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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

TELEPHONE MEMORANDUM

PRESIDENT BUSH

APRIL 1, 19 91

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# News Summary

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

MONDAY, APRIL 1, 1991  
6:00 A.M. EST EDITION

**\*BULLETIN\*** -- TIRANIA -- Initial results from Albania's first free elections in more than 60 years indicated the ruling Communists would prevail in the backward countryside and the opposition would capture the cities. That raised the grim prospect of political stalemate, which would plunge into even deeper crisis an impoverished nation. (Tony Smith, AP)

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

**WARSAW PACT MILITARY STRUCTURE OFFICIALLY DISBANDS** -- The once-mighty Warsaw Pact, a symbol of the Cold War and Soviet domination, slipped into history as a military alliance. (AP)

**DEMOCRATS URGE HALT TO IRAQI USE OF HELICOPTERS** -- The U.S. should prevent Iraq from using helicopter gunships against rebels but should not otherwise intervene in the insurrection against Saddam Hussein, two key Democratic members of Congress said. (AP)

## NATIONAL NEWS

**GULF SUCCESS LIFTS BUSH CONFIDENCE AT HOME** -- A cautious new sense of opportunity on domestic problems has infused the halls and staff meetings of the post-Desert Storm White House, according to some officials there. (Christian Science Monitor)

## NETWORK NEWS (Sunday Evening)

**IRAQI UNREST** -- Even as American troops come home at the rate of 3,000 a day, Saddam Hussein continues to crush the rebellion.

**SOVIET GEORGIA** -- There was another challenge to Gorbachev and his drive to keep the Soviet Union together.

**ALBANIA** -- The Communists are seen as having a chance of winning the election.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS...A-1
NATIONAL NEWS.....A-4
NETWORK NEWS.....B-1
TALK SHOWS.....C-1

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## WARSAW PACT MILITARY STRUCTURE OFFICIALLY DISBANDS

VIENNA -- The once-mighty Warsaw Pact, a symbol of the Cold War and Soviet domination, slipped into history as a military alliance. One Hungarian newspaper called the occasion "the winning of the Third World War." The ties that bound the Soviet Union's military to its Eastern European satellites for 36 years were to be formally severed on Monday. Eastern European officials said the end of the pact will lead to changes in the NATO alliance, and that the former Warsaw Pact nations would seek new security arrangements.

The end of the pact was barely noted in other pact nations, which already had been busy for months easing themselves away from Moscow's control. In the Soviet Union, Gen. Pyotr Lushev and Gen. Vladimir Lobov gave up their titles as Warsaw Pact commander and chief of staff, respectively. (Mark Porubcansky, AP)

## DEMOCRATS URGE HALT TO IRAQI USE OF HELICOPTERS

The U.S. should prevent Iraq from using helicopter gunships against rebels but should not otherwise intervene in the insurrection against Saddam Hussein, two key Democratic members of Congress said.

"I don't think the United States can intervene in every internal conflict, however despicable the circumstances may be," Sen. Mitchell said on NBC's Meet the Press. Mitchell added, "I wish they would enforce the original policy of not permitting any aircraft, fixed wing or helicopters, to operate against the rebels."

Rep. Hamilton said on CNN's Newsmaker Sunday that "I think those helicopters now are creating a blood bath there" and should be stopped.

President Bush was asked about Mitchell's comments as he flew to Florida and said, "Always glad to have his opinion. Glad to hear from him."

Richard Perle said on CNN that the U.S. should tell the Iraqis it will shoot down the gunships. (Dale Nelson, AP)

## Bush Lets Mitchell's Idea Drop

ISLAMORADA -- President Bush brushed off Sen. Mitchell's suggestion that U.S. troops shoot down Iraqi helicopters that attack civilians. "He did? Always glad to have his opinion," Mr. Bush said of Mitchell as he flew aboard Air Force One for his first vacation since he called a halt to the war with Iraq Feb. 27. Asked if he agreed with Mitchell and Rep. Hamilton, the president cracked, "Glad to hear from him."

Mitchell said he endorsed the Bush administration's general hands-off approach to the Iraqi civil war, but he said U.S. forces should fire on Iraqi helicopters used to kill rebelling Kurds and Shiites.

Iran's U.N. ambassador said Iraq was using chemical weapons - possibly fired from helicopters -- against rebels in both northern and southern Iraq. (Frank Murray, Washington Times, A1)

## GULF SUCCESS LIFTS BUSH CONFIDENCE AT HOME

A cautious new sense of opportunity on domestic problems has infused the halls and staff meetings of the post-Desert Storm White House, according to some officials there. Within the administration, President Bush's 90 percent approval rating is read as a reestablished bond of trust with the public -- a bond badly frayed when he broke his "no new taxes" pledge last year. The Bush strategy remains to keep expectations low and stay within the discipline of last fall's budget deal. The White House is wary of promising anything it cannot deliver and leery of succumbing to euphoria with grandiose, half-baked initiatives to "write the president's name in history," as the aide puts it. But another White House staff member says: "There's more confidence that if we undertake something that it will be effective."

(Marshall Ingwerson, Christian Science Monitor, A1)

REBELS SAY DOHUK, ERBIL BOMBARDED;  
IRAQ SAYS REBELS CHASED OUT

NICOSIA -- Kurdish rebels said Iraqi forces backed by helicopter gunships, warplanes and artillery pounded two provincial capitals but had not managed to capture the cities. Iraq, however, claimed it had chased the rebels out of the northern cities of Dohuk and Erbil, and said government troops were welcomed by cheering residents. It was impossible to verify either side's claims.

(Terry Leonard, AP)

## REFUGEES FLEEING IRAQ SAY BASRA SMELLS OF BODIES

CAIRO -- Refugees fleeing civil war in Iraq told of army atrocities and hunger as they flew to Egypt over the weekend aboard a Kuwaiti airliner. They also said Iran had fomented and armed Shiite Moslem rebellion in southern Iraq, concealing weapons in food shipments and serving as a sanctuary and rear base for guerrillas fighting the Republican Guards.

(Paul Taylor, Washington Times, A8)

## IRAQI REFUGEES' CHORUS: 'PLEASE MISTER, PLEASE!'

EUPHRATES RIVER VALLEY -- There are more than 50,000 hungry and sick Iraqi refugees, many near death, making their way to makeshift camps set up at U.S. military checkpoints in southern Iraq. They all seek food, water and medical attention. Many arrive, after traveling for days by foot or car, dehydrated or malnourished. Others suffer from bullet and shrapnel wounds or chemical wounds. Nearly all are asking for political asylum. "We will be dead if the American soldiers go home. They are the only way we can now live," says Leila Abu Fahr of Baghdad at an Army camp near the Kuwaiti border. "America turned my country into nothing but now I wish they would go back and finish off Saddam."

