

News Digest

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Bush strict about annual spending strays

■ The President will veto any spending that deviates from his proposed 4 percent increase.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Bush will veto any annual spending bill that costs more than he wants, Vice President Dick Cheney said Sunday, warning Republicans not to stray from the administration's budget priorities. Only days ago, budget writers in the House and Senate questioned whether they could stay within the budget levels Bush has proposed — a 4 percent increase for discretionary programs, which constitute everything the govern-

ment does, except automatically paid benefits like Medicaid.

"If, in fact, bills come down with items in it that he thinks are inappropriate or excessive in terms of the total amount, I don't think he will be bashful about using his veto," Cheney said on CBS' "Face the Nation." "I think we'll come to something very close to what the president has recommended."

The vice president was responding to a question about comments by the Senate Budget Committee chairman, Republican Pete Domenici of New Mexico, who said the 4 percent increase would be "very hard to live on" and that Congress has different spending priorities than the

president's.

In the House, committee chairmen have raised the possibility of higher spending on agriculture and science, for example.

In the past three years, discretionary spending has increased by an average of more than 6 percent annually. Last year, it grew by 8.5 percent, which Cheney said was unacceptable.

"As soon as the surplus arrived, Congress and the prior administration started spending money in a rather profligate fashion," said Cheney, dismissing the notion that the Bush administration is trying to starve the government.

Under Bush's plan, the \$635 billion discretionary budget for

fiscal 2001 would rise to \$661 billion in 2002. Increases would come in education, defense, health research and embassy security, while cuts would hit at least 10 federal agencies, including the departments of Interior and Transportation.

Democrats complain that Bush's overall budget plan — which features a \$1.6 trillion, 10-year tax cut and \$2 trillion in debt reduction — is unfair to the middle class and poor. They say the tax cut is weighted toward the rich and that Bush has understated the cost by \$1 trillion, an underestimate they say threatens education and other priorities. Democrats prefer a \$750 billion tax cut.

Republicans last week pushed

the Bush tax cut through the House Ways and Means Committee on a party-line 23-15 vote. Democrats also contend the Bush plan relies on questionable budgetary and surplus projections a decade into the future.

"It is impossible for us to forecast what's going to happen 10 years from now and make a decision today as to what we are going to do," Rep. Charlie Rangel, D-N.Y., the top Democrat on Ways and Means Committee, told CNN's "Late Edition."

Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill said the Bush administration was not claiming to be able to predict the future, but that the existence of a huge surplus today proved that taxes were too high.

World/Nation

The Associated Press

■ Thailand

Bomb on airplane may have been assassination attempt

BANGKOK, Thailand — The blast that gutted a Thai Airways airplane minutes before Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was to board came from beneath his assigned seat, his security adviser said Sunday.

Thaksin said it could have been an inside job to assassinate him.

The Boeing 737-400 blew up and burned on the tarmac Friday, 35 minutes before its scheduled departure from the domestic terminal at Bangkok International Airport.

One crew member preparing for the 70-minute flight to Chiang Mai was killed, and seven airline workers were injured. None of the 149 listed passengers, including Thaksin, had boarded.

■ California

Cost Guard seizes cocaine from Mexican fishing boat

SAN DIEGO — U.S. authorities unloaded 8.8 tons of cocaine on Sunday that they said was smuggled on a rusty fishing boat from Mexico. It was the government's fourth-largest such seizure ever.

The Coast Guard said a Navy destroyer with a Coast Guard law enforcement unit on board seized the boat Feb. 24 about 250 miles west of Acapulco. They towed the boat to San Diego.

The seizure, which the Coast Guard said was the government's fourth-largest, capped what the agency called one of its most productive weeks of anti-drug patrols.

In six days, the Coast Guard — from Miami to the Caribbean, and in the Pacific from Mexico to Washington state — seized 28,845 pounds of cocaine, about what it captured in all of 1996.

■ California

'Dumb & Dumber' writers to script original 'Stooges' movie

LOS ANGELES — Peter and Bobby Farrelly think there's just something about The Three Stooges.

