

News Digest

By The Associated Press

State of the Union

Reagan assumes responsibility for Iran arms sales

WASHINGTON — President Reagan told the nation Tuesday night that he now regrets his failed risk in selling arms to Iran but, despite the continuing furor, "will not sit idly by if our interests and our friends in the Middle East are threatened."

He said he did not want to see an America that had become "so obsessed with failure that we refused to take risks that could further the cause of peace and freedom in the world."

The president delivered his sixth State of the Union address as the Pentagon shifted its overseas naval forces in what one source described as a response to recent hostage-takings in Lebanon.

Reagan said relatively little about the situation in Lebanon and used the bulk of his remarks to lay out the agenda for the last two years of his

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—Reagan



presidency.

"I took a risk with regard to our action in Iran. It did not work and for that I assume full responsibility," Reagan said in his prepared text.

He added: "Let there be no mistake about American policy; we will not sit idly by if our interests or our friends in

the Middle East are threatened, nor will we yield to terrorist blackmail."

Reagan said it was not wrong to try to establish contact with a nation of strategic importance and "certainly it was not wrong to try to secure freedom for our citizens held in barbaric captivity."

In Brief

Inmates injured in penitentiary

PITTSBURGH — Inmates evacuated from their cells because of an accidental fire set blazes throughout the prison Tuesday, battled guards and each other and then barricaded themselves inside an auditorium where they started a major fire, authorities said.

At least 25 inmates and three guards were injured from fighting or suffered smoke inhalation before all the fires were extinguished, said Thomas Seiverling, spokesman for the State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh, also called Western Pen.

All the inmates were stripped, searched and returned to their cells by early afternoon, officials said.

Sandinistas say Hall to be released

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Sam Nesley Hall, a self-described freedom fighter and brother of a U.S. congressman, will be released within hours because the government decided not to press spy charges, the state-run radio station Voice of Nicaragua said Tuesday.

An anonymous Nicaraguan official has said Hall, 49, suffers from a mental disorder and needs institutional care not available in Nicaragua.

Hall was arrested Dec. 12 at Punta Hueate air base, 13 miles northeast of Managua, with maps and sketches of the airfield, crudely drawn on hotel stationery, stuffed in his socks, the Sandinistas said.

Coup attempt fails; Marcos supporters hold Manila TV station

MANILA, Philippines — Mutinous soldiers held out inside a television station Wednesday, long after President Corazon Aquino announced that the loyal military had crushed an attempted coup.

Gen. Fidel V. Ramos, commander of the armed forces, gave those inside the building — about 160 troopers, 50 civilian supporters of ex-Presi-

dent Ferdinand E. Marcos and a few policemen — a deadline to surrender but then withdrew it.

Ramos went to the besieged station at 3 a.m. Wednesday and spoke for about 45 minutes with the rebel leader, air force Col. Osca Canlas.

Canlas told reporters that Ramos ordered the rebels to leave the station by 6 a.m. (4 p.m. Tuesday EST), but he said he asked Ramos to

extend the deadline and the general "graciously allowed it." There was no indication a new deadline had been set.

After his meeting with Canlas, Ramos remained near the station for more than two hours and at dawn he told reporters Canlas had sent a message saying he had not finished consulting with his men and was not ready to make a

decision.

Ramos then left the area but said, "This cannot go on indefinitely." He gave no indication that a move against the mutineers was imminent.

Maj. Gen. Salvador Mison, deputy chief of staff, said a general and 17 other officers were behind the revolt and five had been arrested, but would not name them.

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The shuttle disaster

A nation remembers its crew

NASA workers will observe 73 seconds of silence, schoolchildren will launch a small rocket, and a statue made partly from donated pennies will be dedicated Wednesday as Americans recall the Challenger disaster one year ago.

Relatives of the seven shuttle astronauts will mark the sad anniversary by joining in public memorial services or grieving privately.

On Tuesday, the astronauts' families issued a joint "Letter to America" in which they said they would raise money for space learning centers around the country, "places where children, teachers, and citizens alike can touch the future."

Some ceremonies were scheduled to coincide with the time on Jan. 28, 1986, that Challenger lifted off from Launch Pad 39B.

Just 73 seconds later, the shuttle exploded, killing mission commander Francis R. Scobee, pilot Michael J. Smith, teacher Christa McAuliffe and crew members Gregory Jarvis, Judith A. Resnik, Ronald E. McNair and Claude Onizuka.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration, at



its 10 centers, will observe 73 seconds of silence Wednesday at the launch time of 11:38 a.m. Flags will be lowered to half-staff, and President Reagan will address NASA employees by a satellite television hookup later in the day.

There also will be a moment of silence at the Seattle Center Flag Pavilion, in the shadow of the Space Needle. The National Air and Space Museum will show continuously "The Dream is Alive," which was shot during three shuttle flights. Resnik, Scobee and McNair appear in it.

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