

Supreme Court allows police search of passengers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court bolstered police powers in the war on drugs Thursday, ruling that officers may board buses and ask any passenger to consent to a search. Voting 6-3 in a case from Florida, the justices said the increasingly widespread law-enforcement tactic does not violate the rights of passengers as long as they feel free to refuse the police request. Police don't need a court warrant or a suspicion that a crime has been committed to ask passengers to submit to searches, the court said.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote for the court that the ruling applies to trains, planes and other forms of public transportation. The ruling, she said, was not a significant departure from past decisions that say police don't "seize" people just by talking to them or requesting cooperation. "No seizure occurs ... so long as the officers do not convey a message that compliance with their request is required," O'Connor said. But the court's dissenters condemned what they said is the court's

growing tolerance of abusive police behavior.

exiting their buses and possibly being stranded in unfamiliar locations," Justice Thurgood Marshall said. "This choice is no choice at all."

gal immigrants. The court also has let police in airport terminals question people who look like drug couriers.

University of Miami law professor Mary Coombs, representing the American Civil Liberties Union, said Thursday's decision "in theory is not bad."

But, she said, what it means is that "in the real world police will keep on making life inconvenient, difficult and oppressive for bus passengers who don't have any drugs."



Graphic by Bingo Barnes

"Officers who conduct suspicious, dragnet-style sweeps put passengers to the choice of cooperating or of

The bus-search ruling was an expected development by an increasingly conservative court that steadily is giving police more power to conduct searches without warrants or probable cause to suspect a crime.

The court relied in part on a 1984 decision that permitted immigration officials to "raid" factories in search of ille-

Kuwait artists sentenced to life terms

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — Seven actors, poets and songwriters, including a 74-year-old convicted of writing a poem praising Saddam Hussein, were sentenced Wednesday to life in prison for helping the seven-month Iraqi occupation.

The martial-law court also sentenced four other artists to prison terms ranging up to 15 years on charges of aiding Iraq and helping its propaganda efforts. One was given a suspended sentence and one was acquitted.

The sentences came a day after U.N. officials said Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar hoped Kuwait would show demerency toward six journalists sentenced to death for collaboration.

The collaboration trials have drawn condemnation from Kuwaiti lawyers and international human rights groups for the lack of evidence presented in court, and other problems.

The groups also say Kuwait is expecting foreigners to have held to an excessive standard of loyalty, considering that most had few rights under Kuwaiti law.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch criticized the trials Wednesday in a letter to Kuwait's emir. The group said that while it respected Kuwait's aim of bringing collaborators to justice, "the desire for revenge cannot be permitted to justify compromises with the right to a fair trial."

"Kuwaitis are demanding harsher judgements due to what they've seen under occupation," of Kuwait by Iraq, said Jasim Muttawa, editor of Al-Watan newspaper.

There were no outbursts in the courtroom when Judge Jawad Abdulla read the sentences.

Aid cutoff

House votes to stop supporting Jordan as reprisal for backing of Saddam Hussein

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House voted Wednesday to cut off military aid to Jordan as a reprisal for its support of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein during the Persian Gulf War.

Lawmakers softened the blow by giving President Bush the authority to waive the cutoff of military aid, expected to total \$27 million in the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, if certain conditions are met.

"King Hussein showed unequivocal support for Saddam Hussein" during the gulf conflict, said Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., who pressed for the cutoff. "The United States of America shouldn't in any way support that country."

The aid cutoff was approved 410-4 after the House voted to let the president keep aid flowing to Jordan if he deems it to be in the national interest, and if he certifies that Jordan has committed to bilateral negotiations with Israel, recognized Is-

rael's right to exist and stopped aiding Iraq.

The House also used the measure to register its wariness of offering direct aid to the Soviet Union.

On a vote of 374-41, lawmakers moved to ban aid to Moscow unless conditions are met on human rights, self-determination for the Baltic republics, and scaled-back military spending and military aid to Soviet allies.

In debating the Jordan issue, Rep. Lee Hamilton, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Middle East subcommittee, argued that King Hussein was being helpful in the peace process and should be rewarded.

The problem with an aid cutoff, Hamilton said, is "it looks to the past instead of to the future. ... Jordan is now coming our way. ... We ought to encourage Jordan in those directions."

Conditions would only make Bush's job in reviving the peace process more difficult, he said.

