

Wealthiest 2 percent hold more than GNP

WASHINGTON - Nearly 28.5 percent of America's personal wealth is in the hands of 3.3 million persons whose holdings exceed the entire gross national product, the Internal Revenue Service reports.

The IRS says the richest 1.6 percent of U.S. adults -- those with assets of \$500,000 or more -- had total holdings of \$4.3 trillion and a combined net worth of \$3.8 trillion in 1986, the latest year for which figures are available.

By comparison, the value of all goods and services produced in the United States in 1986 -- the GNP -- was \$4.1 trillion.

Four years earlier, 23 percent of personal wealth in the United States was held by 2.2 million people with a net worth of \$2.1 trillion.

The IRS report suggests the United States has well over 1 million millionaires. In 1986, the IRS estimated, there were 941,000 adults with a net worth of \$1 million or more, almost twice the 475,000 reported in 1982 and five times the 180,000 in 1976. The number has surely climbed since then.

The report, based on estate-tax returns, tracks other recent findings that the number of wealthy people and their share of the pie grew sharply over the past decade. Those studies attributed the increase to an economy that grew for seven straight years and to major changes in tax law.

The IRS study estimates the 3.3 million wealthiest Americans had an average net worth in 1986 of \$1.13 million. The portion of women among the super-rich continued to grow; they accounted for nearly 43 percent of total assets and on the average owed less and had a greater net worth than men.

Past studies found the wealthy putting the biggest portion of their money into real estate, but now the No. 1 investment choice is corporate stock.

"Considering the relative performance of the real estate and stock markets between 1982 and 1986, this reversal was not unexpected," wrote IRS analysts Marvin Schwartz and Barry Johnson.

More than one-quarter of the richest adults were in California (558,000) and New York (340,000). Texas, battered by declining oil prices, dropped from second to third place with 250,000; Florida had 238,000; Illinois, 148,500.

On a per capita basis, the IRS said, Connecticut had the largest concentration of wealthy people, at 327 per 10,000 adults. California had 299 per 10,000. The national average was 198 per 10,000.

Average net worth of the rich ranged from \$473,510 in North Dakota to \$1.25 million in Oregon.

E. German lawmakers set unification date

EAST BERLIN - East German lawmakers ended their anguished and much-ridiculed battle over the date of unification and early today voted to merge the foundering nation with West Germany on Oct. 3.

Parliament burst into applause when the vote was announced.

After an 11-hour Parliament session that lasted until today's predawn hours, lawmakers voted 294 to 62 to make Oct. 3 the date the nation becomes part of a single Germany. Seven lawmakers abstained.

The date was a compromise between the major factions in Parliament after a weeks of battling that tore apart the broad coalition government of Prime Minister

Lothar de Maiziere.

Earlier, lawmakers rejected a proposal by the small German Social Union party to unify immediately.

Parliament also passed a treaty that will allow all-German elections on Dec. 2. The West German Parliament is to vote on the same treaty today. Easy passage is expected.

De Maiziere urged lawmakers to accept Oct. 3 as the historic day of German unity and end the seemingly pointless squabbling over whether unity should take place in August, September or October.

"Many people have gotten the impression discussions over a date are more important to us than the solution of crucial problems," he

told Parliament.

The lawmakers met in special session to try to resolve differences over the date of unity.

The Social Democrats have insisted it occur Sept. 15. As East Germany's second-largest party, their approval is needed to pass a unification proposal.

De Maiziere's Christian Democrats on Wednesday as a compromise proposed Oct. 3 as the merger date.

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's conservative government said earlier in the day that unity could occur on East Germany's Oct. 7 birthday or one day earlier.

Kohl and de Maiziere, his East German ally, previously backed

merging the two countries on Oct. 14, but the Social Democrats balked.

The Social Democrats want unity quickly so West Germany can more quickly assume direct responsibility for East Germany's failing economy.

The Social Democrats also want early unification so that Kohl will be forced to admit the staggering costs of bailing out East Germany. This could cost the Christian Democrats at the polls in December.

West Germany says it is crucial that unity not occur before the Oct. 1-2 meeting in New York City of foreign ministers from the 35-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

NASA regains radio contact with troublesome Venus probe

PASADENA, Calif. - Troubled NASA restored intermittent radio contact with Magellan on Wednesday after losing touch with the malfunctioning spacecraft for the second time since it started orbiting Venus.

A brief "blip" of a radio signal was received by NASA's Deep Space Network tracking station in Goldstone, Calif., at 12:30 p.m., about 17 1/2 hours after contact was lost Tuesday night, said Bob MacMillin, spokesman at the space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

The signal indicated the spaceship finally had accepted repeated computer commands to start spinning and send radio signals into space so that some of those signals reached Earth, he added.

At about 2 p.m., NASA again locked onto Magellan's signal temporarily, MacMillin said.

Engineers expected to receive more intermittent signals before giving Magellan orders to stop spinning and keep an antenna aimed at Earth. Those orders were designed to restore steady radio communications.

