

= Iran ? Contra affair =

The Iran ? Contra affair ( Persian : ?????? ????? @-@ ????? , Spanish : caso Irán @-@ Contra ) , also referred to as Irangate , Contragate or the Iran ? Contra scandal , was a political scandal in the United States that occurred during the second term of the Reagan Administration . Senior administration officials secretly facilitated the sale of arms to Iran , which was the subject of an arms embargo . They hoped thereby to secure the release of several U.S. hostages and to fund the Contras in Nicaragua . Under the Boland Amendment , further funding of the Contras by the government had been prohibited by Congress .

The scandal began as an operation to free the seven American hostages being held in Lebanon by Hezbollah , a paramilitary group with Iranian ties connected to the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution . It was planned that Israel would ship weapons to Iran , and then the United States would resupply Israel and receive the Israeli payment . The Iranian recipients promised to do everything in their power to achieve the release of the U.S. hostages . Large modifications to the plan were devised by Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North of the National Security Council in late 1985 , in which a portion of the proceeds from the weapon sales was diverted to fund anti @-@ Sandinista and anti @-@ communist rebels , or Contras , in Nicaragua .

While President Ronald Reagan was a supporter of the Contra cause , the evidence is disputed as to whether he authorized the diversion of the money raised by the Iranian arms sales to the Contras . Handwritten notes taken by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger on December 7 , 1985 , indicate that Reagan was aware of potential hostage transfers with Iran , as well as the sale of Hawk and TOW missiles to " moderate elements " within that country . Weinberger wrote that Reagan said " he could answer to charges of illegality but couldn 't answer to the charge that ' big strong President Reagan passed up a chance to free the hostages ' " . After the weapon sales were revealed in November 1986 , Reagan appeared on national television and stated that the weapons transfers had indeed occurred , but that the United States did not trade arms for hostages . The investigation was impeded when large volumes of documents relating to the scandal were destroyed or withheld from investigators by Reagan administration officials . On March 4 , 1987 , Reagan returned to the airwaves in a nationally televised address , taking full responsibility for any actions that he was unaware of , and admitting that " what began as a strategic opening to Iran deteriorated , in its implementation , into trading arms for hostages " .

Several investigations ensued , including those by the U.S. Congress and the three @-@ person , Reagan @-@ appointed Tower Commission . Neither found any evidence that President Reagan himself knew of the extent of the multiple programs . Ultimately the sale of weapons to Iran was not deemed a criminal offense but charges were brought against five individuals for their support of the Contras . Those charges , however , were later dropped because the administration refused to declassify certain documents . The indicted conspirators faced various lesser charges instead . In the end , fourteen administration officials were indicted , including then @-@ Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger . Eleven convictions resulted , some of which were vacated on appeal . The rest of those indicted or convicted were all pardoned in the final days of the presidency of George H. W. Bush , who had been vice @-@ president at the time of the affair .

= = Background = =

Contra militants based in Honduras waged a guerrilla war to topple the Sandinista National Liberation Front ( FSLN ) revolutionary government of Nicaragua . Direct U.S. funding of the Contras insurgency was made illegal through the Boland Amendment , the name given to three U.S. legislative amendments between 1982 and 1984 aimed at limiting U.S. government assistance to the Contra 's militants . Funding ran out for the Contras by July 1984 and in October a total ban was placed in effect . In violation of the Boland Amendment , senior officials of the Reagan administration continued to secretly arm and train the Contras and provide arms to Iran , an operation they called " the Enterprise " . Ironically , military aid to the Contras was reinstated with Congressional consent in October 1986 , a month before the scandal broke .

= = Arms sales to Iran = =

Michael Ledeen , a consultant of National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane , requested assistance from Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres for help in the sale of arms to Iran . Having been designated a State Sponsor of Terrorism since January 1984 , Iran was in the midst of the Iran ? Iraq War and could find few Western nations willing to supply it with weapons . The idea behind the plan was for Israel to ship weapons through an intermediary ( identified as Manucher Ghorbanifar ) to the Islamic republic as a way of aiding a supposedly moderate , politically influential faction within the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini who was believed to be seeking a rapprochement with the United States ; after the transaction , the United States would reimburse Israel with the same weapons , while receiving monetary benefits . The Israeli government required that the sale of arms meet high level approval from the United States government , and when McFarlane convinced them that the U.S. government approved the sale , Israel obliged by agreeing to sell the arms .

