

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Senator: Reagan should stick to first version of arms story

WASHINGTON — The former chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee said Thursday he believes President Reagan gave advance approval to an Israeli arms shipment to Iran in August 1985, and "ought to stick with" that story he reportedly once told investigators but later retracted.

Sen. David Durenberger, R-Minn., also said embattled White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan was "just making problems" with some of his actions in the unfolding Iran-Contra controversy.

Meanwhile, members of the presidential review-board on the affair conducted a hospital-room

interview with former National Security Adviser Robert C. McFarlane.

And inside the White House, spokesman Martin Fitzwater announced that Reagan stands ready to veto any legislation halting aid to the Contra rebels fighting the Nicaraguan government. The Democratic-controlled Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved such a bill on Wednesday, and Reagan's spokesman said the intent of the legislation "is simply to abandon all Nicaraguans struggling to bring democracy to their country."

In Congress, meanwhile, Secretary of State George Shultz offered no response when Rep.

Robert Torricelli, D-N.J., told him during a hearing that U.S.-provided weapons were having a "dramatic" impact in Iran's favor in its war with Iraq.

Torricelli, just back from a trip to Iraq, said, "The security of our country and of the entire western world is very much at issue today. There is a very real threat to Arab world could be united under this (Iranian) fundamentalist revolution," the congressman said.

In another development in the widening investigation into the Iran-Contra controversy, visiting Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said in an interview that Israel would provide

"necessary information" to congressional committees conducting their own review.

But he said his government would resist any attempt to force Israeli officials to testify about the country's participation in arranging seven U.S. weapons shipments.

Reagan himself said nothing during the day to reporters on the continuing investigation into the secret sale of arms to Iran and apparent diversion of profits to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua. He has repeatedly defended the arms sales, but said he knew nothing of the alleged diversion of funds.

Mountaineers continue search for skiers lost in avalanche

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. — More than 250 mountaineers using long poles to probe the deep snow across an avalanche recovered two more bodies Thursday and continued searching for at least one more missing skier, authorities said.

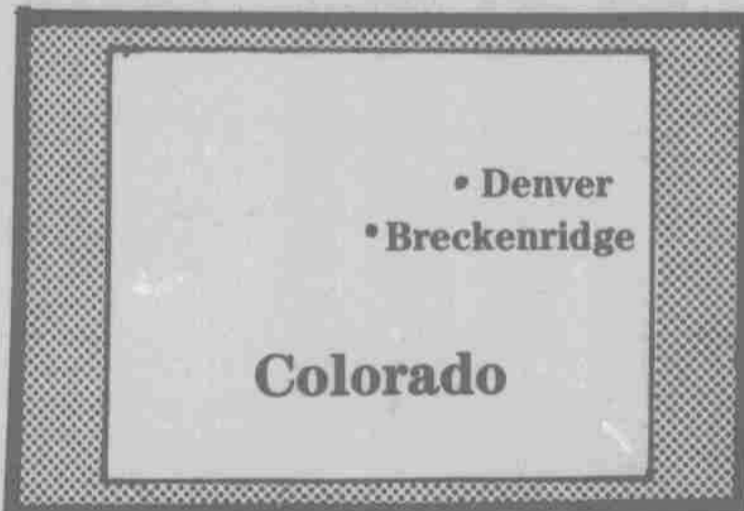
All three victims of Wednesday's snow slide were men, and their bodies were found in one area of the steep slope in the central Rockies.

The first body was found Wednesday, less than three hours after the avalanche. The other two were found in 4 to 6 feet of snow Thursday.

"We have developed information that a fourth victim is involved in the slide. We have shifted our emphasis to the other side of the slide," said Summit County Sheriff Delbert Ewaldt. He said the missing man was skiing with his stepbrother and was not with the other victims.

A helicopter dropped explosives to release loose snow that could cause more avalanches on Peak 7, a steep slope north of the Breckenridge ski area, before the searchers, aided by dogs, headed out Thursday.

Tim Kirkland, an Australian, outran the avalanche and identified three others in his party who apparently didn't



make it. "We were sitting in the snow when one guy right away yelled, 'Avalanche!'" "It looked like a huge cloud coming down," he told reporters in a hoarse whisper. "All we could do is stand up and try to ski out of it. I'm the only one who did," Kirkland said.

In Brief

Cuomo says he won't seek presidency

NEW YORK — Gov. Mario Cuomo said Thursday that he would not be a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1988.

"I will not be a candidate," said the New York governor at the end of a call-in show on WCBS radio in New York City.

The 54-year-old governor said that he had "no desire to increase the speculation" about a possible run for the White House.