Red Cross and State Department officials are due in Safwan this week and may begin dealing with the asylum requests. U.N. officials are also at the camp, checking for signs of cholera or typhoid but so far have found none. Even Kuwaiti soldiers are joining in to help Iraqis by handing out food and translating at medical sites.

(Jack Kelley, USA Today, A6)

## MORE THAN ONE QUARTER OF U.S. TROOPS GONE FROM GULF

RIYADH -- The U.S. is trying to maintain its withdrawal of roughly 3,000 troops a day from the region while awaiting a permanent cease-fire, military officials said. Officials here indicated the Americans are anxious to get home to avoid being pulled into Iraq's civil war. (George Esper, AP)

## IRAN SAYS U.S. INCITED AND THEN DESERTED REBELS

TEHERAN -- A senior Iranian official accused the U.S. of having misled the Iraqi people by encouraging them to overthrow Saddam Hussein and then giving Iraq a "green light" to suppress the rebellion. "[The] United States backs the rebellion and simultaneously backs the Iraqi government," said Morteza Sarmadi, an Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman. Asked why Washington should be blamed for taking a stance similar to Iran's, Sarmadi said there were "fundamental differences" between Iran's relationship with Iraq and America's. He said Iran had been supplying humanitarian relief to the Iraqis and the U.S. has not.

(Judith Miller, New York Times, A8)

## POPE DENOUNCES GULF WAR AS 'DARKNESS'

ROME -- Pope John Paul II delivered a scathing denunciation of the Persian Gulf war, calling it a "darkness" that he said had "cast a shadow over the whole human community." He did not single out any country for criticism. In fact, he never explicitly mentioned the gulf war at all. But the references to it were unmistakable.

(Clyde Haberman, New York Times, A6)

## ASSURED SAUDIS TALKING TO IRAN

RIYADH -- The resumption of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran reflects a growing confidence by Saudi rulers and a desire to encourage moderation in Iran's government, diplomats say. "Now that they have beaten Iraq, they are feeling realistically more secure about their security," a European diplomat said. "The Saudis want to coax the Iranians out of isolation and encourage moderate tendencies within Iran," said another Western diplomat. "But there is still the perennial difficulty in dealing with Iran: You never know from one week to the next who's up and who's down." A Saudi academic said the renewal of ties was the result of Iran's desire for political stability so that it can make progress on its ambitious economic reconstruction plans.

(Tom Diaz, Washington Times, A8)

## SHEVARDNADZE SAYS FEARS CONFIRMED

MOSCOW -- Eduard Shevardnadze condemned the crackdown in the Baltic republics and the show of force in Moscow to quash dissent as "very dangerous experiments" that confirmed his warnings of approaching dictatorship. In his first interview on Soviet television since his resignation, Shevardnadze said the threat from "reactionary forces" that he cited when he quit has increased in the past three months. He did not directly criticize Mikhail Gorbachev, but he offered only limp support and expressed dismay over several recent steps by Gorbachev. Shevardnadze said he is bewildered by the government's present campaign against liberals, saying it was Gorbachev's own policies that allowed them to flourish. (James Rosen, UPI)

## NORTH KOREA PREPARES FOR ASCENDANCY OF KIM JONG-IL

PYONGYANG -- Kim Jong-il, son and heir to President Kim Il-sung, has resurfaced after a year "under wraps," scotching rumors of opposition to the hard-line communist state's succession plan. The junior Kim disappeared almost totally from public view in 1990, giving rise to speculation that his father was having second thoughts about handing over power. But this year, Kim Jong-il has made several appearances, and his propagandists have been lauding his achievements, a clear message to North Koreans that all is well once again in the self-styled "workers' paradise."

(Michael Breen, Washington Times, A1)

## NATIONAL NEWS

## PRESIDENT'S GONE FISHIN'

ISLAMORADA -- President Bush, heeding advice from his wife to "get a little fishing and get a little rest," flew to the Florida Keys for a four-day fishing vacation, his first since the Gulf War ended. "We're going to have a good time down there," the president told reporters on Air Force One.

The president declined to answer questions about U.S. policy matters, including a recent unannounced trip to the Mideast by Brent Scowcroft. Bush was bound for Islamorada, where White House aides said he planned to do very little business and had no meetings or public events scheduled. (Tom Raum, AP)

## MINIMUM WAGE UP 45 CENTS TODAY, UNIONS CALL IT INADEQUATE

Millions of Americans begin earning larger paychecks as the federal minimum wage jumps by 45 cents an hour, but organized labor says the boost falls well short of lifting many workers out of poverty. "They can't support a family on this and in many cases can't support themselves," said Rudy Oswald, chief economist of the AFL-CIO, which wants the base wage increased to \$5.75 an hour from \$4.25 by April 1994. Sen. Kennedy called the 45 cent raise an "April Fool's increase, well below what low-wage workers deserve."

Business executives dismissed the need for another boost, and the White House indicated it probably would oppose another increase. (Karen Ball, AP)

## MITCHELL WON'T FOLLOW REAGAN ON GUN BILL

Sen. Mitchell said he was unswayed by former President Reagan's support for establishing a seven-day national waiting period to buy handguns and predicted the bill would fail. "I don't think the Brady bill will pass in the form in which it now stands. I don't support that bill. I think that we can make some changes in it to have a waiting period that makes sense and accomplishes something," he said on Face the Nation. "I don't oppose the concept of a national waiting period, but it presupposes that there's a waiting period so that a check can be made and there is something to check. There is not now any central national register with which to check," Mitchell said. He said he favored establishing such a register, an approach similar to the Bush administration's stated position of backing the creating of an instant-check system to link gun shops with a national computer system. (J. Jennings Moss, Washington Times, A3)

## SCHWARZKOPF FACES REPUBLICAN DRAFT

A Florida Republican is raising money to draft Gen. Schwarzkopf for a 1992 race against Sen. Graham. The organizer of the drive, W.J. Latvala, is using his direct-mail company to raise money for the "Draft General Schwarzkopf '92 Committee." Florida GOP officials have said he would be an ideal candidate to challenge Graham. (Washington Times, A3)

## NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Sunday evening, March 31 -- CBS News pre-empted by basketball.)

### IRAQI UNREST

NBC's Garrick Utley: The war is not over in Iraq, not the fighting, not the dying. Even as American troops come home at the rate of 3,000 men and women a day, Saddam Hussein continues to crush the rebellion against his rule there. The outcome is now clear: Saddam will win. He is using helicopter gunships as well as troops to defeat the Kurdish forces in the northern part of the country. Today, more Kurds fled Iraq as refugees. And today the Iraqi government allowed journalists to visit the city of Kirkuk, which had been captured by the Kurds.

