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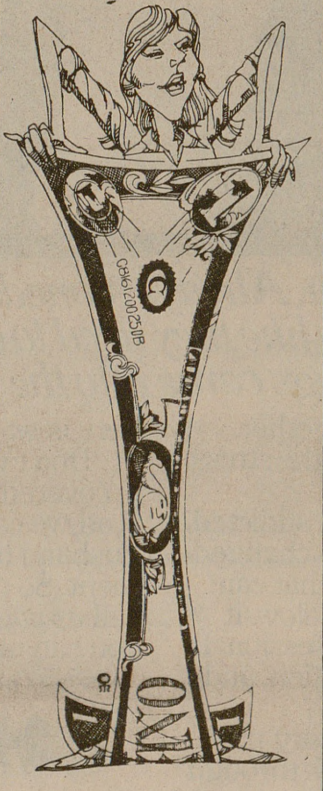
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WORLD & NATION

Thursday, January 26, 1989

Senate unanimously confirms Baker while Mitchell pledges cooperation

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate unanimously confirmed James A. Baker III as secretary of state Wednesday, as Majority Leader George Mitchell pledged to cooperate with the Bush administration while pursuing a Democratic agenda of improvements in the minimum wage, housing, health care and the environment.

The Democratic-controlled Senate also confirmed Elizabeth Dole as Labor Secretary and Richard Darman as Budget Director without a dissenting vote.

Mitchell, in a speech that seemed crafted as a response to President Bush's inaugural address, said he looked forward to "true bipartisanship" on foreign policy. He said that meant the White House must commit itself to "full, timely and meaningful consultation" with Congress.

The first votes were anything but contentious.

The roll call was 99-0 to confirm Baker, who served as Treasury Secretary and White House chief of staff under President Reagan and

was President Bush's campaign manager last year. He was sworn into office minutes later, the State Department said.

Elizabeth Dole, the wife of Senate GOP Leader Bob Dole, also won approval on a 99-0 vote. She is a former Secretary of Transportation who resigned her post to help her husband's unsuccessful 1988 presidential campaign.

Darman's confirmation roll call was 99-0 as well. He is a former top aide to Baker at the Treasury and will be Bush's point man in the drive to reduce the federal deficit.

In all three instances, Sen. Don Nickles, R-Okla., was the only senator who didn't vote.

In the busiest day so far of the new, 101st Congress, committees also held confirmation hearings for several Cabinet appointees. Among them was Defense Secretary-designate John Tower, who said there is a need for reform at the Pentagon and pledged to work with Congress to achieve it.

Nearly a quarter of the Senate sponsored legislation to block the

\$45,000 proposed congressional pay raise scheduled to take effect on Feb. 8. The proposal would roll back the increase if, as expected, the House lets it become law without a vote.

The Bush administration worked behind the scenes to defuse controversy over one Cabinet appointment.

"Dr. Sullivan believes in his heart that the Roe vs. Wade decision should be overturned."

— Gordon Humphrey, senator, R-N.H.

Louis Sullivan, President Bush's choice to head the Department of Health and Human Services, met privately with anti-abortion senators and apparently persuaded them he is committed enough to their cause

to win their support for confirmation.

"Dr. Sullivan believes in his heart that the Roe vs. Wade decision should be overturned," said Gordon Humphrey, R-N.H., referring to the 1973 Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion. Sullivan had upset many conservative senators when he was quoted by another senator as saying he did not support overturning the ruling.

The House was not in session inside the Senate chamber, speaking by Mitchell and Republican Bob Dole were followed by the introduction of legislation for the time this year.

The bills ranged from a measure to block the proposed \$45,000 raise for lawmakers — or repeat it takes effect on Feb. 7 — to a proposal for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

Dole, who spoke a few moments after Mitchell, pledged bipartisanship and added it was intention of the Republicans to support and further the cause of new Republican president.

