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Bush sending \$65m 'package' to Colombia

KENNEBUNKPORT, Maine (AP) — President Bush authorized a \$65-million "emergency anti-drug package" consisting largely of helicopters and other transportation equipment to help Colombia fight its war against drug lords, spokesman

Marlin Fitzwater announced Friday.

Violence by drug gangs "threatens the very fabric" of life in Colombia, Fitzwater said, justifying the immediate aid, which includes military supplies.

The assistance will be in addition

to \$2.5 million in security aid aimed at helping the Colombians protect their judges, who have been the principal target for assassination by the drug cartels, according to administration sources who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Fitzwater said the money would be drawn from a special fund available to the White House for emergency situations. Some \$75 million is set aside each year for such situations, about \$10 million of which has been spent thus far this fiscal year, said another administration official.

"The purpose is to get it there fast," Fitzwater said.

Among the items being earmarked to the Colombian aid package are small arms, ammunition, spotter planes and communications equipment, he said.

Meanwhile, the State Department was sending two Bell helicopters to the South American nation Friday to help police, spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters in Washington.

"This is an intensive and courageous effort on the part of the Colombians, and one in which we are happy to be supportive. We will be happy to stand with the Colombian government and people as they deal with this problem," said Boucher.

"The thing they really need is transport equipment" to conduct raids and ferret out the producers of illicit drugs that are shipped to the United States illegally, said one source.

Bush, asked on the golf course Friday whether he would send helicopters or other equipment to Colombia, said: "We're working on the problem. There's a lot going on on that front ... We're working to accommodate President (Virgilio) Barco ... We're working now with his people in Washington."

No military personnel were included in the recommendations.



WISH FOR WORLD PEACE — People release doves from Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine with a wish for peace throughout the world, marking the 44th anniversary of the end of World War II earlier this month. (AP Laserphoto)

UN announces Contras to disband Sept. 6

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The disbanding and resettlement of the U.S.-supported Contra rebels who fought Nicaragua's leftist government for eight years will begin Sept. 6, officials announced Friday.

The secretary-general of the Organization of American States, Joao Clemente Baena Soares of Brazil, and U.N. Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar agreed at a meeting Friday to begin the work of the International Support and Verification Commission on that date, a U.N. statement said.

Perez de Cuellar also met with Miguel d'Escoto, the Nicaraguan foreign minister, about repatriating the 12,000 Contras now camped in Honduras with their families.

The Tela Declaration signed Aug. 7 by the presidents of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and Guatemala called for the Contras to be disbanded and repatriated or resettled in other countries over a three-month period ending in September.

El Salvador now wants its Central American neighbors to focus their attention on disbanding leftist rebels fighting its government.

The joint U.N.-OAS statement alluded to that goal by saying the Commission to be established Sept. 6 also would seek to disband and resettle "all those involved in armed

Target date set for repatriating

actions in the countries of the region when they voluntarily seek it."

U.N. officials have opened an office in Managua to observe voter registration in Nicaragua. It will be

the first time the world body has monitored a national election in an independent country.

About 10 civilian U.N. poll watchers arrived Thursday in

et cetera

by United Press International

Drug raid

ROSLYN HEIGHTS, N.Y. — Federal agents raided a Long Island home Saturday and arrested a Colombian couple, seizing \$4 million in cash and smashing a ring they estimated laundered \$350 million in cocaine proceeds for the powerful Medellin cartel. Authorities speculated that over the past seven years the couple has laundered about \$50 million annually in cocaine proceeds for the powerful Medellin cartel.

Troop seizure

BOGOTA, Colombia — Army troops and tanks occupied the luxurious estates of suspected drug lords Saturday as President Virgilio Barco put the nation on a war footing in hopes of crushing a wave of terror unleashed by the criminals. Officials

also reported the arrest of the son of one of the leaders of the Medellin cartel, which is said to be responsible for 80 percent of the cocaine smuggled to the United States.

Baltic disaster?

MOSCOW — The Communist Party Central Committee warned Saturday of "impending disaster" in the rebellious Baltic republics, saying in an urgent national television broadcast that "things have gone too far." The unusual 20-minute declaration came three days after more than 1 million people in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania formed a human chain across the three Baltic republics in a massive protest against Soviet rule.

Clear message

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Vowing never to negotiate

Managua and have conferred with Nicaragua's Supreme Electoral Council, U.N. spokesman Francois Giuliani said.

Nicaragua pledged under the Central American peace agreement of 1987 to hold free and fair national elections.

with those who "hold a gun to our heads," the minority white government Saturday defended its crackdown on a civil-disobedience campaign and three weeks of pre-election violence that has killed at least 60 people. "We have a clear message for the instigators of unrest," said acting President Frederik de Klerk. "You will not succeed, we will not tolerate violence or revolution."

Story correction

COROZAL (Tropic Times) — An error appeared in Friday's story entitled "Morale calls make PMLs easier to endure." The story should have said "the specific times allotted for morale calls are: Monday through Friday, 6 p.m. to 6 a.m."

18/11/89

U.S. news

Mourners demonstrate at Brooklyn murder site

NEW YORK (UPI) — Family members of a black youth slain in a Brooklyn racial attack joined hundreds of angry black activists Saturday in a demonstration at the site where the victim died, but they were taunted by white residents shouting profanities at the crowd.

As the demonstrators marched through the predominantly white Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn led by the slain youth's two brothers, a pack of about 30 white youths — most of them in the same age group

as the alleged attackers — followed the march, shouting curses and racial slurs.

"Go home, you ... monkeys!" one white man shouted at the marchers.

About 100 other whites held a counter-demonstration, bearing signs insisting "We Are Not Racist" and "Do Not Malign the Community."

Police at the scene said there were no injuries or arrests.

Five of the white youths arrested in the murder of Yusuf Hawkins, 16,

were arraigned Saturday at State Supreme Court in Brooklyn.

The alleged leader of the attack, Keith Mondello, 18, was ordered held on \$100,000 bail. Four other youths, Steven Curreri, 18; James Pitino, 24; Pasquale Raucci, 19; and Charles Stressler, 21, were ordered held on \$75,000 bail.

Mondello and Curreri were charged with assault, riot, conspiracy, aggravated harassment, menacing and criminal possession of a deadly weapon — a baseball bat, police said.

Hawkins's funeral was scheduled for noon Wednesday in Brooklyn.

Before the march Saturday about 400 blacks held a meeting at Brooklyn's Slave Theater, where Hawkins' parents thanked the audience for contributing \$2,500 to a family fund.

Rev. Al Sharpton praised Hawkins, calling him an "honor student" who came from a "royal family."

"Our children can't walk the streets," Sharpton said. "We aren't violent, we don't want to cause trouble. People say be careful, don't start trouble, but it's already started."

As the march began, protesters walked to Bensonhurst's 62nd police precinct and chanted: "We want the murderer!" and "What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!"

A crowd of whites lined up along the march route and repeatedly heckled the protesters, screaming "Sharpton sucks!" and "Free the boys from Bensonhurst," a reference to the five whites arrested in the attack.

A white woman in her late 20s with four children clinging to her dress

screamed profanities at the marchers, while a white man tried to charge the demonstrators but was intercepted and held back by police.

Godfrey Sandiford, one of the leaders of the march, said a young white man spat in his face at the end of the march as he was about to board a bus to leave the area.

Raucci and Stressler were arraigned on all those charges except conspiracy. Pitino faced the assault, riot, harassment and menacing charges.

Hawkins was shot to death Wednesday night on a Bensonhurst street in an attack by a gang of young white men seeking revenge for a friend whose girlfriend spurned him to date blacks and Hispanics, police said.

