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Cotton Club

With Steve Duke playing Santa Claus, Scott Welch (left), Frank Tonlin, Randy Abernathy and Ron Davis spend the weekend

in front of G. Rollie White Coliseum, hoping to beat the rush for Cotton Bowl tickets, which go on sale today.

Photo by Doug LaRue

U.S. copters carry troops in Honduras

Official: Reagan OK'd airlift; U.S. not involved in fighting

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. helicopters, with President Reagan's approval, on Sunday began airlifting Honduran troops to within 25 miles of a battle with about 1,000 Nicaraguan troops that have crossed into Honduras, a State Department spokesman said.

Gregory Lagana said no Americans were involved in the fighting, and they were under orders to remain at least 25 miles away, in keeping with congressional restrictions on the use of U.S. forces along the border dividing Honduras, a U.S. ally, from Nicaragua, governed by the leftist Sandinistas.

A statement released late Sunday by the State Department said on Saturday night that Reagan, after consulting with his senior advisers, agreed to provide the requested airlift support using U.S. military helicopters located at Honduras' Palmarola air base, near Comayagua.

The airlift began Sunday afternoon and will conclude sometime today, the statement said.

In Nicaragua Sunday, Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto denied that any Nicaraguan troops were in Honduras and claimed instead that U.S. warplanes bombed two Nicaraguan villages Sunday afternoon, wounding eight people.

"Today Nicaragua has been the object of a series of air bombardments in the northern zone of the country," D'Escoto said during a news conference in Managua. "Everything indicates that the planes that have penetrated our territory and bombed different populations are North American planes."

However, Dan Howard, a White House spokesman, discounted D'Escoto's assertion, saying, "It's not for me to say what's happening. It's for the government in Honduras to say."

The Honduran government has claimed a Nicaraguan incursion.

Michael O'Brien, a U.S. Embassy spokesman in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, went further in denying D'Escoto's charge, calling it completely false.

"This is obviously another example of Sandinista disinformation," O'Brien said. "It's a maneuver by the Nicaraguan regime to distract public attention from the Sandinista aggression against Honduras."

He said that no U.S. military plane is operating on the Nicaragua border.

Lagana said "there had been a series of harassing actions last week, patrols moving across the border. Then on Thursday, 200 Sandinista troops overran a Honduran position manned by 16 to 20 Honduran soldiers."

The attack came in an area not far from positions occupied by U.S.-backed Contra rebels, Lagana said, "but we have no doubt that the Sandinistas knew they were attacking Honduran positions."

The State Department statement said the Honduran government formally protested the Nicaraguan attack Friday, but "the protest was rejected by the Sandinistas."

The following day, the Honduran armed forces "verified the presence in Honduras of a Sandinista force . . . and confirmed continuing Sandinista attacks against Honduran military outposts well within Honduras," the statement said.

Late Saturday afternoon, "the Honduran armed forces launched air strikes against Sandinista targets within Honduras," the statement said, and the government of Honduras requested U.S. airlift assistance.

Incursions by Sandinista forces chasing the Contras into Honduras are frequent, according to U.S. government reports, but the Honduran armed forces ordinarily stay out of the fighting.

A Pentagon source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "Their hands were forced this time."

One administration source speculated that the Nicaraguans crossed the border "to turn up the heat on the Hondurans, to let them know that there is a price to be paid" for close association with the United States.

U.S. officials said they would not provide further details on how many U.S. forces or helicopters were involved in the airlift until "that information would no longer be of military value to the Sandinistas."

Pentagon spokesman Col. Arnold Williams said he was unable to say immediately how many U.S. troops are in Honduras.

Last March, 2,900 were there, and the number rose to 4,600 last May.

Advice from State ignored in history

WASHINGTON (AP) — When President Reagan rejected George P. Shultz's warning against selling arms to Iran, he was following a time-honored presidential tradition: ignoring advice from secretaries of state.

But amid the furor over the arms sales and evidence from opinion polls that most people think Shultz was right, Reagan may take solace in knowing he's in company with George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

As recently as Reagan's first term, Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. spent 18 stormy months fighting to be the "vicar" of U.S. foreign policy. After he lost the battle

Reagan says 'mistakes' were made

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan, adopting a conciliatory tone amid unrelenting criticism over his secret arms deals with Iran and payments to Nicaraguan rebels, said Saturday that mistakes were made in carrying out his policies and pledged to "set things right."

Yet Reagan defended his policy of reaching out to Iran.

"While we're still seeking all the facts, it's obvious that the execution of these policies was flawed and mistakes were made," Reagan said in his weekly radio address.

Reagan continued to deny that he had attempted to swap arms for hostages and promised that his administration would get to the bottom of how U.S. arms were sold to Iran and how proceeds sent to Nicaraguan Contras.

"It was not my intent to do business with (Ayatollah Ruhollah) Khomeini, nor to undercut our policy of anti-terrorism," Reagan said.

