

# News Digest

PAGE 2

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## Clinton aims to improve D.C.

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton told District of Columbia residents Sunday he's dedicated to making the nation's beleaguered capital "a shining city on the hill for all America."

"I don't believe our national government has always been the best neighbor to the city of Washington," Clinton admitted, but he added: "We are committed to becoming a better neighbor."

Mayor Marion Barry said he appreciated Clinton's comments.

"I think it was good he came to point out that the present government has not been good neighbors," Barry said during a later, unrelated White House reception. "I hope that (Senate Majority Leader) Trent Lott and (House Speaker) Newt Gingrich hear that."

Crumbling conditions in the district were the focus of Clinton's visit to Metropolitan Baptist Church, in the heart of the district's black community. But the subtext clearly was to show Clinton himself crossing the invisible barriers that make religious worship one of America's most segregated practices.

The visit came as Clinton's yearlong campaign for racial reconciliation shifted into a higher gear after last week's town hall meeting in Akron, Ohio. That gathering was followed by several others convened by Clinton aides — one of which has drawn fire for having a black-only audience.

That closed, invitation-only event last week at a Dallas museum, presided over by black Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater, was organized by Dallas Municipal Court Judge

Vonceil Hill, a friend of Slater's.

Sylvia Mathews, deputy chief of staff overseeing the race effort, said the Dallas meeting was an "isolated incident" that would not be repeated. Slater's spokesman Bill Schulz said the reaction was an encouraging sign that people of all races are eager to talk.

"Clearly this was a missed opportunity," Schulz said.

Hill told the Dallas Morning News that having an all-black audience did not hurt the discussion. "I don't believe the president has indicated that every dialogue must start in the same way," she said.

But Abigail Thernstrom, a conservative author who took part in the Akron dialogue, told "Fox News Sunday" that the exclusion of whites was unfair. She urged Clinton to add divergent views to his advisory board on race.

"I want to hear the White House say it is racist," Thernstrom said. "You can make more of an effort so we don't have a monologue here."

Although Sunday's event also played to a largely black audience, aides hoped images of Clinton reading letters from black children, singing along with soulful hymns and entering the debate over the district's future would nudge the national conversation beyond the feel-good platitudes that came out of Akron.

Metropolitan's pastor, the Rev. Dr. H. Beecher Hicks Jr., took it there, saying blacks must not use the legacy of slavery as an excuse for perpetuating wretched conditions in Washington.

"There comes a moment in my life when I must

declare liberation from my past," Hicks said. "We will not lay all of our problems at the feet of racism. Nor will we wink at mismanagement and incompetence that we have heaped upon ourselves."

Clinton did not promise new policies or tax relief for the district. He reiterated his support for local home rule and pledged to pay closer attention to the problems of those who live in the White House's shadow.

"One of the gifts I hope I and our administration can leave for the 21st century is a national capital that is a shining city on the hill for all America," he said.

Currently, district government is overseen by a congressionally appointed control board, and Congress has final say over the district's budget. Many citizens believe the controls exist because Washington's population is mostly black, and the city's voters have placed mostly blacks among their leaders.

"Washington has gotten a lot of lectures from people in national politics about being more responsible," Clinton said. "But in the essence of our Constitution is the idea that responsibility requires freedom. I want Washington, D.C., to be able to run its own affairs."

Clinton said he chose to attend Metropolitan, with a black membership, rather than his usual church, the racially diverse Foundry United Methodist, to encourage more Americans to worship at least once with people of different races or faiths. The two churches are only about 10 blocks apart.

## Provocative playwright wins Nobel

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP) — Dario Fo wore a conservative black suit Sunday when he gave his Nobel Literature Prize lecture — but that was about the only way the noted provocateur conformed to tradition.

As guests entered the ornate auditorium of the strait-laced Swedish Academy, ushers as usual handed them texts of the lecture. But their eyes widened when they turned the cover page.

Instead of seeing neatly printed paragraphs full of carefully worded thoughts, they found 25 pages of brightly colored drawings, some of them unsettling — including several of pigs and men undergoing genetic manipulation.

A few words were scrawled amid the drawings: "provocazione ... ignoranza del nostro tempo (provocation ... ignorance of our times)."

"Friends of mine, noted men of letters, have in various radio and television interviews declared: 'The highest prize should no doubt be awarded to the members of the Swedish Academy, for having had the courage this year to award the Nobel Prize to a jester,'" Fo said in his introduction.

Then he launched into the speech, extemporizing as he referred to the same pages the audience was regarding. From them he spun a tale of deep affection for his small hometown, outrage at political repression and the devaluation of life through genetic manipulation; he ended with a statement of devotion to his wife, actress Franca Rame.

The gilded ceiling of the room echoed with laughter and applause as Fo demonstrated the qualities shown in some 70 plays; a torrent of words, burlesque gestures and noises and the sense that madness is overtaking the stage, followed by the realization that Fo is a craftsman with icy control.

