

WORLD BRIEFS

Bush announces cuts in U.S. nuclear arsenal

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Bush wants the Soviets to join in scaling back the world's most powerful nuclear missiles as he commits the United States to eliminating most short-range missiles.

In an announcement detailing some of the nuclear history's biggest changes, Bush pledged Friday to "take steps to make the world a less dangerous place than ever before in the nuclear age."

Bush said in a nationwide television address that he will eliminate ground-launched short-range nuclear weapons — most of them stored in Europe — as well as those carried on ships and submarines, including the Pentagon's 350-400 Tomahawk cruise missiles. But the United States will keep those carried aboard aircraft.

He further offered to open negotiations with the Soviet Union to eliminate all long-range ballistic missiles with multiple warheads, an area in which the Soviet Union has a large advantage.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin joined other leaders in praise for Bush's proposal to sharply reduce superpower nuclear arsenals.

Legendary jazz player Miles Davis dies at 65

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Miles Davis, one of America's finest jazz trumpeters and the most consistent trendsetter in jazz history, died Saturday at the age of 65.

Davis died of pneumonia, respiratory failure and stroke, according to a statement read by Pat Kirk of St. John's Hospital and Health Center, where Davis was admitted earlier this month.

Davis was the most famous trumpeter in his generation — in the line of jazz trumpeters that stretched from Louis Armstrong to Dizzy Gillespie to Wynton Marsalis.

He was the innovator of more distinct styles than any other jazz musician. He pioneered in cool jazz, hard bop, modal playing, free-form explorations and use of electronics.

"You can really say he turned the

whole jazz world around," said Leonard Feather, a longtime friend and author of "The Encyclopedia of Jazz."

Iraq releases U.N. nuclear inspectors

UNITED NATIONS — Free from five days of detention in a Baghdad parking lot, U.N. weapons inspectors met today with Iraqi officials to catalog secret documents detailing Saddam Hussein's nuclear weapons program.

The U.N. inspection team and Iraqi officials were working to compile an inventory of the documents.

"They're going to just keep going and going and going until it's all done," said Jeremy Mansfield of the 44-member inspection team.

At the U.N. Headquarters, the head of the U.N. Special Commission in charge of dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction said Iraq may still be trying to continue its research on nuclear weapons.

U.N. officials say the uncovered documents contain records of an extensive clandestine project to build nuclear weapons.

The inspection team release eased tensions between Iraq and the U.S.-led allies that had been raised to their highest level since the Persian Gulf War.

To pressure Iraq to honor provisions in the Gulf War cease-fire agreement, President Bush dispatched two Patriot missile battalions to Saudi Arabia and reportedly planned to send more.

400,000 people attend Soviet rock concert

MOSCOW — About 400,000 people jammed an airfield Saturday to see AC/DC, the Black Crowes and Metallica play at the Soviet Union's biggest Western rock concert, touted as a gift to Russian youth for their resistance to last month's coup.

Scattered skirmishes occurred between bottle-throwing drunken youths and a huge concert security force of about 12,000 police, soldiers and security forces, but only minor injuries were reported.

— The Associated Press

STATE AND NATIONAL

Thomas vote deadlocked in committee

Republicans, Democrats predict full Senate confirmation for appellate judge

By Anna Griffin
Staff Writer

Clarence Thomas has lost the battle but seems destined to win the war in his attempt to replace Justice Thurgood Marshall on the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Senate Judiciary Committee deadlocked Friday in a 7-7 vote concerning the recommendation of Thomas to the nation's highest court. The Thomas nomination will be sent to the Senate floor where the full Senate is expected to confirm the nomination.

The tie vote could have killed the chances of Thomas, a 43-year-old U.S. appellate judge bidding to replace Marshall as the only black member of the Supreme Court. But following the confirmation vote Friday, committee chairman Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., led a 13-1 vote to send the nomination to the Senate floor with no recommendation.

Although the committee failed to take a definitive stance, Republicans and Democrats both are confident the nomi-



Clarence Thomas

nation will be confirmed by the full Senate.

"It looks as if the nomination will be

confirmed without much of a fight," said Tom McMahon, press secretary for Sen. Howell Heflin, D-Ala.

The fierce debate of the past few weeks had little to do with Thomas and more to do with partisan politics, McMahon said.

"The confirmation hearings were rough for Thomas, but there really isn't that much opposition on either side to his nomination," McMahon said. "Many of the members of the committee used the hearings to get some important issues raised, but those issues couldn't be used effectively against Thomas."

The Thomas hearings have sparked renewed debate about abortion, affirmative action and Constitutional interpretation. These debates have primarily been fought in the press, rather than in the confirmation proceedings, said Brad Bodenhausen, deputy press secretary for Sen. John Danforth, R-Mo., Thomas' longtime supporter on Capitol Hill.

