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FOIA MARKER

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Record Group/Collection: George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
Collection/Office of Origin: Office of the President
Series: Daily Files
Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 90523
Folder ID Number: 90523-007

Folder Title:
Friday, October 6, 1989

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
V	12	11	4	3

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet (George Bush Library)

Doc. No. / Type	Subject/Title	Date	Restriction	Classification
01. Schedule	Schedule of the President [redaction] (1 pp.)	10/06/89	(b)(3)	
02. Log	White House Telephone Log [Signal Switchboard] [redaction of personal information] (2 pp.)	10/06/89	(b)(6)	

Page 1 of 1

Collection:

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Office: Office of the President
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Subseries:
WHORM Cat.:
File Location: Friday, October 6, 1989

Pinksheet Number: dw1468
OA/ID Number: 90523-007
Date Closed: 9/22/2009
FOIA/Sys Case #: 2009-0166-S
Re-review Case #:
P-2/P-5 Review Case #:

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FOIA/SYS Case #: 2009-0166-S	Appeal Case #:
Re-review Case #:	Appeal Disposition:
P-2/P-5 Review Case #:	Disposition Date:
AR Case #:	MR Case #:
AR Disposition:	MR Disposition:
AR Disposition Date:	MR Disposition Date:

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P-1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P-2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Removed as a personal record misfile.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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SCHEDULE OF THE PRESIDENT

Friday, October 6, 1989

7:15 am	<u>Adler Fitting</u> (Presock)	Oval Office
8:00 am (15 min)	<u>Intelligence Briefing</u> (Scowcroft/Sununu)	Oval Office
8:15 am (30 min)	<u>National Security Briefing</u> (Scowcroft/Sununu)	Oval Office
8:45 am (30 min)	<u>Meeting with Governor Sununu</u>	Oval Office
9:15 am (5 min)	<u>Photo with Ambassador Zappala</u> (TAB A) (Scowcroft)	Oval Office
9:20 am	The President departs for Capitol Hill for Meeting with Republican Members of the Senate (TAB B) (McClure)	South Lawn
10:40 am	<u>Arrives White House</u>	South Lawn
12:15 pm	The President departs for Walter Reed Hospital for Hand Surgery (Lee)	South Lawn
TBD	Departs for Camp David directly from Walter Reed	

Photocopy from George Bush Presidential Library

7:23 add John Adler, Issa Massoud, + Bob Lowe for fitting 7:35 all out
 7:47 add President's Squadron mates - see Tab A for names
 8:01 Sununu in 8:02 Sununu out 8:03 Sununu in 8:04 add Gates, Scowcroft
 Cheney, Baker
 8:22 add V.P. 8:29 add Marlin Fitzwater 8:48 Baker Cheney out; add Bieker
 8:59 (b)(3) out 9:05 Gates + Scowcroft out; add Darman + McClure
 9:10 Sununu out 9:15 Sununu into Oval 9:20 all out except Scowcroft + Sununu
 9:21 add Zappala + NSC rep. 9:23 dpt Oval + Motorcade
 9:25 dpt WH 9:29 am Capitol 9:34 am Sen. Dole off - begin mtg

UNP 10/05/89
5:00 pm

10:23 dpt Dole office to Mitchell office
 10:26 an Mitchell's office 10:42 dpt Mitchell office to Motorcade
 via Senate Chamber
 10:49 ~~an~~ Board Motorcade 10:50 dpt Capital
 10:56 an WH - talk on S. Grounds w/ Fitzwater, Sumner, McClure +
 11:00 an Oval w/ Sumner 11:13 Sumner out
 11:29 add Firestone 11:31 add Scowcroft
 11:43 Scowcroft out 11:50 Firestone out
 (approx)
 12:11 add Card 12:13 ~~Board Motorcade~~ dpt Oval 12:15 Board Marine I
 12:17 dpt WH. 12:21 an ~~Board Motorcade~~ Naval 12:25 Board m/c depart LZ
 12:27 an Hospital 12:29 an Suite 12:44 an O. R.
 2:00 dpt OR 2:02 an Suite 2:24 dpt Suite to Genl. Vuono
 suite
 2:26 Dept Genl. Vuono suite 2:27 Press Conference outside
 3:32 conclude press conference 2:34 an Landing Zone
 2:38 dpt ~~add~~ Walter Reed 3:05 an Corp David

Friday, October 6

5:10 Mrs. Bush to the South Grounds
5:15 Mrs. Bush to the Second Floor
5:30 Breakfast for Mrs. Bush
6:00 Breakfast for the President
6:30 Nancy Graux to the Second Floor 6:50 down
7:00 Mrs. Bush to the Ground Floor
7:04 Mrs. Bush departs White House en route Atlanta
7:15 The President to the Oval Office
12:17 The President departs South Grounds en route Walter Reed

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TELEPHONE MEMORANDUM

E. D. T. PRESIDENT BUSH

OCTOBER 6

89

, 19

	TIME		DISC	NAME	ACTION
	PLACED				
OUT	AM			MR. MARLIN FITZWATER OFC: WASHINGTON, D.C. WHITE HOUSE ADMIN. EXT. 700	TLKD-OK
~~INC~~	9:06	~~PM~~	9:08		
OUT	AM				
INC	PM				
OUT	AM			MR. FAY VINCENT OFC: NEW YORK, N. Y. 212 339-7807	ENROUTE TO RES. TOLD MRS. PRESOCK LW PASSED PASSED INFORMATION TO TO CAMP DAVID 3:25PM.
~~INC~~	11:21	~~PM~~			
OUT	AM				
INC	PM				
OUT	AM			SENATOR JESSE A. HELMS OFC: WASHINGTON, D.C. 224-1370	TLKD-OK 11:36 AM.
~~INC~~	11:33	~~PM~~	11:40		
OUT	AM				
INC	PM				
OUT	~~AM~~			MR. MARLIN FITZWATER OFC: WASHINGTON, D.C. WHITE HOUSE ADMIN. EXT. 704	TLK-OK
~~INC~~	2:08	~~PM~~	2:11		
OUT	AM				
INC	PM				
OUT	~~AM~~			SECRETARY RICHARD CHENEY WASHINGTON, D.C. 697-9312	TLKD-OK 2:20 PM.
~~INC~~	2:13	~~PM~~	2:23		
OUT	AM				
INC	PM				
~~OUT~~	~~AM~~			GOVERNOR JOHN SUNUNU GENERAL BRENT SCOWCROFT WASHINGTON, D.C. WHITE HOUSE ADMIN. EXT. 653	TLKD-OK 2:18 PM.
	2:17		2:20		
INC	PM				

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TELEPHONE MEMORANDUM

SIGNAL SWITCHBOARD

October 6, 1989

	TIME		NAME	ACTION
	PLACED	DISC		
~~OUT~~	AM		Governor John H. Sununu Office, Washington, D.C. White House Admin x685	Tlkd-ok 12:17 PM via YANKEE ZULU
INC	12:15 PM	12:22		
OUT	AM		General Brent Scowcroft Office, Washington, D.C. Secure Voice x7400	Tlkd-ok 2:32 PM via YANKEE ZULU
~~INC~~	2:31 PM	2:34		
OUT	AM		Ms. Patty Presock Office, Washington, D.C. 456-6508	Tlkd-ok 3:17 PM
~~INC~~	3:15 PM	3:21		
OUT	AM		Mr. Marlin Fitzwater Office, Washington, D.C. White House Admin x700	Tlkd-ok 3:22 PM
~~INC~~	3:21 PM	3:25		
OUT	AM		Congressman Gillespie V. Montgomery Office, Washington, D.C. 225-5031	Tlkd-ok 3:27 PM
~~INC~~	3:25 PM	3:31		
~~OUT~~	AM		Mr. Robert B. Holt (b)(6)	Tlkd-ok 3:39 PM
INC	3:37 PM	3:44		
OUT	AM		Mr. Andrew H. Card, Jr. Office, Washington, D.C. White House Signal 2-2250	Tlkd-ok 3:46 PM
~~INC~~	3:44 PM	3:52		
~~OUT~~	AM		Secretary Louis W. Sullivan Office, Washington, D.C. White House Signal 2-2137	Tlkd with Mr. McBride 3:53 PM Tlkd-ok 4:48 PM
INC	3:52 PM	4:53		
OUT	AM		Mr. Donald Gambatesa Elm Cabin, Camp David, Maryland Camp David Signal 4-1237	Tlkd-ok 3:55 PM
~~INC~~	3:55 PM	3:55		
OUT	AM		Governor John H. Sununu Office, Washington, D.C. White House Admin x685	Tlkd-ok 4:01 PM
~~INC~~	3:59 PM	4:02		
OUT	AM		Lieutenant David E. Adams Chestnut Cabin, Camp David, Maryland Camp David Signal 4-1410	Tlkd-ok 4:45 PM
~~INC~~	4:44 PM	4:45		

Photocopy from George Bush Presidential Library

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TELEPHONE MEMORANDUM

SIGNAL SWITCHBOARD

October 6, 19 89

	TIME		NAME	ACTION
	PLACED	DISC		
OUT	AM		Governor John H. Sununu Office, Washington, D.C. White House Admin x685	Tlkd-ok 4:54 PM
~~INC~~	4:53 PM	4:55		
OUT	AM		Mrs. Prescott Bush (b)(6)	Tlkd-ok 4:58 PM
~~INC~~	4:55 PM	5:01		
OUT	AM		Message: "Please tell the Doctor, Military Aide, Mr. McBride and Mr. Allison the Movie will be at 5:30."	Passed 5:19 PM
~~INC~~	5:15 PM			
OUT	AM			
INC	PM			
OUT	AM			
INC	PM			
OUT	AM			
INC	PM			
OUT	AM			
INC	PM			
OUT	AM			
INC	PM			
OUT	AM			
INC	PM			
OUT	AM			
INC	PM			

PRESIDENTIAL MOVEMENTS

LOCATION Washington, D.C.
Camp David, Maryland

DATE 6 October 1989

TIME	MOVEMENTS
0717	Oval Office
0924	South Grounds
0926	Depart South Grounds via Motorcade
0932	Arrive Capitol Hill
1051	Depart Capitol Hill via Motorcade
1055	Arrive South Grounds
1057	Oval Office
1059	South Grounds
1100	Oval Office
1214	South Grounds
1219	Depart South Grounds via Marine One
1222	Arrive Walter Reed Army Hospital
1438	Depart Walter Reed Army Hospital via Marine One
1506	Arrive Camp David, Maryland



News Summary

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1989 -- 6 a.m. EDT EDITION

TODAY'S HEADLINES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

White House Chaos Kept Noriega Free -- President Bush did not order U.S. forces to seize Gen. Noriega when the opportunity was at hand because of confusion at the top levels of the Administration, White House officials said Thursday night. (Washington Post, Washington Times)

Rebel Hands Bush New Peace Plan For Angolan War -- President Bush reassured Angolan rebel leader Savimbi of "strong" U.S. support Thursday, and Savimbi presented him with a new cease-fire proposal aimed at reopening the peace process with the Soviet-backed government of Angola. (Washington Post, Washington Times, UPI)

NATIONAL NEWS

Democrats Offer IRA In Trade For An End To Tax Cut Bid -- Senate Democratic leaders offered Thursday to strip the \$5.4 billion revenue bill for 1990 of a popular IRA provision if Republicans would drop efforts to cut capital gains. (Boston Globe)

NETWORK NEWS (Thursday evening)

PANAMA -- Gen. Noriega was cracking down against his civilian political opponents as well as his enemies within the Panamanian Defense Forces.

FLAG DESECRATION -- The Senate approved its own version of legislation making desecration of the U.S. flag a crime, punishable by up to a year in jail.

PRESIDENT'S OPERATION -- President Bush will have an operation to remove a cyst from the middle finger of his right hand.

INTERNATIONAL...A-1

NATIONAL NEWS...A-7

NETWORK NEWS...B-1

EDITORIALS.....C-1

FOREIGN MEDIA...C-4

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

U.S. WAS CAUGHT OFF GUARD BY COUP ATTEMPT

Although ousting Panamanian Gen. Noriega has been a goal of two administrations, when rebel Panamanian officers attempted a coup against Noriega this week, President Bush and his top advisers were caught off guard, lacking intelligence and flexible plans to respond to the sudden development, according to high-ranking Administration sources.

From the early tip-off through the collapse of the coup, the sources said, Bush and his advisers were hampered not only by a lack of solid information but also by gaps in the system of managing a crisis and by conflicting reports from the Pentagon, State Department and National Security Council.

"All through the day the President was getting all these different sets of facts from different sources, and none of the sources were that good anyway," a top adviser to Bush said. "Unless it's your coup, it's hard to know really what is going on."

According to another source, the cloud of uncertainty was so thick that Bush was never presented with a clear-cut option to order U.S. forces to aid the rebels. On Tuesday morning, Bush was given a list of the possible U.S. military moves, but he was also given many reasons why American forces should remain on the sidelines because of the uncertainty and risk, and he accepted this conclusion, sources said.

(David Hoffman & Ann Devroy, Washington Post, A33)

White House Chaos Kept Noriega Free

President Bush did not order U.S. forces to seize Gen. Noriega when the opportunity was at hand because of confusion at the top levels of the Administration, White House officials said Thursday night.

There were public denials that the White House blew a chance to seize the Panamanian dictator, ...but the President's top aides argued Thursday night over what happened, and why.

Senior Administration officials said Bush was never presented with the option to seize Noriega, despite strong indications within top Administration circles that forces of the U.S. Southern Command, in place only several hundred yards away, could have captured him with or without the consent of the leaders of the attempted coup.

"A lot of people are wondering how we messed this up," said one government official. "We've got to do better next time."

(Paul Bedard & Bill Gertz, Washington Times, A1)

U.S. Is Largely To Blame For Failure, Sources Say

PANAMA CITY -- A warning that the U.S. would not support any move leading to the death of Panamanian strongman Noriega and botched communications between anti-Noriega rebels and U.S. forces caused the failure of Tuesday's coup attempt, according to U.S. and Western officials here.

In addition, the officials said, the failure of the U.S. to develop contingency plans for a possible coup and the absence of Panama experts in the top echelon of the U.S. Southern Command contributed to the failure of the coup.

(James Dorsey, Washington Times, A1)

NORIEGA WARNS PANAMANIAN HE MAY IMPOSE EMERGENCY
General's Supporters Raid Opposition Office

PANAMA CITY -- Gen. Noriega Thursday warned opponents that he might impose "emergency laws" in a new political crackdown, and armed supporters surrounded the headquarters of an opposition leader, as the Panamanian strongman sought to keep a lid on dissent in the aftermath of a failed coup attempt.

In a harsh speech during a provincial tour aimed at rallying supporters, Noriega declared that now was "no time to talk democracy," citing "an emergency situation of so much economic and political pressure." He said he would respond with "clubs for the indecisive, bullets for enemies and money for friends" in the current turmoil and encouraged supporters to inform on "functionaries who cannot be trusted."

As Noriega was visiting the province of Veraguas, supporters wearing civilian clothes and armed with automatic weapons surrounded a political party headquarters where opposition leader Guillermo Endara had given a press conference, drove away opposition supporters and fired some shots in the air in an apparent effort to intimidate Noriega's opponents.

(William Branigin, Washington Post A33)

NORIEGA FORCES STEP UP PRESSURE AGAINST OPPOSITION

PANAMA CITY -- Soldiers and plainclothes agents broke into the opposition political headquarters late Thursday and evicted opposition leader Guillermo Endara, culminating a day of harassment apparently aimed at intimidating opponents of military leader Gen. Noriega.

It was unclear whether Endara had been arrested at his downtown headquarters. After being forced from the building with his hands over his head, Endara was seen walking away from the scene with two other people in plain clothes.

(Don Finefrock, UPI)

SOLDIERS STORM OPPOSITION LEADER'S OFFICE, HE ESCAPES

PANAMA CITY -- Soldiers stormed the building where opposition leader Endara was holding a hunger strike, but a colleague said he was safely spirited away before the raid.

A nearby resident said the troopers fired tear gas in the raid late Thursday. It came hours after Gen. Noriega...told the nation that the government would get tough with its opponents.

Endara..."is now in a safe place," a colleague, Willie Cochez, said later Thursday. He would not elaborate.

(Eloy Aguilar, AP)

COLOMBIA/BOMBS

BOGOTA -- Two bombs exploded late Thursday in Bogota, injuring two people and damaging a supermarket and a bank, police said. The attacks were believed to be the latest in a series by drug traffickers.

Also Thursday, President Barco named new ministers of justice, interior and communications. His government also announced plans for referendum to let voters decide whether suspected drug traffickers wanted in the U.S. should be extradited.

A U.S. official in Bogota said that despite the government's unprecedented crackdown on drugs, hundreds of tons of cocaine continue to be smuggled into the U.S.

(AP)

NORIEGA CALLS COUP BID 'NEW BAY OF PIGS'

PANAMA CITY -- Gen. Noriega said Thursday that the aborted coup this week was "a new Bay of Pigs" engineered by Washington, which hoped to install opposition leader Guillermo Endara as the president of Panama.

Speaking to an audience at a school gymnasium in Santiago, 156 miles southeast of the capital, Noriega also accused the opposition political parties of taking a hand in Tuesday's coup attempt, which left at least 10 people dead.

"They took Endara early to have him ready...for the presidency, but they f-ed (sic) themselves," Noriega told the gathering, which was organized by a group of pro-government women. (UPI)

CHENEY: U.S. WAS WILLING TO TAKE CUSTODY OF NORIEGA

Defense Secretary Cheney said Thursday that U.S. military forces in Panama "would have been happy" to take custody of Gen. Noriega during Tuesday's coup attempt, but rebellious Panamanian troops were unwilling to have the U.S. "take him off their hands."

Chief Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams said that in a face-to-face meeting the two rebel representatives while the coup was underway, a top U.S. military commander in Panama told them "we would take General Noriega off their hands and they repeated twice, no, they did not want us to take General Noriega."

An internal Pentagon chronology of the coup says: "U.S. notified coup liason that we are prepared to take Noriega under custody if brought to Ft. Clayton (a U.S. military base). Answer -- No intent to turn anyone over to U.S."

Responding to criticism of Capitol Hill that U.S. forces should have taken action during the coup, Cheney and other Bush Administration officials strongly defended the Administration's response to what officials described as an event riddled with confusion and contradictory information.

"The President made a very sound decision," said Cheney, who officials said was designated that Administration's chief spokesman and who made the rounds Thursday on Capitol Hill and on television interview shows. (Molly Moore & Joe Pichirallo, Washington Post, A36)

CHENEY TELLS MORE ON U.S. ROLE IN PANAMA, DISPUTES SENATOR

Defense Secretary Cheney said Thursday rebel officers in Panama asked the U.S. military as early as Sunday night to help them in a coup by blocking two roads -- roads that U.S. forces indeed later controlled.

But Cheney insisted the U.S. "never gave them an answer," and Pentagon officials suggested it was only coincidence that U.S. military exercises and movements to protect U.S. bases effectively placed the roads under American control during Tuesday's attempt to overthrow Gen. Noriega, whose ouster President Bush repeatedly has urged.

(Robert MacKay, UPI)

CASTRO SEES U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN COUP ATTEMPT IN PANAMA

HAVANA -- Cuban President Castro said Thursday that the U.S. had apparently been involved in Tuesday's attempted military coup in Panama and that Gen. Noriega had acted courageously.

"From all available evidence it was organized by the United States," he told reporters in an interview on the tarmac at Havana's airport while seeing off Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze.

"According to my information, the U.S. Southern Command was in close contact with the dissident officers," he said, adding, "It seems Gen. Manuel Noriega conducted himself courageously and that his attitude and the loyalty of the majority of officers of the Panamanian Defense Forces frustrated the military coup." (Reuter)

SAVIMBI AGREES TO MEET 'VERY SOON' WITH MOBUTU Rebel Leader Accedes to Bush Request

Angolan leader Savimbi said Thursday that he will meet "very soon" with Zaire's President Mobutu, who is mediating peace talks in Savimbi's guerrilla war against the Angolan government.

Savimbi said he has acceded to a request from President Bush to "work with" Mobutu.

Savimbi, who earlier had rejected Mobutu's mediation, said after a half-hour meeting with Bush at the White House that he was "happy to say that this is solved because we are going to meet very soon and all the problems will be ironed out." ..

Bush was...supportive of Savimbi Thursday, assuring him that the U.S. still supports him and his demands for "face-to-face negotiations" and "ultimately free and fair elections."

Savimbi said Bush was "satisfied" with his plan for a new agreement with the Angolan government on a cease-fire which broke down shortly after the first was proclaimed June 24.

(David Ottaway, Washington Post, A34)

Rebel Hands Bush New Peace Plan For Angolan War

President Bush reassured Angolan rebel leader Savimbi of "strong" U.S. support Thursday, and Savimbi presented him with a new cease-fire proposal aimed at reopening the peace process with the Soviet-backed government of Angola.

Savimbi, speaking to reporters after the 30-minute meeting, said Bush endorsed the cease-fire plan, which the rebel leader said he will disclose Thursday in a speech at the National Press Club....

Later, in an address to the Heritage Foundation, Savimbi criticized the Bush Administration for refusing to believe the Angolan army has used Soviet-supplied chemical weapons against his rebels.

(James Morrison, Washington Times, A9)

Savimbi Meets With Bush, Accepts Mobutu Role

Angolan leader Savimbi met President Bush Thursday and said he is willing to revive talks with his country's communist government under the mediation of President Mobutu of Zaire.

Savimbi would not tell reporters after his 30-minute White House meeting how earlier friction about Mobutu's role had been resolved. Mobutu spoke to Bush at the White House Wednesday and was encouraged in his mediation efforts.

A senior U.S. official involved in both days of presidential meetings was reluctant to discuss details but said the Administration was able to impress both Savimbi and Mobutu with the need "of getting the process back on track."
(UPI)

AMERICAN 'THREATS' IRK SOUTH AFRICA

JOHANNESBERG -- The government issued a brusque rebuttal Thursday to U.S. demands for apartheid to be reformed within a year, saying it was aware of the need for urgent action without threats from abroad.

"South Africa should retain the right not only to create our own constitutional future, but also to do so without threats and time limits imposed from outside," Foreign Minister Botha said in a statement.

(From combined dispatches, Washington Times, A9)

BUSH SEEKS CONTROL ON PRODUCTS USABLE TO MAKE WEAPONS

The Bush Administration said it is tightening controls on the export of U.S. products that could be used to manufacture missiles and chemical weapons. The move is designed at least in part to deter Congress from enacting even tougher measures.

Commerce Secretary Mosbacher, testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the department is "carefully reviewing" various types of export-applications in order to weed out ones that could make a "significant contribution to a missile development program." The effort is aimed at preventing proliferation of missiles capable of carrying nuclear or chemical warheads.

Mosbacher also told the committee that the U.S. plans to tighten controls or impose new ones on 13 chemicals that could be used to make chemical weapons. He didn't identify these chemicals, but he said some of them are widely available and commonly used for making commercial products such as paint thinners, emulsifiers and fertilizers.

(Eduardo Lachica, Wall Street Journal, A4)

B-2 'STEALTH' BOMBER HAS SHORTER CRUISING
RANGE THAN OLDER, CHEAPER B-1

The Air Force's B-2 "stealth" bomber has less cruising range than the older and cheaper B-1B now in operation, according to a secret part of the Defense Department budget sure to stir up new troubles for the \$530 million flying-wing aircraft.

"Not good news for the plane," said House Armed Services Committee Chairman Aspin of the comparative unrefueled ranges of the two bombers disclosed to the Washington Post by authoritative sources. The Pentagon "black" budget gives the "current" estimates of comparative ranges without refueling as 6,400 miles for the B-1 and 6,000 for the B-2.

"I'm surprised at that," Aspin said. "They've been advertising the B-2 as having better range." (George Wilson, Washington Post, A14)

STATE DEPT. WARNS PLO DELEGATION
Plan For News Conference Is 'Political
Activity' That Imperils Visas

The State Department Thursday warned members of a PLO delegation visiting the U.N. that their reported plan to take part in a New York news conference is improper "political activity" that could lead to revocation of their U.S. visas.

State Department spokesman Boucher said U.S. officials had received a news release stating that delegation members would take part in a "speaking event" sponsored by the Palestine Solidarity Committee and scheduled for last night at the United National Church Center, across from the U.N.

If delegation members participated, Boucher said, it would violate terms of their visas restricting them to attending the U.N. General Assembly session and other U.N. business and prohibiting any additional political activity. Accordingly, Boucher added, the U.S. has asked the U.N. Secretariat to advise the PLO's permanent observer mission at the United Nations of the potential violation.

(John Goshko, Washington Post, A35)

EDITOR'S NOTES: The New York Times and the Baltimore Sun arrived after News Summary press time.

"How The Inexperience Of American Officials Helped Doom Coup," by Frederick Kempe, appears in the Wall Street Journal, A1.

"White House Puts Stock In What Robert Gates Says About Soviets -- And Maybe They Do, Too," by Gerald Seib, appears in the Wall Street Journal, A14.

"Shevardnadze Plan Would Trim U.S. Role In Central America," a news analysis by Lee Hockstader, appears in the Washington Post, A39.

"Severe Ozone Depletion Likely Again This Year," by William Booth, appears in the Washington Post, A18.

"U.S. Journalist Is Arrested In Namibia," by Eleanor Randolph, appears in the Washington Post, A34.

"Bush Comes To Nudge In Middle East," by Peter Grier, appears in the Christian Science Monitor, A1.

NATIONAL NEWS

SENATE VOTES TO OUTLAW FLAG DESECRATION Legislative Response To Court Ruling Is Similar To House Version

The Senate voted 91 to 9 Thursday to outlaw desecration of the American flag after sending mixed signals about whether it will vote later this month to support a constitutional amendment that would do the same thing.

The legislation, similar to a measure approved last month by the House, would make it a crime subject to a penalty of one-year in prison and a \$1,000 fine to mutilate, deface, burn, display on the ground or floor, trample or "physically defile" any flag of the U.S.

The words "physically defile" were added by a vote of 76 to 24 over misgivings of some Democrats who feared it might strengthen arguments that the bill is an unconstitutional violation of free-speech rights and that only a constitutional amendment can adequately protect the flag from desecration.

But the Senate rejected, 53 to 47, another GOP proposal to ban only public acts against the flag. Democrats regarded this as a more serious threat to the constitutionality of the statute because a reference to public acts implied an expression of opinion protected by the First Amendment.

(Helen Dewar, Washington Post, A7)

BUSH URGES AMENDMENT TO BAN FLAG BURNING, REJECTS SENATE VERSION

President Bush, saying a Senate-approved statutory ban on defacing the American flag is inadequate, is renewing his support for a constitutional amendment to outlaw flag burning.

"I believe that a constitutional amendment, properly drawn, is necessary in order to provide the proper protection," Bush said Thursday after 91 to 9 approval by the Senate of the statutory ban.

(Mike Robinson, AP)

DEMOCRATS OFFER IRA IN TRADE FOR AN END TO TAX CUT BID

Senate Democratic leaders offered Thursday to strip the \$5.4 billion revenue bill for 1990 of a popular IRA provision if Republicans would drop efforts to cut capital gains.

In an effort to break an impasse over the revenue bill, Sen. Mitchell of Maine said Democrats were prepared to eliminate some 300 special tax provisions favoring narrow interests if Republicans agreed to back off from the tax cut.

However, Sen. Dole hesitated to agree to the offer, citing in particular President Bush's interest in the capital gains issue.

"There's somebody else in this town who has an interest in this, and that's the President," Dole said. "I have not discussed this with him."

(John Robinson, Boston Globe)

HOUSE VOTES TO EXPAND SUPPORT FOR CHILD CARE Low-Income Parents Tax Break Would Grow

The House voted Thursday to expand federal support for child-care services and to increase tax credits for the working poor who have children, turning back a less expensive plan supported by the White House and a scaled-down version proposed by a conservative Democrat.

The plan was added to the House's huge budget-reconciliation bill and sent to the Senate, which is expected to work on the legislation into the weekend. A final child-care plan is expected to be worked out in a House-Senate conference committee, possibly as early as next week.

Debate was intense and sometimes emotional as the House first discussed a GOP plan by Rep. Mickey Edwards to expand tax credits alone and a proposal by Rep. Stenholm that would have increased child-care funding much less than the plan supported by the Democratic leadership. The Edwards amendment, supported by President Bush, was rejected 285 to 140. The Stenholm amendment failed 230 to 195.

(Don Phillips, Washington Post, A1)

House Leadership Wins Massive Expansion Of Childcare program

Reversing a series of damaging defeats, the House Democratic leadership won approval Thursday of a massive expansion of the federal childcare program despite the opposition of the Bush Administration.

Estimated to cost \$22.6 billion over the next five years, the plan envisions a \$13.5 billion tax break for low-income families through enlargement of the earned income tax credit, expansion of the Head Start schools, provision of direct grants to the states, and establishment of minimum health, training and safety standards for providers.

(Finlay Lewis, Copley)

TRICK-LADEN DEFICIT-CUT BILL PASSED

The House passed a three-inch thick deficit-reduction bill Thursday that contains dozens of examples of Congress's virtuosity in the art of budgetary gimmickry.

The 1,935-page bill approved by 333 to 91 relies heavily on accounting devices to create the appearance of meeting the deficit reduction targets of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law. The bill also contains numerous extraneous and sweeping changes in law that have nothing to do with cutting the deficit.

One provision requires the nation's telephone companies to transfer taxes to the Treasury one week earlier than they do now, a maneuver that would reduce the deficit for fiscal 1990, which began Sunday, by \$102 million. But the change would add \$102 million to the 1991 deficit.

(Tom Kenworthy, Washington Post, A1)

SENATE APPROVES SWEEPING ANTI-DRUG BILL

The Senate approved major anti-drug legislation packed with help for law enforcement agents to crack down on dealers and users and filled with programs to provide treatment, education and rehabilitation for addicts.

The Senate passed over 50 separate provisions, which swept through by voice vote on overwhelming margins, in a dramatic expansion of President Bush's war on drugs. The bill was approved late Thursday 100 to 0 and sent to the House.

Among the major provisions, adopted earlier in the week, was authorization of 1,350 new FBI and drug agents as well as additional judges, prosecutors and others in the judicial system.

The Senate also passed earlier in the week a provision that would provide free treatment for penniless addicts under the Medicaid for the poor program. (Steve Gerstel, UPI)

SENATE REJECTS AUTHORITY TO SHOOT DOWN DRUG PLANES

The Senate narrowly voted down a proposal Thursday night that would have allowed U.S. authorities to shoot down drug smuggling airplanes under strict conditions.

It voted 52 to 48 against allowing such a shootdown if authorities had confirmed the plane was smuggling drugs, had warned the plane to land, received ground permission to fire into the plane.

Sen. Glenn called the proposal ludicrous because he said a family flying home from a Caribbean vacation, through confusion or misunderstanding, could ignore the warnings and be shot down. (Reuter)

HHS CHIEF CONDEMNS REPEAL ATTEMPT

Secretary of HHS Sullivan condemned moves Thursday to repeal the 1988 law that protects the elderly from catastrophic health costs and endorsed a bipartisan Senate plan to salvage it.

Sullivan said repeal would be "unwise health policy" and "an unfortunate act of political expedience."

The White House has said it opposes repeal, and a presidential aide said Thursday night that the White House was not endorsing any of several proposals pending in the Senate....

Sullivan endorsed a proposal by Sen. Durenberger to save most of the major benefits in the 1988 law while cutting back the surtax sharply -- from the maximum \$800 per person this year to \$200.

(Spencer Rich, Washington Post, A4)

FLORIDA HIGH COURT OVERTURNS PARENT-CONSENT ABORTION LAW Constitutional Right To Privacy Cited

The Florida Supreme Court, overturning the state's parental-consent law for minors seeking abortions, Thursday found that the right to privacy outlined in the state constitution protects a woman's decision to have an abortion.

The ruling -- the first significant decision by a state court in the wake of the Supreme Court's ruling last July cutting back abortion rights under the U.S. Constitution -- represented an important victory for abortion-rights activists. It offers the prospect that state courts could frustrate efforts by state legislatures to adopt restrictive abortion laws.

