

News Digest

By The Associated Press

House votes to freeze \$40 million in Nicaraguan Contra aid Republicans: Decision could "hand over Central America to the Soviet Union"

WASHINGTON — The House voted Wednesday to freeze \$40 million in aid for the Nicaraguan Contras for six months and to order the Reagan administration to use the time to account for millions of dollars in allegedly missing previous aid.

The 230-to-196 vote marked the first in a series of expected congressional battles over contra aid this year. The resolution was supported by 213 Democrats and 17 Republicans and opposed by 156 Republicans and 40 Democrats.

Democrats said Wednesday's action was justified by alleged corruption in the ranks of Nicaragua's anti-leftist insurgents. But Republicans said the vote was a bid to break a promise made by Congress last year and could "hand Central America over to the Soviet Union."

Final congressional action to block the money would draw a veto from President Reagan. Leaders of both parties say such a veto would stand.

But House Speaker Jim Wright of Texas said the real target is not the \$40 million — the last installment of a \$100 million aid package voted

last year — but the \$105 million Reagan has requested for the Contras for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

Rep. David Bonior, D-Mich., leader of the House Democratic task force on Contra aid, said a moratorium was essential because, of the money previously provided the Contras, "tens of millions and perhaps hundreds of millions of dollars cannot be accounted for."

But Contra aid supporters said the moratorium proposal was aimed at embarrassing Reagan and giving the Soviet Union a victory on the

mainland of the Western Hemisphere.

"I do not want to be recorded as contributing to handing Central America over to the Soviets," said Rep. Trent Lott, R-Miss., sounding a theme repeated by many Republican speakers.

On Capitol Hill before the debate and vote, Secretary of State George Shultz and Reagan's national security adviser, Frank Carlucci, said a break in the aid pipeline would strip the Contra rebels of their defenses and remove any incentive for Nicaragua's Soviet-packed Sandinista government to negotiate in good faith.

Judge: Couple can adopt child of surrogate mother

LONDON — In a test case brought by the government, a judge ruled Wednesday that a married couple can adopt a 2-year-old girl born to the husband and a surrogate mother who received a \$7,500 fee.

At issue was whether the couple could adopt the child even though the surrogate mother accepted money for her services and a 1958 adoption law bars "payments in return for consent to adoption."

High Court Judge Sir John Latey said he was convinced the surrogate mother was not motivated by financial gain but wanted to help childless couples.

The judge also said the girl has been living with her natural father and his wife since she was two days old and was

"thriving... (in a) loving, normal, parent-child relationship."

Latey said the surrogate mother originally agreed to bear a child for \$15,000. She received \$7,500 but then published a book about her experience, earning an undisclosed amount, and turned down the second \$7,500 installment.

The couple and the surrogate mother did not draw up a written contract and the surrogate arrangement was "one of trust which was fully honored on both sides," Latey said.

Latey said the father had sexual intercourse with the surrogate mother several times before the child was conceived.

In Brief

Governor Orr signs tobacco tax bill

LINCOLN — Gov. Kay Orr signed a tobacco tax bill Wednesday. The Legislature passed LB730 on Tuesday with the emergency clause attached, meaning it would become law shortly after Orr signed it.

The measure, sponsored by the Revenue Committee, increases the cigarette tax and imposes a new excise tax on other tobacco products, such as cigars, pipe tobacco and snuff.

The cigarette excise tax will increase from 23 cents a pack to 27 cents a pack July 1. The new tax on other tobacco products, 15 percent of the wholesale price, begins Jan. 1, 1988.

The measure is expected to generate an additional \$7 million in state revenue for 1987-88.

Former Nebraska governor dies

HARTINGTON — Former governor, lieutenant governor and legislator Dwight W. Burney died Tuesday at his winter home of Mesa, Ariz., at age 95. His funeral will be Saturday in Hartington, where Burney was born.

He became acting governor Sept. 9, 1960, after the death of Gov. Ralph G. Brooks, and served until Jan. 5, 1961.

While acting governor, Burney was re-elected as lieutenant governor and held that job until 1965, when he retired from state office. Burney lost a bid to become governor in 1964 when he was defeated by incumbent Democrat Frank Morrison.

Burney's wife, Grace, said he awoke Tuesday with stomach pains and died during the afternoon after being driven by friends to a Mesa hospital. Mrs. Burney said an aneurysm on an artery near his stomach ruptured.

Other survivors include son Donald of Naperville, Ill., and daughters Marilyn Pierpont of California and Natalie Hahn of Nigeria.

Burney's funeral will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Congregational Church in Hartington.

Trade gap hits record in late '86

WASHINGTON — The nation's merchandise trade deficit hit an all-time high of \$38.4 billion from October through December as higher-priced imports swamped gains in U.S. export sales, the government reported Wednesday.

The Commerce Department said the imbalance between what the nation imported and exported rose 3.3 percent from the July-September period and helped to push the annual trade deficit to a record \$147.7 billion. The figure was 18.7 percent above the previous all-time high of \$14.4 billion set in 1985.

The new report confirmed parallel figures released earlier that put both the quarterly and annual deficits even higher. The new deficit totals are lower because they reflect trade on a "balance of payments" basis, omitting such factors as military sales and the cost of shipping and insurance.

During the final three months of 1986, imports rose 3 percent to \$95.7 billion, while export sales advanced 2.8 percent to \$57.3 billion.

Analysts, however, noted some encouraging signs in those totals. The import rise was totally accounted for by a 4 percent rise in the price of goods imported. The volume of imports actually fell by 1 percent during the quarter.

To correct the country's trade problems, the Reagan administration for two years has been working to push the value of the dollar lower on foreign exchange markets. This would raise the price of imported goods while making American goods more competitive overseas.

Analysts said the new trade report showed this strategy was beginning to work, although they cautioned that the quarterly trade deficits were likely to remain at near-record levels for most of this year.

THE FAR SIDE By GARY LARSON



"She's lookin' good, Vern!"

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EARLY REGISTRATION FOR 1987 SUMMER SESSIONS MARCH 16- APRIL 3

Class Priority

All students who register during the early registration period, March 16-April 3, 1987, will receive class priority for the choice of courses if their registration worksheets and course request forms are completed and returned to the Records Office, Service Counter No. 107C, Administration Building, according to the following schedule:

1. Graduate students and students of senior rank (89 or more credit hours on record at the end of the second semester 1986-87), by 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 18.
2. Students with 53 or more credit hours by 4 p.m. Friday, March 20.
3. Students with fewer than 53 credit hours by 3 p.m. Friday, April 3.

Pre-Session	May 18-June 5
8-Wk Session	May 18-July 10
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Summer Sessions Class Schedules and Registration Packets are available at Service Counter No. 107C, Administration.

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