NBC's Tom Aspell reports from Kirkuk under Iraqi censorship. No one knows how many Iraqis are dying in the uprising. Foreign newsmen were escorted to Kirkuk to see for themselves that Saddam's troops are now in full control of the city for the first time in nearly two weeks. Civilians described the occupation by insurgents as a nightmare.

(Civilian: "Many people died from Kirkuk, innocent people.")

(Civilian: "They come inside the private house and broke and stole everything.")

The damage indicated that the nine-hour (according to Iraq) battle was no pushover. Offices of the ruling Baath Party and provincial headquarters buildings were totally destroyed. The governor said Kirkuk had been occupied by Kurds, Iranians, religious fanatics, and deserters from the Iraqi army. He blamed most of the civilian deaths on what he called groups of thugs. He said they had overrun Kirkuk only to loot and kill. The fighting in Kirkuk has boosted morale in the Iraqi army. Iraqi officials announced in Baghdad this evening that the army has taken back two other important towns in the north. As far as the government is concerned, the uprising is all but over. (NBC-Lead)

The BBC's Michael MacMillan reports from the Kurdish side in Kirkuk, not subject to Iraqi censorship. This is the result of the Iraqi offensive.

(TV Coverage: Children crying in hospital.)

No one can estimate the number of injuries. What's clear is that the Kurds have no medical supplies. There's little chance of survival for those with serious injuries, and with no food the rebels will find it difficult to keep up the fight. In the distance, we could see Iraqi helicopter gunships, which have, according to the refugees, been firing quite indiscriminately at anything which moves. This is the weapon the Kurds fear the most. They can't understand why the U.S. is willing to shoot down fixed-wing aircraft but are still allowing helicopters to fly. (NBC-2)

The ITN's Edward Storton reports on the unrest, cleared by Iraqi censors. We journalists toured enough of Kirkuk to be able to say with some confidence that the government's forces now control it again. During the two-and-a-half hour visit we neither saw nor heard anything to indicate the resistance is continuing.

Storton continues: Their hold had lasted about a week. The provincial governor, brother of Iraq's Interior Minister, said casualties have been low because the rebels had been defeated within two hours. We saw large numbers of Iraqi troops being moved along the roads here, and many more were coming up the highway from Baghdad throughout the day. The authorities here say the rebels have been driven at least 30 miles from Kirkuk, and seem confident that the counter-offensive now under way will be successful and will soon recapture all the territory between here and Iraq's northern borders. (ABC-6)

ABC's Don Kladstrup reports on the occupying U.S. army in southern Iraq and the thousands of fleeing refugees it must deal with. The army is eager to go home, but is helping to feed and shelter the refugees. The challenge facing Americans is to answer the question, Why didn't you finish what you started and liberate all of Iraq? And what happens when a formal cease-fire is signed and American soldiers leave? Under the cease-fire plan, the U.N. or Red Cross may help protect the refugees. But some of the refugees aren't so sure, and fear they will then be executed. (ABC-7)

#### IRAQ/SEN. MITCHELL

Utley: ...Following the cease-fire, the American policy and position was that the Iraqis could use their helicopters for transportation, but not as weapons. Now that they're doing just that, should American forces shoot the helicopters down? Today a leading Democrat said yes.

(Sen. Mitchell, on NBC's "Meet the Press": "I wish they would enforce the original policy of not permitting any aircraft, fixed-wing or helicopters, to operate against the rebels. But generally, I think the policy of non-intervention is the correct one.")

The war has been over now for a month, and more than a quarter of the American forces have now left the Gulf to come home. Once there were 540,000 U.S. troops deployed there; now fewer than 400,000 remain, and most are expected home by the Fourth of July.

ABC's Carole Simpson: Sen. Mitchell said today U.S. forces should shoot down all the Iraqi helicopter gunships being used by Saddam to put down rebel forces in northern and southern Iraq. He said the aircraft, if not downed, could threaten American troops.

(NBC-3, ABC-8)

#### INDEPENDENCE/GEORGIA

Simpson: There was another serious challenge today to Mikhail Gorbachev and his drive to keep the Soviet Union together. Following the lead of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, the republic of Georgia held a vote on independence today, despite Gorbachev's warning that such a vote is illegal and unconstitutional.

ABC's Rick Inderfurth reports on the vote. Turnout was heavy, with as many as three million expected to vote to restore the brief independence Georgia enjoyed before Soviet troops occupied the republic in 1921. The independence drive is led by its President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who predicted today that the referendum would be backed by a great majority, perhaps 80 percent. Nationalist feelings were also on display in the Ukraine, where Catholics celebrated the return of their patriarch after 50 years of exile.

Inderfurth continues: The revival of Ukrainian Catholicism is going hand-in-hand with their growing independence movement, posing yet another challenge to President Gorbachev's attempt to hold the Union together. But an even more immediate problem is a revolt taking place in Moscow against Gorbachev's economic policies, both from those who say he is going so far and those who say he has given up on it. Lawmakers in the Russian Federation parliament are demanding a rejection of Gorbachev's go-slow approach to a market economy. And Moscow residents say they have never seen lines as long for bread as they are currently. (ABC-Lead, NBC-9)

#### SOVIET MINE STRIKE

Simpson reports that unless Russian lawmakers meet their demands, striking Soviet coalminers today threatened to flood their mines. They want Gorbachev to resign, new elections to take place and higher paychecks. (ABC-2)

#### WARSAW PACT

Simpson reports the once-mighty Warsaw Pact is no more. It was formally severed today. (ABC-3, NBC-10)

#### ALBANIAN ELECTIONS

ABC's John Donovan reports on Albania's first multi-party elections in nearly 50 years, in which a reported 95% of eligible voters went to the polls. The communists are seen having a chance of winning it, as many Albanians believe them when they say they are leading the movement for reform. But candidates from the newly-created opposition parties, who are claiming that they were not given fair access to television and campaign platforms, argue that Albania needs to move away from communism much faster. They appeared confident. The Democratic Party is given the best chance of defeating the communists. The communists today allowed Albanians to celebrate Easter in church for the first time in half a century.

