

## World and Nation

# Bush defends role in coup attempt

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration said Wednesday it was not asked and did not promise to aid in Tuesday's failed coup against Panamanian leader Manuel Antonio Noriega but reserves the right to use military force on its "own timetable."

Amid sharp criticism from Congress that the United States should have stepped in to help topple Noriega, officials said the administration was in the dark Tuesday about what was happening in Panama, with no details about the coup's chance of success.

U.S. officials, asking not to be identified, said the rebels had Noriega in custody for four to five hours but then

let him go.

"It's crazy, I don't understand it," an official said when asked why the insurgents decided to free Noriega.

One of Noriega's Miami-based lawyers, Raymond Takiff, disputed the account, saying the general was away from the Panamanian Defense Forces headquarters when the fighting began.

Bush was buffeted by criticism from Congress, where one senior Republican said, "We blew it," and a Democratic colleague spoke of "cold feet."

Secretary of State James Baker, testifying before a Senate committee, said the United States had kept its distance Tuesday because the rebels had little chance of removing Noriega. Brushing

aside criticism of the U.S. reaction, Baker said, "It's easy to be an armchair general."

White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater said the United States had been tipped off about a coup attempt during the weekend by "a third party" and was in touch with "relatively low-level" members of the rebel force during the fighting.

The rebels said "they weren't willing to give up Noriega" to the United States, Fitzwater said. He said it was unclear whether they actually had the general in custody.

He said "just about everything" about the coup argued against U.S. military involvement, especially lack

of reliable information.

Asked if the United States might have helped the rebels if they had agreed to turn over Noriega, who faces drug charges in this country, Fitzwater said, "Well, you can't say. I don't know. I can just tell you the way it unfolded."

Fitzwater said the person who alerted the United States to the planned coup "told us with an idea of seeing how we would react to it. And basically, our reaction was that we would protect property, treaty rights and people, but that was it."

Baker and Fitzwater refused to confirm reports that the United States had given refuge to coup leaders and their families in Panama.

EPA to sue 11 cities for tainting sewers

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — The Environmental Protection Agency announced lawsuits and penalties Wednesday against 11 cities, including Detroit,

Phoenix and San Antonio, accusing them of allowing untreated toxic industrial chemicals into public sewage systems.

The action is the latest in a stepped

up effort by the EPA in recent months to force municipalities to take action against industrial plants that do not pretreat toxic chemicals before discharging them into public sewers.

The latest suits brought to 61 the number of cities that have been targets of either administrative fines or civil lawsuits this year for violations of federal water pollution laws in connection with the toxic industrial discharges.

"We are sending a message, a very clear message," declared EPA Administrator William Reilly. "No individual, no industry, no municipality will be allowed to violate environmental laws without the risk of sanctions and penalties."

Attorney General Dick Thornburgh, who joined Reilly at the news conference announcing the latest lawsuits, said the actions reflect "our determination not to sit idly by while our waters continue to be befouled."

## Lawyer encourages Court to raise licensing authority

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — An apparently sympathetic Supreme Court was urged Wednesday to bolster communities' power to crack down on adult bookstores, X-rated movie theaters and other sexually oriented businesses.

Several justices vigorously challenged claims that a Dallas licensing ordinance violates the Constitution's free-speech guarantees, while they seemed to react more warmly to arguments by a lawyer for Dallas supporting the ordinance.

John Weston, a Beverly Hills lawyer representing the objectionable Dallas businesses, said the ordinance's broad authority to deny licenses was an unlawful "prior restraint" on free expression.

The local law goes beyond traditional government regulation of public health and safety, Weston argued during the 60-minute high court hearing. "We're not dealing with nuclear power plants."

### Blood studies conflict

BOSTON — The odds of getting an AIDS infection from a typical blood transfusion were just 1 in 28,000 two years ago, and the risk is dropping more than 30 percent a year as fewer AIDS carriers are donating blood, a study says.

"The blood supply is probably safer now than it has ever been," concludes the study, conducted by the American Red Cross.

### News in Brief

However, another report cautions that some people at high risk of the disease still give blood despite appeals to refrain, and blood banks should try harder to persuade them not to donate.

A third study showed that more than 95 percent of people who receive AIDS-tainted transfusions become infected, and half of them develop AIDS within seven years.

### Winners emerge after tax battle

WASHINGTON — It began as a simple bill to reduce the budget deficit by \$5.3 billion. But as Tuesday night faded into Wednesday morning, the bill ballooned into a multi-billion-dollar package of tax goodies for a parade of special interests.

It was tax time at the Senate Finance Committee and there were a lot of winners: low-income parents, some of the nation's wealthiest retirees, oil producers, timber growers, banana farmers, rural hospitals, first-time homebuyers, entrepreneurs, people who adopt handicapped children ...

