

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Poindexter cites fifth again

WASHINGTON — Former National Security Adviser John M. Poindexter, a key figure in the Iran-Contra investigation, cited his constitutional protection against self-incrimination Tuesday in refusing to answer congressional questions about computer security.

Poindexter, citing the same Fifth Amendment protection, had refused in December to answer Senate and House committees' questions about his role in the sale of arms to Iran and possible diversion of some profits to the Nicaraguan rebels.

On Tuesday, Rep. Jack Brooks, Texas, asked four questions narrowly focused on a directive issued by Poindexter on Oct. 29, 1986, relating to security. The questions made no reference to the Iran-

Contra investigations being conducted by an independent counsel and separate House and Senate committees.

Still, Poindexter answered each time:

"On the advice of counsel, I decline to answer that question pursuant to my constitutional rights under the Fifth Amendment."

"Admiral, is it your intent to exercise your Fifth Amendment privilege in regard to all questions we might ask you?" asked Brooks, chairman of the Government Operations Legislation and National Security Subcommittee.

"That is correct," Poindexter answered.

In barbed comments during the hearing, Poindexter's lawyer sug-

gested the former presidential adviser had been called to testify only in order to create a spectacle, and congressman called Poindexter's refusal to testify "a perversion" and said he was the one putting on a show for the news media.



Channell admits ties to North

WASHINGTON — Conservative activist Carl "Spitz" Channell met with Lt. Col. Oliver North as many as 4 times, always at the White House and in the presence of private contributors to the Contras, a Channell spokesman says.

The contributors, from whom Channell raised millions of dollars for the private pro-Contra effort, were anti-communist, predisposed to support the president's policy and, frankly, people who trusted Spitz," said Jared Cameron, a pub-

lic relations spokesman through whom Channell this week answered some questions that have arisen about his connection with North and the private Contra aid network.

Cameron said that, although money was not solicited at the sessions during which North spoke, North was "a resource" for Channell's efforts to help the Contras.

The characterization was the most direct tie to North that Channell has publicly acknowledged since

news stories and the report of a presidential investigative commission linked him to the Iran-Contra affair.

The way in which Channell's relationship with North, the fired White House aide, was described differed from a version Channell gave in an interview with The Associated Press in December. Then he said he had met North "several times" over the past year, and that North had briefed his contributors twice.

U.S. still debt leader of world

WASHINGTON — America's deficit in the broadest measure of foreign trade soared to a record \$140.57 billion in 1986, pushing the United States further into the hole as the world's largest debtor nation, the government reported Tuesday.

The imbalance in the nation's current account jumped 19.5 percent above the previous record of \$117.68 billion, set in 1985. Last year ended on an especially gloomy note as the quarterly deficit from October through December hit a record as well, \$36.84 billion, primarily because of a further deterioration in merchandise trade.

The current account measures not only trade in merchandise but also in services, which includes such items as investment earnings, tourism and foreign aid.

While the United States has run a deficit in merchandise trade for 15 of the past 16 years, the current account was in

surplus as recently as 1981 as Americans' earnings on overseas investments were enough to offset the merchandise deficits. But in recent years, a flood of foreign goods has wiped out the cushion once provided by investment earnings.

Deficits in the current account have made the United States the world's largest debtor country as foreigners now own more in U.S. investments than Americans hold in foreign investments.

America became a debtor nation in 1985 for the first time since 1914 with a total figure owed to the rest of the world of \$107.44 billion. The new figures on the current account for 1986 indicate that the U.S. debt has now soared to more than \$220 billion, putting American far ahead of the previous debt leader, Brazil, which owes \$108 billion to foreigners.

Sheriff Deputy Dodge buried remembered as devoted to duty

LINCOLN — Lancaster County Sheriff's Deputy Craig Douglas Dodge will be remembered as a man who kept his brass shined and his shoes polished, a man whose strict devotion to duty should serve as an example for the entire community.

The Rev. Wallace Easter commemorated Dodge with that praise Tuesday at Dodge's funeral at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Dodge, 42, was the first Lancaster County deputy to die in the line of duty. He was shot when he responded to a domestic disturbance call in Hickman early Saturday. He died a short time later.

More than 1,400 mourners, many of them law enforcement officers from throughout the state, crowded into the

church. Latecomers stood in the aisles and in the back of the church.

Many state and local elected officials also attended.

Gov. Kay Orr, a member of Westminster, arrived about 10 minutes before the service began and was escorted to a seat in the front with the Lancaster County deputies.

Former Gov. Bob Kerrey arrived a few minutes later and sat in the rear of the church.

Several seats were reserved in the front opposite members of the sheriff's department for Dodge's wife, Barbara, his parents, Hale and Ethel Dodge of rural Waverly, his two sons, Allen, 18, and David, 13, two stepsons, Nick, 12, and Joe, 7, and other family members.

In Brief

Attempt to fulfill suicide pact fails

BERGENFIELD, N.J. — A young couple was found dazed but conscious after breathing car fumes today in the same garage where last week four youths, including a teen-ager they knew, died in a suicide pact, police said.

A suicide note was found, but the couple's car had been turned off, police said.

The car's motor was not running, but was warm when police discovered the two, the police said. The two told rescuers they had turned off the motor when they heard someone outside the garage, Goetting said.

Hair drug doesn't ruffle bald men

NEW YORK — You can entice them with all manner of pills, potions and promises, but many a chrome dome out there is proud of his pate.

Consider the passionate response of John Capps III, founder of Bald Headed Men of America, when he heard that a government advisory panel Monday recommended approval of the first drug shown to make hair grow on bald men.

"We believe that skin is in," Capps explained in a telephone interview. "If you don't have it, flaunt it."

55 mph a joke, senator says

RENO, Nev. — Nevada's senior senator calls 55 mph a joke. And the man charged with seeing that motorists abide by the federally mandated speed limit admits he occasionally inches up to 60.

Nevada was the last state to post a speed limit on outlying highways after the federal government told it to. But it sued the government, accusing it of unconstitutionally coercing Nevada to follow the mandate.

The Legislature has taken a cavalier approach to speeders, passing a law that give motorists caught driving up to 70 mph in a 55 mph zone a \$15 wrist slap for wasting energy.

Sen. Chic Hecht, R-Nev., a vocal backer of the measure pending in Congress to allow states to let motorists kick it up to 65 on rural interstates, says the maximum was a good idea in 1974, when motorists were lined up at the pumps.

"Today, the roadside double-nickel is a symbol of how the federal government continues to trample on rights

better reserved for the states," he said.

"Let's face it, the 55 mph limit is an unenforceable joke. The national average speed is clocked at 66 mph. We're not seeking a total repeal of the 55 mph limit. . . . We merely want to give every state the opportunity to review its own rural highway system and determine if a higher limit might be appropriate."

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