Reagan said Nov. 25, when the administration disclosed that up to \$50 million of the money paid for U.S. arms shipped to Iran was sent to U.S.-backed Nicaraguan rebels, that one element of the implementation of his policy was "seriously flawed." His Saturday statement was the first time he has referred to mistakes, but he did not outline the errors.

Senate Republican leader Bob Dole said Reagan's concession "goes a long way toward" improving his credibility.

"I think he's sticking by his policy of improving relations with Iran," Dole said, but added that he thinks Reagan's reference to "mistakes" being made implies that he, the president, shares blame.

In the Democratic response, House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill

and resigned, Haig wrote a bitter memoir accusing the White House staff of undermining him.

Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson resigned in 1793 when he grew weary of President Washington taking the advice of pro-British colleagues.

Seven decades later, Lincoln continuously reversed Secretary of State William H. Seward. As presidency expert Louis W. Koenig chronicled in his 1964 classic, "The Chief Executive," Seward once offered to relieve Lincoln of the arduous task of formulating policies. Lincoln wrote back, in effect, "Don't bother."

Jimmy Carter overruled Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance's advice against trying to rescue U.S. hostages in Iran. Vance resigned after the attempt ended in disaster.

In the current case, Reagan apparently overruled Shultz's advice last winter and organized a White House-run initiative that included selling arms to Iran at a time when the administration was publicly trumpeting its view that that country was a nest of terrorists. By all accounts, the State Department took no active part in the policy.

Why do presidents sometimes ignore the advice of men they have selected as the titular head of the U.S. foreign policy establishment?

In recent years, presidents have believed that the State Department's ballooning bureaucracy is too cumbersome for action or adequate decision-making. Carter, as well as Richard M. Nixon in his first term, relied predominantly on their personal national security advisers to make decisions.

Some secretaries, appointed for political reasons, were cut out of policy making from the first day.

Henry Kissinger, who ran Nixon's foreign policy apparatus from the National Security Council from 1969 to 1973, said Nixon didn't even invite Secretary of State William Rogers to the first presidential meeting with the Soviet ambassador to Washington.

According to Kissinger, Nixon "moved sensitive negotiations into the White House where he could supervise them directly, get the credit personally and avoid the bureaucratic disputes or inertia that he found so distasteful."

John F. Kennedy also complained of such inertia and sent his brother Robert on a few foreign missions.

Since Shultz took office in 1982, there has been no evidence that he has been cut out in such a way. Shultz has been the leading figure in talks with the Soviets and has gotten his way on most anti-terrorism policies. And no national security adviser has dominated policy in the Reagan administration as did Kissinger or Carter's aide Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Students challenge reform bill in France

PARIS (AP) — Student protests against a university reform bill widened into a general challenge of the conservative government Sunday as union leaders joined students in calling for nationwide demonstrations.

Dozens of people clashed with about 500 police in the Latin Quarter student district.

At least 68 people were injured. Premier Jacques Chirac, faced with one of the greatest political crises of his nine months in office, appealed for calm.

His interior minister, Charles Pasqua, promised a full investigation into the death Saturday of a 22-year-old student following what witnesses said was a beating by police.

Protests against the reform bill began three weeks ago but escalated in the last few days.

The government says the bill would make universities more com-

petitive, but students say it would make higher education elitist.

The students' national coordinating committee called for national demonstrations this Wednesday and invited unions and other organizations to join in opposing the reform bill and police "repression."

The Communist-led General Confederation of Labor, France's largest union federation, urged members to join in Dec. 10 strikes.

Education Minister Rene Monory said Friday that the three most controversial provisions of the bill would be studied further, but that parliamentary debate would continue on the rest of the measure.

The Devaquet bill would let universities set their own admission and curriculum standards.

Universities also would be allowed to orient students into a field of study corresponding to the students' aptitude, and not necessarily to their wishes.

Whiteley honored at funeral

By Rodney Rather
Staff Writer

A riderless horse led a funeral procession through the Texas A&M campus Friday as mourners honored Dr. Eli L. Whiteley, a Medal of Honor recipient and A&M professor emeritus of soil and crop sciences who died Tuesday at 72.

A 1941 A&M graduate, Whiteley was the last survivor of eight Aggie Medal of Honor recipients. He received the Medal of Honor for killing seven enemy soldiers and capturing 23 others while fighting from house-to-house in the village of Sigolsheim, France, on Dec. 7, 1944.

The lead horse — laden with a saddle adorned with only a pair of cavalry boots facing backward in its stirrups and a saber — embodies a cavalry tradition symbolizing that the rider no longer will mount his horse.

Included in the procession was a wagon carrying Whiteley's casket, which was accompanied by seven riders of Parsons Mounted Cavalry and a detachment of six soldiers from Fort Hood.

