

World and Nation

House committee charges Wright

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — The House Ethics Committee, with Democrats and Republicans united, formally charged Speaker Jim Wright Monday with 69 violations of the chamber's rules, including what the panel's chairman called "a scheme to evade" limits on outside earnings.

After a 10-month, \$1.5 million investigation, the committee of six Democrats and six Republicans voted unanimously to issue a report finding "reason to believe" the Texas Democrat had run afoul of House rules requiring reporting of gifts, barring acceptance of gifts from persons with a direct interest in legislation and limiting outside earned income.

"I know in my heart I have not violated any of the rules of that institution," Wright said in a speech

to a labor meeting shortly after the ethics report was released.

He said he had asked "very urgently, very earnestly" for a quick meeting with the committee "to confront them, to confront the allegations head-on, face-to-face."

At a news conference, committee chairman Rep. Julian Dixon, D-Calif., emphasized that Wright is presumed innocent until the charges are proven, and he underscored that proving them requires a much heavier weight of evidence than the step taken Monday, which is the panel's equivalent of an indictment.

The move set in motion a series of steps in which Wright can defend himself and the panel will try to prove with "clear and convincing" evidence that the violations occurred. That is likely in the end to throw the matter before the full House, where Wright's position as the nation's highest elected Democrat could be on the line.

Possible punishments range from a reprimand to expulsion from the House, although lawmakers in both parties seemed to think the final decision would come down to whether Wright should be reprimanded or simply chastised for poor judgment and let off without formal punishment.

Wright immediately began his defense in earnest, operating what one supporter, Rep. Charles Wilson, D-Texas, called "a war room" out of

the speaker's office. "At some point we've got to start figuring out who's on our side and who's on the other side," Wilson said.

Wilson predicted Wright would win on the floor, "losing a few cowardly Democrats and picking up some brave Republicans."

The most serious allegation against Wright — that Fort Worth developer George Mallick, from whom he accepted \$145,000 in gifts over a 10-year period, had a direct interest in legislation — also had the narrowest margin of support on the ethics committee.

According to records of internal committee votes released along with the report of the panel's special outside counsel, Chicago attorney Richard J. Phelan, Democrats Ches-

ter Atkins of Massachusetts and Bernard Dwyer of New Jersey joined the six committee Republicans for an 8-4 margin on that issue.

The panel agreed with its counsel, Phelan, that Mallick's major interests in real estate and oil and gas ventures and in redevelopment of Fort Worth's historic stockyards district gave him a direct interest in legislation on taxation and on certain appropriations bills. His financing arrangements with savings and loan institutions also gave him an interest in legislation involving the S&L industry, the committee found.

But Wright's lawyer, William Oldaker, called that "doublespeak" and said "it's one of the most outrageous readings of legislative history" he has seen.

Death threat

claimed responsibility for the incident.

Monday's harassing call seems to be from the same man, Smith said. He plans to notify Carrboro police of the call.

"What a damned joke. You guys can't even answer the damned phone," the caller said. "I've been calling you for four days now, and I never talk to anyone in person. It must mean you have a bunch of s--- to hide. You guys are a bunch of f---in' losers, I mean it. You guys are

stupid. Go f--- yourself."

One caller left a message saying he was interested in PETA, but sounded suspicious because he kept asking another person in the background what to say, Smith said. The number the man left was a Charlotte telephone number.

SETA has been trying to get the University to be open about its use of laboratory animals, Smith said. PETA visited the University in December 1988, an event which publicized SETA, he said. Smith also wrote an article concerning animal rights in the recent issue of the Carolina Critic, he said.

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British government initiates investigation of soccer deaths

From Associated Press reports

SHEFFIELD, England — The government announced Monday it will investigate the soccer stadium tragedy in which 94 fans were killed and said it may ban standing-room-only sections.

Criticism increased to target police handling of what is the greatest sports disaster in the nation's history. Meanwhile, the Football Association rescheduled the abandoned match for May 7 and said the F.A. Cup final will go on May 20 as scheduled.

Officials and fans accused the South Yorkshire police of letting thousands of late arrivals into Hillsborough stadium and then responding too slowly when the surging crowd was crushed against an anti-riot fence in one of the standing-room-only terraces.

Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, speaking to a hushed House of Commons, said the inquiry headed by Lord Justice Taylor would begin work Tuesday and "make recommendations about the needs of crowd control and safety at sports grounds."

Walesa plans Solidarity rebuild

WARSAW, Poland — Lech Walesa on Monday urged Poles to rebuild Solidarity "skillfully and quickly" hours after a court declared the independent union legal again and ended seven years of government suppression.

Walesa also praised President Bush for announcing an aid package for Poland's economy. Walesa was expected to follow up restoration of his union's legal status in a meeting Tuesday with his longtime antagonist, Polish leader Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski and a trip to Rome on Wednesday to meet Polish-born Pope John Paul II at the Vatican.

Looking relaxed despite what he said was a case of pneumonia, Walesa arrived by train in Warsaw on Monday night and told reporters Bush was "a brilliant politician."