The sibling writer-directors behind "There's Something About Mary" and "Dumb & Dumber" said Friday they planned to make a movie based on the slapstick characters of Larry, Moe and Curly.

The film won't be a remake of any particular Stooges story but will be an original idea cooked up by the brothers, Warner Bros. Studios said.

Shaggy-haired Larry Fine, belligerent Moe Howard and his skinhead brother, Jerome "Curly" Howard, are the best known performers of the Three Stooges comedy act, which went from vaudeville stages to Hollywood in the 1930s.

■ Great Britain

IRA bombs BBC, retaliates against peace accord

LONDON — Raising the specter of a campaign of attacks by opponents of the peace process in Northern Ireland, a powerful bomb blamed by police on IRA dissidents went off early Sunday outside the British Broadcasting Corp.'s television center. One man was hurt.

Britain was on high alert against new attacks following the blast, which Prime Minister Tony Blair denounced as a "cowardly act." He said it would not deter peace efforts in Northern Ireland.

"There are those outside the peace process who are set on trying to turn the clock back to the days before the Good Friday Agreement," Blair said through a spokesman, referring to the province's 1998 peace accord. "We will not allow them to take our focus from working with all parties to move the process on."



Yaniv Sofer/Newsweek

Israeli medical personnel evacuate an injured woman to a hospital after a suicide bombing in the central Israeli town of Netanya. At least three Israelis were killed and dozens more wounded when a suspected Palestinian militant blew himself up in the middle of the town's main road.

Israel's safety efforts do not stop militants

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NETANYA, Israel — A Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up and killed three Israelis at a bustling intersection Sunday, the second lethal explosion in four days as militant Islamic groups vowed more attacks against Israel's incoming government.

With Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon preparing to assume power, possibly this week, the bombings have shown that Israel remains vulnerable despite sealing off Palestinian areas in a bid to keep out militants.

Sharon, a former general who says he will restore security to Israel after five months of fighting, said "the terror attack is a very serious one that shows that the Palestinian Authority is not taking the necessary steps" to halt violence.

"We know very well that the most loyal forces of (Palestinian leader Yasser) Arafat are involved in attacks," Sharon said. He did not directly link Arafat loyalists to Sunday's bombing.

The Palestinian attacker detonated the bomb just before 9 a.m. at a corner in the coastal resort town of Netanya. The force hurled a car into the air, shattered shop windows and crumpled street stalls in the central market area. The Israeli dead included an 85-year-old man, his niece and another woman, Israeli officials said.

"It was horrible, just horrible," said William Weiss, a municipal worker. "There were hands, legs, flesh and a head thrown around. It turned out that was apparently the terrorist's head."

Police scoured the streets for evidence while volunteer Jewish Orthodox men picked up pieces of flesh on the bloodied street to ensure a proper Jewish burial for the dead Israelis.

Israel has been hit by multiple bomb-

ings since the Israeli-Palestinian fighting began in September, contributing to a general sense of vulnerability. A taxi van bombing Thursday in northern Israel killed an Israeli man and wounded nine others, including the bomber.

No one claimed responsibility for the latest blast, but the two leading Islamic militant groups, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, both have said they would carry out attacks to undermine Sharon's government.

"Resistance will continue until we push the occupiers out of our land," said Mahmoud Zahar, a spokesman for Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Israel has sought to prevent Palestinian militants from entering Israel by imposing a blanket closure on all Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The measure has strangled the Palestinian economy, kept 120,000 Palestinians from commuting daily to their jobs in Israel and heightened tensions between the sides.

The closure has not halted Palestinian attacks, but Israel says opening the borders would make it easier for Palestinians to slip into Israel.

Police said they requested help from the army in foiling attacks. Israel's Channel Two Television reported the police had asked for several hundred soldiers to be deployed either in Israeli cities or along areas that border the West Bank and Gaza.

Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, named defense minister in Sharon's government, said he would attempt to develop a plan to "rout terrorism." He said he would also seek to reduce "to a minimum the collective punitive measures against the Palestinian population," a reference to the closure.

Sunday is a work day in Israel, and the Netanya street corner was crowded during the morning rush hour. About 50 people were injured, apparently including those suffering from shock, Israeli officials said.

Napster ordered to use screening system

■ After numerous hearings in court, Napster is forced to begin blocking illegally pirated songs.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Copyright music flowed freely on the Napster tune-swapping service Sunday afternoon as users waited to see if the company would fulfill a promise to block pirated songs sometime over the weekend using a new screening system.

All the top-10 songs listed on the Billboard Hot 100 list were available on servers, including the No. 1 "Stutter" by Joe featuring Mystikal. Songs by longtime Napster foe Metallica also showed up in searches.

The company will not comment on the screening plan until it begins, spokeswoman Karen DeMarco said Sunday. She would not say when that would be.

With the service facing imminent change, usage was soaring. More than 11,100 people shared a total of 2.2 million files Sunday afternoon on just one of dozens of servers used by Napster.

"I am kind of watching it and trying to get my last efforts in — quickly," said Thor Nelson, a user from St. Paul, Minn.

During a federal court hearing Friday, Napster attorney David Boies said the service would deploy the screening system over the weekend. He did not provide a specific time.

On its Web site, Napster said

the process of screening out file names, song titles and artists won't be easy.

"It has involved a significant investment of time and resources," a statement said. "However, we believe it is superior to shutting the service down and disbanding the community during the transition period to the new membership-based service."

The software to be installed on Napster's servers will block access to 1 million music files, Boies said. He and other Napster officials did not say whether that number represented distinct songs or spelling variations on a smaller list.

Napster's plan is a preemptive move against an injunction sought by the major record labels, which argue copyright holders and artists are not compensated for music traded on the service. Napster has argued that its computers do not store actual song files but rather direct people to other users' hard drives where the music can be downloaded.

In July, U.S. District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel granted the industry's request for a preliminary injunction and ordered Napster to shut down for facilitating infringement.

But last month the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals stayed the order pending its decision in the case. By Friday, all parties were back in court to discuss the case when Napster changed its tune and announced plans to start blocking songs.

Spy arrested for alerting Soviets

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Accused spy Robert Hanssen may have alerted Moscow to a secret tunnel built under the Soviet Embassy in Washington, according to a published report.

Hanssen, a 25-year FBI veteran and counterintelligence expert who was arrested last month and charged with spying for Moscow since 1985, "compromised an entire technical program of enormous value, expense and importance to the United States government," according to an FBI affidavit filed in the Hanssen case.

That program referred to the tunnel, The New York Times reported Sunday, also citing sources as saying it was unclear whether the operation produced any useful intelligence. The tunnel's existence had not been known publicly.

The tunnel operation, estimated to have cost several hundred million dollars, was run by the FBI and the National Security Agency as part of a sophisticated eavesdropping operation to track Soviet Union — and later Russian — facilities and personnel in the United States, the Times reported. One-time CIA official Vincent Cannistraro said Sunday that the damage to national security could be considerable.

"I think the real fallout from this is going to be looking at how the Soviets used their knowledge of this to feed false information into the American system. That's going to be the subject of a long damage assessment," Cannistraro said.

The embassy complex was built in the 1970s and 1980s, but not fully occupied because of a dispute with the United States over claims that U.S. Embassy buildings in Moscow had been bugged. The complex was not fully occupied until after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The U.S. government arrested CIA officer Aldrich Ames in 1994, and when he was not able to explain a series of damaging intelligence losses, it is believed the investigation intensified and led to Hanssen.

Cannistraro said the building of the tunnel "has to be seen not in a vacuum but part of the clandestine efforts that went on between the Soviet Union and U.S. with each using tunneling. It's spy versus spy."

Weather

TODAY

Mostly sunny
high 41, low 18

TOMORROW

Partly cloudy
high 43, low 25

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