

Thomas vote delayed; nominee denies harassment



WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Tuesday postponed its vote on Clarence Thomas' Supreme Court nomination for one week to investigate allegations he sexually harassed a former aide. Thomas "totally and unequivocally" denied the accusation.

The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee pledged public hearings, possibly as early as Friday. "The nominee has the right to be confronted by his accuser," Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., said in reference to Anita Hill, Thomas' former aide.

Biden provided an outline for hearings after a day of drama in which Thomas requested a delay to "clear my name" and several crucial Democratic supporters said they could not vote for him until the allegations were aired.

Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole first called for a Friday vote, then reluctantly agreed to the week delay proposed by Senate Democratic Leader George Mitchell. Dole predicted Thomas ultimately would be confirmed by a comfortable margin.

"This is a test for Clarence Thomas," Dole said. "It is a test of his character and I believe he is up to the test."

Hill, a law professor who says Thomas made repeated lewd remarks to her when she worked for him a decade ago, said she would cooperate with the Senate. "I intend to go to Washington if it is requested," she said.

Thomas, too, pledged to work with the committee. Sen. John Danforth, R-Mo., said Thomas told him that "I have to restore what they have taken from me. I have to appear before the appropriate forum and clear my name."

In an emotional speech, Danforth complained bitterly that a confidential FBI report on the matter had been leaked. He said Thomas was being crucified and sought assurances that the hearings would not become a "fishing expedition."

Biden replied, "Any questions about his conduct in terms of whether or not he harassed this individual or any other individual are relevant."

The White House swiftly issued a statement in support of Thomas.

"We will work with the committee and the full Senate to bring this matter to a vote," the statement said. "Judge Thomas is an outstanding individual who has demonstrated his honesty and integrity throughout his life."

Thomas appeared a sure bet for confirmation until Hill's allegations became public over the weekend. His supporters initially fought a delay, but relented when it became clear there might not be enough support for

confirmation if the Senate voted Tuesday. "It seemed to me it was a gamble not worth taking," Dole said.

The decision to delay the vote capped a dramatic and remarkable day which saw the Senate agonizing not only over how to proceed with the nomination but also with the larger issue of its sensitivity to the issue of sexual harassment.

Even as they reluctantly agreed to the delay, Republicans vented anger that a private committee report on Ms. Hill's allegations was leaked to the media. Sen. Hank Brown, R-Colo., Judiciary Committee member, said he would demand appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate unspecified violations of Senate rules.

'Any questions about his conduct in terms of whether or not he harassed this individual or any other individual are relevant.'

— Sen. Joseph Biden

'This is a test for Clarence Thomas. It is a test of his character, and I believe he is up to the test.'

— Sen. Robert Dole

Under the agreement reached Tuesday night, the vote on the Thomas nomination was delayed exactly one week, until 6 p.m. EDT Oct. 15.

Mitchell said the delay was "to give time for further inquiry into this matter by the Judiciary Committee."

"We are going to ventilate this subject to give both Professor Hill the opportunity to make her case in full and give the nominee his opportunity to state his defense in full," Biden said.

Seven of 13 Democrats who had announced their support for Thomas — Alan Dixon of Illinois, Richard Bryan and Harry Reid of Nevada, Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, J. James Exon of Nebraska, Wyche Fowler of Georgia and Richard Shelby of Alabama — all called for a delay in the vote.

If supporters forced a vote, "this senator would be in a position to vote against the nomination," Bryan said. Exon said he would either abstain or vote against Thomas if the vote were held Tuesday.

Thomas remained out of public view during the day. But Danforth in an effort to stop the loss of support, released a sworn affidavit in which the nominee said, "I

totally and unequivocally deny Anita Hill's allegations of misconduct of any kind toward her, sexual or otherwise."

"At all times during the period she worked with me, our relationship was strictly professional," Thomas said. "During that time and subsequently, the relationship has been wholly cordial."

Danforth said as he released the affidavit — several hours before calling for the delay — that there was no reason to postpone the vote because Hill's allegations against Thomas were known by most senators and the public.

On the Senate floor, Danforth said the confirmation process had turned into "the worst kind of sleazy political campaign, with no effort spared to assassinate the character of Clarence Thomas."

Danforth also produced telephone logs Thomas kept as chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission indicating that Hill telephoned him 11 times during a 3-year period after she left the agency. She had worked for him earlier at the Education Department.

The senator also read from an affidavit by Carlton Stewart, a former EEOC official who said he overheard Hill praise Thomas' nomination at last August's American Bar Association convention in Atlanta.

On the Senate floor, Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, recited the list of Hill's telephone calls and asked, "Does this sound like a victim speaking to her harasser?"

Among the log notations was the message, "Just called to say hello. Sorry she didn't get to see you last week." A Jan. 2, 1985, message "please call tonight" left the phone number of Washington's Embassy Row Hotel and her room number.