And, of course, workers who want to use Individual Retirement Accounts to shelter income from the Internal Revenue Service. In the biggest fight of the day, liberalized IRAs, favored by most Democrats, won out over a cut in capital-gains taxes, which Republicans preferred.

## Perspective

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second math class.

"We do have a certain number of students who go to level four to avoid having to take two math courses," she said.

About 20 to 30 percent of the level four students are taking the class for that reason, she said.

Math department Chairman John Pfaltzgraff declined to comment on the possible requirement changes. "That's in the hands of the (General) College."

Cesareo Banderia, chairman of the Department of Romance Languages, said, "Until all the facts and consequences are studied, I don't know if I'm in favor of it or not."

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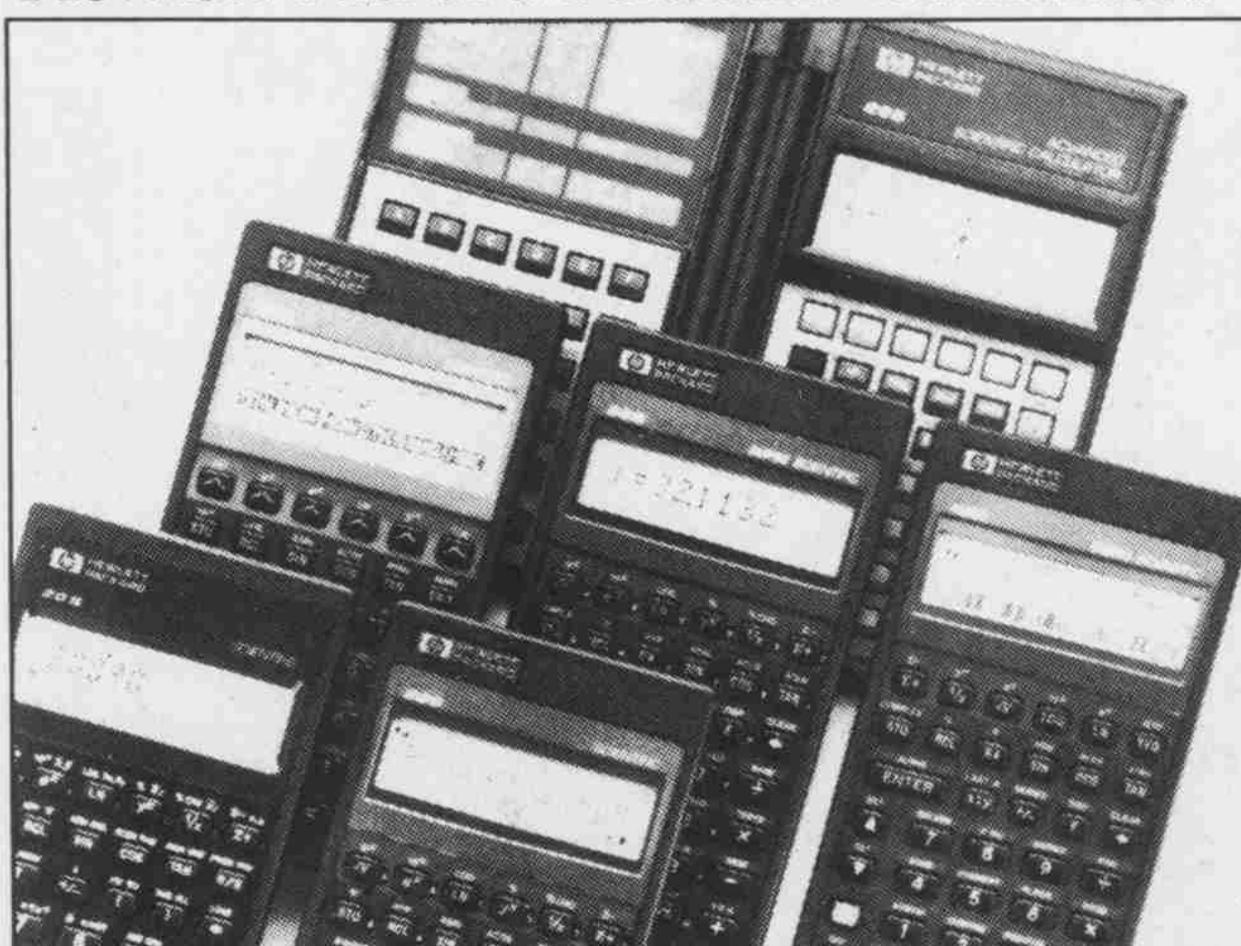
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