

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Arms scandal unfolds

McFarlane disputes previous accounts of weapons shipments

WASHINGTON — Robert C. McFarlane, President Reagan's former national security adviser, contradicted previous accounts from administration officials on Monday, testifying under oath that the president approved an "indirect" shipment of arms to Iran in August 1985.

As the public accounting of the Reagan administration's foreign policy fiasco began in Capitol Hill, Secretary of State George P. Schultz — also under oath before the House Foreign Affairs Committee — denied involvement in the transfer of Iranian arms sale profits to Nicaraguan rebels, saying he had "zero" knowledge of the "illegal" diversion of money.

As Shultz and McFarlane appeared separately before the committee, the Justice Department released the text of its application to a federal appellate court panel in Washington, seeking appointment of an independent counsel to probe possible criminal activity in the affair.

The request raised the possibility that the granting of immunity from prosecution may be necessary to get to the bottom of the affair. It was not immediately clear when the three-member panel would act to name the counsel.

Marine Lt. Col. Oliver L. North, fired as a top National Security Council aide, and "other U.S. government officials"

were mentioned as likely targets of the investigation.

McFarlane, who had testified last week in secret before Senate Intelligence committee, testified publicly Monday before the House panel, saying the president gave his authorization for the indirect shipment of "small levels of arms to Iran for the purpose of strengthening elements against terrorism."

Attorney General Edwin Meese III, who made a preliminary inquiry into the matter at Reagan's request, said on Nov. 25, "Our information is that the president knew about it probably after the fact."

In Brief

Kilauea Volcano continues destruction

KALAPANA, Hawaii — A new lava flow from Kilauea Volcano on Monday burned down another house in this southeastern Hawaii Island coastal community, where 10 homes already have been destroyed in the past two weeks.

The house burst into flames as it was touched by lava at 5:30 a.m., said Hawaii County Civil Defense Director Harry Kim.

Three other houses are threatened by the latest lava flow, which reached the Kalapana Highway around 10 p.m. Sunday and began crossing the road around 3 a.m., Kim said.

The new flow, about 120 feet wide, is moving atop a flow which crossed the highway and destroyed 10 houses on its way to the ocean.

Molten lava took an eight-mile path from a vent in the volcano's east rift zone to the ocean, adding about 10 acres of land to the island. The flow into the ocean stopped during the weekend because of a blockage in a lava tube.

The recent flows are from the 48th phase of an east rift zone eruption which began on Jan. 3, 1986.

Hondurans continue hunt for invaders

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — Honduran troops, flown by U.S. helicopters, hunted for stragglers Monday of a Nicaraguan force that Honduran officers say crossed the border during the weekend and burned three deserted villages.

A military intelligence source said the troops also were acting as a guard against further incursions.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said about 20 Honduran air force planes had bombed and strafed retreating Nicaraguans, who he said were pursued by three Honduran infantry battalions.

Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government denied that an incursion took place and claimed that warplanes from the Honduran side of the border bombed two villages inside Nicaragua, killing seven soldiers and wounding 11 people.

Honduras said that 18 of its soldiers were wounded in intense fighting in the border area over the weekend and that its troops inflicted undisclosed "heavy" casualties on a force of 700 Sandinista raiders.

U.S. Embassy and Honduran military sources, who spoke on condition that they not be identified for security reasons,

said 14 U.S. helicopters ferried hundreds of Honduran troops to the border site on Sunday after the Nicaraguan force crossed into Honduras the day before.

The helicopters, all unarmed, provided transportation from Palmerola, an air base where U.S. forces are headquartered 30 miles northeast of Tegucigalpa, to an air strip called Jamastran, about 90 miles east of the capital, they said.

The Jamastran air strip is 30 miles from the border, in line with standing instructions to American troops to avoid possible clashes with the Nicaraguans.

Honduran officials said residents of about 40 villages fled to safety elsewhere when the Nicaraguan force penetrated 3 miles inside Honduras on Saturday and set fire to three deserted villages near the town of Cifuentes, about 70 miles east of Tegucigalpa. The villages, Mitingale, Buena Vista and La Esperanza, all were in El Paraiso province.

Capt. Carlos Quesada Aguilar, spokesman for Honduran armed forces, said heavy fighting raged Sunday around Cifuentes but subsided Monday morning as the Sandinistas began withdrawing to the Nicaraguan side of the border.

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West Bank clashes continue; Israeli university closes

RAMALLAH, Occupied West Bank — Israeli troops fired on demonstrators in a Palestinian refugee camp Monday, killing a 12-year-old boy and wounding four other people, Palestinian news reports said.

Soldiers also shot and wounded two other Palestinians, and stone-throwing Arabs injured two Israeli women in a fifth day of clashes in more than a dozen cities, villages and refugee camps in the territories Israel captured during the 1967 Middle East war.

Monday's death brought to four the number of Palestinian youths killed by Israeli soldiers since Thursday in the occupied territories, where about 1.4 million Palestinians and 50,000 Jewish settlers live.

More than 25 Palestinians have been wounded by Israeli gunfire, and at least 14 Israeli policemen and civilians have been injured by stones. Army and Palestinian reports say at least 100 Arabs have been detained.

In Monday's bloodiest clash, at the Balata refugee camp near Nablus, troops fired tear gas and opened fire on Palestinian youngsters who pelted them with stones, the army said.

Ramadan Mohammed Daoud Zeitun died of gunshot wounds in the head, said the Palestine Press Service, which monitors events in the occupied territories. They army said four protesters ranging in age from 14 to 20 were shot in the feet.

Although the army confirmed that a Palestinian boy died of gunshot wounds in the head, it said it could not describe the circumstances immediately.

The Israeli government closed one of two Bir Zeit University campuses near Ramallah until Jan. 3. Bir Zeit, financed by Arab governments, has a student body of more than 2,000.

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