

# Phone Note Puts Bush Claim On Iran-Contra Into Dispute

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President Bush's claims that he was unaware of opposition by two top Reagan Cabinet members to secret U.S. arms sales to Iran were called into question by the disclosure yesterday of a 1987 note about a telephone conversation between the two officials.

In 1987, at the height of the Iran-contra controversy, which involved revelations that the Reagan administration had secretly sold arms to Iran for the release of U.S. hostages, then-Vice President Bush said he had supported the policy but might have had a different view had he known of strong opposition to it

by then-Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger and then-Secretary of State George P. Shultz.

A day after Bush's remarks in an interview with The Washington Post were published, Weinberger complained about Bush's assertions in a phone conversation with Shultz, according to a handwritten note dictated by Shultz to an aide after the Aug. 7, 1987, conversation. The text of the note, made by Charles Hill, was introduced yesterday in U.S. District Court here by prosecutors as part of a pretrial motion in the Iran-contra case against Weinberger.

"VP [Bush] in papers yest. sd [yesterday said] he not exposed to Cap [Weinberger's nickname] or

See IRAN-CONTRA, A28, Col. 1

## Shultz Had Notes Made Of Phone Call

IRAN-CONTRA, From A1

my arguments on Iran arms," Shultz recounted. "Cap called me + sd [and said] that's terrible. He [Bush] was on the other side. Its on the Record. Why did he say that."

After Iran-contra became public in late 1986, Bush came under criticism for portraying himself as being "not in the loop" in the evolution of what became the most serious scandal of the Reagan administration.

In his interview with The Post published Aug. 6, 1987, Bush said he had not advised Reagan against selling arms to Iran, in part because he never heard strong objections to the policy.

"If I'd have sat there and heard George Shultz and Cap express it [opposition] strongly," Bush said, "maybe I would have had a stronger view. But when you don't know something, it's hard to react. . . . We were not in the loop."

Bush added in the interview that he had no idea there had been anything like a "raging fight" between Shultz and Weinberger on the one hand and, on the other, top officials of the National Security Council and then-CIA Director William J. Casey over whether to undertake the arms sales.

Post staff writer David S. Broder, who conducted the interview, wrote in a subsequent column that he had asked Bush three times whether he was really unaware of the protests by Weinberger and Shultz. Each time, Broder reported, Bush said he did not attend the Dec. 7, 1985, White House meeting at which the two Cabinet secretaries expressed their vehement objections because "I was off at the Army-Navy football game" that day.

Additional arms sales were discussed at a full National Security Council meeting on Jan. 7, 1986, at which Bush was present. Shultz and

Weinberger continued to object strenuously to the sales at that meeting.

Bush, according to Shultz's testimony to congressional committees that investigated the Iran-contra affair, favored the arms sales as did Casey and then-national security adviser John M. Poindexter.

When questions arose after the 1987 Post interview about Bush attending the January 1986 White House meeting and still being unaware of the Shultz-Weinberger opposition, Bush's chief of staff said: "If he [Bush] was there for all of it, he doesn't recall it as a showdown session, and it's possible he wasn't there for all of it."

Subsequently, in January 1988, Bush told Post columnist Mary McGrory in writing that he had had concerns about the arms deals involving U.S. credibility, loss of life and "how it will be interpreted if cover is blown." Pressed on who had heard his concerns, Bush strongly implied that he had discussed his reservations at Reagan's morning national security briefings and that then-White House Chief of Staff Donald T. Regan was among those who heard him.

The Charles Hill note released yesterday was what tipped off independent counsel Lawrence E. Walsh to Weinberger's penchant for keeping his own notes, which have become a key element in the prosecution of the former defense secretary. Hill's note quoted Shultz as saying, "Cap takes notes but never referred to them [in statements to Iran-contra investigators] so never had to cough them up."

Weinberger was indicted in June on charges that he lied about having notes and about some aspects of the Iran-contra affair.

Prosecutors said yesterday they had reviewed Weinberger's papers at the Library of Congress in late 1990 and early 1991, concentrating on those indexed as "Classified." It was not until "much later," they said, that they inspected his unclassified papers and found "over 1,700 pages of daily diary notes and hundreds of pages of meeting notes for the years 1985 and 1986 alone"—the period in which Iran-contra occurred.