In 1985 , President Reagan entered Bethesda Naval Hospital for colon cancer surgery . While the President was recovering in the hospital , McFarlane met with him and told him that representatives from Israel had contacted the National Security Agency to pass on confidential information from what Reagan later described as the " moderate " Iranian faction opposed to the Ayatollah 's hardline anti @-@ American policies . According to Reagan , these Iranians sought to establish a quiet relationship with the United States , before establishing formal relationships upon the death of the aging Ayatollah . In Reagan 's account , McFarlane told Reagan that the Iranians , to demonstrate their seriousness , offered to persuade the Hezbollah militants to release the seven U.S. hostages . McFarlane met with the Israeli intermediaries ; Reagan claimed that he allowed this because he believed that establishing relations with a strategically located country , and preventing the Soviet Union from doing the same , was a beneficial move . Although Reagan claims that the arms sales were to a " moderate " faction of Iranians , the Walsh Iran / Contra Report states that the arms sales were " to Iran " itself , which was under the control of the Ayatollah .

Following the Israeli ? U.S. meeting , Israel requested permission from the United States to sell a small number of BGM @-@ 71 TOW antitank missiles to Iran , claiming that this would aid the " moderate " Iranian faction , by demonstrating that the group actually had high @-@ level connections to the U.S. government . Reagan initially rejected the plan , until Israel sent information to the United States showing that the " moderate " Iranians were opposed to terrorism and had fought against it . Now having a reason to trust the " moderates " , Reagan approved the transaction , which was meant to be between Israel and the " moderates " in Iran , with the United States reimbursing Israel . In his 1990 autobiography An American Life , Reagan claimed that he was deeply committed to securing the release of the hostages ; it was this compassion that supposedly motivated his support for the arms initiatives . The president requested that the " moderate " Iranians do everything in their capability to free the hostages held by Hezbollah .

The following arms were supplied to Iran :

August 20 , 1985 ? 96 TOW anti @-@ tank missiles

September 14 , 1985 ? 408 more TOWs

November 24 , 1985 ? 18 Hawk anti @-@ aircraft missiles

February 17 , 1986 ? 500 TOWs

February 27 , 1986 ? 500 TOWs

May 24 , 1986 ? 508 TOWs , 240 Hawk spare parts

August 4 , 1986 ? More Hawk spares

October 28 , 1986 ? 500 TOWs

= = = First arms sale = = =

On August 20 , 1985 , Israel sent 100 American @-@ made TOW missiles to Iran through an arms dealer named Manucher Ghorbanifar . Subsequently , on September 14 , 1985 , 408 more TOW missiles were delivered . On September 15 , 1985 , following the second delivery , Reverend

Benjamin Weir was released by his captors , the Islamic Jihad Organization .

= = = Modifications in plans = = =

Robert McFarlane resigned on December 4 , 1985 , citing that he wanted to spend more time with his family . He was replaced by Admiral John Poindexter .

Two days later , Reagan met with his advisors at the White House , where a new plan was introduced . This one called for a slight change in the arms transactions : instead of the weapons going to the " moderate " Iranian group , they would go to " moderate " Iranian army leaders . As the weapons were delivered from Israel by air , the hostages held by Hezbollah would be released . Israel would continue to be reimbursed by the United States for the weapons . Though staunchly opposed by Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger , the plan was authorized by Reagan , who stated that , " We were not trading arms for hostages , nor were we negotiating with terrorists " . Now retired National Security Advisor McFarlane flew to London to meet with Israelis and Ghorbanifar in an attempt to persuade the Iranian to use his influence to release the hostages before any arms transactions occurred ; this plan was rejected by Ghorbanifar .

On the day of McFarlane 's resignation , Oliver North , a military aide to the United States National Security Council ( NSC ) , proposed a new plan for selling arms to Iran , which included two major adjustments : instead of selling arms through Israel , the sale was to be direct , and a portion of the proceeds would go to Contras , or Nicaraguan paramilitary fighters waging guerrilla warfare against the democratically @-@ elected Sandinista government , at a markup . North proposed a \$ 15 million markup , while contracted arms broker Ghorbanifar added a 41 % markup of his own . Other members of the NSC were in favor of North 's plan ; with large support , Poindexter authorized it without notifying President Reagan , and it went into effect . At first , the Iranians refused to buy the arms at the inflated price because of the excessive markup imposed by North and Ghorbanifar . They eventually relented , and in February 1986 , 1 @,@ 000 TOW missiles were shipped to the country . From May to November 1986 , there were additional shipments of miscellaneous weapons and parts .

