

Meeting with Bush logged in North private notebook

New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — Hours after Oliver L. North met with lawmakers in 1986 concerning his involvement with the Nicaraguan rebels, he met with Vice President George Bush, Mr. North's private notebooks show.

The meeting with the lawmakers was a critical moment in the history of the Iran-contra affair, but until the release of hundreds of pages of Mr. North's notebooks Tuesday, the Bush meeting was not known.

The brief notebook entries do not suggest the purpose of Mr. Bush's meeting with Mr. North, and it is possible the session was unrelated to Iran-contra matters.

But the entry on the meeting is one of many bits of information that came to light with the release of the 21 handwritten notebooks kept by Mr. North when he was a National Security Council aide.

Among other things, the books show that Mr. North held previously undisclosed meetings with top Reagan administration officials.

The notebooks indicate that Mr. North met separately with Mr. Bush and Donald P. Gregg, Mr. Bush's national security adviser, on Aug. 6, 1986.

Mr. North had met that morning with members of the House Intel-

ligence Committee. He later testified that he had lied in answering their questions about the extent of his involvement with the Nicaraguan contras.

The page of Mr. North's notebook that refers to the "session with V.P." was omitted from the entries released by the Iran-contra congressional committees in 1987. It was not clear whether the page was never turned over to the committees or was turned over to the committee later but withheld from public release on national security grounds.

Mr. Gregg, now U.S. ambassador to South Korea, has said he first learned of Mr. North's activities Aug. 8, 1986, and did not pass the information to Mr. Bush.

Mr. Bush has said he knew little of Mr. North's efforts to aid the contras and went along reluctantly with the Iran arms sales.

Mr. North's actions to supply the contras were undertaken at a time Congress had banned government aid to them.

Asked Tuesday about Mr. North's notebooks, White House spokesman M. Marlin Fitzwater said: "The vice president's role in the Iran-contra affair was completely examined in the congressional inquiry, and we have nothing to add."

Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who had sought the notebooks in con-



The Associated Press

Tom Blanton of the National Security Archive displays a copy of the notebook page that refers to the North-Bush meeting

nection with his inquiry into drug trafficking in Central America, said the notebooks "revive old questions left unanswered in the Iran-contra affair and raise new ones."

The notebooks were obtained by the National Security Archive, a Washington-based research institute that maintains a library of declassified government documents. The institute secured access to the material through a request under the Freedom of Information Act after filing a lawsuit in August against the independent prosecutor in the Iran-contra case.

The office of the Iran-contra prosecutor declined to comment on the notebooks Tuesday because the information they contain may be used if there are further prosecutions in the affair. Representatives of the Iran-contra congressional committees also declined to comment on the specific issues raised by the notebooks.

Last May, Mr. North was convicted of destroying documents related to the affair, aiding and abetting in the obstruction of Congress and accepting an illegal gift of a \$13,800 home security system.