Summertime accident leads Air Force to remove warheads from 5 MX missiles

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Air Force removed the warheads from five of its 50 MX nuclear missiles late last year after a summertime accident in which one missile came loose and fell to the bottom of its underground silo, according to a published report.

The five missiles were part of the same production lot and Air Force investigators discovered a common problem that led to the safety action being taken, the *Washington Post* said.

The service is still trying to decide how to repair the five missiles, each of which is designed to carry 10 warheads, the paper added, quoting unidentified sources.

The Air Force refused to confirm the account on Wednesday, acknowledging only that a single MX missile had been taken off alert last June following an accident.

That accident previously had been reported by newspapers in Wyoming, where F.E. Warren Air Force Base is located. The nation's MX, or Peacekeeper, missiles are all

deployed at F.E. Warren.

The Air Force also insisted Wednesday, without any elaboration, that the nation's entire MX force of 50 missiles was on alert "at this time."

"We have 50 missiles that are deployed and operational at this time," said Lt. Col. Don Christianson, a spokesman at F.E. Warren.

Christianson refused to say whether any of the problem missiles had been replaced with new missiles in order to maintain the alert force.

The spokesman agreed, however, that one MX missile had been taken off alert, its warheads removed and its components broken down as part of a safety investigation after an incident last June.

"Last summer, we received some indications of an electrical disconnection with a Peacekeeper (MX) missile inside its silo," Christianson said.

"An investigation was conducted, and a structural failure in a support skirt was found to be the cause," he said. "There was no safety threat.

The reports of the investigation are classified, however, so I am unable to go further."

The *Post* said Wednesday the missile had fallen between six inches and a foot when it came "unglued" from its underground launch canister. The canister envelops the missile and is used to propel the four-stage MX from its silo before the main rocket motor is ignited.

The newspaper said the fall of the 195,000-pound missile was sufficient to cause "grave damage" and to require "extensive repairs." And when the Air Force further investigated the matter, it concluded the missile was one of a batch of five that had been subject to a particular production problem, the paper said.

Air Force officials responded by

ordering removal of the 10-warhead packages atop each of the other missiles to relieve the warheads and pressure on their canister pending corrective action, the paper concluded.

The Air Force so far has been authorized to build 50 of the missiles and to deploy them at F.E. Warren.

Former President Ronald Reagan pushed Congress for permission to build 50 more MX missiles and base them on mobile rail-car launchers.

The administration of President Bush has yet to make a final decision on whether to push that same program or endorse another program to develop a truck-mounted, single-warhead Midgetman nuclear missile.

President Bush, Texas meet at 'power lunch'

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush met Wednesday with four influential Texans in Washington, giving new meaning, said one congressional staffer, to the term "power lunch."

The president had lunch at the White House with Texas Sens. Phil Gramm and Lloyd Bentsen, Secretary of State-designate James A. Baker III and Commerce Secretary-designate Robert Mosbacher Sr., both of Houston.

"Basically, the president wanted to get together with a group of Texans and talk about a variety of issues important to Texas and to America," said Gramm, a Republican.

"From a Texas perspective, this gives new meaning to the term 'power lunch,'" said a Democratic congressional staffer.

Gramm said the issues discussed included creating new jobs through trade, opening new markets overseas for American goods and enhancing the country's competitive position.

Other discussions, Gramm said,

covered creating more opportunities for trade with Mexico and problems South Texas is facing as refugees from Central America stream into the Rio Grande seeking asylum.

Gramm said the influx has put extra burden on communities in South Texas, "and we need a way to deal with it. We've got to have more effective way of screening people."

Immigration officials should be able to reject on its face an application for political asylum from someone from a country like Costa Rica, which is generally agreed to be a democracy, rather than let the applicant remain in the United States while his case is pending, Gramm said.

Gramm also met Wednesday with Agriculture Secretary-designate Clayton Yeutter, discussing programs in Texas and possible improvements, and Europe's ban on \$100 million in U.S. beef exports because the cattle were fed growth hormones.

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