Both the sale of weapons to Iran , and the funding of the Contras , attempted to circumvent not only stated administration policy , but also the Boland Amendment . Administration officials argued that regardless of the Congress restricting the funds for the Contras , or any affair , the President ( or in this case the administration ) could carry on by seeking alternative means of funding such as private entities and foreign governments . Funding from one foreign country , Brunei , was botched when North 's secretary , Fawn Hall , transposed the numbers of North 's Swiss bank account number . A Swiss businessman , suddenly \$ 10 million richer , alerted the authorities of the mistake . The money was eventually returned to the Sultan of Brunei , with interest .

On January 7 , 1986 , John Poindexter proposed to the president a modification of the approved plan : instead of negotiating with the " moderate " Iranian political group , the United States would negotiate with " moderate " members of the Iranian government . Poindexter told Reagan that Ghorbanifar had important connections within the Iranian government , so with the hope of the release of the hostages , Reagan approved this plan as well . Throughout February 1986 , weapons were shipped directly to Iran by the United States ( as part of Oliver North 's plan , without the knowledge of President Reagan ) and none of the hostages were released . Retired National Security Advisor McFarlane conducted another international voyage , this one to Tehran ; bringing with him a gift of a bible having a handwritten inscription by Ronald Reagan ; and , according to George Cave a cake baked in the shape of a key . Howard Teicher described the cake as a joke between North and Ghorbanifar . He met directly with the " moderate " Iranian political group that sought to establish U.S.-Iranian relations in an attempt to free the four remaining hostages . This meeting also failed . The members requested concessions such as Israel 's withdrawal from the Golan Heights , which the United States rejected .

= = = Subsequent dealings = = =

In late July 1986 , Hezbollah released another hostage , Father Lawrence Jenco , former head of Catholic Relief Services in Lebanon . Following this , William Casey , head of the CIA , requested that the United States authorize sending a shipment of small missile parts to Iranian military forces as a way of expressing gratitude . Casey also justified this request by stating that the contact in the Iranian government might otherwise lose face or be executed , and hostages might be killed . Reagan authorized the shipment to ensure that those potential events would not occur .

In September and October 1986 three more Americans ? Frank Reed , Joseph Cicippio , and Edward Tracy ? were abducted in Lebanon by a separate terrorist group , who referred to them simply as " G.I. Joe , " after the popular American toy . The reasons for their abduction are unknown , although it is speculated that they were kidnapped to replace the freed Americans . One more original hostage , David Jacobsen , was later released . The captors promised to release the remaining two , but the release never happened .

= = Discovery and scandal = =

After a leak by Mehdi Hashemi , a senior official in the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution , the Lebanese magazine Ash @-@ Shiraa exposed the arrangement on November 3 , 1986 . This was the first public reporting of the weapons @-@ for @-@ hostages deal . The operation was discovered only after an airlift of guns ( Corporate Air Services HPF821 ) was downed over Nicaragua . Eugene Hasenfus , who was captured by Nicaraguan authorities after surviving the plane crash , initially alleged in a press conference on Nicaraguan soil that two of his coworkers , Max Gomez and Ramon Medina , worked for the Central Intelligence Agency . He later said he did not know whether they did or not . The Iranian government confirmed the Ash @-@ Shiraa story , and ten days after the story was first published , President Reagan appeared on national television from the Oval Office on November 13 , stating :

My purpose was ... to send a signal that the United States was prepared to replace the animosity between [ the U.S. and Iran ] with a new relationship ... At the same time we undertook this initiative , we made clear that Iran must oppose all forms of international terrorism as a condition of progress in our relationship . The most significant step which Iran could take , we indicated , would be to use its influence in Lebanon to secure the release of all hostages held there .

The scandal was compounded when Oliver North destroyed or hid pertinent documents between November 21 and November 25 , 1986 . During North 's trial in 1989 , his secretary , Fawn Hall , testified extensively about helping North alter , shred , and remove official United States National Security Council ( NSC ) documents from the White House . According to the New York Times , enough documents were put into a government shredder to jam it . North 's explanation for destroying some documents was to protect the lives of individuals involved in Iran and Contra operations . It was not until 1993 , years after the trial , that North 's notebooks were made public , and only after the National Security Archive and Public Citizen sued the Office of the Independent Counsel under the Freedom of Information Act .