Before the initial blip was received, National Aeronautics and Space Administration officials expressed optimism they would overcome the problem.

"I wouldn't say people are thrilled, but nobody's panicking. We're very optimistic we'll be able to regain contact with the spacecraft, figure out what's wrong and continue the mis-

sion," said Ellen Stofan, assistant to Magellan's chief scientist.

MacMillin said the radio signal that restored intermittent contact was very brief because the spinning spacecraft's radio signal was just finishing a sweep past Earth as Magellan emerged from behind Venus. The next signal lasted about 20 minutes because the spacecraft was not behind Venus and its radio beam could sweep across the face of the Earth.

Potential loss of the \$413 million spaceship, the centerpiece of a \$744 million mission, threatened NASA with another severe setback.

The agency temporarily grounded its shuttle fleet this summer due to hydrogen fuel leaks, and also discovered the \$1.5 billion Hubble Space Telescope's performance was badly impaired by a flawed mirror.

Planetary scientist Steve Wall said Magellan's radio signal fluttered in and out of contact before fading away Tuesday night, indicating an unknown problem made the spacecraft turn so the antenna it was using at the time no longer pointed at Earth.

"We do not believe anything like a massive failure occurred," he said.

Engineers spent Wednesday sending increasingly specific computer commands to Magellan to make it start spinning slowly while beaming radio signals across space. That activity, in which Magellan's radio beam acts much like a ray of light from a lighthouse, was the first step toward

restoring steady two-way communication, engineer David Okerson said.

The spacecraft didn't respond to early sets of commands, prompting MacMillin to declare: "Bad news. Nothing. Not a peep out of it."

But Wall had correctly predicted "awfully good" chances Magellan eventually would receive the radioed commands because its receiving antenna can detect signals from any part of the sky except directly behind the spaceship. Magellan also changes position as it orbits Venus "meaning

the signals from Earth should reach the spacecraft," MacMillin said.

Venus and Magellan were almost 149 million miles from Earth on Wednesday, Wall said. Venus is Earth's nearest neighbor, and is the second planet from the sun.

Magellan was designed to use radar to peer through Venus' thick clouds to make the most detailed pictures and maps yet of the rugged landscape, where temperatures reach 900 degrees Fahrenheit due to an out-of-control "greenhouse effect."

Bush

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insula."

Cheney and Powell had been expected to report to him that the United States was approaching a target of 100,000 military personnel in the region, said one source, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Presidential press secretary Marlin Fitzwater said in a statement that "the actual number of reserve personnel to be called to active duty will depend upon the operational needs of the armed forces" in the gulf area.

While not saying which reserve skills Bush wanted to tap, Fitzwater noted that the reserves are an integral part of military airlift, food and water handling, surface transportation, cargo handling, medical services, construction and intelligence.

A Pentagon statement said some

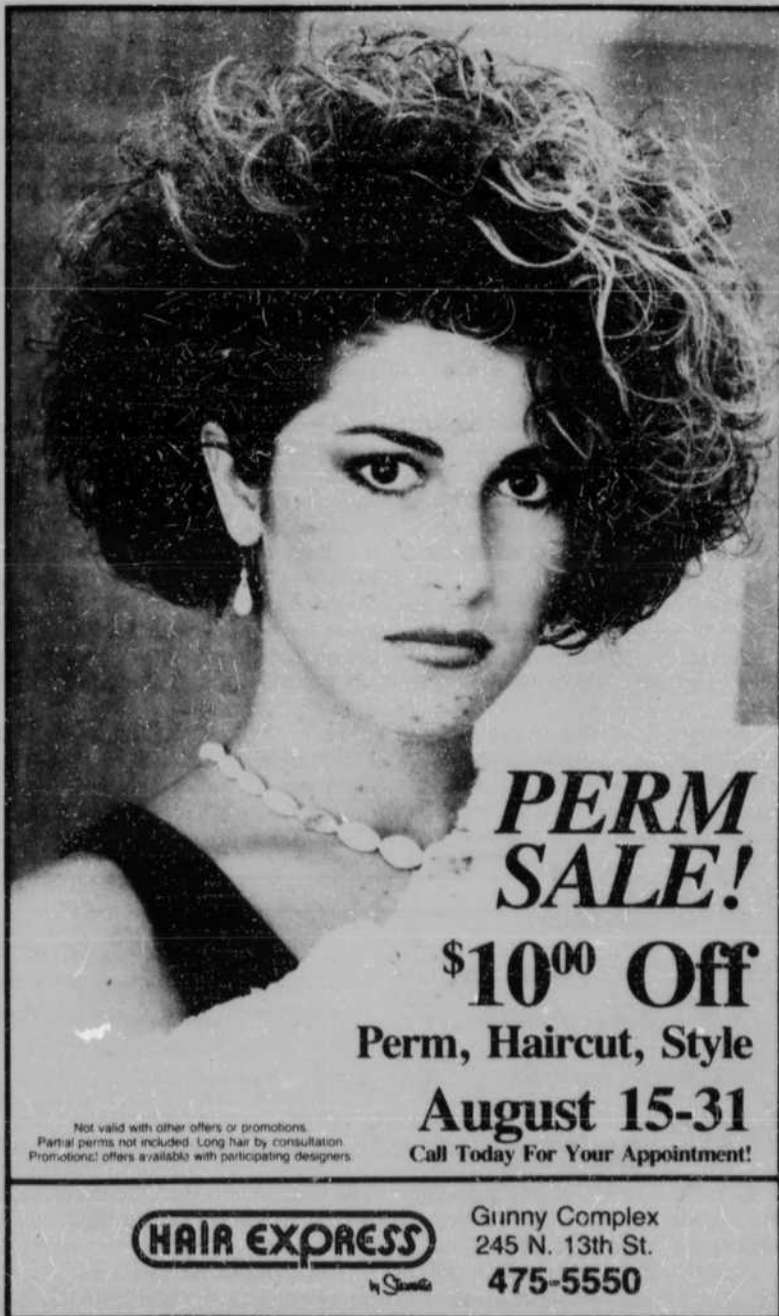
reserves called to active duty would be shipped to Saudi Arabia while others would remain on U.S. shores replacing troops already dispatched to the Mideast.

