

Democrat claims to have seen Tower intoxicated in Senate

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Democratic senator said Tuesday he had seen Defense Secretary-designate John Tower "under the influence of alcohol" in the Senate, commenting hours after President Bush insisted that "not one" senator had first-hand evidence that Tower had a drinking problem.



Battalion file photo

John Tower

Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, meanwhile, flatly predicted the nomination would be rejected when it came to a vote. But a few hours later, Sen. Christopher Dodd of Connecticut became the second Democrat to support confirmation.

"I owe John Tower the same fairness and careful judgment he used 22 years ago," Dodd said, referring to Tower's 1967 defense of Tom Dodd, then a senator and the father of the current senator. The elder Dodd was censured by the Senate for improper use of campaign funds.

Dodd spoke as Democrats showed increasing confidence in their ability to prevail, and as Republicans complained bitterly about the tactics of a key Democratic opponent to the nomination, Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia.

In a riveting exchange on the fourth day of increasingly heated debate over Tower's personal qual-

"I have not seen him inebriated to the extent he could not perform his duties," replied DeConcini, who said later he had seen Tower "under the influence" several times.

But Tower, in a statement, denied the charge, saying, "I have never been inebriated on the Senate floor."

Bush, in a session earlier Tuesday with White House reporters, repeated his insistence that no senators had first-hand information that Tower was hampered by a drinking problem.

"I haven't had one single senator — not one — (who) served with him over the years, say, 'I have seen him. My first-hand evidence is this man is ineligible because of his consumption of spirits,'" Bush said.

Mitchell said that despite the decision Monday of Southern Democrat Howell Heflin of Alabama to support Tower, the nomination will go down in defeat.

"I believe that when the vote occurs the nomination will be rejected and it is obvious if the Republicans had the votes they would now be demanding the vote take place," Mitchell told reporters.

Iran breaks relations with Britain for failure to ban 'Satanic Verses'

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Iran broke relations with Britain on Tuesday because it refused to suppress "The Satanic Verses," whose author is under a death sentence by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini for blaspheming Islam.

Khomeini's fundamentalist Shiite Moslem regime, which has put a price of \$5.2 million on novelist Salman Rushdie's head, said it was determined to defend Islam against foreign insults.

Britain said the 88-year-old patriarch's order that his followers kill Rushdie, a British citizen, violated the principles of international relations and the diplomatic rupture was "entirely of Iran's making."

Iran decided Feb. 27 to sever diplomatic ties unless Britain met its demands.

Moslems object to Rushdie's portrayal of the prophet Mohammed's wives as prostitutes and his implication that Mohammed wrote the holy Koran rather than receiving it from Allah. Rushdie says the novel, published last year, is a secular study of good and evil that is not meant to offend Moslems.

More than a dozen countries have banned the book, including Egypt, India, Pakistan and Iran. Riots it inspired in India and Pakistan have taken at least 19 lives.

Rushdie, 41, was born in Bombay, India, to Moslem parents but has said he no longer practices religion. He has been in hiding since Khomeini pronounced the death sentence and Iranian clerics offered the reward.

In London, the Foreign Office said Tuesday that British officials had not received formal notification from Iran but learned of the action through news reports and a Tehran radio broadcast.

Hussein Musavi, the Iranian premier, said on Iran's state radio that Britain had made "a big mistake" and Moslem countries would not permit their beliefs to be insulted.

An Iranian statement accused Britain, which Khomeini's clerics consider their worst Western enemy after the "Great Satan" United States, of "being in the front line of plots and treachery against Moslems" for two centuries.

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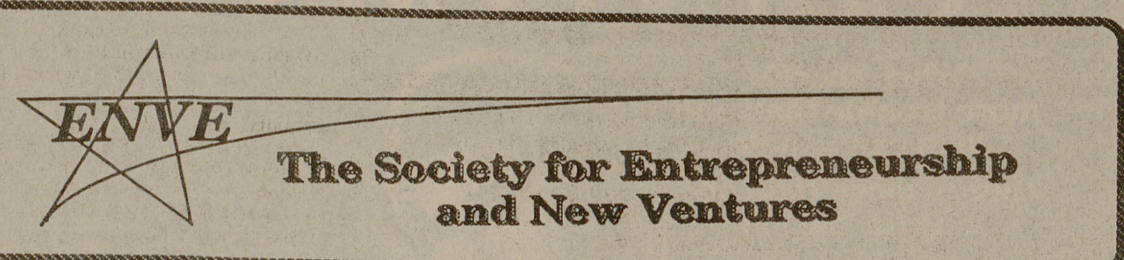


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