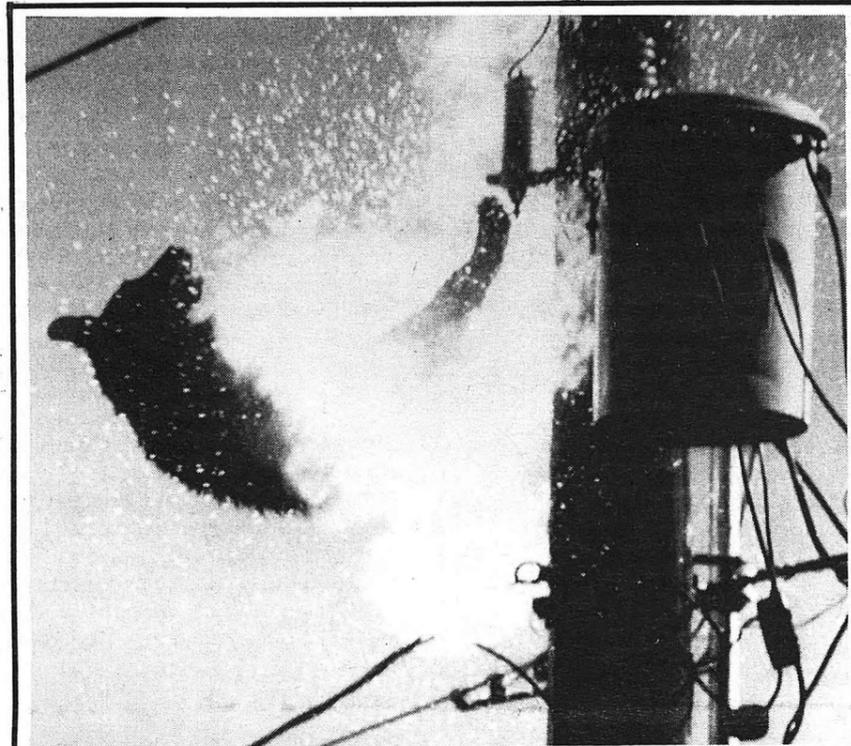
The gang was lying in wait with baseball bats outside a party for the young woman's new friends. The white youths apparently mistook Hawkins and his three friends for the young white woman's new friends, police said.

Police said they were searching the city Saturday for an 18-year-old man, Joseph Fama, for questioning about the attack.

A police spokesman would not say whether Fama was the gunman in the Hawkins attack.

The attack, seen as the worst racial incident in New York City since a black man was chased to his death by white youths in Howard Beach, Queens, in 1986, drew criticism from across the city.

Another link between the two crimes emerged with the disclosure that one of Hawkins's friends the night of the attack was a relative of Michael Griffith, the victim of the Howard Beach incident.



SHOCKED BEAR -- An adult black bear falls amid a hail of sparks from a power pole after being tranquilized by Albuquerque, N.M. Game and Fish Department officers, who drew criticism for failing to shut or provide a net for the plummeting bear. The mother bear, which had been searching for her lost cub, survived the fall. (AP Laserphoto)

Jury reviews Helmsley's tax returns

NEW YORK (UPI) — The jury in Leona Helmsley's tax evasion trial Saturday asked to review three years of tax returns filed by the self-styled hotel queen but failed to reach a verdict before it recessed for the day after eight hours of deliberations.

The returns sought by the jury were for 1983, 1984 and 1985, the three years for which Helmsley is accused of tax evasion.

Helmsley, 69, was charged with billing some \$4 million worth of renovations at the couple's Greenwich, Conn., mansion as business expenses in order to evade taxes from 1983 to 1985.

The U.S. District Court jury in Manhattan began deliberations Saturday morning in the dramatic trial, which has captured national attention since it began eight weeks ago.

Judge John Walker said the jurors will deliberate until 5:30 p.m. daily but will be allowed to sit as late as 6 p.m. or 7 p.m.

Walker said some jurors expressed an interest in attending church services Sunday morning, so a late start was anticipated.

The 69-year-old Helmsley, wife of billionaire real estate magnate Harry Helmsley, was charged in a 47-count indictment with billing some \$4 million worth of renovations at the couple's Greenwich, Conn., mansion and other personal expenditures as business expenses in order to evade taxes from 1983 to 1985.

Harry Helmsley also was charged in the case but was severed after Walker ruled that a series of small strokes left him with memory loss and unable to assist in his own defense. He never once showed up at the trial.

A last-ditch defense tactic was to bring in recent accountings that purported to show the Helmsleys were actually owed \$591,000 in tax refunds for the three years in question because some of Harry Helmsley's partnerships were not properly depreciated.

The prosecution dismissed it as an attempt to cloud the issue — that personal items, from her underwear to crossword puzzles — were paid for by corporate entities, evading the tax that would have been levied if those expenses had been billed under

personal income.

Leona Helmsley was on trial with Joseph Licari, 51, of Oyster Bay Cove, N.Y., her husband's financial chief, and Frank Turco, 45, of Lutz, Fla., her top aide in running the Helmsleys' hotel business.

Both Leona Helmsley and Turco were charged with extortion, a count that carries up to 20 years in prison.

The other charges carry penalties of three to five years each.

Elizabeth Baum, a former housekeeper for the Helmsleys and one of 48 witnesses called to testify in the trial, said Leona Helmsley told her, "We don't pay taxes. Only the little people pay taxes."

DeVita said the defense contention that \$1 million to the Helmsleys was "peanuts" amounts to a defense that "they're too rich to be guilty, and that's no defense."

"There was a time in English History when there was something called sovereign immunity where the queen could not be prosecuted," DeVita said. "But we don't have sovereign immunity here."

Two disappear in recon desert flight

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. (UPI) — A search Saturday failed to find a reconnaissance training plane with two crew members aboard that disappeared on a three-hour training flight over the Southern California desert, and military officials asked for the public's help.

The turboprop OV-10A Bronco left Camp Pendleton at 11:30 a.m. Thursday on a routine training mission. The craft, its pilot and an observer, were declared missing at 2:30 p.m., when a search was launched.

Maj. Jim McClain said military officials have asked residents of the desert area in the plane's range to be alert for any sign of the craft.

"We are most concerned," McClain said. "It is highly unusual for a crew to be missing for this long with no contact. We want to find the craft and any help would be appreciated."

McClain said the crew was flying under visual flight rules and was not required to make radio contact with any tower, except immediately after take-off.

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U.S. news

Homeless teens most neglected in U.S.

BERKELEY, Calif. (UPI) — Teenagers living on the street are even more neglected than homeless adults and face a high risk of exploitation and death, researchers said Wednesday.

"Adolescents living in abandoned buildings and parks — a neglected, invisible and highly vulnerable group — are being shut out of even the few services available to the homeless," said Marjorie Robertson of the University of California at Berkeley's School of Public Health.

Half the 13- to 17-year-olds studied in the Hollywood, Calif., area attempted suicide, and only a handful used shelters, according to the detailed analysis submitted to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Of the 93 teens in the study, 48.4 percent abused alcohol, "resembling in behavior and prevalence of abuse a skid row sample of homeless adults in Los Angeles," Robertson said.

Yet only a few were getting help or treatment, and often they were denied shelter because of their drinking problem.

Although exact statistics remain unknown, the number of homeless adolescents nationwide is estimated at 1 million to 1.3 million at some point during the year, the National Network for Runaway and Youth Services said in Washington.

Half these children return home after a few days on the street, the organization said.

Of the teens in the Hollywood study, 79.3 percent had been homeless more than once, and 79.4 percent were living in "improvised shelters," such as abandoned buildings, vehicles and in the streets, Robertson said.

While many of the youngsters came from intact nuclear families, 57

percent had lived a part of their lives in foster or group homes, she said.

"The stereotype of the modern-day Tom Sawyer who leaves home looking for adventure could not be further from the truth," Robertson said.

"Homelessness seems to be part of a long pattern of residential

instability. Often these kids' lives started being disrupted when they were 5 or 6 years old. Many had been wards of the state. They were legally entitled to the protection of the state, but they weren't getting it when we saw them."

While other studies have focused on a more select group of teenagers found at clinics and shelters, the Berkeley researchers drew their sample from abandoned buildings, parks, alleys, fast-food restaurants, a few services for the homeless and the seedy Hollywood and Santa Monica boulevards.

"Adolescents are not typically entitled to welfare benefits," Robertson said. "Shelters are scarce and not required to take them. Nor are the young ones legally entitled to work."

Although the majority was getting some money from families, friends or short-term jobs, there was a high rate of prostitution, panhandling and drug dealing among the 93 teens, 60.2 percent of whom were white and 61.3 percent of whom were male.

