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Bush faces headaches, criticism for handling of Valdez tanker spill

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush, who has declared himself an environmentalist, has found his first few months in office full of environmental headaches and criticism that the fresh breeze he promised may be little more than stale air.

"The honeymoon isn't over, but I think we're in a shaky period," says Jack Lorenz, president of the Isaak Walton League, when assessing the Bush administration's record in protecting the environment and natural resources.

While Bush is given good marks on some environmental issues, there has been broadening criticism of the way the administration has dealt with the massive oil spill in Alaska, its attitude toward oil exploration in environmentally sensitive areas and on some key sub-Cabinet appointments to posts involving the environment and conservation.

Environmentalists still applaud: the selection of William Reilly, a lifelong conservationist, as head of the Environmental Protection Agency; a

decision to work aggressively for revisions in federal clean air laws including provisions to combat acid rain; a decision to push internationally for 100 percent elimination by the end of the century of chlorofluorocarbons, a chemical blamed for depleting high-altitude ozone; and for Reilly's intervention in building the controversial Two Forks dam in Colorado.

three national parks are in the oil path. "It is the federal government's responsibility to prevent this damage," he said.

"Mr. President, this (the oil spill) is your Boston Harbor," declared Roger McManus, president of the Center for Marine Conservation in a news release. The pollution in Boston Harbor became a campaign issue last year as Bush sought to gain an edge on environmental issues over Democrat Michael Dukakis, governor of Massachusetts.

Nevertheless, some of the optimism expressed by environmentalists when Bush took office in January has soured.

"Clearly we've got problems on our hands. And it looks like a long siege is at hand," Michael McCloskey, chairman of the Sierra Club, said last week as the leaders of nine major environmental and conservation groups chastised the Bush administration for a number of personnel decisions and its response to the Alaska oil spill.

The complaint was that Bush wasn't moving quickly enough to take control for the oil spill cleanup in Alaska from the Exxon Corp., whose tanker ran aground and tore open in pristine Prince William Sound on March 24, spilling more than 10 million gallons of crude.

George Frampton, president of the Wilderness Society noted that

The president said Friday that Exxon's efforts were inadequate and that the Coast Guard would take increased control of the cleanup.

There also have been personnel decisions that have riled environmental groups, most notably the nomination of James Cason, a controversial Interior Department official, as an assistant secretary of agriculture overseeing the U.S. Forest Service.

Cason, as a senior Interior Department official in the Reagan administration, has been accused of consistently taking a pro-development stand on public lands issues and being the architect of various efforts in recent years favoring mining and oil interests.

Last Fleet Street paper makes final press run

LONDON (AP) — The last national newspaper on Fleet Street, once London's rumbustious newspaper row, made its final press run there Sunday as British journalism traded the typewriters' clatter for the quiet of high technology.

Behind the gleaming, black glass facade of the art deco Express building, reporters, editors and technicians crated the contents of desks, packed up their memories, and sent off the final Fleet Street edition of the Sunday Express before moving to new headquarters.

When the last bundle of papers was tied up and dispatched around the country, all was silent where for decades typewriters clacked, linotype machines rattled, and presses hummed.

Express Newspapers group is moving only a few hundred yards across the River Thames to a new, 10-story building with computers and other modern newspaper technology.

But the site is a million spiritual miles from the noisy exuberance of Fleet Street 89 years ago, when the Daily Express was the new kid on the block. The Sunday Express was founded by Lord Beaverbrook in 1918, and its celebrated building went up in 1931.

The British are avid newspaper readers. For nearly 300 years, the country's national papers were all published on or near Fleet Street. The short, crowded street and ad-

joining warren of alleys and hidden courtyards were abuzz around the clock with journalists rushing to meet deadlines.

The national newspapers have moved away one by one to computerized facilities since publisher Rupert Murdoch began the exodus in 1986. That year, his four newspapers — The Times, The Sunday Times, The Sun and The News of the World — moved to the developing Docklands.

