

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Reagan orders polygraph tests

WASHINGTON — In the wake of spy scandals, President Reagan has ordered that lie detector tests be given to government employees, ranging all the way up to Cabinet secretaries, with access to highly secret information.

Even as the president's action — taken Nov. 1 but kept secret — was disclosed Wednesday, Secretary of State George Shultz was described as being opposed to using lie detectors, whose reliability has been questioned and are viewed by some as an invasion of privacy.

Would Shultz submit to a lie detector test? "I can't answer," said State Department spokesman Charles Red-

man. "I don't know."

White House spokesman Larry Speakes said he did not know how many people would be required to take the tests, but the Los Angeles Times, which first revealed Reagan's decision, said that up to 10,000 people could be affected, including 4,000 people at the State Department.

Rep. Don Edwards, D-Calif., denounced Reagan's "sudden secret order" as "contrary to the cautious approach to polygraph tests that everybody else has taken in both houses of congress and at the Department of Defense."

Speakes said the tests "will be ap-

plied to a selective number of officials who have highest levels of access to classified information, especially communications security and other compartmentalized information.

"The test will be mandatory for people who have to obtain clearances for such sensitive information," Speakes said. Thus, it would include government contractors as well as employees.

In 1983, Reagan proposed a huge expansion of the use of lie detectors which, if fully implemented, would have affected more than 3.7 million federal and contract employees, according to estimates by the General Accounting Office.

Atomic Bulletin has 40th anniversary

CHICAGO — Like Dr. Frankenstein, the scientists who brought the atomic bomb into existence watched with horror as their creation made its way into the world.

Hoping to alert the public to the dangers they had unleashed, they founded the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, a Chicago-based magazine that celebrates its 40th anniversary this week. A symposium featuring several past and present contributors is planned for today at the University of Chicago, where Bulletin offices are located.

The mid-1940s were "an incredible time, a heady time for science," said Harrison Brown, a chemist and physicist who worked on the Manhattan Pro-

ject, helped found the Bulletin and now serves as editor-in-chief.

"After the destruction the bomb caused (in Japan) and the impression it made on this nation, we believed arms control was a goal that was attainable within 10 years," Brown said by telephone from his home in Albuquerque, N.M.

"There was no arms race then, and our vision turned out to be far from the truths of today. But the goal has remained the same — to keep the scientists and the citizens of this world informed about the nuclear debate in terms that can be understood."

The bulletin's most enduring symbol, the "Doomsday Clock," first appeared in 1947 at the suggestion of

physicist Edward Teller, who later resigned from the magazine.

The clock was set then at 11:53, reflecting an estimate by the journal's editors and an international board of scientists — including 17 Nobel Prize winners — of the world's proximity to the final midnight of nuclear destruction.

After the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963, the clock was pushed back to 11:48.

It's been moved as far forward as 11:57 — the first time in 1949, after the first Soviet bomb blast, and again in 1983, after U.S.-Soviet arms-control talks were suspended. It remains at 11:57 today.

Fake diploma business on the rise

WASHINGTON — Rep. Claude Pepper's colleagues are calling him "Dr. Pepper" nowadays.

To dramatize the flourishing diploma mill racket, the 85-year-old Florida Democrat disclosed Wednesday that he received a phony Ph.D. in psychology from a non-existent Los Angeles university last week in exchange for four short book reports and payment of \$1,810.

At a hearing by the House Select Committee on Aging, Pepper announced what he called the "truly disturbing" results of an investigation into a boom-

ing industry in bogus academic degrees, medical licenses, job resumes and other professional credentials.

"We found that the promotion and purchase of academic degrees in a fraudulent fashion is widespread and increasing," Pepper said of the inquiry by his subcommittee on health and long-term care. "About 500,000 Americans have secured — and many are employed on the basis of — credentials they purchased but did not earn."

Fees range up to \$28,000 for a medical degree complete with transcript, diploma, letters of recommendation

and an employment verification service, Pepper said. He estimated that 10,000 physicians nationwide are practicing with falsified or questionable credentials, preying most frequently on the elderly.