(Ruth Marcus & Dan Balz, Washington Post A1)

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REHNQUIST/DEATH PENALTY

Chief Justice Rehnquist, bypassing for now the federal courts' policy-making body, has sent to Congress a plan that could lead to swifter executions for death row inmates.

Rehnquist's move has angered civil liberties lawyers who had criticized the proposal when it was unveiled last month.

It also appears to have dismayed many of his colleagues on the Judicial Conference.... Fourteen of the judges wrote Congress to request hearings on whatever recommendations the conference makes, according to Friday editions the New York Times.

The Chief Justice's move "would essentially render the (U.S.) Judicial Conference impotent," Leslie Harris of the ACLU told Legal Times. (AP)

DARMAN DECRIES GOVERNMENT MANAGERS' NEGLECT OF DUTY

White House Budget Director Darman Thursday criticized the "Hollywood East syndrome" that caused Washington officials to neglect their management responsibilities and allowed scandals like the one at the Department of HUD.

Testifying before the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, Darman said the HUD affair was not only major governmental scandal and blamed a collective failure of oversight by federal managers.

"There is in Washington culture a Hollywood East syndrome. Too many are infatuated with the glare of the lights and too few are interested in the pedestrian work of management," he told the committee.

(Kenneth Barry, Reuter)

FEMA OFFICIALS ADMIT RESPONSE TO HUGO WAS SLOW

Fourteen days after Hurricane Hugo hit the South Carolina coast, officials of the federal agency coordinating disaster relief Thursday defended themselves from charges of bureaucratic bungling, but conceded that the agency's response was slower than it should have been.

Officials of FEMA said their small, 10-year-old agency had never encountered a disaster of Hugo's magnitude and pleaded for an end to the criticism. "I would say, enough is enough," said Grant Peterson, the FEMA associate director who has headed the relief effort.

Peterson, a former Spokane, Washington, county commissioner, said his agency had mounted a Herculean effort after the storm struck the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and then the U.S. mainland. "Even with every effort being applied, we must ask ourselves if the effort is going as rapidly as everyone, including ourselves if the effort is going as rapidly as everyone, including ourselves would like?" he told a news conference. "In all candor, the answer is no."

(Bill McAllister, Washington Post A29)

TRUMP MAKES \$7 BILLION BID FOR AMERICAN AIRLINES
If Deal Succeeds, DOT May Look At Impact

Billionaire developer Donald Trump launched the largest airline takeover bid ever Thursday by offering \$7 billion for American Airlines.

In doing so, Trump is challenging one of the toughest, most aggressive managements in the aviation industry, that of the American Airlines's top executive, Robert Crandall. AMR Corp., which owns American, said it will consider Trump's proposal but remains committed to operating an independent airline....

Thursday, just as the Trump bid was being announced, the Senate Commerce Committee approved a bill, sponsored by Wendell Ford, that would require the Transportation Secretary to determine the impact of airline buyouts on safety, the ability of an airline to grow, competition with foreign carries and other factors.

(Martha Hamilton, Washington Post, A1)

BUSH UNDERGOES FINGER SURGERY

President Bush promised not to be off the job long following his surgery Friday to remove a cyst from the middle finger of his right hand.

White House Press Secretary Fitzwater told reporters Thursday that the "mucoid cyst" appears to be non-malignant and the surgical procedure is considered routine.

The presidential spokesman said the cyst, which Bush has had for three years, is "not really painful, but it's a nuisance in the sense that it is large enough to cause him some anxiety." ...

During an Oval Office photo session Thursday with Angolan rebel leader Savimbi, Bush joked that he was facing "a serious operation" and told reporters, "I'll show you my scar afterwards."

(Helen Thomas, UPI)

Bush To Undergo Surgery On Finger

President Bush, making light of minor surgery to remove a cyst from his right middle finger, says it's no "federal case" and promises to show off his scar afterward.

The President was to be operated on early Friday afternoon as an outpatient at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for removal of the cyst, which has troubled him for several years.

(Tom Raum, AP)

EDITOR'S NOTES: "The President's Digital Dilemma; Finger Due For Surgery Is Deemed Unfit To Print," by Ann Devroy, appears in the Washington Post, A29.

"TALKING POINTS -- Bush Aides Dabble In Massachusetts Political Matters," by Ann Devroy, Ruth Marcus & Maralee Schwartz, appears in the Washington Post, A29.

"Abortion-Rights Group Enters Va. Governor Race; Activists Place Ads Denouncing Coleman," by John Harris, appears in the Washington Post, B6.

"Thornburgh Blames Judiciary Panel," by AP, appears in the Washington Times, A5.

NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Thursday Evening, October 5)

PANAMA COUP ATTEMPT

ABC's Ted Koppel reports that Panama continues to dominate activity in Washington today and new details are emerging about the United States' role in the attempt to overthrow Panama's military dictator, Gen. Manuel Noriega.

ABC's Brit Hume: Senior officials say the critical White House meeting on Panama occurred at 1:45 Tuesday in the Oval Office, where Defense Secretary Cheney briefed Mr. Bush, Chief of Staff Sununu, National Security Advisor Scowcroft, his deputy Robert Gates, and Press Secretary Fitzwater. Cheney reported what he said was the only U.S. contact of the day with rebels. Two hours earlier, when two rebel officers appeared at the gate of Fort Clayton in Panama, asked for and got a meeting with U.S. General Mark Cisneros. Cheney said the rebels claimed they had control of Noriega, and Cisneros asked if the U.S. could take him, but the rebels would not release him. The President said he needed more information before he could do anything. Soon after the meeting broke up, Assistant Secretary of State Aronson arrived to say the coup was over and Noriega had prevailed. The news surprised the President. On Capitol Hill today, Sen. Jesse Helms, among others, sharply disputed the White House version of events, in particular that the rebels would not release Noriega.

(Sen. Helms: "Not so. They were eager to turn over Noriega. But the fact is that the United States refused to leave the U.S. base in Panama to go get him.")

(Cheney: "Any claim, any charge, that somehow we were offered Noriega and didn't take him is a bunch of hogwash. Just not true.") The White House, however, apparently took Helms' information seriously enough for Chief of Staff Sununu to summon two of his aides to the White House this afternoon to try to find out where it came from. The White House may also be trying to find out why it took more than an hour for word of that meeting in Panama with the rebel leaders on Tuesday to reach the President.

Koppel: And another charge from Senator Helms: He says that Gen. Noriega personally shot and killed the Panamanian officer who led the coup against him. In Panama, Gen. Noriega again blasted the United States today and continued to rally his supporters.

ABC's Peter Collins reports from Panama City that Gen. Noriega called his domestic opposition traitors and called for new laws to strip Panama's business class of its wealth. He made clear there would be swift reprisals against his enemies in the military. To underscore his contempt for the opposition, Noriega sent his secret police to harass the apparent winner of last May's cancelled election, Guillermo Endara.

(Endara: Noriega is doing whatever he wants. There is no law here.")

Collins continues: At opposition headquarters late today, anti-Noriega demonstrators were chased away by men firing into the air. Noriega is making it clear he could care less about the debate in Washington over how the coup was handled. He rules Panama. (ABC-4)

NBC's Fred Francis reports U.S. forces in Panama may not have been co-conspirators in the coup to overthrow Noriega, but American commanders, on orders from the Administration, blocked some roads for the rebels, were prepared to block more, and say Pentagon sources, would have intervened if the rebels could have delivered Noriega to U.S. forces. Sunday night rebel leader Maj. Moises Giraldi called U.S. officers at the American military base in Panama and said the coup was planned for Monday morning. The rebels asked the U.S. to block highways to prevent Noriega's rescue and to give refuge to their families. Today, Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams said the U.S. put troops on the roads, but only as part of a pre-planned exercise.

(Williams: "They asked us if we would be prepared to block access by road. So, we knew which roads they were talking about.") Noriega was free to celebrate today because the Administration did not want to risk involving U.S. troops when rebel intentions and support for the rebels seemed so murky. (NBC-6)

CBS's Dan Rather: Two days after a military coup against him, Panama's Gen. Noriega was cracking down today against his civilian political opponents as well as his enemies within the Panamanian Defense Forces. Sporadic shooting was still going on this evening in the capital city, Panama City -- apparently an effort by Noriega's men to intimidate people and keep any crowds from gathering.

CBS's Doug Tunnell reports that plain-clothed policemen surrounded opposition offices in Panama City. They blocked the entrances to the building, arrested at least one person, and refused to let former presidential candidate Guillermo Endara leave.

(Endara: "This is to intimidate not only me, but the whole population.")

Sources reported raids on the homes and offices of other opposition figures around the country this afternoon. While the raids were underway, Noriega was in the town of Santiago for yet another public appearance that seemed designed to repair any damage to his image of invincibility. Noriega told his supporters that, in the wake of the coup attempt, his regime will not tolerate dissent. There are many here who believe he is now weaker than ever.

(Carlos Lopez Guevara, former foreign minister: "There is no stability in this country because, first of all, there is no stability within the armed forces of Panama.")

Amid the uncertainty, the Bush Administration has been criticized by Panama's opposition for choosing to wait on the sidelines, and the U.S. military is beginning to draw fire from people here who are normally friendly.

(Ricardo Arias Calderon, opposition leader: "They won't come. It's like a dog that barks very loudly and bites none at all.")

A growing investigation by Noriega loyalists has revealed far greater support for the coup than initially suspected. The greatest fear is that the legacy of this week's failed coup will be more violence as Noriega moves to silence those who dare to oppose him.

Rather: In Washington, Secretary of Defense Cheney was playing defense for a second day against charges that President Bush and his Administration baffled, flubbed, and missed an opportunity to help topple, and perhaps capture, Noriega.

CBS's Bob Schieffer reports that criticism from the Republican right, which began to simmer yesterday, boiled over on the Senate floor today. At one point, conservative Republican Jesse Helms said that the Administration's explanation of what happened in Panama was simply untrue. As Helms told it, rebel officers took Noriega captive and tried to turn him over to U.S. military officers, only to be told the officers had no clearance to accept him.

(Sen. Helms: "The U.S. officers informed the opposition troops that the South Com did not have the authority to apprehend Noriega and that the opposition troops would have to bring Noriega to the U.S. base.")

Defense Secretary Cheney called the charge hogwash. He contends the rebels never offered to surrender Noriega.

(Cheney: "They made it clear to us at that time that they would not turn Noriega over to us; that they did not want him extradited or expelled from the country, that they planned to have him retire quietly in Panama.")

While Democrats were not as critical as Helms and others on the right, there was skepticism and, from the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, the promise of an investigation.

(Sen. Boren: "The full facts have not yet been laid out to us or to the American people and we intend to get to the bottom of it.")

(Sen. Kerry: "The intelligence has not been adequate, the strategy has not been adequate, the contingency plans have not been in place.")

While there's disagreement over just what transpired between the U.S. officers on the scene and the rebel officers, both Republican Helms and Democrat Kerry said on the Senate floor their sources report that the coup leader has been shot to death by Noriega himself.

Rather asks Schieffer: Can President Bush and his men stop all this question asking, or is there likely to be an investigation of the charges made by Sen. Helms and others?

Schieffer: I think there's going to be more than one investigation. Sen. Boren is planning to have the Intelligence Committee look into this. Sen. Nunn...says there are a lot of questions still to be answered, so I think this is going to be around for a while. (CBS-2)

EAST GERMAN EXODUS

ABC's Peter Jennings, from West Berlin: From a divided city, half of which is in turmoil. Over there, behind me on the East German side of the Berlin Wall, the 40th anniversary of the German Democratic Republic is being marked by the worst crisis since that wall was built. Mikhail Gorbachev is going to arrive there tomorrow, and today the East German government told dissidents over there that if they interfered with the Gorbachev visit, they would be crushed ruthlessly. This was also the day on which thousands more East Germans, having rejected their homeland, finally arrived in the West.

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ABC's Jim Hickey reports from Hof, West Germany, on the arriving freedom trains. While passing through East German towns on the trip to the West, police fought with thousands of others to prevent them from jumping on board. The worst violence occurred as they neared Dresden.

ABC's John Donovan reports from the West German Embassy in Prague, Czechoslovakia, that skeptics of the government say the Czech leaders are interested in giving the appearance of change simply to persuade the West that they deserve its economic support.

Jennings reports on the East German anniversary celebrations. Honecker is reported to be so ill that East Germany has not only a refugee crisis, but a leadership crisis.

ABC's Barrie Dunsmore reports from Dresden, East Germany, on a typical East German family.

Jennings reports that President Bush said today he was moved by the thousands of East Germans making their way West, but the U.S. government also put out the word that American embassies in the Soviet bloc would not welcome people wishing to emigrate; they were not equipped, the State Department said, as places of refuge.

(ABC-Lead)

Jennings reports that the level of frustration in East Germany has led people to stand up and say, in public, we want change. Because the Communist Party here shows no inclination for political reform, thousands of young people have turned their backs on their homeland, and more than a million people have applied to leave legally.

(ABC-10)

NBC's Tom Pettit reports from Frankfurt, West Germany, that in Dresden last night, security forces fought with several thousand people who came to try to get on the freedom trains. Demonstrators burned a police car last night and an eyewitness said the police used sticks and water cannons to beat people near the train station. Later, anti-government protesters marched in Dresden shouting, we want freedom.

Brokaw reports that 600 other East German refugees boarded their train to freedom today in Warsaw. They started their ride with shouts of thanksgiving to the Polish government. All of this is a rejection of the rule and the ideology of East German leader Honecker, who today hinted that he is now prepared to use force against West Germany if he believes that East Germany's sovereignty is being threatened by a continuing exodus.

NBC's Jim Bitterman reports on East Germany's anniversary celebrations and the rule of Honecker. Dissidents were being warned that -- quote -- those who wish to tamper with East Germany's socialism should remember what happened in China. But it's a threat that's being openly defied. Reform groups have been attracting growing numbers to their demonstrations. Even young party members are unafraid to openly challenge the hardliners at the top. (NBC-2)

Rather reports on the nightmarish scene in Dresden where thousands of people desperate to get out of East Germany converged on the railroad station, which was blocked off by a huge force of police. Still, the crowd surged at the train screaming, we want out. At midnight, the police finally drove them back with water cannon and clubs. Only then could the trains creep through the city, their doors and windows locked from the outside.

CBS's Bert Quint reports that those on the freedom trains say the door out of East Germany is now closed. (CBS-3)

ANTI-DRUG WAR

ABC's Ted Koppel reports there have been two more huge cocaine busts. A Panamanian ship with 6 tons of cocaine on board was seized in the Gulf of Mexico and 9 tons of cocaine was taken when narcotics agents raided a house in Harlingen, Texas, last night. American officials say one of the reasons for the big busts here is that the drug cartels no longer feel safe storing cocaine in Colombia. (ABC-3)

AIDS

Rather reports 18 AIDS research programs in 14 American cities were awarded federal funds today. The \$9 million they will share is aimed at making AIDS drug testing more available for women, minorities, and intravenous drug users. (CBS-8)

CATASTROPHIC HEALTH

Brokaw reports senate leaders are trying to work out a plan to save parts of the coverage. The plan would sharply cut the surtax that many of the elderly oppose but it would retain the main hospital benefits. (CBS-5, NBC-4)

CHILD CARE

Brokaw reports the House today voted a huge increase in federal subsidies for child care. The cost is expected to exceed \$22 billion over five years. (CBS-5, NBC-5)

FLAG DESECRATION

Rather reports the Senate approved its own version of legislation making desecration of the U.S. flag a crime, punishable by up to a year in jail and a one thousand dollar fine. (CBS-5)

PRESIDENT'S HEALTH

CBS's Lesley Stahl: President Bush will have an operation tomorrow to remove a cyst from the middle finger of his right hand. His doctors say it appears to be non-malignant, though a biopsy will be performed. The President himself, laughed it off. (President, sitting in Oval Office: "I'd like you to -- [inaudible due to laughter] I know, life goes on, I'll continue through this awful, awesome burden that -- continue what I'm doing.")

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Stahl continues: The small lump, called a mucoid cyst, is at the end of the President's finger between the last knuckle and the nail. He's had it for three years, and it's grown to the point that it's become a nuisance.

(Dr. Harold Dick, Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center: "This is a small, pea-sized swelling that occurs on the back of the fingers, just behind the fingernail, and becomes troublesome if it is not treated in its early stages.")

The President is left handed so this is not expected to impede his activities. In a photo-op, Mr. Bush tried to resist the urgings of reporters to -- quote -- show us where it hurts.

(President, in Oval Office sitting next to Angola's Jonas Savimbi: "Don't tempt me [laughter]. It is this finger [laughter]. This middle one.")

TV coverage: President, with fingers together and facing down, pointing to his middle finger.

President, to Savimbi: "This finger is sometimes identified as a bad gesture [laughter]. I don't know if the same is true all through Africa.")

There was a lot of joking here today, but the President is going to have surgery tomorrow that'll take about an hour. He will get a local anesthetic, so he will not asleep at all -- and that means that the baton will not be passed temporarily to Vice President Quayle.

(ABC-6, NBC-9, CBS-4)

ENVIRONMENT/PAPER RECYCLING

NBC's Don Oliver reports that paper recycling efforts are so successful that there is now a glut of used newspapers. The market is saturated and prices are half what they were a year ago. The problem is that there just aren't enough plants to turn the recycled newspapers into something useful. (NBC-8)

NOBEL PRIZE

ABC's Morton Dean reports the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize has gone to the Dalai Lama. The Nobel Committee's chairman suggested it was a double-edged award: prestige for the Dalai Lama and a message to China about Tibet and Tiananmen and the pro-democracy movement there. (NBC-7, CBS-6, ABC-7)

AMERICAN ROCKET COMPANY

Koppel reports the first privately-developed commercial rocket was engulfed in flames as it failed to lift off. (CBS-8, ABC-5)

BAKKER VERDICT

Rather: After a trial that lasted five weeks...the verdict finally was in today on television-preacher Jim Bakker. The verdict was guilty 24 times, all counts.... (NBC-Lead, ABC-2, CBS-Lead)

EDITORIALS/COLUMNISTS

PANAMA COUP ATTEMPT

Gen. Noriega Will Fall -- "The best way to rid Panama of its dictator is through the Panamanian people themselves.... It should be a coup by Panamanians, not by U.S. soldiers on behalf of Panamanians. It will happen, if U.S. policy-makers maintain patience, pressure through sanctions and close contacts with democratic elements in Panama.... Contrary to some congressional sentiments, the Bush administration did not underreact. Cautiousness does not mean lack of resolve. Toughness is not proven only by sending the Marines." (Hartford Courant, 10/5)

Muffed Chance In Panama -- "The Bush Administration was telling the world it had nothing to do with the attempted coup. That's clearly true. But it's nothing to celebrate, despite the fact that the President -- for failing to help the coup attempt -- has been roundly praised by committed Democratic non-interventionists.... Wednesday's coup attempt represented an ideal opportunity to resolve the Noriega matter once and for all.... While the Bush administration basks in praise from politicians who supported Michael Dukakis in the last election, we wonder what lies ahead." (New York Post, 10/5)

Bush Was Right On Panama -- "Gen. Noriega's predictable overthrow will bring stability and democracy to Panama only if it is clearly the handiwork of the Panamanian people, not American forces. For that reason, President Bush was wise in refusing to order U.S. troops into a chaotic coup attempt by junior officers whose political aims were as obscure as their military tactics were faulty.... We believe Secretary Baker was correct in reminding the Noriega clique that the United States reserves the option to use American force on its own timetable, under its own plans, 'at a time of maximum opportunity and advantage.' Long-range U.S. interests dictate that the [Panama Canal] will be safest if the Panamanian people regard it as an asset to be preserved, not a target to be sabotaged. That is the underlying philosophy of the Panama Canal Treaty, and it should remain uppermost in U.S. priorities." (Baltimore Sun, 10/5)

Uncrushed 'Pineapple' -- "President Bush probably acted wisely this time around by daring, as was said about Walter F. Mondale, to be cautious. Those who take a longer view, such as Sen. Richard G. Lugar point out that actively backing a coup is hardly a way to convince governments elsewhere that U.S. bases won't mean U.S. meddling in the host country's internal affairs.... Without a mass uprising, without a heroic figure-in-waiting on the order of the Philippines' Corazon Aquino, and absent of Soviet or Cuban or other external threat, the 'victory' of an overtly American-engineered coup might well have been both empty -- and short-lived." (Philadelphia Inquirer, 10/5)

Noriega Survives, For Now? -- "Whatever comes from this test of Noriega's power, it is essential that the United States continue its support for civilians who oppose the drug thug/dictator. U.S. military restraint is also vital. The last thing either country needs is troop confrontation. For now, though, there is less and less assurance that the Noriega cancer can be removed." (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 10/4)

Failure In Panama -- "The United States missed a historic opportunity on Tuesday. In a display of irresolution that was disgracefully at odds with the Administration's belligerent rhetoric on the perfidy of Panamanian dictator Noriega, Washington froze in its posturing.... President Bush submissively denied U.S. involvement in the foiled coup attempt. U.S. forces in Panama should have been ordered to assist the rebels with all the resources needed to oust General Noriega.... Washington is rightfully reluctant to resurrect gunboat diplomacy. A violation of a neighbor's sovereignty can be justified only in exceptional circumstances -- which applied here. Panama is lost in the grip of a brutal political mutation: the combination of narcotics kingpin and astute Caribbean dictator who brazenly violates his own people's sovereignty. Thus U.S. intervention on the side of dissident Panamanian officers would have been fully justified."

(Miami Herald, 10/5)

Bush's Bay Of Pigs? -- "When the [Bay of Pigs] operation ran into trouble...President Kennedy shrank from providing direct American military support.... A similar climb-down appears to have taken place this week when President Bush refused to use U.S. troops to help topple Panamanian dictator Gen. Noriega.... This week's coup leaders may not have been the insurgents of choice, but in foreign affairs you have to take your opportunities where you find them. It is also laughable that the administration is running around claiming that it didn't 'instigate' the insurrection. After the fiasco of Panama's elections last May,...the president openly called for an uprising by dissident officers. The idea of U.S troops less than two miles from the action standing by and watching does nothing for America's tattered leadership image in the world at large. If anyone wonders why America's allies sometime seem uncertain of coming to our aid when we request it, it may be because the United States itself is such an uncertain ally.... Mr. Bush's refusal to act is made all the more inexcusable because the administration admits to having had advance warning that something was afoot in Panama. It is possible the president had information that would have rendered intervention undesirable, but the administration has not even hinted that that was the case. Instead, it appears to have crossed its fingers and hoped things would work out.... Noriega is roundly detested by almost everyone except the Medellin cartel. This is one instance where American national interests and world and congressional opinion are all rolled into one. Secretary of State Baker is fond of quoting the president's poll ratings on the handling of foreign policy. He should worry less about polls and more about looking after America's interests. It looks like George Bush wimped out on this one."

(Detroit News, 10/5)

Coup Attempt -- "The U.S. government should avoid any appearance of having been the prime mover in this affair. And it should resist any pressure to intervene militarily. President Bush knew exactly what he was doing when he went out of his way to point out that the United States has no quarrel with the Panamanian military. He knows that it is the key to Noriega's departure, if that is indeed in the cards.... Whatever is happening in Panama, the United States must not let itself be drawn into an invasion. Let the word continue to go out, however, that should the Panamanian people decide to topple Mr. Noriega, the normalization of diplomatic and trade relations will benefit both countries. An occupying force or U.S. military personnel will not." (Dallas Morning News, 10/4)

Friday, October 6, 1989 -- C-3

In Panama, As Elsewhere, A Policy Of Timidity -- "Given Bush's explicit calls for the Panamanian military to overthrow Noriega -- why didn't the 12,000 U.S. troops stationed in Panama block Battalion 2000's return? We don't know the answer to that one, any more than we know why Bush abandoned Nicaragua's Contras, why he so strenuously resisted condemning the Beijing slaughter in June, or why he pursues a policy in Cambodia certain to bring the Khmer Rouge back to power. We do know that for a president whose strong suit is supposed to be foreign policy, Bush's timid performance to date has been woeful." (Boston Herald, 10/5)

The Noriega Paradox -- "It's a curious paradox: Clearly the people of Panama want to be rid of this vile man.... Equally clearly, the United States wants to be rid of him.... And yet the two parties cannot seem to act in concert to achieve the result each desires. The paradox is rooted, of course, in real and fancied perceptions of Latin Americans that somehow the colossus to the north wants to colonize or exploit their lands. Noriega, needless to say, lost no time in exploiting this fear. Until we can overcome this legacy of distrust, the Noriegas will flourish and work their mischief in Latin America." (Baltimore Evening Sun, 10/4)

Getting General Noriega -- "Elliot Abrams...said, 'We should have pushed and tipped the balance' in the Panama coup attempt. Sen. Jesse Helms...introduced a congressional resolution that reads: 'Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the president of the United States is authorized to use the armed forces of the United States to secure the removal of Gen. Manuel Noriega from his illegal control of the republic of Panama.' In all these statements, there is an assumption that getting General Noriega is the paramount concern of the United States. This personalizing -- indeed, diabolizing -- of policy is most apparent in the lawlessness of Sen. Helms' amendment. All laws are to be suspended -- treaties with the Organization of American States, other international laws and U.S. laws itself. We are willing to do damage to our own values to express our repugnance at the values of one man. This is no way for a great power to do business." (Garry Wills, Baltimore Sun, 10/5)

###

FOREIGN MEDIA REACTION

EAST GERMAN EXODUS

"Gorbachev's Vital Stake In Two Germanies"

"If Mr. Bush and Mr. Gorbachev were meeting this autumn, as they should, they would have had a chance to set a context for developing relations between the two Germanies. Now, Mr. Gorbachev, who is due to visit East Germany next weekend, is probably the only context setter. The Hungarians consulted him before they allowed the first exodus.... He has a vital stake in good relations between the two Germanies and thus in a reform program for East Berlin which buys time for Mr. Honecker's heirs to create a country where enough of its citizens want to live.... The point for everyone, including West Germans, to remember is not the destruction of East Germany, but the creation of a national identity that its citizens do not despise."
(Guardian, Britain)

"Refugee Pact Stems From Baker-Shevardnadze Wyoming Talks"

"According to diplomatic sources, the new exodus of East German refugees was secretly organized by East Germany, West Germany, the United States and Czechoslovakia last week at the U.N., with the endorsement of the U.S.S.R.... The pact stems from the silent agreement reached by Baker and Shevardnadze during their talks in Wyoming to allow for greater liberalization in Eastern European countries without destabilizing the Warsaw Pact.... The White House reacted with quiet satisfaction to the events in Prague. In line with the agreement reached in Wyoming, the United States is not supposed to do anything which could add to tension in Eastern Europe or in the Soviet Republics."
(Stampa Sera, Italy)

"Honecker Holds Key, Should Turn It"

"The solution of the refugee problem does not lie in increasing the number of emigration permits, but rather only in the removal of the causes responsible for the desire to emigrate. Erich Honecker holds the key to the solution in his hands. He should turn it at long last."
(Berliner Morgenpost, West Berlin)

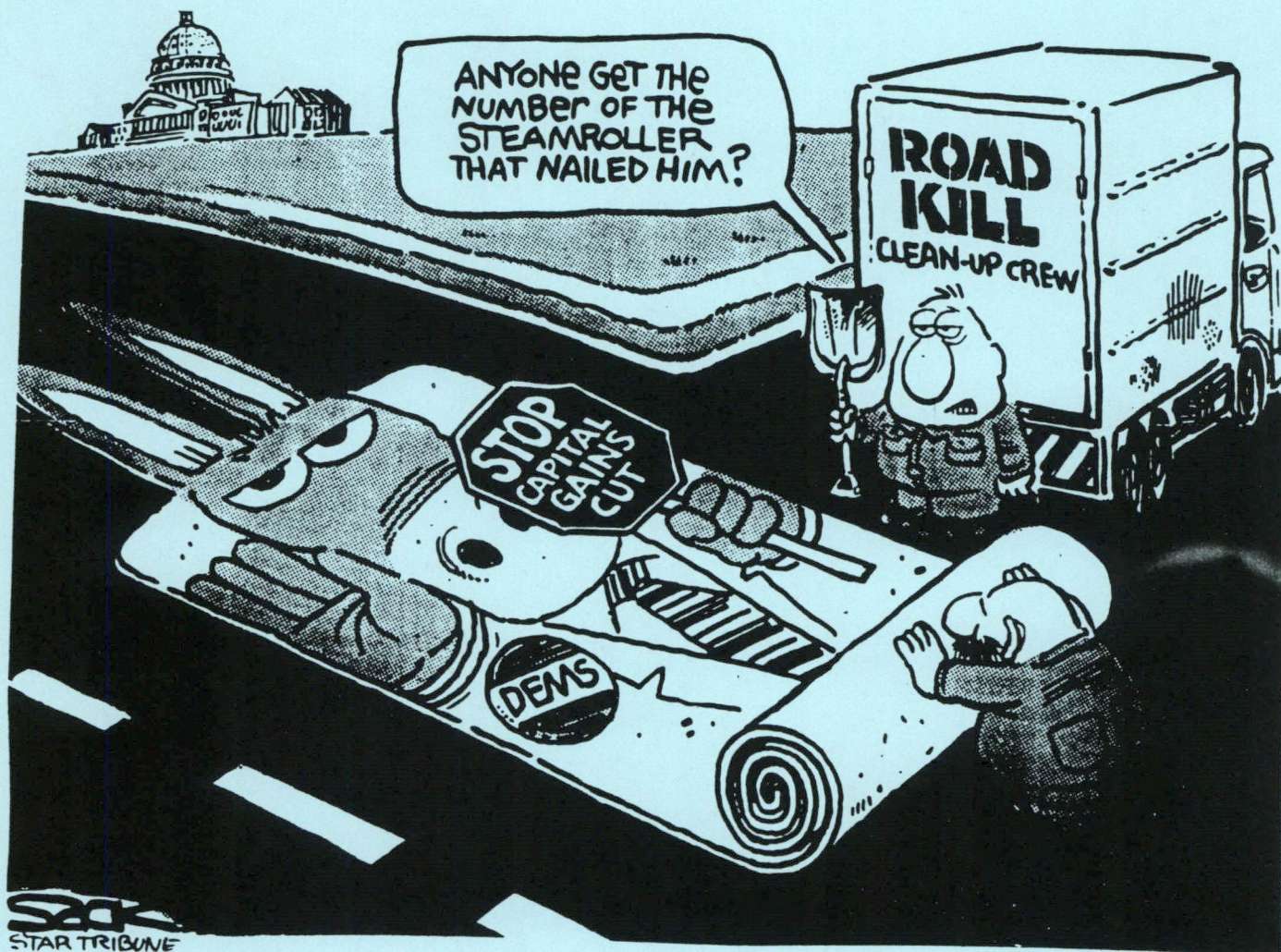
"Berlin Wall Is Crumbling"

"Suddenly the iron triangle Prague-Warsaw-DGR has broken. As far as practice is concerned, this means that the Berlin Wall is crumbling because the East Germans were able to gain their freedom via Budapest, Warsaw and Prague. Now the GDR is isolated in every direction."
(Die Welt, West Germany)

"Gorbachev Would Not Come To GDR Unless Crisis Was Solved"

"Honecker has not only given in to pressure from the world public, but he was also left by Moscow. One thing became clear during Genscher's and Shevardnadze's talks in New York: Gorbachev would not come to the GDR if he ran the risk of being made responsible for the refugee drama at the Bonn missions."
(Sueddeutsche Zeitung, West Germany)

