

The Battalion

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Disgruntled protesters demonstrate outside Dome

Protesters speak out about legalization of marijuana, Bush's foreign policy in Somalia, past action concerning POW's and MIA's, gay rights, and abortion

signs held by Somalians. Mohamoud Egal a Somali-American from Dallas said President Bush is not doing enough to help Somalians. "In the past, there have been support efforts (by Bush), but in a limited basis," Egal said. "When aid was given before, it did not reach the people who needed it most." Vietnam veterans demonstrated their opposition to Bush's past

action concerning POW's and MIAs. Don Shirkey who served in Vietnam as an Air Force pilot said the Republicans have not done enough to find out what happened to soldiers left in foreign countries. He said the veterans want to know what happened to the prisoners. "We know we left people alive over there," he said. "What I want to know is how

anybody can say any of them died. We can't make people prove they're alive. We just need to assume they're alive and prove they're dead." Gay rights activists were also well represented. They and other demonstrators protested AIDS and the most recent theme of the Republican party that excludes homosexuals — family values. But not everyone on the demonstration grounds was

protesting a Republican plank; some were simply supporters. Defenders of abortion rights were met with some opposition with signs such as "Warning: 7 Judgements from Jesus because of abortions" held by John Kenneth Rasha of Houston. Rasha said he saw Jesus in 1977 in Jerusalem and was told to spread a warning to women who

had abortions that they would be met with seven punishments from God, although he could not remember what the seven warnings were. Even though the cries of the protesters did not disturb the celebration behind the doors of the Dome, they were not ignored outside and no reports of any major disturbances were reported in the heavily patrolled protest area.

By JULIE CHELKOWSKI

Reporter of THE BATTALION

Inside the Astrodome, delegates and guests rallied in support of the Republican party and its leader. But outside the gates a different tone was set with hundreds of protesters voicing their disagreement and dissatisfaction with some issues held by the GOP.

A wide variety of protesters and signs were scattered along a portion of Kirby Drive across from the Dome in the protest area during the Republican National Convention, grabbing the attention of passers-by and the media. Signs ranged from homemade posters written in black marker on an old piece of cardboard to colorful banners professionally printed and distributed.

"Legalize pot" was one of the more popular signs of the protesters. The sign and its supporter, Houstonian Patrick Curry, received honks from passing motorists and cheers of "All right, man!"

Curry said this was his one chance to get some recognition for his support of legalizing marijuana.

He said he believes cigarettes and alcohol causes as much or more harm as marijuana if abused. And if both of those are legal, he said, there is no reason why using or growing marijuana should be illegal.

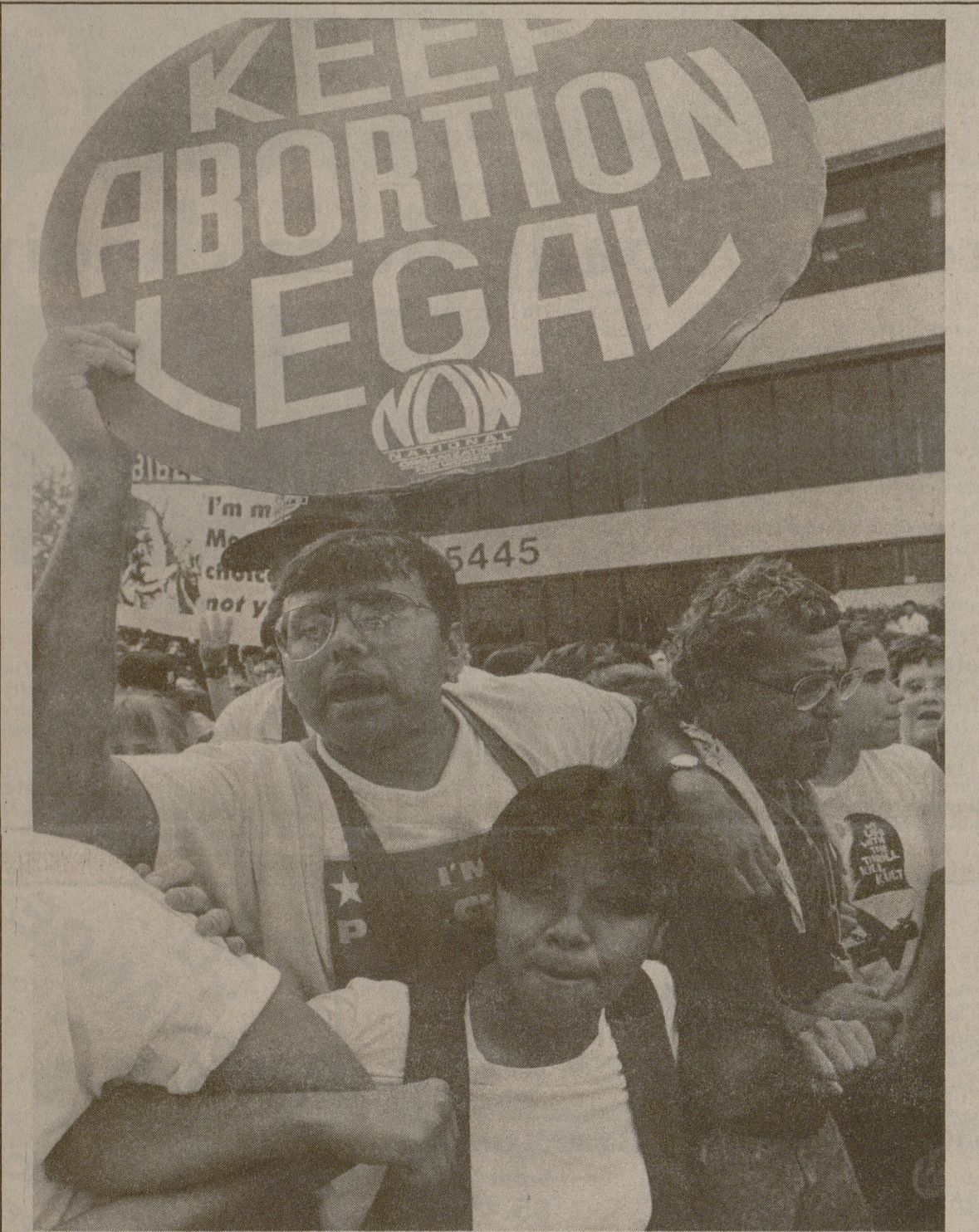
"I'm not advocating the use of narcotics or cocaine, I'm advocating the legalization of marijuana," Curry said.