"Senators on both sides are guilty of using the hearings as debating ground," Bodenhausen said.

Friday's vote was decidedly partisan with seven of the committee's eight Democratic members going against the confirmation and all six Republicans voting for Thomas. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., was the only senator to break with the party line.

The sealing of Thomas' fate actually occurred Thursday afternoon when Heflin declared his opposition to the nomination.

Heflin's vote helped convince Biden that voter reaction to a rejection of the black judge would be minimal, convincing the chairman and several other Democratic senators to block the confirmation, McMahon said.

Heflin attributed his decision to the nominee's testimony during the first week of the hearings.

"I stated at the onset of the hearings that Judge Thomas' own testimony could remove, clarify, decrease or increase any doubts... about his nomination," Heflin said Thursday. "Most of these doubts still remain."

Partisan politics justified in judicial confirmation process, legal experts say

By Jason Richardson
Staff Writer

Although the latest round of Supreme Court confirmation hearings has been characterized by political propaganda, legal experts defend the part politics plays in the confirmation process.

The controversy centers around Judge Clarence Thomas, President Bush's second nominee for the nation's highest court.

"Deciding membership on the Supreme Court has and always will be an inherently political process," said Patrick Bruer, a UNC associate professor of political science.

Thomas has been described by the American Bar Association as "qualified" rather than "well-qualified" to be a Supreme Court justice. His nomination raises the question of what should serve as basic minimum qualifications.

"For the first time it is a question of whether (the nominee) is merely competent to be confirmed, as opposed to whether this person has achieved the excellence to deserve the nomination," said Burnele Powell, professor and associate dean of academic affairs at the UNC School of Law.

Over the years, Thomas has been openly hostile to the legislative branch, Powell said. Two weeks ago, tables were turned, and senators were given opportunities to scrutinize the nominee.

"The Senate has an opportunity to commit executive nominees to particular positions on the issues," said Terry Sullivan, a UNC associate professor of political science.

Over the entire nomination process hangs the shadow of the Robert Bork and David Souter confirmation hearings. In short, Bork told his views and was rejected. Souter dodged the issues and was confirmed. It becomes easy to see why Thomas chose to answer or not to answer as he did, Sullivan said.

On one side of the confirmation debate sit Democrats, determined to stop Thomas from making the high court even more conservative. Opposite them sit Republicans, equally determined to protect their party's nominee from attack.

The ideological questions senators direct at a judicial nominee are reasonable, considering the political nature of the process, Sullivan said.

"I don't think it's hypocrisy, it's just down-in-the-trenches politics," Sullivan

said. "They've got to use everything they can to win. It's inevitable that the nomination process is political because the nomination process is about politics."

Former President Ronald Reagan nominated three justices to the Supreme Court. A successful Thomas will represent Bush's second appointment, thereby laying a definitive Republican mark on the nation's highest court.

"When we elect presidents we indirectly elect the Supreme Court," said Stephen Gillers, a law professor at New York University.

Powell stressed the importance of finding out about a nominee's beliefs before he actually sits on the court.

The courage to demand answers from an evasive nominee has been absent from the Thomas hearings, Powell said. Thomas' race, combined with his "by-the-bootstraps" rise from poverty, has made Democrats wary of criticism.

Throughout the confirmation hearings, Thomas made reference to his background and upbringing in rural Georgia. He repeatedly answered Democrats' questions about his views with stories from his childhood in abject poverty and from his incredible rise to prominence from such humble beginnings.

The Democrats realize that as conservative as Clarence Thomas is, the next nominee could be worse politically, Powell said.

For more than 100 years, the Senate did not exercise the Constitutional power

"to advise and to consent" presidents in the selection of nominees.

"We have a different society today, and it is necessary that our institutions evolve," Powell said.

Many critics of the process have pointed to the intentions of the Constitution's founders, who apparently fashioned the Supreme Court as an apolitical body to balance the legislative and executive branches.

"There has never been an attempt to maintain a partisan balance on the court," Bruer said. "The first Supreme Court was entirely Federalist, corresponding to the founding government."

Although the process is flawed, the confirmation hearings serve a definitive need, Powell said. Intense questioning is good for the Senate and good for the country, he said.

"The Senate should ask sharp and tough questions of people who are about to have conferred on them a lifetime tenure in one of the coequal branches of government," Powell said.

The presence of television transformed the nature of confirmation hearings, bringing the whole process home to most Americans in full color every night on the evening news, Gillers said.

"It's given us Supreme Court groupies something to stare at all day," he said. "It's like our version of baseball."

The television coverage of the hearings has had some adverse effects: "It's encouraged a certain amount of posturing on the part of the committee and the nominee," Gillers said.

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