

House passes last bill of GOP crime package

WASHINGTON — The House passed the centerpiece of the Republican anti-crime package Tuesday, voting to create block grants for local governments and eliminating President Clinton's program to hire more police.

But the latest milestone in the House GOP's "Contract with America" agenda faces a far less certain future in the Senate. And Clinton, who has demanded that his police program remain untouched, has threatened to veto it if it reaches his desk.

"I'm not going to let them wreck our crime bill, which is putting 100,000 new cops on the street," Clinton said.

The sixth and final bill in the crime package was passed by a 238-192 largely party-line vote.

The bill replaces crime-prevention programs and a commitment to help put 100,000 new cops on the streets — two cornerstones of the 1994 anti-crime law — with a \$10 billion block grant that local governments can use as they see fit to fight crime.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said the Judiciary Committee he chairs will have to rewrite the House package to secure Senate passage and come up with a bill that Clinton will be compelled to sign.

The crime package faces a precarious future because of Senate filibuster rules that could draw out debate indefinitely, Hatch said.

"We're going to have to come up with our own Senate bill," he

said, predicting it would take at least a month before it emerges from his committee.

White House chief of staff Leon Panetta said the administration believed it had enough votes to sustain a veto of a crime bill.

The block grant bill would give local governments \$2 billion a year over the next five years for crime-fighting, replacing the \$7.5 billion for community police and \$3.9 billion for prevention programs that last year's law authorized for 1996-2000.

Republicans argued that local governments are better able than Congress to decide how best to fight local crime.

The other five bills in the package, all passed last week, would:

-Require criminals to pay restitution to their victims.

-Ease restrictions on courts using unlawfully seized evidence.

-Streamline deportation of criminal aliens.

-Provide \$10.5 billion for prison construction while requiring states receiving the money to impose strict sentencing on violent criminals.

-Allowing death-row inmates only one year to file appeals to federal courts.

Passage gave the new Republican majority their fifth major legislative triumph less than halfway through the 100 days in which their "Contract With America" promised votes on a number of issues.

Crime bill

The House passed the last bill of their six-part anti-crime package Tuesday. How the bill differs from the crime law passed last year.



The Police or Prevention Block Grants Bill

1995: Authorizes \$10 billion in block grants, which state and local authorities may use for police or prevention programs.
1994: Authorized \$8.6 billion to hire 100,000 new police officers, billions more for prevention programs.
Both: \$1.6 billion to curb violence against women and \$383 million for drug treatment for prisoners

The five bills passed last week would...

- Require criminals to pay restitution to their victims
- Ease restrictions on courts using unlawfully seized evidence
- Streamline deportation of criminal aliens
- Provide \$10.5 billion for prison construction; states would have to impose strict sentencing to receive the money
- Allow death-row inmates only one year to file appeals to federal courts

What's next: The Senate will vote on the package, then it moves to President Clinton, who may veto it.

AP/Eileen Gionton, Wm. J. Castello

Peru wants cease-fire in Ecuador border war

LIMA, Peru — Peru announced a unilateral cease-fire in its border war with Ecuador Monday night, according to a Foreign Ministry statement. The cease-fire will go into effect Tuesday, the communique said.

In the statement, Peru called on Ecuador to cooperate in the cease-fire to avoid worse "bloodshed among brother nations."

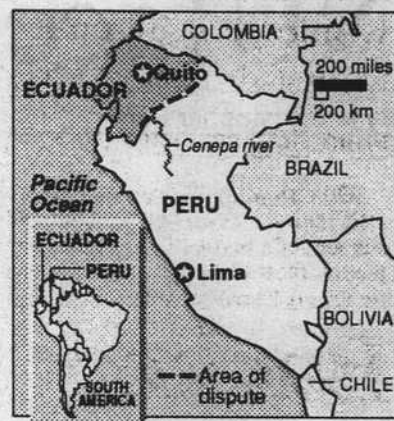
There was no immediate reaction from the Ecuadorean government. But a television station in the Ecuadorean capital of Quito reported that officials were surprised and skeptical about the announcement.

According to the communique, Peru would invite a commission of observers to verify the cease-fire in a disputed 48-mile border zone. The border zone is in the Amazon jungle, 590 miles north of Lima and 220 miles south of Quito.

President Alberto Fujimori planned to inform the governments of the four nations trying to negotiate an end to the fighting of Peru's decision, the statement said.

The communique said Peru was confident that Chile, Brazil, Argentina and the United States could find a permanent solution to the conflict that broke out Jan. 26.

The four nations are guarantors of a 1942 treaty that ended a war in which Ecuador lost about half its



AP Amazon territory to Peru. Ecuador later renounced the treaty.

Earlier Monday in Lima, news reports said that Peruvian troops had taken the Ecuadorean base of Tiwintza at the headwaters of the Cenepe River. The reports couldn't be immediately confirmed.

