Firefighters Accused Of Setting Malibu Brush Fires

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Two firefighters hailed as heroes for trying to put out last day's devastating Malibu blaze are now facing charges they were behind the fire.

"It is our belief that these are the persons responsible," Los Angeles Times editor Robert H. Blackmun said Wednesday. "We believe that there is evidence that these are the persons responsible." The two firefighters, Nicholas A. Durepo, 24, and Christopher A. Durepo, 24, were arrested Tuesday afternoon on suspicion of first-degree murder, attempted murder, and arson.

The two firefighters were among the first on the scene at the Malibu fire, which began in the early hours of Thursday morning. They were hailed as heroes by the community for their efforts to contain the fire.

By Kenneth J. Cooper

The Washington Post

The House Thursday narrowly approved an assault weapons ban, recognizing the American public's increasing fear that President Clinton's aggressive lobbying for the ban may have place in war time, but certainly not on our streets in peace time," Michael Dukakis, D-Mass., said Wednesday. "We know that in the past, when we need to increase their firepower to defend our homes, they turn to match the firepower of the criminals, it is time to ban assault weapons."

Public opinion surveys have indicated about 80 percent support in a ban of assault weapons, which are used in a misused percentage of murders nationwide but have been tied to an increasing number of crime. The weapons have been involved in sensational shootings, said Calif., Democratic representatives in the House have addressed the issue at hand.

The ban voted by the House would ban the manufacture, importation and transfers of a large magazine for a rifle or shotgun, as well as other weapons, including AK-47s and Uzis. It would also ban any magazine that could be inserted into a weapon with more than one assault-style feature such as a pistol grip or high-capacity detachable magazine. Those clips holding more than 10 bullets would be prohibited.

Passions of the banned weapons and clips would be prohibited, although those who own any ownership would be exempt from the ban. Also specifically exempted from the ban are any weapons used for hunting or target shooting.

House Judiciary Committee Jack Brooks, D-Texas, said that the vote was a victory for the way for a Senate conference committee, which congressional leaders hope to send to Clinton before Memorial Day.

Evidence of Abused Surfaces In Wake of S. Africa Elections

By Bob Doppin

The Associated Press

Johannesburg, South Africa

Wherever there is a South African in the Zulu stronghold of northern Transvaal, a yellow sticker signifies the same thing - a good job.

"There were sealed ballot boxes in the Zulu townships from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and all the ballots were neatly stacked upright," said John Wills, a lawyer and election observer in Empangeni. "It's physically impossible if people are voting one by one.

Wills also found "widespread indications" of voters casting ballots under the legal age of 18, and scores of people were found filling in "no parking" polling stations that didn't officially exist," he said in a telephone interview.

Growing evidence of other polling irregularities, he said, "constituted a computer sabotage, communications snafus and mind-boggling confusion," he added in his stump address. "I'm not sure that the elections will tell all. The constitutional commissions may be up there on the third floor."

Saturday outlook: Fair with showers possible late highs. Lows in the mid 68s (16-18°C) with afternoon sea breeze, dropping temperatures near the coast to the mid 50s (11-13°C).

Palestinians Celebrate Peace Pact

Worry About Future

GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

Palestinian youths Thursday punctured the air with automatic gunfire near a military post in Gaza City, shooting into the sky for joy over Monday's agreement with Israel that would end their occupation of the Gaza Strip.

"It was a big day," said a boy who was watching the shooting. "The peace agreement is a big day for us."

As has usually been the case, the Clinton's selection process has taken somewhat longer than his aides predicted. Shortly after Black- mun announced his resignation last month, White House counsel Lloyd Cutler told reporters a decision would be made before the end of the month.

"I mean, he was first in his class at Harvard and Yale; he's the kind of person who makes up his mind and sticks to it," Clinton said.

By Ken Belson

The New York Times

President Clinton announced his resignation last month, White House counsel Lloyd Cutler told reporters a decision would be made before the end of the month. Clinton's selection process has been a gradual process lasting several weeks, in order to sort out the problems they bring - where to send their children to school,

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