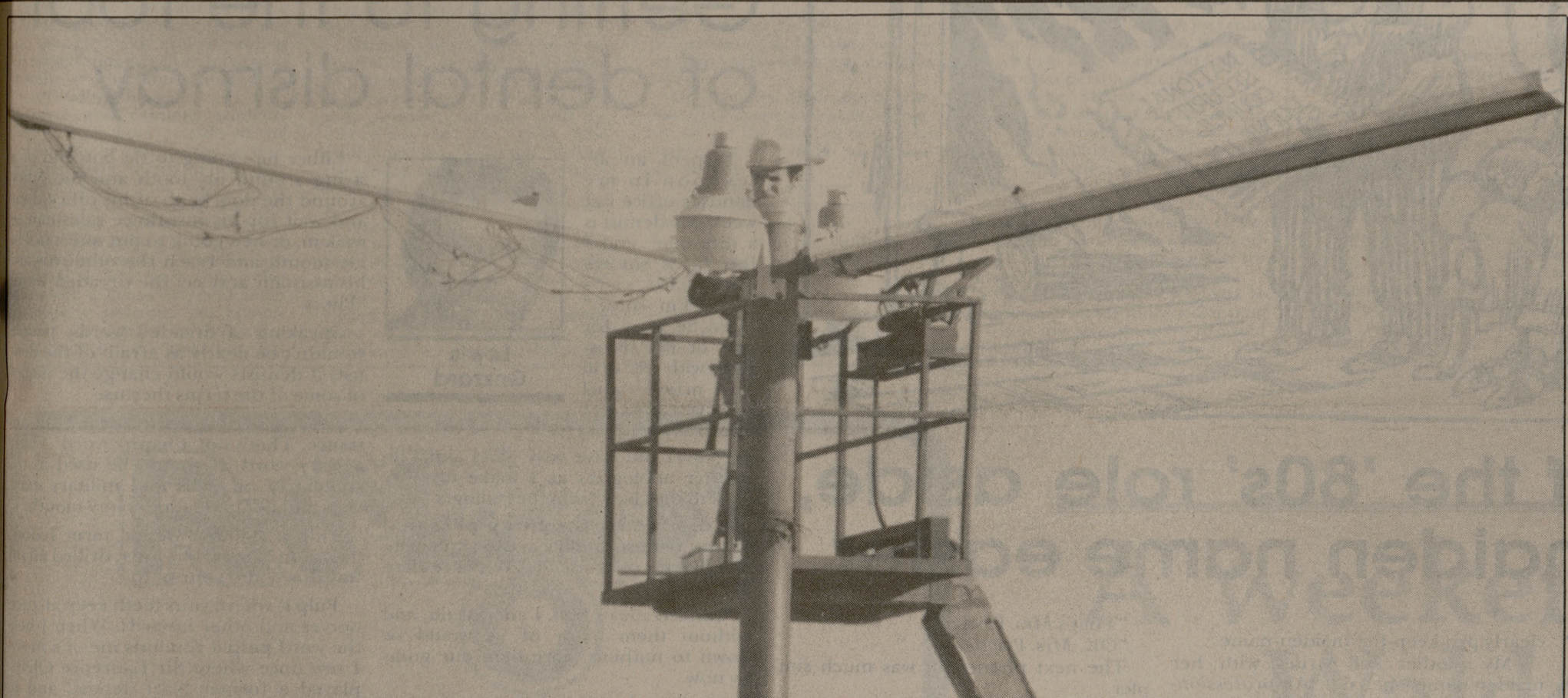


Photo by Greg Bailey

Let There Be Light

Electrician George Lovell works in a "cherry picker" repairing a parking lot light at the Redmond Terrace Shopping Center Wednesday.

Vandiver finalist for UH spot

Texas A&M President Frank Vandiver is one of five finalists left from a field of 152 considered for the vacant University of Houston system chancellor's position.

The position has been open since Sept. 1, when Charles E. Bishop resigned to accept a research and teaching position with the University of North Carolina. Bishop had been the top executive of UH's four-campus system for six years, earning \$139,000 annually.

Vandiver issued a statement Wednesday about his nomination, saying he was flattered by the offer but that it was too early to comment.

"I am flattered to have been nominated and considered a finalist for the position of chancellor at the University of Houston," Vandiver said. "I am happy to be president of Texas A&M University and it is simply premature to comment on a position that has not been offered to me."

Trish Healy, an information specialist for UH, said the chancellor most likely will be selected by the end of this month.

County attorney allows students to make restitution

By Christi Daugherty
Staff Writer

The five A&M students charged with misdemeanor theft of long-distance service in the past few weeks by phone companies other than Star Tel may be let off the hook after all.

Brazos County Attorney Jim Kuboviak said he has decided to give those charged by other phone companies the same chances for leniency as being granted by Star Tel.

"If the students that were charged, these non-athletes with complainants other than Star Tel,

wanted to make restitution, then I would allow them the same deal that Star Tel made," Kuboviak said. He said he felt he had to make the move in the interest of fairness.

Star Tel is granting a 15-day period of amnesty, allowing all who have used Star Tel access codes illegally to pay the charges and avoid prosecution.

Other long-distance services, in particular MCI, have expressed opposition to any sort of amnesty plan, and MCI strongly emphasizes legal prosecution as a crime deterrent.

