

Supreme Court to hear cases on government and abortions

WASHINGTON (AP) — A decade after it legalized abortion, creating both a new area of American law and a still-raging moral storm, the Supreme Court is nearing what may be its second most-important decision on abortion.

At issue: How far can governments go in making abortions more difficult to obtain?

The nation's highest court will hear three hours of arguments Tuesday on abortion cases from Virginia, Missouri and Ohio.

The four major questions the justices will be asked to answer, in a decision expected by July, are these:

Can states or local communities require that all abortions on women more than three months pregnant be performed in a hospital?

Abortions in hospitals generally are more expensive than those performed in abortion clinics, and in many areas most or all hospitals refuse to perform abortions on women beyond their first trimester of pregnancy.

Can minors, even those found to be "mature," be required to have the consent of a parent or judge before obtaining abortions? The Supreme Court appeared to condone such a requirement three years ago.

Can doctors be required to tell patients seeking abortions that the fetus is "a human life?"

Can governments require doctors to wait 24 hours after a woman signs a consent form.

The court's latest consideration of the issue comes at a time when anti-abortion forces seem to have lost momentum in Congress.

A pair of bills aimed at outlawing abortion — one by amending the Constitution to overcome the court's landmark decision and the other by declaring a fetus a "person" — are nowhere near passage.

Adding political significance to Tuesday's arguments is the Reagan administration's decision to get involved.

Under the direction of Attorney General William French Smith, the Justice Department has urged the court to give states and local communities more leeway in regulating abortion.

For the first time since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973, a Justice Department lawyer will argue in an abortion case in which the government is not a party and no federal law is involved.

The 1973 decision, called Roe vs. Wade, was based on a woman's constitutional right to privacy. Led by Justice Harry Blackmun, the court said a woman's decision to have an abortion during the first three months of her pregnancy must be left to her and her doctor.

Reagan on S. American tour

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pres. Ronald Reagan travels to South America this week, hoping to improve ties strained by differences over things from drugs to diplomacy and to show interest in a region that has felt neglected by successive U.S. administrations.

He returns to Washington briefly today from a six-day California vacation before setting off Tuesday on a five-day tour of Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and Honduras.

Reagan is to meet with leaders of two other Latin nations: Pres. Efraim Rios Montt of Guatemala during the visit to Honduras and Pres. Alvaro Magana of El Salvador on the Costa Rican stop.

With U.S. differences with Latin America over the Falk-

lands conflict beginning to fade — to the dismay of most South American nations, the United States supported Britain over Argentina — Reagan is expected to turn his attention to trade problems and economic issues.

In each of the four selected countries, he is likely to encounter complaints as each tries to assert itself and emerge from the U.S. shadow. But the United States also considers each country to be among its best allies in Latin America.

The U.S.-Brazilian relationship soured when Pres. Jimmy Carter emphasized human rights and Brazil canceled an old military agreement. But with Brazil, ruled by the military since a 1964 coup, apparently headed toward a democratically elected government, the State Depart-

ment says human rights problems have almost disappeared.

Brazil is a major competitor for Third World markets and its foreign policy is directed at protecting its export markets. Brazil exports sugar, auto parts, computer components, frozen orange juice, coffee and cocoa — all of which will find their way into U.S. commerce.

U.S. quotas on sugar imports have hurt Brazil, but that problem is symbolic of the overall trade relationship.

In an example of the political balancing such a trip demands, Reagan will fly from Brazil, with its military government, to Colombia, run by civilians. A state department official, asked why Reagan was visiting Colombia, replied: "Because he's going to Brazil."

Burnt body found at Kennedy grave

WASHINGTON (AP) — A group of tourists visiting Arlington National Cemetery Sunday discovered the charred body of a man at the grave of Pres. John Kennedy, authorities said.

The badly-burned body, lying three feet from the eternal flame, was discovered shortly after 8 a.m., according to Sgt. Michael Furr, a spokesman for the Military District of Washington.

The body was lying face down with the feet closest to the flame, Furr said.

The spokesman said no iden-

tification papers or notes of any kind were found with the body and most of the man's clothing had been burned away.

Preliminary investigation indicated the man was between 25 and 30 years old and died in the early morning hours, Furr said.

The cemetery is located in Arlington, Va., across the Potomac River from the District of Columbia.

An autopsy was to be performed Monday by the Fairfax County Medical Examiner's office to determine the cause and

time of death, U.S. Park Police said.

Furr said it had not been determined if the man died at the gravesite, if other people were involved in the death, or if the man's wounds had been caused by the small gas flame that burns constantly at the gravesite.

Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

Furr said the only other similar incident at the Kennedy gravesite was when a man committed suicide there in 1973.

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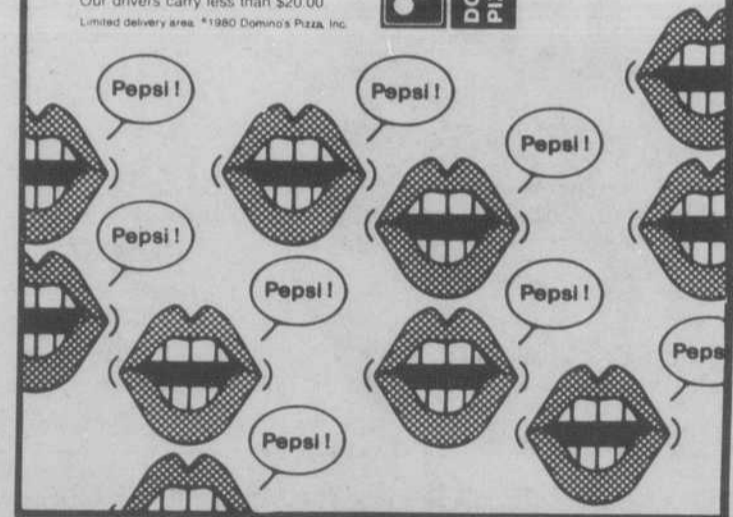
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