

World and Nation

Bush urges Cabinet confirmations

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — President-elect George Bush told Senate Republican leaders Tuesday he will seek speedy confirmation of his Cabinet, perhaps with hearings beginning even before he takes office on Jan. 20.

Bush also told the GOP senators he hopes any "honeymoon period" with Congress can yield a federal budget compromise, according to participants in a private get-acquainted meeting at the Capitol.

Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., said the president-elect indicated he wanted to meet with "a bipartisan group to discuss his thoughts" before submitting a budget outline of his own.

However, Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and the 1988 Democratic vice presidential candidate, said Bush "should not be in the position of not sending any budget up."

"This will be his first test of leadership. He has to show what he believes in — national defense, Medicare, revenues. He has to speak to the principal points of the budget.

That's part of the price of leadership," Bentsen said. "They just won an election. It's theirs to call."

Republican senators said the vice president indicated during their meeting that he would take up the matter of early confirmations with the Senate's newly chosen majority leader, George Mitchell of Maine. Bush called Mitchell to congratulate him shortly after Tuesday's secret-ballot election among Senate Democrats.

In 1981, the Senate, then controlled by the Republicans, voted confirmation of key appointments of President Ronald Reagan's within hours of his inauguration. Democrats now have a majority in the Senate.

"It would be important to his administration if he could have early action on confirmation, particularly with some of the key people like (James) Baker," Bush's choice for secretary of state, said Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss.

Cochran said if Democrats went along, confirmation hearings could be held on Bush's nominations before they are formally submitted.

"The Congress does come into

session on Jan. 3. We could do some work between then and the inauguration," Cochran said.

He said Bush indicated he would like the Senate to "expedite the hearings and consideration of those nominees to those Cabinet positions so that when the president is inaugurated, they started to work right away with the Cabinet in place."

Three members of Reagan's Cabinet whom Bush has indicated he will retain — Attorney General Dick Thornburgh, Education Secretary Lauro F. Cavazos and Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady — do not require reconfirmation by the Senate.

In other developments Tuesday: ■ Aides to defeated Democratic rival Michael Dukakis and Democrat Jesse Jackson said the two men would meet this week with Bush — Jackson on Wednesday and Dukakis on Friday.

■ A source close to the Bush transition, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said a decision by Bush on defense secretary could come by Wednesday. The source said Bush still favors former Sen. John Tower of Texas, but some Bush advisers are

objecting, partly because they do not have a high regard for close Tower associates likely to get choice Pentagon jobs.

In his meeting with Senate Republicans, Bush reiterated a promise to work with Democrats and Republicans in forego a budget agreement, perhaps beginning before his inauguration.

While the senators shied away from using the term "budget summit," they indicated that is basically what Bush has in mind.

"I think it's going to develop that way, but I don't know the timing," said Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan.

Bush said he was in a "listening mode" in his second trip to Capitol Hill since his election. His first was two weeks ago, when he met with House Speaker Jim Wright.

On Tuesday, Bush said he was "getting the message" rather than carrying advice.

"We're ready to go to work, ready to work with the new administration," Dole said after the breakfast session. "We pledged our cooperation; he's pledged his."

United Nations postpones debate on Palestinian issue

From Associated Press reports

UNITED NATIONS — The General Assembly on Tuesday postponed its annual debate on the Palestinian problem so PLO chief Yasser Arafat, denied a U.S. visa, can address the body at a special session in another country.

General Assembly President Dante Caputo said he had received and granted a request from Arab nations to postpone the debate, which had been scheduled for Thursday, Friday and Dec. 6.

Earlier, Caputo had said that once he received a request from Arab nations, the assembly would move swiftly to provide Arafat another forum.

Arab diplomats said they would seek to move the debate to Geneva on or about Dec. 13-14.

Group sues to seal FBI files

WASHINGTON — An organization opposed to Reagan administration policy in Central America filed suit against the FBI on Tuesday, seeking to seal files compiled during the bureau's anti-terrorism probe of the private group.

The class-action lawsuit alleges that during the March 1983 to June 1985 probe, the FBI spread false information about the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), linking it to terrorism and hurting its efforts to raise money and enroll new members.

The CISPES lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court, seeks an order preventing the FBI from using records gathered during the probe and requiring the bureau to seal the files and deposit them in the National Archives.

Savings and loan losses down

WASHINGTON — Losses in

News in Brief

the savings and loan industry shrank by 60 percent in the third quarter, reflecting rescues of insolvent institutions that transferred the red ink to the government's books, a top regulator said Tuesday.

