

World & Nation

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CIA analyst testifies in hearings

WASHINGTON (AP) — A pivotal figure in the Iran-Contra affair testified Tuesday that in 1986 he clearly laid out for CIA director-designate Robert Gates evidence pointing to a White House diversion of money to Nicaraguan rebels.

The testimony by senior CIA official Charles Allen followed Gates' assertion that he couldn't recall being told of a White House role in the possible diversion.

The question of what Gates knew about the 1985-86 diversion of money to the Contras from U.S. arms sales to Iran has been at the heart of the debate by the Senate Intelligence Committee on whether to confirm Gates.

Gates has told the committee in sworn written responses to its questions that "to the best of my recollection, Mr. Allen never mentioned to me or speculated that anyone in the U.S. government,

Official says he told Gates of Iran-Contra suspicions

including the ... White House" was involved in the diversion, which occurred despite a legal ban on U.S. aid to the rebels.

Allen told the panel that he had met with Gates on Oct. 1, 1986, and again on Oct. 7 to express his growing concern at increasing signs that a diversion was occurring. "Mr. Gates appeared startled and disturbed that the White House would involve itself in such dubious activity," he said.

Gates specifically expressed concern at the role played by White House aide Oliver North, Allen said. Allen said Gates told him he had always admired North but that "this was going too far" if indeed a diversion was under way.

Pressed by Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., Allen said, "It was clear that I implied the chain went from North to Adm. Poindexter," President Reagan's national security adviser.

Allen also differed with Gates on the amount of information he had conveyed to him about the suspected diversion during the Oct. 1 meeting. Gates has testified that Allen's remarks amounted to a brief reference at the end of a lengthy conversation on other issues, and called it "extraordinarily flimsy" speculation.

"I had what I call an analytic judgment," testified Allen, who at the time was the top CIA counterterrorism official. "Mr. Gates may call it speculation. That's fair. But I

call it an analytic judgment."

Allen said that at the time he feared, but had no proof, the trail would lead to the Oval Office. But now "I have absolutely no knowledge" that Reagan was involved in the diversion, he added.

Gates "has a faulty memory when it comes to the involvement of the NSC" — the National Security Council — said panel member Bill Bradley, D-N.J.

"There's a conflict in testimony there," agreed committee chairman David Boren, D-Okla.

Allen said he laid out for Gates the reasons that led him to conclude that a diversion "could well be under way," even though he lacked hard proof. Allen listed four indicators he shared with Gates, among them that North had told him of substantial profits accrued in "the reserve" from a markup of 500 to 600 percent on the price of the arms sold to Iran.

EL Salvador allows leftist guerrillas in police force

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — El Salvador's government and the leftist rebels agreed Tuesday that the guerrillas will be incorporated into a new national police force, thus safeguarding their entry into the political process.

Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani and the military commanders of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, or FMLN, continued working with U.N. mediators Tuesday to iron out other issues and sign a communique, diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Salvador's constitution will be amended to separate the national police from the Defense Ministry, which is currently in charge of all the country's security forces.

The political independence of the new police force is intended to make it free of the army's influence, and thus able to safeguard the public, diplomats said.

The FMLN had originally sought incorporation into the army, with its officers inserted right up to the command level, but the Salvadoran government rejected that option.

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar instead proposed the creation of the new national police force as a compromise.

The government and FMLN negotiators agreed to continue working on other issues, such as purging the army of rights abusers, and to meet with the secretary-general again on Oct. 15, diplomats said.

The eight days of negotiations were an attempt to reach agreements in principle on ways of reassuring the rebels they will be safe if they disarm and join the political process, thus ending the 12-year-old civil war.

Perez de Cuellar agreed to mediate the talks at the request of the United States and Soviet Union.

In a speech to the General Assembly on Monday, Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani said that at that point, "We have made important progress in negotiations to ensure that 1991 will be the year of peace."

"Total agreement for an end to the conflict may be a reality in the very near future," Cristiani said.

Perez de Cuellar was more cautious on Monday, saying "roadblocks still remain." Representatives of the FMLN gave a similar assessment.

Rules insure noise reduction by year 2000

Regulations promise to quiet jets

WASHINGTON (AP) — Transportation Secretary Samuel K. Skinner on Tuesday launched a drive to hush the nation's loudest jets by the end of the decade, without severely disrupting airline finances.

Skinner issued new noise reduction regulations that gave airlines the flexibility they had asked for, while promising more peace and quiet in the new century for most of the nearly 3 million Americans now exposed regularly to high levels of jet racket.

Skinner put the cost at anywhere between \$880 million and \$4 billion, while one industry group said it likely will be \$100 billion. In any case, it likely will be paid by airline travelers through higher ticket prices, Skinner noted.

The transportation secretary said that in certain "very rare" circumstances his department would consider waiving the new rules for up to two years so as not to force financially troubled airlines out of business.

Skinner also issued new standards that likely will make it more difficult for individual airports and communities to issue more restrictive noise rules.

