## National/Regional

## Officials monitor National Guard

TAMARA ARMY BASE, Honduras (AP) — Officials from several U.S. states are traveling to this Central American country to find out why U.S. National Guardsmen are taking part in war games conducted with Honduras.

Politicians from Oregon and Mississippi have arrived in recent days, and more are due from Arkansas and Michigan.

Oregon Sen. Jeanette Hanby, a R-Hillsboro, said she sees the maneuvers as a form of pressure on the government of Nicaragua, which borders Honduras.

"I don't believe in military intervention in a country that has had a popular election, has elected a president and wants their own sovereignty." Hanby said, referring to Nicaragua.

Oregon Rep. Bili Markham, R-Riddle,

"If the Guard were ever nationalized (sent to war), heaven forbid, they would be better prepared if they train in the terrain, language and customs of where they may be sent," Markham said as he watched guardsmen and Honduran airborne soldiers storm a hill while firing automatic

This week, about 950 National Guardsmen are in Honduras, a country that U.S.-supported rebels use as a base of operations for their efforts to overthrow Nicaragua's Sandinista government. Guardsmen are being trained here in large numbers for the first time.

The Oregon legislators questioned U.S. military officers about why the maneuvers involving their guardsmen were held in Honduras instead of Oregon.

Lt. Steven Muhr, a company commander of the Oregon contingent, said the exercise provided training unattainable in Oregon because soldiers could be sent thousands of miles away on short notice and operate in an "austere, remote environment."

Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbit, a Democrat who recently agreed to let 65 guardsmen from his state help build a military highway in Honduras, earlier this week in Phoenix criticized the idea of having guardsmen take part in military exercises.

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## Interest-reduction plan to assist farmers

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new interestreduction plan ordered by Congress is being set up by the Farmers Home Administration to help farmers lower their loan payments to commercial banks.

The Agriculture Department agency also began sending out letters this week to 65,303 delinquent borrowers. Most of them will get, a friendly reminder" to contact local officials about their overdue loans, the head of the agency said Wednesday.

Vance Clark, FmHA administrator, said much tougher letters serving notice of "intent-

to take adverse action": are going to four in every 10 of those tardy payers. About 27,000 borrowers are three years or more behind in payments, including 3,000 who may have fraudulently dodged their debts.

"I don't expect a lot of great, terrible things to be happening across the nation because of those mailings," Clark said. "There will be foreclosures, sure, and I think we have to prepare for some of those, but it's not the end of the world."

The mailings began Monday and are to be completed by Feb. 21, Clark said.

## U.S. flights may soon travel to U.S.S.R.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States and the Soviet Union were set Thursday to seal an agreement for civilian flights between the two countries for the first time in more than four years

A ceremony to exchange notes was set for late afternoon, with Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin representing the Soviet Union and Deputy Seretary of State John Whitehead acting for the United States.

Flights between New York and Moscow are due to begin April 27, and between Washington and the Soviet capital two days later.

At least four Aeroflot and Pan Am flights a week are anticipated. Pan Am, the American carrier, will also service Leningrad. Commercial air travel was suspended by the United States after more than 100,000 Soviet troops moved into Afghanistan in late 1979 to support the Moscow-aligned government in Kabul against rebel guerrillas.

There were twice-a-week flights then. The new agreement, which was slowed down by a dispute over Pan Am's share of the revenue, will double the traffic.



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