During the trial , North testified that on November 21 , 22 , or 24 , he witnessed Poindexter destroy what may have been the only signed copy of a presidential covert @-@ action finding that sought to authorize CIA participation in the November 1985 Hawk missile shipment to Iran . U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese admitted on November 25 that profits from weapons sales to Iran were made available to assist the Contra rebels in Nicaragua . On the same day , John Poindexter resigned , and President Reagan fired Oliver North . Poindexter was replaced by Frank Carlucci on December 2 , 1986 .

In his exposé *Veil : The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981 ? 1987* , journalist Bob Woodward chronicles the role of the CIA in facilitating the transfer of funds from the Iran arms sales to the Nicaraguan Contras spearheaded by Oliver North . According to Woodward , then Director of the CIA , William J. Casey , admitted to him February 1987 that he was aware of the diversion of funds to the contras . The controversial admission occurred while Casey was hospitalized for a stroke , and , according to his wife , was unable to communicate . On May 6 , 1987 , William Casey died the day after

Congress began its public hearings on Iran ? Contra . Independent Counsel , Lawrence Walsh later wrote : " Independent Counsel obtained no documentary evidence showing Casey knew about or approved the diversion . The only direct testimony linking Casey to early knowledge of the diversion came from [ Oliver ] North . "

= = Tower Commission = =

On November 25 , 1986 , President Reagan announced the creation of a Special Review Board to look into the matter ; the following day , he appointed former Senator John Tower , former Secretary of State Edmund Muskie , and former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft to serve as members . This Presidential Commission took effect on December 1 and became known as the Tower Commission . The main objectives of the commission were to inquire into " the circumstances surrounding the Iran @-@ Contra matter , other case studies that might reveal strengths and weaknesses in the operation of the National Security Council system under stress , and the manner in which that system has served eight different presidents since its inception in 1947 " . The Tower Commission was the first presidential commission to review and evaluate the National Security Council .

President Reagan appeared before the Tower Commission on December 2 , 1986 , to answer questions regarding his involvement in the affair . When asked about his role in authorizing the arms deals , he first stated that he had ; later , he appeared to contradict himself by stating that he had no recollection of doing so . In his 1990 autobiography , *An American Life* , Reagan acknowledges authorizing the shipments to Israel .

The report published by the Tower Commission was delivered to the president on February 26 , 1987 . The Commission had interviewed 80 witnesses to the scheme , including Reagan , and two of the arms trade middlemen : Manucher Ghorbanifar and Adnan Khashoggi . The 200 @-@ page report was the most comprehensive of any released , criticizing the actions of Oliver North , John Poindexter , Caspar Weinberger , and others . It determined that President Reagan did not have knowledge of the extent of the program , especially about the diversion of funds to the Contras , although it argued that the president ought to have had better control of the National Security Council staff . The report heavily criticized Reagan for not properly supervising his subordinates or being aware of their actions . A major result of the Tower Commission was the consensus that Reagan should have listened to his National Security Advisor more , thereby placing more power in the hands of that chair .

= = Congressional committees investigating the Iran ? Contra affair = =

The Democratic @-@ controlled United States Congress issued its own report on November 18 , 1987 , stating that " If the president did not know what his national security advisers were doing , he should have " . The congressional report wrote that the president bore " ultimate responsibility " for wrongdoing by his aides , and his administration exhibited " secrecy , deception and disdain for the law " . It also read that " the central remaining question is the role of the President in the Iran ? Contra affair . On this critical point , the shredding of documents by Poindexter , North and others , and the death of Casey , leave the record incomplete " .

= = Aftermath = =

Reagan expressed regret regarding the situation during a nationally televised address from the Oval Office on March 4 , 1987 , and two other speeches ; Reagan had not spoken to the American people directly for three months amidst the scandal . President Reagan told the American people the reason he did not update them on the scandal :

The reason I haven 't spoken to you before now is this : You deserve the truth . And as frustrating as the waiting has been , I felt it was improper to come to you with sketchy reports , or possibly even erroneous statements , which would then have to be corrected , creating even more doubt and

confusion . There 's been enough of that .

He then took full responsibility for the acts committed :

First , let me say I take full responsibility for my own actions and for those of my administration . As angry as I may be about activities undertaken without my knowledge , I am still accountable for those activities . As disappointed as I may be in some who served me , I 'm still the one who must answer to the American people for this behavior .

