

# Texas A&M The Battalion

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## Two officers withhold testimony in House NSC aides won't discuss Iranian arms deals

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two of President Reagan's recently departed national security aides — both still active-duty military officers — refused to publicly answer questions Tuesday from a House committee exploring the Iranian-Contra arms-and-money connection.

The dramatic invocations of Fifth Amendment rights by Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter and Marine Lt. Col. Oliver L. North brought an increasing aura of mystery to the burgeoning foreign policy scandal.

The refusals to testify came as the Reagan administration appeared to be at odds with itself over exactly what happened and how officials should respond to congressional demands for answers. Retired Maj. Gen. Richard V. Secord, another principal figure in the controversy, took the Fifth Amendment before the Senate Intelligence Committee.

In citing their constitutional right against self-incrimination, Poindexter, Reagan's former national security adviser, and North, fired as a key National Security Council aide, declined in separate, nationally broadcast appearances before the House Foreign Affairs Committee to discuss any aspect of U.S. arms sales to Iran or the transfer of profits to Nicaraguan Contra rebels.

"I must decline to answer that question at this time because of my constitutional rights under the Fifth Amendment," Poindexter, who resigned Nov. 25, told the committee.

North, who worked for Poindexter, said, "On the advice of counsel, I respectfully and regretfully decline to answer the question based on my constitutional rights."

At the White House, President Reagan, in an exchange with news reporters during a picture-taking session, said he has caught glimpses of the nationally televised House hearings, but also said, "If I were taking questions, I would remind you that I am the one that told you

all that we know about what happened."

In fact, Reagan used his regular Saturday radio broadcast to the nation last weekend to acknowledge that elements of his policy to establish contact with moderate political forces in Iran were "flawed" and that "mistakes were made." Without directly apologizing for the policy that resulted in the biggest flap of his nearly 6-year presidency, Reagan promised to "set things straight" with the American people.

While Congress turned up the heat for answers, two former presidents offered their views:

• Richard M. Nixon described the Iran-Contra controversy as "a sideshow" and said it was time for critics of Reagan to "get off his back." Nixon's comments were made during a closed-door meeting with Republican governors in Parsippany, N.J.

• Jimmy Carter said Reagan appears to be trying to hide the facts.

Reagan appears to want the Congress to have to dig for the facts, meaning they will come out piecemeal "and that could be more damaging," Carter said in an interview in Atlanta.

In another development, Rep. Charles Wilson, D-Texas, who strongly supports covert U.S. aid to Afghan guerillas said he had been assured by CIA Director William Casey that the mixing of money for Nicaragua's Contras with Afghan aid was a clerical error and did not divert any money intended for the Afghans.

Poindexter and North had previously declined to answer questions during a private session of the Senate Intelligence Committee, and North later Tuesday cited the Fifth Amendment during an appearance before the House Intelligence Committee, said a committee source who declined to be named publicly.

Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., vice

chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said he was frustrated by the repeated refusals of Poindexter and North to testify.

"I wish the White House would stop talking about the tremendous cooperation they're showing, when the people they used throughout this (arms deal) kept coming up and taking the Fifth," Leahy said in a telephone interview from Puerto Rico, where he said he was on a "working vacation."

"The PR (public relations) folks at the White House might not like it, but it would be a lot more factual if they just said, 'We are not going to guarantee you cooperation,'" Leahy said.

## Journalists to protest war toys

NEW YORK (AP) — Many of the nation's editorial cartoonists are using their newspaper and magazine spots between now and Christmas to protest the sale of war toys, again raising questions about whether such items are healthy.

But while the debate rages, sales of war toys continue to soar.

G.I. Joe, with his \$130 aircraft carrier and other accoutrements, is the nation's biggest selling toy, and Rambo, Ninja Warrior and other war toys are especially popular during this holiday gift-giving season.

"All this Rambo, it's crazy," said Sharon Cullity, a buyer in New York City. "It's guns, guns guns."

A shopper, Donna Apostol of St. Johns, Mich., said, "If you're going to let them watch it on TV, you have to let them play with it."

Some find that disturbing. Between today and Dec. 24, more than 40 editorial cartoonists, including nine Pulitzer Prize winners, will use their cartoons to urge parents to avoid toys with violent themes.

Bob Staake, a St. Louis free-lance cartoonist who organized the effort, said, "At a time when we are supposed to be celebrating peace, it seems insane to turn war into a Christmas present."

The manufacturers say it is natural for little boys to play war, and these are the toys that people want.

Some psychologists say that war toys are not harmful.

"Kids can differentiate between violence that is funny and violence that is sickening," said Brian Sutton-Smith, a professor of education and folklore at the University of Pennsylvania. "They can clearly tell the difference between Road Runner and the evening news... culture is full of murder, Shakespeare is full of murder. Do you want to get rid of that?"

