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Bush's defense agenda.

Lawyers clash over North role as trial opens

WASHINGTON (AP) - Presi-

dent Bush on Tuesday denounced as "vicious rumor" allegations

against Defense Secretary-designate

John Tower and declared they had

FBI report on the embattled nomi-

rightly" on the nomination, Bush

said at a news conference that the re-

improprieties.

the nomination.

Urging the Senate to move "forth-

"gunned down" by a thorough

WASHINGTON (AP) — Oliver North's criminal trial opened Tuesday with the prosecutor portraying him as a liar who "places himself above the law" but with North's lawyer defending him as a patriotic Marine who obeyed unflinchingly the orders of his commander in chief

North, now retired from the service, listened intently as prosecu-tor John Keker told the jury the defendant had lied time and again to his president and to Congress about

the Iran-Contra affair. Chief defense lawyer Brendan Sullivan countered that North, a former top National Security Council aide, worked in a secret world where "he always acted with the approval of his superiors; he acted al-ways with the best interests of his country

Thus the two sides squared off for the oft-delayed first trial to come out of the Iran-Contra affair, a trial that may take as much as five months to complete.

The first testimony comes Wednesday morning when Rep. Lee Hamilton, D-Ind., the former chairman of House Intelligence



thing to do with who he's sleeping with or whether he has one glass of

Edwards said the question is whether Tower, a former Republican senator who once chaired the Armed Services Committee, can be credible in dealing with defense conufacturers as a consultant since he vote against Senator Tower," Bu added. left the Senate in 1985.

But Bush, responding to report-ers' questions at the White House, said he was "convinced that he is not only capable of doing this job, but will do it in an outstanding way.

The president said he personally reviewed the 140-page FBI report. "What I got from it was that there

this man by rumor and innuendo, over and over again rumors surfacing with no facts to back them up," Bush said.

Published reports have said the FBI found that Tower drank excessively in the 1970s, but no longer does so. Asked about that, and whether the former senator had undergone treatment, Bush replied:

'I say there is no evidence of any

PORTS WRITEF

Senate Majority Leader Geor Mitchell of Maine told reporters didn't know when the commit would act on the nomination and said the delay in the confirmation proceedings had been "at the request of the White House.

ulate about whether the Sena would hold a closed-door session review the Tower file.

The Wall Street Journal report in Tuesday's editions that as a se ator from Texas Tower profit Score:Rice 76, from a lucrative oil investment a ranged in 1981 by a Corpus Chris lawyer whose son Tower recor •Record:15-9; 7 •Next game:Sat mended for nomination to the fee •Standing:Four eral bench. A&M shot 37

Tower's financial disclosure for indicate he put up no capital and nanced his entire investment with eld, (Rice shot "Evidently we five-year promissory note from now-defunct San Antonio bank, th newspaper said.

st seem to be in A&M's shootir The money was used to purcha machinery which was leased to Corpus Christi drilling firm und ues to plague terms that allowed Tower to pay "We just could the note while earning abo nse," Hickey s \$25,000 from the rental payme lid get an open and resale of the equipment in 198

May

the Battalion

Vednesday,

Rice

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The Texas A&

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Lady Ag

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Adrian Dantley rewd trade or a Aguirre has lor odiness, his lac tless play at crit pposedly, is the Detroit.

However, they ing another w uirre. In fact th at Dantley woul ersonally as he h At first glance. rry for Dantley iber of a team cord in the NB nin one game ear and was in th

Bush said that stores should have "protection of t law if they decide to go ahead and sell a book of this r the champion Dantley was a t Bush called the press conference to announce the second-term Rep. Bill Grant of Florida was switching his registration from Democratic to Republican. mplained abou

Si

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ak

However, Bush said Duke's record is "one of rac and bigotry." He added, "I'm sorry, I just felt I had speak out.'