One Republican supporter of Thomas, Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, said, "I think the Senate itself is on trial, the best course of action is to bring in Judge Thomas, bring in Ms. Hill tomorrow and vote on Thursday."

But Biden said he favored a longer delay to allow the FBI to conduct a more thorough investigation before the Judiciary Committee held hearings on the allegation. Asked how long that would take, Biden said: "I haven't the slightest notion."

All but two of the Senate's 43 Republicans — James Jeffords of Vermont and Bob Packwood of Oregon — have said they will support Thomas. Packwood on Tuesday joined Jeffords in opposing the nomination.

Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., one of the Senate's two women and a Thomas opponent, said the failure to fully investigate Ms. Hill's allegation had hurt the Senate's image.

"What concerns me as much as the allegations themselves is the U.S. Senate appears not to take the charge of sexual harassment seriously," Mikulski said.

Baker renews attempt to start Arab-Israeli talks

WASHINGTON (AP) — Selection of Palestinian delegates acceptable to all sides looms as the biggest problem as Secretary of State James A. Baker III makes a new effort to set up a Middle East peace conference.

Baker will leave Saturday night on his eighth trip to the region since the end of the war with Iraq in February and make stops in Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Syria, State Department spokeswoman Margaret D. Tutwiler said Tuesday.

He probably will meet with Palestinian Arabs in Washington later this week and is planning another session during the trip.

In effect, Baker is operating against a deadline.

In July, even while the parties were bickering over the terms for negotiations, President Bush and Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev announced they would issue invitations for a peace conference this month.

Baker's toughest problem is trying to steer between Israel's objections to even an offstage role for the Palestine Liberation Organization and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat's attempt to influence the selection of Palestinians for the negotiations and the agenda itself.

The Bush administration hopes that Palestinians acceptable to both Israel and the PLO will make public statements that they will participate as

part of a delegation with Jordan.

The Palestine National Council, the would-be legislature of a PLO-run state, cleared the formula at a meeting last month in Algiers. To avoid a PLO imprint, the administration would like the Palestinians to announce their intention to attend as representatives of Arabs on the West Bank and Gaza.

Spokeswoman Tutwiler declined to discuss the intricacies of Baker's diplomacy. But she said "we are very anxious to see formation of a joint Palestinian delegation and this is something that obviously the secretary will continue to be working on."

Asked if Palestinians had taken steps yet in that direction, Ms. Tutwiler replied "no" and added: "Obviously he (Baker) would like to see public steps being taken."

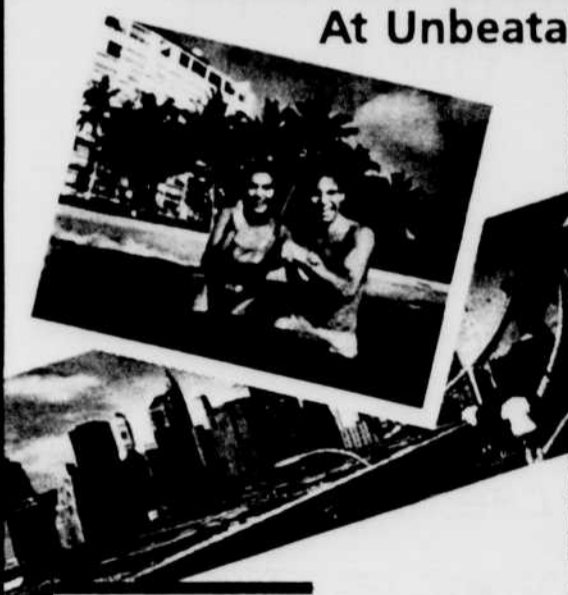
Faisal Hussein and Hanan Ashrawi, two Palestinians considered likely participants in negotiations, were questioned on Tuesday by police in Jerusalem on suspicion they met with PLO officials in violation of Israeli law.

No charges were filed, and they were not detained.


Meanwhile, a senior administration official said Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin may go to the Middle East while Baker is there.

GREAT SHOTS

Deserve Great Developing
At Unbeatable Prices!*



12 exp. 3 x 5	2.89
24 exp. 3 x 5	4.79
36 exp. 3 x 5	6.79
FROM SLIDE 3 x 5	49¢
REPRINTS	
3 x 5	25¢
4 x 6	39¢
ENLARGEMENTS (SLIDE OR NEG.)	
5 x 7	1.29
8 x 10	2.99



UNIVERSITY
OF OREGON

BOOK
STORE

CHECK OUT OUR
1-HR. PHOTO LAB

NEW

We will match any developing price in Lane County!

13TH & KINCAID
M-F 7:30-6 SAT 10-6
346-4331

12 Oregon Daily Emerald Wednesday, October 9, 1991