"We were surprised to find young people with so few resources — some of them were on the street for up to seven years — could survive at all," Robertson said.

She called for "a new kind of residence in the community" and a study on "why so many children are falling out of the foster care system."

"These kids have no entitlement, no protection and few options," she said.



MOVIEGOER — Alleged spy Felix Bloch is followed by a camera crew as well as FBI agents as he leaves a Washington, D.C., movie theater showing "When Harry Met Sally" earlier this month. The veteran U.S. diplomat is under suspicion of spying for the Soviet Union. (AP Laserphoto)

Exxon plans special oil spill crew for winter

VALDEZ, Alaska (UPI) — Exxon has announced that it will maintain a special crew on call through the Alaskan winter to handle emergencies in the worst oil spill in U.S. history, while the governor demanded that the oil giant resume its cleanup next spring.

Exxon started shipping spill equipment to Anchorage warehouses last week and will start demobilizing boats and work crews this week. By Sept 15, there will be no Exxon beach-cleaning crews remaining.

Exxon said it will mount a major winter scientific study program designed to gauge the environmental effects of the March 24 spill off southern Alaska in Prince William Sound. The spill has killed tens of thousands of birds and otters.

The company hopes to put people on oil-tainted shorelines every two weeks to gather data and get a first-hand look at what winter storms may be doing to subsurface oil remaining on cleaned beaches.

Exxon announced it would keep a special cleanup crew on call with a small fleet of boats and planes to handle any emergencies.

The future plans were unveiled at a news conference by Otto Harrison, the company's Valdez cleanup manager. He seemed to bow to state demands for a winter strike force to handle lingering spill emergencies and appeared to retreat from what was widely perceived as a total Exxon pullout by mid-September.

Harrison refused to make a commitment for cleanup plans next year. But Alaska Gov. Steve Cowper reiterated the state's insistence that Exxon resume cleanup next spring, saying that the winter cleanup plan

by Exxon falls short because it does not prepare for a major effort next year.

"Exxon has made a major effort, there's no question about that," Cowper said. "But there's still a lot of oil below the surface, there's a lot of oil on the beaches and there's a lot of oil in the water."

Harrison asserted that Exxon would finish the cleanup by the onset of wintry weather in September. He acknowledged, however, that after that there may be a need to call up emergency crews to collect tarballs and deploy containment booms

Medical devices faulty, group says

WASHINGTON (UPI) — At least 35 makers of medical devices — from wheelchairs to pacemakers — failed to report deaths, injuries and life-threatening problems to the government, a public advocacy group charged last week.

The Public Citizen Health Research Group also alleged the Bush and Reagan administrations have been "soft on industry" and as a result the Food and Drug Administration "failed to act appropriately against these criminal violations of the law."

Katherine Meyer, a Public Citizen lawyer, said failure to report problems within five days is a violation of a 1976 amendment to the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. Meyer said intentional failure can lead to a fine of \$10,000 and three years in prison.

Besides wheelchairs and pacemakers, Public Citizen also cited problems with heart defibrillators, infant respiration and heart

around oil washed up from beaches.

Harrison said only winter field work can determine what needs to be done next year.

"I don't know what it's going to look like in 1990," Harrison said of the vast area hit by nearly 11 million gallons of oil that spewed out of the Exxon Valdez when it ran aground in the sound.

"Undoubtedly winter storms will help," he said of beaches that may still be tainted with oil.

If storms fail to disperse lingering oil and instead end up washing oil toward fish hatcheries or sensitive

monitors, silicone breast implants, tampons and crutches.

"It's interesting that people who steal bread to provide for their families can go to jail and these companies can hide reports in their files and go on," said Dr. Sidney Wolfe, director of the organization founded by Ralph Nader.

Wolfe cautioned, however, the cases in question involve a "fraction" of the industry.

William Grigg, an FDA spokesman, said the agency is looking into Public Citizen's allegations.

"The companies that make 50,000 different types and brands of medical devices make 15,000 reports a year and about 4 percent of these are considered after analysis to be related to a device failure," Grigg said. "These have resulted in important recalls such as one correcting more than 11,000 artificial kidney machines after a faulty valve resulted in a death."

areas, Exxon will be ready with three planes, four helicopters, four boats able to withstand rough seas and a still-unformed call-up force of workers. Oil containment boom also will be stashed at key locations, he said.

Exxon claims to have cleaned 916 miles of the 1,077-mile shoreline identified as oil-tainted in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska.

Harrison declined to discuss "how clean is clean," but said Exxon expects to leave waters and shores stable and in good enough shape for animals to survive.

Harrison said Exxon's winter activities will include taking 12,000 samples for laboratory analysis of water and intertidal pools.

"We'll be looking at the critters who live there," he said. "We want to stand on the key beaches every two weeks during the winter."

Exxon will move its Valdez spill headquarters to Anchorage and maintain a 300-person winter work force of scientists and support staff.

Harrison said they would finish burning its mounds of oily waste by the end of October at barge-mounted incinerators.

At the cleanup's height this summer Exxon employed nearly 11,000 people and a total of 1,385 vessels, most of them fishing boats.

Even as Harrison was announcing the demobilization plan, transition to winter programs and discussing future activities, the work force was being reduced, he said, and trucks were shipping the first of 1,700 container-loads of material to Anchorage.

hemisphere

Families, military to get drug assets

MEDELLIN, Colombia (Reuter) — Colombia, defying an unprecedented "declaration of war" by drug barons, has ordered that their seized assets be awarded to the police, justice ministry and a family welfare agency among other beneficiaries.

President Virgilio Barco, invoking state of siege powers, last week signed four decrees with provisions for awarding millions of dollars' worth of impounded properties and assets.

The measures supplemented an anti-drug emergency package announced last week following the assassinations of a leading presidential candidate, a judge and a police chief.

Barco's latest decrees appeared to be his only response to a toughly-worded statement issued earlier by a shadowy group called the "Extraditables" declaring all-out war on the government.

The group, associated with the notorious Medellin cartel which controls most of the world's cocaine, threatened war against Colombia's industrial and political leadership. It also singled out journalists, judges, business and trade union leaders "and all those who have persecuted us in the past."

The statement, from the same group that claimed responsibility for last year's killing of Attorney General Carlos Mauro Hoyos, was issued hours after bombs blew up the offices of Colombia's two main political parties in Medellin, hub of the drug trade and Colombia's second-biggest city.

A Defense Ministry spokesman in the capital, Bogota, acknowledged that an atmosphere of "expectation and anxiety" prevailed following the "declaration of war." But he said the situation was "relatively under control."

Despite the bomb attacks here there was no sign of extra police or

army forces on the streets.

Under Barco's new decrees, authorities have 72 hours to draw up an inventory of assets impounded since the government launched its nationwide crackdown on drug traffickers.

Owners of confiscated assets, few of whom are expected to challenge the government, will be allowed five days to demonstrate in court that they had acquired any confiscated property legitimately.

The Defense Ministry says at least 141 properties, 150 aircraft, 1,141 cars and trucks, 30 yachts and 678 weapons have been seized and nearly 11,000 people arrested since last week.

None of the 12 traffickers on a "Dozen Most Wanted" list that Washington has asked Colombia to extradite has been apprehended.

In an interview with ABC television's "Primetime Live," Barco said three important drug traffickers

had been arrested. He did not identify them, however, and acknowledged that they were little more than lieutenants of the country's top drug barons.

Barco, speaking in halting English, said he anticipated more bloodshed because of his government's crackdown on the drug trade but reiterated his opposition to the use of U.S. troops to fight the traffickers and their private armies.

Under the new decrees, in cases where no proof of legitimate ownership is available, the government will award the sumptuous homes of suspected drug barons to a national family welfare institute.

Confiscated airplanes would go to security forces and a state airline, farm and agricultural implements to a national farm institute and arms, helicopters and two-way radios to the police and military.