Finally , the president stated that his previous assertions that the U.S. did not trade arms for hostages were incorrect :

A few months ago I told the American people I did not trade arms for hostages . My heart and my best intentions still tell me that 's true , but the facts and the evidence tell me it is not . As the Tower board reported , what began as a strategic opening to Iran deteriorated , in its implementation , into trading arms for hostages . This runs counter to my own beliefs , to administration policy , and to the original strategy we had in mind .

To this day , Reagan 's role in the transactions is not definitively known ; it is unclear exactly what Reagan knew and when , and whether the arms sales were motivated by his desire to save the U.S. hostages . Oliver North wrote that " Ronald Reagan knew of and approved a great deal of what went on with both the Iranian initiative and private efforts on behalf of the contras and he received regular , detailed briefings on both ... I have no doubt that he was told about the use of residuals for the Contras , and that he approved it . Enthusiastically . " Handwritten notes by Defense Secretary Weinberger indicate that the President was aware of potential hostages transfers with Iran , as well as the sale of Hawk and TOW missiles to what he was told were " moderate elements " within Iran . Notes taken on December 7 , 1985 , by Weinberger record that Reagan said that " he could answer charges of illegality but he couldn 't answer charge [ sic ] that ' big strong President Reagan passed up a chance to free hostages ' " . The Republican @-@ written " Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran @-@ Contra Affair " concluded , that

There is some question and dispute about precisely the level at which he chose to follow the operation details . There is no doubt , however , ... [ that ] the President set the US policy towards Nicaragua , with few if any ambiguities , and then left subordinates more or less free to implement it .

Domestically , the scandal precipitated a drop in President Reagan 's popularity as his approval ratings saw " the largest single drop for any U.S. president in history " , from 67 % to 46 % in November 1986 , according to a New York Times / CBS News poll . The " Teflon President " , as Reagan was nicknamed by critics , survived the scandal , however , and by January 1989 a Gallup poll was " recording a 64 % approval rating " , the highest ever recorded for a departing President at that time .

Internationally , the damage was more severe . Magnus Ranstorp wrote , " U.S. willingness to engage in concessions with Iran and the Hezbollah not only signaled to its adversaries that hostage @-@ taking was an extremely useful instrument in extracting political and financial concessions for the West but also undermined any credibility of U.S. criticism of other states ' deviation from the principles of no @-@ negotiation and no concession to terrorists and their demands " .

In Iran , Mehdi Hashemi , the leaker of the scandal , was executed in 1987 , allegedly for activities unrelated to the scandal . Though Hashemi made a full video confession to numerous serious charges , some observers find the coincidence of his leak and the subsequent prosecution highly suspicious .

= = = Indictments = = =

Caspar Weinberger , Secretary of Defense , was indicted on two counts of perjury and one count of obstruction of justice on June 16 , 1992 . Weinberger received a pardon from George H. W. Bush on December 24 , 1992 , before he was tried .

Robert C. McFarlane , National Security Adviser , convicted of withholding evidence , but after a plea bargain was given only two years of probation . Later pardoned by President George H. W. Bush .

Elliott Abrams , Assistant Secretary of State , convicted of withholding evidence , but after a plea bargain was given only two years probation . Later pardoned by President George H. W. Bush .

Alan D. Fiers , Chief of the CIA 's Central American Task Force , convicted of withholding evidence and sentenced to one year probation . Later pardoned by President George H. W. Bush .

Clair George , Chief of Covert Ops @-@ CIA , convicted on two charges of perjury , but pardoned by President George H. W. Bush before sentencing .

Oliver North , member of the National Security Council convicted of accepting an illegal gratuity , obstruction of a congressional inquiry , and destruction of documents , but the ruling was overturned since he had been granted immunity .

Fawn Hall , Oliver North 's secretary , was given immunity from prosecution on charges of conspiracy and destroying documents in exchange for her testimony .

Jonathan Scott Royster , Liaison to Oliver North , was given immunity from prosecution on charges of conspiracy and destroying documents in exchange for his testimony .

National Security Advisor John Poindexter was convicted of five counts of conspiracy , obstruction of justice , perjury , defrauding the government , and the alteration and destruction of evidence . A panel of the D.C. Circuit overturned the convictions on November 15 , 1991 by a vote of 2 to 1 and the Supreme Court refused to hear the case .

Duane Clarridge . An ex @-@ CIA senior official , he was indicted in November 1991 on seven counts of perjury and false statements relating to a November 1985 shipment to Iran . Pardoned before trial by President George H. W. Bush .