The BBC's Bill Hamilton reports on the vote. Early indications from the vast rural community suggest a huge vote for the Marxist-Leninist government. Some believe the final result may be too close to call. (ABC-5, NBC-5)

#### YUGOSLAVIA

Simpson reports government troops had to separate Serbian and Croatian police following gunfire that left at least two people dead. Twenty-nine people were arrested, and 21 of them were armed civilians. (ABC-4, NBC-7)

#### E. GERMANY

NBC's Gary Matsamoto reports on the costs of reunification for East Germans. Tens of thousands are protesting unemployment which reached 50 percent this year, and rent for state-owned apartments is set to quadruple. East German products just aren't good enough to compete in Western markets. Their technology is too old to salvage, too costly to clean up. Economic hardship might not even begin to ease for another two years. (NBC-6)

**ISRAEL/PLO**

Simpson reports that Israel's Security Cabinet, meeting in secret session, voted to expel and demolish the homes of Arabs who have encouraged the latest wave of Palestinian attacks against Israeli citizens. They also put new restrictions on Palestinian entry into Israel from the occupied territories. (ABC-9)

**EASTER/POPE**

Simpson reports Pope John Paul II delivered his annual Easter address to 30,000 pilgrims and worshippers in St. Peter's Square. He urged the world to heed what he called the long-ignored aspirations of Palestinians, Lebanese and Kurds to exist in freedom. He also condemned the Gulf crisis, the ensuing war and the international arms trade. (ABC-10, NBC-4)

**BLACKS/UNEMPLOYMENT**

NBC's Irving R. Levine reports on blacks and unemployment. Black teenagers are unemployed at a rate of 35 percent. It may be a lot worse, as many have quit looking for work with the recession going on. When a black teenager does find work, more often than not it's low-paying and low-skilled at a fast food joint. One view is that black teens have only themselves to blame. But some believe they are the victim of prejudice, and some the victims of broken homes. (Roger Wilkins, civil rights leader: "A lot of these kids don't have skills. They don't even have the rudimentary skills of you've got to come to work on time, you've got to take your hat off, you've got to do what the boss says. Fathers tell sons that. Uncles tell nephews that. These kids aren't in that culture. They have to learn those things.")

Centers to train teenagers in office skills have been hit by government budget cuts and by the recession.

(Effie Mackler, director, Urban League Training Center: "Some places where perhaps they would automatically hire ten, they may not be able to hire but five of the graduates here because they are also feeling the crunch and they cannot hire at the rate that they once were able to.")

The cutbacks are unfortunate, because experts agree that training centers can play a big part in helping black teenagers meet their goals. The minimum wage goes up tomorrow by 45 cents, to \$4.25, but it won't necessarily make it any more difficult than it already is for black teenagers to find jobs; most employers are already paying above the minimum to get qualified workers. Employers say it doesn't make sense to hire someone even at the minimum wage if they can't do the job.

Utley: A special training wage was enacted about a year ago. Is this help for these people?

Levine: You may recall the Bush Administration pushed for the training wage, arguing it would encourage companies who give teenagers a chance to get some experience. But in fact, very few companies took advantage of that lower wage. Of the thousands of companies in the U.S., only ten applied to the Labor Department to hire people for six months at the lower wage. (NBC-8)

THIS WEEK WITH DAVID BRINKLEY

**Moderator:** David Brinkley. **Panelists:** George Will, Sam Donaldson.

-- The topic is the Knight Foundation Commission proposals for reforming sports programs at universities. --

**Discussion segment:** Tom Wicker joins.

**On the Schwarzkopf controversy:**

**Will:** ...Any general...has a natural professional impulse to complete the job. However, completing the job is a political judgment.... This issue acquired a peculiarly saliency this week because America is standing by while terrible events are going on.

**Donaldson:** As I understand it, Schwarzkopf didn't make his recommendation to the President, he made to JCS Chairman Powell.... But I think what it shows is, in Schwarzkopf's case, a certain naivete, certainly about the way Washington works.... It also shows that Schwarzkopf's greatest sin may be that he's grown so popular. No President can stand for one of his subordinates to have the limelight like Schwarzkopf has.

**Wicker:** It seems to me that his transgression, if that's what it was, was particularly egregious this time because of the implication that we could have stopped or intervened successfully in this civil war and didn't do it. So more than normally, I think, it aroused certain animosities at the White House.... The war itself, it seems, was disproportionate to the [U.N.] war aim. President Bush's repeated calls for the internal overthrow of Saddam could not have done anything but convinced the Kurds and Shi'ites and so forth that if they tried to overthrow Saddam, we would help.

**Donaldson:** ...We went there for the oil.... We didn't go in there for any other reason, Presidential assertions notwithstanding.

**On the Brady Bill and President Reagan:**

**Brinkley:** Ronald Reagan came into town and endorsed gun control.... That probably means [a seven-day waiting period] is going to pass.

**Donaldson:** I think so. I think there was a steam building on Capitol Hill anyway.

**Wicker:** I would think so, and I think President Bush now could hardly come out in opposition to it....

**On Doug Wilder and 1992:**

**Will:** I think it's great. He's a successful governor of a very important state that's gone Republican for these many years; he's a Democrat; he's a moderate man; he's for a kind of fiscal conservatism. Why not?

MEET THE PRESS

Moderator: Garrick Utley. Panelists: David Broder, Tim Russert.  
Guest: Sen. Mitchell.

Utley: ...Bloody fighting is continuing; Saddam is trying to put down the rebellion that appears to be succeeding; our troops are at least standing to one side, watching it from across the border..., under orders not to intervene. Is the Administration doing the right thing here?

Mitchell: I think the policy of non-intervention generally is the correct one. I wish they would have enforced the original policy of not permitting any aircraft, fixed-wing or helicopters, to operate against the rebels. But generally, I think the policy of non-intervention is the correct one. Tragic as that is, there is something really despicable about the Iraqi army, which really wouldn't fight the American army, taking it out on their own civilians with such a vengeance.

Utley: I think we can agree on that.... But to follow up on this point, do you really think that we should have or should still go in and shoot down those helicopters and those fixed-wing aircraft?

Mitchell: The clear intent of American policy at the outset was to prohibit the use of aircraft which might threaten American forces, and that was both fixed-wing and helicopters, from operating. I think we should enforce that policy.

Utley: ...So you're saying, in effect, that the President should come out and say, okay, let's go, and stop that at least, that's the least we can and should do.

Mitchell: That was the Administration policy at the outset. Clearly the exception was apparently permitted for the ferrying of officials, Iraqi government officials within the country. It's clear that they're being used far beyond that. So I think that the Administration's policy is the correct one; I think it should be enforced.

Utley: Do you get any signals from the Administration as to why it's not doing that?

Mitchell: No, I have not.

Broder: Senator, you say what the Iraqis are doing is despicable. Then why is the policy of non-intervention correct?

