

Bush sending envoy to Ukraine for talks



WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House on Monday applauded the election mandate for independence in the Ukraine and said it will send a top envoy to Kiev to discuss eliminating nuclear weapons and other issues as a prelude to U.S. recognition.

"We obviously are moving toward full diplomatic recognition," White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said. "We commend Ukrainians for pursuing the democratic path."

But he added, "It will take some time before we're ready to make final decisions on recognition."

In addition to dispatching Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Niles to the Ukrainian capital this week, President Bush will send Secretary of State James A. Baker III to both Kiev and Moscow later in the month for talks with the leaders of Russia, the Ukraine and the central Soviet government.

Bush went to Kiev on Aug. 1 to warn lawmakers against "a suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred." He cautioned then that the United States would "not try to pick winners and losers" between the republics and the center.

Now, in the political turmoil unleashed by the abortive August coup against Gorbachev, the United States is adjusting to the reality that the Soviet Union as it existed for seven decades is no more.

Bush called Gorbachev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin, as well as Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, over the weekend to discuss the unfolding developments in the Ukraine.

Tass reported that Gorbachev warned Bush before Sunday's elections that Ukrainian independence would be a "catastrophe" for the republic, for Russia, the Soviet Union and the world.

But Fitzwater said, "all the leaders, including President Gorbachev, want to be realistic in their approach" to the changes taking place.

The Ukraine, with 52 million people, is the second most populous of the Soviet republics and has long served as its breadbasket as well as a major source of the country's iron and coal.

Bush congratulated Leonid Kravchuk, the Ukraine's former Communist Party boss, on his apparent victory in the presidential election. Kravchuk was Bush's host in Kiev and visited him at the White House last Sept. 25.

Fitzwater said Niles, the State Department's top official for European and Canadian affairs, will consult with the newly elected Ukrainian leaders "on three issues of fundamental importance" to future U.S.-Ukrainian relations:

• Respect for human rights, including equal treatment of minorities, and ways the Ukraine can demonstrate its respect for borders and adherence to such international treaties as the Helsinki Final Act.

• Steps the United States hopes the Ukraine will take to achieve its goal of "non-nuclear status," including control of the missiles on its territory, and compliance with the START treaty and other disarmament pacts.

• The Ukraine's commitment to free market economic policies and to "free and fair trade both with other republics" and internationally.

Niles will also discuss the Ukraine's obligation to help pay the Soviet Union's debts, estimated at \$70 billion or more, the spokesman said.

Several members of Congress criticized the White House for not immediately recognizing the Ukraine. "This administration's failure to recognize Ukraine's independence shows that misguided White House decisions are not confined to domestic issues," said House Whip David Bonior, D-Mich.

Auto analyst says safety is now key of industry

WASHINGTON (AP) — For American car makers, the era of planned obsolescence is over and quality and safety are new watchwords, a longtime observer and critic of the auto industry says.

"Planned obsolescence is clearly a thing of the past because today's consumers plan on keeping their cars for four or five years and the industry knows it," said Jack Gillis, author of an annual rating guide to new and used cars.

As American automakers produce more quality cars, the long love affair of American drivers with Japanese vehicles appears to be cooling, Gillis said.

"We're seeing Americans less afraid to say they are having problems with Japanese cars," he said.

For example, he said, many owners of the 1989 Toyota Camry have registered

complaints with the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"In the past couple of years, there have been improvements in the quality of U.S. cars, creating a more level playing field with Japanese cars when it comes to quality," he said. "And consumers are coming to the realization that its not necessarily true that if you buy a Japanese car you are buying a trouble-free automobile."

Gillis comments coincide with the publication of the 1992 editions of *The Car Book*, which rates new cars, and *The Used Car Book*. Both publications are produced in conjunction with the Center for Auto Safety, founded by Ralph Nader.

Gillis said that improvements in U.S. auto industry have been accompanied by a "phenomenal turnabout in the pro-

motion of safety."

"It's become a buzzword in advertisements," he said.

"Consumers do care about safety," Gillis said, and manufacturers have discovered "that you can use safety as a marketing tool."

Gillis said that while the safety of U.S. vehicles has improved, there are certain glaring safety defects, including new cars that either do not have air bags or have them on the driver's side only.

"The passenger side seat has often been called a suicide seat, and it's never been more true than now," Gillis said.

The following list is the book's *Best Bets for 1992*, giving emphasis to crash safety and the availability of air bags and anti-lock brakes as well as the other factors:

Best Subcompacts: Nissan Sentra,

Mazda Miata, Volkswagen Golf-GTI, Hyundai Excel, Daihatsu Charade and the Geo Storm.

Best Compacts: Audi 80, Chevrolet Corsica, Dodge Shadow, Plymouth Sundance, Pontiac Sunbird and the Chevrolet Cavalier.

Best Intermediates: Dodge Spirit, Mercury Sable, Ford Taurus, Saab 9000, Plymouth Acclaim and the Volvo 240.

Best Large: Oldsmobile Toronado, Infiniti M30, Buick Riviera and the Chevrolet Caprice.

Best Minivans: Oldsmobile Silhouette, Chevrolet Lumina APV, Dodge Caravan-Grand Caravan, Plymouth Voyager-Grand Voyager and the Pontiac Trans Sport.

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Bush asking \$2.6 million for election

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush on Monday requested \$2.6 million in federal matching funds for his re-election campaign, while the six Democrats vying for the right to oppose him requested a combined \$3.2 million.

The first matching-fund requests of the 1992 campaign offer clear evidence of the relative ease at which Bush can out-raise his Democratic rivals.

Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin made the largest request among the Democrats, asking for \$1.1 million in matching funds. Nebraska Sen. Bob Kerrey and Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton each requested \$580,000 and former Massachusetts Sen. Paul Tsongas requested \$486,000.

The requests for matching funds are not necessarily illustrative of a candidate's overall fund raising.

Fund raising is far off the pace of four years ago. Michael Dukakis, the Democratic nominee in 1988, had raised \$10 million at this stage four years ago.

The matching funds requested by the campaigns on Monday will be paid out in January, after the requests are reviewed by FEC auditors.

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