"These reservists will support Operation Desert Shield by joining active duty units deployed in and around the Arabian Peninsula or by filling critical military support vacancies in the United States or elsewhere," the statement said.

An administration official said the Pentagon expected to call up 40,000 reservists "between now and the end of August."

Short of declaring a national emergency, the president can mobilize up to 200,000 of the nation's 1.2 million reservists for as long as 180 days. It is up to the Pentagon to determine how the total is divided among services.

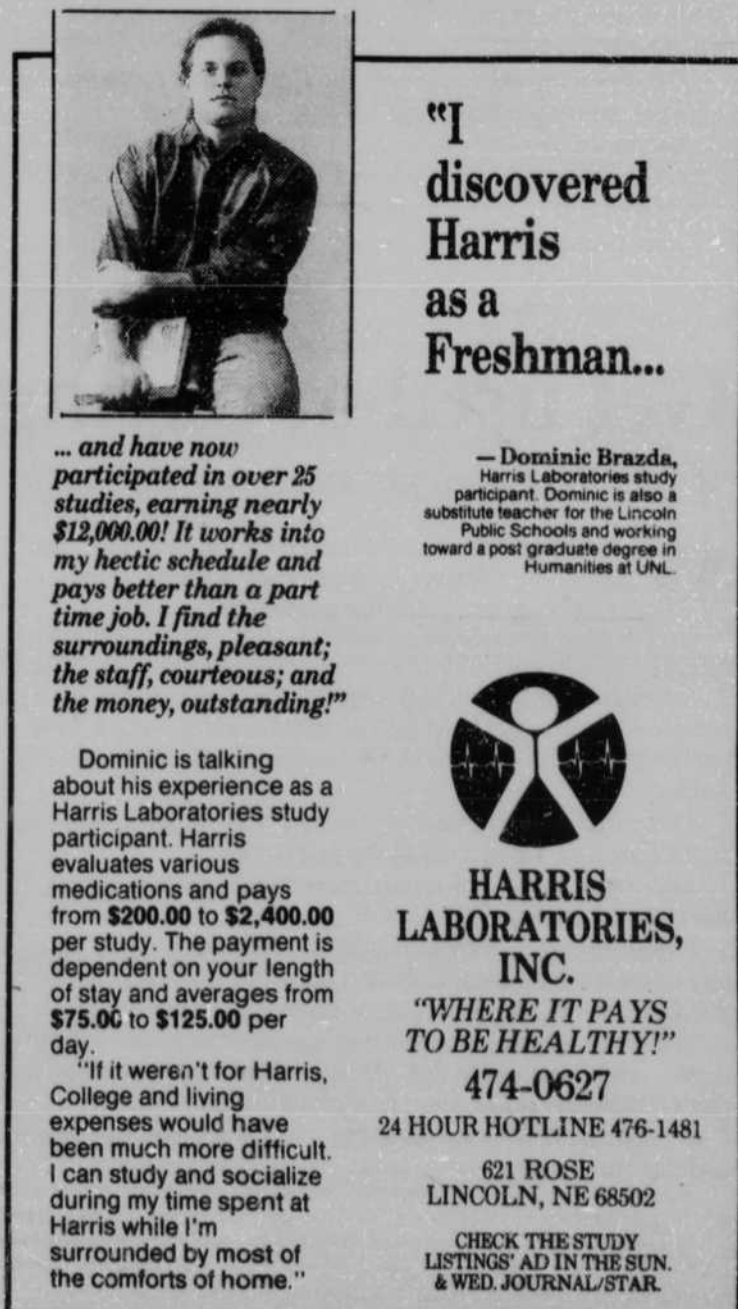
"At this time we do not anticipate approaching the full 200,000 authority provided by law," Fitzwater said.



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