

World and Nation

Tower Commission report suggests cover-up by presidential assistants

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Tower Commission suggested Thursday that the president's men tried to cover up the full story once the Iran arms deal began unraveling.

Its report cited what it said was a misleading account of events by former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane, indications of concealment efforts by Lt. Col. Oliver North and a lack of notes from meetings at which McFarlane's successor, John M. Poindexter, was official note-taker.

The commission said it did not believe President Reagan intended to cover up unlawful conduct, but that he wanted the full story told.

But its critical report said those around the president who prepared his supporting documents "did not appear, at least initially, to share the president's ultimate wishes."

Although there have been reports that North, the president's National Security Council aide, may have destroyed, altered or removed documents from the White House, the commission provided the first official

Three major investigations continue in Iran arms deal

WASHINGTON (AP)— With the release of the report of the Tower Commission on Thursday, three major investigations still are looking into the secret arms sales to Iran and the reported diversion of profits to the Nicaraguan rebels.

The current investigations include:

- The Senate select committee headed by Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawaii, and co-chaired by Sen. Warren Rudman, R-N.H. The Senate panel has until August to compile a report.
- The House select committee

suggestion that Poindexter had a hand in missing documents.

In a section devoted to actions of the administration in the aftermath of the first disclosures of the arms deal, the commission said it was

headed by Rep. Lee Hamilton, D-Ind., which has until October to file its report.

• Independent counsel Lawrence E. Walsh, a retired federal judge who is running a wide-ranging investigation authorized by a special panel of federal judges. Walsh is expected to take several months to complete his work.

But the constitutionality of Walsh's appointment and position has been challenged in court, a move that could delay or terminate his effort.

"concerned about various notes that appear to be missing."

"Poindexter was the official note-taker in some key meetings, yet no notes for the meetings can be found," it said. "The reason for the

lack of such notes remains unknown to the board."

The commission said it lacked the evidence to confirm or refute that North destroyed documents.

But it said there was "considerable reason to question the actions" of North in the aftermath of last November's first disclosure of the arms sales.

"The board found indications that Lt. Col. North was involved in an effort, over time, to conceal or withhold important information," the commission said.

It recounted efforts by the White House, after the first revelations in a Lebanese magazine last Nov. 3, to reconstruct the events in a chronology.

It said the NSC put together the events in a way that was inaccurate and misleading.

"Mr. McFarlane described for the board the process used by the NSC staff to create a chronology that obscured essential facts," the commission said.

Soviets conduct 1st nuclear test since 1985

MOSCOW (AP) — The Soviet Union detonated its first nuclear explosion in 19 months Thursday and said it was forced to resume testing because the United States refused to go along with a Kremlin moratorium on weapons tests.

The explosion under the steppe in remote Kazakhstan was announced by the Soviet news agency Tass. The rapid announcement was highly unusual and appeared intended to underscore the Kremlin's contention that continued American testing required a resumption of Soviet tests.

"I want to stress once more that the termination of the moratorium was a forced measure dictated by security interests only," said Maj. Gen. Gely Batenin, a Defense Ministry spokesman.

But at a special news conference on the test, he said, "The resumption of nuclear explosions by the Soviet Union does not mean that it has abandoned its struggle for the complete cessation of such tests."

Batenin added, "A historic chance for ending nuclear tests once and for all has been missed."

In Washington, the State Department said the Soviets' decision to resume nuclear testing was their own affair.

"The U.S. position on nuclear testing is clear," department spokesman Phyllis Oakley added. "As long as we depend on nuclear weapons for our security, we must insure that those weapons are safe, secure, reliable and effective. This demands some level of underground nuclear testing as permitted by existing treaties."

The White House has said in the past that the blasts also are necessary to develop the "Star Wars" anti-missile system based in space.

During the 19-month freeze, Mikhail S. Gorbachev and other Soviet leaders repeatedly called on the United States to halt testing and accused Washington of being unwilling to work toward arms control.

Soviet officials stressed that the Kremlin was leaving the door open for a superpower test ban.

Tass said the blast, the Soviets' first since July 25, 1985, had a yield of less than 20 kilotons, the force of the U.S. atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan in 1945.

The United States conducted two tests in the Nevada desert this year.

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