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WORLD & NATION

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Tuesday, March 20, 1990

FBI searches for art stolen from museum

BOSTON (AP) — The FBI searched around the world Monday for a dozen priceless artworks stolen from the Gardner Museum. Authorities said it was the biggest theft of modern times — a \$100 million-plus caper exceeded only by the looting of Germany's national bank at the end of World War II.

The museum, meanwhile, disclosed that the missing works were insured for damage as well as restoration and conservation, but that it had no theft insurance.

"Insurance coverage for a collection as valuable as the Gardner's would be prohibitive," museum spokesman Corey Cronin said. "The (museum) board decided a number of years ago not to insure the collection since, even if an insurance policy paid off, the museum could not use the money to replace the items lost."

FBI Agent Dennis O'Callaghan said he could not discuss any leads the FBI might have uncovered. He added, "There are sources around the world we would reach out for" in the effort to recover the works, which included well-known paintings by Rembrandt, Degas, Vermeer and Manet.

He said no ransom demands had been received, but if any come, it would be treated like a kidnapping. He would not elaborate.

Report examines oceans Sea sewage poses health risk to seafood lovers, swimmers

LONDON (AP) — Sewage dumped at sea poses a significant health risk to seafood lovers and swimmers who can pick up bacteria and viruses, an international report on the world's oceans released Monday said.

The contaminated sewage can cause hepatitis, cholera, polio, gastrointestinal illnesses and possibly AIDS, it said.

Contrary to public fears, however, radioactive contamination of the oceans remains "extremely low" and the oceans are not threatened by oil pollution except at the sites of major spills, the report said.

The United Nations-sponsored report said coastal waters are the most vulnerable and abused. They are threatened by contaminated sewage, runaway coastal development and excess nutrients such as phosphates and nitrates which are killing fish and altering plant life.

Professor Alasdair McIntyre of the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, chairman of the 20-member panel that prepared the report, rejected the theory that sunlight and waves quickly destroy dangerous organisms in sewage.

"It used to be thought that a very short time in the sea killed off these organisms, but we are having to recognize this is not the case," he told a news conference.

The report said eating contaminated seafood is firmly linked with serious illness, including viral hepatitis and cholera and that bathing in contaminated water could also cause illness.

"There are records of people contracting polio from swimming in contaminated water," McIntyre said. He said a U.S. study showed the polio virus could survive for 17 months in sewage-polluted marine waters.

Epidemiological studies in the United States and the Mediterranean have also provided "unequivocal evidence" that swimmers in sea water polluted with microorganisms from feces have a higher incidence of gastric disorders, the report said.

"The fact that viruses are known to survive for sur-

prisingly long periods is a significant development," he said.

Asked about the AIDS virus, McIntyre said: "Although the chance of an AIDS virus surviving would be very slight, nevertheless it could survive."

Last week, Patrick Gowen, a British marine biologist formerly at the University of East Anglia, told a parliamentary committee that new research showed the AIDS

"Although difficult to quantify, destruction of beaches, coral reefs and wetlands, including mangrove forests, as well as increasing erosion of the shore, are evident all over the world."

United Nations sponsored report

virus could live for more than 24 hours in sea water. He warned that swimmers could catch it through cuts, sunburn sores and shingle scuffs.

The World Health Organization dismissed the claim as "total nonsense."

The report by the Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution said human pollution was evident in the oceans "from the poles to the tropics and from beaches to abyssal depths."

The scientists said "the open sea is still relatively clean" but marine habitats and resources along the oceans' coasts were being damaged irretrievably by harbor developments, industrial installations, tourist facilities and saltwater fish farming.

"Although difficult to quantify, destruction of beaches, coral reefs and wetlands, including mangrove forests, as well as increasing erosion of the shore, are evident all over the world," the report said.



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Sandinistas continue to maintain power over Nicaraguan people despite defeat

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP) — Even in defeat, the Sandinistas dominate the stage in Nicaragua.

Three weeks after the United National Opposition ousted the Sandinistas with a resounding 55 percent of the vote, UNO supporters still have not held a public celebration.

UNO officials have steered cleared of the government agencies they must start running on April 25. They have yet to get a look at the books of the state-run enterprises they hope to privatize.

"A couple of guys wanted to go down to the ministries, but I told them, 'No, you could get killed,'" said labor leader Alvin Guthrie, a UNO deputy-elect to the National Assembly. "I told them just be prudent. Take it easy."

President Daniel Ortega has been sending mixed signals in speech after speech, saying the Sandinistas will defend the gains of the revolution while giving up power.

President-elect Violeta Barrios de Chamorro has been virtually invisible. The shape of her Cabinet and her policies are still unclear, as is the balance of power in her 14-party coalition. Chamorro, 60, has had only one short news conference since the Feb. 25 general election.

Ortega has been at the forefront, issuing warnings of insurrection and civil war one day, then calmly assuring Vice President Dan Quayle that the Sandinistas will give up power.

A climate of uncertainty and impatience prevails, despite the lifting last week of the U.S. economic embargo that had severed Nicaragua from its traditional markets and strangled its sources of credit.

By the end of the week, a U.S. dollar fetched 120,000 cordobas, the Nicaraguan currency, on the black market. That's nearly double the black market rate in the weeks just before the election and more than double the 54,000 official rate.

