

# Texas A&M The Battalion

Vol. 87 No. 29 USPS 045360 16 pages

College Station, Texas

Friday, October 9, 1987

## U.S. hits, sinks Iranian boats after assault

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. helicopter gunships sank three Iranian patrol boats in the Persian Gulf on Thursday after an American observation helicopter was fired upon without provocation, the Pentagon said.

It was the second American military engagement in the region since the United States attacked an Iranian ship laying mines on Sept. 21, and the first to involve a direct attack on U.S. forces by Iran.

Officials said no Americans were hurt in the confrontation.

At least six Iranian crewmen survived Thursday's assault and were picked up from the gulf's waters by a U.S. patrol boat, Pentagon spokesman Fred Hoffman said.

Two of the six later died, and another was said to have serious injuries. Hoffman added that a search for other survivors was continuing.

President Reagan was informed of the incident by Lt. Gen. Colin L. Powell of the National Security Council staff. Powell went to the Oval Office at 3:30 p.m. EDT to brief Reagan, said presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater. He said the president would be updated on developments as warranted.

"It appears it was an isolated incident," Fitzwater said. "We did not

provoke the incident in any way. Our helicopters acted in self-defense because they were fired upon."

He said the administration would review the incident in terms of the War Powers Act, which if invoked gives Congress a say in whether American forces could remain in the region. The administration has refused to invoke the law over the Persian Gulf deployment.

Fitzwater said the act is reviewed every time there is an incident and "will be after this incident, as well, but there are no preliminary judgments to make other than we will comply with the spirit of the resolution by giving full and detailed consultations to the Congress."

Asked if the Iranians picked up from the water would be returned home, Fitzwater noted that the United States returned Iranians who were captured from the mine-laying boat.

"I think the other incident is instructive of our general attitude, but I just couldn't go beyond that," Fitzwater said.

Hoffman said the incident occurred at 9:50 p.m. local time in the gulf, or 1:50 p.m. CST. He said the American helicopters were flying in international airspace and mounted the attack "within the rules of engagement in self-defense."