Mitchell: Well, because I don't think the United States can intervene in every internal conflict, however despicable the circumstances may be. I think it is particularly so in this case, since, as I said, the Iraqi army, in effect, didn't fight against a stronger military force, and now appears to be, to some extent, taking it out on their own civilians.

Broder: When you were last on this program back in February, you indicated that you thought that the real Administration policy was the removal of Saddam Hussein, and that you thought that should be our objective. Is that still your view?

Mitchell: Yes it is. I think it still is the Administration's policy.

Broder: How do you envisage that happening?

Mitchell: I believe that ultimately, and I think sooner rather than later the Iraqi people will come to recognize that this man has been a disaster for their country.... It's clearly now the view of a large number of Iraqis, certainly the Shi'ites, who are a majority in the country, the Kurds in the north. I think eventually it has to penetrate the ruling party, which involves his supporters, the Baath Party and others.

Broder: Is Gorbachev going to make it?

Mitchell: I don't think he will unless he takes dramatic steps necessary to turn the economy around....

Broder: If he's not going to make it, what should our government's position be vis-a-vis Gorbachev, Yeltsin?

Mitchell: ...I think first of course our policy should be based solely on what is in our national interest.... And so I think our policy should be supportive of the democratic reforms there, encouraging of the movement toward a free economy but not placing all of our chips on one person or another.

Utley: ...We're getting signals now from the White House that President Bush may be prepared to not oppose [the Brady Bill] if the Democrats make some accommodation on his crime bill. Do you see some deal possible here that would get the crime bill through and this gun control act through, too?

Mitchell: ...Sen. Biden's bill...is actually a much stronger and tougher anti-crime bill than is the President's, and I think we're going to pass Sen. Biden's bill or some variation of it this year. It provides the most important thing with respect to combatting violent crime in our country, and that's aid to local police departments and city governments and --

Utley: Which also involves money and is asking for more money than the President's bill would. But the President wants some things in his crime bill. Do you see the two sides getting together and getting a crime bill that both Congress and the White House can agree on, and also this Brady bill?

Mitchell: I hope we can do that. And I hope that we can come up with a comprehensive package. Now, I don't think the Brady Bill will pass in the form in which it now stands. I don't support that bill. I think we can make some changes in it to have a waiting period that makes sense and accomplishes something.... I don't oppose the concept of a national waiting period. But it presupposes that there's a waiting period so that a check can be made, and there's something to check. There is not now any central national register which to check.... I favor the creation of a national register, which would give us something to check during that waiting period, and also I favor providing federal funding necessary to make the checks....

**Russert:** Will a bill which encompassed those items pass the Senate?

**Mitchell:** I think a bill of that type would. And there are efforts under way....

**Russert:** Let me ask you about the civil rights bill. Have southern Democratic senators come to you expressing their political concerns that the bill is perceived as a quota bill and may damage their re-election interests?

**Mitchell:** Northern Democratic senators, western Democratic senators and southern Democratic senators have all had a whole series of discussions about the bill, which include that as well as other concerns about it. A number of them have also expressed the concern that we have to do something to eliminate the double-standard which exists in our society, whereby women are treated less favorably than others who are subject to discrimination.... What I've said [to them] is that we've got to review the legislation and do the best we can to come up with a bill that will honor our commitment to equal justice in our society, to equality without discrimination, and that can become law, and that's what we're trying to do.... I think we'll pass a bill. Whether the President will sign it is the question. I don't know.

**Utley:** ...There aren't that many [Democrats running for President].... Isn't this going to be a problem for the Democrats in terms of how the public is perceiving the lack of real interest in Democrats to get out there and run?

**Mitchell:** No, not at all. I think it's a problem for the press, but not the public....

**Utley:** But it is important to get people out to start the political debate, to present the agenda, the issues, what the Democratic Party is going to be running on.

**Mitchell:** I must say that I disagree.... I think shorter campaigns are better for everyone.... From the standpoint of a partisan Democrat, we had long campaigns in '88 and '84, and what did it get us?

**Russert:** Two weeks ago on this program, Sen. Robb...said that anyone who wanted to run for President had to pass a certain threshold when it came to foreign policy and defense matters; and that senators, including yourself, who had voted against the use of force would bear a heavier burden in trying to convince the American people of seriousness on those issues. Is that fair?

**Mitchell:** Oh, I think it's a concern that the American people have, and that all those who observe the political situation have.... So it's a legitimate question to raise, a concern which is in the minds of people now, and will be addressed in the course of a campaign.

**Russert:** So Sen. Robb is right. A vote against the use of force by a U.S. senator is one strike against him if he decides to run for President?

Mitchell: I don't think he said that. I think those are your words. But my own view is that may be; it may result in that. We don't know that yet....

Broder: ...Are you supporting the Moynihan tax cut?

Mitchell: I have not made a decision on the specific numbers -- what rate to cut, how many years to cut it in. I favor the concept of a payroll tax cut, and I believe there's a good chance it will pass this year....

Utley: ...How do you, as a Democrat, and how does the party in 1992, really think it can sell many of these proposals which require money that may not be there -- in fact, is not there?

Mitchell: First, it's a mistaken assumption that the solution to every problem involves more money. The single largest domestic problem, other than economic growth and the recession we're in, is health care. We don't spend too little money on health care, we spend too much.... We can actually provide broader coverage and a more appropriate level of care at less cost.... I will introduce legislation this spring that will provide universal health coverage by creating a system of both incentives and disincentives to encourage companies to offer health insurance through employment..., and for those who do not do so, there will be a disincentive in the form of some payroll tax that will go to create a pool to pick up the others. It's something many states have already done. We're going to apply it at the national level.

Russert: ...You'd like to be President?

Mitchell: Yes, I would.... I'm not going to run in '92. I haven't made any decision beyond that....

Utley: ...But if no strong Democratic candidate emerges and the party says we need somebody who's a national figure, and says George Mitchell, we need you -- do you exclude the possibility?

Mitchell: That just doesn't happen.... Believe me, there are going to be plenty of Presidential candidates.... I'm not going to be a candidate in 1992. I've made no decision beyond that.

## FACE THE NATION

**Moderator:** Lesley Stahl. **Guests:** Secretary Sullivan; Alexander Lyubimov, Soviet TV producer; Hedrick Smith, Johns Hopkins University.

**Guest:** Secretary Sullivan.

**Stahl:** One in eight children in America going hungry -- what's wrong in our country where we can afford to fight a war in foreign land, where we can afford more money for space exploration, but we cannot afford to feed our own babies?

**Sullivan:** I think we're all concerned about the problem of hunger in America, and we are committed to addressing this problem. In fact, in the President's budget for FY '92 is a proposed increase of more than \$2 billion for this program. Also, we have shown our commitment to children and women by the fact that, in the first budget that the President submitted to the Congress in 1989, he proposed expanding Medicaid eligibility for women and children, pregnant women and children. And the Congress acted on that, and that brought one million women and children additionally into the program.