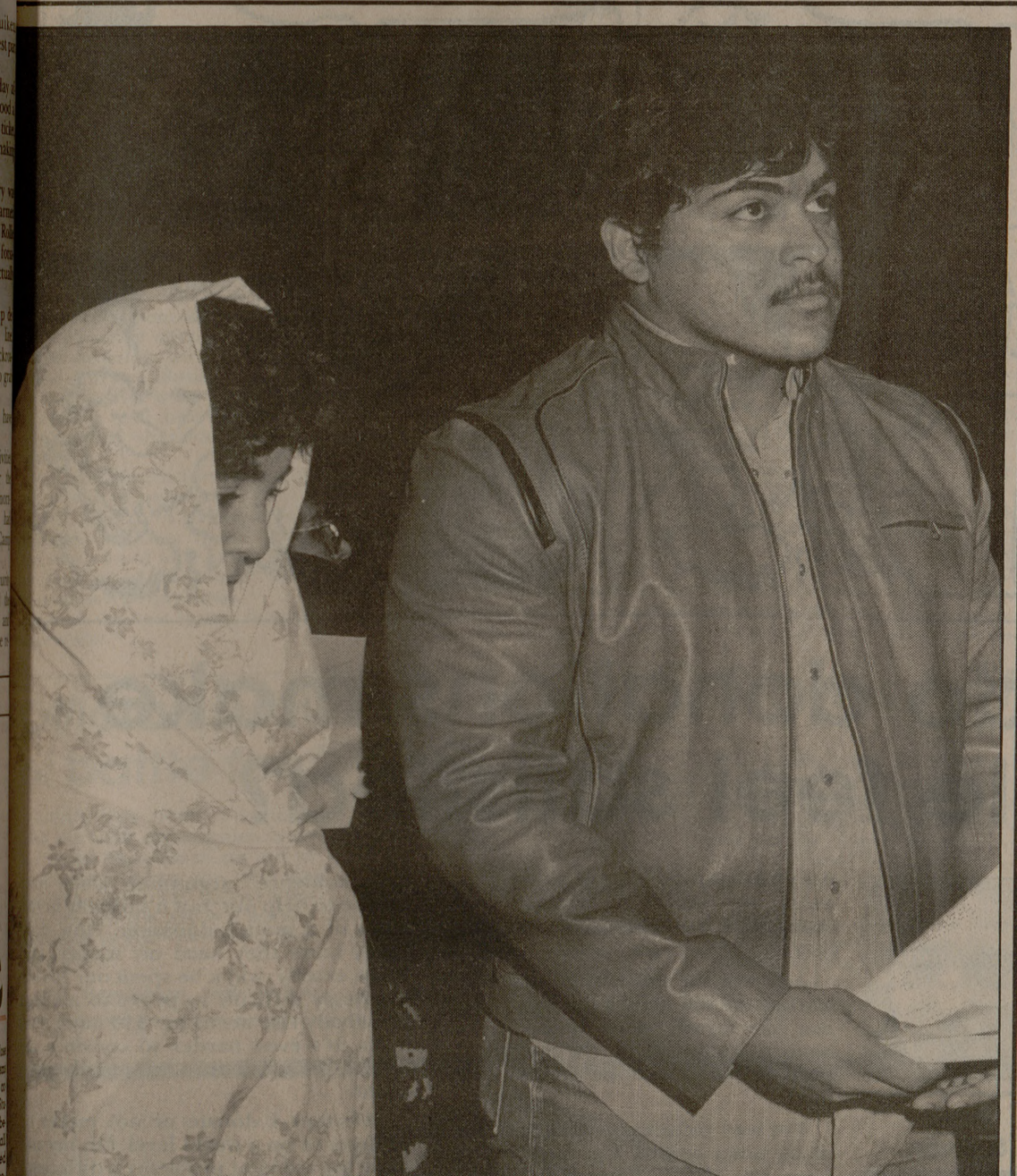


Photo by Doug La Rue

## No Room At The Inn

Students portraying Mary and Joseph walk through campus during "La Posada," a traditional Mexican Christmas ceremony that re-enacts the journey to Bethlehem. A group of singers fol-

lowed the two from the All Faiths Chapel through the campus. "La Posada" was sponsored by the MSC Committee for the Awareness of Mexican-American culture.

## Study urges birth control, sex ed for teens

### Doctor: Sex ed needed to fight pregnancies

By Christi Daugherty  
Staff Writer

Sex education may be the only way to combat teenage pregnancy, a Bryan pediatrician said Tuesday during a 7-member panel discussion.

Dr. Kenneth Matthews, an assistant professor in pediatrics at the Texas A&M College of Medicine, spoke at the College Station Community Center as the keynote speaker on the issue of teen pregnancy.

The discussion was sponsored by the A&M College of Medicine, the Brazos County Extension Service and Brazos Valley Health Services.

Matthews said he has been a proponent of sex education in schools for more than a decade, and still believes that it may be the only way to decrease teenage pregnancy in Texas, which is ranked third in the nation for pregnancies among girls between the ages of 15 and 19.

"As a pediatrician I have appointed myself an ombudsman for children," Matthews said. "I'm willing to stand as a shield for the child. But we're talking about a pregnant 12-year-old, and when a 12-year-old comes to you, as the children's shield, which child do you protect?"