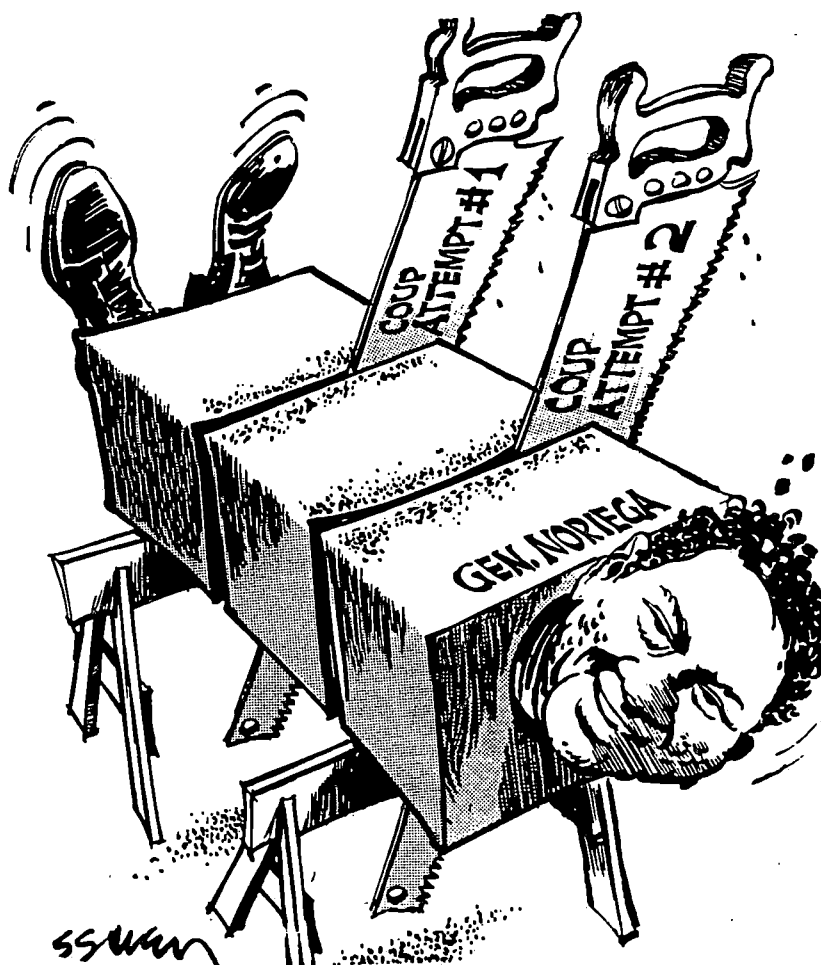
Friday Follies



- a look at politics through the eyes of the political cartoonist -

"I don't care a straw for your newspaper articles. My constituents don't know how to read. But they can't help seeing them damned pictures."
(William Marcy Tweed speaking of Thomas Nast, 1871)

WHITE HOUSE NEWS SUMMARY SPECIAL EDITION
VOLUME I ISSUE 22 -- October 6, 1989



Manuel's magic



© 1987 THE WASHINGTON POST
TAPKEP

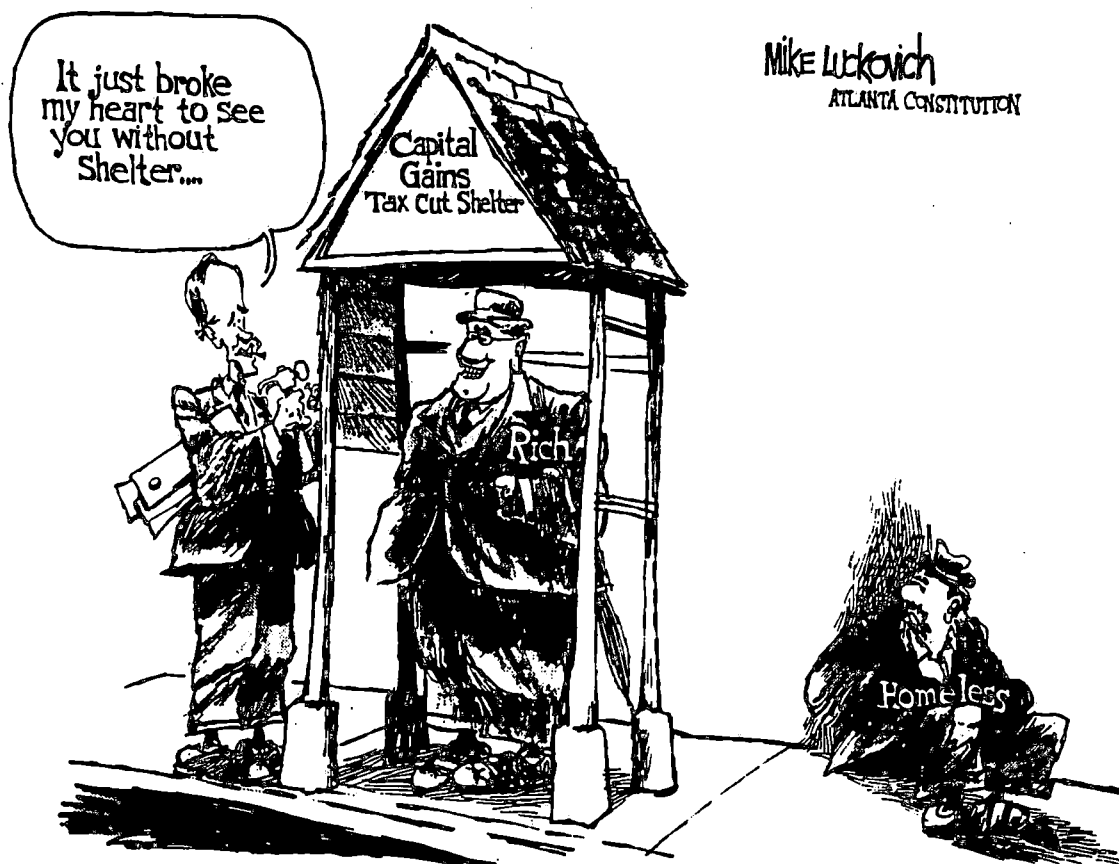
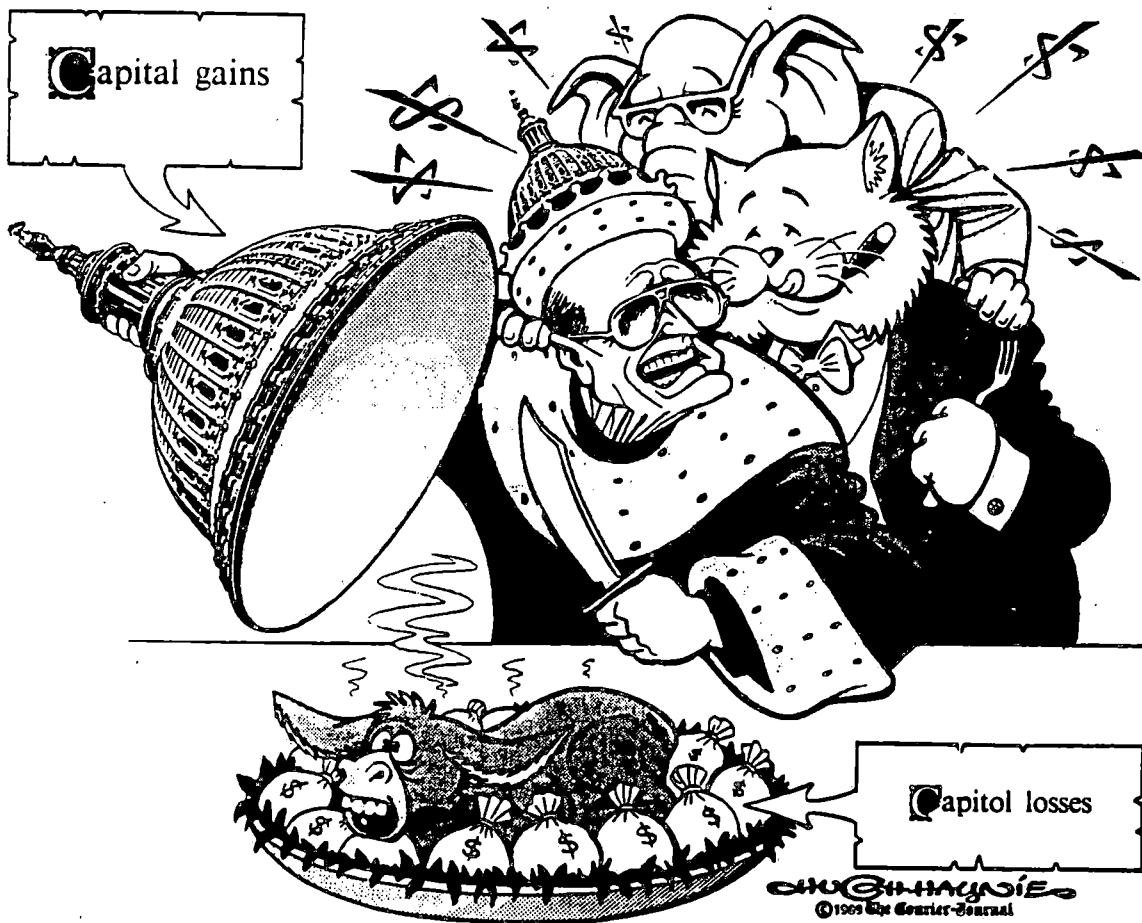
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COW EMBIGGLES

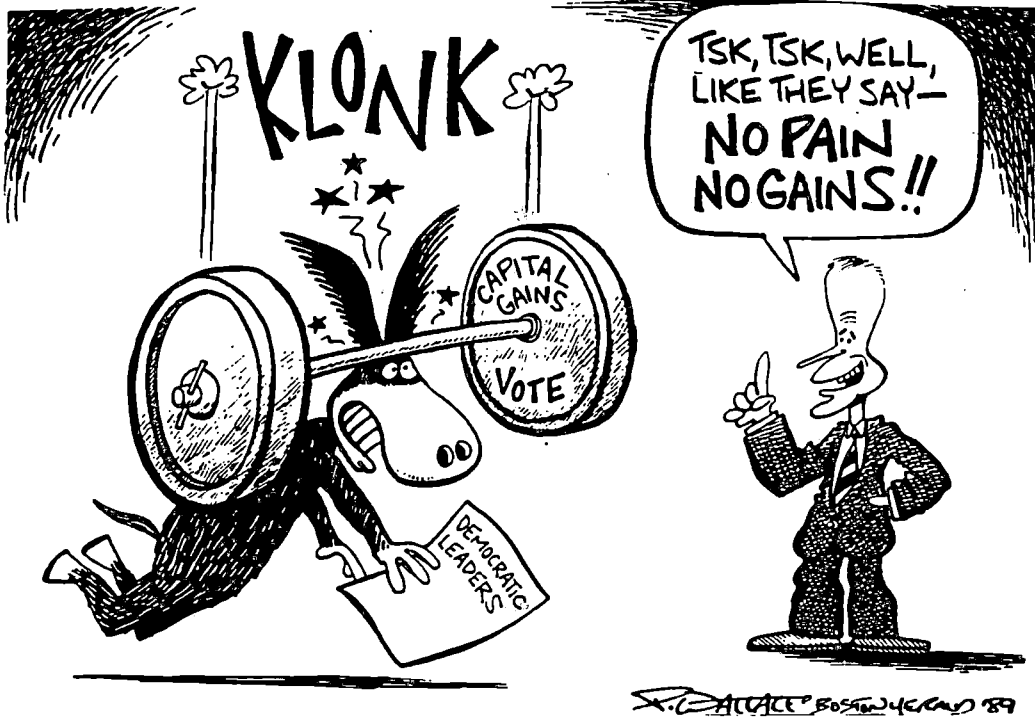




© 1999 The Miami Herald
Mike Peters







WHICH JOB WILL BE CREATED BY CUTTING THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX?

A) Factory Job

B) Desk Job

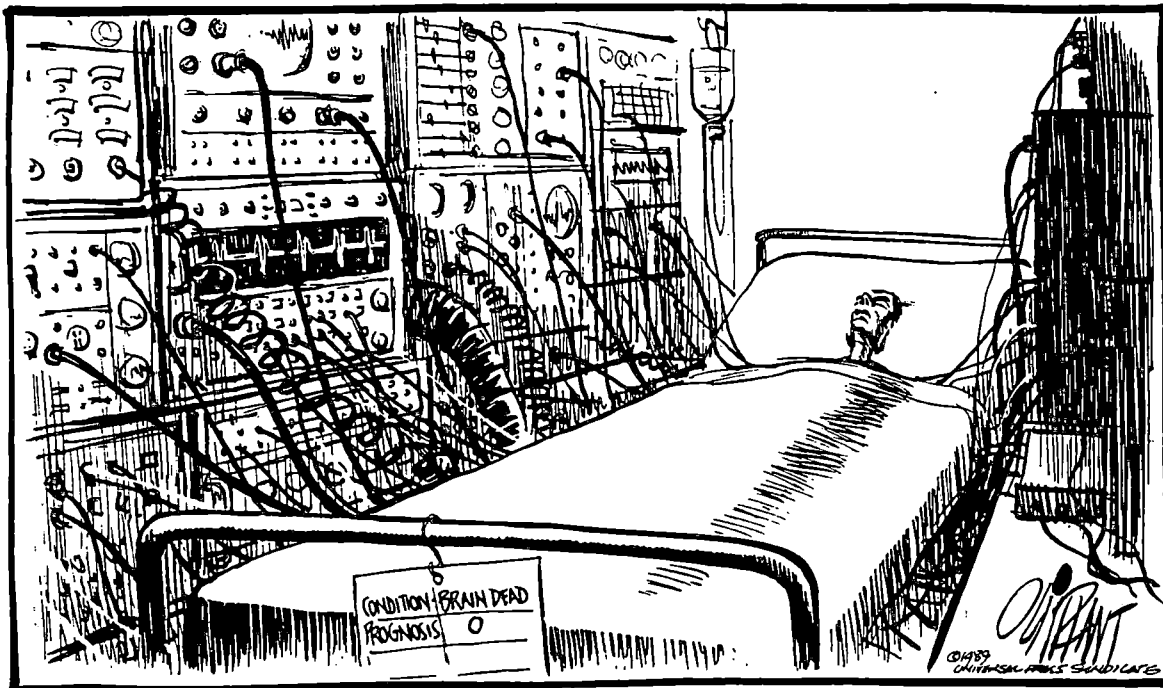
C) Snow Job



Jimmy Margulies/Houston Post



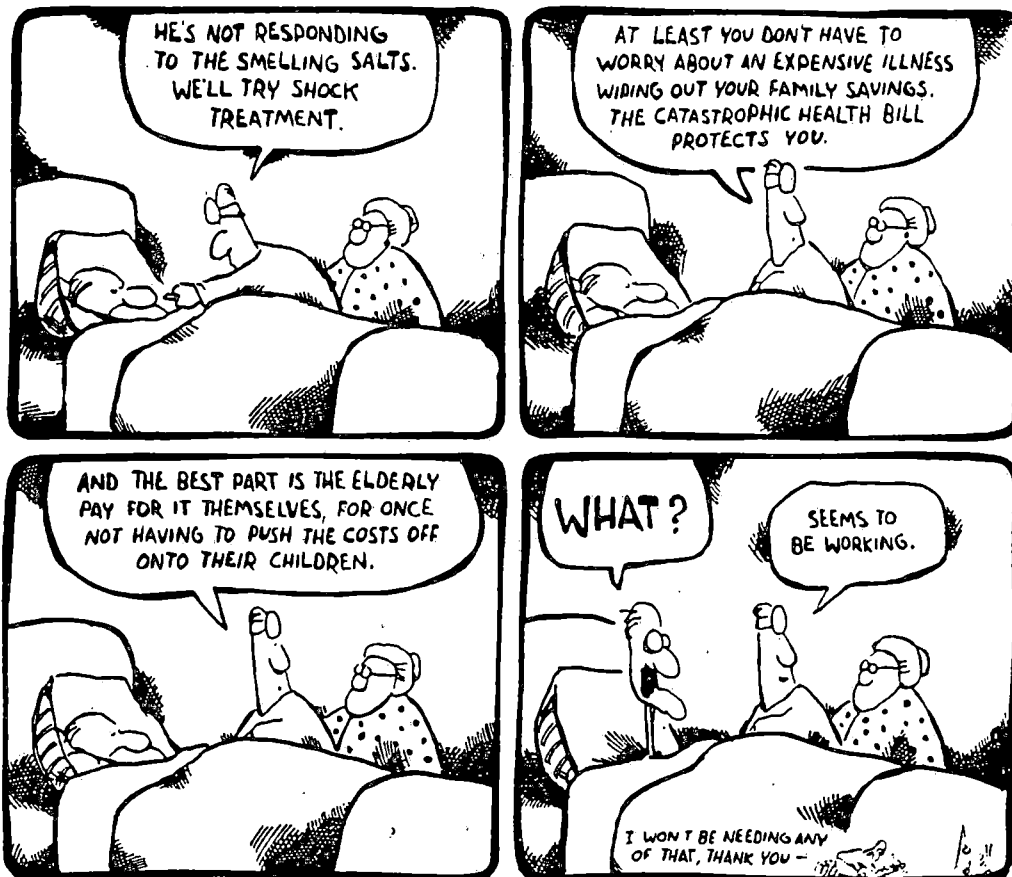
'Dessert'



CONDEMNED TO LIFE.



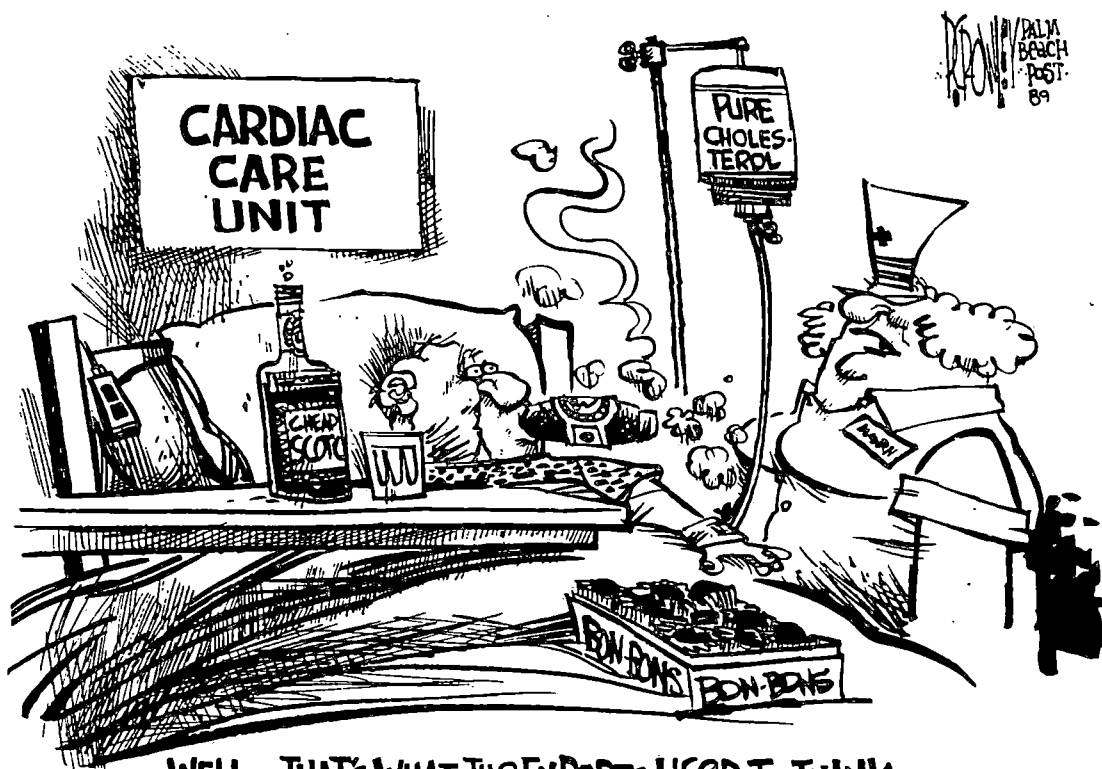
COSTELLO: ©1989 THE DARKSIDE PICTURE



BY TOLES FOR THE BUFFALO NEWS

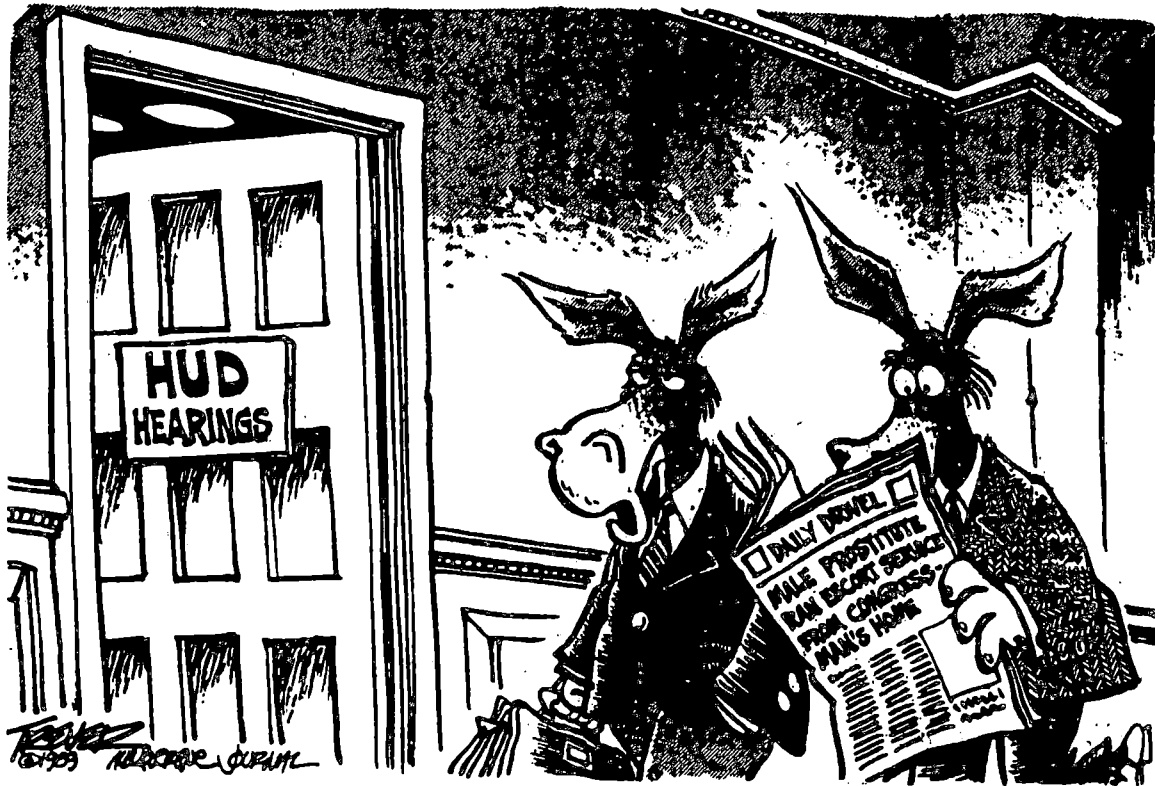


CLEANING UP AFTER HURRICANE ELDERLY

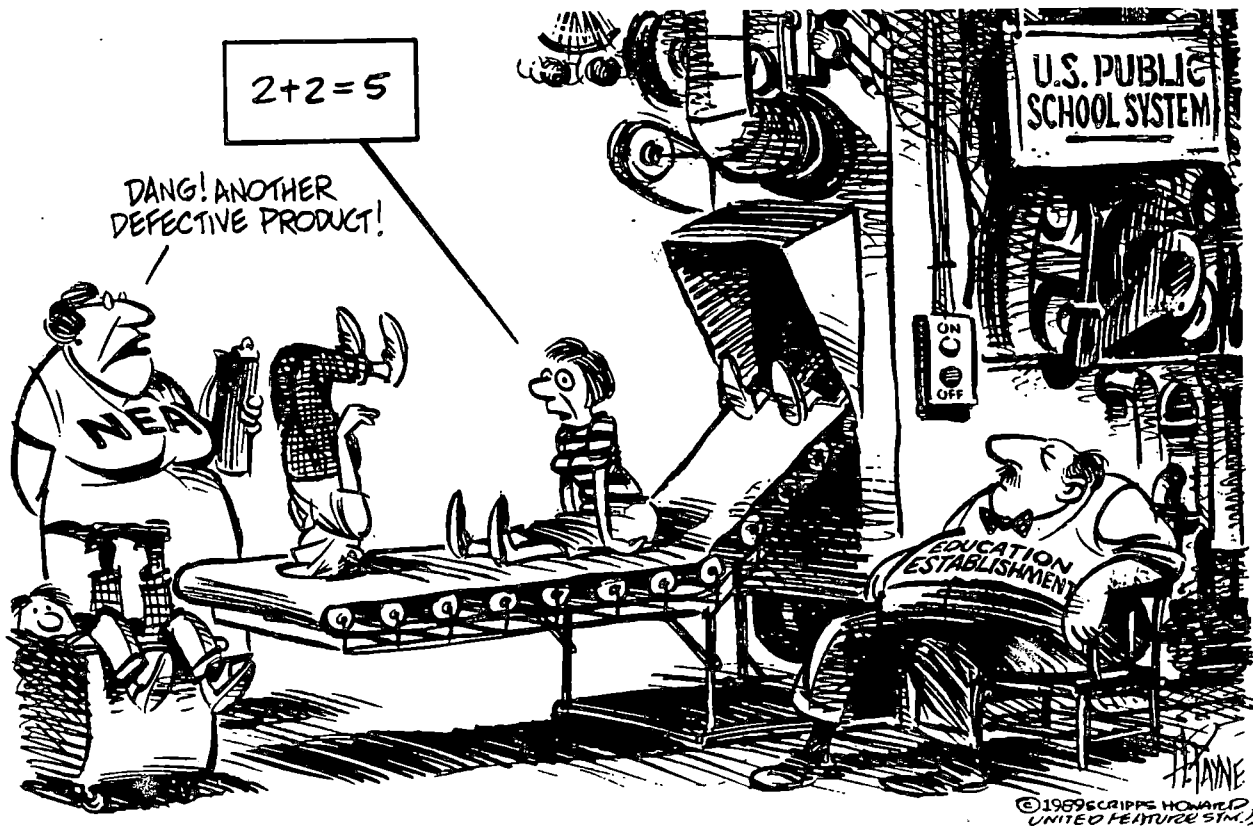


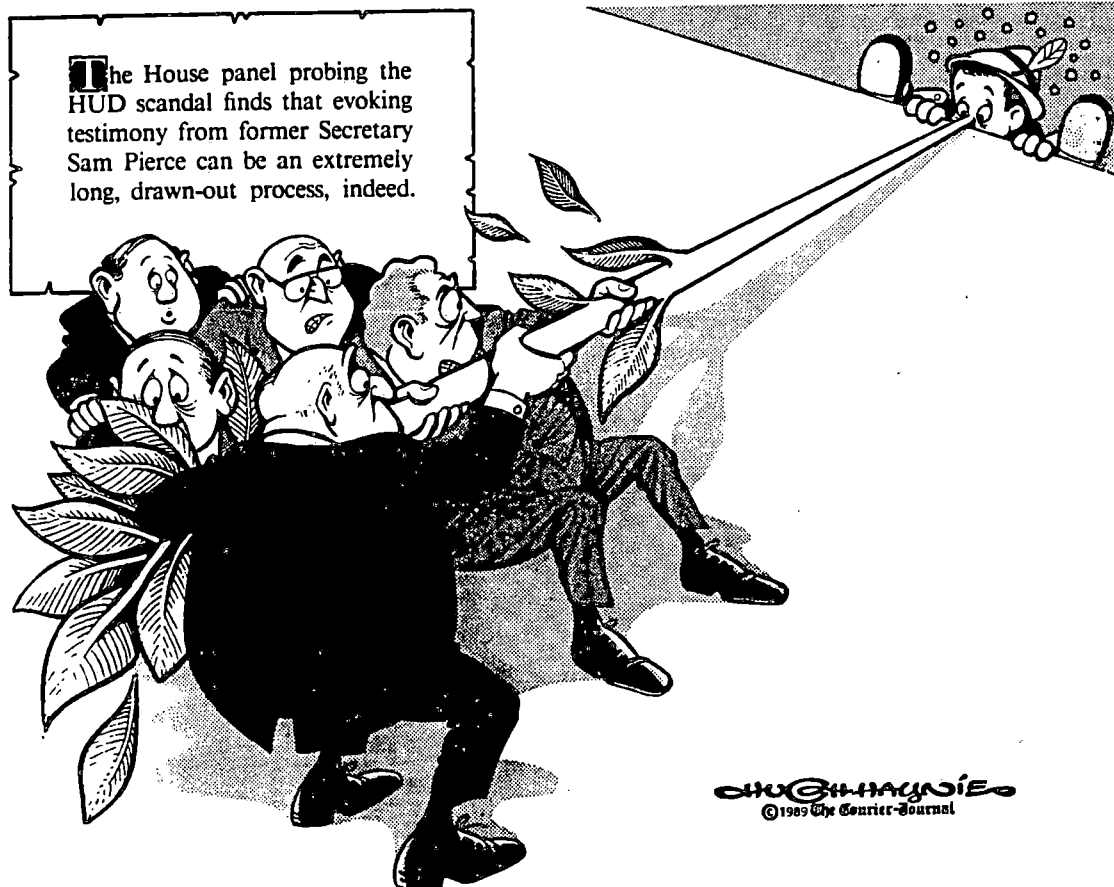
WELL...THAT'S WHAT THE EXPERTS USED TO THINK.