The administration is proposing \$57 million in aid to Jordan next year.

The votes came as the House pushed toward completion of a two-year, \$25.3 billion measure authorizing foreign aid for the next two fiscal years. It included economic, development and military assistance for U.S. allies around the globe, as well as the prospect of \$15 million in first-time direct aid to Soviet republics.

But final enactment of the legislation was far from certain.

Congress has been unable to wrestle a foreign aid authorization bill into law since 1985, and has had to use separate spending bills each year to enact its foreign policy prescriptions.

Bork challenges anti-racketeering law, contends federal law unconstitutional

CHICAGO (AP) — Former U.S. Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork will challenge the constitutionality of a federal anti-racketeering law used to go after mobsters, drug dealers and white-collar criminals, he said Wednesday.

Bork will serve as co-counsel on a friend-of-the-court brief for the Chicago Board of Trade arguing that the Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organization Act is unconstitutional, BOT spokesman David Prosperi said.

Eight soybean traders were convicted of racketeering conspiracy charges following an FBI undercover investigation at the world's largest futures exchanges. The convictions have been appealed.

"The Board of Trade has felt for a very long period of time that the RICO statute was misapplied in the case of the indicted and convicted soybean traders," Prosperi said.

The RICO statute forbids conducting the affairs of an enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity.

It was enacted by Congress in 1970 to fight organized crime but has been interpreted more broadly to go after white-collar criminals.

Bork, whose 1987 nomination to the Supreme Court was defeated by the Senate after a storm of criticism about his sensitivity to civil rights, said the RICO law is too vague and has been applied too broadly.

"It seems to me that it denied defendants due process of law," Bork said from his Washington, D.C., home. "It's hard to know when you're likely to fall into its trap. Ordinary businessmen ... are suddenly finding themselves in courtrooms being called racketeers."

The commodities convictions might be thrown out if the appeals court finds the statute is unconstitutional, Bork said. He also said it would be likely to affect other RICO convictions.

"If it were unconstitutional because it were incurably vague, that would have effects in all cases," Bork said.

Committee offers reform legislation

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate Intelligence Committee on Wednesday took another stab at what members said would be reforms in U.S. covert operations.

It approved a new version of operating legislation for the fiscal year that already is more than two-thirds over.

The panel voted unanimously in closed session for the fiscal 1991 intelligence bill, and Chairman David Boren, D-Okla., said he hoped President Bush would sign it.

A version of the measure was vetoed last year by Bush, who said it would restrict other countries carrying out covert actions for the United States.

Because of the veto, the Central Intelligence Agency has been operating since the fiscal year be-

gan last Oct. 1 without normal congressional authority.

The full Senate must now act on the bill, and differences remain to be worked out with a House version approved May 1. A bill for the 1992 fiscal year also is working its way through Congress.

While authorizing intelligence activities, the bill also seeks to write into the law a series of changes that grew out of the 1986 Iran-Contra affair, in which a handful of Reagan administration officials pursued covert operations in Iran and Nicaragua without notifying Congress. The administration argued it was not required to in the circumstances.

Last year's vetoed measure redefined covert action to include "requests" by the United States to third parties to carry out secret operations on its behalf. Bush said that might impair U.S. officials who wanted to informally inquire about the feasibility of proposed covert actions.

The new version also broadens the definition of covert action.



President Bush, vetoed a version of the intelligence bill last year.

Noriega still protecting smugglers, report says

MIAMI (AP) — Manuel Noriega aided Bolivian drug smugglers and provided phony passports and even a Ferrari to said.

Colombia's Medellin cartel, the accusations were made in a prosecution document aimed at bolstering the drug and racketeering case against the deposed Panamanian leader, whose trial is scheduled to begin Sept. 3.

Noriega, accused of protecting four cocaine shipments for the cartel, helped ship 10 to 15 additional loads, each several hundred pounds, the government said.

He once accepted bribes to release a drug ship that was intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard in the late 1970s and turned over to the Panamanian government, prosecutors said.

The ship, the M.V. Don Emilio, was given back to the smugglers complete with the cocaine "which was still hidden inside the fuel tanks," the government said.

The U.S. attorney's spokeswoman, Diane Cossin, refused to comment about whether the evidence would be used to file a new indictment against Noriega. She said only that no such charges have been filed.

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