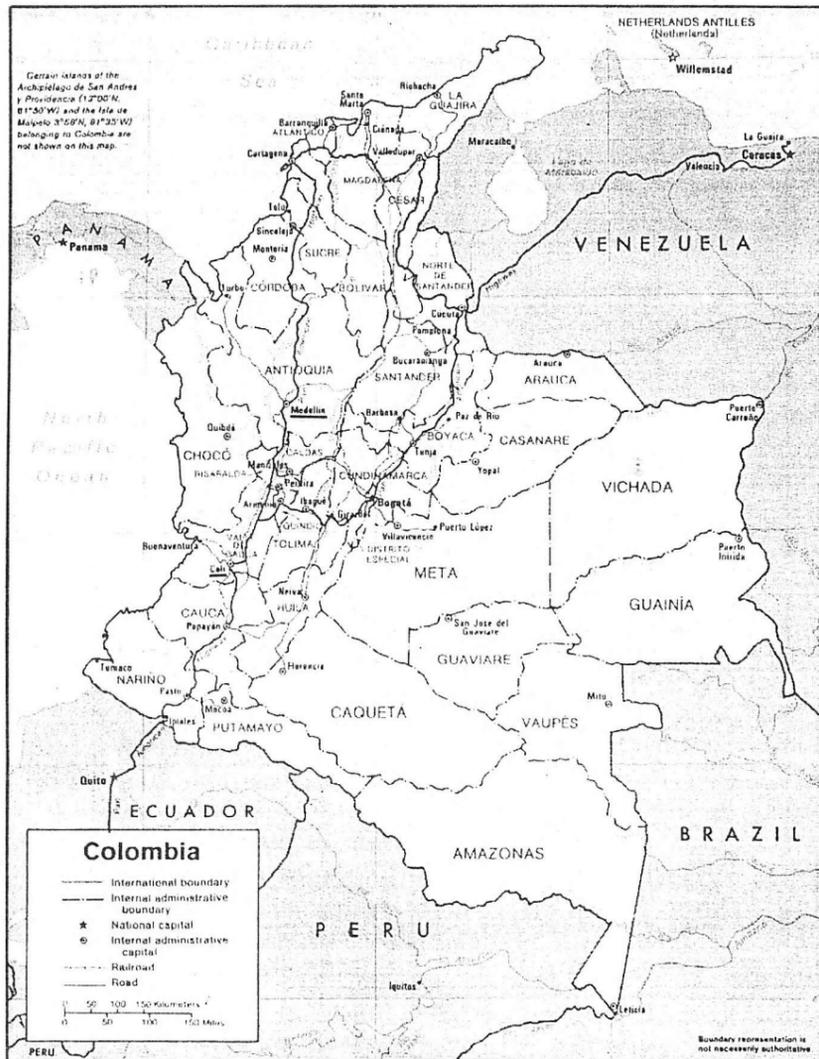
Impounded cars, furniture, stocks and bonds, foreign currency and Colombian pesos would be awarded to the security police and a fund to provide security for judges.

Another decree ordered the country's governors to draw up a list of all rural airstrips within 15 days with an accompanying list of the alleged owners and stated purposes. The same decree orders security forces to "make unusable" all unauthorized airstrips.

Under Colombia's constitution all the emergency measures adopted over the past week have to be presented to the Supreme Court, which must uphold their constitutionality.

To protect the Supreme Court justices, the government has ordered that their individual rulings on the issue of constitutionality not be made public.

More than 50 judges have been killed in Colombia this decade.



Kingpins get 5 days to prove legitimate ownership

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — The government intensified its war on drugs, ordering cocaine traffickers to surface and claim \$200 million in confiscated property or lose it. Enraged dealers staged a series of deadly bomb and arson attacks.

Using emergency powers under a four-year state of siege, President Virgilio Barco issued a decree last week requiring owners of the seized property personally to make claims for restitution and barring them from using real estate agents, lawyers or other fronts.

Police and military agents have seized hundreds of luxurious mansions, ranches, office buildings, shops and restaurants across the country along with airplanes, helicopters, cars, trucks and other items in an unprecedented offensive.

Defense Ministry officials put the total value of the goods at about \$200 million.

The government crackdown began last week after the assassinations of Luis Carlos Galan, a popular arges in the United States and the Colombian government promised to extradite any who are arrested.

Early Thursday, traffickers infuriated by the crackdown bombed offices of the Liberal and Conservative party offices in downtown Medellin, killing a

passerby.

They also set fire to the weekend retreats of two prominent politicians on the outskirts of Medellin, an industrial city 215 miles north of Bogota and the base for the world's biggest cocaine cartel.

Families were sleeping in both houses when gangs doused the structures with gasoline before dawn and set them ablaze, authorities said. The families ran outside and were not hurt.

Two bombs, each containing about 45 pounds of dynamite, were found at the Medellin offices of two national radio networks and deactivated.

At one of the stations the bombers left a communique saying: "We declare total and absolute war on the government, on the industrial and political oligarchy, on the journalists who have attacked and ravaged us, on the judges who have sold out to the government, on the extraditing magistrates, on the labor union presidents and all those who have persecuted and attacked us."

The communique was signed by The Extraditables, a violent group authorities link to the Medellin cartel.

"We will not respect the families of those who have not respected our families," it said. "We will burn and

destroy the industries, the properties and the mansions of the oligarchy."

Authorities have arrested three alleged drug traffickers as part of the crackdown, but the bosses of the cocaine cartels are believed in hiding.

Barco, invoking powers granted to him under a state of siege, issued decrees that reinstated the principle of extradition, suspended since 1987.

President Bush hailed the decision as "a courageous move."

Attorney General Dick Thornburgh said that Barco's decision "certainly pleases us" and added that the United States wants the extradition of about a dozen kingpins whom he said control the far-flung international operations of the drug cartels.

An issue with nationalistic overtones, the subject of extradition divides Colombians, and the topic has affected relations with Washington as it seeks to bring drug barons to trial in the United States.

Barco could test Colombian nationalism and the reaction to extradition as early as this week.

If Barco decides actually to extradite any arrested trafficker to the United States, he must deal with those Colombian public figures who balk at extradition as a breach of national sovereignty.

To judge by the published reactions to Barco's crackdown on

traffickers, Colombian leftist leaders are most prone to attack extradition.

Roberto Pombo, a legal affairs analyst with the leading newspaper El Tiempo, said he thought more people back extradition than oppose it, following the assassination of the ruling party's presidential candidate, Senator Luis Carlos Galan.

Washington apparently wants leading traffickers extradited because, according to a State Department report to Congress last March, it is doubtful that any major drug baron can be brought to trial in Colombia, given the bribery and intimidation of judges.

"It is virtually impossible to arrest and convict major drug traffickers (in Colombia) because it has been corrupted by a combination of threats and bribes from traffickers, known in Spanish as 'plata o plomo' (silver or lead)," it said.

Colombia's judges began a strike earlier this month to demand more government protection following the assassination of an appeals court judge who upheld an arrest warrant for reputed Medellin cartel leader Pablo Escobar.

The United States has been working for months on anti-drug programs for Colombia, especially programs to protect its judicial system.

hemisphere

Bolivia, Peru fear Colombian spillover

LA PAZ, Bolivia (Reuter) — Bolivia and Peru, the world's major coca producing countries, fear Colombia's crackdown on drug traffickers could force the dealers to cross into their territory in a search for new havens for their laboratories, diplomats say.

The massive hunt for drug traffickers and new threats in the all-out fight against the cocaine barons could unleash a smugglers' backlash and force those countries to change their stance of not allowing U.S. troops on their soil, they say.

Both the new Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora and Peru's President Alan Garcia have refused to allow the presence of U.S. troops to help the fight against the drug lords.

Former Bolivian president Victor Paz Estenssoro allowed U.S. troops to lend logistical support to his government's anti-drug drive between July and September 1986. The move triggered a wave of anti-American feelings among Bolivians.

In Lima, a Latin American

diplomat told Reuters: "The Peruvian authorities are worried and the force of events might lead them to fight the drug traffickers."

Colombia's neighbors, including Peru and Ecuador, have launched a coordinated military operation along their frontiers in a bid to keep out drug traffickers linked to the assassinations of three leading Colombian public figures last week from crossing into those countries, a foreign ministry source in Bogota said.

