

World and Nation

Presidential campaign forges on Candidates agree to debate dates, locations

George Bush said Wednesday that American flags have sold more briskly since Republicans began restoring pride in the country in 1981. Michael Dukakis stressed support for some weapons and muted earlier opposition to others as he sought to blunt attacks on his defense credentials. Bush also touted smaller than expected trade-deficit figures and Dukakis accused the Republicans of opposing "every single effort" to reform the Pentagon, while their managers fleshed out details on the campaign debates that are expected to be pivotal in the close race for the White House.

Officials said that vice presidential candidates Dan Quayle and Lloyd Bentsen would hold their only de-

bate of the fall on Oct. 5 in Omaha, Neb. Los Angeles was fixed as the site of the second and final Bush-Dukakis debate on either Oct. 13 or 14. The two contenders for the White House square off a week from Sunday in Winston-Salem, N.C., in their first debate of the campaign. Bush said, "I've been looking forward to it." But Dukakis went to Annapolis, Md., which was to have hosted a debate Wednesday night, and taunted the vice president for his refusal to make it a date. "If George Bush isn't ready today after seven and a half years as vice president of this country, how can we expect him to be ready on Jan. 20, 1989?" the Democrat said.

Dukakis aides said the Massachusetts governor would carve a day or two out of his travel schedule to prepare for the first debate, a reflection of the importance of the event in the hardfought campaign. Public opinion polls in recent days have shown Bush holding a single-digit lead, and Democratic aides said privately they didn't look for much change in the 10 days before the debates begin. The vice president said some polls were good and others weren't. "They cancel out. I think we're just about where we've been but I'm just (going to) keep plugging away." And he did, wooing Hispanic and Asian voters in a tour of California, the biggest prize with 47 electoral votes.

The vice president said joblessness among Hispanics has fallen almost twice as fast under President Reagan as it did when the Democrats were in the White House during 1976 to 1980. "We're on the optimistic side; we're on the American side; we know we can do the job," Bush told one audience. He said there was "new pride in America" demonstrated by the performance of a flag-making company in New Jersey. "Back under the previous administration things were rough. They weren't selling that well." "Well, since we began restoring pride in the United States of America, business has been booming," he said, without naming the company.

U.S. Army ready to aid Gilbert victims

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon has agreed to dispatch active duty military personnel and equipment from at least one base in Texas to assist with evacuations along the Texas Coast as Hurricane Gilbert moves closer inland, Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, said Wednesday.

See related stories, page 1

Gramm said the Army was setting up a crisis action center in Washington to coordinate the effort, and that personnel and equipment would be called up from Fort Hood in Killeen and possibly Fort Bliss in El Paso. Trucks, helicopters and bulldozers and an undetermined number of military personnel will be sent to the coast to assist the Texas National Guard with the evacuations, Gramm said. "They're willing to commit whatever is needed to get the job done," Gramm said. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration labeled Hurricane Gilbert the strongest hurricane ever in the Western Hemisphere.

"I'm pleased we're getting organized," Gramm said. "If it turns out to be the disaster it has the potential to be, an early coordination effort could be the difference between saving lives and not."

Gramm also announced Wednesday that the Army Corps of Engineers had opened an emergency office in Galveston to handle flood control and emergency construction along the coast.

"This puts a lot of resources at our command," he said. Gramm said he had also been talking with officials from the Housing and Urban Development Department, the Small Business Administration, the Farmers Home Administration, the General Services Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Administration about emergency shelter and communications needs.

Wright begins ethics defense before House investigators

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Jim Wright, testifying under oath, gave a lengthy defense Wednesday of his business dealings in a closed-door session before the House ethics committee and said he hoped the probe would be over before Congress adjourns next month. Wright, D-Texas, also said the investigation that has hung over him since it was begun formally last June is a reminder that members of Congress do live in glass houses.

"We should be prepared to conduct our affairs with such rectitude that people can't find anything wrong," Wright said. Speaking to reporters after a two-hour morning session before the panel, formally known as the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, Wright reiterated his belief that he would be exonerated on the six counts against him. Wright later returned for a 3.5 hour afternoon session with the committee. Committee Chairman Julian Dixon, D-Calif., said Wright's testimony was completed, and that the panel would meet again Thursday. "I'm just absolutely certain I have not violated any rules of this House... or knowingly have done anything

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— House Speaker Jim Wright, D-Texas

that violates any ethical standard," Wright said he did not anticipate such a result.

Of the panel's inquiry, Wright said, in a sense it's a fine thing, it's a wholesome thing that even the speaker himself is amenable to the rules that call for a probe anytime a complaint is lodged against a House member.

But he said he fully expected that the investigation will be completed by the time the House adjourns in early October. "I do not want it left dangling. I want it resolved," he said. Wright said he made that view clear to the committee.

"I said, 'Let's come to a resolution of it.' After all, the facts are clear," he said. "If they discover that I have done something wrong inadvertently, they should say that." But

He pronounced himself very, very happy to finally be called to testify. He said he had looked forward to this for more than three months.

The ethics committee has subpoenaed numerous witnesses in connection with the complaints filed against Wright by his chief accuser, Rep. Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., and has already interviewed many of them. Wednesday's session was Wright's first appearance before the panel.

Wright said he answered questions from the panel on all six counts that are in the committee's formal resolution of inquiry. "I sat there and just discussed it all with them," he said.

Police, gunmen have shootout 20 minutes before Pope arrives

MASERU, Lesotho (AP) — Pope John Paul II arrived in this tiny kingdom Wednesday just 20 minutes before a bloody shootout between police and gunmen holding a busload of nuns and children on a papal pilgrimage.

Four people reportedly died. John Paul was to fly from Botswana to Lesotho today but bad weather forced his chartered jet to make an unscheduled landing in South Africa, the target of his criticism during his southern Africa tour.

The pope arrived in Lesotho eight hours behind schedule and just 20 minutes before the tense hostage drama was played out.

Police said gunmen hijacked the bus carrying about 70 people Tuesday, drove it to the British High Commission (embassy) compound and demanded to meet the pope. Authorities said the hijackers began firing after they tried to drive the vehicle through the closed gates of the embassy compound.

Three hijackers and a hostage, a young woman, were killed in a gun battle with police, authorities said. Eleven other passengers were wounded, the rest of the hostages were rescued, and one hijacker was arrested, police said.

The hijackers held police at bay through Tuesday night while demanding to meet John Paul and Lesotho's king, Moshoeshoe II, a government official said. John Paul, meanwhile, had intended to bypass South Africa on his tour of five neighboring, black-ruled nations.

But his flight from Botswana to Lesotho was diverted because of bad weather, and he spent three hours at Johannesburg's Jan Smuts Airport before heading overland in a police-escorted convoy to rain-soaked Lesotho, about 270 miles away.

Members of Lesotho's military council greeted the pontiff at the border, but crowds along the route into Maseru were sparse because of the wet, chilly weather.

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