

# Washington Whispers

## FRIENDLY PERSUASION

■ White House optimists are increasingly confident that congressional Republicans will compromise on the 1996 budget. The goal: to avert a government shutdown when the fiscal year ends September 30. President Clinton's advisers do not think GOP lawmakers have enough time to ensure the party unity needed to ram through their budget priorities. Nor do White House officials think the Republicans have convinced the public that their priorities are best for the country. So plans are being drawn up for a Clinton "antigriddlock offen-



Dole

sive" that could begin at a meeting with Hill leaders this week. Clinton favors balancing the budget in 10 years, while the GOP is pushing a seven-year plan. Some Clinton aides now think a "blended plan" is likely, perhaps on a nine-year timetable. The White House even sees a silver lining in Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole's gloomy warning last week that there would be no deal. Says one ranking staffer: "Bob Dole goes darkest just before he comes up for a compromise."

## OZONE LOOPHOLES

■ Even as the Environmental Protection Agency begins celebrating Ozone Layer Awareness Week, an investigation by a Washington-based environmental organization has uncovered a burgeoning black market in chlorofluorocarbons, the ozone-gobbling coolant used in air conditioners and home refrigerators. In



Then and now. Bush visits an MIA search site last week.

## Saving face in Hanoi

**W**hen an American researcher in Hanoi's central military archives ferreted out a treasure-trove of documents in 1992 about U.S. POWs and MIAs in the Vietnam War, President Bush was presented with a dilemma: how to help Vietnam, which had long denied the existence of such detailed records, to avoid losing face. The solution: create a public-relations script for the Vietnamese. According to a secret Pentagon memo dated Oct. 7, 1992, Hanoi was advised to "begin with a public announcement by your government, noting that for the last several months Vietnamese officials had embarked on countrywide unilateral efforts to recover archives, records, photographs and remains of unaccounted-for Americans." This, the memo said, would be an "acceptable explanation" for the belated discovery of the documents — including shoot-down records — that should "minimize public antagonism." Twelve days later, parroting the secret advice from Washington, Hanoi announced it was "unilaterally conducting a countrywide search of all its archives." Four days after that, Bush announced "a significant, real breakthrough," saying Hanoi had agreed to provide all information on POWs.

1987, dozens of countries signed a United Nations environmental pact pledging to end the production of CFCs by 1996. Because of dwindling supplies, the price has soared from \$1 a pound to \$15 since 1989. According to a report expected this week from Ozone Action, the trafficking in black-market CFCs from India, Poland and Russia is so extensive it ranks behind only cocaine as the biggest illegal import by tonnage through the Port of Miami. Ozone Action also notes a major loophole in U.S. and international laws that will allow U.S.-based firms to manufacture and export CFCs legally after 1995.

## READY FOR ANYTHING

■ Bill Clinton's strategists do not believe the president faces a challenge for the Democratic nomination from the moderate wing of the party. They do, however, remain concerned that civil-rights activist Jesse Jackson or another candidate from the left might decide to run at the last minute. In any event, Clinton political aides do not intend to be caught off guard. "Within three weeks we could have a national campaign organized in the key states," says a senior Clinton strategist. The president's backers predict that despite considerable jockeying among the pro-Clinton ideological and political factions, the re-election campaign will be run out of the West Wing, not campaign headquarters in Washington. The likely



Jackson

Sir any chance of obtaining this memo?