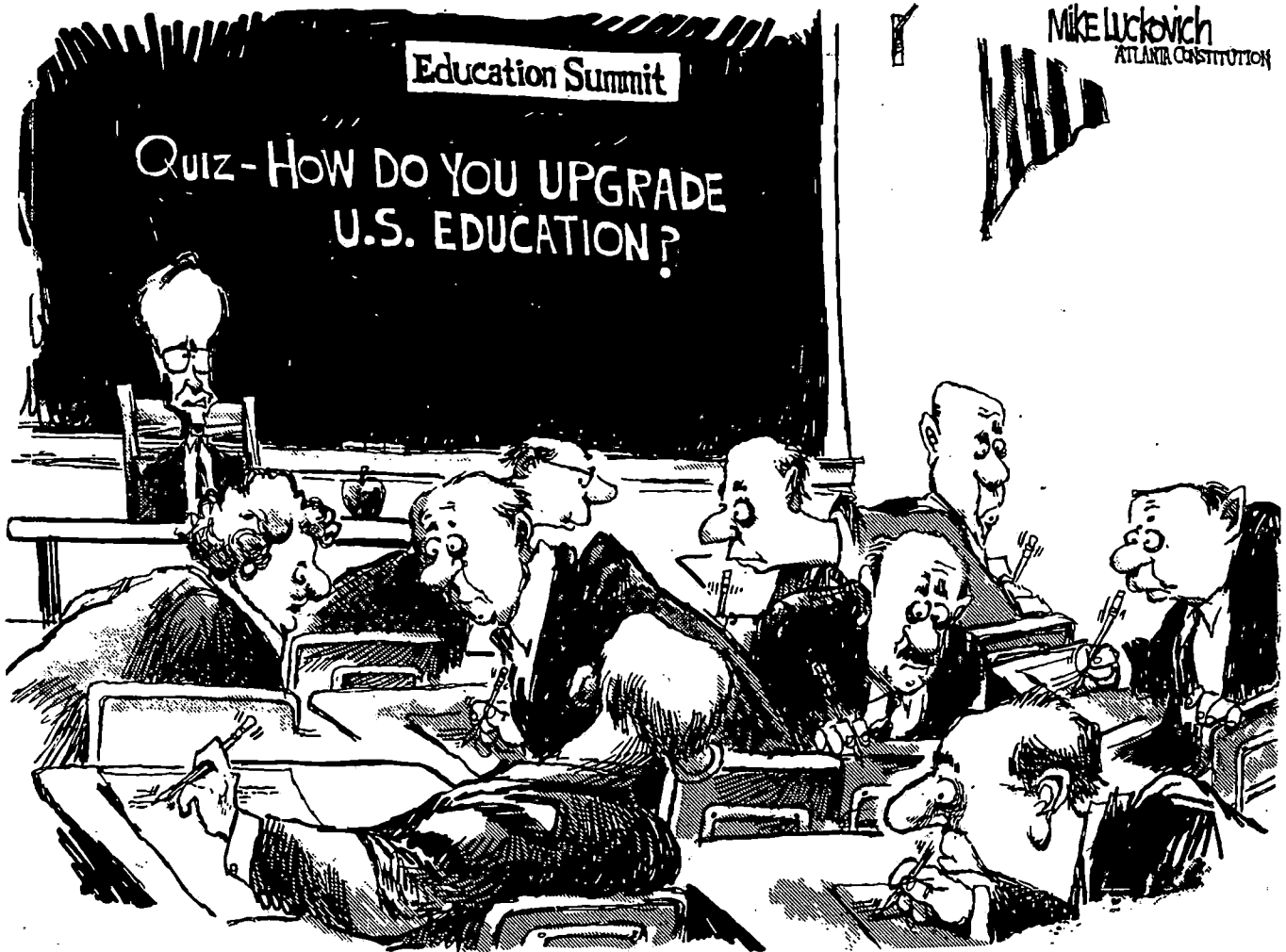
**'Maybe We Shouldn't Keep Barney Frank
On The Housing Oversight Committee —
He Had One Too Many Oversights . . .'**



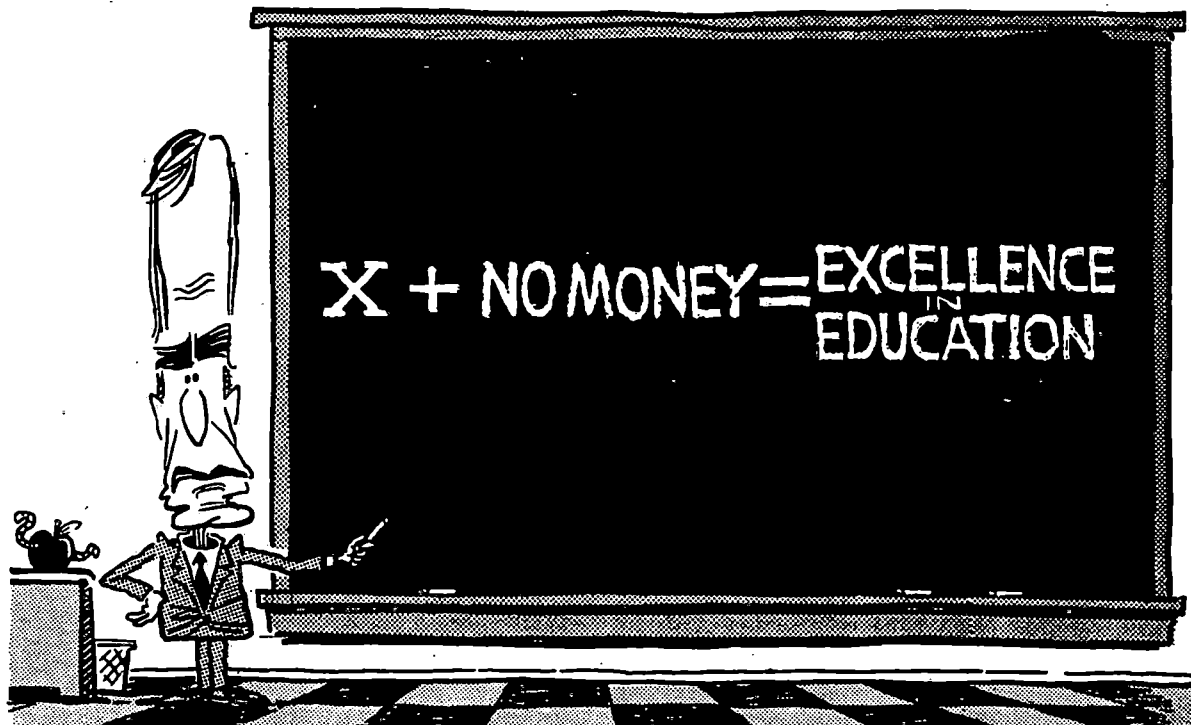
After leaving politics, Barney Frank made what seemed a logical career move...



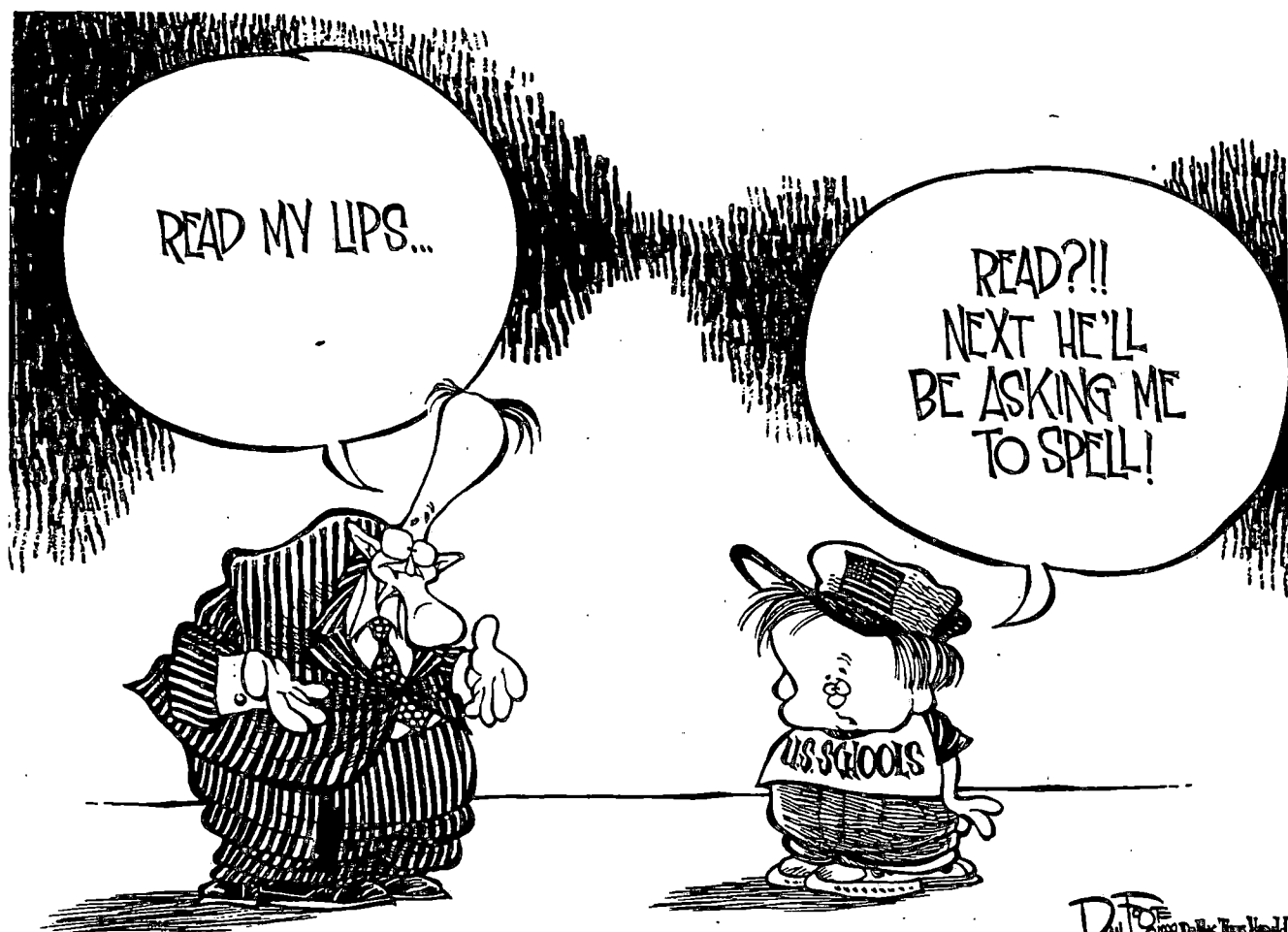




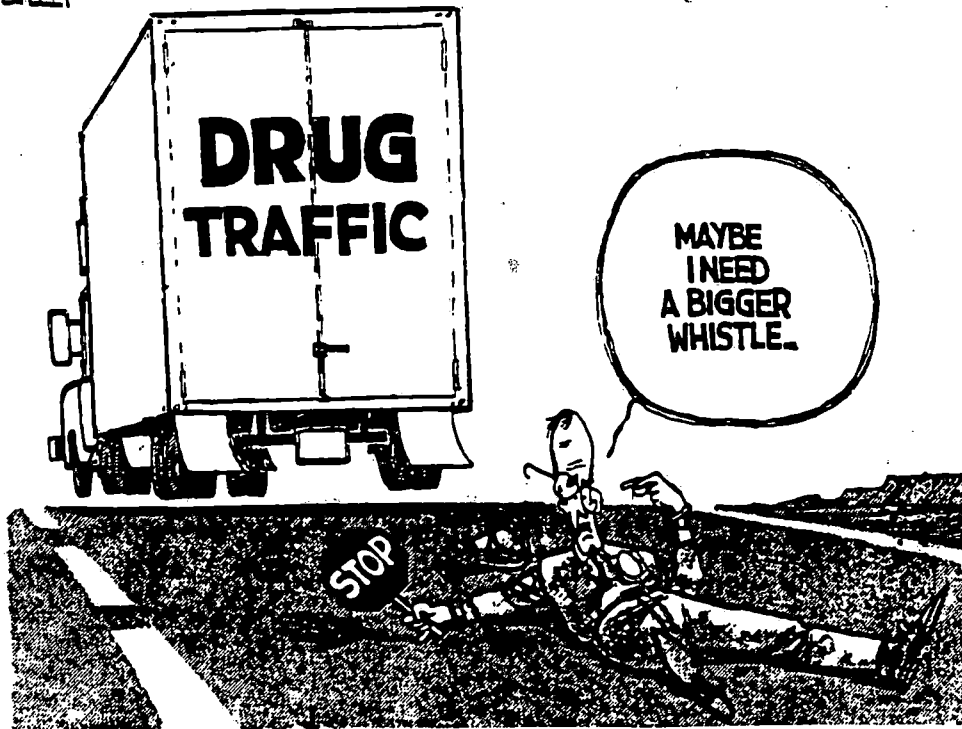
STAR TRIBUNE



YOUR ASSIGNMENT, GOVERNORS, IS TO FIND 'X'.
YOU HAVE THREE MONTHS.



SKELLY



MAUDIN
© 1989 Chicago Sun-Times

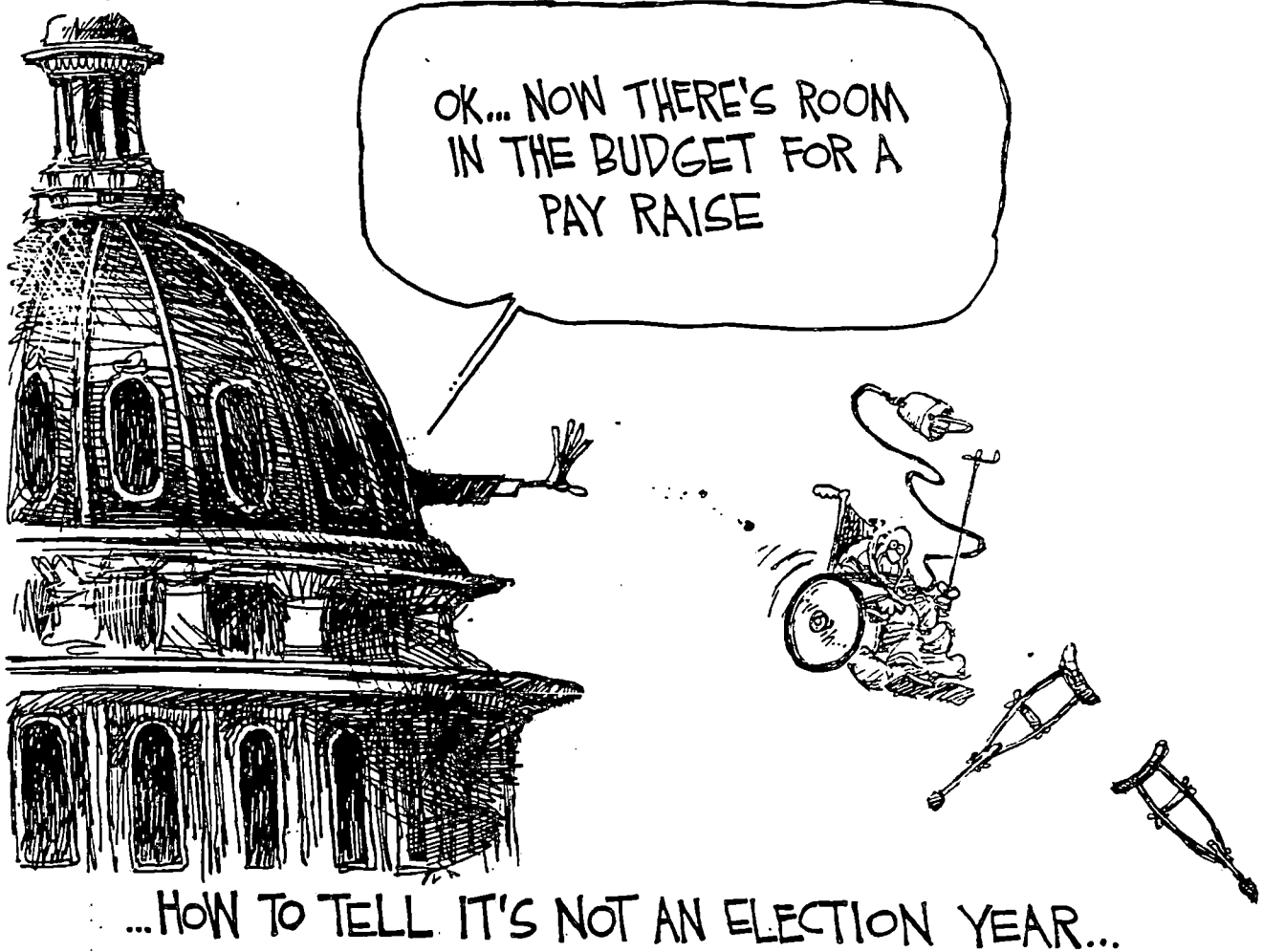






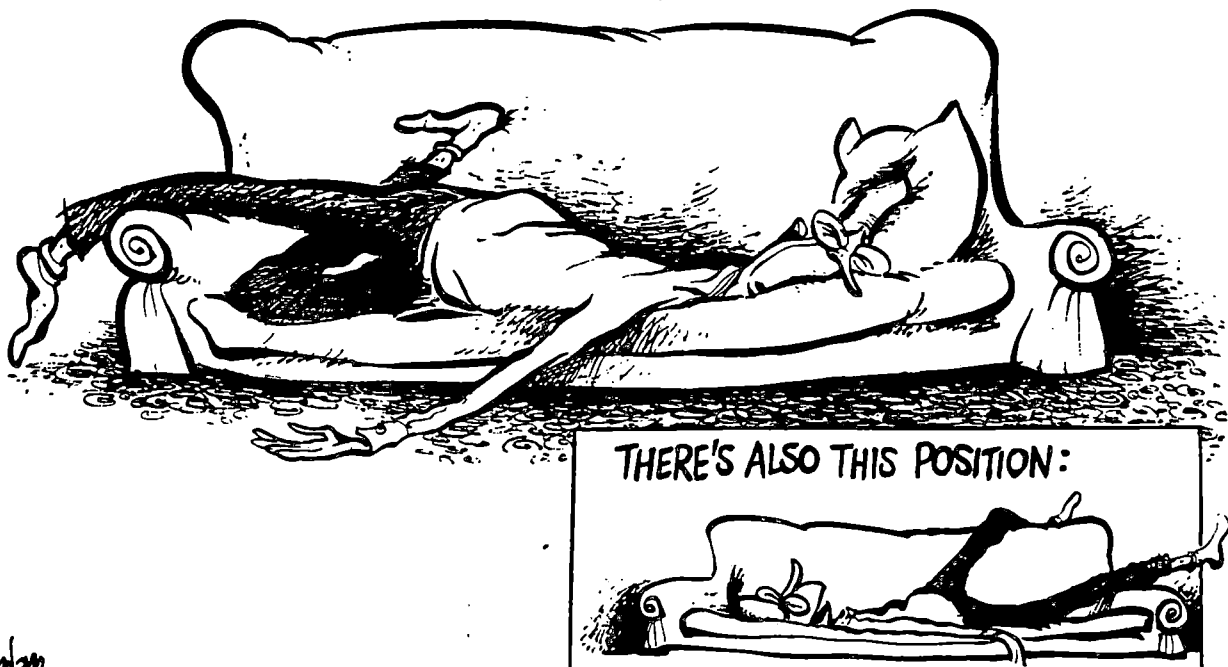
Special to the Star-Telegram / BUBBA FLINT

VIE / OCT 1971 SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

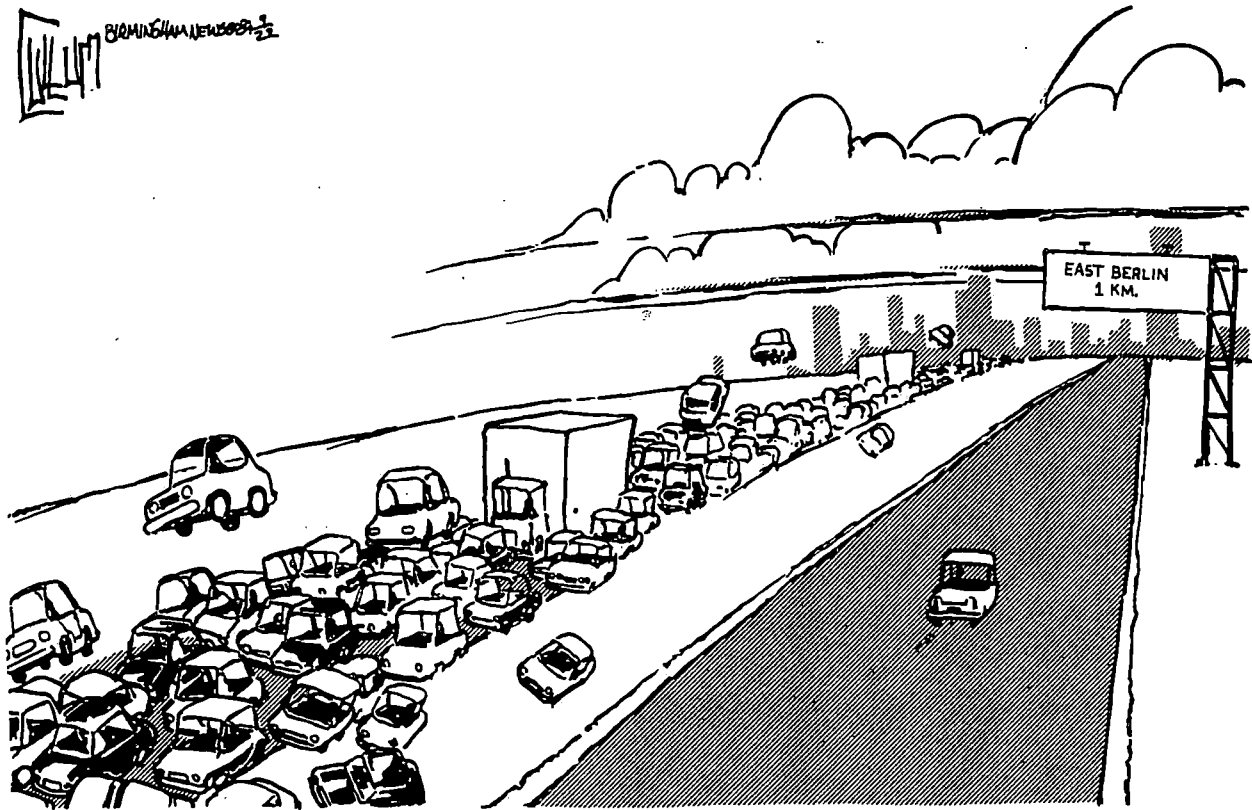




SIMILAR TO HIS PREDECESSOR'S
MR. BUSH'S POSITION ON
THE DEFICIT:



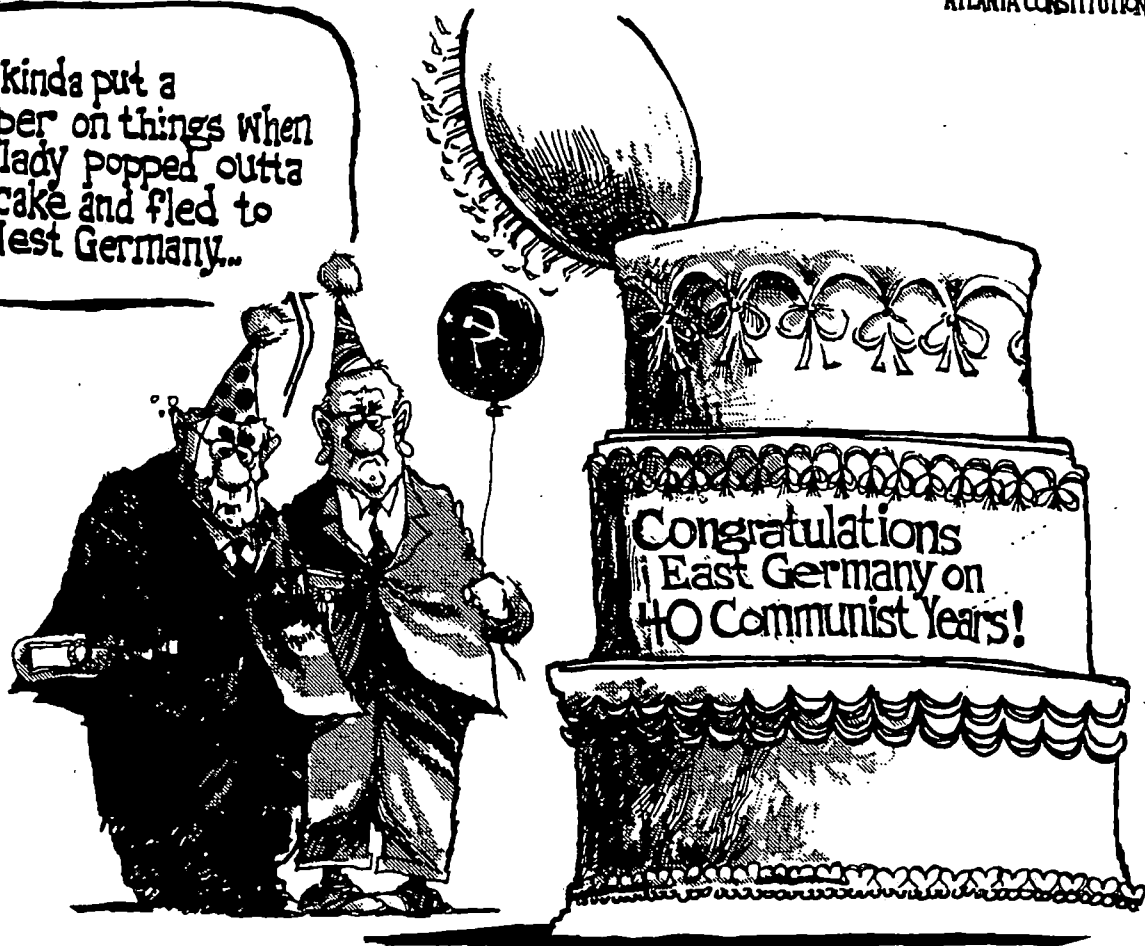


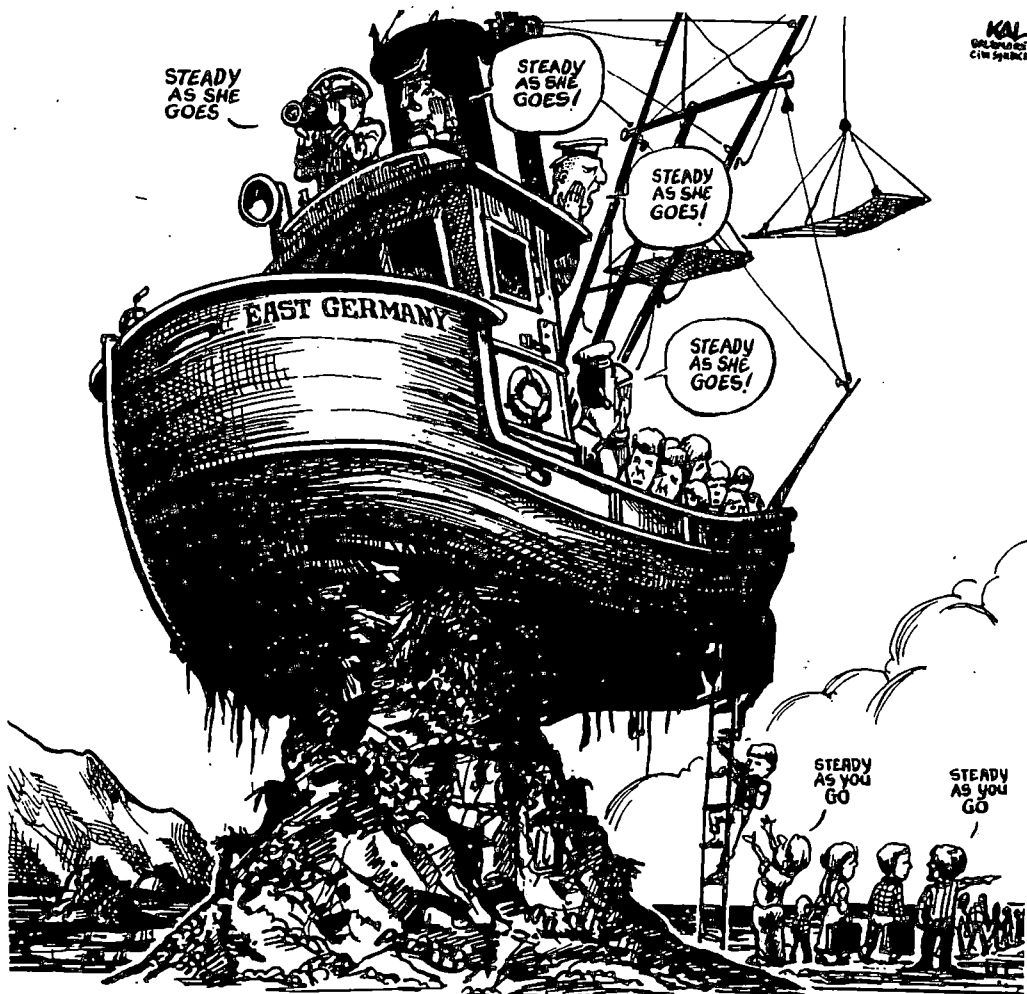


East Berlin morning rush hour

Mike Lukovich
ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

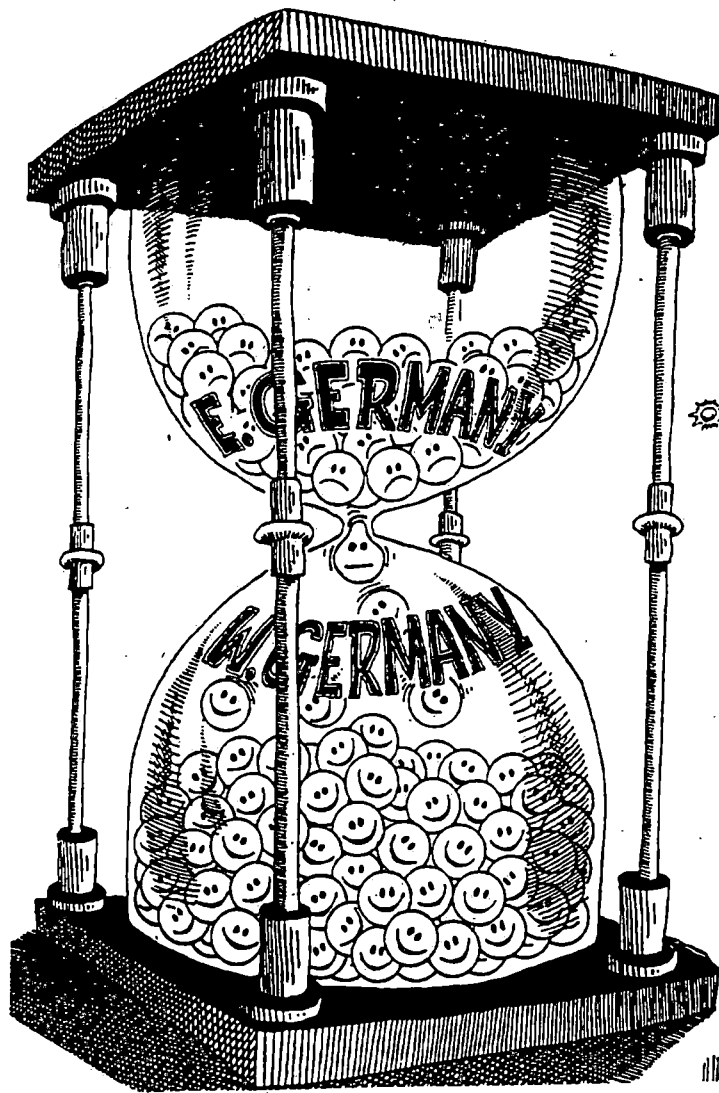
It kinda put a
damper on things when
the lady popped outta
the cake and fled to
West Germany...