A subsequent crackdown, in which 11,000 criminal suspects were arrested by the Colombian government, led newspapers in Lima to ask for an increase in joint efforts between Peru, Colombia, Bolivia and the United States in their war against the drug trade. But they have not hinted they want U.S. troops in their territory.

The Bush administration has said that it would send U.S. troops to those drug-producing countries if their governments requested help.

Peru and Bolivia produce 90 percent of the world's coca, the raw material for cocaine, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Colombia is the leading refiner of the drug.

Ecuador, although not a coca producer, has been used by Colombian drug traffickers as a route point to send drugs to the United States and Europe due to lax local controls at ports and airports, diplomats said.

In 1988, former U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese proposed that the major coca producing countries form a multinational force to combat the drug trade. Bolivia disagreed with the idea, diplomats said at the time.

DEA agents are carrying out a joint-effort with Peru to stamp out the drug trade, which has its main fields in the central Upper Huallaga River Valley.

They also help Peruvian forces pounce on drug traders before they load the basic coca paste onto Colombian light planes on their way

back to Medellin and Cali, homes of the notorious drug cartels, diplomat sources said.

Last March, U.S. and Peruvian anti-drug experts sprayed a controversial herbicide, known as Spike, over part of the Upper Huallaga coca field, local officials said.

Shortly after, leftist guerrillas allied with drug traffickers attacked a police post in the cocaine-producing area of Tingo Maria, killing 13 people, including at least 10 policemen.

The attack on the Uchiza town highlighted the Peruvian authorities fears that Maoist Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) guerrillas were aiding drug traffickers in exchange for a "protection tax," Peruvian security sources said.

Shining Path and the smaller guerrilla group, the pro-Cuban Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, are known to vie for the estimated \$150 million a year the drug trade pays for protection, the source said.

Venezuelan austerity brings deepening recession

CARACAS, Venezuela (Reuter) — Six months into office President Carlos Andres Perez is sticking firmly to his austerity policies, which led to price riots in February, but Venezuela faces deepening recession, economists say.

"I think the (austerity) package is working but the impact this year will

be deeply negative," Pedro Palma, an economist and consultant, told Reuters.

Perez's policies of lifting state subsidies and freeing price controls to liberalize the economy provoked riots three weeks after he took office Feb. 2, and nearly 300 people were killed.



FOOD RIOTS — New price increases in Venezuela could trigger more food riots such as in February when looters sacked supermarkets. (AP Laserphoto).

Inflation in the three months to July fell steadily as the measures began to work, economists said.

But consumers' purchasing power plunged, devouring profits in the main car assembly, textile and agriculture industries, they added. Only a government decree prohibiting mass firings has kept people at work.

Gross Domestic Product, a measure of a country's wealth, is expected to shrink in Venezuela this year, after expanding by 5.7 percent last year, economists said.

The days when many middle-class Venezuelans would regularly fly to Miami for weekend shopping trips are over. Many residents who were financially comfortable last year, now say they fear they cannot keep up their mortgage payments.

"The government has yet to achieve a freeing of prices," said Domingo Felipe Maza Zabala, an economics professor at Caracas's Central University.

Despite initial measures in February that raised gasoline and transport prices, the government still controls prices of many essential goods with subsidies, economists said.

It will have to impose further price increases on the 18 million population at the risk of provoking another burst of riots, they added.

Palma and other economists have forecast inflation of between 80 and 90 percent this year, which would be the highest in Venezuela's history. Much of that increase is attributed to sharp rises in March and April after the measures took effect.

The success of the austerity program will also depend on Venezuela reaching an agreement to reduce its foreign debt owed to commercial banks under the so-called Brady Plan, economists said.

Perez has called for a 50 percent reduction in the amount owed to the banks, which account for most of the \$29 billion foreign debt.

Noriega aide linked to Colombian mercenaries?

JERUSALEM (Reuter) — Allegations that Israelis are training private armies for Colombian drug barons could harm the Jewish state's image by exposing the seamier side of its vaunted defense expertise.

There are about 800 registered Israeli firms dealing in military knowledge and arms exports — a large industry built up by former army commanders and intelligence agents, according to Israeli government officials.

"The greatest damage is that rather than being known as producers in agriculture, in genetics, in medicine, our trademark is the security business whether weapons or support systems," former Mossad secret service head Meir Amit told army radio.

The officials said Israel introduced more stringent regulations for security firms in 1986 following the Irangate scandal, which embarrassed the government over its role in

shipping arms to Iran to win freedom for U.S. hostages.

Specialists in the field said most of the registered companies had the blessing of the Israeli government but several operators, tempted by action and big money, drifted outside the law.

Israeli police have sought Colombian and U.S. help in checking charges first made by NBC television that Israeli and South African instructors were working for cocaine tycoons by training hit-squads in secret Colombian hideouts.

Israeli television named one of the men in NBC's film as an army reserve colonel who heads a defense and security firm.

Colombian drug traffickers wanted by the United States declared "total war" on the Bogota government Thursday and bombs blew up the offices of the country's two main political parties in the drug capital, Medellin.

As the group known as "The Extraditables" also threatened journalists, judges, business and trade union leaders, Israel Thursday dissociated itself from its citizens reported to be working for the Medellin drug cartel.

The Defense Ministry said it rejected a request from a security consulting firm — whose president was reported by Israeli media to be training hit-squads — to operate in Colombia.

An official statement added: "The Ministry of Defense has not permitted any Israeli to transfer military knowledge or train anybody or element not subject to government control (of that country) and this obviously refers also to Colombia."

Israel Television quoted a retired Israeli army officer involved with the security company as denying allegations it transferred any military knowledge to elements in Colombia.

The television quoted him as saying he joined the firm because its

chief executive, his former army commander, "promised that the company would operate only with countries and bodies that were internationally recognized."

Israeli and U.S. television gave prominent coverage Thursday to a former Israeli intelligence agent who has close ties to Panamanian strongman Manuel Antonio Noriega.

NBC said Colombian and U.S. authorities were investigating whether the ex-agent had any role in training and equipping the drug barons' gunmen in Colombia.

There have been widespread reports of Israelis training the Nicaraguan Contra rebels and providing personal security for African and Latin American heads of state.

Israeli security firms also work as consultants for several major airlines to prevent air piracy and the smuggling of bombs on board aircraft.

military news

Congress to debate defense protectionism

WASHINGTON (AP) — After working itself into a "Buy American" frenzy over co-production of a jet fighter with Japan, Congress again faces a new protectionism battle over renewing an obscure, 39-year-old law on weapons purchases.

The Defense Production Act of 1950 gives the president power to limit or prohibit the acquisition of foreign products. The Korean War era legislation also gives the government authority to subsidize industries, including those that produce goods for the Pentagon.

Nearly four decades later, lawmakers are hoping to use renewal of the law, which expires Sept. 30, to infuse life into the depressed U.S. defense industrial base and limit foreign sources for weapons components.

The interest in the problems of U.S. defense manufacturers comes on the heels of a rancorous debate earlier this year over co-production agreement of the FSX fighter, an advanced version of the F-16.

Opponents of the FSX transaction charged that it would "shut down American industries" by handing the Japanese vital U.S. technology. However, congressional efforts to prevent the U.S.-negotiated deal or impose conditions failed.

Next month, defense industry woes and the increasing use of foreign suppliers for weapons components moves to the forefront again.

"The problem has been a subject of numerous defense, industry, Government Accounting Office and congressional reviews since the mid-1970s," said Sen.

Alan Dixon, D-Ill., a member of both the Senate Armed Services and Banking committees.

"Yet, until recently, little has been done to shape practical solutions," Dixon said last month.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies found that from 1982 to 1987 the number of U.S. companies supplying goods to the Defense Department dropped from 118,000 to 38,000.

William G. Phillips, president of the National Council for Industrial Defense, said the Pentagon's reliance on foreign companies has become a major concern for about 5 million members of labor unions and employees of companies represented by his group.

The argument most raised by

Phillips and others is that the Pentagon might be unable to get necessary components for its weapons systems if foreign supplies are cut off.

"The general consensus is we are becoming dependent on foreign sources for some very important pieces of our military hardware," Phillips said in an interview last week.

