

news roundup

from the associated press wire

World

Iraqi defectors may not exist

The Pentagon said last night that it could not confirm reports that as many as six Iraqi pilots manning helicopters have defected to Saudi Arabia. The Pentagon statement followed a denial by the Saudi Defense Ministry that any such defection had taken place. However, US journalists with Operation Desert Shield forces in Saudi Arabia report goings-on that suggest some type of aircraft did cross the border.

Perez de Cuellar may go to Iraq

United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar is reportedly considering a last-ditch peace mission to Baghdad before the Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. UN and diplomatic sources say the United States is expected to give its blessing to a UN visit aimed at persuading Saddam Hussein to remove his troops.

Gulf crisis may hurt arms talks

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said there is concern about the Persian Gulf and the status of arms talks. But he also said that at this point the administration intends to go ahead with the meeting.

Fitzwater said one big hitch on arms talks stems from discrepancies in Soviet figures given for the recently concluded treaty to reduce conventional arms. A Soviet official said he expects the February meeting to take place as scheduled. He said the only reason to postpone it would be if the new arms agreement is not ready to be signed.

Haitian coup attempt fails

Raymond Joseph, charge d'affaires of the Haitian embassy in Washington, announced the failure of a coup attempt in his country Monday. He said troops have arrested Roger Lafontant, a former aide to ousted dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier.

Lafontant had taken caretaker president Ertha Pascal-Trouillot hostage. But Joseph said he has spoken with the president, and that she is in control.

Haitians protested the threat to the country's first peaceful transition to democracy.

War preparations continue

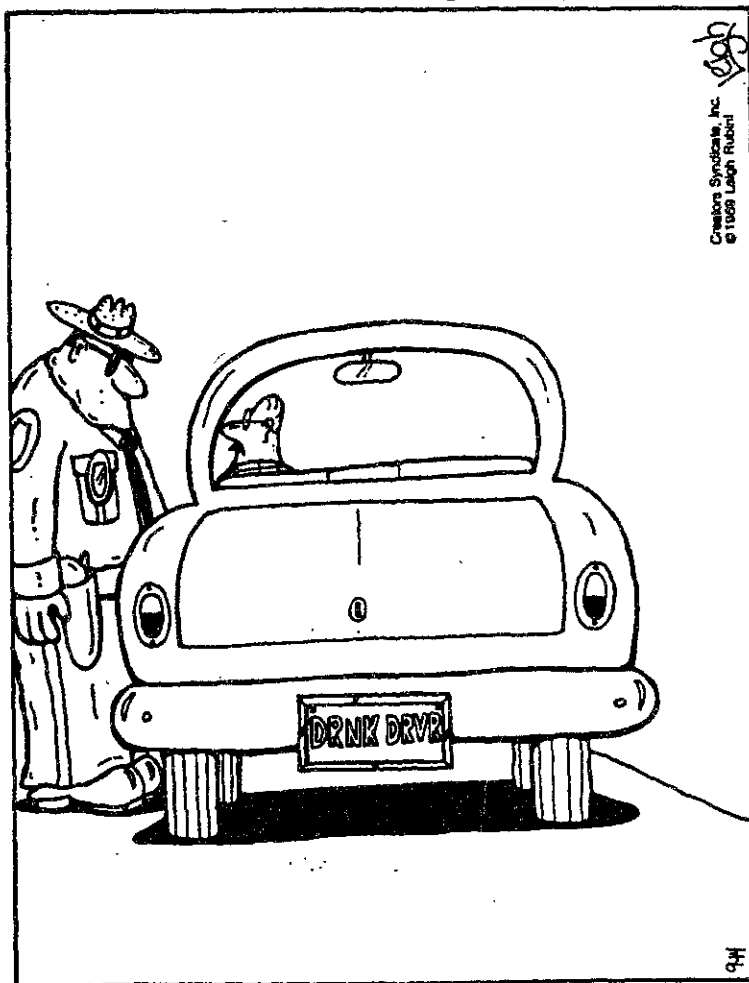
Embassies and US military facilities in the Middle East and Europe are continuing preparations for possible war. Across Europe, there has been a rush of diplomatic activity over the five-month-old gulf crisis. King Hussein of Jordan arrived in Bonn, Germany, yesterday for talks on his own peace initiative.

Lithuania in turmoil

The White House said the sending of Soviet troops to Lithuania and six other Baltic republics "amounts to intimidation." The Lithuanian government said "an armored column" rolled into its capital city yesterday. The troops are to help enforce the Kremlin's draft laws. Draft compliance has been as low as 15 percent in Lithuania.

There are also disputes within the Lithuanian government. Prime Minister Kazimiera Pronskiene returned home from a meeting with the Soviet president and turned in her resignation. The prime minister had been criticized for planning to increase prices.

Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



Dr. Nick Draver was often baffled by the amount of attention that the Highway Patrol lavished upon him.

Nation

NAS criticizes pollution control efforts

The National Academy of Sciences said the government is doing a poor job of keeping tabs on water pollution. The academy also said that dirty water is making people sick. An academy panel said illness caused by contaminated seafood could be reduced if the government stepped up monitoring efforts for the nation's oceans, lakes and streams.