The business community, although buoyed by the end of the five-year embargo and a \$300 mil-

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Denis Galeano Conejo
Contra field commander

lion aid package President Bush is requesting from Congress, is cautious.

"After the 25th" has become a kind of refrain in business circles.

In their waning days of exclusive power, the Sandinistas have been at turns threatening, defensive, contrite and conciliatory.

All eyes are upon them as they prepare to "govern from below," simultaneously maneuvering for position in transition talks with UNO, shoring up their power base and taking steps to block any conservative counterreforms.

They have handed out thousands of guns, rallied their rank and file, passed an amnesty covering a decade of revolutionary rule and drafted a law legalizing the confiscations of thousands of

homes, farms and vehicles.

Nothing of substance has emerged publicly from the transition talks, where dismantling U.S.-supported Contra rebels and control of the army, police and state security apparatus are critical issues.

But the Sandinistas have made it clear that while they may give up the government, they won't give up their guns.

In his most troubling speech to date, Ortega said that if the Contras haven't demobilized by April 25, the day UNO is scheduled to take over, the country would rise up in arms.

"It is like the calm before the storm," he said. "We have to avoid being crushed by the tempest of civil war, popular insurrection, violence."

The Contras, for their part, continue to insist they won't put down their weapons until Chamorro is in office and they feel it's safe to return from their base camps in Honduras.

"We're going to remain at arms to guarantee that the people get everything people vote for — a change in the government and a change in their lives," Contra field commander Denis Galeano Conejo said.

Despite defeat, the Sandinistas are well-positioned to block the complete dismantling of their leftist revolution.

Although UNO won a 52-seat majority in the 92-seat National Assembly, it is three seats short of the number it needs to amend the Constitution.

The Sandinistas also will maintain control of the Supreme Court, which would hear any challenges to the Constitution, until 1993, halfway through Chamorro's term.

Judge denies mistrial motion

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge on Monday denied a mistrial motion by John Poindexter that was triggered by a reference in open court to testimony Poindexter had given Congress under a grant of immunity.

The information in the reference was "not new at all," said the judge in Poindexter's Iran-Contra trial.

With Rep. Lee Hamilton on the witness stand, prosecutor Dan Webb asked about a document, signed by then-President Reagan, indicating missiles had been sent to Iran in 1985 to try to win the release of Americans held in Lebanon.

Had Poindexter ever reported destroying the document? Webb asked.

"He did," Hamilton said in front of the jury.

The congressman, co-chairman of a special congressional committee that investigated the Iran-Contra affair, was referring to Poindexter's July 1987 testimony to the committee, during which he said he tore up the document.

No part of the case against Reagan's national security adviser may be derived from his testimony to Congress, given under a grant of immunity from prosecution.

As soon as Hamilton answered the question on Monday, another prosecutor, Howard Pearl, stood up and Webb quickly said "I see the problem."

Webb rephrased the question, but Poindexter lawyer Richard Beckler later asked for a mistrial, saying that Hamilton had specifically been instructed not to refer to Poindexter's immunized testimony.

U.S. District Court Judge Harold Greene denied the motion, saying that Oliver North testified last week that he watched Poindexter tear up the finding.

Greene said Hamilton's testimony was "cumulative rather than harmful."

Beckler suggested the jury might not find North's testimony credible. But Greene also noted that "both the government and the defense referred to tearing up of the finding" in their opening statements to the jury.

"And you have great credibility," Greene told Beck-

ler. The information about tearing up the finding "is not new at all," Greene concluded.

In November 1986, Hamilton had been chairman of the House Intelligence Committee that met with Poindexter to discuss U.S. arms sales to Iran.

The congressman said the national security adviser made no mention of a U.S. role in the November 1985

"Admiral Poindexter said ... President Reagan wanted to tell the full story"

Lee Hamilton
representative

shipment of Hawk missiles to Iran. The CIA-assisted delivery was authorized by the Reagan "finding" that Poindexter destroyed hours after testifying before the committee.

Webb asked Hamilton, "Do you recall whether Admiral Poindexter said he could reveal all the facts?"

"Admiral Poindexter said ... President Reagan wanted to tell the full story," replied Hamilton.

The finding that Poindexter destroyed depicted the U.S. role in Iran arms sales as a straight arms-for-hostages deal, the kind of arrangement the Reagan administration declared it would never allow.

Poindexter told the Intelligence Committee members that the U.S. government didn't learn until January 1986 of the missile shipment, according to notes taken at the meeting by a congressional staffer.

Bush's bailout falls billions short of need

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush's savings and loan bailout will fall at least \$30 billion and possibly as much as \$162 billion short of the amount needed to clean up the industry, a congressional report said Monday.

Legislation enacted in August provided \$50 billion to close or sell failed thrift associations through 1992. However, \$48 billion of that will be needed to cover losses at the 383 institutions seized by the government through March 5, concluded a report submitted by Rep. Bruce Vento, D-Minn.

Vento is chairman of an 18-member House Banking Committee task force tracking the performance of the new bailout agency, the Resolution Trust Corp.

Regulators expect the failure of an additional 225 to 295 S&Ls with losses of at least \$32 billion to \$40 billion, according to the report. In addition, 295 to 325 S&Ls are weak and may not recover on their own, the report said.

Depending on the severity of the losses, the shortfall could rise as high as \$162 billion, Vento warned.