

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Gulf clash renews War Powers debate

WASHINGTON — Recent U.S.-Iranian clashes are miring Congress in renewed debate about its role in making foreign policy and, as before, the fight centers on the 1973 War Powers Act.

"There are so many complexities involved here," said Sen. William Cohen, R-Maine, discussing the current fight. "I think this is just the sort of situation the War Powers Act was designed to deal with."

Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., former chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, halfway agreed with Cohen.

"It's a situation where there are a lot of strong opinions on a complex issue," Lugar said. "I also think it's a case where the War Powers Act is not

applicable."

The differing views are a microcosm of the dispute in the Democratic-controlled Senate over President Reagan's policy of reflagging 11 Kuwaiti tankers and protecting them with U.S. Navy convoys in the war-torn Persian Gulf.

Reagan has refused to invoke the War Powers Act, enacted by Congress over President Nixon's veto after presidential decisions greatly expanded the U.S. role in the Vietnam War.

Both Lugar and Cohen agreed that that if the question actually comes to a vote on whether to simply support Reagan's policy, Congress would be closely divided.

49 die in Burma plane crash

RANGOON, Burma — A Burma Airways plane caught fire and crashed about 20 miles short of a popular tourist town in central Burma Sunday, killing all 49 people aboard, including 14 Americans, the government said.

The official News Agency of Burma said 36 foreigners, nine Bur-

mese passengers and four crewmen were aboard. The brief announcement did not give the cause of the crash.

It was the airline's second disaster in less than four months; a Burma Airways crash on June 21 killed 45 Burmese.

Columbus' landing still debatable

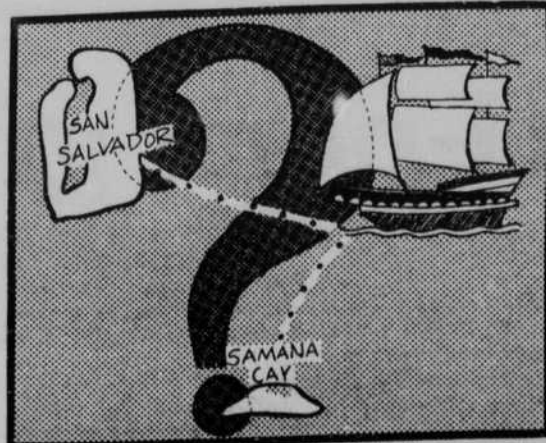
BOSTON — A new reading of the Atlantic ocean's winds and currents argues that Christopher Columbus' first landing in the New World really was on a small island that was long the favorite of historians.

For decades, historians believed Columbus first landed in 1492 on Watling Island, later formally renamed San Salvador, in the Bahamas. Last year, however, the National Geographic Society analyzed ocean conditions that would have pushed his ships slightly sideways and concluded that Columbus really set foot first on Samana Cay, an obscure isle 64 miles to the southeast.

Now, oceanographer Philip Richardson and computer programmer Roger Goldsmith from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution have recharted the trip, estimating Columbus' position for each half hour of the voyage. They said Columbus probably landed where experts had believed all along.

"On the face of it, our data leans pretty strongly toward San Salvador," Richardson said.

But Joseph Judge, a National



Kim Nability/Daily Nebraskan

Geographic editor who led his magazine's effort to find Columbus' true landing place, stands by his calculations and said Samana still looks like the right spot.

"The short answer is that we took the matter up with the experts, and they say Richardson is not really correct," Judge said.

Richardson and the National Geographic team both tried to retrace Columbus' course by figuring the currents and winds that

would have pushed his ships sideways. But they used different methods.

The National Geographic's calculations relied on Navy pilot charts that show the directions and speed of prevailing currents. Richardson, however, used the average of prevailing currents in a spot rather than relying on the charts.

He said those calculations hit San Salvador almost on the nose.

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Reagan calls Bork's decision gratifying

WASHINGTON — President Reagan indicated Saturday he would have acceded to a request by appeals court Judge Robert H. Bork to withdraw as a Supreme Court nominee, but said he was gratified by Bork's announcement Friday that he would carry on.

In his weekly radio address to the nation, broadcast from Camp David, Md., Reagan said, "I won't easily forget" how Bork described the agony of deciding whether to remain in the fight. But Reagan also said he shared Bork's feeling that there should be "no illusions" about his prospects for confirmation.

In the Democratic Party's response, Sen. George Mitchell of Maine said that "when the United States Senate votes on the nomination of Judge Bork, nearly 60 senators, including several Republicans, will vote no."

"Judge Bork's views are inconsistent with two centuries of American constitutional law and the common understanding of the American people," Mitchell said, adding that Bork has little appreciation for Americans' right to privacy.

Reagan said Bork's record had been "subjected to distortions and misrepresentations," and said that "while I refused to withdraw his name, I understood why Judge Bork himself might choose to do so."

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