

News Digest

By The Associated Press

House votes down aid to Contras, 222-210

WASHINGTON — A sharply divided House, on a 222-210 vote Thursday, defeated president Reagan's plan to send \$100 million in military aid to Nicaraguan rebels. The dramatic setback followed two weeks of intense personal lobbying by the president.

Presidential spokesman Larry Speakes said the administration will not abandon the fight. "We're gaining converts, and the next battle will bring us victory," he said. House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill, D-Mass., who led the opposition, promised an April 15 vote in the House.

The setback for Reagan might be temporary since the Senate is scheduled to take up the

issue next week. But the vote, nonetheless, represented Reagan's most serious foreign policy reversal in Congress.

The Congress initially rejected his aid request last year, but later — after Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega paid a visit to Moscow — approved \$27 million in non-lethal aid.

Speakes said Reagan will press "again and again until this battle is won, until freedom is given the chance that it deserves in Nicaragua."

The vote followed two days of often bitter debate that ended with O'Neill saying Reagan's plan "takes us further down the road to a situation where our troops will be involved."

House Minority Leader Bob Michel, R-Ill., responded to O'Neill: "Today, you're wrong, you're wrong, you're wrong . . . A month from now will be too late because the communists are already mobilizing for an offensive."

Although the House vote represented a defeat for Reagan's Nicaraguan policy, O'Neill apparently won some last-minute votes by promising a new round of votes on alternative aid proposals on April 15. Reagan is considered likely to win some aid for the rebels at that time.

Sixteen Republicans joined 206 Democrats in opposing Reagan's proposal. Forty-six Democrats, many from southern states, and 164

Republicans voted for the aid.

House Majority Whip Thomas Foley, D-Wash., said Reagan's defeat "shows Congress resented attempts by the administration to question the patriotism (of aid opponents). That was scandalous. That was unfortunate and classically ineffective."

But Rep. Dick Cheney, R-Wyo., said he could not "find a single vote that we lost" because of the sharp attacks on opponents from White House communications director Patrick Buchanan and other backers.

All three Nebraska Republicans voted on the losing side of a 222-210 roll call.

Philippine constitution would abolish Assembly

MANILA, Philippines — The draft of a new, interim Philippine constitution would abolish the National Assembly and vest all law-making powers in President Corazon Aquino in a democratic revolutionary government, it was disclosed Thursday.

A Cabinet official gave The Associated Press and other reporters copies of the draft constitution Thursday.

The official, who dealt with reporters on condition of anonymity, said Aquino wants to "soften some provisions" of the draft so she does not have to call her government "revolutionary."

The official said Aquino planned to announce the new constitution Monday. He did not say why he was releasing the draft Thursday.

It would give Aquino the law-making powers of the National Assembly and would prohibit any court from questioning her authority or the validity of any law she decrees.

The draft constitution would provide for a commission that would write a new permanent constitution that would be put to a popular vote.

The Philippine News Agency quoted Solicitor General Sedfrey Ordonez as saying Aquino had consulted with him on the draft constitution and that her final proclamation would not use the word "revolutionary," which is contained in the draft.

Aquino's official spokesman had said earlier that the president would announce Monday or Tuesday whether she would proclaim a revolutionary government.

Aquino took office Feb. 25, the day President Ferdinand Marcos fled the presidential palace under pressure from a civilian-military rebellion. Since then, she has been considering declaration of a "revolutionary government" to enable her government to remove some of the bureaucracy and government institutions set up by Marcos during his 20-year rule.

The current National Assembly is controlled by the former president's political party.

The draft constitution says civilian authority "shall at all times be supreme over the military" and includes a "bill of rights" from the 1973 constitution currently in effect.

Ever wonder what happens when the rabbit gets caught?

COUNCIL BLUFFS, Iowa — Human error apparently allowed greyhounds running at Bluffs Run to catch the rabbit in Wednesday's first race.

Track officials said the rabbit accidentally was stopped in mid-race and the dogs attacked it. All money wagered on the first race was refunded and track patrons were treated to a bonus consolation double in the second race.

Women's Commission

LINCOLN — The Commission on the Status of Women would receive more than \$98,000 in state tax funds if the Legislature stands by a decision it made Thursday.

Funding for the commission was eliminated by the Legislature in 1985 during a round of budget cuts that also saw funds discontinued for commissions dealing with Indians and Mexican-Americans.

On a 25-16 vote, lawmakers amended LB1251, the main appropriations bill that contained more than \$822.6 million to fund state government operations and aid programs.

Janovy honored

OMAHA, Neb. — John Janovy Jr., 48, author, scientist and professor of life sciences at UNL was named as the first recipient of the Loren Eiseley Memorial Award presented in conjunction with a forum at Clarkson Hospital on balancing human values in higher education.

Janovy was selected because he exemplified the ability to work both in science and the humanities, as did the late Loren Eiseley, the announcement said.

Iacocca's 'Vice'

MIAMI — Don Johnson's sockless feet and 5 o'clock shadow may seem fashionable to his fans, but

In Brief

Lee Iacocca, 61, who is to join the "Miami Vice" star in an episode of the series, has other ideas.

The Chrysler Corp. chairman will appear as a police officer on a "Miami Vice" episode to be broadcast in May.

He joked that "Vice" stars ought to switch to Chrysler luxury sports cars, but said, "The first thing I'm going to do is to tell Don Johnson to get a shave and put on some socks."

Paris bombing

PARIS — An explosion ripped through a crowded shopping arcade on the Champs Elysees in central Paris on Thursday, and fire officials said one person died and 21 others were injured.

The blast was reportedly caused by a bomb.

No arrests were made in Monday's bombing, and police said there was no claim of responsibility. The bombing came one day after voters narrowly gave a centrist-conservative coalition control of the National Assembly.

Booster study

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Rocket specialists Thursday began examining a 500-pound piece of debris from one of Challenger's booster rockets to determine if it is the key section with the joint believed to have caused the shuttle explosion.

The broken 4-by-5-foot part was brought into port along with two larger booster pieces Wednesday night by the salvage ship Stena Workhorse.

Engineers of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration believe the Jan. 28 explosion was triggered by a rupture in a joint between the bottom two segments of the right rocket.

Spy charges

MOSCOW — A Foreign Ministry spokesman on Thursday accused the United States of trying to spy on the Soviet Union when it sent two Navy ships into Soviet waters in the Black Sea last week.

The U.S. Defense Department acknowledged Tuesday that the cruiser USS Yorktown and destroyer USS Caron entered Soviet waters off the Crimean coast on March 13 but said it was "simply an exercise of the right of innocent passage."

Sikh acquitted

NEW YORK — A federal jury Thursday acquitted a Sikh computer expert of plotting to assassinate Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, but found him guilty of two lesser charges.

Following 15 hours of deliberations over three days, the jury found Gurpartap Singh Birk innocent of plotting to assassinate Gandhi during a U.S. visit and trying to hire a hitman to kill him.

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34 Nebraska Union
1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68509-0448

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Managing Editor: Thom Gabrukiewicz, 472-1766
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your guide to living in Lincoln

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