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Reagan advisers want Shultz out, Howard Baker in

Dole doubts Congress got all the facts

By Mary Belcher and Damon Thompson
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Senate Republican leader Robert Dole charged yesterday that the White House has not given Congress all the facts about secret U.S. arms shipments to Iran, and he urged President Reagan to clean up "the mess" quickly.

"It's very hard to tell" whether Congress got the full story, despite House and Senate intelligence committee sessions Friday with CIA Director William Casey and National Security Adviser John Poindexter, the Kansas Republican said on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation."

"Whether it's an intentional withholding, or just that we haven't asked the right questions, I would say we don't know all the facts," Mr. Dole said.

Sen. Dale Bumpers said on CBS that the value of weapons sold to Iran is still in question. Although a figure of $12 million has been reported, "it could be as much as $100 million that was, at least, agreed to," the Arkansas Democrat said. Other versions of the deal said Iran paid $12 million for $20 worth of weapons.

Since news of the president's secret Iranian arms shipments surfaced in a Lebanese magazine early this month, Mr. Reagan has attempted to calm public concern by explaining his actions in a nationally televised speech and a separate press conference.

Members of Congress have accused the president of breaking the law by failing to inform them of covert arms shipments, which Mr. Reagan approved in January. The Friday briefings, given by Mr. Casey on Capitol Hill and by Mr. Poindexter at the White House, apparently did not satisfy members' desire for information.

"We have not heard . . . all we're going to have to hear from the CIA on this one," said Sen. Sam Nunn, Georgia Democrat, on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"They [the CIA] were more involved than we thought they were," said Mr. Nunn, who is expected to lead the Foreign Relations Committee in the next session. "The difficulty in this situation is no single group of players seems to know the whole story."

Mr. Dole has been one of the president's most reliable allies on Capitol Hill for the past six years, but yesterday he faulted Secretary of State George Shultz and other Cabinet members for "bickering" among themselves to avoid blame for the Iranian operation.

"It's pretty hard for some of us who were elected and are Republican leaders to get out front when those in the president's Cabinet are sort of hiding from the issue," he said, explaining his difficulty in supporting the president on the secret Iranian operation.

Mr. Dole said the dispute between Mr. Shultz and former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane over whether the secretary of state was informed of the operation "creates a real problem for a lot of us . . . who trust the president and want to see the president out of this mess — and it is a mess. It was a mistake."

Mr. Shultz has characterized his knowledge of the Iranian affair as "fragmentary," while Mr. McFarlane, who initially led efforts to open U.S. channels to Iran, has said Mr. Shultz was repeatedly briefed on all the details.

Mr. Dole would not say whether Mr. Shultz or other presidential advisers should resign. But he said, "Right now they ought to circle the wagons — or let a couple wagons go over the cliff.

"The president is well-intentioned, well-motivated, but let's face it — that isn't going to wash," Mr. Dole said, suggesting that Thanksgiving "might be a good time" for Mr. Reagan to "remove some of the problems."

Mr. Nunn said a personnel shake-up is "not enough." Instead, he said, the entire foreign policy-making process should be reviewed.

Outgoing Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman David Durenberger agreed. "It goes way beyond cutting some throats," he said on NBC.

The Minnesota Republican said the president will have to make "visible" changes in how foreign policy is set.

In the first public hearing on arms shipments to Iran, Undersecretary of State Michael Armacost will testify today before the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

The hearing will be "much more of a policy-level discussion" than Friday's closed hearings, a source said. Rep. Lee Hamilton, an Indiana Democrat who chairs the House Intelligence Committee and sits on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, wants the operation to be "public record," sources said.

"He's been having regular hearings on the Middle East and he's gotten statement after statement that they [the administration] aren't giving anything to Iran," said the source. "He feels they've misled the committee."

The House panel will hold additional hearings in early December, when Mr. Shultz and Mr. McFarlane are expected to testify. Some of those hearings might be closed.

Following Friday's hearings on Capitol Hill, House Majority Leader Jim Wright said Iran paid more than $12 million for weapons from the United States, depositing the payments in a Swiss bank account.

The Texas Democrat said 1,000 of 2,008 anti-tank TOW missiles shipped to Iran were assembled in February in San Antonio, Texas, and the rest were shipped separately.

He said "several other countries" besides the United States and Israel were involved in shipping weapons to Iran, but he would not identify them. The shipments, he said, were made with "the condoning of the United States and the complicity of the United States in some instances."

Mr. Casey assured House members that the president has not ordered the CIA to withhold information from Congress about any other secret operations, according to Mr. Wright.

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Responding to allegations that Mr. Reagan broke the law by failing to inform Congress of the arms shipments, Mr. Casey on Friday said, "Oh, no, no, no."

Rep. Henry Hyde, Illinois Republican and a member of the intelligence panel, said he did not think Mr. Reagan broke the law. But he said the president was "unwise" to keep the policy a secret from Congress for so long.

In a letter to the president, Mr. Durenberger and Senate Intelligence Committee Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy, Vermont Democrat, said that "excessive compartmentalization of this program may have led to mistakes in its formulation and implementation."

Senate Democratic leader Robert Byrd, West Virginia Democrat, said he has prepared legislation that would require any covert intelligence operation originating at the White House to be subject to congressional oversight.

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