

President Bush, staff members pay tribute to Rep. Leland

By JENNIFER DIXON
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON -- President Bush paid tribute to two House members killed in recent plane crashes, calling them "outstanding public servants" who were "working to better the lot of mankind."

Bush opened a question-and-answer session with White House reporters by recalling the deaths in Ethiopia of veteran Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Texas, and in Mississippi of freshman Rep. Larkin Smith, R-Miss.

"I want to note again the passing of two outstanding public servants ... the president said. ... Their passing is mourned by everyone who knew them."

"... Their death also reminds us that there are outstanding men and women in public life who are working to better the lot of mankind," Bush said, alluding to Leland's interest in alleviating world hunger and Smith's concern with the war on drugs and crime.

Meantime today, the bodies of Leland and the 15 others in his delegation were lifted off the mountain-side crash site in southwestern Ethiopia, officials said.

The bodies, lifted one by one from the wreckage by helicopters hovering near the face of a sheer cliff, were flown to Gambela, where they were placed aboard an Ethiopian air force C-130 cargo plane for the return to Addis Ababa for identification procedures that could take up to a week.

Meanwhile, a delegation of U.S. and Canadian aviation safety experts left Washington on Monday for Ethiopia to help investigate the cause of the crash. The Ethiopian government had requested the aid.

Plans for a delegation of four members of Congress and two White House aides to travel to Ethiopia to accompany the American bodies back to the United States were on hold until the bodies were retrieved and identified.

Leland, a 44-year-old Texas Democrat who headed the House Select Committee on Hunger, was on his sixth visit to Africa and his second this year when the plane

Legislators say minority package offered for votes

By The Associated Press

RALEIGH -- Some black legislators say they considered an offer of \$2.7 million for minority economic development spending in exchange for their support of a gubernatorial veto package, but that in the end the money was not enough.

House speaker Joe Mavretic, D-Edgecombe, and Gov. Jim Martin worked in vain this week to round up 72 House votes in favor of a revived constitutional amendment that would give the veto to the governor, double the length of legislators' terms and limit legislative sessions.

Rep. Mickey Michaux, D-Durham, who is chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus, would not identify who made the offer, but he said he made a counteroffer -- \$40 million in assistance to minority-oriented programs.

Rep. Howard Hunter, D-Northampton, said black legislators considered the \$2.7 million "just too cheap."

Black legislators say that little in the \$758.7 million state budget benefits minorities.

Rep. Herman Gist, a black Democrat from Greensboro, said he understood the \$2.7 million offer came from Mavretic, who had discussed the veto with Michaux earlier this week.

Mavretic would not say whether or not he made the offer, saying, "I don't breach confidences." Martin's legislative aides deny making any offer to the 13 House members of the black caucus.

Martin tried to pick up potential votes Tuesday by sending two state planes to fetch legislators attending a conference in Oklahoma. Realizing he lacked the necessary votes, he ordered the planes back to Raleigh the next day -- empty.

Martin and Mavretic had 68 of the 72 votes needed to pass the veto measure and winning some black votes could have given Martin the needed extra votes. But no black legislators supported the veto last week.

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crashed on Aug. 7.

Leland was memorialized at a special service Monday, one day after searchers found the wreckage of his plane in a remote mountain ravine 100 miles from its destination near Ethiopia's border with Sudan.

"This mission was a mission of mercy. It was the best our country had to offer. It showed our compassion, our generosity, our interest in seeing that there are no more hungry people, the children would not die of hunger. So why these?" said Robert Mallett, an aide to Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas.

Mallett and three other congressional staff members praised Leland and the Capitol Hill aides who had been on the plane during a memorial service Monday in the stately caucus room of the Russell Senate Office Building.

Sponsored by the Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus, the service mourned Leland, D-Texas, and Patrice Y. Johnson, Leland's chief of staff; Joyce Williams, a staff member with Rep. Ron Dellums, D-Calif., for 10 years; and Hugh A. Johnson Jr., a staff member of the House Select Committee on Hunger.

Their charred plane was found Sunday, its broken pieces scattered in a remote mountain ravine 100 miles from its destination near the Sudan border.

"We ask God, why these. They're



Associated Press Laser Photo

Rep. Mickey Leland speaks with Sudanese refugees at a camp in Ethiopia in April 1989.

our best," Mallett said. "Your living will not be in vain. Because we're going to see that homelessness is no more. That ... in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'we ain't going to study war no more.' We're going to see that there are no more hungry children in Ethiopia, anywhere in the world."

"In that way, we will know that in your dying, you have challenged us to live," Mallett said.

On the crimson-carpeted platform behind him, four white candles for each of the four dead flickered in

their silver candlesticks. Velvet drapes covered the arched windows, as mourners wiped away tears or hid their crying eyes in their hands.

"We gather today with heavy hearts as we join with his staff, his family, and Senate staff in this great, immeasurable loss," prayed Senate Chaplain Richard C. Halverson. "We remember the hungry and the homeless for whom he laid down his life."

Leland, the founder and chairman of the hunger committee, was leading a 16-member delegation of Americans and Ethiopians to the

refugee camp when the twin-engine plane vanished shortly after take-off from Addis Ababa last Monday. There were no survivors.

It was his second trip to the region since March to focus attention on the need for hunger relief for hundreds of thousands of Sudanese, who have been forced from their homes by the country's long-running civil war.

It is now rainy season in the Horn of Africa, and bad weather Monday forced rescuers to postpone retrieval of the remains until Tuesday.

"We ask God in our anger ... why now?" Mallett said. "I suppose the answer lies somewhere in thinking about the condition of the world. They went about doing good, to heal the world."

House Speaker Tom Foley said, "There will be a determination on the part members of the House to work for those goals that Mickey Leland sought to achieve, the alleviation of hunger and suffering here and in Africa and elsewhere in the world."

Foley said Leland's willingness to return to Africa time after time, despite unstable political conditions and that travel there is dangerous, was a "testament to his determination individually to follow through on commitments and values that were very, very close to him."

"And I think other members will also be willing to assume those risks

and I don't think this will change," said Foley, D-Wash.

Letters, telegrams and phone calls of condolence continued to pour into Leland's office Monday, as staff members from other congressional offices pitched in to help.

"We have been receiving a lot of inquiries as to where to send telegrams and cards, and we're referring them to this office and the district office," said Clara Pinzana.

Ms. Pinzana, who is press secretary to Rep. Greg Laughlin, D-Texas, has been helping out in Leland's office since last Monday.

Monday's callers included the offices of Texas Gov. Bill Clements and Washington Mayor Marion Berry, Ms. Pinzana said.

Leland's staff, Ms. Pinzana said, "They're doing really well. They have burned the candle at both ends, but you wouldn't know it."

Private companies sent food and "concerned people" stopped by to bring cookies, Ms. Pinzana said.

In Dallas, about 500 mourners gathered at the Peoples Missionary Baptist Church for a memorial service sponsored by the Interdenominational Ministers Alliance of Dallas.

The Rev. S.M. Wright, president of the alliance, said Leland had worked closely with many political and religious leaders in Dallas, trying to solve statewide problems.

To all those who have chosen to light a candle rather than curse the darkness, we salute you.

PHILIP MORRIS

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