

Texas A&M The Battalion

Vol. 82 No. 174 USPS 045360 6 pages

College Station, Texas

Wednesday, July 8, 1987



Photo by Sarah Cowan

Raking 'Em In

J.C. Day rakes up some leaves on the A&M campus Tuesday. Day is from Austin and has been a gardener since July 1986. He works in the central campus area.

North: I did nothing without authorization

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lt. Col. Oliver North testified Tuesday, "I never carried out a single act, not one," without authorization from above and told a congressional hearing that he assumed President Reagan had approved the diversion of Iranian arms sale profits to Nicaraguan rebels.

But, he said, "No memorandum ever came back to me with the initials from the president." And he said that on the day Reagan fired him, the president called him on the telephone and told him, "I just didn't know."

In his first day of long-awaited testimony, North was a take-no-guff witness trumpeting his devotion to the Nicaraguan rebel fighters. His jaw jutting forward, North began the day trying one last time to avoid answering questions in public.

There was no official White House reaction after the hearings adjourned for the day. A senior official said North "made three quick assertions: I didn't tell the president, the president never talked to me about it, and Poindexter told me the president didn't know."

Adm. John Poindexter, who left the White House along with North last November, was Reagan's national security adviser and one of those North pointed to in establishing the chain of command in which he said he operated.

North's testimony was the most sought-after in the congressional Iran-Contra hearings to date and it lived up to its advance billing. His more than six hours in the witness chair was punctuated by sharp exchanges with committee counsel John Nields, and between North's lawyer and the committee chairman.

At times, North angrily denounced what he thought were questions about his motives.

To a question about diversion of the Iranian arms profits to the rebels fighting the Nicaraguan government, North snapped:

"The only thing we did was divert money out of Mr. Ghorbanifar's pocket and put it to better use." Manucher Ghorbanifar was a middleman in contacts with Iran.

"I would have offered the Iranians a free trip to Disneyland if we could have gotten our hostages home for it," North added.

North led off his testimony by saying "I came here to tell you the truth, the good, the bad and the ugly."

At one point, questioned by House committee counsel John Nields about a falsehood deliberately placed in a National Security

Council chronology, North said firmly:

"I did a lot of things, and I want to stand up and say I'm proud of them. I don't want you to think, counsel, that I went about this all on my own. I realize there's a lot of people around that think there's a loose cannon on the gundeck of state on the NSC. That wasn't what I heard while I worked there. I've only heard it since I left."

Lawsuit charges UT System with breaching job contract

ODESSA (AP) — A \$9.5 million breach-of-contract lawsuit has been filed against the University of Texas of the Permian Basin, its president, academic vice president and the University of Texas System.

Troy York, former director for UTPB's Center for Energy, Technology and Economic Diversification, filed the suit Monday against Duane M. Leach and H. Warren Gardner, president and vice president of academic affairs of UT Permian Basin, UTPB and the UT System.

York is seeking compensatory damages of \$8.5 million and punitive damages of \$1 million.

York, 52, who is unemployed and lives in Gaithersburg, Md., contends in his suit that he was fraudulently induced by Leach and Gardner to retire from a secure U.S. government position with the Department of Energy in September 1985.

That month, the suit states, York, Leach and Gardner entered into a contract under which York was guaranteed academic rank as a research professor of business management with tenure.

York's suit says he was fired Jan. 19, 1987, without good cause and that the dismissal breached his contract because there was no notice.

Peace group member says aid to Contras harming Nicaragua

By Robert Morris
Staff Writer

American Contra aid is said to be staving off the communist charge through Central America; according to Roger Battle, it is instead destroying the lives of thousands of Nicaraguan citizens.

Battle, a research assistant in the Texas A&M oceanography department, spent two weeks in Nicaragua with an inter-religious and politically non-affiliated group called Witness for Peace.

The organization, formed in 1973, is a nationwide watch group that keeps a 35-member full-time delegation in Nicaragua to document human rights violations by the Sandinista government and the Contra opposition.