On other topics, Bush: • Said "I'd like to find some way to do somethin about easy access to automatic weapons.

controversy over the ayatollah's death threat again

Rushdie, an Indian-born British citizen who now is hid

ing under police protection. Many Moslems say Rushdie's book portrays the prophet Mohammed's wives as prostitutes and suggess that he — rather than God — wrote the Koran, Islami

A number of booksellers, including some of the n tion's largest chains, have taken "The Satanic Verse

Asked his views about another Republican, for

Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, who was elected u

seat in the Louisiana House of Representatives, Bu said his own attempt to keep Duke from winning m have been viewed by some voters as "improper or ow

But the president, a strong opponent of gun contra added that "I want to be the president that protects"

rights of people to have arms." • Tried to allay some fears that the Japanese or too much American property.

port produced nothing to substantiate allegations of excessive drink-ing, philandering and financial Members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, meanwhile, scrutinized the report, which the White House forwarded to committee chairman Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., and ranking Republican John John Tower

Warner of Virginia late Monday Nunn's office said the committee would meet in a closed session Wednesday and vote Thursday on

Meanwhile, Rep. Mickey Edwards, R-Okla., a prominent conser-vative, said Tower should withdraw his nomination because he has lost wine before he goes to bed or two." the credibility needed to promote

tractors after accepting nearly \$1 "I've seen nothing in there that it said. million from major weapons man- would make me if I was a senator,

has been a very unfair treatment of

kind of the disease — alcoholism. None. None whatsoever." Bush said the report "speaks to the fact that a lot of the charges . . .

I'd say all of these charges that we've read about - have been rumor, and a lot of it vicious rumor." The president said the allegations

against Tower "that have been hanging over this simply have been gunned down in terms of fact."

Bush condemns death decree on novelist Rushdie by Iran

holy book.

off the shelves.

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Bush condemned Iran's death decree against British novelist Salman Rushdie as "deeply offensive to the norm of civilized behavior" and warned on Tuesday that Tehran would be held accountable for any actions against American interests.

Bush said he strongly supports the decision of Euro-pean governments to recall their ambassadors and chief diplomats from Iran in protest of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's order for the assassination of Rushdie, the author of "The Satanic Verses," a novel that many Mos-lems consider blasphemous.

On another matter, Bush said he was not concerned that Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's diplomatic trip to the Middle East would diminish the

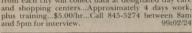
U.S. role in the region. Asked what role Moscow should play in the Middle Fast, Bush said emphatically, "I think it should be a limited role and I think that's what it's going to be.'

Bush said he did not feel it was necessary for the U.S. to send an ambassador on a diplomatic visit just to counter to Shevardnadze's trip.

The president made his comments at a hurriedly called news conference at the White House on the eve of his departure for a five-day Asian trip to attend the funeral of Emperor Hirohito in Japan, followed by stops in China and South Korea.

Bush used the opportunity to urge the Senate to "move forthrightly" to approve the embattled nomination of John Tower as secretary of defense after repeated allegations of womanizing, excessive drinking and questions about Tower's relationship with defense contractors.

Up until now. Bush has been silent on the worldwide



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Committee, takes the stand.

Keker told the jury Tuesday that North had profited personally by using traveler's checks furnished by a Contra leader and, on a broader scale, had told lies that amounted to "a crime that goes to the soul of our self-government."

"You will hear he considers himself a patriotic person, but there is no higher patriotic purpose than to protect our system of government," Keker said. "To lie to Congress because you mistrust it then is a crime and not a defense.

Sullivan did portray North as a patriot, saying he believed in the Marine moto "Semper Fidelis" always faithful.

"He lived with that Marine Corps motto. He was always faithful to country, to commander in chief, to his family, to those whose lives de-pended on him," said Sullivan. And yet, said the defense attor-

ney: "Lt. Col. Oliver North has in the end been abandoned by his government.

North's eyes moistened as Sullivan wound up his opening statement almost in a whisper.

The lawyer said that North was the troubleshooter at the National Security Council, and if "a secret mission had to be accomplished, it was 'Let Ollie do it.'

When Congress decided not to support the Nicaraguan freedom fighters in 1984, Sullivan said, "the president was angry ... and he vowed he would find a way to support them."

Reagan ordered National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane "to keep them together body and soul and it was then the job of Ollie North," Sullivan said.