Supreme Court hears nude dancing arguments

Nude dancing — is it free speech or just indecent? The Supreme Court addressed this issue yesterday as the state of Indiana presented arguments in support of its ban on barroom-style nude dancing. Three dancers and two clubs fighting the ban say the dancing is a form of free speech protected by the First Amendment. But Indiana officials say public nudity has been a common-law crime since before the First Amendment.

Pan Am-TWA merger scrapped

Any possible deal is off between the ailing Pan American World Airways and rival Trans World Airlines. Pan Am, which has filed for federal bankruptcy protection, had said it might talk about merging with TWA. Now, Pan Am says it has thrown out those plans. The airline promised to keep up full service during its Chapter 11 reorganization.

The Transportation Department tentatively approved the sale of Pan Am's transatlantic routes to United Airlines. The deal will cost United \$290 million.

LA to begin water rationing

Officials in Los Angeles, CA, say they will begin rationing water to millions of customers next month, forcing growers to cut back 30 percent and homes and industry to reduce water use by 10 percent. The rationing is to conserve the city's dwindling supply of water as Southern California enters its fifth year of drought.

Survey reports racial stereotypes

A new survey indicates most whites cannot let go of their stereotypes of blacks and Hispanics. A National Opinion Center Survey found that more than half of the whites surveyed believe blacks and Hispanics are less likely to be hard-working, nonviolent, intelligent, and patriotic. At the same time, the survey indicates a growing number of whites support racial equality.

Leaders of groups representing African-Americans and Hispanics expressed little surprise at the results.

Keating Five hearings continue

Sen. Donald Riegle (D-MI) told the Senate Ethics Committee he does not remember talking to savings-and-loan owner Charles Keating about Keating's problems with federal regulators. That contradicts earlier testimony from Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ) and a former Keating employee. Also, the panel voted to excuse Sen. Alan Cranston (D-CA) from testifying because of his ongoing cancer treatment.

Rubes By Leigh Rubin



Sylvia regretted going to Phil's pad to see his bug collection.

Bush to nominate new GOP head

The White House confirmed Monday that President George Bush plans to nominate Agriculture Secretary Clayton Yeutter to become chairman of the Republican National Committee. Spokesman Marlin Fitzwater acknowledged that Yeutter comes up short on political experience, but called him an aggressive campaigner.

Administration officials had said last Friday that Yeutter was Bush's choice. But the president refused to confirm it at the time.

Bush earlier nominated former drug policy director William Bennett to the job. Bennett declined, citing financial restrictions.

FBI anti-terrorism plan attacked

An FBI plan to gather information about potential terrorist attacks by Iraq is upsetting the head of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. He is concerned that proposed interviews with Arab-American business and community leaders could lead to more discrimination.

The FBI denied the plan amounts to harassment, or will lead to discrimination.

Local

Bank of New England fails

The Bank of New England filed for bankruptcy protection as federal regulators settled in to oversee operations at the troubled institution. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation promised to cover all depositors, even those exceeding the \$100,000 guaranteed by the agency.

BNE is the fourth largest bank to fail in US history, with \$22 billion in assets. FDIC officials said the bailout is expected to cost more than \$2.3 billion.

Sports

Baseball names hall-of-famers

Rod Carew has become the 22nd player elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in the first year of eligibility. Pitchers Ferguson Jenkins and Gaylord Perry join Carew as this year's inductees to the hall in Cooperstown, NY.

Four-hundred forty-three members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America cast ballots in this year's election. Players must receive 75 percent of the eligible ballots, or 333 votes this year, in order to be elected. Jenkins received 334, Perry 342, and Carew 401 votes. This is the third time in 55 years of voting that three or more players have been elected in the same year.

Weather

Cold-to-moderate temperatures; some snow likely

An upper-level disturbance accompanied by some moisture from the Mid-Atlantic States will move across the region today, giving southern New England a period of snow this afternoon and early evening. Precipitation levels should be light, with the heaviest amounts to our south. Snow may mix with sleet and freezing rain in coastal and southern sections of Massachusetts before ending.

A cold front will cross the area tomorrow morning. The next chance for precipitation will be Saturday. Early indications are that this next system will be stronger than today's.

Wednesday afternoon: Cloudy with steady snow developing by the afternoon. Winds from the east shifting to the southeast at 5-10 mph (8-16 kph). High around 32°F (0°C).

Wednesday night: Steady snow, possibly mixing with sleet and freezing rain before ending. Winds from the southeast shifting to southwest. Low 25-28°F (-4°C to -2°C).

Thursday: Clearing, windy, and turning cold late in the day. Winds northwest increasing to 10-15 mph (16-24 kph). High 34°F (1°C). Low 18-21°F (-8°C to -6°C).

Friday: Sunny and cold. High 30°F (-1°C).

Weekend outlook: Snow and/or rain arriving Saturday. Precipitation, possibly changing to all rain in eastern sections. Clearing, windy, and cold Sunday.

Forecast by Michael C. Morgan