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THE BATTALION
POLITICS

Morales retracts attack

AUSTIN (AP) — A day after calling Republican Congressman Henry Bonilla a "coconut" and a "wannabe white," Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Victor Morales backed away from the racially sensitive comments Thursday.

"While I disagree strongly with the perspective Mr. Bonilla brings to his office and the manner in which he represents his constituents, public discourse should be conducted on a higher plane," Morales said.

"I used terms I should not have used," he said in a written statement.

On Wednesday, Morales said Bonilla reminded him "of the people when I was growing up that we called chocolate chips, coconuts," explaining the people were dark-skinned but ignored their heritage.

"To me, there are certain people within the Hispanic community, who for their own reasons, seem to forget who they are ... and that's the way he strikes me."

The remarks were quoted by the Houston Chronicle and the San Antonio Express-News in the newspapers' Thursday editions.

Bonilla, R-San Antonio, declined to respond to Morales' remarks or his retraction.

Pulce Martinez, a San Antonio Republican activist, said Morales' comments hurt everyone in the Hispanic community.

"Hispanics can't get ahead because they keep pulling one another down," said Martinez, chairman of the Texas Republican Party's Partnership Committee. The organization works to get more minorities involved in the GOP.

Opinions differ on abortion

(AP) — The following are the answers of the major presidential candidates to the question: "What changes, if any, do you support in abortion law?"

Bill Clinton

"The decision to have an abortion should be between a woman, her doctor, and her faith. Abortions should be safe, legal, and rare. We are working to lower the number of abortions by emphasizing education, prevention and personal responsibility to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies."

Bob Dole

"I oppose abortion except in cases of rape, incest, or if the life

ON THE ISSUES
CAMPAIGN



of the mother is at risk. I recognize this is an issue where good

and decent Americans agree. I also believe that all Americans share a goal of a nation of values life. One of my greatest disappointments in the last years has been Bill Clinton's support for partial-birth abortion, an indefensible procedure even many pro-choice friends come too close to inflicting.

Ross Perot

"In a free society with a moral, ethical base, abortion would be unthinkable. A decision to have an abortion should be made between a woman and God. We must support counseling and education that can prevent unwanted pregnancies."

Dole challenges Clinton to tell truth

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Battered by Democratic ads claiming he would cut Medicare, Bob Dole issued a blunt challenge to President Clinton on Thursday: "Why don't you tell the truth, Mr. President?"

"I know it's hard to get the president off his soap box, he's out there every day announcing some new gimmick," Dole said at a morning rally aimed at wooing older Americans. "But I would say to the president, 'Mr. President, why don't you be honest with Florida seniors and other seniors across America?'"

Dole continued, "Once he does that, we're going to wipe him out in Florida and all across America."

The GOP presidential nominee went on to defend his record on programs for the elderly: "Listen, I helped rescue Social Security, all my mother had was Social Security income and Medicare. I know how important it is to seniors, men and women. Let's set the record straight right now."

To buttress his argument, Dole waved a 1983 thank-you letter from the late Florida Rep. Claude Pepper, the Democratic champion of senior citizens. Supporters at the half-filled West Palm Beach Auditorium were handed a copy of the letter as they left.

Dole was beginning a four-day retreat at his oceanside condominium in Bal Harbour, where he planned to prepare for the first presidential debate on Oct. 6 in Hartford, Conn.

For months, Dole has been the subject of ads saying the former Senate majority leader "voted to cut

Medicare" when he pushed a GOP budget plan that would have limited spending growth in the program.

The charges have taken a toll in a state where more than one-fifth of the state's population is 60. While Florida is usually a safe GOP bet, the statewide polls give Clinton a slight lead here.

Dole served on Pepper's bipartisan commission to reform Social Security and is this year serving a similar panel to tackle Medicare's ballooning costs. To that end, Dole asked for Clinton's cooperation. "Let's try and work this out and get it done — out of politics."

"Everybody would be a lot better off."

Clinton campaign spokesman Joe Lockhart said Clinton "should take some responsibility for his actions. What scares older American in Florida around the nation is Bob Dole's own record of hostility toward Medicare." Lockhart noted that Dole had voted against the creation of Medicare.

Both candidates support cuts in future Medicare spending. Dole favors saving \$158 billion by reducing Medicare's growth over six years while Clinton would save \$124 billion by reducing growth over the same period.

In interviews for the American Association of Retired Persons' membership bulletin, the candidates said the savings would come from trimming increases in payments to hospitals and physicians.