He recited a lengthy version of the history of the Iran-Contra affair to the jury, some of whose members appeared to be nodding off. Sullivan noted that while the Reagan administration was barred by law from directly helping the Contras, officials solicited funds for the cause from other countries.

He quoted Reagan as saying privately at the time, "If this leaks out, we'll all be hanging by our thumbs outside the White House until we find out who did it.

Democrats, Bush clash over budget; Congress wants spending details

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Bush and his budget director on Tuesday prodded congressional leaders to join them in budget negotiations, but Democrats responded

by chiding them for withholding their views on where spending cuts should be made. Talk of more talks was put on

hold while, with Bush heading for Japan, Congress began budget hearings amid efforts to extract more detailed information from the White House.

"We've got an administration here that wants to embrace the concept of a line-item veto but won't give us a line-item budget," said Sen. Jim Sasser, D-Tenn., chairman of the Senate Budget Committee.

The president met at the White House early Tuesday with Sasser, Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, D-Maine; House Speaker Jim Wright, D-Texas, and other top Republicans and Democrats from Capitol Hill.

It was the first such meeting since Bush revealed his \$1.16 trillion fiscal 1990 budget in a speech to Congress on Feb. 9.

Lawmakers said they told the president that before negotiations could begin they needed more detail, especially on how he would pay for the new programs he wants for creases. education, the environment, child care and other areas.

And they said the prognosis was poor for some of the specific recommendations he did include - such as a reduction in the capital gains tax choices. rate

Bush contends cutting the rate about in half, to 15 percent, would result in more taxes being paid because economic activity would increase. Democrats not only doubt the president's supply-side math but contend the tax is a giveaway to the rich, since poor people have few cap-

ital gains.

The meeting was polite but it dealt more with schedules than substance, participants said. "The symbolism is very good. We

haven't really gotten down to substance," Wright said, predicting that once work begins, "some serious differences will emerge" on issues such as a \$5 billion Medicare cut, one of the handful of spending cuts Bush did detail.

"It was important for us to emphasize we're on the right track, and we are," said Rep. Leon Panetta, D-Calif., the House Budget Committee chairman. But, Panetta asked, "When does he start to make the tough choices? That's part of the process here, to find out what the choices are.

Bush's budget director, Richard Darman, appearing before the Senate Budget Committee, defended the White House budget including Bush's proposal for a "flexible freeze" on \$136 billion in existing programs.

Those programs, mostly in domestic agencies, would be kept at last year's spending levels with selected increases allowed only if offsetting cuts were made. The White House has refused to say where it would cut and where it would support in-

Going into further detail now had little appeal for the administration, he said, since the chances were "close to zero" that Congress would agree with the administration's policy

"We look forward to learning of other proposals and to discussing them on the merits," Darman said. "We mean to be cooperative." Dar-man said all of the budget, not just the flexible freeze, was negotiable Sen. Bennett Johnston, D-La., told him "You get an 'A' for mood."

Dallas station offers Reagan talk show iob

DALLAS (AP) - A local radio station has offered former President Reagan a job as a weekly talk-show host, one of many such offers to hit the Great Commu-nicator's desk since he left office last month.

Mark Rodgriguez, president of KOJO-FM, made the proposal in a letter dated Feb. 16, but said he

has yet to receive a response. Reagan's spokesman, Mark Weinberg, said Reagan has re ceived many similar offers from broadcasters across the countr including two in his hometowno Los Angeles. Weinberg wouldn't say if Reagan was considering any of the offers.

"All I can say is that each invitation will be responded to individually," Weinberg said.

Rodriguez offered the former president \$200,000 to be host of a weekly 35-to 45-minute live ta show for a year on the 100,000 watt station which features a con temporary Christian music format

Reagan is reportedly asking \$50,000 per speaking engagement.

But Rodriguez said the station's offer, equal to a year's sa ary as president, probably wouldn't be the determining fac tor were Reagan to accept the invitation.

"I'm assuming Reagan's not short of cash," Rodriguez said Tuesday in a telephone interview with the Associated Press.

"I'd think he'd do it for the chance to be on the radio again," he said.

During the last days of his administration Reagan said he would miss his 5-minute radio address which aired each Saturday

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