"But I think it should be treated as an addiction, not as a crime."

Other advocates of the legalization of marijuana said President Bush's life was saved by the drug in World War II. They explained that his parachute was made with hemp (a plant whose stems yield a fiber used to make cords and is the derivative of a narcotic drug such as hashish) and he should therefore give legalizing the drug a closer look.

Many Somalians were present to demonstrate their dissatisfaction in Bush's handling of civil unrest in the country.

"Stop the Carnage in Somalia" and "Stop this Humanitarian Nightmare" were some of the



Pro-choice and anti-abortion forces squared off every morning at Houston Women's clinics. Here, pro-choice supporters link arms to prevent pro-lifers from gaining access to clinic doors. Here, HUY NGUYEN/The Battalion

Republican party split on abortion stance in platform

Lack of pro-choice support at convention keeps topic off floor for open debate, vote

By JULIE CHELKOWSKI

Reporter of THE BATTALION

The 1992 Republican Convention ended on Aug. 20, with the party's platform decided and the selection of George Bush to lead the Republicans to what they hope will be another "four more years."

But not everyone was unanimous on all decisions of the platform — the most disputed issue being abortion.

Abortion has been a dominant issue this election year with most Democrats taking a pro-choice stand and most Republicans siding with pro-life.

Although pro-choice Republicans were out of line with their party's platform that calls for a constitutional amendment banning abortion, and opposes public funding for the procedure, there was no contention — only a call to be recognized.

On the first day of the convention, delegates had the chance to debate the abortion issue, but failed to gain enough backing for a petition. A majority of six state delegations is required to bring an issue to the floor for open debate. Abortion rights supporters only managed to gain support from Maine, Massachusetts, New Mexico and the Virgin Islands.

Though they were not allowed an official debate on abortion, advocates in the convention expressed their support through

other methods such as speeches, signs and buttons.

Secretary of Labor Lynn Martin and Congresswoman Nancy Johnson of Connecticut are two advocates of legal abortion. On Tuesday night of the convention Johnson stated her position on abortion and urged other pro-choice Republicans to have their voices heard.

Similar to many signs and buttons, Johnson said she was "proud to be both pro-choice and pro-Bush."

The abortion issue taps another important topic that Johnson briefly addressed — religious freedom.

Some Republicans have said that with attempts to ban abortion there has been a breakdown of separation between church and state. Johnson agreed religious beliefs should be kept separate from government decisions.

"I believe government in a democracy must preserve the right of each of us to live in harmony with our most deeply held beliefs."

—Congresswoman Nancy Johnson, advocate of legal abortion

"Our nation was founded by people seeking religious freedom," Johnson said. "I believe government in a democracy must preserve the right of each of us to live in harmony with our most deeply held beliefs."

Even though official abortion protest and debate was stifled inside the Astrodome, protesters across the street on Wednesday night had few restrictions.

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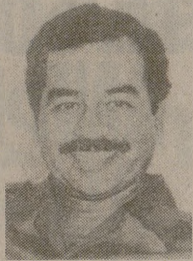
Hussein promises to resist 'no-fly' zone

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — President Saddam Hussein vowed Sunday to resist the "no-fly" zone imposed over southern Iraq by U.S.-led allies, but offered no specific actions his government might take.

