

Kerrey calling it quits, aides say



WASHINGTON (AP) — Nebraska Sen. Bob Kerrey told Democratic colleagues Wednesday he was abandoning his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, a Senate aide said.

"He's going to announce tomorrow that he's pulling out," said the aide to a senator who attended a meeting Kerrey had with Democratic senators and supporters Wednesday in the Capitol. The aide requested anonymity.

Kerrey scheduled a Thursday morning news conference today in Washington and a welcome home rally later in Omaha.

And Leo Perrotta, his Rhode Island campaign manager, who was preparing for the March 10 primary there, said, "Kerrey is dropping out of the race."

Kerrey canceled his appearances Wednesday in Florida and on CNN's "Larry King Live" after doing poorly in all of Tuesday night's primaries and caucuses.

Arriving at Washington National Airport, Kerrey confirmed that his campaign funds were running short but said he had "made no final decision

yet" about his candidacy.

But senior advisers reinforced widely circulating reports that Kerrey would halt his campaign.

"You don't cancel your schedule right before a bunch of primaries to stay in the race," one adviser said.

Another said friends were advising Kerrey that "things look too bleak to risk the future by going on."

Kerrey was the only Democratic candidate who did not chalk up a victory Tuesday night. And he was at or near the bottom in every contest — 5 percent in Georgia and Maryland, 8 percent in Idaho, 11 percent in Utah, 12 percent in Colorado.

Asked Tuesday night where he expected to win in next week's multiple Super Tuesday caucuses and primaries, Kerrey replied, "Nowhere."

Kerrey, a former governor, had long been considered a rising Democratic star. He earned a Medal of Honor in Vietnam, where he lost part of a leg. He dated actress Debra Winger. He had charisma.

But Kerrey's first national campaign, begun half way through his first Senate term,

was plagued by missteps and miscalculations.

His campaign — even the candidate himself — seemed to be reinvented every week.

First there was Kerrey the tough trade warrior, prompting rivals to accuse him of Japan-bashing. Then there was Kerrey the war hero, who maintained his unquestionable patriotism made him a most electable candidate. There was also Kerrey the health-care reform candidate — a theme he sounded so often that many observers said he was missing the larger economic picture.

Clayton Kauffman of Grand Island, Neb., a friend for 11 years, said Kerrey did not display his wit or humor during much of the campaign. "When he's at home with familiar faces, that's when he really cooks," Kauffman said.

Kauffman also said Kerrey had never dwelled on his war record before and suggested the shift was made on the advice of misguided consultants.

"The public appreciates modesty in their heroes," he said. "Sometimes you get the 'experts' on a campaign and they try to shape a person to the market."

Stanford whistle-blower to run for Congress

STANFORD, Calif. (AP) — The man who uncovered research overbilling at Stanford University took a parting shot at school officials Wednesday, calling them "two-legged rodents" who lived high on "the federal dole."

Paul Biddle, the on-campus research contract negotiator for the Office of Naval Research, had resigned to pursue a political career. The 47-year-old Republican, who is running for Congress, slammed the door on his way out.

"Instead of looking for fraud at Stanford, I hope I can get out there and look for waste and bad management in other areas," Biddle said. "I'm telling you, I learned a lot about waste and greed of individuals here."

Stanford spokesman Larry Horton said he wouldn't respond to Biddle's leave-taking tirade,

but said the school is looking forward to seeing Biddle's replacement come on campus to oversee federal research contracts.

"We're looking forward to working with a member of the government who doesn't have a conflict," Horton said, referring to a suit Biddle filed on behalf of the government in an effort to force Stanford to repay overcharges.

Biddle came to Stanford three years ago and immediately became suspicious that the school had enjoyed a "cozy" relationship with his government predecessors, who hadn't audited Stanford's books in a decade.

Stanford has denied widespread overbilling, but paid back \$2.3 million in "inappropriate" bills, including maintenance of a yacht and shopping center, and for flowers, furniture and parties at Stanford administrators' homes.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

North Korea to have material for nuclear bomb

WASHINGTON (AP) — The commander of U.S. forces in South Korea said Wednesday that North Korea will have the material for a nuclear bomb by this summer and could build an untested weapon as early as next year.

Army Gen. Robert Riscassi told the Senate Armed Services Committee that North Korea could construct a crude bomb sometime between 1993 and 1994.

Questioned about a delivery system for the weapon, Riscassi said North Korea could "slate it to an aircraft, put it on a Scud. Clearly, they have the technical expertise to do that."

The commander elaborated on CIA Director Robert Gates' testimony last week to the House Foreign Affairs Committee in which the agency chief said North Korea could produce a nuclear weapon within a few months to a few years.

North Korea has agreed in principle to allow inspections of its nuclear facilities. However, North Korea has been slow to allow the inspections, prompting South Korea and the West to express concern that the delay is allowing the North to produce nuclear warheads.

Bush pushes tuna embargo lift for no-netters

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Bush administration on Wednesday proposed lifting tuna-import embargoes for countries that agreed to stop netting dolphins for a five-year period beginning March 1994.

Critics called the proposal insufficient and said it would result in more dolphin deaths.

Court-ordered embargoes of yellow-fin tuna have been in effect against Mexico and Venezuela since 1990 because they failed to adequately reduce the number of dolphins killed by their tuna-fishing fleets.

The embargo was widened Jan. 31 to include nations that import yellow-fin tuna harvested from the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean by Mexican and Venezuelan vessels that use dolphin-killing methods to catch tuna. Seventeen nations fall into this category and their tuna exports to the United States are embargoed.

The embargoes will affect nearly half of the U.S. supply of tuna, according to the Commerce Department.

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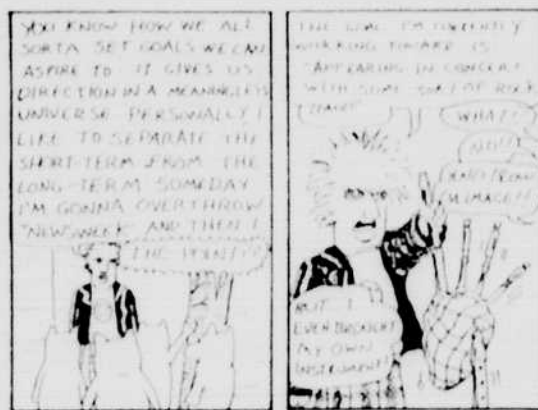
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