Kathleen Keegan, an MCI spokeswoman in New York, said MCI had not heard about Kuboviak's decision, but would not object.

"We put the matter into the hands of the county attorney, and we will stand by whatever he decides," Keegan said.

Kuboviak said he had not as yet informed the companies of his decision, because although they will have some input into the matter, the final decision is his.

He said that since people are now aware that prosecution is a possibility, he plans to be more severe if the problem arises again.

Since he has never encountered the problem before, and suddenly has many cases of it, he said he feels the industry is trying to make examples of the students they've caught.

"I'm going to take a harder stand on it next time, but I'm adjusting my philosophy on the existing cases based upon what Star Tel has done," Kuboviak said. "Since Star Tel made the decision to accept restitution, I

Court to say if bias law covers AIDS patients

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a case that may affect the rights of AIDS victims, the Supreme Court was told Wednesday that a federal law banning bias against the handicapped does not protect people with contagious diseases.

"This cannot be what Congress had in mind," Solicitor General Charles Fried, the Reagan administration's top courtroom lawyer, said in urging the justices to rule that people with contagious illnesses are not covered by the 1973 anti-bias law.

With a nationwide debate over AIDS discrimination as a backdrop, the court must decide whether all recipients of federal aid — including

virtually all public schools — are barred from discriminating against people with contagious diseases.

Gay rights activists say the decision may affect the national debate on AIDS even though the Supreme Court case does not involve a victim of acquired immune deficiency syndrome, a deadly disease that to date mainly has afflicted homosexuals.

The U.S. Public Health Service says there are no known cases of anyone getting AIDS through casual contact. But there is a great deal of public fear about how contagious it might be, and there have been efforts to bar AIDS carriers from

schools and work places.

During Wednesday's 60-minute argument session, however, AIDS was mentioned only once.

George Rahdert, a lawyer representing a third-grade teacher fired after she was diagnosed as having tuberculosis, argued that a Justice Department memorandum on AIDS wrongly suggests that an employer legally can fire people based on an irrational fear that they may spread the disease.

Gene H. Arline sued the Nassau County, Fla., School Board after she was fired as a teacher because she had tuberculosis, an infectious respiratory disease.

Fiscal officer: Future of TAEX lies in use of mass communications

Editor's note: This is the third in a three-part series on the effects of state budget cuts and Texas' slumping oil economy on the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. Part 3 examines the TAEX' future.

By Bob Grube
Staff Writer

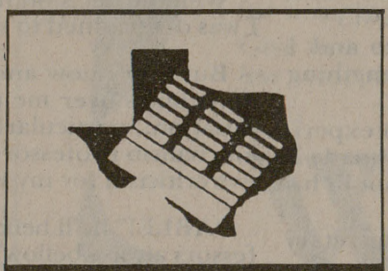
As Texas and Texans try to weather the storm of oil slumps and budget cuts, the Texas Agricultural Extension Service is riding in the eye of the storm — relatively speaking.

Ronald Jackson, fiscal officer for the TAEX, says it is better off than many state agencies, but it's still smarting from budget cuts — about \$2.8 million for the 1986-1987 biennium — it took from the Legislature's second special session in September and from Gov. Mark White's hiring freeze.

"There's no bright light on the horizon that shows we're going to

fill all the empty positions that have been empty since the governor's hiring freeze," Jackson says.

"The Legislative Budget Board approved us for even funding for the next biennium," he says. "It means that there won't be any



more cutbacks and that we'll be able to restore programs that there is a significant need for."

So far in Brazos County, no programs have been cut, thanks to County Agriculture Program Leader Jim Mazurkiewicz.

But the budget cuts have reduced the county's extension office staff from five to three, and the reduction in staff is taking its toll on the remaining agencies.

Jackson says the TAEX budget cuts are not as dramatic or as visible to the public as are cuts in other agencies, but he says the TAEX feels a hiring freeze the same way another agency feels a layoff.

"Today, we (TAEX) have one subject matter specialist for approximately every 30 counties in the state," Jackson says.

"In the future, we may be less accessible than we are now," he says. "Instead of serving 30 counties, the specialist may have to serve about 90 counties."

With hiring freezes, staff reductions and budget cuts, the future for increased funding looks bleak for state-funded agencies in Texas.

How will the TAEX deal with this bleak future?

Jackson says the economic future of the TAEX lies in mass communication methods that reach more people for the dollar rather than the more traditional individual, personal communication methods.

"We're going to more of a mass media-type situation," Jackson says.

"We're really going to have to get into videos," he says. "We can produce educational and topical videos and air them on the educational television channels."

Another high-technology communication method, the Tele-Tips telephone program, is being used in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Tele-Tips is a computerized educational tape system that allows the caller to choose from a

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Cotton Bowl tickets to be sold Monday

Student tickets for the 1987 Cotton Bowl will go on sale Monday at 7 a.m. for \$25 apiece at the G. Rollie White Coliseum ticket windows, Texas A&M Ticket Manager Jim Kotch said Wednesday.

Kotch said tickets will be limited to six per student. Each Cotton Bowl ticket request must be accompanied by a season ticket book and half of those ticket books must be of either graduate or senior classification for Monday's ticket dispersal, Kotch said.

Further ticket information will be available Friday, he said.