

Bush, de Klerk continue fighting apartheid

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush said Monday that South Africa's campaign to abolish white supremacist rule is irreversible and assured President F.W. de Klerk that he would oppose new conditions for lifting economic sanctions.

"These conditions are clear-cut and are not open to re-interpretation. And I do not believe in moving the goalposts," Bush said, referring to requirements South Africa must fulfill before the sanctions will be suspended. The sanctions were imposed in 1986 over then President Reagan's veto.

Bush also said all political groups in South Africa "have a special responsibility to support the process of peaceful

transition."

De Klerk, the first South African leader to visit the United States since 1945, assured Bush that the process of reform is irreversible, and Bush echoed that sentiment.

"We will not turn back," de Klerk said.

The leaders met at the White House for two hours, first in the Oval Office and again over lunch. The meeting was a showcase of U.S. political support for de Klerk's efforts to guide South Africa toward a post-apartheid democratic system.

More than 100 anti-apartheid demonstrators marched outside the White House during the visit.

"Bush is an accomplice to a colossal public relations fraud which attempts to portray F.W. de Klerk as a moderate reformer," said Randall Robinson, head of TransAfrica, a private anti-apartheid group.

Robinson said de Klerk's trip "sends a false and dangerous message that South Africa is on its way to change."

"Clearly, the time has come to encourage and assist the emerging new South Africa," Bush said. Behind the leaders, a black Marine held the flag of South Africa; a white Marine held the American flag.

But Bush said that despite "the dramatic progress that we salute here today," South Africa hasn't moved far enough to

meet the conditions for removing economic sanctions.

South Africa has not released all political prisoners and has not lifted the state of emergency in the Natal province. Further, it has not repealed a population registration act that requires citizens to be classified by race — a key part of the apartheid system.

On the other hand, Bush said, "the move away from apartheid toward a new political reality is indeed irreversible and much has already happened."

Bush's statement goes beyond the assessment of most European leaders.

"I don't think it's that far

ahead. ... I imagine that by the end of the year, they (European leaders) will have reached that conclusion," Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen said at briefing for reporters.

Cohen said the United States accepts the conclusion that South Africa won't repeal the population registration measure until apartheid is totally dismantled.

Bush cited the release from prison of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, the removal of outlaw status for the African National Congress, plans to release remaining political prisoners and removal of media restraints as improvements.

OWL

Continued from Page 10

Secretary Clayton Yeutter and Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan Jr., recommended Friday that Northwest logging be cut by about 20 percent to save the rare owl from extinction.

The panel also recommended, with the backing of President Bush, that the Endangered Species Act be changed to allow for the immediate convening of a special Endangered Species Committee that would have the authority to exempt from the act some timber sales in Northwest forests inhabited by the owl.

Further, the panel said timber sales in those old-growth forests would need insulation from other existing laws, including the National Forest Management Act and National Environmental Policy Act.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared the owl a threatened species on June 22, outlawing the killing of the bird or destruction of its critical habitat. A few days later Yeutter announced formation of the task force in an effort to soften the economic blow on the Northwest's timber-dependent economy.

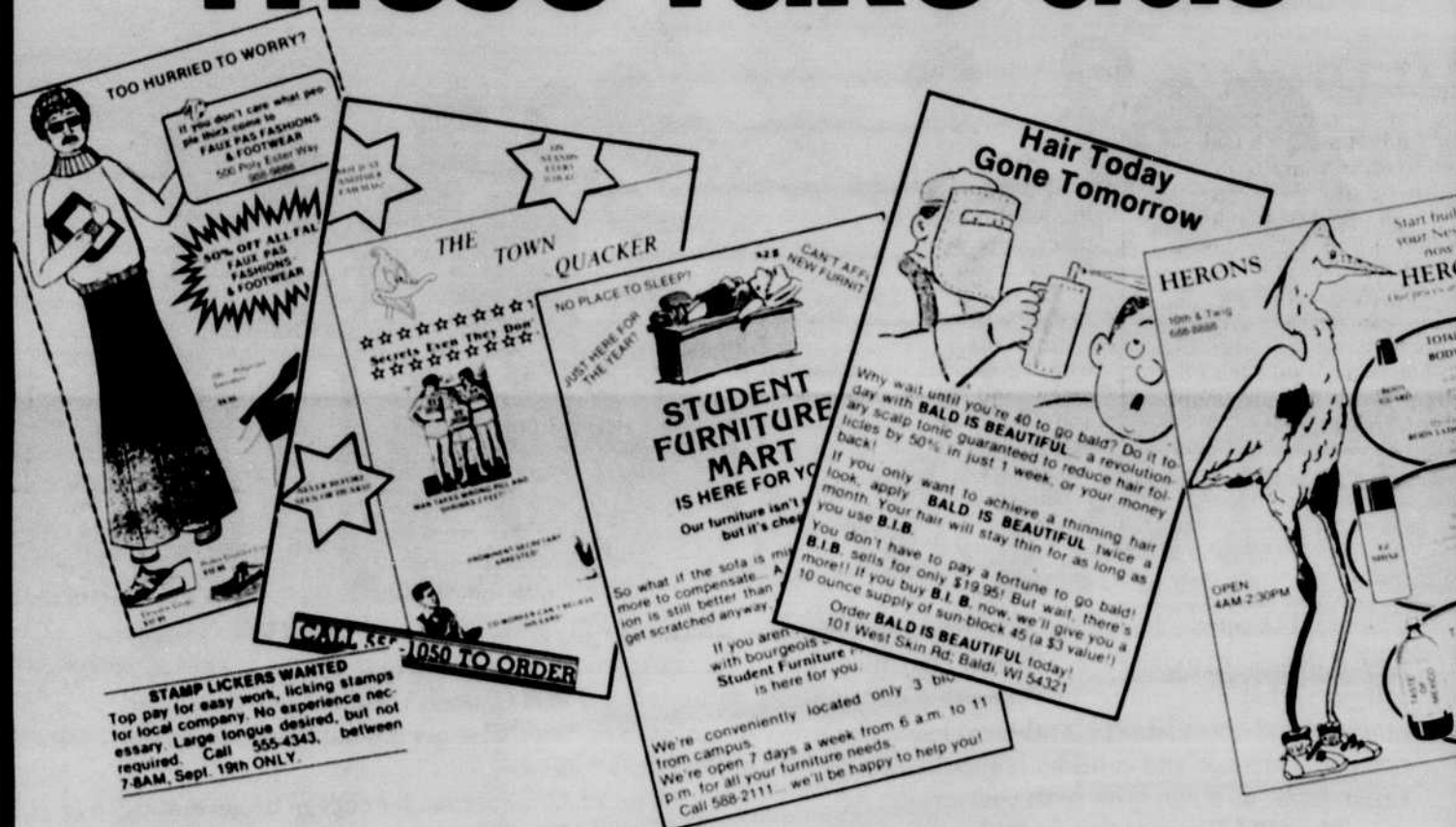
Mitchell said current law allows for the convening of the special exemption committee, known as the "God Squad," if the Fish and Wildlife Service determines that a proposed timber sale would jeopardize the owl's survival.

That would require the Agriculture Department's Forest Service or the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management to submit timber sale plans to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

"The administration has had three months to ask its own Fish and Wildlife Service whether its plan would be likely to cause extinction of the spotted owl," Mitchell said Monday.

"But Secretary Yeutter and Secretary Lujan apparently decided that the Forest Service and BLM should not follow the Endangered Species Act by initiating consultation on timber sales and forest plans for fiscal year 1991 and beyond.

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