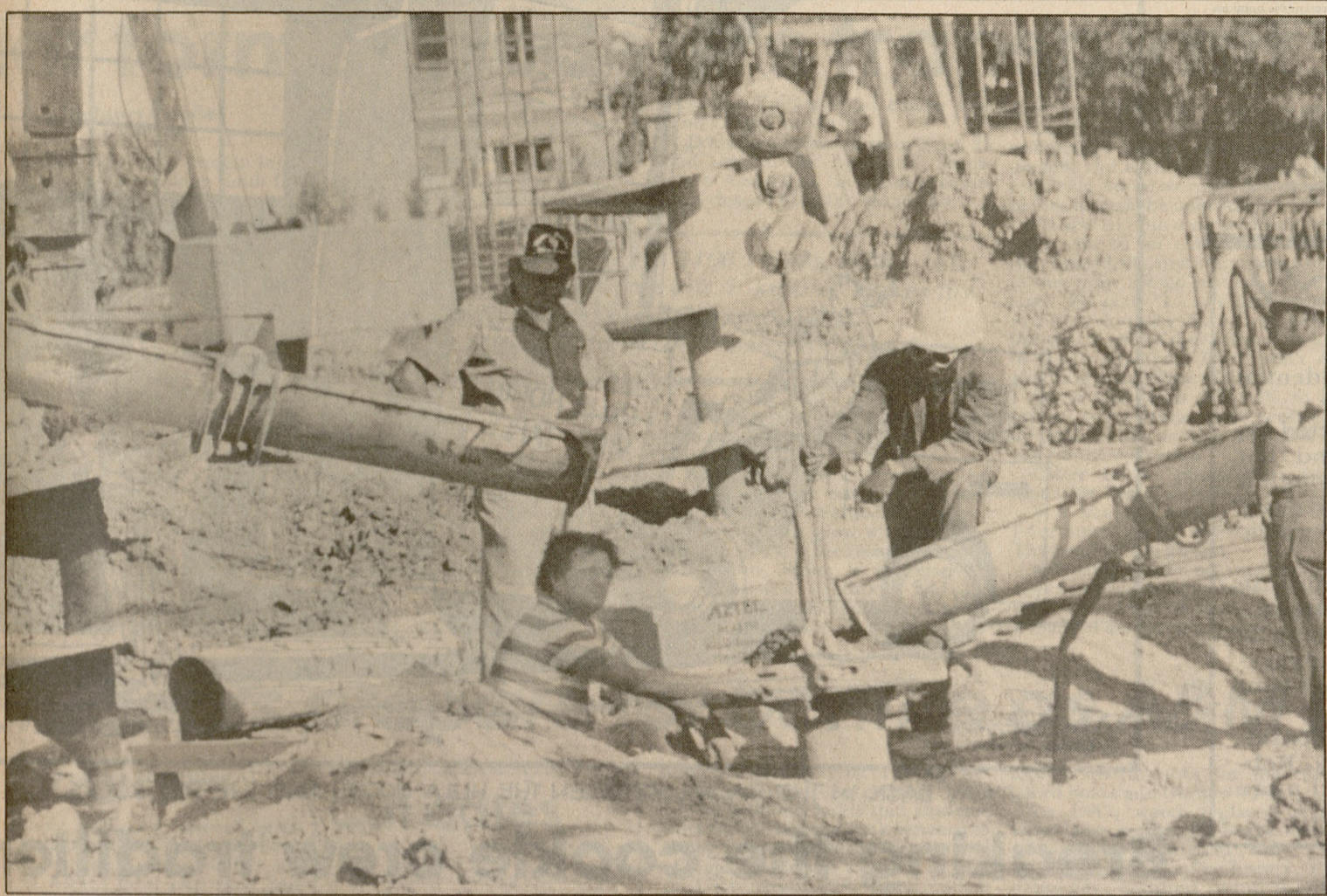


Photo by Sam Myers

### Heads up

One construction worker looks like he is about to become a permanent fixture of A&M's new parking garage as others work on filling a

post hole with cement Thursday afternoon. The post hole will provide support for the foundation of the garage.

## Majority of Senate takes position against Bork

WASHINGTON (AP) — Robert H. Bork's Supreme Court nomination was dealt an almost certain fatal blow Thursday as opposition spread to a majority of the Senate. But President Reagan said he wouldn't surrender "in the face of a lynch mob."

Reagan officials, giving what seemed to be conflicting signals, insisted the fight would continue to the Senate floor, no matter how bleak the outlook, but also said it was

up to Bork to decide whether to withdraw.

The president himself said of Bork, "He has a decision to make. I have made mine. I will support him all the way."

Bork went at midday to the Justice Department to meet with Attorney General Edwin Meese III, raising speculation that the nomination might soon be withdrawn. Department officials added to the speculation by saying Meese had arranged

a meeting with Reagan to talk over Bork's fate. However, presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said later that there would be no such meeting, that Meese had reported there was no change in the status of the nomination and that "our strategy is to continue to make our case and change minds."

Terry Eastland, a Justice Department spokesman, said Bork "obviously wants to stay in the fight for the nomination as of today and the

attorney general is not trying to persuade him one way or the other."

Meanwhile, Democratic Sen. George Mitchell of Maine — himself a former federal judge — declared on the Senate floor that he would oppose Bork's nomination if the White House pursues it to a final vote. According to an Associated Press tabulation, based on floor speeches, written statements and a telephone survey, Mitchell was the 51st senator in the 100-member

chamber to declare he would reject confirmation. The number of announced opponents later reached 53.

Reagan, speaking briefly with reporters at the White House, was asked if he were giving up the fight for Bork's confirmation and said, "It's virtually impossible to give up in the face of a lynch mob." He didn't say to whom he was referring.

But Fitzwater left the door ajar for Bork's voluntary withdrawal, commenting, "Obviously, his deci-

sion can be whatever he wants it to be."

And Tom Korologos, a lobbyist brought in by the White House to help Bork, said of the nominee, "We're going to let him decide."