**Stahl:** Bet let's be honest. When these budget increases are put through, still only about half the pregnant women and children who are eligible for this food assistance because they're below a certain poverty level...will get that money and benefits.... Shouldn't this be priority number one, is my question?

**Sullivan:** It is a top priority. The President articulated in his inaugural address his commitment to children. And what has shown that commitment is the largest expansion in the Head Start program in the 25-year history of that program.

**Stahl:** But that only reaches one-third of the children.

**Sullivan:** No, it reaches 60 percent of the eligible four-year-olds, giving them a year of Head Start experience prior to starting school.... The President has asked for more dollars than the Congress has given. It is not simply what the President does, but also what the Congress does as well.

**Stahl:** ...I want to know if you think we're in a country that can't afford to really massively address this problem like a war?

**Sullivan:** Lesley, we are firmly committed to addressing the problem of hungry children and of pregnant women and children in our society.... Many people don't receive services because they are not aware of it; they don't come in for it.... We have not cut any health programs for pregnant women or children. We have worked to try and restrain the rate of growth in our Medicare and our Medicaid programs. But the dollars have not been reduced, they have increased every year.

**Stahl:** Well, you know, that's a tricky statement because what's happening is the number of poor children is increasing. So as I understand it, the per capita amount spent on each poor child is actually going down....

**Sullivan:** We are concerned about poor children. But the answer is not simply federal programs. We have a problem in our society that our families are disintegrating. And I maintain that the family is the first department of health and human services.... We have to work to strengthen our families and have them give the nurture and the guidance that's needed for their children.

**Stahl:** It's still true, isn't it, that welfare benefits are cut if a woman is married to a man who works?

**Sullivan:** That is an anomaly that certainly we need to address.... A number of states are changing their requirements because that is a policy that has tended to be disruptive of families.

**Stahl:** Well, you've gone around the country and made a lot of speeches lately that everyone's applauding, talking about the need for families to stay together and people to take responsibility for their own lives. But you haven't even made the proposal to change the welfare system so that it encourages couples to stay married, so that they don't lose their benefits if they work.... What you say in your rhetoric isn't matched by policy proposals.

**Sullivan:** ...It takes, as you know, a number of negotiations with state governments to change such policies. But we certainly would want to do everything to have policies that promote families staying together.

**Stahl:** ...Why are kids getting measles in America? I've heard it was the budget cuts; that the clinics are not staying open at night for parents to bring their kids in to be vaccinated; that there are many fewer nurses; that the outreach program that educates families about the need to vaccinate newborn or very small babies was cut drastically so people aren't learning about the need to do this and where to go. What about an infusion of money for that program?

**Sullivan:** We have proposed for the FY '92 budget now before the Congress a 19 percent increase in the vaccination program, a \$40-million increase in that program to bring it to \$258 million....

**Stahl:** Forty million is about 20% less than your own advisory committee proposed was needed to really deal with this problem.

**Sullivan:** Lesley, I wish that we could simply solve all of these problems by throwing money at them.... There is a cultural issue here that we have to address.

**Stahl:** Okay, there is the other problem of infant mortality.... It's twice as high in this country as it is in Japan.... The only solution for solving these unbelievably painful things...is money.

**Sullivan:** ...We are adding money to it, but what I'm telling you is this: if you depend upon simply adding money, you'll never be successful.... And let me correct another thing: the infant mortality in the U.S. is half this year what it was in 1970.... We have decreased, but what's happened is other countries have decreased more rapidly.

Guests: Lyubimov and Smith.

Stahl: ...Is Gorbachev becoming a dictator, is he a dictator, and what's going on with his feud with Yeltsin today?

Lyubimov: ...These two rivals, Gorbachev and Yeltsin, in their desperation to defeat each other, just give no gain to the people, as we say it here. Maybe it's what we call "populism."...

Smith: ...I think that you're seeing a much more intense, much more polarized situation now. The confrontation between Yeltsin and Gorbachev...is becoming more and more intense.... And the show of 50,000 troops in Moscow last week is just the sign that Gorbachev is ready to use [his] power.

Lyubimov: ...I suppose that these troops taken two days ago was just a trick to show Gorbachev was strong enough to defeat any; and at the same time, with withdrawal of troops, he showed he's kind and eager to compromise.

Stahl: Are the limits on Gorbachev from within, or are there foreign policy limits -- which leads me to the question about what all this means for U.S. policy, U.S. relations?

Lyubimov: Well, you have created a positive image of Gorbachev with the help of your journalists here in Moscow, and you have a problem with this now.... I think your attitude should be as it is now -- like Secretary Baker expressed after his visit his Moscow -- supporting Gorbachev, supporting any of our political figures who go against the people, because in this situation you can't count on any of them; none of them are reliable enough.

Smith: I don't think there's any question that we ought to be spreading our contacts. I think the government has been far too close to Gorbachev.... Our interest now is not in Gorbachev's survival. It is in the continuation of some kind of reform.... There are lots of ways to work with all kinds of people who want to push those reforms. They're in the cities, they're in the republics, there's Yeltsin.

THE McLAUGHLIN GROUP

**Moderator:** John McLaughlin. **Panelists:** Pat Buchanan, Fred Barnes, Jack Germond, Morton Kondracke.

**On the Schwarzkopf controversy and the Iraqi civil war:**

**McLaughlin:** ...Despite Gen. Schwarzkopf's tribute to the commander-in-chief and despite the general's implicit consent in the decision to halt hostilities expressed in the interview, the Bush people, including the President, were stunned by what Schwarzkopf had to say.... Did the Administration overreact to the Schwarzkopf interview, or was the chastisement proper?

**Buchanan:** I think Dick Cheney was dead right to issue that statement. This is about a very, very serious matter: Who is politically accountable for the fact that tens of thousands of Shi'ites and Kurds are being slaughtered right now, who rose up against Saddam Hussein in the belief that the U.S. might help them, a belief which we ourselves have encouraged?...

**Barnes:** ...Schwarzkopf is right; he doesn't want the blame for what's going on. Schwarzkopf is right about another thing, too: When he told the Iraqis not to use their helicopter gunships, and then the White House wouldn't let him shoot them down.... The Bush Administration could do so little and get so much out of it over there in Iraq now.... The Administration made this story much bigger by their reaction to it....