Federal Home Loan Bank Board Chairman M. Danny Wall, in a luncheon meeting with reporters, also hinted at his agency's recommendation for reshaping the federal rescue effort.

Wall said the nation's 3,028 federally insured S&Ls lost \$1.52 billion in the July-September period, down from a revised \$3.82 billion in the second quarter and \$3.93 billion in the first three months of the year.

Man convicted of terrorism charges

NEWARK, N.J. — A Japanese man called an international terrorist by prosecutors was found guilty Tuesday of weapons charges and of transporting homemade bombs with the intent to commit sabotage.

U.S. District Judge Alfred J. Lechner convicted Yu Kikumura in a non-jury trial after the 36-year-old defendant admitted to the government's charges in an agreement worked out with prosecutors.

Stock market average rises

The Dow Jones average of 30 industrials rose 20.09 to 2,101.53.

Gainers outpaced losers by a 7-to-4 margin, with 939 issues rising, 536 falling and 477 unchanged on the New York Stock Exchange.

Judge upholds 2 indictments against North

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — The judge in the Iran-Contra case refused today to dismiss two of the central charges against Oliver North but ruled the third, a wire fraud charge, must be struck from the indictment.

U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell upheld the legal validity of the charges of conspiracy to defraud the government and theft of government property arising from the diversion to the Nicaraguan Contras of profits from the sale of U.S. arms to Iran.

"The indictment clearly alleges a conspiracy which involved concealing the very existence of the profits of the enterprise from the start and hiding from Congress information relating to the conspirators' assistance for the Contras," Gesell said. "Its purpose depended on deceit from the start and acts of concealment were actually part of the commission of the substantive crime."

But Gesell dismissed a wire fraud charge, saying it "is, in many ways, a cumulative count" that would only create "substantial confusion in the minds of the jurors."

The judge also refused to dismiss

charges that the former National Security Council aide lied to congressional committees that questioned the Reagan administration about whether it was covertly providing military aid to the Contras in defiance of the so-called Boland Amendments.

Earlier today, Gesell refused to bar prosecutors from closed hearings set to begin this week on deleting sensitive government secrets from documents to be used as evidence.

He refused to give North's lawyers permission to file a motion to bar independent counsel Lawrence E. Walsh from the hearing, which is set to begin Wednesday.

Gesell said in a brief order that barring prosecutors "would alter the purpose of the hearing and would result in further and wholly unnecessary delay."

Defense lawyers gave no reason for their request, which was filed Monday. If they had been granted permission to file the motion, they likely would have argued that prosecutors would get an unfair preview of their strategy if allowed to attend the hearing.

The hearings were scheduled by

Gesell to consider defense objections to the deletion of sensitive material from classified documents that Walsh wants to use as evidence against North.

Gesell has directed North to come to the hearing prepared to say why the material is relevant to his defense and should not be deleted.

The references Walsh wants to delete include names of foreign countries and officials as well as U.S. intelligence agents operating abroad. The government has consented to Walsh's use of the 350 documents as exhibits in a public trial provided the sensitive references are deleted.

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State George Shultz said Tuesday the strong opposition to his decision to prevent PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat from visiting the United Nations shows widespread insensitivity to the threat of international terrorism.

In his first public statement on the

subject since his decision to reject Arafat's request for a U.S. visa last Saturday, Shultz said he was sorry but not surprised about the extent of the criticism he has received.

Speaking at a groundbreaking ceremony for a State Department annex, Shultz said the magnitude of the opposition suggested that international terrorism had become a secondary issue for many.

"The basis (for the decision) was our concern about terrorism, and I am afraid that it's too easy for people to forget what an important problem that is and what a threat it is to

civilized society," he said.

Referring to the presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization observer mission in New York, Shultz said the Palestinians will have no difficulty in getting their message across to other U.N. members.

"We have no problem with that," he said.

Since the State Department rejection of Arafat's visa request, worldwide opposition has been virtually unanimous, ranging from Arab countries to some of America's closest allies — Great Britain, West Germany and Italy.

One common argument mentioned by allied spokesmen was that Shultz's decision weakens the hand of Arab moderates.

Shultz said the decision will not impair the peace process and that he will not reconsider it.

"I think it was the right decision. I stick by it," he said.

Meanwhile, Shultz's spokesman, Charles Redman, showed little interest in a statement by an adviser to Arafat, Bassam Abu-Sherif, who appeared to go a long way toward

meeting U.S. demands concerning the PLO.

Among other points, Abu-Sherif said the PLO's position is one of "full acceptance" of Israel and of rejection of the threat or use of terrorism by the Palestinians.