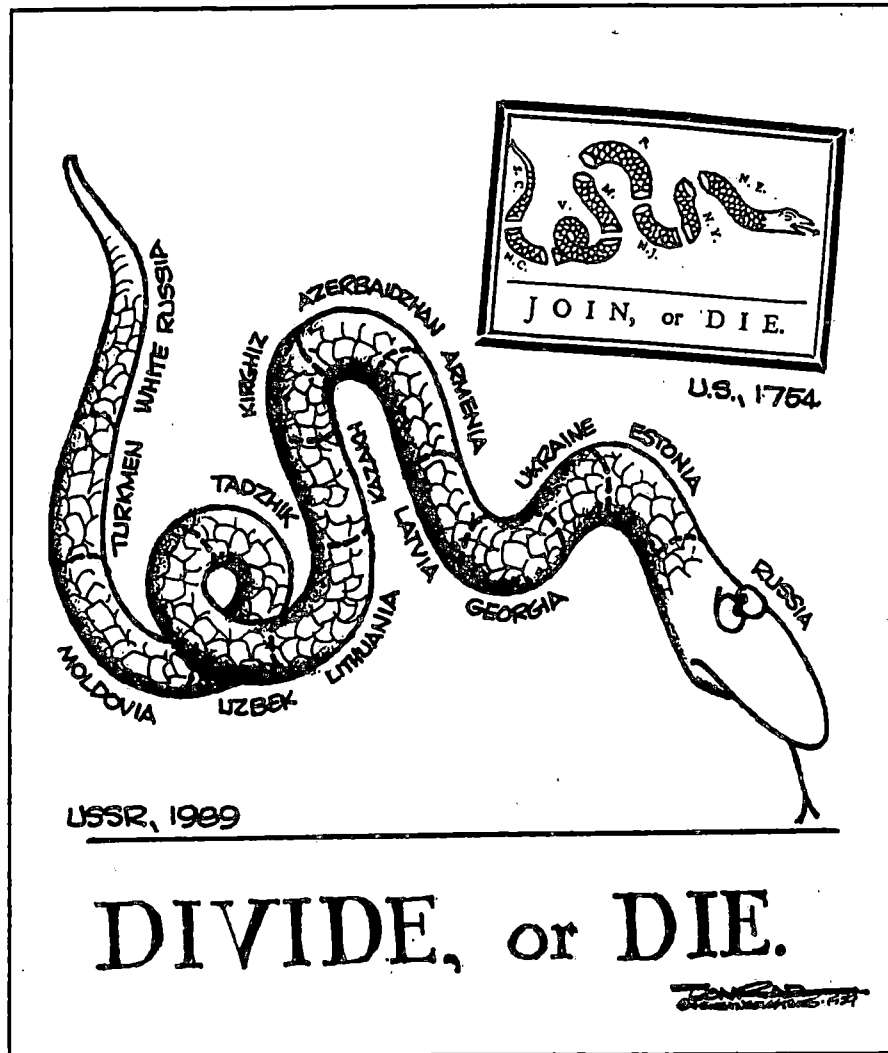


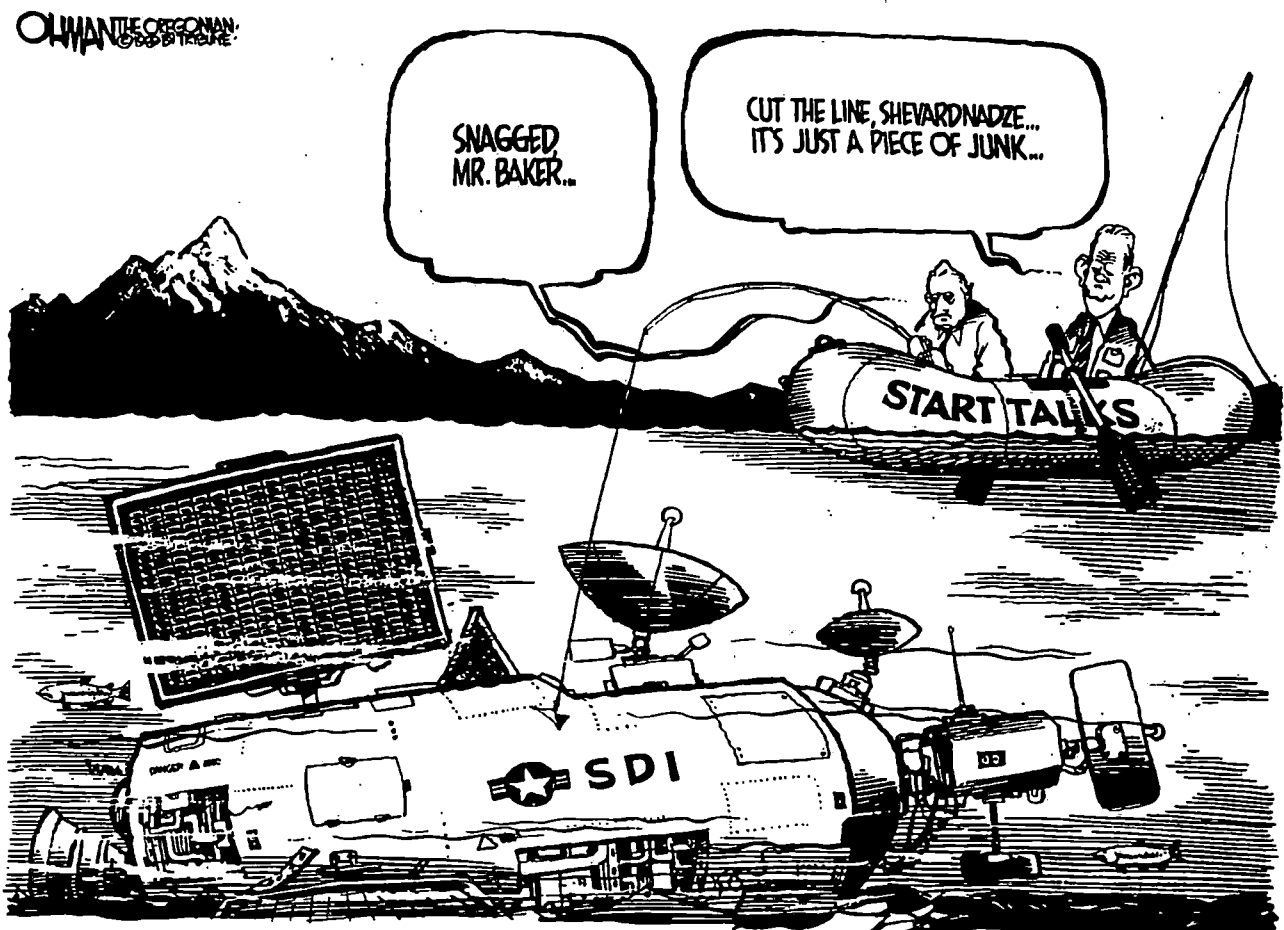
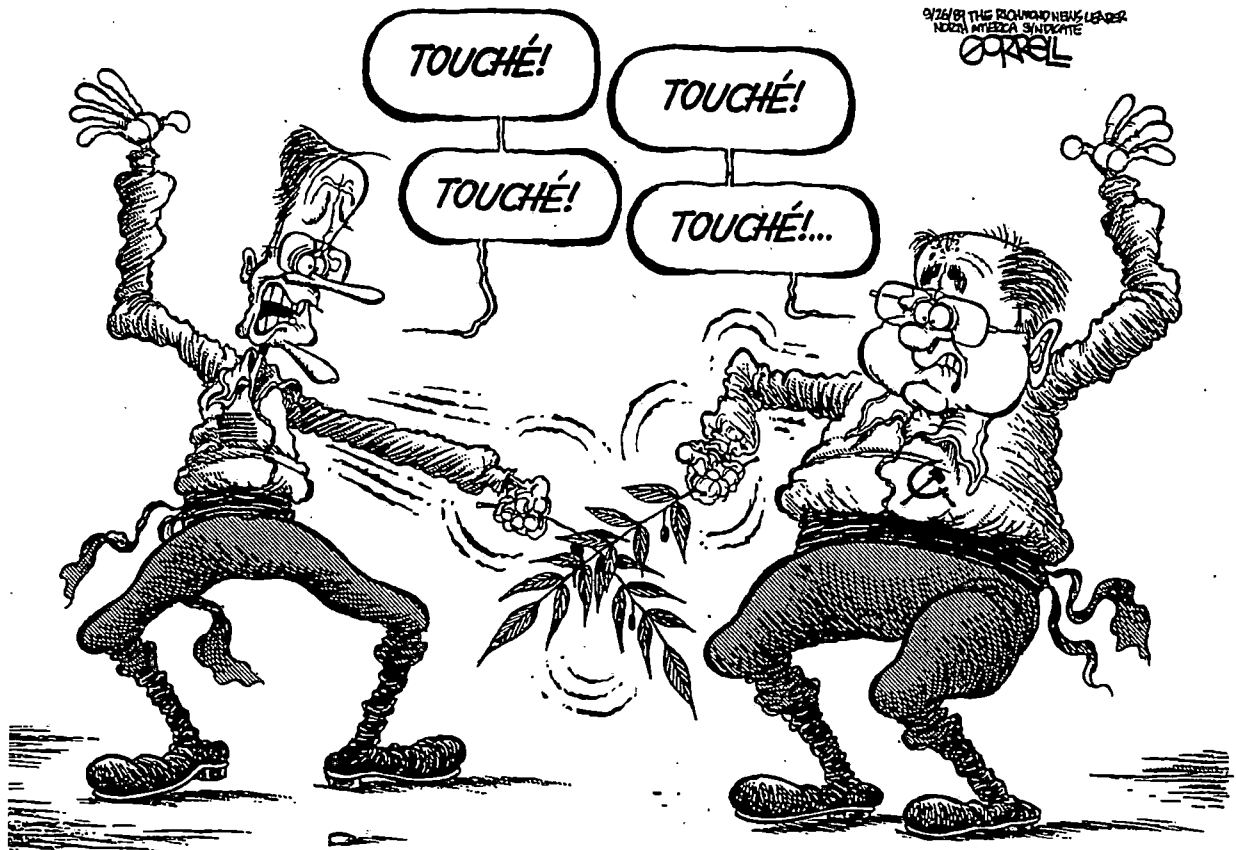


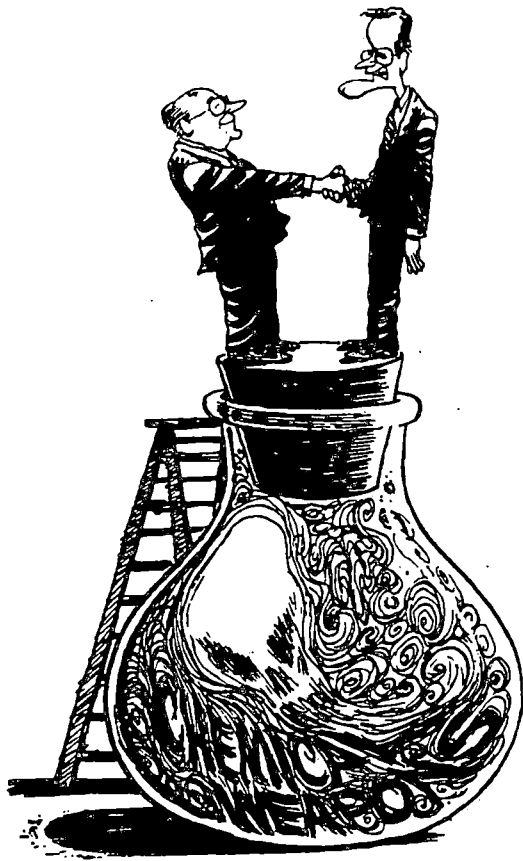
MIKE LUCKOVICH ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

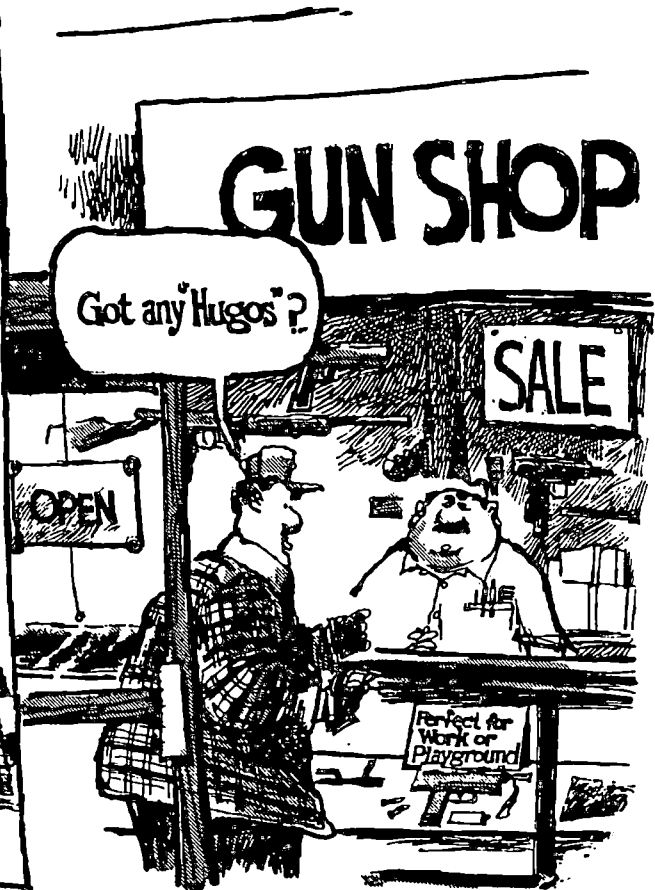
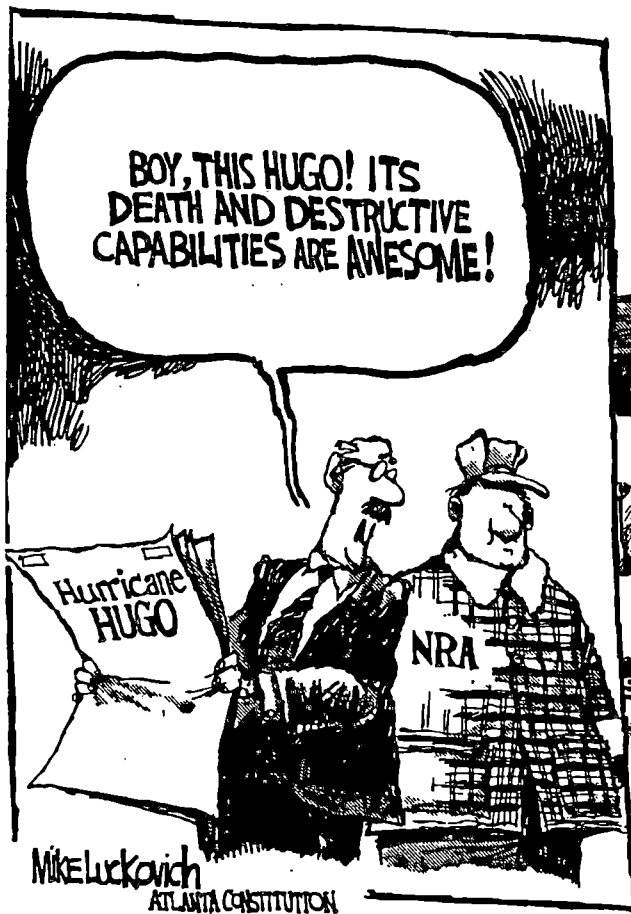
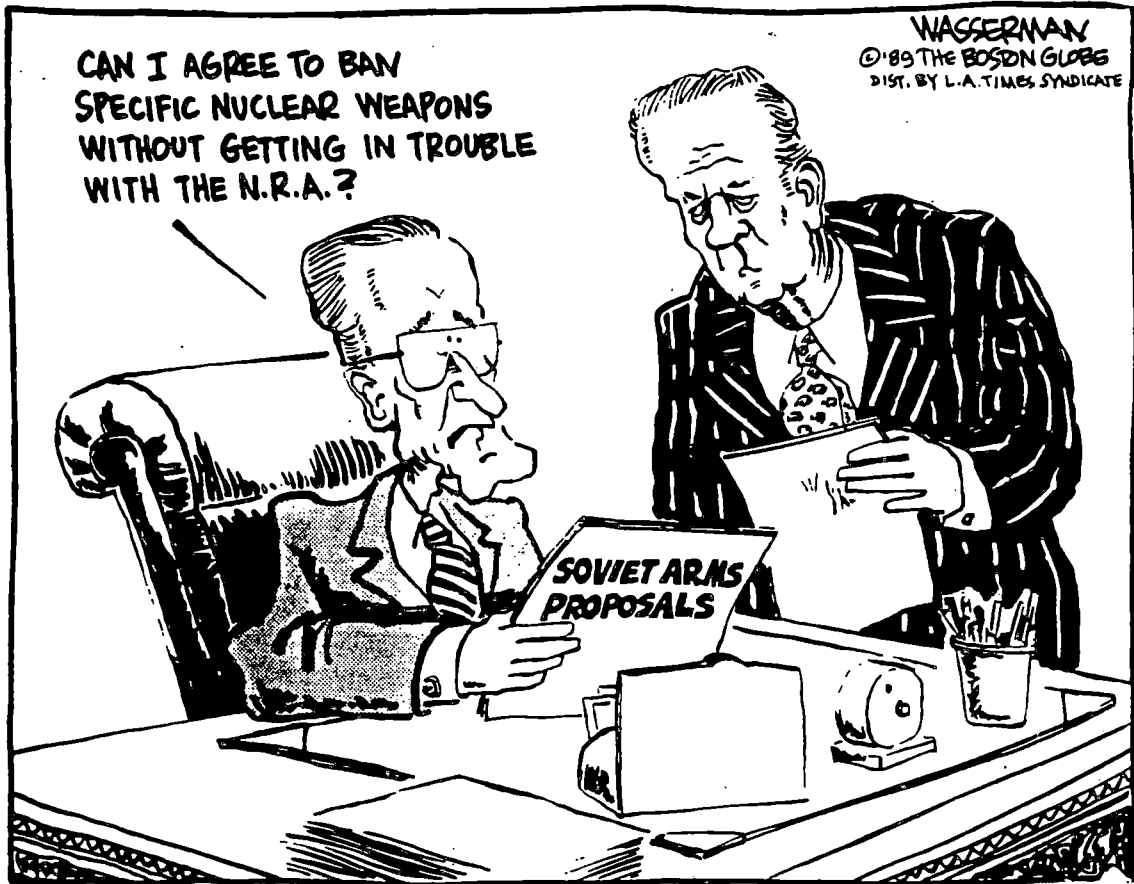


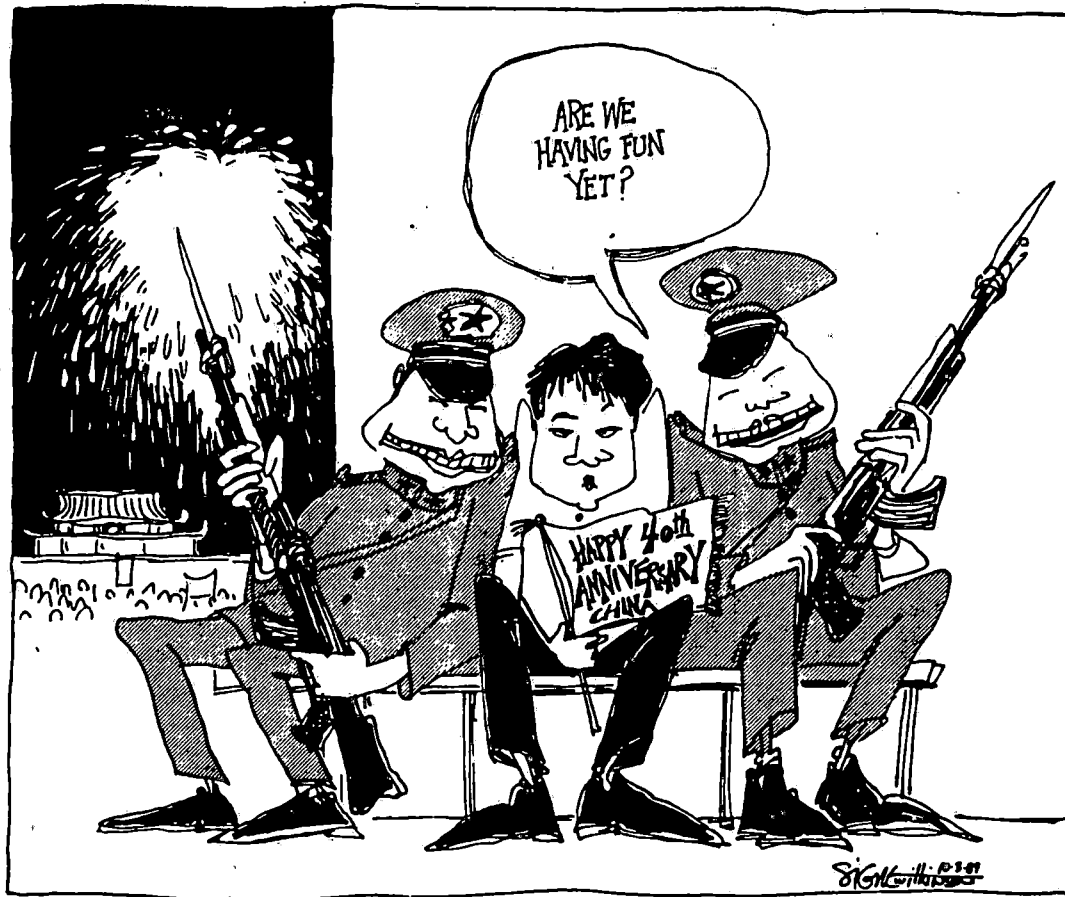




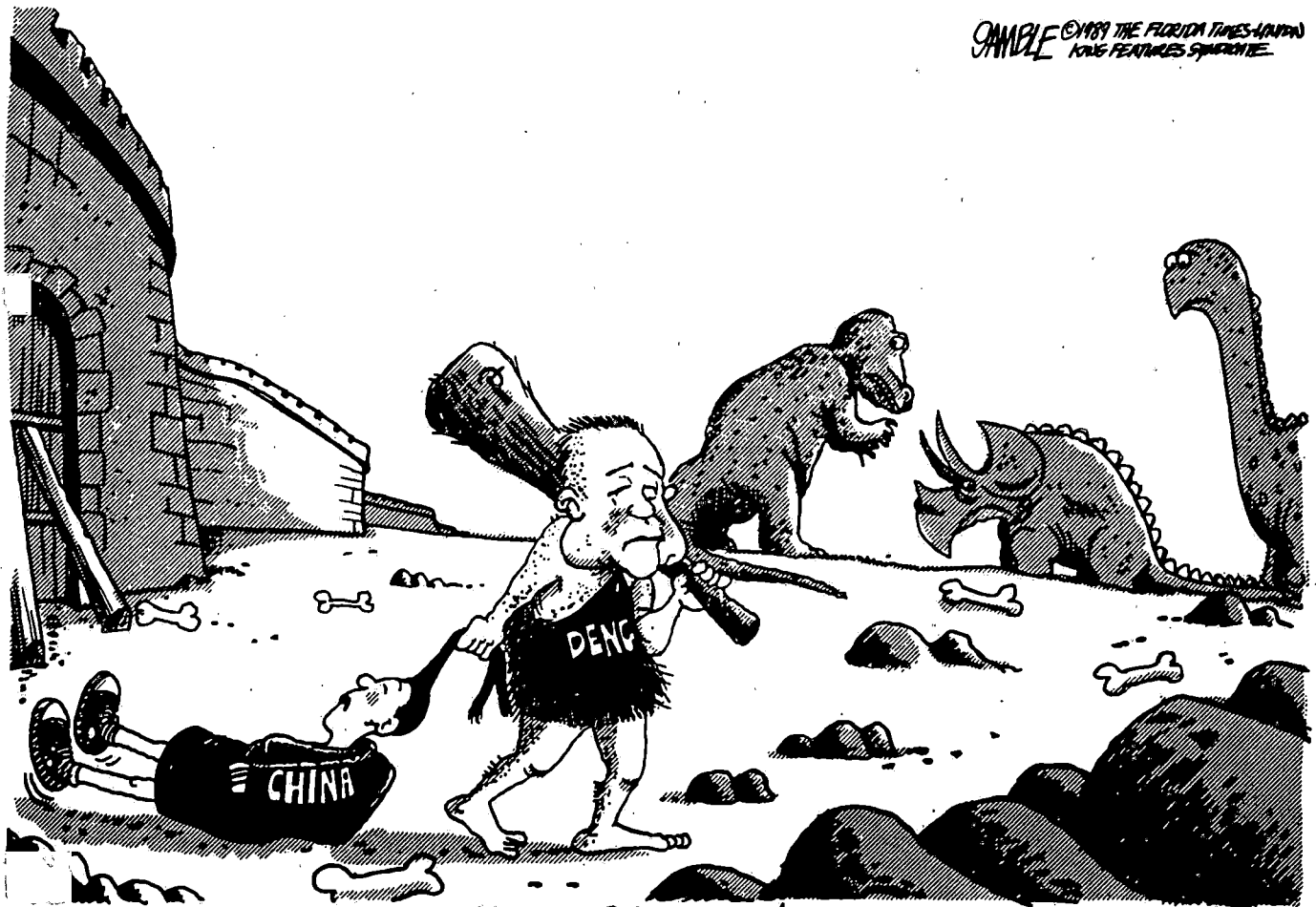






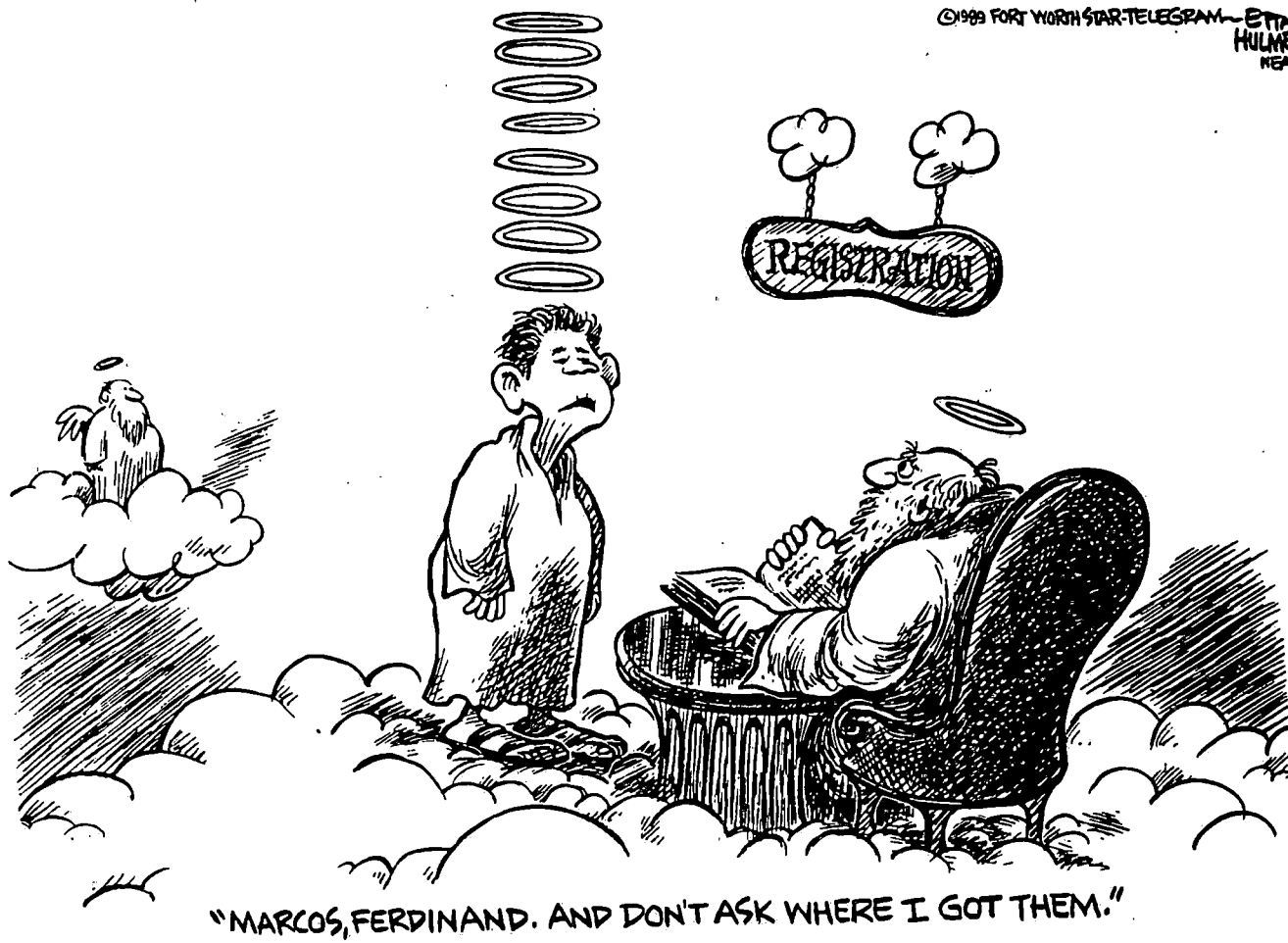


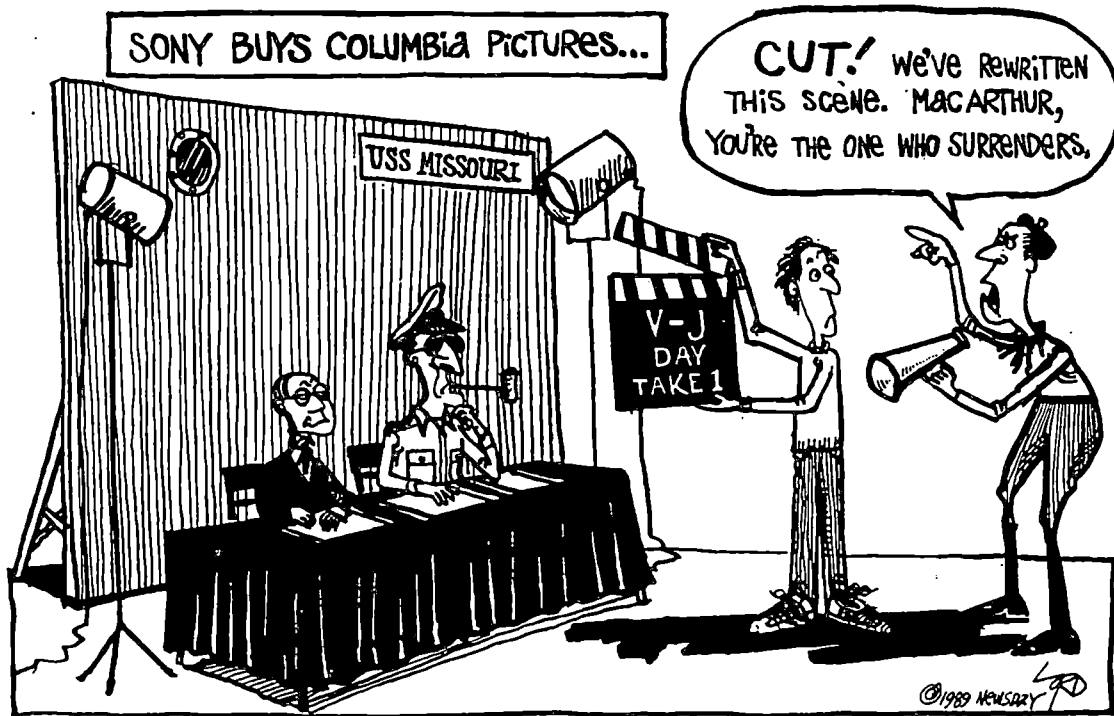
SAMPLE ©1989 THE FLORIDA TIMES-UNION
KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

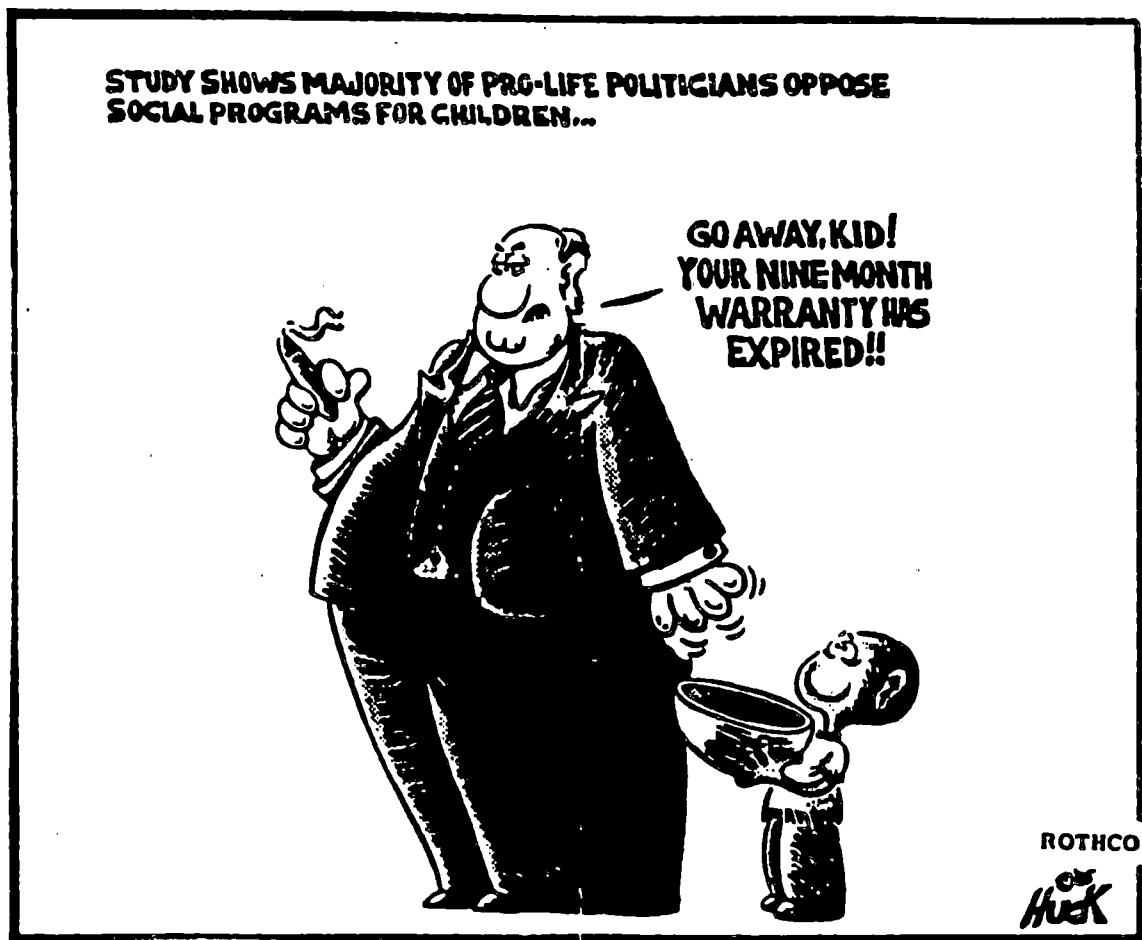


RETURN TO THE STONE AGE!









THIS COURT WILL DECIDE
WHEN LIFE BEGINS AND
WHEN AND HOW IT ENDS,
ANYTHING IN BETWEEN...