It also sponsors short-term (two-week) delegations of 25 people who tour war zones, where they speak with villagers and many different Nicaraguan organizations, including civic, political and religious groups.

In an interview Tuesday, Battle cited many human rights abuses by the Contras and gave a detailed first-hand impression of why the people of Nicaragua don't want American intervention.

Of primary concern to the Nicaraguan people is the perceived disastrous effect the Contras are having on the already hobbled economy, Battle said.

Before the revolution, Nicaraguan export income was \$700 million. It is now \$200 million, and the Sandinista government is working to salvage the economy at the same time it builds a new one, he said.

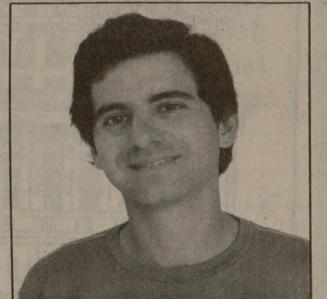
When comparing the \$200 million in export income to the \$100 million that the Contras are supposed to be getting every year from the United States, it is easy to see how threatened they feel, he said.

Battle recognizes that there is a large-scale Soviet presence in the area; however, he doesn't see it as an effort to impose communist rule.

While the Soviets are definitely arming the Sandinista military, they are also building hospitals, grain elevators and providing other much-needed farm equipment and products, he said.

"The flip side to that is practically every Western European country aids Sandinista Nicaragua too," he said. "You see a very strong presence of foreign assistance there. There are about 5,000 American, Canadian and Western European volunteers, workers and technicians working in the country."

"It's a pity that the type of aid that the United States (government) has to give is military. You go there and talk to people, and no matter where you go they will tell you they are suffering a lot from what the Contras are doing."



Roger Battle

The U.S. is only making an explosive situation worse, he said.

"The United States needs to stop funding the Contras," he said. "Any political fanaticism will be accentuated by the continued aggression. The Sandinistas are there to stay, and they've won the hearts and imaginations of most of the people of the country."

"And the people associate the Contras with that \$100 million (funding from the U.S.) a year; and they associate the Contras with blown up bridges, destroyed cooperatives, clinics, and murdered teachers and health workers."

Battle contends the Sandinistas are doing everything they can to rectify an inherently bad economy and further U.S. involvement only hampers that initiative.

"The agenda of the Sandinista government is to experiment with a new economic system, an alternative economic system," he said. "Because as far as the experience they have had for the two centuries that the United States has had influence in the region, they have never been able to free themselves from poverty and malnutrition. So what they are doing now is experimenting with something that they hope will bring them an alternative."

"And there is no way that you go there and see that they are becoming totally dependent on the Soviets or Cubans. The place is just crawling with Western European organizations, and advisers from western countries."

Battle answers critics of the Sandinista's human rights record with statistics from the Permanent Commission for Human Rights, an organization he said is funded by the Red Cross.

There are about 7,000 political prisoners in Nicaragua, however, political killings reportedly numbered less than 30 last year.

Not an alarming number when compared to the 40,000 that have been killed in and El Salvador in the last five years, especially when considering that Nicaragua has been under a state of war since 1979, Battle said.

Members of Bryan Council find opposition to landfill surprising

By Yvonne DeGraw
Staff Writer

After searching for a site for a new municipal landfill since 1984, the Bryan City Council thought they had found one most people would like.

The 236-acre site on the southeast corner of Old San Antonio Road and Sandy Point Road is

Reactions to proposed landfill Part one of a three-part series

located outside city limits, has a mile of road frontage and tests found hard clay near the surface.

However, as soon as the location of the site was made public, there was more public outcry than the city has heard in years.

There was a standing-room-only crowd for the city council meeting at which a purchase option on the property was approved.

Over 4,000 petitions protesting the proposed landfill have been signed thus far.

Mayor Marvin Tate of Bryan pointed out that the city has not made a commitment to build a landfill there.

"Listen, all we've done is bought an option," he said. "We haven't decided that is where the landfill is going to go."

