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SUBJECT Full Text —

DAN RATHER: Good evening. This is the CBS Evening News. Dan Rather reporting.

President Reagan tonight left the hospital after his first full battery of tests to check for any possible recurrence of the colon cancer he had last summer. Test results not yet reported tonight by the White House.

Bill Plante is there.

BILL PLANTE: As President Reagan departed the hospital after his exam for a long weekend at Camp David, he seemed encouraged by the results.

REPORTER: Mr. President, what did the doctors tell you?

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN: Fine.

REPORTER: Any sign of cancer or tumors?

PRESIDENT REAGAN: Nope. Everything's fine.

PLANTE: Heading into the hospital this afternoon, President Reagan acknowledged that he was ready for this checkup, after admitting yesterday that he really wasn't looking forward to it at all. No wonder. The procedure, similar to the one shown here, isn't dangerous, but it is uncomfortable.

First, a colonoscopy to examine the President's bowel for new polyp growth and to take a look at the place where his surgery was performed last summer.

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But today's action left only Raymond Button (?) and his mother as defendants; and parents of the alleged victims outraged.

DIANE CARTER: We were idealistic enough to believe that the crimes against children deserved prosecution.

FELICIA BROCKLASBY: I just can't imagine walking into the local Safeway and seeing them there.

ROBERT CURRIE: And if we allow this to happen, pedophiles all over the country can get jobs in preschools and can molest kids.

DOW: Released defendants claimed that they had been victims of public emotion.

MARY ANN JACKSON: I know the suffering that can come upon innocent people as a result of this hysteria.

BETTY RAIDOR: They filled the children full of fantasies they fed to the children.

I never did anything wrong. And I was never aware or never saw anything wrong.

DOW: Next steps: arraignment and then trial for the two remaining defendants in the McMartin case, the final laps in a legal marathon that is expected to run for many more months.

David Dow, CBS News, Los Angeles.

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RATHER: In Beirut today, a Spanish diplomat and two Lebanese employees of the Spanish Embassy were kidnaped near the Beirut airport. An anonymous phone-caller reportedly demanded the release of two Shiite Muslims imprisoned in Spain.

Just hours earlier, and perhaps not coincidentally, Spain and Israel established diplomatic relations for the first time.

United States Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead was in Rome today, part of his mission still trying to sell the European allies on U.S. economic sanctions against Libya. Whitehead gave Prime Minister Craxi what he called incontrovertible evidence that Libya was behind the brutal Rome and Vienna terror attacks and killings.

And Whitehead had a word for Muammar Qaddafi, who has called those attacks everything from heroic to horrible.

DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN WHITEHEAD: It is what has caused President Reagan to call him flaky. And because I am a diplomat, I have used a more modest word: crazy.

RATHER: Muammar Qaddafi is flaky. Muammar Qaddafi is crazy. That's what President Reagan and members of his Administration have been repeatedly telling us. And it could well be true. There's a lot of evidence to support it.

But Steve Kroft reports from Tripoli that there are those who say they see another Qaddafi, a leader who carries weight in the Arab World, a man with a method to his madness.

STEVE KROFT: Seen through American eyes, he's the ultimate victim, the godfather of international terrorism, a one-dimensional, erratic, irrational, unbalanced, two-bit dictator.

Why, then, has the United States been unable to effectively isolate him? Because not everyone sees him exactly the same way.

Miles Copeland used to be with the CIA.

MILES COPELAND: He may be crazy to us, but he's not crazy to a large part of the Third World.

That the Arab nations took his side in the latest crisis with America is not insignificant. After all, Libay's army had invaded Chad, massed recently on the border with Egypt, and Qaddafi has meddled in the affairs of Algeria, Tunisia and Sudan. His neighbors think he's a menace. They back him because he's Arab. The son of a Bedouin, who by the age of 26 had overthrown a king, shaken off the colonial yoke, and dismantled the largest American air base outside the United States.

Seventeen years later, he's one of the longest-serving leaders in the Arab World. And despite current economic problems related to the price of oil, he remains admired by most of his subjects.

To understand why people here love Qaddafi, you must realize that in 1958, less than 30 years ago, Libya was still a feudal kingdom populated by desert people living in tents. The average personal income was \$25 a year. Today it's nearly 7000.

He's not a communist. Qaddafi embraces the Russians for his own protection. But not even they claim to control him.

RICHARD JOHNS [Financial Times]: He's very volatile and opportunistic, and appears inconsistent. The only thing consistent about him are his long-term objectives.

KROFT: More than anything else, Qaddafi wants to be taken seriously, to make his presence felt. Thus his support for terrorism.

He has three obsessions: hatred of Israel, hatred of the United States for supporting Israel, and a dream of a united Arab world.

JAMES THOMPSON [London University]: He's articulating the viewpoint of the nation. He's doing it in his own style, which is different from the Western style. And he's hanging in there as a leader. It must be that he's saying something the people want to hear.

KROFT: Qaddafi's biggest strength is still his money. He's a good customer for America's allies in Western Europe, Japan and South Korea. And they have been willing, so far, to overlook the blood he's tracked across the floor in his support of terrorist groups. The customer, as the saying goes, is always right.

COPELAND: He has pulled the Arab World behind him a lot more successfully than we've pulled Europe behind us in deciding what we're going to do in our conflict with him. He's won this one.

KROFT: One British diplomat compared the frustrations of dealing with Qaddafi to those encountered by the Europeans 30 years ago in dealing with Qaddafi's hero, Gamel Abdel Nasser. The more the French and the British attacked Nasser, the more prestige he accrued.

It is a lesson, many think, the U.S. is now relearning.

Steve Kroft, CBS News, Tripoli, Libya.

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RATHER: The Soviet Union's staunch ally on the Arabian Peninsular is South Yemen. But this week's intense fighting between rival Marxist-Leninist factions has made it anything but a friendly place. So, late today, hundreds of foreigners, Soviets and West Europeans, began evacuating South Yemen's capital on the British royal yacht Britannia and other ships.

The danger is real. But the French and German Embassies already have been damaged by shellfire.

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RATHER: The Reagan Administration, saying it's trying to protect jobs in the domestic auto industry, today refused to increase fuel economy requirements for 1987 and 1988 model cars.