James B. Busey, head of the Federal Aviation Administration, said this was necessary to avoid disrupting the airline industry and "to reduce the noise in a standard way so that noise will not be simply pushed to another area."

"These regulations provide a good balance that meets the needs of the 300 million Americans who

fly, and the several million people who live near airports," Skinner said. "We're giving airlines flexibility but setting standards for them to meet. How fast that will occur will depend on the economic condition of the industry."

The new airport noise-reduction rule will require the replacement or quieting of more than 2,200 of the nation's loudest jet aircraft by the year 2000. Foreign airlines flying into the United States also will be required to meet the new noise standard.



Skinner

When the transition to quieter aircraft is complete, Skinner said, the number of people exposed to high levels of airport jet noise will be reduced by about 85 percent, from about 2.7 million to around 400,000.

Skinner said the project will cost airlines \$880 million to \$4 billion, depending on whether they choose to retrofit noisy "Stage 2" aircraft with "hush kits" or quieter engines, or to replace them with quieter "Stage III" aircraft.

"Eventually the consumer will pay for it," Skinner said.

Robert J. Aaronson, president of the Air Transport Association, put the estimated cost far higher, saying it will cost the airlines his association represents more than \$100 billion.

But he called the new regulations "a significant landmark" that will assure "quieter skies around the nation's airports."

Skinner's announcement revised a proposed Federal Aviation Administration noise-reduction regulation that would have given airlines fewer options in achieving a quieter aircraft fleet by the year 2000.

Consumer confidence continues to decline

NEW YORK (AP) — Disturbing signs emerged Tuesday that suggested consumers are increasingly insecure and pessimistic, boding ill for the already shaky economic recovery and the Christmas shopping season.

The Conference Board, an economic research organization, said its consumer confidence index skidded in September, the third straight drop for the widely followed barometer of consumer attitudes.

Major automakers said sales of new cars plunged compared to a year ago.

Americans are growing more worried about the current state of the economy and less sure about business conditions six months from now, the Conference Board said.

"Given recent consumer confidence readings, those who expect the economy to rebound in the remaining months of the year are likely to be disappointed," said Fabian Linden, a Conference Board economist.

Consumer expenditures account for two-thirds of the gross national product, making the economy's recovery from recession dependent on consumer willingness to spend.

The lack of confidence was reinforced later Tuesday when General Motors Corp. said its car sales tumbled in mid-September from year-earlier levels, despite incentives aimed at clearing 1991 models from showrooms.

Ford Motor Co. reported a substantial decline and other carmakers, including Toyota Motor Corp. and Nissan Motor Corp. also reported lower sales.

The slump in confidence is reminiscent of a year ago when the start of the Persian Gulf crisis frightened consumers into curtailing purchases in the fall and at Christmas.

This year the outlook for Christmas is dim because overall retail sales are sluggish at a time when they normally would be accelerating.

Polish dissident visits China

BEIJING (AP) — Adam Michnik, a political prisoner in Communist Poland and a legislator in the new, democratic Poland, held out his hands and imitated a man trembling with nerves.

"When Chinese officials see me coming ..., they said, and let laughter finish the sentence.

"They know they will hear something different, and I try not to disappoint them," he said.

The eight-day visit of Michnik and five other Polish legislators, which ended Tuesday, was rich in irony, offering China's aging hard-line Communist leaders the unpleasant vision of once-jailed democracy activists in government positions.

Could this be China's future coming to haunt it? The Polish delegation's leader, Bronislaw Geremek, also a former dissident, tried to tell the leaders just that.

"They (the Polish Communists) put us in jail, but later they invited us to a round table (talks)," Geremek said he told a group of Chinese officials. "You

may want to think about your own dissidents. You may have to talk to them some day."

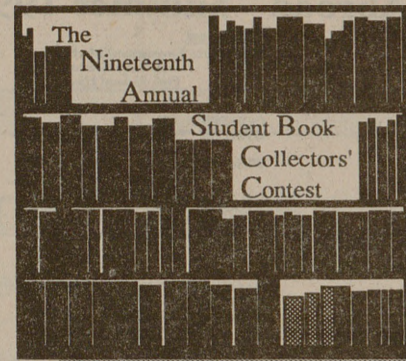
Of the many foreign politicians who have pressed China over the past year to release political prisoners, none has conveyed as strong a sense of mission as Michnik and Geremek.

"For people like us, it is a moral duty," Geremek said one evening as they downed shots of vodka at a Polish reporter's home in Beijing. The Chinese response? "They got very angry."

Polish sources said Wan Li, chairman of China's National People's Congress, immediately ended a meeting with the Polish group after Geremek gave him a list of political prisoners.

That raises the question of why the Chinese invited the Poles. The sources said China pressed hard for the group to come.

"For the Chinese it is very important. They want to prove that they accept the changes in East Europe and that it won't affect China — that it is only Europe," Geremek said.



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