"There are certain requirements that have to be met before the final decision is made."

The purchase option was approved by the council on June 22.

Half of the \$59,472 deposit required by the contract will be returned if the city decides not to buy the property within six months.

A sliding scale will make the rest of the deposit non-refundable after 18 months.

At that point the city must decide whether to buy the property for \$580,560.

A \$1 million bond issue was passed by voters in 1984, and the city has been looking for a new site since then.

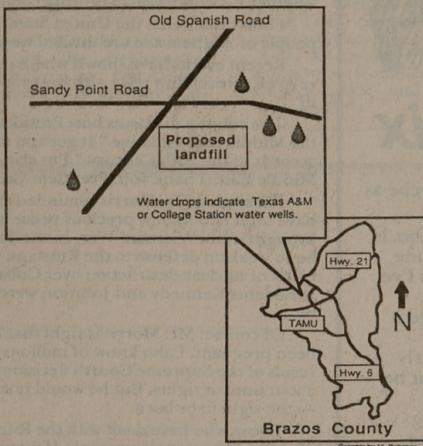
Tate said Bryan needs to have a new landfill in place within five years.

The city considered at least eight other sites, but all were either unavailable or unsuitable.

"We weren't able to come up with another property that fit the parameters we need," Tate said.

Now that the city has signed a purchase option it can run more tests on the land, Councilman Hank McQuaide.

"You usually don't walk onto someone's land and run tests unless you have an agreement," he said.



But he said he thinks testing will proceed quickly.

"I don't think it will really take a year to find out whether or not the site is suitable," McQuaide said.

Tate said that if the site cannot be licensed the city will be starting back at square one and finding a landfill site quickly will become more critical.

But Bryan is no longer looking at other potential sites.

"At this point in time we've entered into an option on this piece of property," Tate said.

"I don't think that we would want to go out and look for additional sites at this point," he said.

Opposition to the landfill focuses on the water wells in the area.

College Station has three wells about a mile to the northeast of the site.

Texas A&M's seven wells are found a similar distance to the southwest, and Bryan's own wells are located within three to four miles of the site.

This opposition came as a surprise to city officials who did not think the water wells would be an issue.

The site was given a preliminary soil and location test by HDR Techserv of Dallas.

This examination — which will cost the city at least \$92,500 — did not consider the water wells.

Bryan City Manager Ernie Clark said the consulting engineers said the site looked good, and the city decided to "go for it."

Opponents of the proposed landfill site claim that pollutants from the landfill will contaminate both underground and surface water in the area.

LaDonna Hudson, who owns 60 acres near the site, said she had assembled proof of the site's unsuitability by the council meeting at which the purchase option was approved.

"I looks like they have spent \$160,000 of the taxpayers' money without ever discovering that the entire thing was not feasible to begin with," she said.

Dr. Kirk Brown, a nationally recognized expert on landfills and a professor in Texas A&M's soil and crops sciences department, says the city does not realize how much it will cost to build a landfill.

Local officials said they believe Bryan will do what is best for the area.

College Station City Manager William Cole said he has talked with Bryan's city manager about the site and is waiting to see the results of tests run on the land.

"Everybody's jumping around saying 'We have a big problem,'" he said. "I think we need to wait and see the facts."

"If the facts indicate we've got a big problem, then I guarantee you Bryan will be the first one to say, 'Hey, we've got to go elsewhere.'"

Joe Estill, director of A&M's physical plant, said he had not been contacted by Bryan officials.

"There's no reason for them to contact us," he said. "They have to make application to the state. They have to take core samples."

Texas A&M will examine the data before taking a position, Estill said.

Hudson said she has the feeling that the Bryan City Council wants to push for this site.

However, Tate claimed this was a false impression.

"We're certainly not going to push something through to meet a timetable if it's not going to be safe and doesn't meet the requirements," he said.

Brown said he wants the brouhaha to cause people to think about options to traditional hole-in-the-ground landfills.

"My hope is that some good would come out of all this," he said.