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Off The Wire

National and international news from the Reuter News Report

El Salvador aid request postponed by committee

WASHINGTON — The Senate Appropriations Committee postponed action Monday for the second time on President Reagan's emergency request for \$93 million in military aid for El Salvador. The Republican-controlled panel last week defeated one urgent Reagan appeal, for \$21 million in covert aid to Nicaraguan rebels, and delayed until today a vote on the Salvadoran assistance.

But late Monday the committee decided to postpone today's meeting at least until Wednesday. Reagan angered several key senators last week when he tried to bypass normal congressional procedures and asked that the new aid be included in two popular emergency measures—one for fuel aid to poor people, the other for food aid to Africa.

U.S. military policy protested

SAN FRANCISCO — Twenty-seven people demonstrating against increased U.S. military activity in Central America occupied the local office of Sen. Pete Wilson for about two hours Monday before being arrested, police said. They demanded that the California Republican, who was in Washington, D.C., sign a "peace pledge of non-intervention" in the volatile region. A further 300 demonstrators, chanting slogans and banging on tin pans, staged a rally outside the building close to San Francisco's City Hall.

The rally was called in response to last week's announcement of U.S. maneuvers in Honduras and other military steps in the region in advance of presidential elections in El Salvador March 25.

Ceasefire near, war continues

BEIRUT - Artillery exchanges shook Beirut Monday and rival radio stations reported nearly 50 people injured in residential areas on both sides of the "Green Line" dividing Beirut into Moslem- and Christian-controlled sectors. In the Swiss city of Lausanne, the nine leaders of Lebanon's warring factions were reported by official sources to have agreed Monday that cease-fire committees should meet in Beirut and Lausanne to discuss a disengagement of forces. But the sources said the leaders were reluctant to announce a cease-fire deadline before their military commanders had met in Beirut for fear it would be sabotaged yet again. The state radio's correspondent in Lausanne said the nine had started to contact their supporters in Beirut and tell them the cease-fire should take effect immediately. The reporter on national television, however, said the timing of the cease-fire had not yet been announced.

Lennon FBI files in question

LOS ANGELES — A federal judge Monday ordered the U.S. government to give specific reasons why FBI files kept on the late Beatle John Lennon might endanger national security. District Court Judge Robert Takusugi gave government attorneys until May 20 to explain to him its refusal to turn over about 200 documents to a University of California history professor who is seeking them for a book he is writing on Lennon.

The lawsuit, filed last year, came after Professor Jonathan Weiner received only a third of the Lennon documents he had requested under the Freedom of Information Act. In documents the government did release, it was shown that Lennon was under government surveillance before the 1972 Republican convention because of fears by the Nixon administration that he might help lead demonstrations at the event.

Glemp returns to Poland, disputes

WARSAW, Poland — Cardinal Jozef Glemp, Poland's Roman Catholic primate, returned from abroad Monday to deal with a hunger strike in a church and a dispute with the Communist authorities over the removal of crucifixes from public buildings. The hunger strike by four men and three women started Sunday at St. Joseph's Church in the Warsaw suburb of Ursus where parishioners have been angered by the cardinal's transfer of their radical activist priest to a new country post. A spokesman for the group said they had sent a letter to the cardinal seeking the reinstatement of Father Mieczyslaw Nowak and that supporters at 20 other Polish churches were ready to join the fast if he refused.