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House Democrats soften Marine withdrawal stance

United Press International

WASHINGTON — House Democrats, hoping to defuse charges they are playing politics with foreign affairs, Thursday moved to tone down a resolution calling for the prompt removal of U.S. Marines from Lebanon.

Rep. Steven Solarz, D-N.Y., said Democrats on the Foreign Affairs Committee planned to rewrite the resolution to take out "gratuitous" partisan criticism of the administration and make it clear that U.S. air and naval forces should remain in the area to support the Beirut government.

But he said the "bottom line" would still be a call for President Reagan to promptly withdraw the Marines "from the soil of Lebanon."

Undersecretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger went before the committee earlier in an effort to head off the resolution, but members planned to

meet Friday to vote on the measure so it can be taken to the full House next week.

Solarz said the Democrats do not want the withdrawal resolution to be seen "as a particularly partisan endeavor," and do not intend that the United States abandon the government of Lebanese leader Amin Gemayel.

Administration officials and Republicans on the panel have charged the Democrats with "playing politics" and warned the withdrawal demand only encourages Syria and other factions opposed to the Lebanese government.

The Foreign Affairs Committee met Thursday afternoon to hear administration testimony on the resolution. Solarz said committee Democrats would meet after the hearing to make the changes in the resolution.

Rep. William Broomfield, R-Mich.,

ranking Republican on the committee, said earlier he will offer an alternative when the resolution comes to the floor in hopes of restoring bipartisan agreement on U.S. policy in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, O'Neill's chief spokesman accused the White House of branding Democrats traitors. He noted that presidential spokesman Larry Speakes had declared that efforts to persuade the president to withdraw the Marines from Lebanon "aid and abet" Syria and "others bent on a destructive role in the Middle East."

"Aiding and abetting is legal language for being a traitor; it wasn't an accident," said O'Neill aide Christopher Matthews.

"The White House is engaging in a new form of McCarthyism," he said. "Charlie McCarthyism. You don't blame the dummy. You blame the ventriloquist."

Speakes was not apologetic. "I'm terribly sorry that the speaker is upset, but that's the way the game is played," he said. Asked if he was calling Democrats traitors, Speakes replied with a big smile: "oh, no, of course not."

Eagleburger told the House committee a U.S. pullout from Lebanon would be "a major victory" for terrorism.

"We may bring our boys home to safety now, but we run an enormous risk of encouraging escalating crises which may, down the road, compel us to send our boys out again in even more dangerous circumstances," he said.

He could not promise immediate positive results if the United States pursues its objectives in Lebanon, "but I can assure you that failure to pursue them — cutting and running, if you will — will do enormous harm."

Looking up

Photo by ERIC EVAN LEE

Chris Osborne of College Station washes the second floor windows of Sterling C. Evans Library Thursday with a brush and a long pole. Though the rest of campus was hit by occasional showers, Osborne, a Texas A&M employee, was able to work 'under cover' of the building.

Senate passes tough crime bill

United Press International

WASHINGTON — The Senate overwhelmingly approved a sweeping crime bill Thursday that reverses the insanity defense, making acquittal more difficult for defendants like presidential assailant John W. Hinckley Jr.

The 91-1 vote to pass the crime package, which also abolishes parole for federal crimes, followed defeat of an amendment that stymied Senate action all week. Sen. Charles Mathias, R-Md., cast the lone dissenting vote. By a vote of 51-41, the Senate kil-

led the amendment by Sens. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, and Dale Bumpers, D-Ark., forbidding federal workers from taping conversations without permission.

The amendment was prompted by the revelation that U.S. Information Agency chief Charles Wick taped telephone calls without informing those on the other end of the line. Among those recorded were White House Chief of Staff James Baker and former President Jimmy Carter.

Republicans charged the amendment was aimed at embarrassing Wick and his close friend, President

Reagan, and warned it was drafted so hastily it would interfere with intelligence-gathering and criminal investigations.

Bumpers shrugged off the pleas to withdraw the amendment so hearings on the subject could be held.

"George Orwell is surely smiling from ear to ear. Big Brother is watching," Bumpers said, urging colleagues to safeguard Americans' privacy.

Broad support for the crime bill was won by separating out controversial issues such as the death penalty and the exclusionary rule for later consideration.

The crime legislation, the first major bill of the year, would narrow the insanity defense in the wake of the furor that arose when Hinckley was acquitted by reason of insanity on charges of trying to assassinate Reagan, and abolish parole for federal crimes.

The measure would require defendants who plead insanity as a defense to prove with "clear and convincing evidence" they did not know what they were doing at the time of the crime. The burden is now on the prosecution to prove the defendant sane beyond a reasonable doubt.

Commissioner says EDB isn't 'immediate threat'

United Press International

But committee Chairman Sen. Carlos Truan, D-Corpus Christi, said

he thought it was a "copout" for Texas to wait for the federal Environmental Protection Agency to set minimum exposure standards.

"I don't think that kind of copout will wash with members of our committee or the people of Texas," he said. "I yield to no member of the Texas Senate on the low esteem in which I hold the EPA under the Reagan administration."