As for the likely outcome of a floor vote, Korologos said, "We're not naive; there's no mystery on how the vote count is going to go. The handwriting is on the wall." Mitchell was one of five Democratic senators who announced against Bork Thursday.

## INS announces relaxation of amnesty rules

WASHINGTON (AP) — Immigration officials announced Thursday they are relaxing regulations to allow 100,000 or more illegal aliens who re-entered the United States on fraudulently obtained visas to qualify for amnesty.

The relaxation came as the Immigration and Naturalization Service disclosed a 30 percent decline in the number of apprehensions of illegal aliens along the nation's borders, which INS officials regard as a sign that the sweeping immigration law enacted a year ago is succeeding.

"The law is beginning to work . . . to discourage illegal immigration by turning off the magnet of jobs that attracts people to this country," INS Commissioner Alan Nelson told a news conference.

At least 100,000 people will be affected by the modification and hundreds of applications for legalization have been held up until the INS made the policy change. Nelson said that in one instance, the wife in a Mexican family living in Los Angeles since 1977 returned to Mexico for a family emergency and obtained a visitor's visa to re-enter the United States after Jan. 1, 1982.

Under the immigration law, illegal aliens must have been in the United States since Jan. 1, 1982 to be eligible for the amnesty program, which is expected to affect 2 million people. Some 800,000 applications have been received to date.

Nelson said the revision could be especially beneficial to people from Europe, Asia, Africa

and elsewhere who may have overstayed an initial visa and then left the country for an emergency and acquired another visa to return.

The 1986 immigration law makes it illegal for U.S. employers to knowingly hire illegal aliens and requires them to ascertain the citizenship of new employees.

For aliens who have been living in the United States illegally since before 1982, the law contains an amnesty provision that will enable them to obtain temporary legal residency. That can be converted to permanent residency status after 18 months for those who can demonstrate a minimal understanding of English and some knowledge of U.S. history and government.

## Professor at A&M sees U.S. in position to pull ahead of Soviet Union with SDI

By Mary-Lynne Rice  
Staff Writer

The United States may be in a position to pull permanently ahead of the Soviet Union in strategic space defense technology, the director of Texas A&M's Center for Strategic Technology said Thursday night.

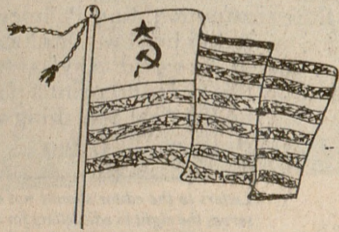
Dr. Richard E. Thomas, A&M professor of aerospace engineering, addressed about 75 people in Harrington Education Center about U.S. and U.S.S.R. space defense. The lecture was sponsored by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

With Strategic Defense Initiative, the United States has a weapon the Soviet Union cannot match, Thomas said.

"Of course, they're very concerned about SDI and about falling behind economically," Thomas said.

The space defense systems of both nations have common roots in the long-range ballistic missiles of the late 1950s, Thomas said. At that time, the United States considered the missiles the "ultimate weapon," he said.

"But the Soviets never see anything as the ultimate weapon," Thomas said. "They have the view that any weapon can be countered."



Graphic by Susan C. Akin

As technology proceeded into the 1960s, Thomas said, it became evident that the missiles could, in fact, be intercepted.

"We could see that intercepting an incoming warhead might be a realistic thing," he said. "Things looked pretty good for that system."

Technology has now advanced, however, past the age of ground-based interception into the age of space defense.

Thomas said that although the Soviet Union's ground-based strategic defense system is more advanced than the United States' in laser technology, progress in American defense far surpasses general Soviet technology.

"Over the past two years, the progress made in weapons is absolutely astounding," he said.

"The (SDI) program is very, very impressive," he said.

The Soviet Union predicted a defense system like SDI, Thomas said, but did not expect it until long past the turn of the next century.

"Now they're forced to confront it sooner than they predicted," he said. "And that's basically a declaration of a war of technology."

