

Senate committee backs Holbrooke nomination

WASHINGTON (AP) — Richard Holbrooke's long-delayed nomination to be U.N. ambassador won the unanimous backing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, but new obstacles emerged last yesterday.

More senators are planning delaying tactics, following the lead of Sen. Charles Grassley, who announced last week he would block the nomination over an unrelated civil service dispute.

While Grassley, R-Iowa, suggested in an interview the impasse could be resolved by week's end, other senators added their own "holds" to the nomination, said a spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss.



HOLBROOKE

Unlike Grassley, these senators did so anonymously, which is allowed under Senate tradition, spokesman John Czwartacki said.

He said he did not know who the senators were or whether their concerns were identical to Grassley's, but said their objections to moving ahead this week with the nomination appeared "irreconcilable." Czwartacki did say the situation could change quickly.

Grassley is protesting a State Department decision to transfer a senior staff member from a U.N. office in New York to a lesser post in Washington after she informed members of Congress about alleged waste and mismanagement within the United Nations. He contends the transfer and demotion violated a law that he sponsored protecting whistle-blowers.

The new delays are the latest in a series of obstacles to Holbrooke's yearlong effort to win Senate confirmation. Now an investment

banker, the veteran diplomat was the architect of the 1995 Bosnia peace agreement and more recently served as the administration's envoy for Kosovo.

The committee vote was anticlimactic. Holbrooke's nomination was one of more than two dozen diplomatic nominations approved unanimously, by voice vote, without debate, and sent to the Senate floor.

Afterward, the chairman, Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., joked with State Department official Barbara Larkin that the vote was one of the quickest ever for the panel.

Holbrooke supporters hoped the Senate would approve the nomination before its July Fourth vacation.

But the hold by Grassley, who is not a committee member, remains in the way. By Senate tradition, any senator can block — at least for a while — any nomination for any reason.

P&G to limit animal testing

CINCINNATI (AP) — Procter & Gamble Co., the maker of Crest, Tide, Pampers and Ivory soap, said yesterday it will immediately stop using animals to test many of its household products.

P&G made exceptions for its current food and pharmaceutical products and for any new products. In some cases, animal testing is required by law, and P&G said such practices will continue.

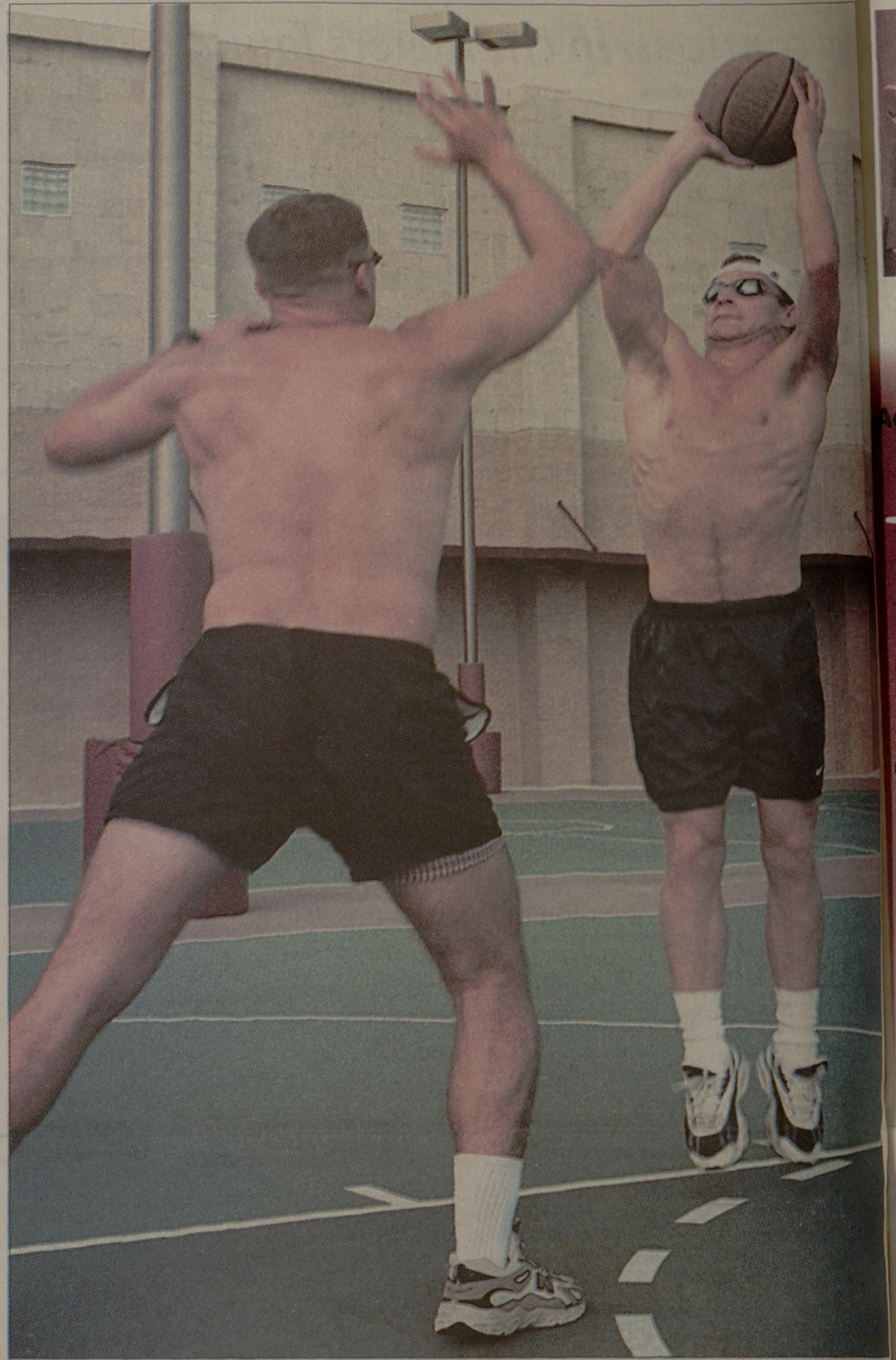
Animal-rights activists have made the company a target for years, with the boycott of P&G products beginning in 1989. They have thrown cream pies at P&G's chair, been arrested at the Cincinnati headquarters and spoofed P&G's Tide detergent-sponsored race car with a similarly decorated auto with the logo "Died."

