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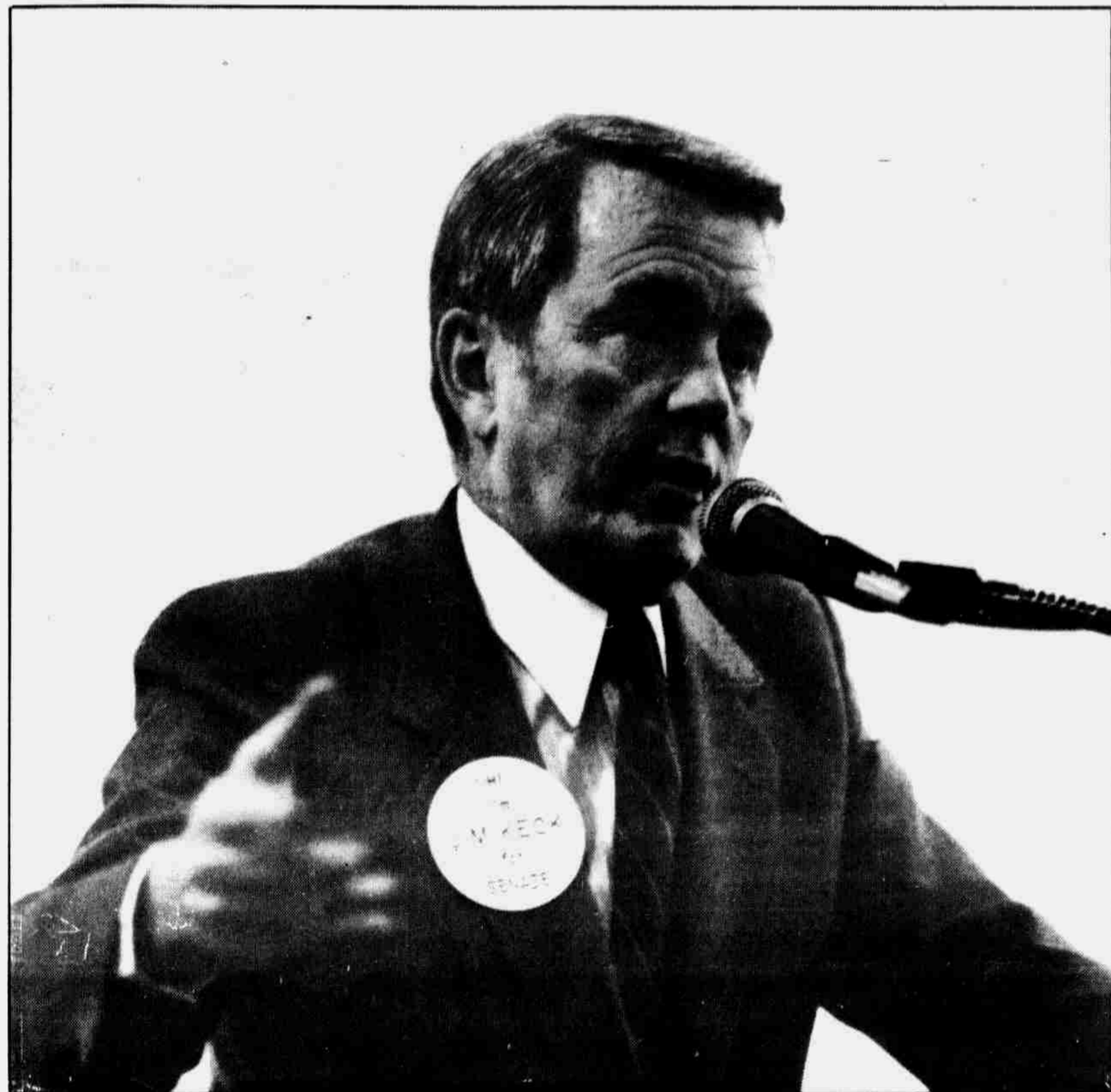
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James Keck

Photo by Dave Bentz

'Unknown candidate' Keck runs for Senate with Republican Party

By Jim Wegman

"I'm an unknown challenger facing an incumbent," said Omahan Jim Keck, Republican candidate for U.S. Senate. Keck spoke to about 60 people Wednesday as part of UPC's Talks and Topics Afternoon Speakers Forum.

Keck served 37 years in the U.S. Air Force and recently retired as a three-star general. He was vice commander-in-chief of the Strategic Air Command, and is the senior vice-president of Bozell and Jacobs, Inc. of Omaha.

Keck described himself as being "very familiar with the legislative process." During one of his tours in the Air Force, Keck was responsible for taking national defense legislation through Congress.

"I know more about bureaucracy than anybody here, and I don't like it," Keck said.

In 1979, Keck was asked to run for the Senate but refused because of government over-spending and his feeling that "one more person wouldn't make much difference."

In 1980 that feeling began to change, Keck said.

The mandate of the people was to reduce the size and scope of government, Keck said. He was now assured that one person could make a difference because there were people who agreed with him.

