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World and Nation

FDIC chairman defends merger that created troubled Dallas bank

WASHINGTON (AP) — The condition of First RepublicBank Corp. of Dallas was "clearly worse than any one of us knew" when federal regulators created the bank by merging two troubled Texas banks, the chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. testified Thursday.

Thirteen months after the merger of InterFirst Corp. and Republic-Bank Corp., the FDIC took over First Republic in what may be the largest federal bank rescue ever.

The FDIC is advancing \$4 billion to help NCNB Corp. of Charlotte, N.C., acquire the bank. The North Carolina company has agreed to pay \$210 million to \$240 million to acquire a 20 percent stake in NCNB Texas National Bank.

For five years it will have an option to buy the remaining 80 percent from the FDIC.

FDIC Chairman L. William Seidman estimates the government may recoup some of the \$4 billion for a total hit of \$2 billion to \$3 billion, which would still be more than the

pect to recover from its 1984 bailout of Continental Illinois Bank & Trust

In a hearing before the Senate Banking Committee, Seidman said regulators knew the two Dallas banks were in trouble but could not foresee that conditions would change "rapidly and adversely after the merger took place.

Although regulators knew both banks were in trouble, Seidman said officials believed the new institution "had a reasonable chance to suc-

Although the merger was to result in an infusion of \$200 million in new capital and annual reductions of \$100 million in operating costs, "it was not enough to overcome these problems," Seidman said. Without the merger, the two banks "clearly would have failed," he said.

Banking Committee Chairman William Proxmire, D-Wis., said auditing of the two banks before the merger was "not sufficiently ad-

cy's office handles those audits, and spokesman Lee Cross said that although a formal examination was not done before the merger, the agency thoroughly reviewed the two banks' loan portfolios.

"These matters unquestionably are clear threats to the ultimate success of the proposal."

In a letter to the Federal Reserve, which had final approval of the merger, the Comptroller's office wrote in April 1987:

"Both InterFirst and Republic are seriously troubled institutions as confirmed by our recent on-site re-views. We believe that their future viability depends on some form of outside assistance or other transaction such as the one proposed.

"In developing our recommendation, we were mindful of the fact that certain unresolved accounting questions as well as lingering difficulties in the Texas economy may affect adversely some of the underlying financial projections in the proposals, especially short-term profitability.

"Also we are aware that the proposal is being viewed with some de-

gree of skepticism by market fund-ing sources whose continued support will be critical to the survival of the combined instituion.

cess of the proposal."
Cross said the letter was "not what you call a ringing endorsement" of

the merger proposal. She said officials believed the real estate market in Texas was about turn around at the time of the merger, but its failure to climb out recession hit the new bank hard.

Seidman said the FDIC had re ommended in favor of the merger.

Sen. Bob Graham, D-Fla., said h understood that the Dallas brancho the Federal Reserve had reco mended against the merger as "im-prudent" but Seidman said he "did not know that to be the case.

Seidman said the FDIC may have two more large bank failures on the horizon, but would not identify the banks, their locations or when a col-

Critics crucify 'Last Temptations'

Others say movie examines Christ's struggle against sin

NEW YORK (AP) — He "was made like his brethren in every respect," Scripture says of Jeand various watchdog groups on the media. sus, "one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

A new movie about that struggle against going wrong, "The Last Temptation of Christ," has roused some Christians to the battlements.

They say it's scandalous, a shameful degrading of Jesus. Others say it examines a valid question about his humanity, but fumbles in doing so, playing up shallow distractions.

"The question is not strenuously explored, but it's a thing theologians are grappling with today," says Robert E. A. Lee, head of the communication commission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

'Many believers seem to want to deny our Lord's humanity.'

However, his full manhood, including its temptations, is affirmed in classic Christian doctrine, along with his full divinity and unfailing goodness. It's seen as a profoundly mystifying combination.

The movie is based on a novel by Greek author

Denunciations of the film have come from fundamentalist Protestants, numerous Roman

It's a "blasphemous evil attack on the church and the cause of Christ," says the Rev. Donald Wildmon, a United Methodist who heads the American Family Association. He says has con-

tacted 170,000 pastors to boycott the film. Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick of Newark, N.J., said that "if this was an attempt to show the human side of Christ's struggle, the result unfortunately is coarse and common.

The office of Greek Orthodox Archbishop Iakovos termed the film "strictly the fantasy of a sick human imagination which seeks to exploit human weaknesses and temptations . . . Christ is both perfect God and perfect man."

The flak also singed Jews, who are outraged both by the implications by some fundamentalists.

that Jews were resonsible and by the picketing of the home of Lew Wasserman, who is Jewish, head of MCA, owner of the film maker, Univer-

Rabbi James Rudin, interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, said statements and demonstrations that "gratuitously" link Jews to the film are "ugly calls to reli-

Roman Catholic Archbishop Roger M. Maho-

ney of Los Angeles, a friend of Wasserman's, also denounced "the anti-Semitic implications that a few voices have raised in this matter.

Actually, the film represented the collaborative work of three Christians — the Greek Ortho

dox author of the novel, the Dutch Reformed script writer Paul Schrader and the Roman Cath olic director Martin Scorsese, who calls it "an af-The Rev. Kathleen LaCamera, a United Meth-

odist media critic, said her major complaint wa that the film fails in its central effort to show Je-

"I found the Jesus in the film to be remote. The Jesus that you and I know is infinitely more accessible."

Evelyn Dukovic, a Catholic and head of Morality in Media, which is urging a boycott, said "the film is not only objectionable but extremely of

fensive to any believing Christian."

