# News Digest

By the Associated Press
Edited by Bob Nelson

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## Three Italian jets collide, killing 38

RAMSTEIN, West Germany — Three Italian jets collided at an air show at a U.S. military base Sunday, and one crashed into a crowd of spectators and exploded. Officials said 38 people were killed and at least 100 injured, many of them children.

The ZDF television network showed a giant ball of fire engulfing the spectators, who ran in panic with their clothes burning and their hair singed. It showed cars and trucks in flames at the Ramstein Air Base 60 miles southwest of Frankfurt.

Some people stood in shock as a thick cloud of smoke enveloped them, and others ran toward the scene to try to give first aid.

The network also showed the plane as it veered toward the horrified crowd out of control before bursting into a ball of flames that appeared to be at least 100 feet high.

The network said the other two planes crashed away from the crowd of several hundred people. The three jets were part of a 10-plane Italian Air Force demonstration team, "Frecce Tricolori," that was flying 65 yards above the ground, ZDF said.

"The Germans have announced . . . that 31 people died," Ramstein Air Base spokesman Doug Moore told The Associated Press by telephone.

He said the dead included the three pilots, and "those dead on the ground are a mix of civilian and military."

Officials said at least 100 people were injured, many of them seriously. "A large number has serious burns," said police spokesman Willi Hollaender in nearby Kaiserslautern.

The ARD television network said that "for about 60 of the injured, it's questionable whether they will survive their injuries." It did not attribute the report.

"There are many children among the dead and injured," said Kris Kumpf, a German medical assistant who helped treat the injured. "The worst part of it is, we're still trying to find some of the parents," she said, trying to hold back tears.

She said most of the injured had badly burned backs from when they turned and tried to run away from the flaming jet.

Moore said investigators were still piecing together the sequence of events. He said it was not certain whether all three planes collided at once or whether two first hit each other and the third later became involved.

Hollaender told the AP that the planes involved were Airmacchi MB 339As.

In Rome, Italian Premier Ciriaco DeMita expressed the profound sorrow of his government at "the terrible disaster."

## *Bentsen damns Quayle with faint praise*

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen said Sunday that Sen. Dan Quayle probably could grow into the job of being president if it became necessary.

It was the faintest of praise from a 67-year-old Texas Democrat seeking to contrast his experience with that of a 41-year-old Indiana Republican — and to make the difference a major issue in their campaign for vice president.

Appearing on NBC's "Meet The Press," Bentsen was asked whether Quayle was qualified to be president.

"Frankly, he would not have been on my short list as I look over Senate colleagues," said Bentsen. "He obviously was on the short list of the hard right. . . .

"Now, I wouldn't say that he couldn't grow into the job; he probably could. But if a tragedy befell a president, you'd have to be able to move in immediately and take over and do what has to be done in facing whatever issues that confront you at that time."

Among the four candidates, Bentsen dominated the public political stage Sunday.

Quayle attended church in Sacramento, Calif., and then made the cross-country flight home to Washington for a couple of days' rest and planning for this week's swing through Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

The contenders for the No. 1 chair in the Oval Office — Republican George Bush and Democrat Michael Dukakis — kept things low-key.

Jesse Jackson assured another group of television interviewers — on ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley" — that he was behind the Dukakis-Bentsen ticket, but left it a little fuzzy how far behind.

To a questioner's suggestion that he had not quite made up his mind on how hard to play the game, Jackson said:

"Well, I've made up my mind, but of course, I need signals of sensitivity that reflect the urgency of now. We must keep expanding beyond the present Democratic base with an intense voter registration campaign that has not yet been agreed upon and planned. There must be more inclusion at the senior policy positions in order that there might be more sensitivity around Governor Dukakis."

Bentsen's remarks about Quayle's experience were a continuation of the Democratic strategy of calling attention to the better-known Texas senator's 17 years in the Senate compared to Quayle's 7-year tenure.

## in brief
NEWS

### Soviets may have had prior access to secrets

FRANKFURT, West Germany -- Soviet bloc agents may have had access to NATO defense secrets at a U.S. Army base for decades before a former U.S. sergeant was charged with spying there, a West German newspaper said Sunday.

West Germany last week announced the arrest of former U.S. Army Sgt. Clyde Lee Conrad, who since the late 1970s allegedly sold classified information from the Army base in Bad Kreuznach.

Officials said Conrad, 41, revealed secrets about nuclear missile bases, pipeline systems and troop strength to Hungarian agents, who passed them on to the Kremlin and other Soviet bloc countries.

But the spy ring may have been receiving NATO information long before Conrad became active, according to the Welt am Sonntag newspaper, which quoted information from unidentified U.S. investigators.

Conrad was in charge of safekeeping classified NATO information, which was held in a safe at the Bad Kreuznach base. The newspaper said U.S. security officers believe Conrad's predecessor at the base documentation center also worked for the Hungarian secret service.

### Killer bees continue northward advance

TAPACHULA, Mexico -- Africanized "killer bees" are spreading north and will arrive in the United States in less than two years despite efforts to stop them or alter their behavior, officials say.

The bees killed one resident of Tapachula, a town near the Guatemalan border, when a man tripped on an unseen hive. They also have harassed herds of cattle and made grazing difficult as far as 650 feet from a hive.

The bees will be in the United States by 1990, said Dr. Gustavo Rodriguez Eres, Mexican director of a joint U.S.-Mexican bee control program.

The bees are expected to spread into the southern United States, but once there, their northward progress will be slowed by cold weather.

### Executions down in capital of capital punishment

HUNTSVILLE, Texas -- Executions are down this year, even in the nation's capital punishment capital, as courts "fine-tune" the laws and death-row inmates wait to see what effect that will have on their cases.

In Texas this year, only Robert Streetman has been belted to the gurney and executed by injection, while eight convicts have been put to death nationally. Last year, Texas accounted for six of the 25 U.S. executions and 10 or 18 in 1986.

Texas has a great deal to do with the national drop in executions, said Tanya Coke, research director for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. "The courts heard major death penalty cases which challenge the constitutionality of the Texas law and essentially held them up."


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