"The questions are how dependent, how fast and whether or not that dependency is leading to a critical vulnerability if we lose that foreign source," he said.

But former Defense Secretary Frank C. Carlucci in congressional hearings last month cautioned lawmakers that strict protectionist legislation would "invite retaliation" from U.S. trading partners.

"It could be disastrous to our national security, if we assume we can 'go it alone' technologically," Carlucci said.

The House Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs subcommittee on economic stabilization is weighing amendments to the law that would require the president to limit foreign participation in defense manufacturing and provide financial assistance to medium-size and small U.S. companies.

The measure sponsored by Rep. Mary Rose Oakar, D-Ohio, would limit products for new and existing weapons to those from manufacturers and assembly plants in the United States. The practice would be phased in over five years.

DoD attempts change in data storage

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon is quietly moving ahead with a plan to wean bureaucrats, battleships and bombers from unwieldy stacks of printed paperwork and convert them to compact, cost-effective computer disks.

The effort comes in response to a weighty problem: a modern Navy warship carries 15 to 25 tons of operating, maintenance and repair manuals; the B-1B bomber has generated 1 million pages of how-to documentation.

The Pentagon says the campaign could reduce the lifetime cost of major weapons by up to 20 percent by converting masses of printed technical information into

computerized databases.

The cost for technical data delivered with military hardware ranges from 10 percent to 30 percent of the total weapon system price tag. Add to that the millions of dollars that must be spent, year after year, to keep the manuals up to date.

To spearhead the conversion of printed data to electronic form, the Defense Department in September 1985 launched a program called Computer-Aided Acquisition and Logistics Support, or CALS.

Bruce Lepisto, deputy director of the Pentagon's CALS Policy Office, said each of the military services has selected particular weapons to lead the way in carrying out the computerization effort.

For the Air Force, he said, these lead systems are the Advanced Tactical Fighter and the B-2 Stealth bomber; for the Navy, the A-12 attack aircraft and SSN-21 Seawolf class attack submarine; and for the Army, the LHX helicopter and M1-A2 tank.

Lepisto acknowledged that there had been some problem weaning military personnel as well as defense contractors from reliance on traditional paper documents.

"We're talking about a major cultural change here," he said. "Some people are overly anxious and want to rush in. And some people feel that better is the enemy of good enough."

What we're implementing is a new way of doing business. And certainly there are going to be people that want to go either faster or slower."

Paul N. Pechersky, co-chairman of the CALS Industry Steering Group, representing hundreds of defense contractors, said, "We're still in the very early stages. This is a massive undertaking. From my own personal perspective, I think we're doing very well."

"The first several years have been devoted to trying to get our act together — to decide what we want to do and how we want to do it. And more importantly, to try and get agreement on some of the early digital (information) exchange standards that have to be put in place," he said.

Pechersky, corporate director of management information systems for E-Systems Inc. in Dallas, said the program is "evolutionary, not revolutionary. We'll see various implementations of CALS well into the year 2000."

The CALS program involves development of standardized text and image formats so that electronic data can be readily exchanged between a wide variety of different computer systems within the military and at defense contractors.

Texas city fights testing on 'The Bomb'

WASHINGTON (AP) — A south Texas city is fighting to protect the springs that make it a desert oasis from a Pentagon proposal to rock a nearby ranch with a series of massive underground explosions.

The proposed explosions on the Buck King Ranch near Del Rio, Texas, are an important element in U.S. strategic deterrent capabilities, says the Defense Nuclear Agency.

The non-nuclear explosions are designed to simulate the impact of nuclear blasts on subterranean missile silos and military command centers.

But 12,000 of the 40,000 Del Rio residents have signed petitions asking the agency to take its explosives elsewhere. They say they don't want to take any chances with the Texas border city's only source of water, the San Felipe Springs.

"We depend on San Felipe Springs for survival," says City Manager Jeffrey Pomeranz. "The city of Del Rio is not willing to play a what-if game with our water and the future of our city."

"No one in Washington has

offered us any guarantees, nor can they, that if our water supply was adversely affected, the federal government would step in and correct the situation," he said.

Mexico also has expressed concern to U.S. officials about the potential impact of the explosions near the border, said Leonardo French, a spokesman for the Mexican Embassy.

Defense Nuclear Agency officials, however, say a final decision to conduct the tests hinges on geological and environmental assessments of the area that are not yet completed.

The agency spent two years choosing the site 25 miles north of Del Rio for the graduated series of explosions.

The explosions would start with a 1,000-pound charge in 1990, increasing to 470 tons — equivalent to 300 tons of TNT — in November 1992.

Defense spokeswoman Cheri Abdelnour said the tests would be performed with the same conventional explosives used by the mining industry, and do not involve

nuclear or radioactive devices.

Jack M. Bachkosky, director of plans, programs and requirements for the defense agency, said the tests are "important to the continued credibility and viability of our strategic deterrent."

"As an agency, our primary responsibility to the Department of Defense is to ensure the survivability of our strategic assets and the effectiveness of those same assets when used against anyone who might threaten our security," he said.

Del Rio officials were told the purpose of the tests was to "determine the survivability of underground missile silos and foreign missile silos and other underground military facilities," Pomeranz said.

But Del Rio residents say water in West Texas is more important. Last week they became even more skittish when an underground cave-in contaminated their water with an unknown substance, forcing them to drink boiled or bottled water for two days.

the highly publicized defection of a fighter pilot, the Soviet Air Force may have needed some good publicity.

In a dazzling three-hour air show — the country's first in more than 20 years — it aimed to show Soviet and foreign doubters that it still very much has the right stuff.

Although Western air attaches who attended said they saw little that was new, the "Aviation-Sports Holiday" was clearly in line with the policy of glasnost, or openness, pursued by the Kremlin under President Mikhail S. Gorbachev, which has also brought an easing of the once-obsessive secrecy about

military affairs. More than 150,000 people saw the supersonic Blackjack bomber.

According to Jane's "All the World's Aircraft 1988-9," the Soviets are expected to build at least 100 Blackjacks at a new complex in Kazan. Eleven had been completed by 1988, Jane's said.

Soviet pilots dazzle spectators with airshow featuring Blackjack

MOSCOW (AP) — Another barrier fell to glasnost last week as the Soviets revealed to their own people and the rest of the world the deadliest weapon in their Air Force arsenal — the needle-nosed strategic bomber NATO calls the Blackjack.

Plagued by a chain of recent mishaps, including plane crashes and

sports

Valvano to step down as Wolfpack athletic director

RALEIGH (AP) — Jim Valvano affirmed Friday night he will step down as athletic director at North Carolina State, but he vowed to remain the head basketball coach in an effort to help solve some admitted academic problems.

"If I was part of the problem, one of the reasons I'm here today is because I want very much to be part of the solution," Valvano said in a news conference after learning University of North Carolina President C.D. Spangler had recommended he leave the athletic director's post by Dec. 31.

Valvano would only say he was aware of the December deadline imposed by the committee, adding, "So I fully expect to work with them to implement that decision."

Valvano defended the job he had done as athletic director, but he said he understood the reasons for Spangler's recommendation, which came after a six-month investigation sparked by a book about alleged improprieties in the N.C. State basketball program.

"Whether it's true or not, there can be an appearance of a conflict there," he said. "And in today's athletic world, you've got to remove that."

Valvano's comments came moments after the N.C. State Board of Trustees accepted a report from Spangler and the UNC Board of Governors recommending 14 ways to strengthen academic performance among athletes at all 15 UNC schools with athletic programs.

Trustees and N.C. State Chancellor Bruce Poulton were basically supportive of Valvano's work as coach, saying they saw little evidence that allegations of grade changing, lavish gifts to athletes or drug abuse in Peter Golenbock's book "Personal Fouls" had occurred.

"I don't think they (trustees) have any serious doubts about him remaining coach and I hope he does," Chairman John Gregg said.

"We have been for the last eight months studied and restudied" without evidence of wrongdoing, said Poulton, who announced his resignation Monday in an effort to curb negative publicity he said was personally directed at him.