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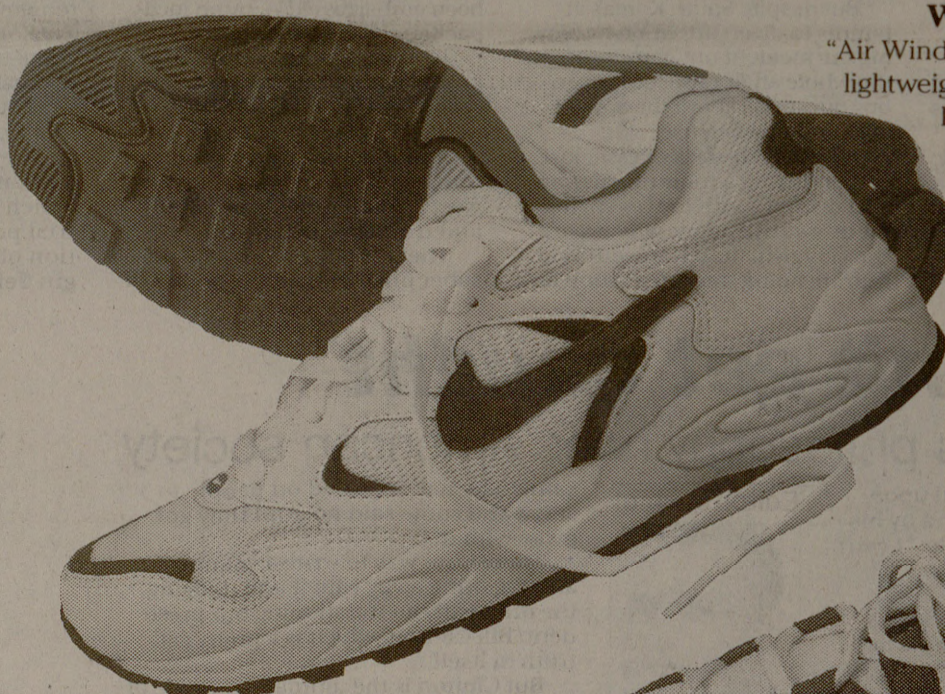


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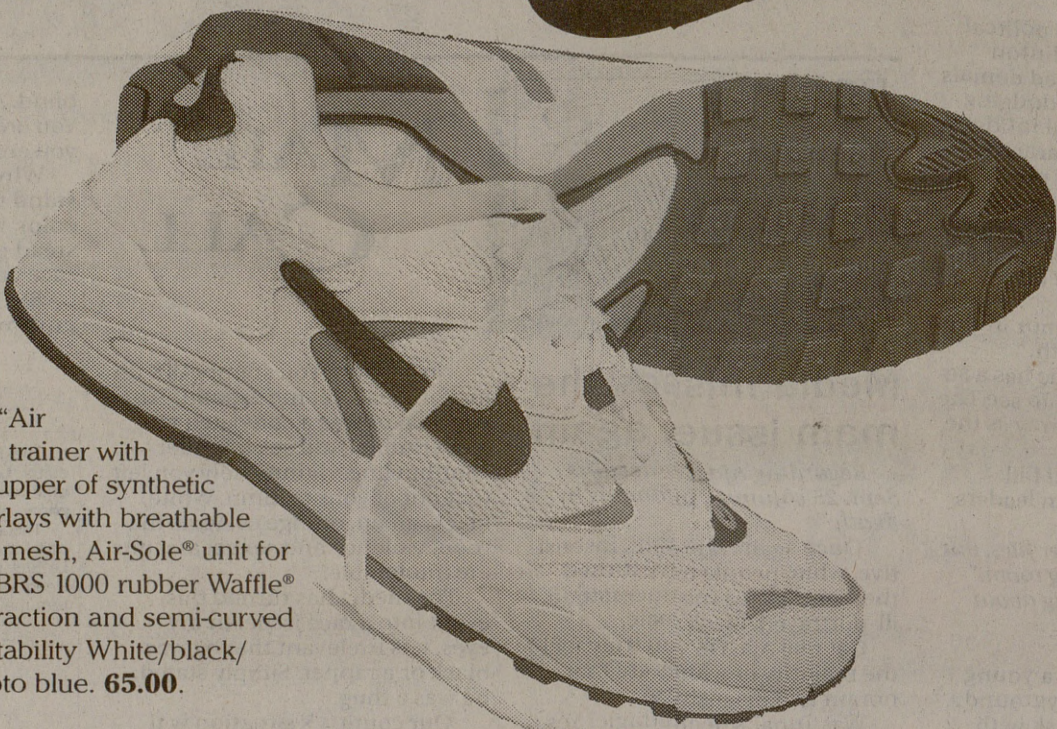
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