To dramatize how easily an academic degree can be purchased, Pepper's subcommittee staff, working with Postal Service inspectors, obtained a Ph.D. in psychology in the mail from Union University in Los Angeles for "C.D. Pepper" of Burke Va., a Washington suburb, in just nine months.

Former Lincoln man working for Israeli-Palestinian peace

LINCOLN — Virgil Falloon is a citizen of the world who obviously believes one person can make a difference.

Since August, the former Lincoln man has been executive director of a Washington-based citizens' organization that is promoting peace in the Mideast by seeking a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians.

SEARCH for Justice and Equality in Palestine-Israel hopes to influence adoption of what it says would be a more even-handed American policy that supports a settlement "on the basis of the inalienable rights of both peoples."

The American people now receive a one-sided view of the dispute, Falloon said.

"The pro-Israeli bias is so strong that it ultimately makes a peaceful solution to the conflict almost impossible. It is not in the interests of the United States not to recognize that the Palestinians have human rights.

"Until the United States is willing to come forward and recognize that injustices are being done, it will never be involved in the peace process."

SEARCH is not anti-Israeli, Falloon is quick to point out.

It was founded by a Jew, and its membership is one-third Jewish, one-third Arab and one-third other Americans.

"We want justice and equality for both peoples, and we want to be sure the American people hear both sides of the story," he said.

Falloon began to identify with the world outside Nebraska — and out-

side the United States — when, as a youth, he went to northern Kenya in 1972 to do volunteer work for a mission. Soon he was helping build an airstrip in southern Sudan.

Questions began to form in his head.

How could a population be starving to death in a country rich in agricultural resources? Why did corporations come in to pump out oil and plant export crops in a country that could be feeding its own starving people? Why did distribution of American Food for Peace commodities fail to stop the starvation?

The young Lincoln man returned to the United States with a sense of "belonging to the world." Filled with "lots of questions," he sought to expand his global perspective by majoring in history and learning Arabic at Georgetown University.

During his junior year, he went abroad to Cairo where he encountered his first Russians, whom President Anwar Sadat was in the process of systematically expelling from Egypt.

"That totally destroyed my perception of Russia as just the Big Bear of communism. My fears were broken down by personal contact. They were people, and they were talking about peace, too."

Falloon completed his work at Georgetown, and then earned a law degree at the University of Nebraska with an eye toward "acquiring a legal background which I could combine with my Mideast background to be most effective in working for causes I

believed to be legitimate and just."

Back in the Mideast again in 1982 as a legal research volunteer for Law in the Service of Man, the West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva, Falloon lived at the center of the conflict, along the West Bank of the Jordan River between Israel and Jordan.

His job: "To look at the legal system which exists under the Israeli military occupation and to see that the rule of law was being followed."

After the year's assignment, Falloon and his wife stayed for another year working with Quakers in the West Bank. Falloon's wife taught at a private school for girls, and he became its building and grounds superintendent.

After their return to the United States, the offer came from SEARCH.

"I really believe it's a movement, a coalition, that could be very influential in the next five years or so," Falloon said.

"We want to get the Palestinians and the Israelis talking. We would never advocate a particular political solution; We just want to encourage the dialogue."

Falloon said he is encouraged by the sudden American awareness and concern for the plight of blacks in South Africa.

"I hope one day that the Israeli-Palestinian dilemma is raised to that level. Hopefully before more radical elements are allowed to engage themselves in armed conflict which, we fear, could ultimately escalate to the use of nuclear weapons."

In Brief

Centers will aid distressed farmers

LINCOLN — Gov. Bob Kerrey on Wednesday announced creation of six assistance centers across Nebraska for financially strapped farmers and ranchers, but he cautioned that it won't provide a "magical solution" to farm problems.

The Ag Action Centers, partly financed by a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, will provide counseling and job-training services for victims of the agricultural recession, Kerrey said at a news conference at the Governor's Mansion.

The centers will be located in Beatrice, Fremont, Grand Island, Norfolk, North Platte and Scottsbluff.

