

## Debate highlights Perot

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON— In an election year filled with surprises, Ross Perot's strong showing in the first debate could alter electoral dynamics once again, analysts and strategists of both parties suggested Tuesday.

No one expects the Texas businessman to win. But his homely-filled straight talk could translate into a spurt of support that makes a difference to President Bush and Bill Clinton in individual states.

Tuesday night's vice presidential debate gave Americans another chance to take a look at the Perot-Stockdale ticket.

And, political observers suggested that, since expectations were low for retired Adm. James Stockdale, a credible performance



Perot

and hand an electoral landslide to Democrat Clinton.

The Dallas billionaire could become a "resting place for disenfranchised Republicans" who would otherwise vote for Bush but see the president's chances as hopeless, said Democratic pollster Geoff Garin.

"He can take a lot of votes out of Bush's hide, especially if Bush

by the Vietnam prisoner of war-turned-scholar could further pique interest in Perot.

Some analysts said Perot could wind up delivering the coup de grace to Bush

no longer looks like a viable candidate," Garin said.

Third-party candidates usually fare worse in elections than they do in polls because, in the end, voters don't want to throw away their votes.

But, if Clinton retains a double-digit lead in the polls over Bush, many voters who don't like either Bush or Clinton may feel they have nothing to lose by casting a protest vote for Perot.

"The minute it looks like Bush may not win, a significant amount of his vote may fold and go into another camp or stay home," said Frank Luntz, a GOP pollster who worked for Perot last spring and summer.

"No longer can you say that Perot will just fade away," Luntz said.

## American professor earns Nobel Prize in economics

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — American Gary S. Becker won the Nobel Prize in economics Tuesday for pioneering the theory that people make everyday decisions following the same rational path long associated with business.

Before Becker began publishing his ideas in the late 1950s, most academics considered habit and often emotion or irrationality as the primary factors in human behavior like having children or committing crimes.

"His work can be used to explain peoples' choice of education, how the family chooses to spend its time, including how many children it should have and the type of marriage," said Assar Lindbeck of the Royal Swedish Academy of Science.

Becker, 61, a professor of sociology and economics at the University of Chicago, said he was "still in a bit of shock" about receiving the \$1.2 million prize. He was the 15th person connected to the University of Chicago to win the Nobel economics

prize in 22 years.

"I was interested in social problems, but felt the economics had the tools by which to handle the long-term interests and social questions," Becker said.

The key to his research is the theory that human behavior follows the same rational principles, whether it involves a household, a business or an organization. Though greeted initially with skepticism, his work has influenced sociology, demography and criminology.

"Becker has been a hot name for 10 years but we have preferred to wait and see how solid his research results were since he is such a daring and previously controversial person," Lindbeck said. "But year by year it became clear what a tremendous influence his work has had and he became the obvious candidate for the prize."

Becker's theory that people choose their level of education depending on its economic consequences is generally accepted, Lindbeck said.

But still controversial are his analyses of decisions to marry and divorce, based on economic factors.

## Government documents show Baker's role in lobbying for oil spill liability in Congress

### Reports raise ethical questions about chief of staff's actions

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — White House chief of staff James A. Baker III, who has large oil investments, played a role in the administration's effort to lobby Congress on oil spill liability in 1990 as secretary of state, documents show.

The Project on Government Oversight, a liberal research group, said Tuesday the documents raise ethical questions about actions by Baker, who also heads President Bush's re-election campaign.

Janet Mullins, a former State Department official who is now an assistant to Bush for political affairs at the White House, dismissed the group's statements as "totally bogus."

"Baker had absolutely nothing

to do with this issue," said Mullins, who worked on the oil spill liability issue. She co-authored a memo on the subject to Lawrence Eagleburger, the acting secretary of state who was then Baker's deputy.



Baker

A memo from then-Transportation Secretary Samuel Skinner to Baker indicated the two discussed preparing a joint letter urging Congress to approve international accords limiting oil companies' liability for spills. The letter to Senate Majority Leader

George Mitchell was signed by Skinner and Eagleburger, but not by Baker.

That March 1990 letter is one of several State Department documents on the matter obtained by the Project on Government Oversight, a nonprofit group in Washington that investigates activities of the executive branch and Congress. The group provided copies of the documents to The Associated Press.

Baker had promised a month earlier to abstain from involvement in any issues affecting domestic oil and gas prices in order to avoid a conflict of interest.

Baker has a blind trust that shields him from federal conflict-of-interest laws because it is not directed

## Egypt's earthquake death toll hits 400

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO, Egypt — Egypt's earthquake death toll climbed past 400 Tuesday, and officials broadcast appeals for calm among Egyptians terrified of another tremor.

Many prepared for a second night under the stars.

Authorities blamed the high death toll partly on panic stampedes but mainly on the many weak, old or poorly constructed buildings in the Cairo area.

Countries pledged millions in aid. A security official told Cairo Television the search for survivors was called off Tuesday at all the scores of collapsed buildings in the capital area except for one: a 14-story apartment complex in the affluent suburb Heliopolis.

Dozens of people were believed to be buried in the rubble. Relief workers were using their bare hands to sift through dust and stones, and drills to cut through steel construction rods. Many workers said they had little hope of finding anyone alive.

Police Maj. Gen. Nadir Noman, director of civil defense, said 11 bodies were pulled from the debris by early afternoon. As many

as 15 people were found alive in the debris shortly after the quake.

Witnesses reported two people died Tuesday as three quake-weakened structures collapsed in the poor Sayeda Zeinab neighborhood.

Life was generally back to normal elsewhere.

Hundreds of aftershocks didn't help. Almost all were too feeble to be felt but not to be imagined: "Now I know what hell is like," said Nadia Ezzeddin, a housewife in Cairo's residential Zamalek Island. In hopes of calming the public, the official Cairo Radio and Television broadcast a statement by Subhi Freiha, deputy director of the government's Heliopolis Observatory.

"All the observatory's recordings indicate that the situation is stable," Freiha said. "There is no need to worry."

On TV, Information Minister Safwat el-Sherif answered a reporter's question about the rumor of another strong quake by chastising Egyptians to watch their own media instead of believing the foreign press.

The "second quake" rumor was rampant, and intensified as telephone service neared normalcy Monday night.

## French wine industry faces 90s dry spell

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FLEURIE, France — After a decade of superb vintages, bountiful harvests and high prices, France's wine makers are sobering up in the 1990s.

The global recession has trickled down to the most prestigious wine regions — Bordeaux, Burgundy and Champagne.

The dizzying prices of the 1980s have crashed amidst a surplus of stocks, declining consumption and foreign competition.

And the only winner is the wine drinker, who can buy good wines at reasonable prices for the first time in years.

"If someone wants to begin to buy wine now, the recent vintages are down 30-40 percent from what was first asked," said British wine expert Stephen Spurrier.

That's bright news for wine lovers, but spells gloom for this charming village in Burgundy's Beaujolais region.

Growers wonder if the Virgin Mary, venerated locally as protector of the wine harvest, has abandoned them.

"We've had difficult periods before, but none like this since the 1940s," said Jean Debraive, a fourth-generation vintner.

On the vine-draped hillsides surrounding Fleurie, one of Beaujolais' premier areas, it's hard to see anything wrong.

Platoons of straw-hatted harvesters swelter in an age-old dawn-to-dusk ritual, snipping bunches of dusty Gamay grapes.

Healthy grapes are sorted from those withered by a surprise July frost that killed 80 percent of Fleurie's harvest.

Growers in tractors jam Fleurie's tiny streets, sticky with grape juice, to pool their harvests at a cooperative.

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