"This decision is the best thing for my state," said Cuomo, adding that it was also "the best thing for my family" and "the best thing for my party."

Recent nationwide polls had placed Cuomo as a strong second to former Sen. Gary Hart of Colorado as the choice among Democrats for his party's nomination.

Political prisoners arrive in Miami

MIAMI — Two former Cuban political prisoners have arrived in Miami to begin new lives as free exiles.

Aracadio Peguero Ceballos, 45, and Sixto Nicot Sosavila, 43, arrived Wednesday. They were among 20 prisoners released from prison by Castro's government last May. The prisoners have been leaving their homeland in pairs.

Peguero, who leg was amputated in prison, has no family. He will share a house in Miami's Little Havana with four other disabled former Cuban political prisoners.

Soviets free dissident psychiatrist; plans continue for Jewish activist's release

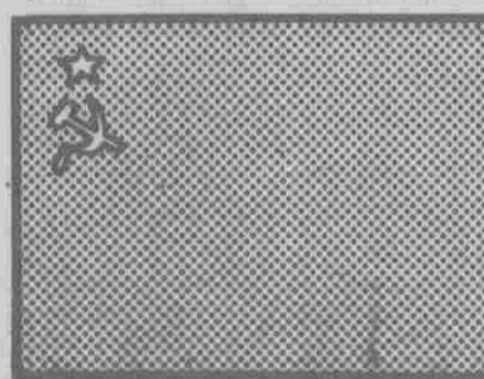
MOSCOW — Psychiatrist Anatoly Koryagin came home Thursday after five years in a labor camp, and officials said Jewish activist Josef Begun would be out of prison in 24 hours, nearly a week after his release was first announced.

Begun, 55, was still at Chistopol Prison on Thursday.

An Interior Ministry official telephoned Begun's wife Inna on Thursday night and told her to go to the prison, 500 miles east of Moscow, for her husband's release Friday.

"I was told my husband will be freed tomorrow, in the second half of the day," she told The Associated Press by telephone.

Begun, a teacher of Hebrew, was pardoned Tuesday by a decree of the Supreme Soviet, the nominal national parliament. He was sentenced in 1983 to seven years in prison for anti-Soviet



agitation and propaganda.

A Soviet official had announced his release prematurely in a televised interview on CBS last Sunday.

Begun's wife said other dissidents freed from Chistopol recently told them Josef Begun is the last remaining prisoner held there for alleged anti-Soviet activity. At least 150 dissidents have been released in the past three weeks, and officials have said an equal

number of cases are under review.

Chistopol has held many of the Soviet Union's best-known prisoners, including Anatoly Shcharansky, who was freed last year, and Anatoly Marchenko, whose death at the prison in December is widely believed to have promoted the wave of pardons.

In addition to reporting releases, Gerasimov has announced that the laws on anti-state slander or agitation and propaganda are being reviewed with the idea of "softening" them. He said Thursday he did not know how long the review would take.

Gerasimov's announcements that Begun had been pardoned and Koryagin was free were carried briefly by the official news agency Tass, on both the English- and Russian-language services. Similar reports of previous releases of other dissidents have not been reported.

Reagan reconciles with Warsaw; lifts Poland's economic sanctions

WASHINGTON — President Reagan, responding to pleas from church and trade union leaders, lifted economic sanctions against Poland on Thursday but warned the Warsaw government not to retreat on political reforms.

"We will be watching to see that further steps are taken toward national reconciliation in Poland and that the progress made is not reversed," Reagan said in a statement.

The Polish government estimates its economy has lost \$15 billion because of Western sanctions imposed after the martial law crackdown on the Solidarity trade union in December 1981.

However, critics claim Warsaw's leaders used the sanctions as an excuse for the country's poor economy.

"The present regime in Poland uses the sanctions as a crutch and it's high time that we kicked the crutch away and let them stand on their own two feet and do not blame (the United States for) what's happening to the economy," said Aloysius Mazewski,

president of the Chicago-based Polish American Congress and a guest at the White House for Reagan's announcement.

The last remaining U.S. sanctions against Poland were the denial of "most-favored-nation" tariff treatment and a ban on U.S. credits and guarantees. Poland already owes the United States more than \$2 billion in guaranteed credits that it is unable to repay.

In lifting the sanctions, Reagan noted the lifting of martial law in Poland in 1983 and the release of thousands of political prisoners in a series of amnesties. Since last September, no one has been arrested on political charges, he said.

The president said that "significantly, the leaders of Solidarity and of the Catholic Church in Poland agree that this is the right course for us to take." During Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead's recent visit to Poland, Lech Walesa, leader of Solidarity, and Cardinal Jozef Glomp appealed for an end to the sanctions.

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