**Germond:** I think the whole thing is a tempest in a teapot. I think the White House overreacted, because they overreact to anybody who doesn't seem to be in lockstep on every issue with every word. Secondly, they're sensitive to it because things are going so badly in Iraq now, and they're sensitive about blame-placing. I think Schwarzkopf was talking like any general would do; generals like to wipe out the enemy all the way.... I think all he showed here is he's not a politician.

**McLaughlin:** Some Administration officials...disparaged Schwarzkopf; one called him a loose cannon; another said he suffered from camera fatigue...; a third said he had been in the desert too long. Were they trying to cut him down a peg with the press?

**Kondracke:** Obviously, they were. I think the Administration feels very guilty about the fact that they're standing by and watching the Kurds and Shi'ites be slaughtered by the tens of thousands by Saddam.... Probably the President was right in stopping the attack when he did.... But now I think we should be shooting down helicopters and even tanks to stop the slaughter that's going on.

**Germond:** ...The Administration wouldn't be so sensitive to this if Bush hadn't repeatedly invited people to rise up against Saddam.

**Buchanan:** ...The Administration really, I think, is divided again in what it wants in Iraq....

**McLaughlin:** ...The President is doing exactly what he is being told to do, and there's nothing better he can do. He should not help the Kurds!

**Barnes:** If you give them the help of shooting down the helicopters, give them Stinger missiles, that's not dragging us into the civil war.... The Administration somehow think that...six months down the road there'll be a coup, and...that somehow we're going to wind up with a moderate regime. That is a hoax.

**McLaughlin:** Do you think Schwarzkopf made an innocent error when he used the wrong word, "recommend," rather than "we planned it together"; or do you think he was trying to rewrite history and preserve his own integrity...and legitimacy in the eyes of history?

**Buchanan:** ...I think Schwarzkopf wanted to finish the battle and annihilate the enemy..., and he wants this on the record.... I think we should have destroyed the armor. **Barnes:** This is neither innocent nor an error; he's on the side of the angels on this.

**Germond:** I think he made an innocent mistake and the choice of language got him into trouble. **Kondracke:** I think he made an innocent mistake; he was wrong on the policy and Bush was right. But now Bush ought to change the policy. **McLaughlin:** An innocent mistake, and the Administration acted unwisely in building it.

#### On the Soviet demonstrations:

**Kondracke:** ...The clash between Gorbachev and Yeltsin is rising to a crescendo, and I'm afraid...that something's going to happen to Yeltsin. He's had four strange accidents....

**Germond:** ...There's no question about the direction of the thing toward Yeltsin.... The fact that they pulled this demonstration off peacefully is even a higher card for Yeltsin to play in the future.... I think Gorbachev is hanging on by his fingertips.

**Barnes:** Yeltsin is so much stronger than the Bush Administration...thought he was.... I think he is basically one [limited] general strike away from toppling Gorbachev....

**Buchanan:** I cannot see the KGB and military and the others letting Yeltsin come to power when they know that is the end for them.... Gorbachev has lost the people.

**McLaughlin:** Gorbachev won the week.

#### On Douglas Wilder and 1992:

**McLaughlin:** ...How seriously should Wilder's presidential punitive bid be taken? **Germond:** Not seriously in terms of Wilder getting the nomination, which he himself recognizes.... **Kondracke:** I bet you he's going to be on the ticket, vice president. **Buchanan:** I don't think he's going to be on the ticket. **Barnes:** Don't underestimate Doug Wilder. He is a tremendous politician, and he's going to make a real run at this nomination. **McLaughlin:** He's going to be on the ticket in the second position.

#### Predictions:

**Germond:** In the end, Wilder won't run for President. **Kondracke:** Bad news for Fritz Hollings; Carroll Campbell is going to run for that Senate seat. **McLaughlin:** At the Republican convention, the featured speakers will be Reagan, Ford, but also Richard Nixon.

## INSIDE WASHINGTON

**Moderator:** Gordon Peterson. **Panelists:** Charles Krauthammer, Marianne Means, Hugh Sidey, Carl Rowan.

**On the Iraqi civil war:**

**Peterson:** ...Now we're standing by watching while Saddam's forces slaughter thousands of Iraqis who are trying to overthrow him. The Bush Administration thinks neutrality is the wisest course.

**Krauthammer:** I think it's a scandal. I think the President was not neutral when he called on the Iraqis to overthrow Saddam, and now that they are in the act of doing that and being put down with astonishing brutality, we are standing by and doing nothing. I think it's a disgrace.

**Sidey:** The fact of the matter is we don't know what would happen if we did otherwise.... I think it's a wise decision.

**Means:** ...First we appease him, then he invades Kuwait, and then he's the devil and Hitler, and now we're sort of propping him up again by not intervening against him. But I don't think it's our role to intervene. I don't think we should get involved in somebody else's civil war. I thought the President was right to go to war, and I think he's right to come home.

**Rowan:** ...This President is under a lot of pressure from the Soviet Union, the French, other members of the coalition, not to intervene or go after Saddam Hussein.

**Peterson:** ...We're telling him you can't fly jet fighters, we're going to shoot them down; in fact we have. But they're allowing him to fly helicopter gunships, and the gunships are doing an awful job on the rebel forces on the ground.

**Rowan:** This is the distinction they make: The jet fighters can be construed as a threat to U.S. forces in the area. They're telling us that the gunship helicopters are not a threat to U.S. forces.... Furthermore, to go after them now would be construed as intervening in the internal affairs of Iraq....

**Sidey:** ...Bush is being advised by his intelligence people that this thing was going to rock along awhile, and in all likelihood they'll be some move within the army or someplace to remove him.... If he is not, he still, in my judgment, is probably no threat to the region.... And I think we get into the quagmire if indeed we go along with this war.

**Krauthammer:** These are the same intelligence people who told us Saddam would not go into Kuwait last August. I think the President is either getting bad advice or making a severe misjudgment. The best way to ensure that the Shi'ites in Iraq are going to be anti-American and pro-Iranian is to ignore them now after having encouraged them..., if we stay out and watch them slaughtered in the tens of thousands.... The Kurds in the north...are quite favorably inclined toward the U.S. We sold them out in the '70s, again in the '80s and we're selling them out again. They are the future of Iraq, and we are on the wrong side of history.

-more-

**On the Schwarzkopf controversy:**

**Means:** ...The issue is, was the President premature to order a cease-fire after 100 days instead of pursuing for another couple days?...

**Krauthammer:** It's clear the President had a hard decision to make.... In retrospect, however..., it increased the amount of killing. It prevented the annihilation of an army on its way to a massacre.

**Rowan:** ...We had a mandate [from the U.N.] to throw him out of Kuwait. We did not have a mandate to go on up to Baghdad or wherever, and the President knew he wanted to get some other things through the U.N. Security Council.... When he made that decision, it was as political as it was humane.