Larry Games, P&G vice president of global product safety, said the new policy is effective immediately in the more than 140 countries in which P&G operates.

Science has advanced to the point that non-animal testing methods can be relied on to ensure that these products are safe for people, Games said. P&G said, for example, if it were to reformulate a product, it could do so by relying on previous animal data.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, one of the organizations that have tried to get P&G to end animal testing, said the announcement is a small step forward, but more needs to be done.

Holding court



James Donbavand (right), a senior management information systems major, pulls up for a jump shot against John Readyhough, a senior community health major, during a basketball game Wednesday at the Student Recreation Center.

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Officials locate more gaps in labs' security measures

WASHINGTON (AP) — Even after an uproar over espionage and poor security, investigators found troublesome security gaps at a major nuclear weapons laboratory in California, officials said yesterday.

The shortcomings, discovered in a review in early May at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, included inadequate monitoring of access to the unclassified computer system and deficiencies in the security force's response to potential terrorists.

The findings by an Energy Department security oversight team are to be presented in a classified brief-

ing to the House Commerce Committee today.

While not giving details, Glenn Podonsky, who headed the internal DOE investigation, said the security weaknesses did not put any top-secret information at risk, but showed some "sensitive" information needed to be better protected.

"It's serious because from our standpoint it needed to be corrected," Podonsky said. "These are holes that need to be plugged."

Meanwhile, the Senate Intelligence Committee heard for the first time Wednesday from Sandy Berger, the president's national security ad-

viser, on security and espionage concerns at the nuclear weapons labs.

Questions about security at clear weapons facilities and an investigation began to surface in March as details from a congressional report on nuclear secrets in the 1980s and into the 1990s.

The controversy intensified after Energy Secretary Bill Richardson rejected the firing of a scientist at Los Alamos lab in early March he had been under investigation for possible espionage since 1998, scientist, Wen Ho Lee, has not been charged with any crime and has denied giving nuclear secrets to all-

Air Force defends B-2 bomber performance in Kosovo campaign

WASHINGTON (AP) — The B-2 "stealth" bomber performed well over Yugoslavia, despite recent congressional reports of weaknesses and technical flaws, Air Force officials told a House panel yesterday.

The \$2 billion planes flew through bad weather and hit "everything we aimed at," Air Force Brig. Gen. Leroy Barnidge, commander of the B-2 bomber force, said.

"The B-2 exceeded all our expectations for durability, reliability and overall performance," he told a House Armed Services subcommittee.

While some of the B-2s required maintenance after returning from a bombing run in NATO's 78-day air war against Serb forces, others were able to take off on a new mission after only loading replacement bombs and refueling, Barnidge said.

The testimony comes two weeks after a General Accounting Office (GAO) report questioned the durability of the special materials that make the bat-winged B-2 nearly invisible to enemy radar.

"These problems remain the primary cause for maintenance times and a reduced pace in flight operations," the report by the investigative branch of Congress said.

The GAO said that while the Air Force has taken steps to address the problems, the 10-plane fleet suffers down times for repair of its delicate stealth parts. GAO completed the report, the sixth in five years of B-2, before the 11-week Balkan air war ended June 10.

Some lawmakers questioned the Air Force's decision to back up the B-2 with extensive support aircraft, radar-jamming planes — protection against the claim that the plane's designers claimed wouldn't be needed for stealth missions.

"We think it's prudent to provide as much buffer coverage" as possible, Lt. Gen. Marvin R. Espinoza, deputy chief of staff for Air and Space Operations. But under the right circumstances, he said, the B-2 "go in alone."