But, Matthews said, there is no epidemic of teen pregnancies today. There is just a different society. But he warned there is potential for an epidemic to develop if parents don't learn how to talk to their children about sex.

Yet pregnancies are not his greatest fear about

teenage permissiveness, he said. He said he thinks the real danger is AIDS.

"To me, the question is, how do we inform our kids about a deadly disease which exists because of a sexually promiscuous, polygamous society," he said. "And we don't know how to tell our children of the importance of selecting a partner who is clean."

He said the answer is to prepare children earlier, in grade school, for the sexual world they will encounter sooner than their parents might wish.

"Sex ed in school is not the answer, it is an answer," Matthews said. "And for kids in junior high and high school it is simply a bandage on a hemorrhage because it's too little, too late."

## Tax reform, economy to affect financial aid

**Editor's note:** This is the first in a three-part series on the possible effects of federal tax reform and the state budget crisis on financial aid at Texas A&M. This section deals with changes in the federal Guaranteed Student Loan program.

By Sue Krenek  
News Editor

Becky Burks is worried. The junior education major is working her way through Texas A&M with a combination of scholarships, loans and a part-time job, but with a year of classes and student teaching still ahead, she's fearful of how state budget cuts and federal tax reform will affect her.

Financial uncertainty is enough to worry any student. But Burks can't calm her fears with a call to Texas A&M's financial aid office — the aid officers know little more than she does.

Student financial aid is being hit from every direction. Financial aid officers must evaluate what will happen to financial aid as a result of changes in the federal tax code and they must try to advise students, often without basic information on the changes.

And the aid officers find their ranks slimmed by cuts in state

funding to A&M that Thomas Taylor, A&M director of fiscal information, says total 10.5 percent under the current budget.

The tax code changes are part of the federal tax reform measure, which the president signed into law in October. Although some provisions of the reform package took effect immediately, Taft Benson, A&M student financial aid director, says his office has received notification of only one change.

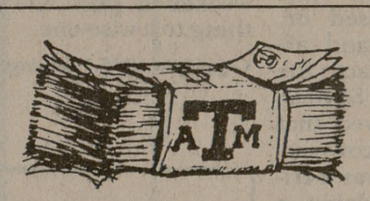
The problem, Benson says, is that changes in laws are not passed directly to financial aid offices. Instead, the changes are interpreted by the Department of Education, which issues regulations the aid offices must follow.

He says these regulations generally are drawn up two to six months after a law's passage, leaving students who must apply for financial aid in the interim unsure of the rules they must follow.

And while Benson is unsure of the exact effects that tax reform and the 10.5-percent cut in state funding to the University will have on financial aid, he says that coupled with other recent changes, the effects won't be good for students.

The most damaging change Benson knows of isn't connected

to tax reform or budget cuts. Beginning Oct. 17, the federal government's Guaranteed Student Loan program became need-based. Because his office wasn't notified until several weeks later,



Benson says students who filed during that period must refile to meet additional requirements and may lose funding.

The loan program, which Benson says may be hit by increased demand for scholarships and grants become less readily available, provides student loans free of interest until after graduation. Until last month, these loans didn't emphasize financial need as a requirement. Students also could apply for a GSL without applying for any other type of aid.

Benson says that under the old rules, any student basically was assured of getting a GSL if his adjusted income was less than

\$30,000 a year. Now, however, a student applying for a GSL must file either a Financial Aid Form or a Family Financial Statement with the aid office.

The FAF and FFS allow the office to generate an estimate of what the family can afford to contribute, Benson says, and a loan will be offered only if that amount is less than the student's costs.

Ann Vanwinkle, financial aid coordinator for the office, says the new rule creates more paperwork for the student and the office. But she says the change may not be all bad.

"Before, some students didn't apply for gift aid (scholarships and grants) because they assumed they were ineligible," she says. "Since they have to file a Financial Aid Form now, we may be able to locate more students who qualify for that type of aid."

But she says the change also creates problems for a staff that's been left short-handed in the wake of the University's hiring freeze.

"I try to be optimistic about it, but the paperwork is just overwhelming for us and for the students," she says.

Benson is less optimistic about the change, estimating that al-

though the office may uncover some students who are eligible for additional aid, it is more likely that about 25 percent of the A&M students who now receive GSLs will be ineligible under the new rules. In 1984-85, the last year for which figures are available, 7,000 A&M students received GSLs. Benson estimates that the number of recipients increases by about 10 percent a year, meaning that more than 2,000 students might face a cutoff in loan money.

He also anticipates an even greater shift away from gift aid and toward loans. In 1981, loans made up 35 percent of financial aid awards nationwide, with gift aid accounting for 65 percent. As the Reagan administration has held education spending level in the face of cost increases, loan awards have risen to 56 percent of total awards, with gift aid shrinking to 49 percent.

Benson says this shift toward loans may be accelerated by two tax reform provisions he has yet to receive official notification on. One would make all non-tuition scholarship income taxable, and one may decrease donations for scholarships by making them less attractive as tax deductions.