Fujimori had said the base was the last of three that Peruvian forces needed to take to remove Ecuadorean soldiers in the disputed region, a 40-square-mile area in the Cordillera del Condor mountains.

According to the last figures available, 36 Peruvian soldiers have died in the fighting and 60 have been wounded. Ecuador upped its casualty figures Monday to 10 dead and 37 wounded.

News... in a Minute

Alcohol, bad diet equal cancer

WASHINGTON — Mixing alcohol with a bad diet steeply increases the risk of colon cancer, researchers report.

Dr. Edward Giovannucci of the Harvard School of Public Health said Tuesday that a study of the health habits and diets of more than 51,000 male health-care professionals showed that those who had two or more drinks daily while following a poor diet were three times as likely to develop colon cancer.

Giovannucci said Tuesday in an interview that alcohol seems to aggravate the effects of a bad diet that was low in fruits, vegetables, fish and low-fat foods.

Such a diet, he said, deprives people of two ingredients in those foods: methionine, an important amino acid, and folate, a nutrient that is key to making methionine.

"The poor diet is a risk factor alone, but it's particularly strong when you see it together with alcohol consumption," said the researcher.

Stealing for love

OMAHA — Robbers who hit an Omaha drug store on Tuesday, Valentine's Day, apparently did it for love.

Omaha police said two men, one of them armed with a revolver, held up Lothrop Drug store. One shot was fired into the air as the men got away by running from the store.

No injuries were reported. The only things taken: three boxes of Valentine's Day candy.

Cubans come ashore in Florida

MANASOTA BEACH, Fla. — The man walked out of the water on the fog-shrouded Gulf Coast beach and spoke to Gary Grathmann, who had been searching for shark's teeth.

"Is this the U.S.?" he asked.

When Grathmann said yes, the man responded: "Thank God." More than 50 Cuban refugees reached Florida's Gulf Coast on Tuesday, some wading ashore and others picked up off shore by the Coast Guard.

It was the largest movement of Cuban refugees since 35,000 people took to rafts last summer to cross the 90-mile-wide Florida Straits to the

Florida Keys. This group, however, came ashore 170 miles north of the Keys, avoiding the Straits where the Coast Guard still searches for would-be refugees.

While immigration officials and police tried to sort out the Cubans' stories, the refugees told reporters they had made the voyage from Cuba south to the Cayman Islands in September, and on Friday headed out on a 700-mile voyage around Cuba to Florida's western coast.

In the Cayman Islands, officials said Tuesday that three boatloads of refugees had left there last week. They blamed smugglers and said the

small British dependency is unable to stop them.

Coast Guard Petty Officer Mark Mackowiak in Miami said the trip was under investigation as a possible smuggling mission, but "policy doesn't allow me to discuss ongoing law enforcement."

Forty-three refugees, including six women, were taken to a community center where they were fed, questioned and given fresh clothing before being sent to a Immigration and Naturalization Service's detention center outside Miami, officials said.

Cochran continues campaign against handling of evidence

LOS ANGELES — The first police officer on the scene of the murders in the O.J. Simpson case acknowledged Tuesday he didn't preserve a melting cup of ice cream or check the temperature of Nicole Brown Simpson's bath water.

That evidence the defense suggested could have helped fix the time of the slayings.

But Officer Robert Riske repeatedly told jurors it wasn't his job to preserve or photograph evidence or to watch the experts do so. He said he was there to look for victims and "secure the scene."

Defense attorney Johnnie Cochran Jr. undertook an item-by-item dissection of the evidence in a campaign to cast doubt on police work in the case and suggest that investigators overlooked or mishandled evidence.

The officer said repeatedly that he was careful not to disturb any evidence because he wanted to preserve

the crime scene for the investigators.

Riske said he did not check trash cans inside the home, did not turn off the television or the music playing on the stereo, did not try to open a Jeep whose passenger door was slightly ajar, and did not check Ms. Simpson's blood-spattered dog for evidence.

Riske spent all morning answering questions. Then his boss, Sgt. David Rossi, a 25-year member of the force at the time of the slayings, took the stand and became the second officer to testify that a single bloody glove was found at the crime scene before Detective Mark Fuhrman arrived.

The defense has suggested Fuhrman planted the matching glove at Simpson's house.

During Riske's testimony, the officer said he used a phone in Ms. Simpson's house to call his supervisors, unaware he might be obscuring fingerprints on the phone.

Simpson trial update

Tuesday, Feb. 14, 1995

► Defense lawyer F. Lee Bailey delivered his first cross-examination, questioning Sgt. David Rossi about his actions at the crime scene the morning of the murders. He said the police were too slow in notifying O.J. Simpson, although he could have been a target of killers.

► Officer Robert Riske said he didn't preserve a cup of ice cream or check the temperature of Nicole Brown Simpson's bath water. That evidence could have been used to fix the time of death.

► Tomorrow: Rossi will return to the stand

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