Richard V. Secord . Former Air Force major general , who was involved in arms transfers to Iran and diversion of funds to Contras , he pleaded guilty in November 1989 to making false statements to Congress and was sentenced to two years of probation . As part of his plea bargain , Secord agreed to provide further truthful testimony in exchange for the dismissal of remaining criminal charges against him .

Albert Hakim . A businessman , he pleaded guilty in November 1989 to supplementing the salary of North by buying a \$ 13 @,@ 800 fence for North with money from " the Enterprise , " which was a set of foreign companies Hakim used in Iran @-@ Contra . In addition , Swiss company Lake Resources Inc . , used for storing money from arms sales to Iran to give to the Contras , plead guilty to stealing government property . Hakim was given two years of probation and a \$ 5 @,@ 000 fine , while Lake Resources Inc. was ordered to dissolve .

Oliver North and John Poindexter were indicted on multiple charges on March 16 , 1988 . North , indicted on 16 counts , was found guilty by a jury of three felony counts . The convictions were vacated on appeal on the grounds that North 's Fifth Amendment rights may have been violated by the indirect use of his testimony to Congress , which had been given under a grant of immunity . In 1990 , Poindexter was convicted on several felony counts of conspiracy , lying to Congress , obstruction of justice , and altering and destroying documents pertinent to the investigation . His convictions were also overturned on appeal on similar grounds . Arthur L. Liman served as chief counsel for the Senate during the Iran ? Contra Scandal .

The Independent Counsel , Lawrence E. Walsh , chose not to re @-@ try North or Poindexter . In total , several dozen people were investigated by Walsh 's office .

During his election campaign in 1988 , Vice President Bush denied any knowledge of the Iran ? Contra affair by saying he was " out of the loop " . Though his diaries included that he was " one of the few people that know fully the details " , he repeatedly refused to discuss the incident and won the election . However , a book published in 2008 by Israeli journalist and terrorism expert Ronen Bergman asserts that Bush was personally and secretly briefed on the affair by Amiram Nir , counterterrorism adviser to the then Israeli Prime Minister , when Bush was on a visit to Israel . " Nir could have incriminated the incoming President . The fact that Nir was killed in a mysterious chartered airplane crash in Mexico in December 1988 has given rise to numerous conspiracy theories " , writes Bergman . On December 24 , 1992 , nearing the end of his term in office after being defeated by Bill Clinton the previous month , Bush pardoned six administration officials , namely Elliott Abrams , Duane Clarridge , Alan Fiers , Clair George , Robert McFarlane , and Caspar Weinberger .

In Poindexter's hometown of Odon, Indiana, a street was renamed to John Poindexter Street. Bill Breeden, a former minister, stole the street's sign in protest of the Iran-Contra affair. He claimed that he was holding it for a ransom of \$ 30 million, in reference to the amount of money given to Iran to transfer to the Contras. He was later arrested and confined to prison, making him, as satirically noted by Howard Zinn, "the only person to be imprisoned as a result of the Iran-Contra Scandal".

= = Reports and documents = =

The 100th Congress formed a joint committee (Congressional Committees Investigating The Iran-Contra Affair) and held hearings in mid-1987. Transcripts were published as: Iran-Contra Investigation: Joint Hearings Before the Senate Select Committee on Secret Military Assistance to Iran and the Nicaraguan Opposition and the House Select Committee to Investigate Covert Arms Transactions with Iran (U.S. GPO 1987 88). A closed Executive Session heard classified testimony from North and Poindexter; this transcript was published in a redacted format. The joint committee's final report was Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair With Supplemental, Minority, and Additional Views (U.S. GPO November 17, 1987). The records of the committee are at the National Archives, but many are still non-public.

Testimony was also heard before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and can be found in the Congressional Record for those bodies. The Senate Intelligence Committee produced two reports: Preliminary Inquiry into the Sale of Arms to Iran and Possible Diversion of Funds to the Nicaraguan Resistance (February 2, 1987) and Were Relevant Documents Withheld from the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair? (June 1989).

The Tower Commission Report was published as the Report of the President's Special Review Board. U.S. GPO February 26, 1987. It was also published as The Tower Commission Report, Bantam Books, 1987, ISBN 0-553-26968-2.

The Office of Independent Counsel / Walsh investigation produced four interim reports to Congress. Its final report was published as the Final Report of the Independent Counsel for Iran / Contra Matters. Walsh's records are available at the National Archives.