

A6 FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 1992

THE WASHINGTON POST

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More High Officials May Be Indicted in

By Walter Pincus
Washington Post Staff Writer

Independent counsel Lawrence E. Walsh said yesterday he may seek indictments against additional officials "at the highest level of government" for their roles in obstructing official investigations into the 1985 arms-for-hostages sales to Iran, according to a report sent to Congress yesterday.

The Iran-contra prosecutor also said this initial phase of his 5½ year investigation should be completed this summer.

The concluding inquiry, Walsh said, will focus on whether there was a conspiracy among top Reagan administration officials, including former president Ronald Reagan, to obstruct official inquiries into the Iran

initiative . . . by withholding notes, documents and other information, by lying and by supplying a false account of the 1985 arms sales.

Last week, Walsh indicted former defense secretary Caspar W. Weinberger on five counts, four of which related to the former Cabinet official allegedly withholding personal notes that disclosed his knowledge of the November 1985 shipment of U.S.-made Hawk antiaircraft missiles by Israel to Iran.

The notes, according to the indictment, also described Weinberger's advice to the White House that the shipment could be illegal.

Another Reagan Cabinet member, former secretary of state George P. Shultz, was notified months ago that he was a subject of the coverup investigation that is be-

ing run by deputy independent counsel Craig A. Gilten.

In August and September 1985, Israel— with White House approval—secretly shipped 508 U.S.-made TOW antitank missiles to Iran, a transaction that led to the Sept. 14 release of the Rev. Benjamin Weir, one of five American hostages then held in Lebanon by pro-Iranian militants.

Two months later, under a more ambitious plan that had CIA assistance, Israel shipped the first 18 of a planned total of 80 U.S.-made Hawk antiaircraft missiles to Iran that were supposed to gain the release of the remaining American hostages.

However, Iran rejected the missiles as being too old, and no hostages were released.

A year later, when the arms-for-hostage dealings came to public attention, White House officials attempted to hide the 1985

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shipments, having been advised by Pentagon, Justice and State Department officials that the shipments might have violated federal laws.

The prosecutors have focused their coverup inquiry on three top-level meetings in November 1986 attended by Reagan, Weinberger, Shultz, then-Vice President Bush, White House chief of staff Donald T. Regan and Attorney General Edwin Meese III.

Walsh, who said more than a year ago that his investigation was in its closing phases, explained yesterday that the inquiry had taken on a new life since mid-1990 due to "newly discovered documents including the personal notes of key officials, CIA cables and tapes and other records previously withheld" from him and other governmental investigators.

In his report, Walsh drew a distinction

between lying to the public about covert activities and misleading investigators.

"It is not a crime to deceive the American public, as high officials in the Reagan administration did for two years while conducting the Iran and contra operations," Walsh told the legislators.

"But," he continued, "it is a crime to mislead, deceive and lie to Congress when, in fulfilling its legitimate oversight role, the Congress seeks to learn whether administration officials are conducting the nation's business in accordance with the law."

Walsh, who had been spending much of his time since late last year in his home state of Oklahoma working on his final report, said he intends to work fulltime in the Iran-contra prosecutors' office in Washington "in order to complete the final phase of our investigation."