Soviet soldiers crush Georgian nationalist rally

MOSCOW (AP) — Soldiers charged thousands of protesters in the Georgian capital early Sunday, and at least 16 people were killed in a crushing melee of clubs, shovels, sticks and stones, official sources and activists said.

"They threw themselves on our people like beasts, and our people couldn't do anything," said Leda Archvadze in a telephone interview from Tbilisi, capital of the southern republic that lies on the Turkish border.

The official Tass news agency said a curfew was in effect Sunday night. Residents flew black flags in mourning, troops and tanks reportedly patrolled the streets, and activists called for a general strike.

On activist said 50 people died in the clash in Lenin Square.

Tension has been building in Georgia since Tuesday, when thousands of hunger strikers and protesters began pressing demands for independence from the Soviet Union. Georgian nationalists contend that under Moscow's central control, Russians have encroached on their indigenous culture, language, politics and economy.

They also accuse the Kremlin of fomenting unrest among Georgia's ethnic Abkhazians, who are demanding more autonomy.

Georgia is the third Soviet republic where authorities have brought in troops and tanks to quell disturbances in the past year. Similar measures were taken to quell ethnic unrest last year in the republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In an attempt to prevent future unrest, the Soviet Presidium on Saturday passed a decree making it illegal to insult or discredit the government. It also mandated fines and prison terms for those who call for the overthrow of the government, among other things.

Ms. Archvadze and another activist estimated 10,000 people were in Lenin Square when soldiers moved in at 3 a.m.

Ms. Archvadze said her information came from her brother-in-law, Svyad Gammachurdia, a member of the Helsinki Watch Committee in Tbilisi, who witnessed the clash. He was arrested at his home several hours later, she said.

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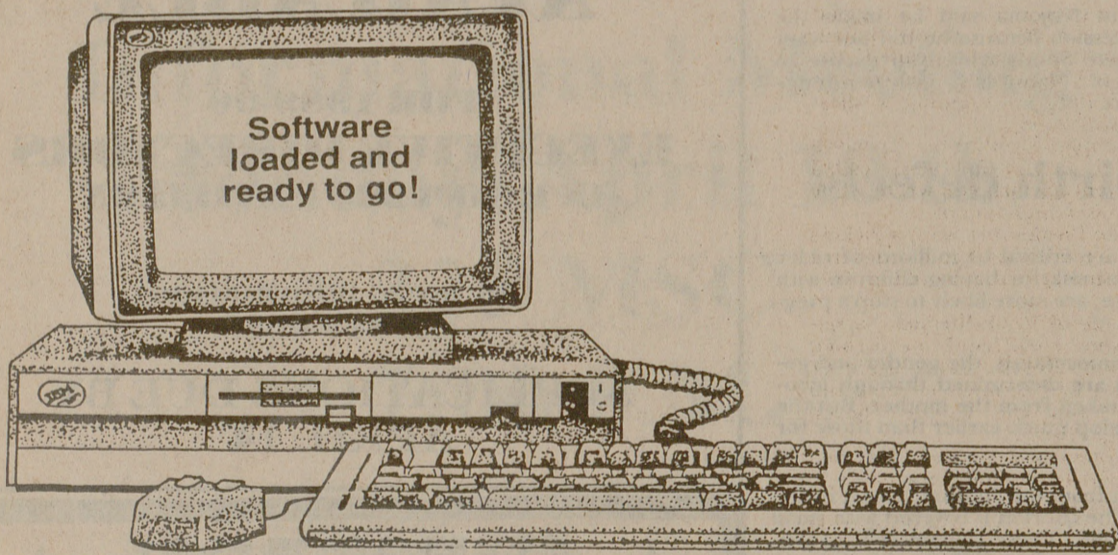
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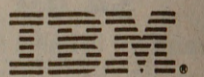
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