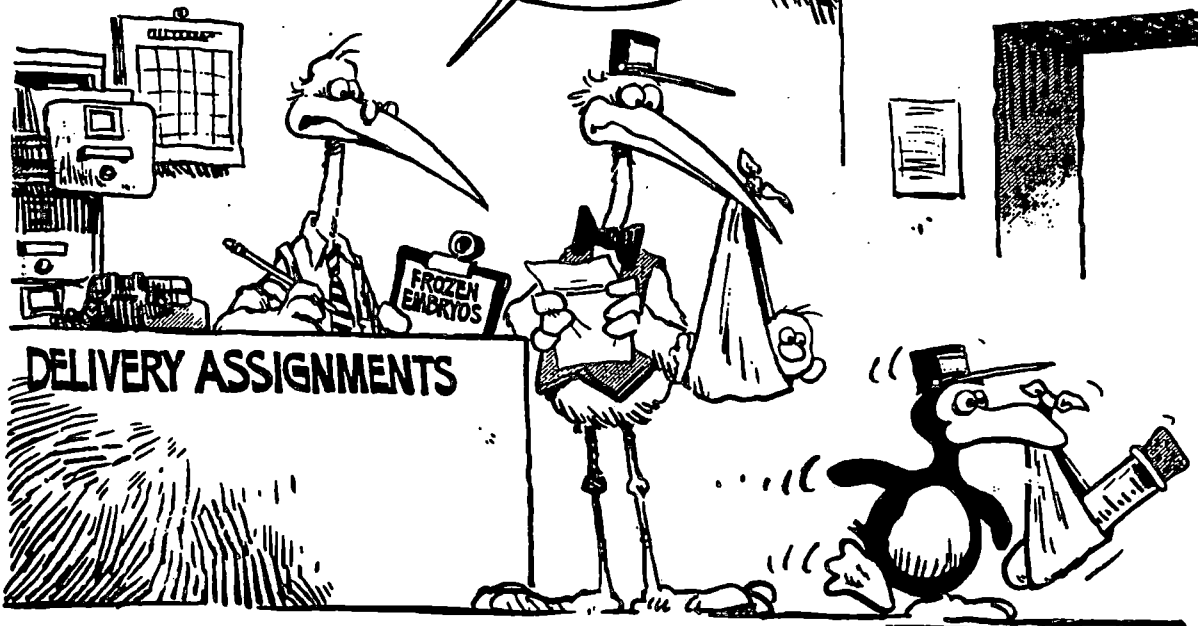
WE DON'T
WANT TO GET
INVOLVED!!

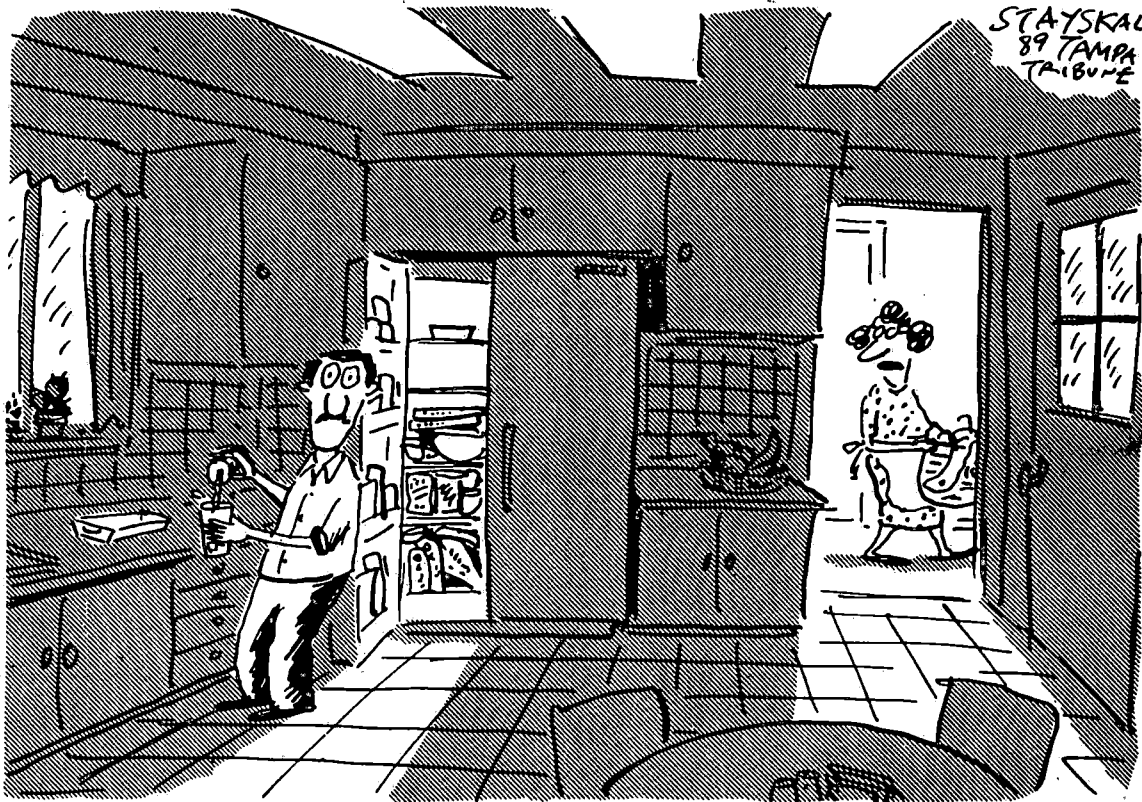


Wardlaw
in THE EVENING SUN

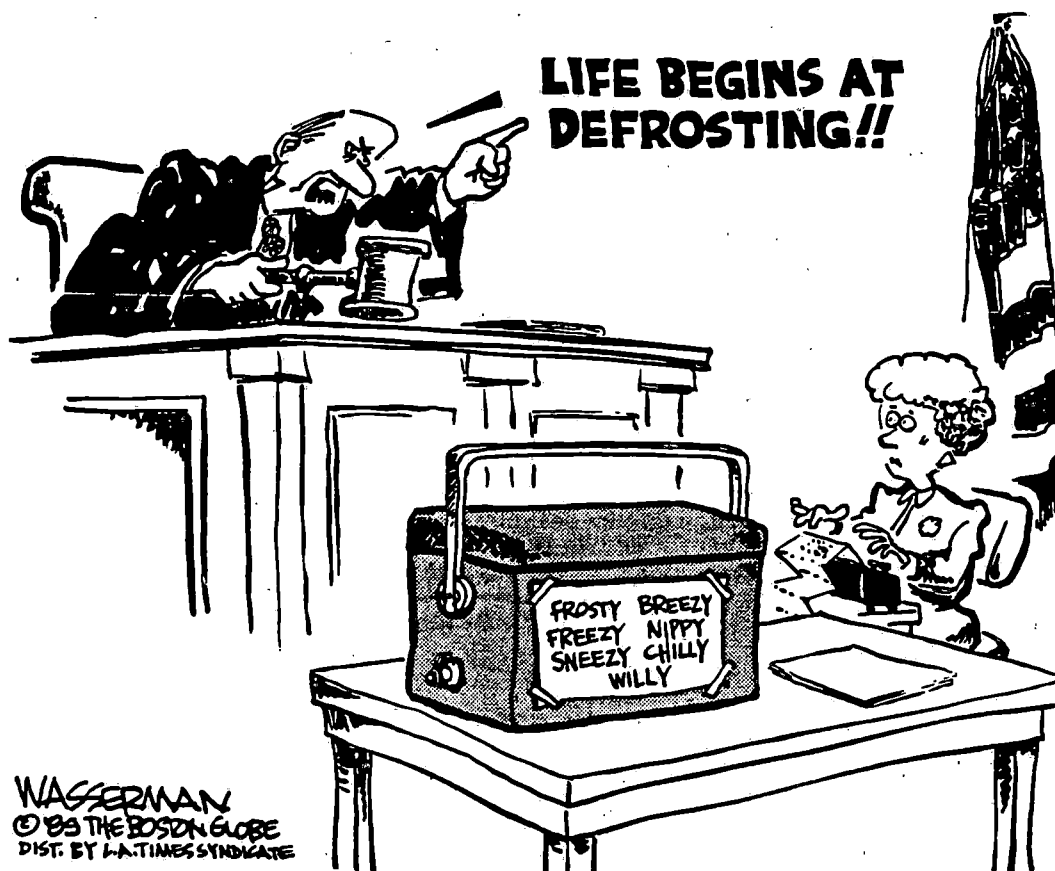
Baby Factory

I MISS THE
OLD DAYS...





"BY THE WAY, I CHANGED THINGS AROUND. THE ICE CUBES ARE ON THE FIRST SHELF NOW AND THE FROZEN EMBRYOS ARE ON THE SECOND!"

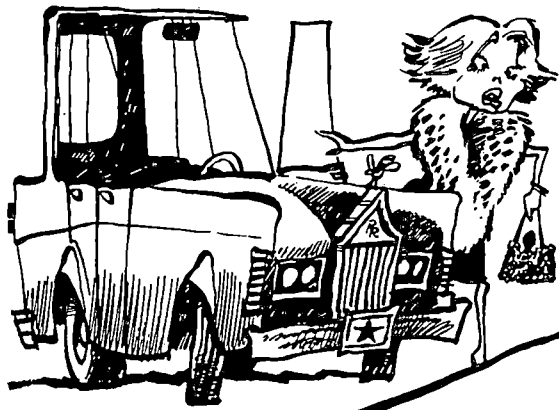






LETHAL WEAPON

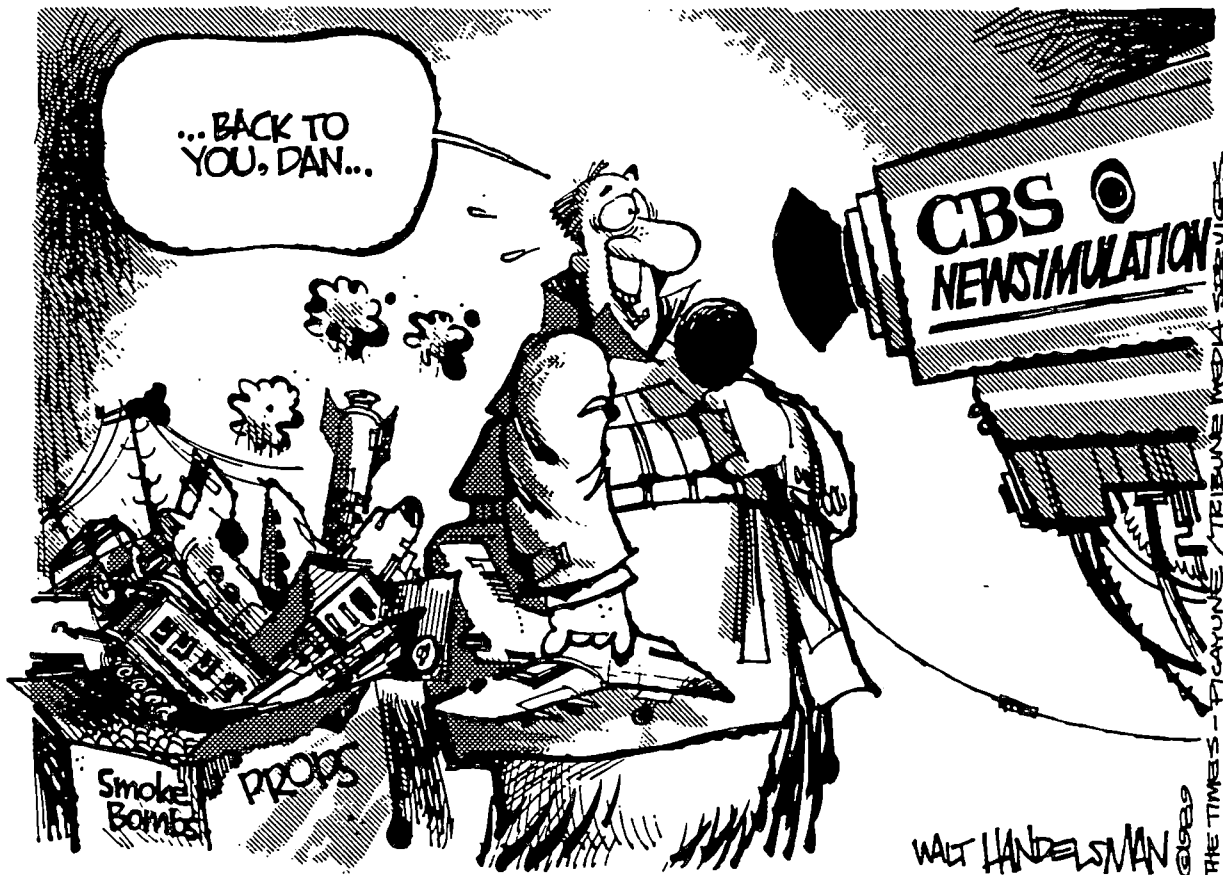
EVERY COP'S
WORST
NIGHTMARE...



ZSA
ZSA!



Mike Keefe 89 THE DENVER POST



WALT HANDELSMAN 89

THE TIMES - PICTURES / TRIBUNE MEDIA SERVICES

Presidential Phone Calls



DATE: Oct 6 TIME: 5 PM approx
incoming/outgoing

WITH: Sec. Lou Sullivan

SUBJECT: see attached

FOLLOW UP:

Situation between
me & Dick

"Just stating
Admin. Posit." had
met Sept 23rd - that
we approved repeat

staff
has long contact DMB
← summer staff

Not understood
by us -

Feel want

informed -

Want to be on
team

D & I talked

yesterday -

Mom was good with
policy -

Just telling me
not asking for

will work improve
communications

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 6, 1989

Mr. President,

Attached are transcripts on Panama
from comments made by you, Secretary
Cheney and me.

Marlin Fitzwater

Bush Library Photocopy
George Bush Handwriting

Photocopy from George Bush Presidential Library

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 6, 1989

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
UPON LEAVING WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

Washington, D.C.

THE PRESIDENT: First report, all is well.

Q How do you feel?

THE PRESIDENT: Feel fine. They just did a -- went deep down into the -- near the bone, apparently. But I think the doctor felt it was a good thing to do. But it's real minor. When it's healed -- I'm out of some sports for a few days, but other than that, it's fine, just fine.

So anyway.

Q Sir, how about Panama? Simply put, a lot of critics say you blew it. Your administration blew it on Panama. Do you have a comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that's the case. No, we reviewed all the information and I don't see anything now that would have had me make a different decision then. And I think the Senate and the House, once fully briefed, will understand that.

But I want to see Noriega out of there. I think the record will show that there was never a chance to have him handed over to us. I think that was one of the things that caused concern, because there's a report that he was offered to our military and they wouldn't take him. Well, that simply is not true. So once that fact is out there, I think it will be all right.

Obviously, I would like to see him out, but I think any commander-in-chief must have the lives of American citizens and of American soldiers foremost in mind when he makes a decision. And I'm not just being stubborn, but as I look at all the information, I wouldn't today have made a different decision then. And I think that will get clear when people understand the facts.

Q When you say make a decision, I mean, what exactly did you decide to do --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, what people -- some people seemed to have wanted me to do is to unleash the full military and go in and -- quote -- "get Noriega." I think that's what -- the charge by those who are -- feel as frustrated as I do about the results. But I think that's the allegation. So you say what could a commander-in-chief have done? I suppose you could have gone to general quarters. But that's not prudent and that's not the way I plan to conduct the military or foreign affairs of this country.

Q Did you ever consider doing that, sir?

Q Were there communications problems, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Not under these circumstances. Not under the way the circumstances developed.

Q Were there communications problems? Were there bad cables? Was there a gap in getting information to you?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. We had kind of almost a running meeting there. And I think that's a good question and I don't think I can factually answer that yet. But I -- having been through a few situations of this nature, I think the more coordination you have the better. But I don't think there was a fact gap that kept the President from acting differently -- put it that way. But whether we can do better on communications, I don't know. I hope so.

Q Do the Panamanians who might want to mount another coup attempt feel that in the future there might be a different response from you; that perhaps you might use -- under the right conditions, use military force to help?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think, as I indicated -- I didn't say it publicly, but as I -- put it this way: I would not rule out any option. Any option. But you have to look at the facts at the time. And you've got to keep in mind the lives of American citizens, lives of your own troops and what you're trying to do. But I wouldn't -- certainly wouldn't rule that out.

Q Do you think the likelihood of another coup attempt is less now because this was put down, sir? Do you think a coup attempt --

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I get the feeling that those who are in opposition feel that, with this manifestation of opposition to Noriega being more clear than ever, that maybe he's weaker. But maybe that's wishful thinking. But I'll tell you, the day he goes out there will be dancing in the streets of Panama.

Q Sir, why didn't you use military force in this case? Was it because you didn't think you could get Noriega himself? Or what was the reason?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I didn't use military force because it wasn't warranted under the existing circumstances.

I've got to go. Thank you all.

Q How long are you going to keep that elevated?

THE PRESIDENT: I've got to hold it up like this, and I'm trying very hard to keep it in this five-finger position here. You get what I mean? (Laughter.) One more question, however -- (laughter.) No, come on.

Q Did it hurt, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No. They put a block on it. I didn't feel it.

Q Does it hurt now?

THE PRESIDENT: They tell me it will later. No, it doesn't now. Just out of some sports.

END

Marine One arrived at the hospital's helipad at 12:21, on Fern Street just off Georgia Ave. He waved to reporters and the few people standing on porches on Fern, and showed his hand and smiled. He was then driven a short distance to the Emergency Room entrance. ~~By~~ At 2:10 p.m., Jay Allison said the surgery was completed and the President was preparing to leave. "He got out of surgery, was changing and was ready to go." He said the President said he felt "great" and added, "He was in a great mood." The President, who Jay said was wearing a white lab coat and green hospital scrubs at the time, was "joking and talking and laughing with the doctors."

A few minutes later, the President, again wearing his dark suit and tie, came out of the Emergency Room and talked about the surgery and Panama. You should be getting a full transcript, but in case that is delayed, here is a quick version: (Throughout this the President held his hand against his chest, the middle finger heavily bandaged and the fingers all kept together, he said later, on purpose.)

All that follows is direct quote:

First Report. All is well.

I feel fine. They just did, they went deep down into the bone apparently. I think the doctors felt it was a good thing to do. But it's real minor and it's, I'm out of some sports for a few days. But other than that, it's fine. Just fine. So anyway.

(did you blow it in panama?)

I don't think that's the case. We reviewed all the information and I don't see anything now that would have had me make a different decision then. And I think the Senate and the House once fully briefed, will understand that. I want to see Noriega out of there. I think the record will show that there was never a chance to have him handed over to us. I think that was one of the things that caused concern. There was a report that he was offered to our military and they wouldn't take him. Well, that simply is not true. So once that fact is out there, I think it will be alright. Obviously, I would like to see him out. But I think any commander in chief must have the lives of American citizens and of American soldiers foremost in mind when he makes a decision and I'm not just being stubborn, but as I look at all the information, I wouldn't today have made a different decision then. And I think that will get clear when people understand the facts.

(inaudible question)

What some people seem to have wanted me to do is to unleash the full military to go in and quote 'get Noriega.' I think that's what the charge by those who feel as frustrated as I do about the results. That's the allegation. You say what could a commander in chief have done? I suppose you could have gone to general quarters. But that's not prudent and that's not the way I plan to conduct the military or foreign affairs of this country.

(did you consider doing that?)

Not under these circumstances. Not under the way the circumstances developed.

(did you have communications problems?)

I don't think so. We had kind of almost a running meeting there. I think that's a good question and I don't think I can factually answer that yet. Having been through a few situations of this nature, I think the more ~~xxx~~ coordination you have, the better. But I don't think there was a fact gap that kept the president from acting differently. Put it that way. But whether we can do better on communications, I don't know. I hope so.

(inaudible question)

I think as I indicated; I didn't say it publicly, but I'll put it this way. I would not rule out any option. Any option. But you have to look at the facts at the time and you've got to keep in mind the lives of American citizens, lives of your own troops and what you're trying to do. But certainly, I wouldn't rule that out.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 6, 1989

TEXT OF A LETTER FROM
THE PRESIDENT TO THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

October 6, 1989

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to Section 1125 of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, I am submitting herewith updated reports concerning consultations undertaken by the United States Government to eliminate trade barriers to U.S. wine exports in certain foreign countries.

Sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH

#

pag e two --walter reed pool

(does the failure of this coup suggest future coups are unlikely?)

I don't know. I get the feeling that those who are in opposition feel that this manifestation of opposition to Noriega being more clear than ever, that maybe he's weaker. But maybe that's wishful thinking. But I'll tell you, the day he goes out, there will be dancing in the streets of Panama.

(why didn't you use the military?)

I didn't use military force because it wasn't warranted under the existing circumstances. I gotta go. Thank you all.

(some question about his finger)

I have to hold it up like this, and I'm trying very hard to keep it in this five-finger position. You know what I mean?

(laughing, some banter)

Now go on.

(does it hurt?)

No, they put a block on it. I didn't feel it. They tell me it will later. (something inaudible) I'm just out of some sports.

####

George Condon, Copley News Service
10/6/89

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 6, 1989

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News Conference with
Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney
At the Pentagon
Friday, October 6, 1989 - 2:30 p.m.

Secretary Cheney: ~~At this point~~ We've received a number of questions, of course, in recent days about various and sundry topics. But out of respect for our guest, we wanted to separate that press briefing from this press briefing. I'd simply throw the floor open to questions. I'd be happy to respond.

Q: Mr. Secretary, was there any moment at all during the proceedings on Tuesday when rebels or their emissaries either requested or expressed any willingness of any sort to turn Noriega over to the United States or permit the United States to obtain custody or control of Noriega under any circumstances?

A: None. If there had been any, I think I would have known about it, *but* There was no representation to U.S. officials on the scene by the officers that we were in touch with, and this was a contact between one of our senior officials in Panama and representatives of the rebels, no indication of a willingness to provide Noriega to us. In fact, it was exactly the opposite. They indicated to us that they would not turn Noriega over, that they did not want him extradited or expelled, that they expected him to retire peacefully in Panama.

Q: What movements, if any movements, did U.S. military units make in response to requests from the rebel leaders?

A: We had been notified originally on Sunday, the first contact that I was aware of, with respect to the possible coup. The request, in effect, was made, would we be willing to block access from the 5th Infantry Company located at Fort Amador, which is south of the city, or the 7th Infantry Company located west of the city, would we be willing to block their access routes into the center of the city where the Comandancia was, where the coup was expected to take place.

We did not tell them we would do that. What we did do was on Tuesday night, direct the deployment of forces in a way that they would be located in positions where they could in fact have interfered with Panamanian forces moving from those two locations towards the Comandancia. Now one of those forces, basically the Marines out to the west of the city, had already been scheduled to be on an exercise anyway. It's important for people to remember that we continually run exercises down there. We do it on a regular basis. We've done it for months. We do it as part of our rights under the Panama Canal Treaty. So part of the movement that took place on Tuesday was, in fact, previously scheduled.

In addition to that, though, we also deployed a mechanized company on the road from Fort Amador so that they would be in a position where if we decided we wanted to intervene militarily in the coup, we could do so. Those were the two basic movements.

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Now you've got aircraft up in the air and other kinds of things going on, but those were the two basic movements that would have related to our intervening in the coup, had we made such a decision to intervene.

Q: At the time, these were described, and you described them as previously planned exercises.

A: Part of one of them was. That was the Marine deployment. The other deployment of the mechanized company was in our mind related to the possibility that there might be a coup on Tuesday. We'd been told there was going to be one on Monday which did not occur. We were deployed, in position, which I've said repeatedly, deployed in a position so that had a decision been made to intervene militarily, that we could have done so.

Q: At the time those troops were standing in the road, if the Noriega loyalists had come down that road, did they in advance have authority to stand in their way?

A: Again, you're getting into semantical arguments here. Our forces in Panama, ~~when~~ when they travel on these exercises, are armed. They have ammunition, live ammunition with them. They are operating under what we call peacetime rules of engagement which have been sort of thoroughly vetted up and down the line, signed off on by the President when we sent troops to Panama last summer. They are, under those rules of engagement, allowed to respond with lethal force if they believe they are in fact threatened. There's never been any doubt about that. We've got a specific set of procedures that they are instructed to go through, the officer who commands each one of these units, in terms of warning the Panamanians, should we get into a confrontation with them down there during the course of our exercises. That if in fact they interfere with our people, that we are prepared to use force to deal with the situation. They are, I think, slated ~~then~~ to wait a certain number of minutes and then to proceed if in fact they are interfered with. That's the standing operating rule in Panama for our forces.

That's separate and apart from the proposition of whether or not we would have made a decision, had we, for example, seen the 7th Infantry Company moving from west of the city down the road where our forces were deployed in and around Howard Air Force Base. That's the kind of decision that would have come up the chain rapidly to the President, and he would have been given the opportunity to make the broad policy decision, yes, we want to intervene militarily. That decision was never made.

Q: Mr. Secretary, I'd like to ask you to clarify two points that have come up in news reports today. There's a report in the Wall Street Journal that several weeks before the coup took place the wife of Major Gerald relayed some sort of message to U.S. officials indicating that he was interested in pursuing a coup and wanted our support. There was also a report that the rebels had asked us to help transport Noriega from his compound to some other location. ~~Now~~ Perhaps they were not asking, ~~they~~ were not going to place him in U.S. custody, ~~we~~ were simply going to transport him from the compound to some other place where he would be in their custody or in retirement. But did they ask us to transport by helicopter or some other means, Noriega from that compound, if not into U.S. custody?

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A: To my knowledge they did not. I never heard either one of those reports until you saw them in that newspaper this morning. I don't have any way of knowing what Major G~~er~~alde's wife may or may not have done three weeks ago. The first I heard of Major G~~er~~alde, the first that Washington people in the chain of command, General Powell and myself, ever heard of Major G~~er~~alde in this regard with respect to the coup, was the report we got early Monday morning. If there were contacts between her and U.S. officials, we have a lot of officials in Panama. I can't vouch for that, but I know the beginning date, the time at which we first got involved in being informed that there might be a coup or that he was contemplating a coup was after the meeting Sunday night when I was contacted by General Powell who in turn had been contacted through SOUTHCOM very early Monday morning. I don't know what transpired ~~(transpired)~~ *not*

Q: On the second part?

A: On the second part, no. In the conversations ~~that~~ your people had with the people involved in the coup during the coup--this exchange, remember, that occurred in Panama between one of our senior officers on the scene and representatives of the rebels--again, they made it very clear to us that they would not turn him over to us. There was no suggestion ~~will~~ you move him from one spot to another spot. It simply didn't happen.

Q: Mr. Secretary, there's been some finger pointing out of the White House, pointing in the direction of the Pentagon, saying that not enough information ~~and~~ incorrect information was getting through so that Mr. Bush could make the proper decisions. Is that true? Have you heard that? Have you been asked about it by the White House? Have you been accused?

A: Who at the White House? The President in conversations with me ~~on the telephone~~ Tuesday afternoon and again, as recently as this morning at the White House in person, has expressed his very strong feeling that the Department and the military specifically involved performed well; that any suggestion of any criticism does not come from him. The only thing I can suggest is that as is true a lot of places, not all the Monday morning quarterbacks reside on Capitol Hill.

Q: Did the information that the rebel leaders had gone to talk to General Cisneros about Noriega, did that information get up to Washington and to the President?

A: It did. There were two meetings, as I recall, on Tuesday. I first received word that the coup had actually occurred, it was underway or appeared to be underway Tuesday morning when I was on the bus with General Yazov up touring the Gettysburg Battlefield in Pennsylvania. This was a previously scheduled event and we were sitting in the front seat of the bus with the tour guide describing how the Confederate and Union forces engaged one another on July 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of 1863, when my military assistant passed to me a portable phone. I took the call. It was General Powell calling from the Pentagon to tell me that in fact it looked like a coup was indeed underway at that point in Panama.

I was up there the first few hours, Tuesday morning. I was back here in the building around 11:00 o'clock. We held a meeting at the White House at 11:45 that ran until roughly 12:30. We had another one that started about 1:45 that had been previously scheduled for the President to meet with General Yazov. General Yazov waited outside while we met with the President and discussed

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developments in Panama. That second meeting was when we had information available to us that in fact there had been a contact between our people in Panama and the rebels, and at that time they had made it clear to us they did not want to turn General Noriega over to the United States.

Q: There was a story in the Times that the White House was concerned enough about the handling of it that Mr. Sununu has ordered an investigation and apparently sources are being quoted as saying that it wasn't handled as effectively as it should be. Is there going to be an investigation? And would you dispute that characterization?

A: I'm not in a position to be able to speak for Governor Sununu or the White House. You ought to direct this questions over there.

Q: What about your characterization of how well it was handled?

A: I've been through a number of these over the years. During my time in the White House with President Ford we evacuated Danang, we evacuated Saigon and Phnom Penh, rescued the crew of the Mayaguez, evacuated Beirut, Lebanon on two separate occasions, where you've got these kinds of crisis type situations that involve potential threat to life and possible use of military forces. I would have to say compared with those other times when I've been involved, that this was handled as well as it could be under the circumstances. That doesn't mean we couldn't learn from it. You always can when you go through one of these exercises and look at it afterwards. But we had a lot of information coming to us. A lot of it was conflicting information. People ask about the quality of intelligence. You have a confusing situation on the ground in Panama, and what comes through the pipeline to policy makers in Washington is confusion on the ground in Panama, and that's an accurate portrayal, but it doesn't help you make decisions very much because you get conflicting reports about, for example, do the rebels have Noriega, do they not have Noriega, and so there are a normal number of kinds of questions that come out of that.

But in terms of the basic, overall operation itself with respect to how we responded, and I'd emphasize we are still learning things about what transpired, you don't have all knowledge at the moment that you sit down to make the decision in the midst of a crisis. Some things you learn four or five days after the event. We may get a defector from the PDF six months from now who will be able to go through blow by blow exactly what transpired in the compound where Noriega was apparently held.

But given what you had to operate with at the time, I think we made sound decisions. Given what I've seen since, I'm still convinced that I would have made exactly the same recommendations and that we would have made exactly the same decisions we did. The issue, the bottom line issue, and you can get into the who struck Johns and who talked to who when and what moved to what location under what circumstances, but the bottom line question for the President, do you want to intervene with military force in a coup in Panama. The factors that affected that judgement included the lack confidence in the individual who was reportedly going to undertake the coup, the fact that he was identified as a Noriega crony, the fact that he controlled the security force at PDF headquarters, the fact that he'd been involved in putting down a previous coup, and the fact that on Sunday night we were told by the coup plotter himself

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that he did not plan to undertake the coup if Noriega were present. Those are all things that are out there that you've got to consider as this unfolds.

Other ^{as when} items that affected our decision not to intervene included such things, ~~from~~ the coup initiative again, was the coup successful? You hear a lot of shooting from the compound, and then it dies down. Who won? Who's in charge in the compound? Another question was, is Noriega in the compound? Did the rebels succeed in the coup? Did they physically possess the building? And do they have Noriega?

We didn't know at the outset. Eventually, as things unfolded, we gained increasing confidence that they did have Noriega, and that was confirmed, finally, when we had this contact ~~base~~ between our officer and the people, but initially you don't know. We had reports that placed him in other locations in Panama that morning, ~~and~~ we had the word of the guy who was running the coup from Sunday night that the coup wouldn't go down if Noriega were present. There was a lot of confusion at the time because there was a lot of confusion in Panama. That's what's coming up through the system.

The bottom line was the ^{Commit} President made the decision, and I think very properly, that you do not ~~permit~~ American personnel into a combat situation unless you've got a very clear idea of what your objective is, unless you can give them a very clear-cut mission, and unless you've got a much better basis upon which to do it than the word of a coup plotter who may in fact be involved in an effort to set up, if you will, the United States Government.

So given all of that, given what we've seen ^{come} since, given all of the sort of after-action analysis that's now underway, my basic conclusion is we made a good policy decision, and if I had to do it all over again I'd make exactly the same decision.

Q: Mr. Secretary, you should have this used this incident as a cover.

A: Can you imagine what it would be like for me to go to Capitol Hill, to my former colleagues and former friends on Capitol Hill, and say to them, guys, we had this great opportunity down there. There was this coup underway, so as a pretext, as a cover, we committed U.S. forces to go in and get Noriega. I don't think ~~they~~ ^{you} operate that way. Those forces are there to protect American interests, to safeguard American lives, to protect our rights and responsibilities under the Canal Treaty. There is no question but what if we wanted, we could go in and wipe out the PDF today, ~~as~~ ^{could} do it by sundown. There's no question but what we've got the military force to go take Mr. Noriega. But you'd probably take a fair number of casualties if you did it. You don't embark upon that course of action lightly.