Once more Poulton lamented what he called the "daily outpouring of hatred ... for the seven years that I have been chancellor."

Poulton lauded Valvano's performance as athletic director, saying the N.C. State coaches had sent him a letter pleading that Valvano remain on the job.

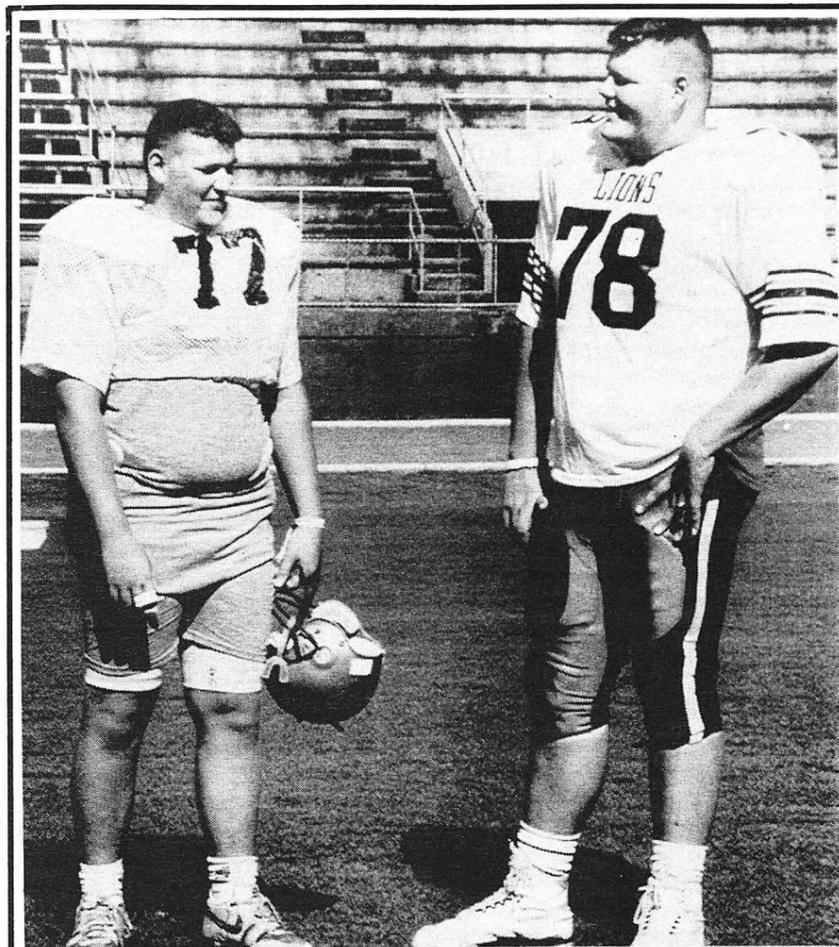
There seemed to be little question that Valvano had neglected the academic side of things as a coach, but most officials said he would change the philosophy that caused problems in the past.

Poulton noted Valvano believes basketball players ought to be evaluated as basketball players alone and that he had manipulated rules to help athletes. He said there were "many cases where every

opportunity to remain eligible has been pursued."

Valvano said he was willing to

change his views on academics, adding, "If I had something to do over, it would be that aspect of it."



TWIN TOWERS — Chris Perry (right), a 6-foot-10, 413-pound tackle for the Covington, La. High School football team, towers over his 6-foot-3 younger brother Adam during a recent practice. (AP Laserphoto)

Preseason college football poll selects Michigan No. 1

ANN ARBOR, Michigan (AP) — Michigan's football team is picking up where Michigan's basketball team

left off — No. 1 in the country.

Five months after winning the NCAA basketball championship, the Wolverines are the preseason pick as the nation's top college football team in The Associated Press' Top 25 poll.

Michigan received 23 first-place votes and 1,439 points to edge defending national champion Notre Dame. The Fighting Irish, who visit Ann Arbor on Sept. 16, were ranked No. 1 on 20 ballots and received 1,378 points.

The only other teams receiving first-place votes were Nebraska (10), Miami (4), Southern California (1) and Florida State (2).

Nebraska is ranked third, followed by Miami, Southern Cal, Florida State, Louisiana State, Auburn, UCLA and Arkansas.

Penn State, coming off its first

losing season in 50 years, is ranked 11th. Next are Clemson, Syracuse, Colorado, Oklahoma, Alabama, West Virginia, Arizona, Brigham Young, Pittsburgh, Houston, Illinois, Iowa, North Carolina State and Ohio State.

The AP is expanding its rankings from 20 to 25 teams this season. Sixty sports writers and sportscasters vote in the weekly poll, which awards 25 points for first place, 24 for second and so on.

Although most of Michigan's starters return from last year's 9-2-1 Rose Bowl champion team, Coach Bo Schembechler is downplaying talk of a national title.

"I don't care about all that," he said. "We're going to try to have a year like last year. We had a lot of heartaches, but we had a lot of fun."

Asked if the preseason ranking puts more pressure on his team, Schembechler said: "Being No. 1 doesn't bother me. The writers probably like us or they wouldn't have voted that way. Of course, we may or may not be that good."

Two of Michigan's top three quarterbacks were recently declared ineligible, but the Wolverines still have senior Michael Taylor, who started the first nine games last season before breaking his collarbone.

This is the second time Michigan has been ranked No. 1 in the AP preseason poll, which started in 1950. The Wolverines also were the top pick in 1981, but they lost their opener to Wisconsin, went 9-3 and finished 12th in the final rankings.

Baseball Standings

As of Aug. 27

AMERICAN

East Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Baltimore	70	60	.538	-
Toronto	68	61	.527	1 1/2
Milwaukee	65	66	.496	5 1/2
Boston	63	65	.492	6
Cleveland	61	68	.473	8 1/2
New York	58	73	.443	12 1/2
Detroit	47	84	.359	23 1/2

West Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Oakland	78	52	.600	-
California	76	52	.594	1
Kansas City	75	54	.581	2 1/2
Texas	67	60	.528	9 1/2
Minnesota	64	64	.500	13
Seattle	57	71	.445	20
Chicago	55	74	.426	22 1/2

NATIONAL

East Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Chicago	72	57	.558	-
St. Louis	70	58	.547	1 1/2
Montreal	70	59	.543	2
New York	69	59	.539	2 1/2
Pittsburgh	56	72	.438	15 1/2
Philadelphia	52	76	.406	19 1/2

West Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
San Francisco	74	55	.574	-
Houston	69	60	.535	5
San Diego	65	64	.504	9
Cincinnati	62	67	.481	12
Los Angeles	61	68	.473	13
Atlanta	52	77	.403	22

Trumbull, Conn. takes Little League World Series

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. (UPI) — A never-say-die Connecticut team won the 1989 Little League World Series Saturday, holding Taiwan to five hits in a 5-2 victory that ended the Far East's five-year dominance of the small-scale baseball classic.

Manager Tom Galla said he had no doubts his Trumbull, Conn., team would win the championship.

"I knew we were a team of destiny," Galla said. "It's a miracle we were here to begin with. We had to win this game."

His players did. Ken Martin homered and drove in three runs and Chris Drury pitched a five-hitter to lead Trumbull to the title with a 5-2 victory over Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

The last U.S. victory came when a team from Marietta, Ga., won the title in 1983.

"You saw it on the field," Galla said. "They don't know how to lose. They didn't care who they were playing today. The kids were more confident and they were a little more aggressive today with their bats than they had been in previous games. We made a few things happen today that we weren't able to do the last couple of days."

Trumbull had stranded 20 runners in their two World Series games, when they defeated Davenport, Iowa, on Tuesday and San Pedro, Calif., on Thursday.

Drury, using an effective fastball and changeup, struck out two and walked four to pick up his second victory in the weeklong series. Chien-Chih Lee took the loss.

Taiwan was leading 1-0 early in the game, but Trumbull went ahead in

the third and held their edge.

"We played our game," Martin said. "We did what we had to do to win it. We deserved it. We worked our butts off to get here. Teams have got out in front early on us before, and we've always come back."

Taiwan Coach Chin-Ming Wu said his team may have been affected by a crowd of more than 40,000 and a large television audience.