The committee summoned associate state health Commissioner Jerome Greenberg after learning of a newspaper article in which he was quoted as saying, "one good war will kill more people than 30 years of exposure to dioxin, EDB and all the other chemicals you can name."

Greenberg told the committee he was speaking for himself and not the Health Department when he made the comment. He said he did not intend to make light of the EDB debate.

But Sen. Chet Edwards, D-Duncanville, told Greenberg his comments were a "poor reflection on the Department of Health and the state of Texas."

"I feel very strongly that it was an extremely irresponsible statement to make," Edwards added.

At least four states, including Florida, California, Massachusetts and Hawaii, have acted to protect consumers from products contaminated with EDB.

EDB, ethylene dibromide, has

been widely used as a fumigant on grain and citrus and as an additive to leaded gasoline since the late 1940s. It has been found to cause cancer in laboratory animals and is suspected of causing cancer in humans.

Traces of the pesticide have shown up in a variety of food products in Texas.

But Bernstein said he thought it was "premature" for states to act on their own to control tainted food products.

"EDB has been around for 50 years," he said. "Why jump the gun?"

Bernstein said the state will act immediately once EPA sets standards, which will apparently be Friday.

"I think that makes a lot more sense than 50 states going off on their own," he said. "I think the farmers and groc-

ers will pay more attention to it (EPA sanctions)."

Assistant Texas Agriculture Commissioner Ron White said the EPA will apparently set limitations on EDB on a three-tier level — raw grain, intermediate products on grocery shelves and ready-to-eat products.

State Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower told the committee

that if his agency had the power it would have ordered the removal of some foods from Texas supermarket shelves.

"Yes, we would have followed the Florida standards and removed them," he said.

Hightower said he had been told that EDB's cancer-causing properties were a thousand times more powerful

than saccharin, which carries a warning label.

But Bernstein said, "You're comparing risks in different leagues."

Bernstein said cigarettes "are a thousand times more potent" than EDB, adding there is only evidence that laboratory animals fed large doses of EDB have contracted cancer.

The amount of EDB given rats and mice, he said, would be the equivalent of a 150-pound human eating six to 12 tons of contaminated raw grain each day.

Earlier, a coalition of environmental and consumer groups asked Bernstein in a formal petition to immediately ban all foods tainted with any level of EDB.

Six more weeks of winter

Punxsutawney Phil sees shadow

United Press International

PUNXSUTAWNEY, Pa. — Groundhog Punxsutawney Phil had a quiet day after predicting six more weeks of winter Thursday but the folks in town made the most of the event that makes everyone in Punxsutawney a celebrity.

Phil emerged from his burrow and saw a "thin, gray shadow over his right shoulder" at 7:20 a.m., said James Means, president of the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club which sponsors Phil's annual prediction.

The shadow sighting means six more weeks of winter for the nation. If Phil had not seen his shadow, it would have meant an early spring was on the way, Means said.

An added attraction to the prediction this year was a groundhog wedding between Phil and Philomena, a girl groundhog from the Philadelphia Zoo.

Phil's third wife apparently didn't

Some people said they hoped for a baby from the match, but Null said, "That's between the two groundhogs."

Julie Roberts, who works for a Philadelphia radio station that broadcast the event live, carried the bride down the aisle.

"Usually all a bridesmaid has to worry about is dropping the bouquet, but I had to worry about dropping the bride," she said.

Following Phil's show, a breakfast was held at the Punxsutawney Country Club and a Groundhog King and Queen were crowned.

And a banquet was scheduled for Thursday night to honor town residents who have promoted Punxsutawney and Phil when they have moved to new cities.

Elaine Light, whose late husband, Sam, was president for 24 years of the Groundhog Club, said the day means "a tremendous amount of fun."

"It makes everyone in Punxsutawney a celebrity," she said.

Ms. Roberts mother, Peggy Roberts, of Punxsutawney, said she

enjoys the hullabaloo.

"As a kid I used to be embarrassed by all this but now it's a lot of fun," she said.

The Groundhog Club claims Phil's forecast is the only "official" one, but other animals across the country put forth their own predictions.

A prairie dog in Lander, Wyo., saw its shadow and predicted six more weeks of winter, as did groundhogs in Upshur County and Athens, W.Va. and Indianapolis.

A rabbit in Irvington, Ky., looked at a thermometer and predicted five more weeks of winter.

Groundhogs in Sun Prairie, Wis., and Lilburn, Ga., did not see their shadows and challenged Phil's prediction by calling for an early spring.

In Today's Battalion

Local

- Former Texas A&M track star Jimmy Howard is working towards a spot on the U.S. Olympic track team. See story page 15.
- Quarterback John Mazur is hoping to pitch for the Texas Aggie baseball team this season. See story page 15.
- The annual All-Nite Fair will be turned into the All-Nite Scare. See page 4.

State

- Residents of nude apartment complex in Houston study their options. See page 3.

National

- Senators are angry over President Reagan's refusal to pass an acid rain clean-up bill. See story page 10.