The Nobel Prize lectures are expected by tradition to last 40 to 45 minutes — and Fo concluded the chaotic capering exactly on time.

Fo, author of plays including "Can't Pay, Won't Pay" and "Accidental Death of an Anarchist," is admired by many for combining biting social commentary with side-splitting comedy — and reviled by many others.

The Vatican was distressed by his winning the prestigious award; Fo has sharply satirized the church, notably in "Comic Mystery," one of his most famous plays.

For many years, the Italian government banned his work from state broadcasting channels and unsuccessfully prosecuted him on several occasions for allegedly defaming police and other offenses.

## Global warming concerns scientist

KYOTO, Japan (AP) — The American leading the international scientific effort to track global warming says he fears the world may repeat the mistake it made on ozone — wait for a near-catastrophe before acting decisively.

"Suddenly, the Antarctic ozone hole appeared, a huge geophysical change," climate scientist Robert T. Watson recalled.

With global warming, he said, "I don't want to find a 'smoking gun' in quite that way."

In an interview with The Associated Press, Watson also warned that the global climate observation system is deteriorating, just when it may be needed most, because of budget cuts by governments in many nations.

"It will degrade our ability to say to what degree our climate is changing," said the former NASA scientist, recently named chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a U.N.-sponsored network of more than 2,000 scientists monitoring the global climate.

Watson is participating in the week-old Kyoto climate change conference, where delegates worked behind closed doors Sunday to reach agreement by Wednesday on a complex

plan to rein in industrial nations' emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

The gases, mostly from combustion of fossil fuels, trap heat in the atmosphere.

The IPCC, established in 1988 to coordinate research on global warming, warned in a major 1995 report that emissions appeared already to have boosted temperatures slightly — and would raise them as much as 6 degrees more by 2100 if not controlled.

That would shift climate zones, make weather more turbulent and expand oceans, flooding islands and coasts.

The Kyoto talks are expected to lead to only limited rollbacks in emissions by 2010 or so.

But "it's still a critical step," Watson said. "It will start to send a message to governments and industries that they have to get their energy policies right."

Watson, 49, has the rapid-fire delivery and untamed beard of a scientist in a hurry. A veteran research manager, he was a White House science aide in the first Clinton administration, and previously worked for NASA for 13 years.

Beginning in 1980, the British-born scientist was in charge of the global effort to assess

the "eating away" by manmade chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) of atmospheric ozone, which helps protect life on Earth from harmful ultraviolet rays that can cause skin cancer and other biological damage.

He notes that some of the same handful of scientific "skeptics" questioning global warming today had challenged theories about ozone depletion in the 1980s. Then NASA discovered the fast-developing ozone "hole" in the late 1980s, and world governments rushed to ban CFCs.

"Still, we are going to be living with ozone depletion for another 50 or 60 years," Watson said.

Scientists now theorize that the physical chain reactions of global warming, phenomena only partly understood, might also produce such sudden events — a slowdown in Atlantic Ocean currents, for example, that could drive down temperatures in Europe.

The lesson, according to Watson: "Yes, there is some uncertainty over global warming. ... But I see no reason to be complacent behind scientific uncertainty."

## Albright completes first year

PARIS (AP) — It was a year ago Friday that the telephone rang in her home in Georgetown. President Clinton was on the line, asking Madeleine Albright to be secretary of state in his second term.

She said yes, of course, and in the ensuing 12 months has grappled with postwar Bosnia's problems, Russia's relationship with an expanding NATO, Iraq's resistance to U.N. weapons inspectors and China's blotted record on human rights and proliferation of dangerous weapons technology.

Like her recent predecessors, however, the Czech-born former university professor is finding that managing Middle East peacemaking is by far her toughest challenge.

Over the last quarter-century, the conflict between the Arabs and Israel has absorbed all American secretaries

of state, from Henry Kissinger to Warren Christopher. With mixed results, almost all of them have flown exhausting shuttles in the region, prescribing formulas for peace that most of the time were rejected.

All wanted concessions from Israel. All skirted the explosive questions of eventual Palestinian statehood and Jerusalem's future. All assumed the United States had a vital security interest in the two sides' reaching accords.

As she gets drawn deeper into so far intractable disputes over land, sovereignty and terrorism, heaping one set of meetings with Palestinian and Israeli leaders on another, Albright could be staking her reputation as secretary of state more on the Middle East than on any other foreign policy front.

Her counterparts in protracted and

painful diplomacy, Benjamin Netanyahu, prime minister of Israel, and Yasser Arafat, leader of the autonomous Palestinian Authority and chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, also have much at stake.

Albright put off her first trip to the Middle East until September, her ninth month on the job. When she finally went, she found little basis for concord. Declaring she would not return just to "tread water," Albright nevertheless has immersed herself deeper and deeper into the details of peacemaking.

Over the last three weeks, she has traveled twice to western Europe for back-to-back meetings with Netanyahu and Arafat. She decided Saturday to return again in midmonth.

"We will be able, at that stage, I think, to move forward," Albright said in Geneva.

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