Thomas said the United States won the first "war" — the race to the moon — and if the SDI program is retained, it can win the war of space defense.

Thomas attended last week's arms talks in Moscow for informal conversation and academic exchanges about the status of the two countries' defense programs. He said it was apparent that the Soviet Union was in "very serious difficulty." Research is severely hindered by bureaucracy, he said.

"If you don't have the research, you don't have the technology," he said.

"And if you don't have the technology, you don't have economic strength," he said.

Thomas said he saw "a certain sense of desperation" in the Soviet Union.

"They want desperately for us to help them," Thomas said, "and I suppose we might."

"But there's a good possibility that we've witnessed the zenith of the Soviet Union."

"In 30 to 50 years we may see them slide to their proper place as a second- or third-rate nation."

It will be necessary for the United States to monitor the Soviet Union's decline carefully, if it occurs, Thomas said.

"If they do decline relative to the West as indicated, they might do something dumb," he said. "We've got to manage their decline adroitly, convince them that we're not threatening and remain strong."

"They never want fair play. If things are relatively balanced, there will be no attack. They will always attack from a position of superiority."

At the moment, Thomas said, the chance for attack is minimal. Although a conventional war is possible, the chance for nuclear war is slim to nonexistent, he said.

"That's an exciting prospect that bodes well for the future of the world," he said. "But that's not to say that the problem's gone; that's not to say that there is no challenge."

## Board of PTL ministry resigns; Falwell states fears of Bakker's return

FORT MILL, S.C. (AP) — The board of the PTL ministry resigned Thursday and PTL Chairman Jerry Falwell said he feared defrocked minister Jim Bakker could return, making the ministry "the greatest scab and cancer on the face of Christianity in 2,000 years."

The resignations were prompted by a court ruling Wednesday that allowed PTL's creditors and contributors to file a competing plan for reorganizing the ministry, which is plagued by reports of more than \$60 million in debt.

Bakker, in a news conference at his mountaintop retreat near Gatlinburg, Tenn., said he would return to the ministry if invited to do so by its creditors. Bakker said he thought Falwell was resigning to avoid testifying under oath in bankruptcy court.

Falwell, who has his own ministry based in Lynchburg, Va., said PTL's main television program, the "PTL Club," will remain on the air at least three weeks, but the payroll at the "Heritage USA" theme park will not be paid Friday.

Falwell said members of the PTL's board were willing to fight Bakker, but unwilling to fight the courts. And he predicted Thursday that within six months, "barring a miracle of God," Bakker would resume control of the evangelical empire he turned over to Falwell in March amid a sex-and-money scandal.

Harry Hargrave, who resigned as chief operating officer, said PTL employees who earn the least will be paid first. He predicted that by Tuesday all would be paid for the past two weeks' work.

Bakker called the resignations a "wholesale walkout" and said he believed Falwell was stepping be-

cause he didn't want to face Bakker attorney Melvin Belli in bankruptcy court.

Asked if Bakker has won the fight over the ministry, Falwell said, "No. The Christian family has lost the war."

"We want to help in any way to restore our baby," Bakker said. He said any invitation for him to return had to come from PTL creditors.

"I think if a child had a need I would call the father and mother to help with that need," said Bakker.

Falwell said the bankruptcy judge's decision to allow competing reorganization plans to be filed within a week dashed the ministry's plans to borrow \$5 million to \$10 million from a Wall Street investor.

Falwell said he has "never received one penny from this ministry, directly or indirectly."

On Wednesday, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Rufus Reynolds, who is overseeing the ministry's reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code, ruled that Falwell's reorganization plan did not take into account the wishes of the creditors and partners.

Larry Sims, president of the PTL Partners Coalition, criticized Falwell's plan because it "falls short of the coalition's goal of returning the ministry to the group for whom it was created — the partners."

The ministry's half-million partners have been one of its major sources of funding, and many are charismatic Pentecostals loyal to Bakker, whose ministry included such charismatic practices as speaking in tongues and laying on of hands, compared with the more austere Baptist fundamentalism of Falwell.