The Rev. Robert L. Maddox, a Baptist and executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said the movie may offend "the person in the pew" but it "does have its commendable points."

Doctors: Drug combination reduces heart attack deaths

and a clot-dissolving drug given within 24 hours of the onset heart attack can dramatically reduce deaths and should now be considered standard treatment, doctors said Thursday.

'I've never seen a trial that produced results as striking as these said Richard Peto, a researcher in a new study showing that the drug combination can reduce the death rate following heart attacks by 8 percent to 13 percent.

The treatment could save the lives of 25,000 of the 500,000 Americans who have heart attacks each year if they all received it, Peto said. It costs about \$150 and can be done at any community hospital or even by a doctor outside a hospital, the researchers said.

Yet the word has not gotten out to doctors, Peto said. 'At the moment, most patients in

the United States don't have blood-

Dr. Peter Sleight, chairman of the study's steering committee, said, 'Our object is to get the results of this treatment widely known so people will get this treatment."

Peto and other study participants spoke at a news conference held in London and New York in conjunction with publication of the latest findings in the forthcoming issue of The Lancet, a British medical journal. The results were widely publicized in March at a meeting of the American College of Cardiology in Atlanta.

The researchers studied 17,187 patients at 417 hospitals around the world. Some patients were given aspirin, and some the clot-dissolving drug streptokinase. Another group was given both, and a control group was given neither.

The death rate up to five weeks after a heart attack was 13 percent in the untreated control group. It dropped to about 101/2 percent in clot dissolving treatment of any the patients given either aspirin or streptokinase, and it dropped to 8

percent in patients given both drugs, Peto said.

Furthermore, the study showed that the drugs reduced deaths in elderly patients, who were previously not thought suitable for clot-dissolving treatment because doctors thought it might increase their risk of strokes, Peto said.

It also showed that the drugs were helpful even if given as late as 24 hours after the onset of chest pains,

Streptokinase is derived from streptococcus bacteria, which cause strep throat. Most heart attacks are caused by a clot blocking the coronary arteries, which provide a nourishing blood supply to the heart.

Streptokinase dissolves the clots and aspirin helps to prevent the clotting of blood cells called platelets, thus helping to prevent reformation of clots, the researchers said.

Refquees say captain caused cannibalism

WASHINGTON (AP) — The skipper of the USS Dubuque will relieved from command this weekend pending an investiga-tion of charges the warship failed to adequately assist a boatload of Vietnamese refugees who later reportedly resorted to cannibalism to survive, officials said

The commander, Capt. Alexander G. Balian, 48, will be relieved Saturday by Capt. David Wetherell, who left San Diego, Calif., on Wednesday to fly to the Persian Gulf, the Navy said. The Dubuque, an amphibiou

landing ship, encountered the Vietnamese refugees in the South China Sea while en route to the

Howard and Navy officials stressed that the captain's reassignment was considered administrative and not punitive at this

The Navy and the United Nations High Commission on Refu gees are investigating reports of murder and cannibalism that sur faced earlier this week in a Philippine newspaper. The Vietnamese boat people eventually were rescued off the Philippines and are in a refugee camp there.

The newspaper quoted survivors as saying they killed and ate some of their fellow passengers to stay alive after they encountered the Dubuque on June 9.

Two of the victims reportedly died of starvation, but three others allegedly were murdered through drowning and then

Some survivors charged the Dubuque refused to take them aboard even though their boat was disabled and they were dying of exposure and starvation. In stead, the ship gave them food and water, the survivors said.

The Navy said earlier this week that when the Dubuque chanced upon the refugees, their boat "was judged to be in seaworthy condition and was under sail.'

But the new Business Week poll found a similar drop after putting Dukakis ahead by 18 following the convention. Overall the three polls Thursday gave a clear indication that Dukakis' post-convention bounce had peaked. However, they also indicated that support for Bush was, at least for the moment, unsettled.

All of the polls had sampling errors of plus or minus

Dukakis lead receding, polls say

NEW YORK (AP) — Three national polls Thursday said Gov. Michael Duakis' post-convention surge has crested, but they differed on the level of backing for Vice President George Bush.

Two of the surveys found Dukakis retaining a double-digit lead over his Republican rival, but the third found enough Bush support to limit Dukakis to a bare six-point advantage. A poll earlier this week found a seven-point Dukakis lead.

Dukakis' best showing in the new polls was a 14-point lead in an NBC News-Wall Street Journal survey conducted Aug. 5-8. That was down from the 18-point Dukakis lead it found the week after the Democratic con-

Dukakis led by 12 points in a CNN-USA Today poll also done Aug. 5-8.

In a Business Week poll done Aug. 4-9, his numerical lead was only six points — statistically a dead heat because of the three-point margin of error.

All three of the polls placed support for Dukakis in the 50 percent range. It was their measures of backing for Bush that varied, from a low of 36 percent in the NBC-Journal poll to a high of 45 percent in the Business Week survey

A Gallup poll released Tuesday fell within that range, with 49 percent for Dukakis, 42 percent for Bush. Two weeks ago it found Dukakis up by 17 points.

Analysts have said Dukakis' 17- or 18-point advantage was a product of publicity from the Democratic National Convention, which ended July 20, and was sure to fade, particularly when the Republicans stage their own convention next week Some expressed surprise at the Gallup poll's sugges-

tion that Dukakis lost 10 points even before the Republicans met, particularly since there had been no mo-

mentous event to cause such a decline. As recently as

July 31-Aug. 3, a CBS News-New York Times poll found Dukakis maintaining his lead of 17 points.

three points.