It was the first statement from Saddam about the flight ban imposed Thursday to protect Shiite Muslim rebels from air attacks by Iraq's military. The comments, read in Saddam's name on Iraqi radio, restated earlier defiant statements by Iraqi officials and news media.

In the 50-minute statement, Saddam claimed the allies were plotting to partition Iraq and the rest of the Arab world then seize control of their oil wealth. He accused Iran, which is predominately Shiite and



Hussein

fought a 1980-88 war with Iraq, of inciting the allies.

It was not immediately clear why Saddam did not deliver the address himself.

In Washington, a White House spokesman, Walter Kansteiner, denied wanting to break up Iraq. He said the action was taken because Iraq violated a U.N. no-aggression resolution in its campaign to crush the Shiite rebellion that began after Saddam's defeat in the Persian Gulf War.

Despite Saddam's vow to respond to "bold aggression," Baghdad has so far

made no signs of breaching the exclusion zone south of the 32nd parallel.

Senior U.S. military officers have said they do not expect Iraq to strike at allied air patrols because the situation could escalate quickly beyond Saddam's control.

The allies have warned they will shoot down any and all Iraqi aircraft that enters the zone.

The allies established a similar "safe haven" for Iraq's Kurdish minority in the north last year after Iraqi troops crushed an uprising by the Kurds following the Gulf War.

Saddam insisted the Iraqi "leadership is determined to reject the bold aggression and confront it with all means available and on all levels." Without elaborating, he said his government "was considering the tim-

ing and options."

Senior Iraqi officials have raised the possibility of ending cooperation with U.N. weapon inspections or U.N. humanitarian efforts. U.N. officials said Sunday that a new U.N. nuclear weapons team planned to go to Baghdad on Monday, which would be the first such visit since the "no-fly" zone took effect.

The commander of U.S. military forces in the Persian Gulf said Sunday that the allies may put fewer planes into the air because the Iraqis have not challenged the southern zone.

Lt. Gen. Michael Nelson also said the allies had not seen any significant activity by Iraqi ground troops arrayed against the Shiites operating out of the vast marshes of southern Iraq.

Ethiopian hijackers surrender jetliner in Italy

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROME — Five Ethiopians who commandeered an Ethiopian jetliner surrendered peacefully Sunday after being assured that Italy would not send them home to face the death penalty.

The hijackers had released 79 passengers unharmed in Djibouti, the east African nation that was the first stop in an odyssey that began late Friday in Addis Ababa and continued on to Yemen and Egypt before the plane landed in Rome.

The nine crew members of the

Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 727 were released unharmed in Rome.

"It is a good ending to this affair, represented by the fact that it was concluded without any damage or injury," said Carmelo Caruso, an Interior Ministry official.

He said the hijackers, including a passenger who apparently joined the hijacking in Djibouti, claimed to be victims of political persecution and requested asylum in Italy.

Giorgio Castellucci, the magistrate leading the investigation,

said that even if the five were granted asylum, they would still be tried on hijacking and weapons charges. He said they had asked permission to study in Italy.

"It is a good ending to this affair, represented by the fact that it was concluded without any damage or injury."

—Carmelo Caruso, Interior Ministry official

The hijackers, armed with two hand grenades and an unloaded pistol, surrendered after Italian authorities assured them that Italy did not have a death penalty and that they would not be sent back to Ethiopia.

Air hijacking is punishable by death in Ethiopia and Italy refuses to extradite people if they could face execution. The punishment for air piracy in Italy is seven to 21 years in prison.

Castellucci said the hijackers had been very calm and had not threatened to harm anyone. He said they were concerned above all with not being sent back to Ethiopia.

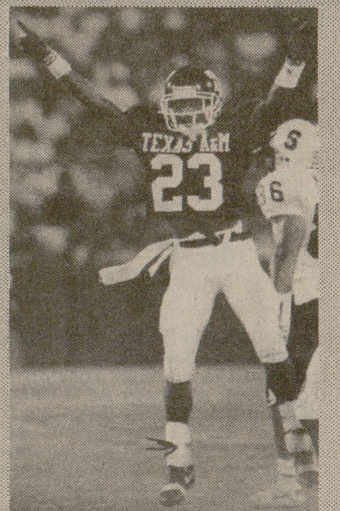
"They assured us they had not committed any crimes in their country but that they had wit-

nessed some operations in which people were killed and for this reason they were put under restrictive measures," Caruso said.

The airliner was hijacked late Friday after taking off from Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, on a domestic flight. It flew first to San'a, Yemen, and then to Djibouti after Yemeni officials denied the aircraft permission to land.

The aircraft later flew to Aden, Yemen; Cairo, Egypt, where it refueled; and finally to the Ciampino military airport in Rome early Sunday after it was refused permission to land in Athens, Greece, Caruso said.

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