"The big crowd made them nervous," Wu said through a translator.

"His (Chien-Chih Lee's) performance before was very good. But today I guess he wasn't ready."

Trumbull advanced to the championship game by defeating San Pedro 6-3 to take the American title. Kaohsiung reached the final Thursday with a 13-0 whitewash of Maracaibo, Venezuela.

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Washington may be stuck with Noriega

WASHINGTON (Reuter) -- Despite U.S. military posturing and this week's failed diplomatic push to oust Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, experts doubt the United States is ready to shoot it out with Panama's strongman.

Instead, defense and political analysts said, Washington may be stuck with Noriega for an uncertain future after the Organization of American States announced Wednesday it had not persuaded him

to relinquish power Sept. 1.

"No matter how annoying a thug Noriega is, everybody knows he has been Washington's thug for years. We can't go for a quick fix," said Rob Kurz of the Brookings Institution.

"If President Bush wanted to kidnap or overthrow Noriega, I think he could do it with surprisingly little bloodshed or criticism from Latin America," said Piero Gleijeses at the Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute.

"But Bush knows the U.S. doesn't have the right to overthrow a bad government in Panama any more than invading Nicaragua or Zaire."

Despite the presence of 12,000 U.S. troops in Panama and high-profile maneuvers by hundreds of them this month, the Defense Department says it is not trying to spark a fight with Noriega, wanted on drug-related charges in the United States.

"What we are doing is not confrontational. We are simply exercising our rights. We have notified the PDF (Panama Defense Force) of these movements in advance," spokesman Fred Hoffman told reporters.

Nonetheless, the OAS officials Wednesday night attacked the maneuvers -- marked by several tense encounters between troops from the two countries -- as "inopportune."

"It is essential to avoid the possibility of an incident that, in the present circumstances in Panama, might thwart all efforts to achieve a peaceful solution," an OAS report said.

Last week U.S. forces at one point stormed through a Panamanian base gate after disarming a guard.

But things have been quiet in recent days, and Kurz and Eva Loser of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington said the White House is probably waiting to at least see what Noriega does in the coming weeks.

"We are going to have to take the long approach here," Kurz told Reuters. "Remember the Shah in Iran, (Anastasio) Somoza in Nicaragua and (Ferdinand) Marcos in the Philippines? We had egg on our faces there, but we didn't run them out with a gun."

Private military analyst Barry Blechman said that while well-equipped U.S. forces in Panama had an advantage over that small country's National Guard and paramilitary troops, a shootout could cost high casualties.

"A quick, clean snatch of Noriega might work. But who knows what it would set off?" said Blechman.

Analysts agreed the United States would have to continue to be patient in its efforts to pressure Noriega to surrender power after charging him with rigging the results of the May 7 Panamanian general election.

The Bush administration and a number of other governments said the election was won handily by Noriega opponents.

"It's going to take continued support of the opposition on such matters as calling for the reopening of (the opposition newspaper) La Prensa," said Kurz. "The May elections weren't the end of

democracy in Panama, they were the beginning."

"Most of all, it would be a major mistake to view Noriega as a crude bully who will suddenly begin shooting his own people and give the United States a chance to dump him," he said.

A Pentagon intelligence analyst, who asked not to be identified, said Noriega was being careful to keep Panamanian nationalism at the centre of his control of the political situation there.

"He represses opponents with intimidation that produces fear, not widespread outrage and defiance," the analyst said.



VICTIMS REBURIED — A coffin containing the bones of the five suspected victims of cannibal Alferd Packer are lowered into their grave site last week near Lake City, Colo. (AP Laserphoto)

Perez asks Cabinet to resign, announces new body of advisers

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — President Carlos Andres Perez asked his entire Cabinet to resign and Saturday announced a new body of advisers, naming a new foreign minister but keeping his economic team.

A Presidential Palace spokesman confirmed Perez's close friend, Reinaldo Figueredo, is replacing Enrique Tejera Paris as foreign minister.

He also said Finance Minister Eglee Iturbe and Energy Minister Celestino Armas will keep their portfolios.

"The decision has been taken not to make any changes in the economic Cabinet posts," the spokesman told reporters at the central town of Miraflores.

Perez praised the outgoing Cabinet in his statement but said it was time for a "reorganization" — the first since he was inaugurated Feb. 2.

In other changes, Agriculture Minister Fanny Bello was replaced by Raul de Armas, Transport Minister Gustavo Rada by Elias Osuna and Health Minister Felipe Bello by Manuel Adrianza.

The palace spokesman said no changes will be made in the state oil

monopoly Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A., which provides more than 90 percent of Venezuela's foreign exchange earnings.

New ministers will be sworn in Sunday, when the 2.8 million members of the governing Democratic Action Party hold nationwide primaries to choose candidates for December gubernatorial and municipal elections.

This is the first time Venezuelans will vote for governors of the 20 states and two federal territories, who previously were appointed by the president.

The most significant change announced Saturday, naming Figueredo to the Foreign Ministry, comes after Venezuela suffered a humiliating diplomatic defeat Thursday, when the Organization of American States decided to suspend its mediation in Panama.

Perez is a highly vocal foe of Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, the de facto leader of Panama. Venezuela had sponsored a strongly worded resolution against Noriega, only to see it watered down by other organization members to a point where it no longer called for Noriega's departure from power.

Peru wants to buy U.S. helicopters to fight drug war

LIMA, Peru (Reuter) -- Peru wants to buy a new fleet of helicopters from the United States to bolster anti-drug drives, Sen. Richard Lugar said Friday.

Lugar, who arrived in Peru Wednesday as part of a nine-nation Latin American tour, said Defense Minister Julio Velasquez Giacarini told him Peru was seeking more U.S. military hardware, including helicopters, to strengthen anti-narcotics efforts in main cocaine-producing areas.

"He made a specific request for helicopters. We've made no commitment yet ... but cooperation in that area is good," Lugar, an Indiana Republican, told a news conference.

Lugar said Peru, the world's biggest producer of coca, the raw material for cocaine, was seeking to buy helicopters on easy terms as part of U.S. aid programs for anti-drug efforts.

He did not say how many or what kind of helicopters Peru wanted.

Peru's security forces currently use U.S. Huey helicopters to fight both drug traffickers and leftist rebels.

U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency officials have helped Peruvian anti-narcotics agents eradicate coca but Lugar said he saw little chance of U.S. troops getting involved in local coca eradication efforts.

"American military personnel are not going to come unless they're requested, and even then only in a very limited capacity," said Lugar. "Personally I don't see any chance of U.S. troop involvement."

et cetera

Walesa, U.S. meeting

by United Press International
GDANSK, Poland — Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, meeting with U.S. officials following the movement's sudden rise to power, said Saturday that Poles were becoming impatient because of rising poverty and urged Washington to speed aid to Warsaw. The meeting coincided with talks in Warsaw between new Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Soviet KGB chief Gen. Vladimir Kryuchkov, the highest-ranking

Soviet official to meet with the premier since he was elected to head Poland's first non-communist government since World War II.

Abducted man dead

JERUSALEM — The body of a Palestinian suspected of collaborating with the Israeli government was found Saturday tied to a utility pole, and another Palestinian was killed during clashes with soldiers in the West Bank, Palestinian sources said. Masked men abducted Asem Taiem, 28, from his home Thursday, and Palestinian

sources said his body, found at midday tied to a pole at the entrance to the West Bank town of Kalkilya, showed signs of severe beatings.

Protest march in D.C.

WASHINGTON — Thousands of demonstrators marched in silent protest Saturday to express their outrage at recent Supreme Court decisions they believe have eroded the rights of minorities and women. District of Columbia Park Police estimated that 35,000 people took part in the march, while Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the National Association for the

Advancement of Colored People, estimated the crowd to be 125,000.

Voyager 2 finds rings

PASADENA, Calif. — Voyager 2 discovered at least one and probably three new rings of icy debris around Neptune, giving the planet as many as five such cosmic strands, along with tumbling boulders of ice — moonlets — imbedded in one ring arc, scientists said Saturday. The nuclear-powered Voyager 2 is departing the solar system after flying past Neptune and its moon Triton Friday.