Beirut fighting claims heavy toll

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Resi-

News in Brief

dents sought shelter Monday in basements and bunkers during citywide shelling that killed at least 43 people in three days and touched off international appeals for a cease-fire.

The rocket and artillery barrages slammed into both the Christian and Moslem sectors during intensified fighting in and around Beirut between Christian army units and an alliance of Druse militiamen and Syrian troops.

The dead included Spain's ambassador to Lebanon, Pedro Manuel De Aristegui, and his father-in-law, prominent Lebanese poet Tewfic Youssef Awwad. Warrant Officer Youssef Bitar, the Lebanese army's top explosives specialist, said on Christian-controlled Voice of Lebanon radio the ambassador's residence was hit by a Syrian shell.

Prison escape attempt fails

MIAMI — A helicopter swooped into a prison's high-security exercise yard Monday and a convicted drug kingpin jumped aboard, but the chopper caught a fence and crashed in the yard, injuring the would-be escapee and his pilot.

Benjamin "Barry" Kramer, 36, a former powerboat champion serving a life term without parole as the leader of a marijuana-trafficking ring, broke his right leg in the accident. The pilot suffered two broken legs and facial injuries.

"Kramer apparently was ready, and as soon as the helicopter was there, he jumped right into it," said John Clark, warden at the federal Metropolitan Correctional Center.

Clark said three armed guards watched but did not react because they did not want to shoot into the prison yard, where a half-dozen men were exercising. He also said they feared there might be a hostage in the helicopter.

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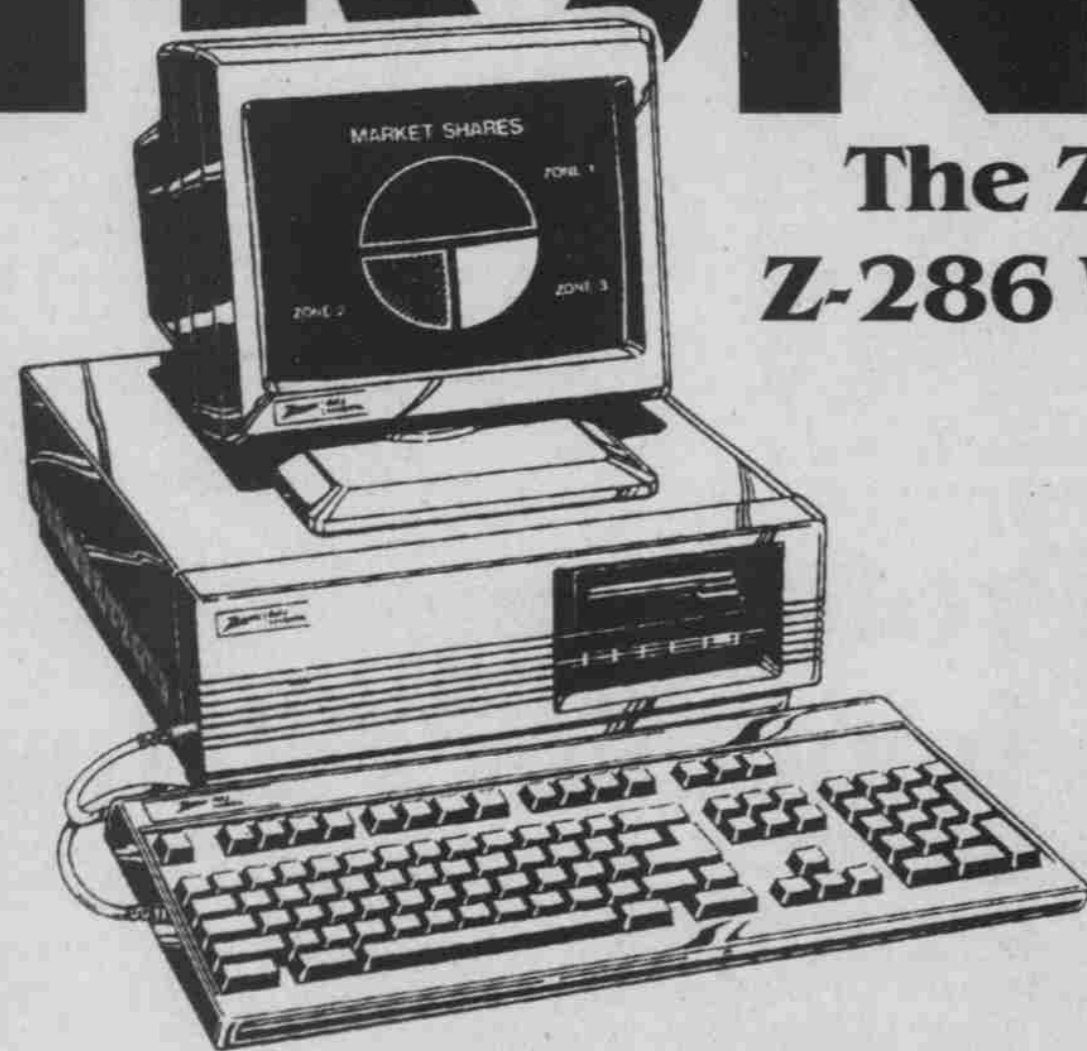
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