About 120 people followed as the somber parade moved from Rudder Tower, along Lubbock Street and Main Drive to the east entrance of campus, where the casket was transferred to a hearse and driven to College Station City Cemetery for a military interment.

At the funeral service, held in

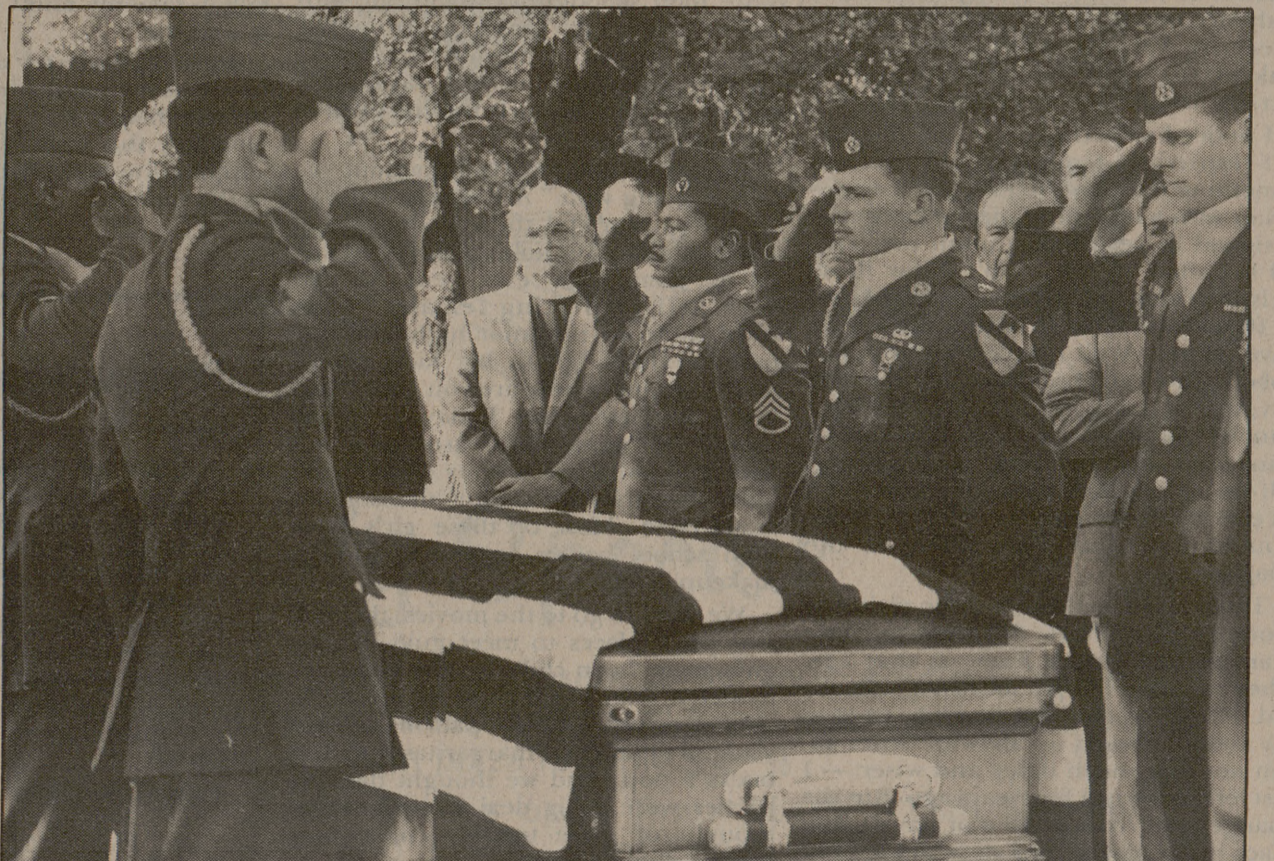


Photo by Tom Ownbey

Members of the Fort Hood Honor Guard salute during the funeral of Dr. Eli L. Whiteley.

Rudder Theater, Whiteley was eulogized by his daughter, Ruth Whiteley.

"This day will serve as a reminder that the man we are paying tribute to, Eli Lamar Whiteley, was dedicated to the principles that made this nation great," Whiteley said.

"He was willing to risk his life, so that this nation might live," she said.

She also read excerpts from Whiteley's writings.

"Those of us who are fortunate enough to wear the Medal of Honor know there is a very thin line between life and death," she read from her father's writings. "We also know there are many other members of the armed services who perform the deeds that merit the medal.

"We, therefore, are the selected few who are given the privilege of wearing the Medal of Honor. We must always continue to hold up the pyramid of honor that surrounds the Medal of Honor."

Speaking on the behalf of A&M, Associate Provost Dr. Jerry Gaston also praised Whiteley's bravery and valor, but expressed hope that no other Aggies will have to face the horrors of war that Whiteley did.