Likening the program to showing compassion for a family grieving at the loss of a loved one, Kerrey said farmers who have lost their land or are near losing it must be helped.

State Agriculture Director Chuck Schroeder estimated that 40 percent of Nebraska farms and ranchers are strapped with debt-to-asset ratios above 40 percent, putting them in moderate to severe financial difficulties.

About 2,300 farms and ranches in the state are considered technically insolvent, he said.

Opposition forms united ticket

MANILA, Philippines — The opposition united behind Corason Aquino as its presidential candidate Wednesday, and Ferdinand E. Marcos chose as his running mate a former foreign minister whom he fired last March for criticizing him.

Marcos, who has been president for 20 years, and Aquino, who blames Marcos for her husband's assassination in 1983, will face each other in a special presidential election Feb. 7. Benigno Aquino was the president's main political foe.

Aquino, 52, and the other leading opposition candidate, former Sen. Salvador H. Laurel, 56, settled a political dispute and showed up at the National Election Commission offices an hour before the midnight filing deadline.

Blood test helps predict AIDS virus

BOSTON — A blood test can reveal whether people whose lymph nodes have become swollen because of the AIDS virus are likely to develop full-blown cases of the disease within a few months, researchers say.

Many people infected with the AIDS virus have persistently swollen lymph nodes, but none of the overwhelming infections that occur in full-fledged cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome. The latest research shows that when these people's blood cells stop making interferon, they are likely to fall ill with the lethal disease, which usually kills its victims within a year.

Swollen lymph nodes caused by the AIDS virus are a key symptom of a condition known as AIDS-related complex, or ARC. Other signs may include weight loss, fever, night sweats, persistent diarrhea and fatigue.

Hacker, 15, arrested in scam

TEMPLE TERRACE, Fla. — A teen-ager was arrested and charged with entering a national computer network and trying to gain access to financial institutions and universities, police said Tuesday.

The 15-year-old boy, who was not identified because he is a minor, was arrested Monday night on the felony counts and released to his parents.

He was charged with grand theft for stealing \$781 worth of computer time from General Telephone Co.'s Telenet system, which he was accused of penetrating more than 1,500 times in the last two months, said Sgt. Clark Baxley.

According to police, the boy tried unsuccessfully to break through sophisticated computer systems at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Barnett Bank and MCI, a long-distance telephone company.

Britain-Ireland agreement under way

BELFAST, Northern Ireland — Officials of Britain and Ireland put their new Northern Ireland agreement into practice Wednesday, but they met behind a barbed-wire barrier to keep out angry Protestants who want the troubled province to remain forever British.

The delegations were led by Peter Barry, the Irish foreign minister, and Tom King, Britain's Northern Ireland secretary. Their meeting marked formal implementation of the Nov. 15 accord giving Ireland a consultative role in the administration of the predominantly Protestant province.

A statement issued at the end of the daylong Northern Ireland meeting affirmed the two governments' "total rejection" of any attempt to promote political objectives by violence or threat of violence.

More borrowers paying on time

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans 30 days behind in their home mortgage payments declined in the third quarter of the year, an organization of lenders reported Wednesday.

"Delinquency rates should fall in the foreseeable future due to current lower interest rates, tighter loan underwriting and intensified loan servicing by lenders," said Warren Lasko, executive vice president of the Mortgage Bankers Association, which surveyed 410 major lenders for its report.

Faced with foreclosure rates that were increasing, lenders have also begun working sooner with borrowers behind in their payments, helping them find a solution before they lose their homes.

Charter granted to Civil War group

WASHINGTON — President Reagan signed into law a measure granting a federal charter to the Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War. Sen. J. James Exon, D-Nebr., introduced the legislation this year on behalf of the national organization. The 7,000 members work to preserve historic sites and construction of monuments commemorating the Civil War.

The charter grants federal recognition to the organization, which is marking its centennial this year, Exon said.

Leah Way of Lincoln, Neb., headed up the organization's national effort to gather support for the federal enactment of the charter.