My own view is that many of the critics on Capitol Hill who are now criticizing us for not having intervened in Panama, would be criticizing us even more vociferously if we had intervened in Panama.

Q: Are you satisfied with a couple of specific things? Number one, there was apparently a three week period of time in which you did not hear about Mr. Geralde.

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A: First of all, that assumes there was some contact at some level, some place. There are coup reports on a fairly regular basis. That's not new. That happens frequently, / I don't know how many times a week. But you get a lot of coup reports in this business, and especially, you get a lot of coup reports out of Panama. I have no knowledge. I was asked if I knew anything about the report that was in a number of the newspapers this morning about the contact three weeks ago by Major Geraldé's wife, and the answer is no, I never heard about it until I saw it in the newspaper this morning.

Q: But nonetheless, you were in a circumstance on Tuesday morning when you were touring a battlefield at a time when a coup was going on. Clearly, in retrospect, I can't imagine that you wouldn't have preferred to have been someplace else when you received that news.

A: No, not at all. The visit with the Defense Minister of the Soviet Union is a fairly important event. It's a historic first. It's the first time we've ever had a Defense Minister from the Soviet Union visit the United States. There had been a coup reported to go down on Monday, and it didn't come off. The idea that I would have said to the Soviet Defense Minister, "Sorry, General Yazov, you're on your own today. I have to stay here because there's a rumor there might be a coup in Panama." We don't operate that way. We've got good communications. The flow of information was not impeded at all by my being in Gettysburg that morning. I don't think it had any impact at all.

Q: Were you satisfied, in fact, with the communications between your people on the scene and the rebels? Since there was obviously advance notice there...

A: No, I'm not satisfied. We'd love to have an open phone line to the guys inside running the coup. You don't have that. That's not the way the real world works.

Q: Do you know whether the Major is alive or dead now?

A: I don't know.

Q: Can you be specific about exactly when the decision was made to take the family of Major Geraldé and give them sanctuary, take them onto the base?

A: When I was first contacted by General Powell early Monday morning, the message that was conveyed to me was really sort of a three-part message. One, there may be a coup. Two, would we block troop movements by the 5th and 7th Infantry Companies against the coup plotters. And three, would we provide sanctuary for the family of the Major. The only one of those that I agreed to was yes, we would indeed provide sanctuary for the family of the Major. So it was early Monday morning when it first came up.

Q: Before it happened. So it could have been perceived by him as tacit approval of this operation.

A: I don't know what it was perceived by him. At that point, we didn't know whether he was for real or not. But as a standard practice, I will, and I have in the past, and I will in the future, if somebody comes ~~as~~ as a *and says will* humanitarian action provide sanctuary for somebody like that, certainly we would do it. We've provided sanctuary for others in Panama previous to this.

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Q: Originally you were led to believe that this coup would go down Monday. When that didn't happen and it was alleged to perhaps go down Tuesday, forces were dispatched perhaps to block those roads. Were any similar forces dispatched to block them in the event the coup had gone down on Monday?

A: Not that I recall, but I'd really have to check with General Powell to see exactly what dispositions of the force were made on Monday. We focused on Tuesday because that's when things happened.

really
General Thurman, I would assume, probably took precautions in Panama on Monday morning. It was his first day on the job, but probably took precautions to make certain that our forces were secure. We may well have had forces out exercising on Monday as we do frequently, coincidentally. But to be precise, I'd have to get back to you.

ordinarily
Q: ~~But~~ *you would* ~~you were~~ *to* have notified ~~by~~ the PDF in advance --

A: It would have been done Sunday night. ~~Not~~ *ordinarily* Like Monday, for example, the Tuesday deployments, we notified the PDF liaison office on Monday evening, as we always do. That's standard practice.

Q: Was there any contact between U.S. forces and the rebels in any way before the 11:30 meeting between the U.S. Army general at Fort Clayton and the two rebels that drove up?

A: Not to my knowledge. Contact was Sunday night with the Major. Subsequent to that we received messages on Monday. The coup didn't come off. The first message was it's going to come later in the day. Then another message that eventually came in said no, it ~~was~~ *is* going to be on Tuesday. But to my knowledge, once the coup started there was no direct contact between U.S. military personnel and the rebels until the meeting where one of our officers met with two of their representatives. That's to the best of my knowledge. If there was such a meeting, it was never made...

Q: What did you learn on Monday that caused you to deploy troops that you were reluctant to deploy on Monday when you had the same speculation that there would be a coup?

A: Remember, by then you had more time. We first got a call at 2:30 Monday morning. Again, I have not said that we did not deploy troops on Monday. I don't know specifically what the deployments were on Monday, and we'll get you that. I'll check on that. I need to check with SOUTHCOM and see exactly what deployments they had out. We focused on Tuesday because that's when things happened.

But on Monday night, it seemed the prudent thing to do to be positioned so that if we decided we wanted to intervene, we could have done so. We decided not to intervene.

Q: Mr. Secretary, when you get right down to the basics of this, the rebels asked you to keep two Noriega units away from the Comandancia. Through number one, a series of exercises; and number two, a later declaration of Condition Delta, we closed or were in a position to close two roads, then they found other means of getting there and...

A: One of the units didn't move and the other units went by air.

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Q: Isn't the basic complaint against the Administration's decision is that it wasn't clean? It wasn't one way or the other. You did just enough so you can't avoid the taint of involvement in an unsuccessful coup, but you didn't do enough, on the other hand, to make sure it was successful which we easily could have done.

A: What would you have done differently? *Bob?*

Q: What I would have done?

A: Yes.

Q: I won't duck the issue. I'd have gone in and gotten rid of the son of a bitch. (Laughter)

A: Let me talk about that for a minute.

Q: At least blocking other routes of access besides the two that were requested.

A: We were not asked to ^{consider} block other routes of access. Again, remember where we are and what's going on down there. You have a coup that goes down on Tuesday that was supposed to go down on Monday, that didn't go down on Monday but it went down on Tuesday. It's run by a guy who's a Noriega crony. It's run by a guy who put down the last coup. Up until the moment the shooting starts, it's a very good supposition that this could well be a setup. It's an effort by Noriega to draw U.S. officials into coup plotting, if you will, that he can then try to use to create an embarrassing incident for the United States within the OAS, etcetera, etcetera. So you don't know up until Tuesday morning that it's for sure, and even for a real thing.

In terms of the question of using military force, initially when the coup first starts, you're sitting there and you've got forces deployed where they could block the 5th Company or the 7th Company. You don't know if the coup plotters, the rebels, have Noriega. So your option at that point is to intervene with military force. We're going to send our troops in to deal with the problem.

Are you going to attack the coup plotters? We found out later on they wouldn't have turned Noriega over to us. At the time we made the decision, we didn't know if they had him.

Are you going to go in and confront the pro-Noriega forces? Maybe Noriega's not even in the compound, because we've got reports that he isn't. So you could end up in a situation where you could have interposed U.S. forces between the rebels and the pro-Noriega folks to what end? For what purpose? You're just in the middle of a shooting scrape in downtown Panama and you haven't achieved any objective at all except to commit U.S. troops into a messy situation.

Then let's assume, okay, they've got Noriega. You're told they will not turn him over to you. Then how do you get Noriega? Do you attack the guys running the coup? That makes a lot of sense. Here's the anti-Noriega forces who have risen up in revolt against Noriega and we're going to use our military force against them. That's a dumb idea.

So to suggest that somehow there was ever sort of a neat, clean picture for us to use U.S. force to go get Noriega, there never was.

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Q: Except in the telephone messages, reports of interception of telephone messages from the compound involving Noriega himself. We keep saying we weren't sure he was there, and yet there are reports that...

A: You ought to know that I never get into the business of discussing intelligence matters, especially that relate to sources and methods. I made the point, it's a valid point, it's true, there were conflicting reports about Noriega's location. That was true right up until close to the end of the coup.

Q: In May, the President called very strongly on the PDF to get rid of Noriega. In retrospect, in view of the fact that we did not go in on this occasion, was that a mistake? Should we in fact tone down that kind of rhetoric?

A: I think it's still the policy of the Administration that the ultimate solution to the political problems in Panama rest with the Panamanian people. We are not in the business of willy-nilly running around the hemisphere toppling governments that we don't like. If democracy is going to succeed in Panama it's going to be because the Panamanian people want it to succeed and are prepared to take steps to have that happen. That policy was in existence previously and it remains our policy today.

Q: We don't rule out coming to the support of a major coup?

A: We do not rule out the use of force in Panama. We never have. We've got forces there, we've got rights and obligations there, we've got people to protect there, and under circumstances where the President deems it appropriate, I'm sure he's prepared to use force, if necessary, to protect those lives and those interests.

Q: Back on the scenario that you described, the conundrum that you described, in effect doesn't all of that begin with the earlier decision to provide tacit approval to whoever is calling...

A: I didn't say tacit approval.

Q: Well, to encourage...

A: How did we encourage?

Q: We encourage by saying that we would accept sanctuary conditions.

A: Can you imagine the United States ever saying to anybody we wouldn't provide that kind of sanctuary?

Q: The question is, can you tell people to keep their powder dry if the United States actually has a strategy in the area?

A: Again, you're in a situation where the guy you're talking with may well be, all the evidence is that he's a Noriega crony. It may well be a setup. So you go as far as you have to, for example say yes, if your family shows up we'll provide sanctuary for them. But you don't go beyond that, and we didn't.

Q: But you're encouraging the Panamanians to handle the situation, and yet you're at the same time giving them the sense that if you go ahead and try to handle it you might get your backside shot off and we might or we might not help you. How is that encouraging?

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A: I come back to the proposition again that the strength of Panamanian democracy rests upon the Panamanian people. The United States cannot impose democracy on Panama. They're going to have to work it out for themselves.

Q: (Inaudible) just enough to taint the United States with interfering...

A: I don't buy that. I think if we had denied that family sanctuary we would be legitimately subject to criticism, and I think that would have been an outrageous act. We would not do that and we did not do that. The other thing we did, of course, was to have our forces positioned in a way so that we could intervene if a decision were made to intervene. That's prudent management, it seems to me, of the force; that does not involve us in the coup; that does not say that we were involved in trying to engineer the coup or support the coup. We were in a position, should developments have warranted, to be actively involved from a military standpoint with those forces. Those developments never arose.

I think that if we had not had people deployed, again, we would have been derelict in our responsibility. Part of my responsibility as Secretary is, I think, to undertake those deployments, and we did it.

Thank you all very much.

END

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
MARLIN FITZWATER

October 6, 1989
The Briefing Room

11:46 A.M. EDT

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12:34 P.M. EDT

#110-10/06

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
MARLIN FITZWATER

October 6, 1989

The Briefing Room

11:46 A.M. EDT

MR. FITZWATER: First of all, Italian President Cossiga will be here on a state visit Wednesday, October 11. We'll have a background briefing to preview the visit here in the briefing room at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 10th.

The President has invited Prime Minister Thatcher of Great Britain to hold informal talks with him at Camp David on November 24th. The Prime Minister last visited Washington in November, 1988. The President last met with her in Paris at the economic summit.

The meeting on the Hill this morning was with members of the the Republican Senate. The President did visit the floor of the Senate on the way out of the Chambers this morning. The discussion was primarily on the capital gains proposal and the bipartisan -- I mean, the reconciliation bill that Congress, the Senate particularly, is working on right now.

Q And Panama?

MR. FITZWATER: No, Panama really didn't come up. The President --

Q Domenici said it was mentioned.

Q The President had some remarks about it.

MR. FITZWATER: The President mentioned a few words at -- he mentioned a few words at the beginning, but there was no discussion.

Q What did he say?

MR. FITZWATER: He just said that he had felt he had made the right decisions; had reviewed the information involved, that he had as good information as could be expected, and that -- is confident we did the right thing.

Q Domenici says that the President told them he felt it was not appropriate to risk American lives unless there was certainty. Did he say that?

MR. FITZWATER: No, not exactly those words. He said we're willing to use force, but not in a case -- not unless we know the circumstances and we have better information.

Q In other words, everything went well and great and he's happy and --

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

MORE

#110-10/06

Q Where is all this flack coming from?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know.

Q Marlin, several of the senators, others on the Hill are upset that they were given official versions from the CIA and the Defense Department about this that do not reconcile. Did the President address this? And how does the administration explain giving one version by one agency and one by another? Which was correct? The CIA apparently said that we did trust this guy and we thought he was for real, and the Defense Department said we didn't.

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I don't know what the CIA said or the Defense Department said in their briefings on the Hill. But as far as the President is concerned and the White House is concerned, our information was all consistent. The information was accurate, at least it has held up to be so in the aftermath. There's only been one course of action dictated by it and, frankly, we're not aware of what these discrepancies might be.

Q Well, if I could just follow up. The other day, Governor Sununu said at the state dinner that we didn't even know who these people were. But we're told through The Wall Street Journal today that they came to the CIA two weeks ago, that we did know who these people are. I mean, it seems to me the administration hasn't been telling us the truth, much less the Congress, about what did we know about who these people were, when did we learn it. How do you respond to The Journal report today that we learned two weeks ago?

MR. FITZWATER: That it's wrong.

Q What's wrong with that?

MR. FITZWATER: The first indication we had was Sunday night.

Q Well, does that include the CIA?

MR. FITZWATER: It includes the CIA.

Q How do you know that?

MR. FITZWATER: That's what the CIA says.

Q Have you asked them today?

MR. FITZWATER: They have been asked.

Q So the story about the wife going to anybody at our Embassy, anybody in the CIA is inaccurate, according to the CIA?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, she did Sunday.

Q What?

MR. FITZWATER: She did Sunday.

Q Two weeks ago.

MR. FITZWATER: Two weeks ago we're told is wrong.

Q What about this helicopter that has once again hovered into view now not to take Noriega out, but to take him prisoner for a time? Is that --

MR. FITZWATER: We had helicopters in the air for surveillance.

Q No, no. I'm talking about the -- the original story, you'll recall, that surfaced was that in the meeting between

Cisneros -- the person we now know to be Cisneros and the rebel representatives -- that a request was made for a helicopter to take Noriega out and that that was passed up the line and nothing was done about it. Now comes this report in The Wall Street Journal that says that, yes, a helicopter was requested, not to take Noriega into U.S. custody, but just to take him -- to hold him prisoner to improve the bargaining leverage of the people attempting the coup. Is that correct?

MR. FITZWATER: No. We never had any request to take him out. In fact, we were told they would not let him go.

Q Not to take him -- but even to hold on to him --

MR. FITZWATER: Even to hold him in any way. We were told that they did not want our involvement; they did not want the United States to taint the integrity of what they were trying to do. And he would not be made available in any way.

Q Do we now know what the reason they came to the gate and asked for the meeting was then?

MR. FITZWATER: They just wanted to let us know what the situation was. And I don't know whatever motives they might have had for asking for the meeting, but that's essentially what they -- they wanted to tell us that they had Noriega, but they would not surrender him to us, that they wanted to retain him. What other purposes they had I don't know.

Q Have you gone to the CIA and asked them to explain these discrepancies that are showing up in print, showing up out of Helms' mouth, showing up out of other senators who've been briefed by the CIA? In other words, have you started what you might call an investigation?

MR. FITZWATER: No. We know the information that we believe is accurate. We know the information that's been presented. We've talked to all the people involved. You've got to ask Senator Helms why he says those things.

Q The CIA has been briefing them. When you say we've talked to all the people involved, that includes the CIA --

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know that at all. I don't know that at all. You can make all the claims you want about what the CIA said, but I don't have any information that they said any of that stuff. I don't know that it isn't being made up entirely. I don't have any information of that kind.

Q Have you gone to the CIA and asked?

MR. FITZWATER: We have checked out all the facts that have been reported in these stories and the answer is, no.

Q Can I switch to capital gains?

Q No.

MR. FITZWATER: Sure. Yes, anything. We'll come back to you. Talk to Lesley, she stole your question.

Q What's the state of play on this review of procedures that Governor Sununu is supposed to have put into effect? Is that happening and how is that being carried out?

MR. FITZWATER: No, there isn't any review such as the one described in The New York Times.

Q What sort of review --

MR. FITZWATER: The NSC has an interagency process in which they routinely review all these kinds of episodes to see if there's anything that could be done or should be done differently in future episodes. It's a routine kind of review. It's the one I talked about last Wednesday -- or not last Wednesday, but two days ago, whenever that was -- but there is no special review as described in the Times this morning.

Q But that's the second time that Sununu has been reported as ordering this review because he said --

MR. FITZWATER: I think he was referring to the same review that I've been talking about -- a routine review by the NSC.

Q On another subject, does the White House still stand by the earlier statements that the movements of U.S. troops on that day were -- what was it -- routine, normal, preplanned maneuvers or exercises?

MR. FITZWATER: We never used those words. We said they were taken in order to ensure the safety of American citizens there and to ensure our treaty rights, and that we certainly were prepared to block off those access routes, if it should be necessary. But it never was and we never did.

Q But you did block the --

MR. FITZWATER: No we didn't. They weren't blocked.

Q The original statement on that led everyone to believe that these were in no way connected to what was going on in the coup attempt.

MR. FITZWATER: No, they were connected -- yes.

Q They were or were not?

MR. FITZWATER: They were.

Q They had asked us to do this, right? And we did it and we also wanted a dual justification that we could say we were protecting American lives. But we didn't do it, except upon their request?

MR. FITZWATER: They did request it. And we told them that we would do that as a means of protecting American lives and our treaty rights, that's true. And that's what happened.

Q Now, wait a minute. I thought you said we did block off -- to the Bridge of the Americas and the causeway.

MR. FITZWATER: We were prepared to do that, but it never actually happened.

Q I thought you said that we did and then they came around another way.

Q Yes, that's what you said yesterday.

Q They came around another way, you said --

MR. FITZWATER: No.

Q -- and so it became peripheral to what --

Q Right.

MR. FITZWATER: They came another way, so we didn't have to do it. We had people there prepared to do it, yes. But it was never necessary. Maybe you misunderstood it.

Q Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. They came another way. So in other words, you would have only blocked it off if Noriega's folks had tried to come to his rescue then?

MR. FITZWATER: If there had been a threat against the American lives or the access, yes.

Q But, Marlin, by their sheer presence --

MR. FITZWATER: There was civilian traffic on this bridge the whole time and the causeway -- cars.

Q Exactly. By their sheer presence, they, in fact, blocked any access by the loyalists from Noriega.

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we don't know that. If it did, so be it. But you can't --

Q Well, wait a minute. You're saying that they didn't block it -- that they --

MR. FITZWATER: They didn't actually block it off. They were prepared.

Q They were there. They were there.

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

Q They were there, they took up positions, but they didn't actually do anything.

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

Q Well, Marlin, you did say the other day that our troops were not relevant to the coup.

Q That's right.

MR. FITZWATER: It turned out they weren't because the coup -- nobody came through there. Unless there was a decision like you suggest, but we have no way of knowing what their decision-making process is.

Q But our people were not there in position at the request of the rebels. They were there only because --

Q No, they were.

Q They were there.

MR. FITZWATER: They made a request that we block those access routes. And we said that we would be prepared to do that because we would want to do that to protect American lives and our treaty rights. And we were prepared to do that. And we did have forces in place for that purpose. As it turned out, the Seventh Infantry never came through there, so we never blocked anything off.

Q Marlin, how does that square with your claim that there was no U.S. participation in the coup? I mean, they asked for us to do something and we did it.

MR. FITZWATER: But we don't consider that participation in the coup. We were not involved in the planning and the operation and the carrying it out. And everything we did was consistent with what we've always done in terms of protection of lives. We have treaty maneuvers there in Panama all the time.

Q But you're not suggesting that these were part of treaty maneuvers?

MR. FITZWATER: No. These were done because we knew we had this word Sunday evening from the wife of Girolodi that there was a possibility of a coup Monday or Tuesday -- Monday, originally.

Q Is Bush planning to talk about this this afternoon, Marlin?

MR. FITZWATER: No, I don't expect so.

Q He's said it up on the Hill.

MR. FITZWATER: We don't feel, and looking over all the information, I can't see one thing that we have said that is wrong or that has been contradicted by any facts by anybody.

Q Let me try one thing, Marlin. Are you confirming that Girolodi did speak directly with U.S. officials in Panama on Sunday?

MR. FITZWATER: There apparently was some direct contact with Girolodi Sunday. I don't know the details of that, but there was.

Q So it was not grumblings or a rumor as you characterized it two days ago. Is that correct?

MR. FITZWATER: It was. The first rumblings were with the wife of Girolodi, which we have to consider in that category -- yes.

Q But then, you're saying Girolodi did speak to who -- CIA --

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know.

Q But he did speak directly to U.S. officials?

MR. FITZWATER: To someone, yes.

Q Do you consider that rumblings or rumor?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, because they, as my understanding is, they were pretty general conversations.

Q He didn't say, we're planning a coup? He didn't say, we would like you to --

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know what he said, exactly, but that's still --

Q Well, we were told by other people that he said, we're planning a coup and that we want -- the only help we want from you is to have the troops cut off these two roads. Now, that's not rumor or grumblings.

MR. FITZWATER: Well, it isn't from our perspective because the fact is, we didn't know for sure it was going to happen.

Q Was that reported to the President?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

Q And he knew Sunday night?

MR. FITZWATER: We had no planning, no involvement at all -- yes.

Q And he knew about this Sunday night?

MR. FITZWATER: We knew that they were thinking about it. I told you that Wednesday.

Q And what did the President do? Did he order any contingency plans?

MR. FITZWATER: We always have contingency plans in Panama for protecting lives and property there. Obviously, the blockade in the causeway and the bridge were part of that plan.

Q Do you have contingency plans to aid the coup?

MR. FITZWATER: We have contingency plans for removing Noriega to expedite the indictment and the extradition. We had no plans for involvement or participation in the coup.

Q The decision was made not to have any plans. The decision was made not to get involved, is that what you're saying?

MR. FITZWATER: We have never been involved. That has always been our policy. It's a decision that didn't need stating.

Q To clarify, if the President was told this, he must have said, we're not going to get involved. That's a decision. Is that correct? And he made that decision Sunday night?

MR. FITZWATER: Our policy has always been that we're not involved in the internal affairs and we were not involved in this.

Q Marlin, you make the point that those access routes were never blocked. If the Noriega forces had used those routes, they would have been stopped, is that correct?

MR. FITZWATER: Probably, yes.

Q Why?

MR. FITZWATER: In order to protect -- those are access routes to our base. That's where all of our personnel is and where our dependents were moved to and so forth.

Q Was there a perception that the Noriega forces would attack the American bases?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we didn't know what they were going to do. But the fact is it seemed like a precautionary step that should be taken.

Q Marlin, why did it take so long to confirm that the rebels had requested those routes be blocked?

MR. FITZWATER: What do you mean take long?

Q We weren't told that initially, that it came at the rebels' request.

MR. FITZWATER: I thought we did say that it was requested.

Q No.

Q No.

Q You said they were doing routine maneuvers that just happened to be taking place there.

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know.

Q In fact, I think you said there were no requests.

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know. I don't have an answer to that.

Q You did say there were no requests.

MR. FITZWATER: I think it was no request for -- we're arguing about a lot of words here and a lot of answers are being given. There were no requests for our involvement in the coup, no requests for our involvement in the operations. That's what we're responding to. But I think we talked about in the discussions with the wife of Girolodi --

Q What is being asked to block the troops if that isn't being involved in the operation? If he's saying, we want you to block them so they can't come in and rescue him, that's part of the operation.

MR. FITZWATER: Because that's something we would want to do if a coup of any kind was taking place there in order to protect lives. Even if we had no --

Q You're blocking access to the Panamanian headquarters, not --

Q Marlin, you're trying to have it both ways. Is that what you want to do? You're saying that because we could justify being there to protect lives, we'll do that. But if we can also block the troops, we would do that. Is that -- was that the policy decision? You've got to -- if not, make a choice. (Laughter.) Are you saying that they were there and that if the troops came through you would have let them go through? Was that the decision?

MR. FITZWATER: No, we would have blocked them off, yes.

Q You would have blocked them?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

Q You would have blocked them from going to rescue Noriega, is that what you're saying?

MR. FITZWATER: To wherever they were going. Whatever their purpose --

Q On what grounds?

Q On what grounds?

Q If troops went to rescue Noriega and they chose to go over the bridge, were American troops told, don't let them through?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, we would have blocked them, sure.

Q Well, that's operational involvement in a coup, isn't it?

MR. FITZWATER: No, it's --

Q What do you mean, no?

MR. FITZWATER: It's protecting access to the base and access to the lives of our personnel.

Q Wait a minute. Riding through the base to get to the PDF headquarters?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, that's where the comandancia is. Go look at your map. That causeway leads to both.

Q What was said -- getting back to the meeting this morning -- what was --

MR. FITZWATER: Wait, let's finish Panama here and we'll come back.

Q Marlin, let me go back to the original point. Are you saying that the wife of Major Girolodi didn't contact anyone in the U.S. government before Sunday night in Panama?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes. That's what we're told, yes. Fred's story is wrong.

Q I would like to ask --

Q Who tells you this?

MR. FITZWATER: I won't tell you that. I speak for all facets of the U.S. government.

Q I thought you said earlier that was the CIA.

MR. FITZWATER: All facets of the U.S. government.

Q Earlier you said that was attributed to the CIA.

MR. FITZWATER: All facets of the U.S. government.

Q I would like to go back to a comment you made a moment ago, earlier, when you said there's no discrepancy in information -- when we've been told that the White House received information that these rebels said they would not turn Noriega over, and State and CIA, through garbled transmission, were told that they would, they were prepared to do that.

MR. FITZWATER: No, no. They were told that they were not, but there was a cable that was wrong that apparently went back from South Com to the Embassy in Panama that, instead of saying they won't -- won't, w-o-n-'-t -- it said they wanted to. And that was incorrect. But none of that misinformation ever arrived at the White House and was never --

Q Didn't arrive at the White House, but it arrived at CIA and State, did it not?

MR. FITZWATER: It did, yes.

Q Well, isn't that a discrepancy in information?

MR. FITZWATER: No. I never even heard of this until yesterday. Discrepancy in what information? With what?

Q Well, you've got information flow, you've got a variety of --

MR. FITZWATER: But it was irrelevant to the decision-making process -- that's my point.

Q Whose cable was that? Which --

MR. FITZWATER: South Com to the Embassy in --

Q So it was a military cable?

MR. FITZWATER: Military cable from South Com to -- is that right -- yes -- South Com to the Embassy in Panama.

Q Was there a CIA-to-State communication on that as well?

MR. FITZWATER: There may have been. I don't know. There apparently were a few hours where State and CIA were in possession of this incorrect cable. But my point is it was irrelevant to the decision-making process here in the White House and to the knowledge that was held by General Powell and the Pentagon people.

Q But in a crisis of this sort, wouldn't it be standard practice, shouldn't it be standard practice for the National Security Council to call together the main players, policy and otherwise, in something like this --

MR. FITZWATER: They were.

Q They were called together?

MR. FITZWATER: They were.

Q When were they all together?

MR. FITZWATER: There were three meetings Tuesday -- 9:40 a.m., 11 something and 1:30 p.m.

Q And in any of these meetings --

MR. FITZWATER: Three formal meetings and several other less formal ones where the partners moved in and out.

Q Were there any meetings Sunday or Monday?

MR. FITZWATER: Pardon?

Q Were there any meetings Sunday or Monday to talk about if this happens, what should we do?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know about Sunday or Monday.

Q Marlin, let me ask you to clarify --

Q Can you find out because --

MR. FITZWATER: Pardon?

Q Would you go through those meetings again, please?

Q At 9:40 a.m., 11:30 a.m., and when?

Q Isn't that what Baker's complaining about? Isn't that what Sununu is complaining about?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't think they're complaining about any --

Q That there was no contingency plan?

Q Who was in that meeting?

MR. FITZWATER: As far as I know, they're not complaining about any of those.

Q Was there any contingency planning, Marlin --

Q Was that an NSC meeting?

MR. FITZWATER: There's all kind of contingency planning, sure.

Q Can you give us an example?

MR. FITZWATER: No.

Q Can I come back to the information -- may I follow?

Q These three meetings involved who? I'm sorry.

MR. FITZWATER: General Scowcroft, Governor Sununu, General Powell, Secretary Baker, Secretary Cheney, and Deputy Gates.

Q Who led the meetings? Who conducted them?

Q What about Bush?

MR. FITZWATER: With the President.

Q All of those were in the three meetings?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

Q Can you tell us again?

MR. FITZWATER: Three meetings Tuesday in which all of those attended and other sessions in which one or more of those people was in and out, gathering information, but at which the principal players were there.

Q And the times?

Q Are you suggesting that in none of those meetings was some of this conflicting information -- for example, were they or were they not going to hand over Noriega or willing to hand over Noriega -- some of this conflicting information was affecting decision-making? I mean, if Baker comes over here having -- with the State Department having received cable traffic that, yes, these guys are prepared to hand him over, and you're operating from information --

MR. FITZWATER: The information wasn't conflicting. There was never a piece of information in this White House that said anything than they were not willing to give him up, period.

Q So where was the State Department and CIA --

MR. FITZWATER: The cable is an ancillary thing out there that has no relevance to the decision-making process here.

Q Marlin, to get back to the fact that you believe -- the President believed that the rebels were not willing to hand over Noriega, is that the justification for no action because at that point, you decided these were not guys who would be an improvement over Noriega?

MR. FITZWATER: That was a major part of the decision-making process in terms of not going in, yes. One, we didn't know where he was; we didn't know his condition;

Q Go slow.

MR. FITZWATER: We didn't know -- first of all, we knew they did not want to give him up. They did not want us involved in any way in terms of directly taking Noriega. And we didn't really know the condition of the leadership of the coup in the sense that our only contact after it started was between General Cisneros and these two lieutenants and their discussion at the fence there between the two posts.

Q You said at the fence, but the reports were yesterday -- the Pentagon said yesterday that they came to the gate and were asked in and the meeting was held in their office. Is that --

MR. FITZWATER: That I don't know.

Q Reporters are being told that in the soul searching and the Monday morning quarterbacking, there are things that would have been done differently and would be and that it's been more than, I mean, a routine reassessment --

MR. FITZWATER: I don't think that's the case. One of the problems here is that we have discussed a great deal about the conflicting evidence and the ambiguity of information about the coup, but that was peculiar to coups, not on our part. We knew what was happening. The information has not changed since then. The chains of command were in place, the information flowed to the White House and the decisions were made.

Q Did Sununu have any role --

MR. FITZWATER: The ambiguities were in the coup itself, which is the nature of those things.

Q Did Sununu have any role in seeing that this NSC process that you've articulated was initiated?

MR. FITZWATER: I think -- I don't know that for sure. I think -- he and General Scowcroft, of course, worked very closely all the way so he was probably aware of it or may be a part of it, but I don't know of any particular.

Q Why didn't you know where Noriega was?

MR. FITZWATER: We didn't -- they didn't tell us.

Q Well wait, when you got -- when you got --

MR. FITZWATER: They didn't tell us.

Q No, wait a minute. When you had the first report that this might be happening, was an attempt made to find out where is Noriega and keep tabs on him?

MR. FITZWATER: Sure. First reports were Tuesday morning, 7:00 a.m. or 8:00 a.m., something like that.

Q No, no, I'm talking about Sunday and then Monday because there were meetings and you suspected this was going to happen.

MR. FITZWATER: Well, yes, but you just can't know.

Q Yes, but --

MR. FITZWATER: You don't know where they'd take him and that sort of thing.

Q Did you -- was a tail put on Noriega? Did you keep track so you knew where he would be at all times?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we knew approximately where he was, yes. But when -- you're talking about -- I'm talking about knowing what room he's in and what his condition is and what building and those kinds of things. I'm talking about a greater degree of specificity I guess than you are.

Q Wasn't one of the reasons you didn't know where he was that he could have been in an entirely different location?

MR. FITZWATER: Could have been, sure.

