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Weinberger's Forked Tongue

Already piqued by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger's stubborn refusal to cut the soaring defense budget, Reagan loyalists on Capitol Hill are privately accusing Weinberger of duplicity. The secretary has been arguing that defense cuts would seriously undermine U.S. efforts for an arms-control deal with the Soviets. Yet, congressional sources say, his hard-line lieutenants in the Pentagon have been quietly assuring conservative Republicans that the next round of arms talks are predestined to fail. "At the same time Weinberger was telling us how we shouldn't hurt the chances for a deal by cutting his budget, we're being told that there's no way we'll get any arms-control agreement," complains one ranking Hill Republican. "There's a feeling that we've been had."

The CIA Goes After the Church Papers

The late Sen. Frank Church, who as chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence exposed CIA plots to overthrow Chilean President Salvador Allende and assassinate Cuban leader Fidel Castro, is continuing to cause problems for the CIA. Before he died last April, Church transferred all his official papers from Stanford University to Boise State University in his home state of Idaho. The CIA is anxious to see those papers, which include materials from both his Intelligence Committee and Foreign Relations Committee chairmanships. So on the agency's behalf, the Information Security Oversight Office of the General Services Administration asked university officials to hand over any sensitive documents. But the university balked. "They told us, 'Thanks, but no thanks,'" says Steven Garfinkel, director of the GSA office. Now the CIA and the Reagan administration are searching for another way to gain access to the papers.

New Wrinkles in the Agent Orange Case

The American chemical companies that manufactured Agent Orange—the herbicide used to defoliate millions of acres of jungle in Vietnam—may soon face further difficulty. The companies have already anted up \$180 million in an out-of-court settlement of a class-action lawsuit brought by veterans who suffered health problems after intense contact with the chemical. But last week U.S. district court judge Jack Weinstein issued a preliminary order unsealing thousands of corporate and government documents that had been obtained by the plaintiffs' attorneys as part of the pretrial discovery process. The order does not become effective until after a hearing set for Feb. 6, and the companies are expected to appeal vigorously. Some of the lawyers seeking to unseal the documents say they may show what the companies and the government knew about the damaging health effects of Agent Orange—and when they knew it—and may well provide a damning indictment of negligence.

In and Out of Alphabet Soup

More troubles are looming for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). According to UNESCO officials, Singapore will shortly join the United States and Great Britain in announcing its intention to withdraw from the beleaguered agency. Although the tiny Asian nation contributes only a small fraction of UNESCO's budget, the impact of its departure (at the end of 1985) would be significant, since it would be the first Third World country to voice open disapproval of the

organization. However, Singapore is not expected to echo American and British criticisms of excessive Soviet influence and politicalization in UNESCO; instead, it will simply argue that its contribution would be better spent elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the Reagan administration's criticism of UNESCO is having an unexpected side effect: donations to the U.S. Committee for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have sharply decreased. Americans are apparently confusing the two U.N. organizations and are expressing support for the U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO by turning Scrooge. Instead of ordering greeting cards this year (a traditional source of revenue for UNICEF), many former card buyers have been sending in notes saying that they "agree with President Reagan's position." In addition, "people are writing or phoning us to say that they're unhappy with our policies," reports UNICEF's Felicia Fairchild. Yet when the agency's fund raisers get a chance to explain the difference between UNICEF and UNESCO, potential donors usually ante up. "We have really tried to clear up this confusion," says Fairchild. "But we haven't had much success so far."

Judging Reagan's Candidates for the Bench

Several public-interest and consumer groups have put together an early-warning system as part of an attempt to prevent the Reagan administration from appointing unqualified cronies to federal judgeships. The plan centers around a grass-roots intelligence network, called the Judicial Selection Project, that will collect tips from local lawyers on possible candidates for the federal bench. The information will then be used to mount full-fledged campaigns against those potential appointees who lack strong professional credentials or who have failed to demonstrate a commitment to fairness and equality under the law. The project is being coordinated by the Alliance for Justice, a Washington-based group whose members include Consumers Union, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Women's Legal Defense Fund.

The Cuban Solution

Concerned that Cuba's world-class athletes might miss yet another Olympiad because of a politically inspired boycott, Fidel Castro has proposed a change for the 1988 Games scheduled in Seoul, South Korea. In a letter to Juan Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee, Castro recommends that the games be shared "in approximately equal parts" between North and South Korea. Such a plan, the Cuban leader believes, might be the only way to avert another boycott. "I don't see any other possibility for saving the honor of the coming Games," wrote Castro.

Trimming Down Foreign Relations

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee probably will not replace the three members it is losing because of retirements and the 1984 elections. Anxious not to deepen the ideological divisions that hamstrung the committee on many votes in recent years, incoming chairman Richard Lugar (Indiana) wants to keep membership at its current level of eight Republicans and seven Democrats. Some GOP leaders like the idea because it gives them an excuse to keep hard-line conservatives such as Orrin Hatch (Utah) and Jeremiah Denton (Alabama), as well as liberal Democrats, off the committee. "There's already a lot of dead weight—and lightweights—on the committee as it is," explains a top Democratic aide.

JOHN CAREY with bureau reports

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