Redman said, "It sounds to me like one more statement from a Palestinian spokesman. It's always a difficult thing determining what's authoritative and what isn't."

Outside the State Department, a handful of demonstrators protested the rejection of Arafat's visa request.

The protesters gathered across the street from the department's main entrance, where they waved Palestinian flags, pictures of Arafat and signs.

In a letter to Shultz, Khalil Jahshan of the Council of Presidents of National Arab-American Organizations said the decision to refuse a visa to Arafat on national security grounds was "absurd."

"Although we disagree with your decision, we honestly believe that it is never too late to correct it," Jahshan wrote to Shultz.

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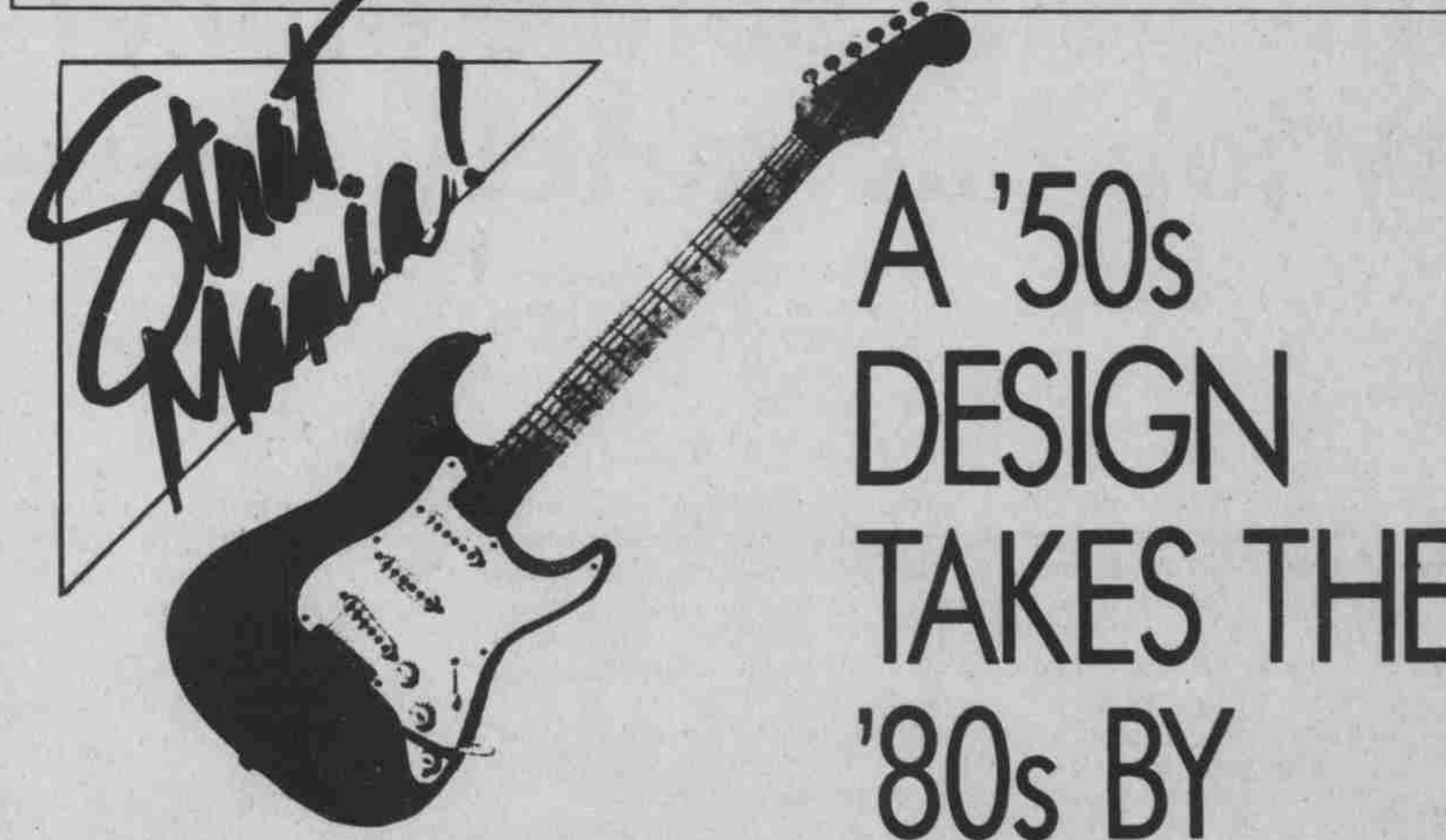
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