

Revisiting the Ketchup Controversy

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By Al Kamen

Washington Post Staff Writer

One thing that gives Washington its special charm is that old disputes, no matter how weightless, never die. They don't even fade away.

So there was Reagan administration budget official—and would-be Virginia senator **James Miller**—testifying at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing Friday on a balanced budget amendment.

Sen. **Patrick J. Leahy** (D-Vt.), who opposes the amendment as a gimmick, couldn't resist tweaking Miller about the Reagan administration's almost surreal move in 1981 to save money by declaring ketchup a vegetable for children participating in the school lunch program. Noting that even the late GOP senator John Heinz, who should know about these things, opposed the effort, Leahy called the move "silly."

"No, it was not," Miller rejoined, it "was an effort to maximize protein for kids in school lunch programs" but "the unfortunate thing was they had a Chinese menu and under the heading for vegetables . . . was ketchup." That was wrong, "but the objective was maximizing protein" for the kids.

Since there's no protein in ketchup, this left everyone confused, so they moved on to other topics. But not to worry; we no doubt haven't heard the last of this.

Diplomatic Dominoes

■ Senior ambassadorial types have been seen in and around the White House these days. Former Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman **William Crowe Jr.**, who is ambassador to the Court of St. James's, visited with **President Clinton** the other day. Crowe completes his three-year tour in May, but with the British elections coming up then and a likely change of government to the Labor Party, the feeling is that Crowe needs to stick around until the fall to provide a little continuity.

If so, former House speaker **Thomas S. Foley**, who is said to covet an ambassadorship in Japan or England—something about island nations?—may have to cool his jets for a while, as will Ambassador to Austria **Swanee Hunt**, who's also said to be interested in the Court of St. James's.

Moving on to Paris, Ambassador to France **Pamela Harriman**, in town for the inauguration, is said to be heading home this spring, perhaps around the time of the ceremony celebrating the 50th anniversary of the proposal for the Marshall Plan.

Protocol chief **Molly Raiser** has been mentioned for that job, along with financier **Felix Rohatyn**, but top career foreign service officer **Frank Wisner**, now ambassador to India, may have the inside track. Wisner, whose wife is French, speaks the language fluently and, if he's rich enough to pay for some of the entertainment obligations out of his own pocket, may be there in time for the NATO summit in July.

CIA Outlook on Nominee

■ Given the pre-hearing pummeling CIA nominee **Anthony Lake** has been getting in the news media, you'd think he was anathema to the entire good ol' boys network at the agency. Not so, says a source

who knows about these things. Some operations directorate folks have been quite happy with Lake's positions as Clinton's national security adviser.

That's because Lake endorsed about every covert action proposal or plan for a dicey clandestine foreign intelligence operation—the fun black-bag jobs, breaking into embassies and stuff—that the operations folks wanted. Despite his problems not telling Congress about Iran arms to Bosnia, this source said, it was Lake who pushed Clinton on coming up with a plan of action on Bosnia and said "let's turn [former mediator **Richard**] **Holbrooke** loose."

While Lake is certain to get roughed up, his confirmation may well hinge on his performance in handling the criticisms.

Fantasy Cast for 'Newt, the Movie'

■ Bored reporters waiting recently for the House ethics committee to agree on a schedule for hearings on House Speaker **Newt Gingrich** (R-Ga.) took to casting "Newt, the Movie." Best pick to play Gingrich was **Brian Dennehy**. **Randy Quaid** was the top choice to portray Rep. **Richard K. Armey** (R-Tex.). **Joe Pesci** would be perfect as Rep. **Tom DeLay** (R-Tex.). **Wilfred Brimley** was the choice for former representative **Robert H. Michel** (R-Ill.), and **Don Johnson** would play Rep. **John A. Boehner** (R-Ohio), mostly for the tan. **Michael Caine** was suggested for the part of former Gingrich press secretary **Tony Blankley**.

Special counsel **James M. Cole** presented some problems, but it's obvious: Chicago Bulls coach **Phil Jackson**, separated at birth.

Additions to White House Team

■ The final staffing pieces are falling into place at the White House. Word was Cabinet secretary **Kathryn "Kitty" Higgins**, formerly chief of staff to Labor Secretary **Robert B. Reich**, would be heading back over to Labor, but this time to be deputy secretary.

Her White House spot appears to be going to **Thurgood Marshall Jr.**, now legislative chief for **Vice President Gore**. Also in the Gore shop, former representative **Cleo Fields** (D-La.) is in negotiations over taking on a new slot there involving empowerment zones.

Top Spots at DNC

■ The new team at the Democratic National Committee is shaping up as replacements come on board for finance chairman **Marvin Rosen** and treasurer **Scott Pastrick**. **Dan Dutko**, a prominent Democratic lobbyist and now finance chair for the inauguration, took himself out of the running. **Alan Solomont**, a nursing home mogul and head of the DNC's business leadership council during the campaign, is in for the finance chairmanship, while **Carol Pensky**, head of the women's leadership forum at the DNC, gets the treasurer slot.