In Brief

Majority leader calls for Meese to quit

WASHINGTON - Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd on Wednesday called Attorney General Edwin Meese III "the crown jewel of ... sleaze" and urged him to quit, but President Reagan reiterated his support for his old friend, the focus of an 11-month-old criminal

Meanwhile, Solicitor General Charles Fried, who ranks fourth in the Justice Department hierarchy, refused to give an immediate answer when Meese personally urged him not to join two other senior department figures who resigned Tuesday, department sources said.

Congressional reaction against Meese was strong the day atter the resignations of the No.2 Justice Department officials, Deputy Attorney General Arnold Burns' and the head of the department's criminal division, Assistant Attorney General William Weld.

Anti-Noriega strike crumbles as stores open

PANAMA CITY, Panama — Supermarkets, pharmacies and small shops opened for the first time in 10 days Wednesday as a nationwide strike aimed at toppling Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega began to fall

Despite the defections, Alberto Boyd, president of the National Council of Private Enterprise, said he and other strike leaders were not ending their effort to get rid of Noriega.

In Washington, the Reagan administration said it was considering new sanctions to force out Noriega, but it appeared no action was

The reopening of the capital's Gago, Rey and Super 99 supermarkets signaled the first crack in a work stoppage that closed an estimated 90 percent of the nation's business and industry.

Later, the city's leading pharmacies reopened, as did some small clothing and other dry goods stores in the central business district.

Traffic, extremely light for days, began to build again on Panama City's streets, with the usual jams of buses, taxis and private autos developing at major intersections.

Richard Nixon to appear on 'Meet the Press'

NEW YORK - Ex-President Richard Nixon will appear April 10 on the NBC-TV show "Meet The Press" for an hour-long interview — his first extended television appearance in eight years, the network said

"There are no set conditions for the interview," said NBC News Vice President Tim Russert, who had tried to get Nixon on the weekly program for three years.

Following the appearance on "Meet The Press," Nixon will appear in a three-part interview with Bryant Gumbel on NBC's "Today" show. Nixon's last long television interview was in 1980 on the ABC-TV

program "20-20."
"Meet The Press" moderator Chris Wallace will be joined by anchorman Tom Brokaw and commentator John Chancellor in quizzing Nixon, who resigned under threat of impeachment in August 1974.

Wire service announces plans for its future

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — United Press International will continue as a 24-hour-a-day world wide wire service and will reduce its staff and seek joint ventures with other companies, the firm's new owners said

UPI Chairman Earl W. Brian and President Paul Steinle said they were committed to seeing the 81-year-old wire service, which is losing \$2 million a month, survive into the 21st century.

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House leaders agree on Contra aid

WASHINGTON-House leaders Foley, D-Wash. agreed Wednesday on a \$48 million package of humanitarian aid for the Contra rebels in Nicaragua and for children injured in seven years of civil war, and they predicted easy passage on the House floor.

Authors of the compromise package portrayed it as a gesture of U.S. support for a temporary truce reached last week between the rebels and the Sandinista government, and for talks aimed at achieving a long-term end to

The hope is that this will lead to political instead of military processes now taking over" in Nicaragua, said House Majority Leader Thomas

Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., promised speedy consideration on the other side of the Capitol, although it was unclear whether the matter could come to a vote on Thursday. GOP lawmakers said President Reagan had indicated strong support for the measure.

The legislation would renew aid to the rebels, whose last U.S. support ran out Feb. 29, and keep them together as a fighting force while they wait in cease-fire zones inside Nicaragua for a long-term truce to be worked out with the Sandinista government.

"It sends a message to the Contras

that they are not abandoned, that we do care about them and want to keep them healthy and a viable force," said Rep. Mickey Edwards, R-Okla., who participated in negotiations to draft the compromise.

And it lets the Sandinistas know that it's important to the United States Congress that the talks that take place down there take place with good faith, and that they move toward democratization," Edwards added.

The agreement, made possible by a 60-day cease-fire reached by the two warring sides last week, broke a weeks-long deadlock in Congress over whether to keep up the flow of U.S. aid.

Committee recommends treaty passage

WASHINGTON — The Senate Foreign Relations Committee recommended overwhelmingly Wednesday that the Senate ratify a historic treaty to eliminate all U.S. and Soviet medium-range nuclear weapons.

"This is a small step away from the nuclear brink," said Sen. Alan Cranston, D-Calif., said following the committee's 17-2 vote.

"It means the elevator of nuclear escalation will finally stop and hopefully descend," said committee chairman Claiborne Pell, D-R.I.

Cranston said his head count shows no more than five senators will vote against the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty when the full Senate takes up the treaty, probably late next month. Ratification requires a two-thirds Senate majority, 67 votes if all 100 senators are present and

the committee were cast by Sens. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., and Larry Pressler, R-S.D. Helms has worked vigorously to derail the treaty.

The resounding committee vote papered over a bitter partisan dispute over an amendment added to the treaty on Tuesday with the aim of assuring that the meaning of the pact cannot be reinterpreted by a future president without the consent of Congress.

Many moderate Republicans said the amendment represented a partisan jab at President Reagan and his administration's reinterpretation of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty to permit the deployment of a Star Wars missile defense system.

Several GOP lawmakers said the controversy may cause them to reas-

The only dissenting votes inside sess their support of the treaty and Cranston said he may be willing to search for a compromise when the Senate debates the issue.

The treaty, signed Dec. 8 by President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev, requires both sides to destroy, within three years, all nuclear-armed missiles with a range of 300 miles to 3,400 miles.

These include all Soviet SS-20 and other medium- and shorter-range missiles aimed at targets in Western Europe and all of the smaller force of U.S. Pershing 2 and ground-launched cruise missiles stationed in Europe and aimed at the Soviet Union.

The treaty is the first accord in the history of arms control to require the actual destruction of the missiles that carry nuclear warheads. And it is the first to require on-site inspection to verify compliance with its terms.

Swaggart returning to pulpit against church suspension

BATON ROUGE, La. - Evangelist Jimmy Swaggart will return to the pulpit on May 22, with or without the blessing of national Assemblies of God church officials who suspended him for a year, his lawyer said Wednesday.

The date coincides with a more lenient three-month suspension given Swaggart by the church's Louisiana council after his tearful confession on Feb. 21 that he committed sins against his church and family.

The national Executive Presbytery had decided that the state council's penalty was not severe enough and announced Tuesday that Swaggart must stop preaching for at least one year and undergo two years of reha-

'We have an issue involving the constitution and bylaws of this or-ganization," said Bill Treeby, a lawyer for Swaggart. He said conflict over whether the national presbytery or the Louisiana district council had the right to discipline

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Although Swaggart did not specify the sins he confessed to, a prostitute has said Swaggart paid her to pose nude for him.

Treeby said the National Presbytery might dismiss Swaggart from the denomination if he resumed preaching on May 22, but that Swaggart would have the right to appeal that

Rev. G. Raymond Carlson, the Assemblies' general superintendent, had earlier said that if Swaggart did not accept its ruling, "the Executive Presbytery would no doubt take action to dismiss him.'

Asked if Swaggart had considered leaving the Assemblies, Treeby said, "he is considering the possibility of an appeal. He has not thought beyond

The national group has not officially been informed of the decision, since Swaggart is still deciding what to do about an appeal. Treeby conceded, however, that Swaggart's leaving the ministry is a possibility.

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