Just returning from a 12-day trip across the state, Keck said Nebraskans are concerned about the economy and agriculture.

There is too much excess spending in government, and some things could be done much more efficiently and effectively at a lower level of government, Keck said.

"The key to the economy is a balanced budget. But we have to move towards it. It can't happen overnight."

Keck said much more emphasis is needed on agricultural policies because agriculture "is clearly the backbone of the state and national economy." He would work toward the elimination of tariffs and excise taxes, and he also would oppose the use of embargoes as foreign policy instruments.

After the speech, Keck said he would support the B-1 bomber along with MX and Trident missile systems because the U.S. can only negotiate with the Soviet Union on an equal level. The Soviets must be in a position to gain from arms reduction. The United States went from a position of "total superiority" to one of "essential equivalence" in the early 1970s and lost it in 1977. Now the Soviets have a 2,700 to 2,100 nuclear systems advantage over the United States, Keck said.

These systems represent only about 6½ percent of the entire defense budget, Keck said.

Keck supports Ronald Reagan's proposals to cut student financial aid.

"I am very in favor of public education, but I feel very strongly that we have to support this from a national level."

State's Army Guard nears full force

The Nebraska Army National Guard is more popular than ever, especially with college students, according to State Recruiting and Retention Manager Maj. Robert B. Robeson.

As of last week 4,422 people are assigned to various Guard units across the state. This represents 95.6 percent of the Guard's authorized strength of 4,626 people. Robeson said this is the highest total since the draft ended. The previous high was recorded on Dec. 26, 1974, when 4,385 people were in the Guard.

Robeson said the Guard's strength has increased 27 percent since 1978.

He said that one out of every 3.5 Army and Air National Guard members is a college student. One of the main reasons college students join is because of the 75 percent tuition bonus, he said. With the bonus the Guard pays 75 percent of tuition for the student's four years of college.

Robeson said many students join the Guard to learn job skills and gain additional bonuses. He said the current generation of students doesn't remember Vietnam and therefore has less animosity toward the military.

Robeson said he thinks the Guard will be "pretty close" to 100 percent authorized strength by the end of the year.

Central American tour changes speaker's views

By Pat Higgins

The Sandinista government in Nicaragua wants to deal with the United States as an equal, said Suzy Prenger, Human Rights Coordinator for Nebraskans for Peace.

Prenger, who spoke Tuesday night at Commonplace, has just returned from a two-week study tour to Central America and the Caribbean. The tour participants met with government, business and religious leaders. Meetings with Sandinista representatives totally changed Prenger's perceptions of Nicaragua, she said.

"The general sentiment there is high tension and fear about what the United States is going to do. The people of Nicaragua want normalcy, but they don't trust our government," Prenger said.

The United States is spending \$5 million in economic aid to Nicaragua and \$19 million to de-stabilize the country's regime. Nicaragua wants to maintain a mixed economy because the private sector makes up 60 percent of the economy today, Prenger said.

"Their economy was in a shambles when they took over from (former Nicaraguan President Anastasio) Somoza's government. Managua still hasn't been rebuilt in the 10 years since its devastating earthquake, despite all

the aid that was sent to Somoza," Prenger said.

The Sandinistas have admitted they have made mistakes, particularly in relocating the Miskito Indians, she said. The Miskitos had been used as a base by loyalists of the Somoza government, Prenger said. The Sandinistas also erred by increasing the number of government jobs without increasing productivity.

"Despite any mistakes, they have a tremendous sense of dedication to make the revolution succeed," Prenger said.

La Prensa, the newspaper opposing Sandinistas, has been shut down five times since the revolution two years ago. Prenger said the Sandinistas believe in freedom of the press but do not believe that it is a free press when certain economic sectors are free to publish what they want.

"The CIA doesn't buy papers in Latin America, but they provide technical assistance to them which should be looked into," Prenger said. "We should also look and see if the information we receive from the media in the U.S. is controlled by certain economic interests."

The Cuban presence in Nicaragua is strong, as about 1,000 health and literacy workers are there from Cuba. The Sandinista government denied being gun runners to El Salvador, Prenger said.

The recent election in El Salvador should be seen as a battle between the center and the right, as moderate leftists did not participate, Prenger said. Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte does not control the Army in El Salvador, she said.

The deaths of four Dutch journalists in El Salvador is seen as a plot by Major Bob D'Aubisson to discredit the Duarte government, Prenger said. She spoke with one of the last people to see the journalists alive. Since journalists' physical safety is not guaranteed, they tend to do their stories in San Salvador from government press releases, she said.

Prenger said she gained greater understanding of President Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative plan while in Jamaica. The CBI proposal is to increase investment which has never worked before, Prenger said. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has been brought to Jamaica to dilute the influence of the Rastafarians, she said.

The attitude of U.S. embassy officials in Jamaica is intolerable, Prenger said.

"We left a clinic for undernourished children to speak with a U.S. embassy official, and he told us that Jamaica is a paradise because the people could always find a thatched hut to live in and they could eat mangoes."