**Krauthammer:** Why do we need a mandate from the butchers of Tiananmen Square to prevent a massacre in Iraq?

**Means:** ...Because it is helpful for Bush's support at home.... I think his popularity will fall if we continued to fight there.... I don't think it is ever far from his mind, his own re-election.

**Sidey:** ...The general's premise that we would close the door and eliminate all the opposition forces or annihilate that whole army I think is somewhat dubious.

**On Mideast arms sales:**

**Peterson:** I understand there are people in Washington who want Syria off the terrorist list. Are we going to get in bed with this fellow the way we did with Saddam Hussein? Are we going to be fighting a few years from now the forces of Assad?

**Means:** ...I think we should take this opportunity to move rapidly and halt all these arms sales.

**Sidey:** April Glaspie...said we tried to rationalize with [Saddam], to see if there was not some way to reach in, to educate him. Why not the same with Syria? What is the alternative, to isolate them?

**Krauthammer:** ...We educated Saddam into Kuwait.... The idea that we are going to domesticate these local thugs is nonsense.... What we can do and ought to do is to call for a one- or two-year moratorium, absolute and universal, on arms sales in the Mideast.

**On the Brady Bill and President Reagan:**

**Rowan:** ...I think it says...that the NRA has lost a lot of its political clout....

**Peterson:** ...The Bush Administration...seems to be willing to cut a deal over the crime package.

**Sidey:** Deep down, I think this is an escape for Bush. I think in his heart of hearts he's probably always favored this.

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From The Desk of

HUGH GREGG

April 1, 1991  
*CB*  
THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

Mr. President:

At KB several weeks ago you expressed concern re Sumnu v. Judd.

The enclosed Manchester Union clip is a further example of what goes on.

Hiler was Kemp's choice and well qualified. Unfortunately he was also Judd's close friend.

Judd even called you, but it made no difference.

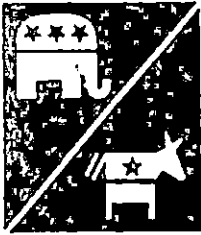
Respectfully,



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## The Granite Status

A POLITICAL POTPOURRI

# Did Sununu Torpedo Job for Gregg Friend?

By JOHN DISTASO  
Union Leader Staff

**A GREGG GRUDGE?** Is White House Chief of Staff John Sununu letting his poor relationship with Gov. Judd Gregg influence Administration business?

Some "inside-the-beltway" sources are convinced he is, in the case of former Indiana U.S. Rep. John Hiler, a long-time Gregg friend and ski partner.

Hiler, a five-term congressman who was defeated by less than 1 percentage point last November, was Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp's choice as HUD's chief congressional liaison, but Sununu, according to a Washington Post piece yesterday, quickly quashed the idea, citing Hiler's opposition to President Bush's infamous tax-raising, deficit-cutting package last year.

Kemp was reportedly "outraged," and our D.C. sources say Sununu's reason won't wash. If Hiler was bounced because of his vote, why did other former GOP congressmen who opposed Bush on the tax hike land nice, big jobs?



JOHN SUNUNU

Lynn Martin of Illinois was recently named Secretary of Labor after voting against the package. Ditto Pat Saiki of Hawaii, who now heads the Small Business Administration. Then, there's Jim Courter of New Jersey, who was punished for his "no" vote by being named to head the commission overseeing military base closings. And don't forget Stan Parris of Virginia, a "no-voter" who now

heads the St. Lawrence Seaway Commission, a "plum job," said one insider.

What about Hiler? Could the Gregg connection have been a factor? The Post doesn't mention it, but our Washington sources say it could be. And State House sources say that Gregg, "surprised" as he was to see his buddy lose out, would be doubly "amazed" if his friendship with Hiler had anything to do with Sununu's move.

Kemp, by the way, is tentatively slated to appear at a Republican State Committee fundraiser June 21.

POTUS' dinner  
at Cheeca Lodge  
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Bush Presidential Library Photocopy



## 12:00 P.M. NEWS UPDATE

**WESTERN HOSTAGES/U.S. ENVOY** (Beirut/Reuter) -- The U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon discussed the issue of Western hostages with President Hrawi and called for them to be freed unconditionally. Asked about speculation a hostage release was imminent, Ambassador Ryan Crocker told reporters: "This...is an issue of extreme concern to the government and people of the United States. It is one that I am personally committed to doing anything I can to bring to resolution. There has been a lot of talk and speculation in the press and I can't tell you what if anything is behind it. But what I can tell you is that the time has long since passed for the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages."

**CEASE-FIRE/U.S. TROOPS** (Riyadh/AP) -- The bulk of the 100,000 American troops stationed in southern Iraq will leave the area after the U.N. approves a formal cease-fire, U.S. officials said. Meanwhile, the troops have been departing at the rate of up to 3,000 a day. Fully 160,000 troops have left the gulf region, according to a spokesman for the U.S. Central Command.

**ALBANIAN ELECTION** (Tirana/AP) -- Communists claimed victory in Albania's first free election in more than 60 years, saying they would win about two-thirds of the seats in a new parliament. The main opposition group conceded it would fall short of forcing the communists from power, but predicted the party would fall within months in Albania. No official results from Sunday's voting were yet released.

**JAPAN-SOVIET TRADE/U.S.** (Tokyo/Reuter) -- The head of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party told government and party leaders that U.S. companies should be included in future economic cooperation projects between Japan and the Soviet Union. Ichiro Ozawa was quoted by party officials as saying that Japan should invite U.S. firms to participate in potential joint economic projects with the Soviet Union.

**ECONOMY** (New York/UPI) -- The U.S. economy continued to decline in March, marking its second consecutive quarterly fall, although the rate of the slowdown diminished for the second consecutive month, the National Association of Purchasing Management said. The Purchasing Managers' Index rose to 40 percent in March, up from 38.5 percent in February, the association said in a monthly report.

**CONSTRUCTION SPENDING** (AP) -- Construction spending fell 0.1 percent in February for the 11th straight monthly decline, the Commerce Department said.

**FISHING/PRESIDENT** (Rita Beamish, AP) -- President Bush plied the balmy waters off the Florida Keys for the region's feisty bonefish, saying he had caught only barracuda on the first day of his fishing vacation. Under overcast skies, Bush and his wife Barbara, along with Secretary Brady and his wife Kitty, bundled up against stiff winds and headed out on boats. Asked what he had caught the day before, Bush said, "barracuda." As his boat pulled out to sea, a reporter asked him what news he heard from Iraq. Bush shook his head and waved his hand in a "so-so" gesture.

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