Q But if you're --

MR. FITZWATER: There was a lot going on. He could have been taken by -- what's going on here?

Q Helicopter.

MR. FITZWATER: Is he leaving early? He could have been taken by car or helicopter, I mean --

Q -- point is that you people did nothing, that you've been talking for a long time urging the PDF to get rid of Noriega -- an opportunity comes along and basically the evidence makes it look like you're -- either you're sitting on your hands because you don't know what to do and you're too passive, or you made an early decision that this guy was no better than Noriega and don't get involved.

MR. FITZWATER: Thank you, Owen.

Q Which one? Do you want to pick one?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, they're all wrong.

Q Well, which is the right one? Why didn't you get involved?

MR. FITZWATER: The right one is because we didn't have the information that would allow us to make an accurate assessment of how to proceed. Two, they told us they did not want us involved; they would not give him up. Do you expect us to go in and take him away from the insurrectors who captured him in the first place, Owen, is that what you're suggesting? I mean use some sense here.

Q Are you glad that the coup failed then?

Q Uhh.

MR. FITZWATER: No, we wish it had been successful.

Q One question please on capital gains. Will the President veto the budget --

Q No, we're not finished. Let's finish --

MR. FITZWATER: Let's finish, Paula. I'll come back to you.

Q May I clarify something based on what the President said on the Hill? He said he was going to say something today on this after his procedure on his finger. Senator Simpson said the same thing, that the President wanted to clear this up with the nation. Is he or isn't he going to have something to say on this?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know. Nothing's scheduled. Maybe he'll talk to the pool on the way out or something.

Q Are you aware of this transcript the Pentagon's provided that recounts in detail the Cisneros conversation to the coup?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

Q Is it not true that in there there is a discussion of whether we would go get him or whether they would bring him to Fort Clayton? It wasn't a question absolutely that they said we wouldn't do it. At one point there was a discussion and we were unwilling to go to the scene. Isn't that the case?

MR. FITZWATER: No, I read that document. It says in three different places they were not willing to let us have him.

Q But there is the one -- there is the dialogue like I

just described in the document about whether we would go there or whether they would bring him.

MR. FITZWATER: No. Not that I saw.

Q Marlin, I'm a little confused about what message reached the CIA and the State Department that didn't make it to the White House. What information was that?

MR. FITZWATER: There was apparently some cable that went from --

Q From SOUTHCOM to the embassy.

MR. FITZWATER: From SOUTHCOM to the Pentagon and then from SOUTHCOM back to the embassy in Panama that had a mistake in the wording or something that -- it came in as they won't allow us to take Noriega and went out as they want us to take Noriega.

Q That never reached Brent Scowcroft?

MR. FITZWATER: And it never reached anybody here -- or Colin Powell, Scowcroft --

Q Baker?

MR. FITZWATER: Baker, Cheney -- none of them.

Q Where did it go?

Q Now why wouldn't it have reached here if we were in this crisis -- I mean doesn't that speak to the very organizational communication problems that --

MR. FITZWATER: No --

Q -- are being raised now?

MR. FITZWATER: No, because General Powell was in direct contact with the SOUTHCOM officials in Panama and our information here was direct and those --

Q But you just said it never got here?

MR. FITZWATER: It didn't. The cable didn't --

Q You said General Powell was in the meetings.

MR. FITZWATER: Right.

Q Are you talking about the wrong information not getting here?

MR. FITZWATER: I'm talking about your wrong cable -- your State Department cable is totally irrelevant to the process in the White House -- never seen by -- irrelevant to the decision-making process because the people here had their other channels of information directly through the military.

Q Marlin, let me pin down another discrepancy. We were told originally that there was never any direct contact with the people who were conducting the coup, save for this meeting on Tuesday with the lieutenants who come to SOUTHCOM --

MR. FITZWATER: And the wife of Girolodi on Sunday. And apparently now there was another meeting between Grimaldi and somebody on the ground there.

Q On Sunday night?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes. I don't know exactly when, but Sunday -- yes, sometime. Yes.

Q Was that somebody at SOUTHCOM?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know who it was.

Q There was a direct conversation between a representative of the U.S. government and him before the coup took place?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

Q Did you not know about that? How come you told us only low-level? That information never got here?

MR. FITZWATER: I'm not sure when that was known. I didn't know about that till yesterday, frankly.

Q So wait a minute. How about that? Did the President not know that?

Q Marlin, you told us specifically that the information about the coup came from third party sources.

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, the wife. She's the third party.

Q But you did not mention that her husband, then, was in contact with U.S. officials.

MR. FITZWATER: Yes. I didn't know that till yesterday.

Q Did the President not know it either?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know what he knew. I'm sure he knew the information that was involved there, but I don't know about the specific meeting.

Q So there is some information that didn't get here?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I don't know that. The information probably came here, but I'm just not aware of the meeting.

Q When did the President get the first rumblings? Did he get it Sunday night or Monday morning at the intelligence briefing?

MR. FITZWATER: Sunday.

Q Sunday.

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

Q Marlin, if this was just a rumor, why was the President told about this Sunday night? I mean, is he briefed everytime there is a rumor down there?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, it's more than a rumor in the sense it was a wife. But, I mean, if your wife comes -- I'm not going into that. (Laughter.)

Q Then they talked to the principal. You admitted that?

MR. FITZWATER: And again, she indicated it was going to be Monday and then it wasn't Monday -- yes.

Q So it was more than just a rumor. It's somewhere between a rumor and reliable information.

MR. FITZWATER: You can characterize it however you like.

Q Well, but Marlin, the fact is that it's essentially they've -- well -- somebody let you come out here and say that there's no direct contact for two days until they let you know the truth.

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I think everything that -- the only thing that I see there that I didn't know earlier was this contact directly with Girolidi.

Q Well, you didn't talk about the specific request to block the roads?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes I did. Yes I did.

Q Not initially.

MR. FITZWATER: Yes I did.

Q Marlin, one of the strange things about this is, despite the talk of deaths, there's no evidence -- there's no body been revealed. Does the Pentagon -- the head helicopters circling the area -- did they see actual bloodshed and do you have any actual evidence that injuries occurred?

MR. FITZWATER: No. In fact -- well, that was a good example. First, we were told Noriega was on Amador, which he turned out not to be -- at least, it didn't look like he was. We were told he was wounded, which, obviously, he wasn't. We were told his bodyguards were killed, which, obviously, they weren't. So there are a lot of things that didn't happen --

Q But that wasn't my question. My question is about the ten or six or however many were killed. Do you have any -- does the United States have any confirmation that people died during that coup?

MR. FITZWATER: Other than what they've told us afterwards -- they said it happened, but we don't have any direct, no.

Q What was your information about Girolidi's, or whatever his name is, his fate? Jesse Helms says, Noriega shot him in the head and he was told that. Is that your information, too?

MR. FITZWATER: No, we don't have any information on how he was killed. They say he was killed. We believe he was killed, but we don't have any direct way of knowing.

Q Do you believe that Noriega did the killing?

MR. FITZWATER: We don't have any information on it one way or another.

Q One more. You say that some of this conflicting -- this cable traffic, for example, didn't affect the decision-making process. I'm interested in the decision-making process. When was the decision made not to go after Noriega or not to take action? Was there such a decision?

MR. FITZWATER: No, never had to make that decision. Because, first of all, they told us they wouldn't give him up. And secondly, we never had enough information to consider that anyway.

Q Did you have enough information -- were you told that they would not give him up in the Sunday conversations?

MR. FITZWATER: No, Tuesday morning -- in the Tuesday morning.

Q With the three officers?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes. Once they'd taken -- they said they had him and they would not give him up to us.

Q When the first information --

Q But you allegedly had already made the decision not to become involved with this thing prior to that?

MR. FITZWATER: In a policy sense, yes. Now, we are always to prepared to act if circumstances change the situation. But they didn't.

Q How were you prepared to act?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, prepared to act -- military options are always there. I'm not going to go into specifics because we don't discuss it, but you may be assured, as Jim Baker said, the option is always there.

Q Was the President told, when he was making the decision, starting on Sunday night, Monday -- that Girolodi was kind of a bad character, that we didn't trust him, he had a bad track record, he'd been awfully close to Noriega and had done some stuff in the past that we didn't like.

MR. FITZWATER: Yes. The main thing about Girolodi was that he had been Noriega's closest confidant, and, indeed, was the man responsible for putting down the coup that happened 18 months ago. And those were major factors that led to a concern that maybe the whole thing was a set-up.

Q Was he also given the positive --

Q Do you still feel it's a setup or are you convinced that it was legitimate?

MR. FITZWATER: We think it was legitimate, now.

Q And so you regret then that the coup did not succeed?

MR. FITZWATER: Our policy has not changed. We would like to see Noriega removed.

Q Just a second -- you say removed -- removed from Panama or removed from his position because -- I don't understand why they're not giving him up was something that you opposed. I always thought the U.S. policy was simply to remove him from office, not necessarily from Panama. You've always stressed that point.

MR. FITZWATER: We would like to see him removed from power, yes.

Q Why did you sour on this when they wouldn't give him up?

MR. FITZWATER: We wouldn't go in and take him away from the --

Q -- to help them?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, first of all, because the insurgents took him and they were holding him -- they were responsible for him, they did not want to give him up. And we didn't know where they were. We didn't have the kind of military information that would allow us to do it anyway.

Q Why not?

MR. FITZWATER: Because they were --

Q You had 12,000 troops there a mile away.

MR. FITZWATER: So what?

Q So why can't you have information like that? Why is it so hard to know --

MR. FITZWATER: Why couldn't it? Why is it so hard to understand when a coup takes a person, they take him into a building -- you don't know where he is or where he's gone -- go out the back door in a car, fly off in a helicopter -- there are all kinds of reports.

Q You said he had helicopters in the air.

MR. FITZWATER: So what?

Q But if you only --

Q -- helicopters in the air, you've got 12,000 troops there --

MR. FITZWATER: Do you think you can't hide one? Do you think it's impossible to hide one person?

Q Do you think your intelligence is so bad that you couldn't even keep track of what he's doing?

MR. FITZWATER: Our intelligence was fine. Our intelligence knew everything it needed to know.

Q Well then, how come you didn't know where Noriega was?

MR. FITZWATER: Because they didn't want us to know, obviously?

Q Marlin, Senator Helms says he was rebuffed in an effort to relay a request from the opposition for U.S. help in blockading the airport during the day on Tuesday. True or false?

MR. FITZWATER: I never heard about it. I don't know what he's talking about. Governor Sununu met with members of his staff yesterday and said, everything you said is wrong about these requests. Tell us what you got -- what evidence -- what there is. And they could produce nothing.

Q With Helms or with his aides?

MR. FITZWATER: Helms' aides, two of them.

Q Can we switch yet or is somebody still on --

MR. FITZWATER: I'm about ready to go. You got one more on Panama?

Q I've got on on Panama.

MR. FITZWATER: Lesley's got one.

Q I'm just trying to figure out why if policy is simply that you want Noriega removed from power, why you wouldn't be willing to support a coup that was going to do that even if it didn't involve them turning Noriega physically over to you?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I didn't --

Q The coup was going to accomplish what you wanted --

Q Right.

Q -- even though they weren't going to physically turn him over to you for transport back to the United States.

MR. FITZWATER: Right.

Q Why wouldn't you support that?

MR. FITZWATER: Who said we didn't support it? What I said was we -- oh, do we have to argue over all this?

Q But, Marlin, I don't want to make it arguing, I'm trying to draw you out --

MR. FITZWATER: You changed questions. The question that I gave the answer that you are saying I gave was to why didn't we take over the coup? And that's what I said we weren't prepared to do and they told us we couldn't have it. Your question is do we support his removal from power -- yes.

Q Isn't there something in between taking over the coup and being in a position to assist it?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I'm not willing to get into those kinds of games, I'm sorry.

Q Well, I mean, it's not a game. The question is did you check to see if there were --

Q Marlin, is the main reason we didn't go in there militarily because they didn't ask us and therefore you couldn't justify it to the Latin Americans and to the rest of the world? They didn't ask you, therefore, you would have been interfering in the internal affairs?

Q You said a couple of minutes ago --

MR. FITZWATER: That certainly -- that's the basis for the policy reason, yes.

Q And if they didn't ask you to join -- to help them -- you couldn't very well justify it, so that finished it off right there?

MR. FITZWATER: That's the basis for the general policy, yes --

Q Can I ask my question.

MR. FITZWATER: -- that plus a lack of information about military accessibility.

Q I have two questions -- the first one is, you told us, I think the first day, that we weren't even sure they had Noriega in hand.

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, we still aren't.

Q Could you explain that a little further?

MR. FITZWATER: We still aren't sure.

Q You're still not -- you have no hard evidence. But the thinking here was that you were unclear -- you talked about that.

MR. FITZWATER: That's true.

Q Okay. And finally, could you just one more time go through those meetings. Were they actually formal NSC meetings that were formally -- or was it something less formal than that?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, a formal NSC meeting is whenever they meet with the President as a group and that occurred --

Q Well, the CIA wasn't there, is that right? That would mean that it wasn't the formal full complement?

MR. FITZWATER: The CIA didn't have a person there, right.

Q And who else wasn't there? Was Powell there?

MR. FITZWATER: Powell was there.

Q So everybody but CIA?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

Q Why wasn't CIA?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know.

Q And can you give us the times again and how -- give us a little more information on how the meetings worked.

MR. FITZWATER: The first one was around 9:40 a.m., 9:45 a.m. Tuesday morning and the second was -- I'm a little less certain, sometime after 11:00 a.m. I'd have to check the schedule. And the third was from about 1:45 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Q That was here at the White House?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, in the Oval Office.

Q Why wasn't the CIA here?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know. I don't know the answer to that.

Q Marlin, is the President satisfied with the way this whole thing was handled?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, he feels that we did the best we could with the information available and he feels he made the right decision.

Q With the information available -- is he satisfied that he was given all the information that should have been available to him?

MR. FITZWATER: As far as I know, yes.

Q So he's satisfied with the process that came down --

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

Q -- that led to the U.S. missing this golden opportunity to snatch Noriega?

MR. FITZWATER: Thank you, Mick. (Laughter.)

Q Does he think the criticism is unfair?

MR. FITZWATER: Okay, Owen, one more.

Q Can I ask one question and then you can go back to

your questions? I waited a half-hour to ask one question.

MR. FITZWATER: Go ahead, Paula.

Q I have one more question on Panama.

Q And you'll have more questions on Panama.

The Senate Republicans said that the President today indicated he would veto budget reconciliation if it contains extraneous provisions -- he does not consider capital gains extraneous. My question is, will the President veto the budget reconciliation if capital gains is stripped out of the bill or if the current childcare provisions are left in?

MR. FITZWATER: He did not indicate a veto for any specific reasons. He did say, as he said in the past, that he's prepared to veto the reconciliation bill if it contains a lot of extraneous bills that he finds onerous or inappropriate.

The main outcome of the meeting, however, was that he reaffirmed and the Leader reaffirmed that a capital gains tax cut is important to the administration; that we believe it should be a part of the reconciliation bill; that it has been a part of the President's campaign, it was part of the bipartisan budget compromise, it was part of the committee deliberations in both the House and the Senate and that we believe it should be a part of the reconciliation bill.

They also agreed they would work to try to clean up the bill to try to get out some of the extraneous provisions and that's pretty much the way it was left.

Q How about --

Q He would veto it as is?

MR. FITZWATER: Pardon?

Q He would veto it if it was left open?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, he didn't say he would veto it -- he didn't specify a veto based on specific provisions right now. He just said I'm prepared to veto it if there are extraneous provisions that are unacceptable.

Q In the interest of avoiding the Gramm-Rudman cuts and getting the bill done, since this has become such a rancorous debate, why isn't the administration willing to hold off on the capital gains fight? Since you're pretty sure the vote -- the head count is pretty close, why aren't you willing to get a cleaned up reduction bill without capital gains and do that next?

MR. FITZWATER: Because we believe capital gains is important, that's it been a part of the process from the very beginning. It's already passed the House and we believe now is the time to see that it's included in the bill.

Q What about catastrophic?

Q -- that's more important than the automatic cuts coming up?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we've said that we could live with sequester if we had to. We don't want to do that and we'd prefer to get a reconciliation bill that we can accept.

Q Marlin, just to be clear -- would the President veto a reconciliation bill that does not contain capital gains?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we don't really approach it from that point; we approach it from the point that we want the capital gains tax in there.

Q I understand, but if they produce a clean bill that is clean enough to remove capital gains, is that --

MR. FITZWATER: It didn't come up this morning in that context and he hasn't given any veto signal.

Q Can you quickly give the catastrophic health position now?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, the position on the catastrophic health is --

Q Marlin, before we get off capital gains --

MR. FITZWATER: Well, let me come back to you; my mind's going on this now.

As you know, the Senate is considering the catastrophic health bill and whether or not to change that to reflect the problems with the premiums and their impact on the elderly. And right now there are, as I understand it, four or possibly five different fixes that are being considered and being promoted by one senator or another.

We have told the Senate that we would not take a position on any of those. We would be glad to work with them and help in any analysis that they wanted, but that we would let them sort this out before weighing in.

There was a situation yesterday in which there was a misunderstanding between Secretary of HHS and the administration on the exact position, and our position is that -- was laid out in a letter from Dick Darman to Senators Danforth, Durenburger, McCain and Roth, and that does represent the administration's position.

Q Marlin, did the President say in the meeting that he opposes the proposal on the Hill to have two separate tax bills this year where capital gains would be moved, but it would be moved separately later?

MR. FITZWATER: It didn't go into individual bills, David. They didn't discuss the four or five alternatives. The discussion really focused on just the whole question of whether or not -- you see, the Democrats have suggested stripping everything out and going for a clean bill, and that was the basis for discussion is whether or not do we press for capital gains, and the conclusion was that we will.

Q The administration has put pressure on Israel to accept the Egyptian plan. This morning they said no. Are you disappointed?

MR. FITZWATER: I'm sorry. I'm not familiar with what their latest word is. I mean, obviously our position is that we would like to see a dialogue, and we thought the Egyptian plan had great promise, so we'll continue to work with both parties.

Q Do what? What do you intend to do to change their mind?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, the same thing we always do in these cases, which is you go back and have more discussions and talk to them and try to urge the process forward.

Q The President said he would like capital gains in, but do you really have a choice given that Bentsen is most likely

going to enforce a special rule that would require 60 votes to get capital gains included. And do you really expect to get the 60 votes? I mean, what choice do you have other than a separate capital gains bill?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, our choice is to keep it in, and we'll try to --

Q How can you do it, though, if you don't have 60 votes?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we'll try to come up with it if that's what it takes.

Q You going to be lobbying then for the votes?

MR. FITZWATER: We'll lobby for whatever it takes.

Q Just one more question on Panama. You said that the President feels we did the best we could with the information available. With the benefit of hindsight, and obviously you have more information, does the President wish he had taken any different actions? Would he have done it differently if he'd had full information available to him?

MR. FITZWATER: No, he wouldn't do it any different. And the information availability is not because of any failure on the part of us. It's because that's the nature of coups. There was conflicting information. You've got -- this whole thing happened in a six-hour period, and people running all over and the leadership is uncertain and they're moving him around. It's the ambiguity of the coup itself, as is true of all coups, that caused the conflict of information.

Q Didn't you make a miscalculation? You started out saying that you weren't sure you could trust this guy, that it might have been a set-up, that you might have wound up, as Katie said, replacing one dictator with another. Now in hindsight, you're saying you wish the coup succeeded, that it wasn't a set-up.

MR. FITZWATER: Well, as it turns out, it was not a miscalculation. Indeed, there were a lot reasons. We never did know where Noriega was. It turns out they wouldn't turn him over to us once they had him, if they had him. It turns out --

Q Well, wait a minute --

MR. FITZWATER: Let me finish, you asked me the question, Owen -- let me finish. It turned out the coup failed. It turned out, even afterwards, we don't know what happened. It turned out our first calculations were exactly right; there were a lot reasons to be very cautious about the successful ability of this group to carry this off.

Q Well, you just said one of your calculations was that it might be a set-up.

MR. FITZWATER: That was one of them, yes.

Q This routine review, is this the type of thing that's going to result in a finding of some kind that --

MR. FITZWATER: I don't expect any.

Q -- a formal conclusion, or where's it supposed to lead?

MR. FITZWATER: No, it'll just -- it would lead to any changes in the way we, I don't know what, handle the information. Frankly, I don't really know what kind of specifics they would be

changing.

Q Is there an official assessment at this point, four days -- three, four days later?

MR. FITZWATER: The initial assessment is essentially that we had as good information as was possible to get. And we made the right decision.

Q What about all the people who were quoted today in a number of medias saying that the administration is unhappy with it's first foreign policy test under fire -- it's first crisis?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes. Well, I speak for the President.

Q Marlin, at this point, does the President feel that you're farther away than ever from getting rid of Noriega? A setback?

MR. FITZWATER: I think -- I don't know that we have a position on -- it's pretty hard to make a judgment about closer or further. But as Baker and Cheney and others have pointed out that certainly indicates a degree of concern and suspicion and fragility in the PDF that might make Noriega feel more insecure than he has in the past.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

12:34 P.M. EDT

#110-10/06

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 6, 1989

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

President Bush underwent minor surgery today at Walter Reed Army Medical Center to remove a mucoid cyst of approximately one centimeter in diameter from the third digit on the middle finger of his right hand. The procedure, which started at 1:35 p.m., took approximately 25 minutes and was entirely successful. A pathological examination of the cyst is underway, but Dr. Burton Lee, the President's Physician, said the cyst appeared benign.

The digital nerve block anesthesia, a form of local anesthesia, is expected to wear off within three to four hours following the surgery. Pain medication will be prescribed as necessary.

The incision was approximately one-and-one-half-inches long, along the top of the finger. Eight stitches were required to close the incision which will be removed in approximately two weeks. No long-term impairment of movement in the finger is expected.

The operation was performed by Dr. Allan Smith, a Colonel in the Army Medical Corps and Chief of Hand Surgery at Walter Reed, and Dr. George Bogumill, Chief of Hand Surgery at Georgetown University. Digital nerve block anesthesia was administered by Dr. Charles Gandy of Walter Reed, a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Medical Corps. White House Physicians, Dr. Burton Lee and Dr. Lawrence Mohr, a Colonel in the Army Medical Corps, were in attendance throughout the procedure.

The President will wear a splint on the finger for two to three weeks. Dr. Allan Smith will visit the President at the White House Tuesday, October 10 for a follow-up examination.

#

FROM
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ms. Jan Borman
Assistant Principal
Gering Junior High School
1800 8th Street
Gering, Nebraska 69341

October 6, 1989



THE PRESIDENT

Dear Jan:

I was very moved by your letter of September 13th. I hope you will let me know how that case is resolved. It would be terrible if a courageous kid stands up and does the right thing, only to have the case dismissed.

Thank you so very much for all you are doing to help our young people. For my part, I plan to stay involved working with our drug czar, Bill Bennett, to help you and hundreds of thousands like you to win the fight.

Barbara joins me in sending our warmest best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Geo Bush".

bcc: Governor Sununu
David Demarest

(in & out)

JB

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 6, 1989

Dear Officer Christensen:

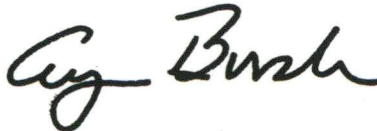
I am deeply touched by your letter and the story of the little girl who discovered drug use in her own family. If my words have helped to save one American family from being torn apart by drug abuse, that in itself is a worthy goal.

Please assure that little girl that she acted very responsibly and that she will never regret her brave decision to get help to a family member. It is so tragic that a little girl of ten years must make such a wrenching decision to save her family, the foundation of our society.

As for her comments that I should have been tougher, please assure her that we stand for more than tough talk, we stand for tough action and are committed to a war that we all can win.

I thank you for your support and commend you for the fine work that you and the police of this country are doing to fight the drug problem.

Sincerely,



Officer Al Christensen
Monterey Police Department
351 Madison Street
Monterey, California 93940

JB

George Bush Presidential Library Transfer Sheet

COLLECTION:

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Office of the President

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☐ **Other**

Other (Specify):

DESCRIPTION:

White House Photographs: P06966-20 [Preparing for "hand surgery"]; P06973-24A [Barbara Bush at Morehouse School]; P06995-25A [Barbara Bush and Oprah]

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24

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Friday, October 6, 1989

OA/ID Number:

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Date of Transfer:

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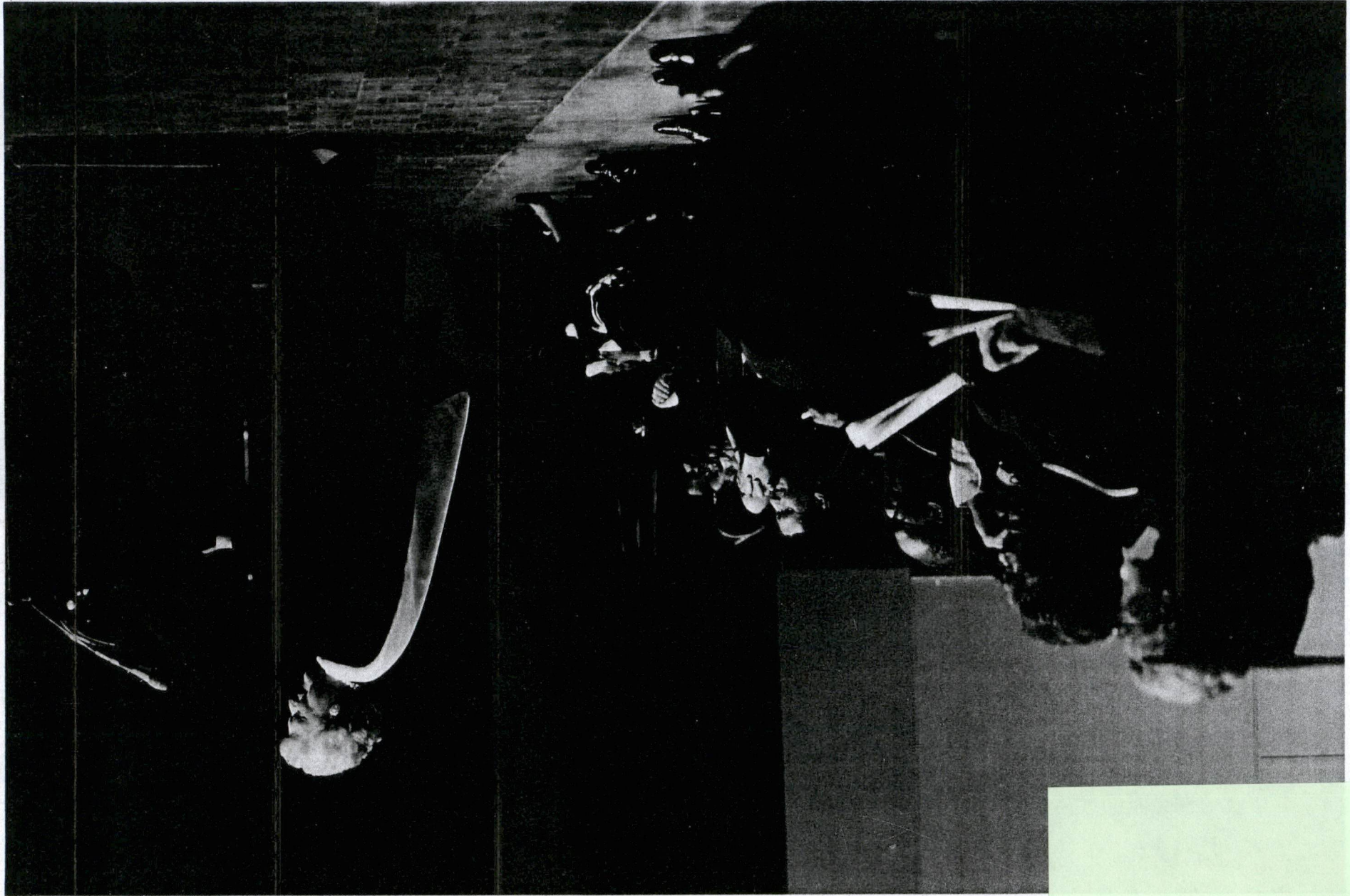
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for
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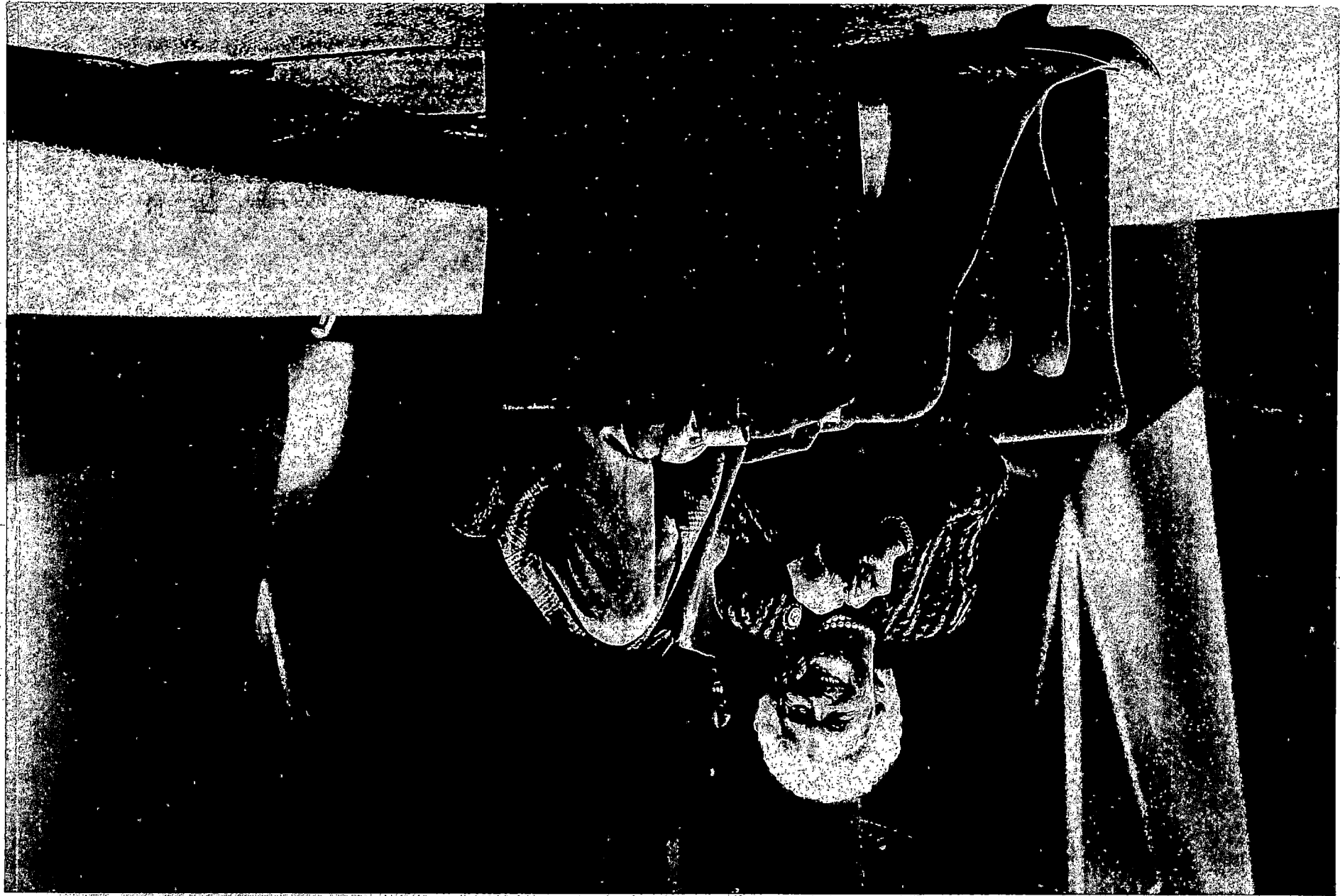
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FROM
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. John M. Weber
Hilton Head Plantation Company
P. O. Box 1607
Hilton Head Island, South Carolina
29925



THE PRESIDENT

Oct 6, 1989

Dear John

I remember your Dad
very well indeed. He was a
good friend. Give my best
to your Mom. Thanks for your
letter - Sincerely, Cy Busch