

**BRIEFLY**

**Cuba, China to bolster ties:** Cuba and China want to strengthen their relations in all areas, Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez said here Monday after arriving from a trip to Beijing, AFP reports from Mexico City.

Asked if Cuba would seek greater support from China as a result of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, Rodriguez said the ties between the two orthodox communist nations were "solid and balanced."

Speaking at an airport press conference, he called China "a friend we can count on." He said the two countries had "the will to continue broadening and strengthening relations, in all areas."

**Honecker's plea for Soviet asylum:** Ousted East German Communist leader has officially applied for soviet political asylum, a German newspaper reported on Monday, reports Reuter from Bonn.

The tabloid Bild said Honecker had written to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev seeking asylum from the Soviet government after Russia's cabinet voted last week to expel him.

Bild did not give a source for its report released ahead of publication on Tuesday. It has in the past often been well-informed on political moves behind the scenes in Moscow.

**Demirel fails to submit cabinet list:** Turkey's Prime Minister-designate Sulciyman Demirel delayed plans to submit a cabinet list to President Turgut Ozal on Monday after a wrangle with his coalition partner over government seats, reports Reuter from Ankara.

Demirel, leader of the True Path Party (DYP), and Social Democrat Populist Party (SHP) chief Erdal Inonoo both said they hoped to find a compromise soon.

They agreed last week on plans for democratic and human rights reforms and other social, economic and security policies.

**Cheney against defence cuts:** Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said Monday that the United States must not fall prey to "our eagerness to cash in on the peace dividend" in reducing the defence budget, reports AP from Boca Raton Florida.

Regional contingency plans, as evidenced by the Gulf War, are now the military's defence posture, he said.

National security achieved through much lower levels of military personnel must remain at the forefront in budget reduction, he told more than 500 editors and publishers attending the Southern Newspaper Publishers association convention here.

**Trinidad goes to polls Dec 16:** General elections will be held in the Caribbean State of Trinidad and Tobago on December 16, Prime Minister Ray Robinson announced on Monday night in a radio address, reports Reuter from Trinidad.

His ruling party, the National Alliance for Reconstruction, is seeking a second five-year term in office.

Two major opposition parties — the People's National Movement and the United National Congress — are expected to field candidates. Robinson said that all nominations must be made by December 6.

**Four Afghan refugees killed:** Four Afghan refugees were killed Tuesday when rival guerrilla groups fought a gunbattle in Western Pakistan, officials said, reports Reuter from Quetta.

The battle erupted at the Girdi Jungle Refugee Camp near Dalbandin in Baluchistan Province over an old dispute between two different Afghan guerrilla groups.

Officials said Pakistan's paramilitary frontier troops had been sent to the camp to restore peace.

**Attorney refuses to prosecute Ashrawi**

CAIRO, Nov 19: Israel's state attorney yesterday decided not to prosecute Hanan Ashrawi, a top Palestinian negotiator, for alleged meetings with PLO officials, according to reports from Jerusalem, reports Xinhua.

The state attorney, Brit Beinsh, made the decision after examining a police file on Ashrawi, who was the spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegates to the Middle East peace talks that opened in Madrid on October 30.

Beinsh's decision still has to be formally approved by the Israeli attorney-general, Yosef Harish.

Reports also quoted Police Minister Roni Milo as saying that the police file contained "apparent evidence" to the offence — a Jordanian TV interview in which Ashrawi allegedly admitted meeting with PLO officials.

Last week, the Israeli police recommended that Ashrawi, a 45-year-old English literature professor from Bir Zeit University in the occupied West Bank, be prosecuted for alleged meetings with PLO officials in both Amman and Madrid this summer, in violation of Israeli law.

A 1986 Israeli law bans any contacts with representatives of terrorist organisations, and

the maximum sentence for an offence is three years in prison. Israel views the PLO as a "terrorist group."

However, Ashrawi has denied meetings with senior PLO officials.

The attempt to prosecute Ashrawi has drawn widespread



accusations from Palestinians as well as liberal Israelis who charged the move is harmful for the Middle East peace talks, co-sponsored by the US and the Soviet Union.

The US administration has reportedly warned Israel against prosecuting Ashrawi.

**Mujahideen free Soviet prisoner of war**

RIYADH, Nov 19: Afghan Mujahideen in the Saudi Red Sea Port of Jeddah have released their first Soviet prisoners of war who have since returned home, a Soviet diplomatic source disclosed here Monday, reports AFP.

A delegation of Mujahideen guerrilla fighters who returned from Moscow on Sunday handed over the Soviet prisoner Elham Uzbek, to his father and Uncle, who had travelled especially to Saudi Arabia, the source said.

It was the first release of a Soviet prisoner following a Mujahideen announcement in Moscow that the guerrillas would free a group of Soviet prisoners by the end of the year.

The delegation held talks last week in Moscow with

Soviet officials on means to reach a political settlement in the Afghan crisis. They issued a joint statement stressing the need to transfer all the power in Afghanistan to an Islamic transition government.

Meanwhile, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia welcomed the joint statement issued Friday by the Soviet and Afghan Mujahideen.

"We are optimistic and will consider that the joint statement constitutes a positive step in favour of an equitable settlement to the Afghan question," the Saudi Monarch said who in Jeddah presided over the weekly meeting of the Saudi Cabinet.

His remarks were reported by the Saudi Press Agency.

**Freed captives start for homes**  
**More hostages to be released soon, say Waite, Sutherland**



DAMASCUS — The last of the captured British hostages Terry Waite (L) and US hostage Thomas Sutherland (R) accompanied by Syrian Vice-Foreign Minister Youssef Shhokour as they appear at a news conference following their release Monday.

AKROTIRI (Cyprus), Nov 19: Waite, freed from nearly five years of captivity in Lebanon, flew home to Britain on Tuesday after spending the night at a Royal Air Force hospital, a spokesman for the British military base said, reports AP.

The RAF VC-10 carrying Waite, 52, and a group of Foreign Office officials, a medical team and the former hostage's brother, David, took off from Akrotiri at 9:10 a.m. (0710 GMT).

Reuter report from Damascus says: "I am happy to be free," were the first words from released British hostage Waite when he and American Thomas Sutherland met the press in Damascus on Monday night.

Both appeared to be in good health and chatted with the ambassadors before a formal news conference organised by the Syrian Foreign Ministry.

A grey bearded Waite 52, wore light brown trousers and a cardigan over a button down shirt.

Sutherland, 60, was in black trousers and a black cardigan with a red rose

tucked under the collar.

US hostages Joseph Cicippio and Alann Steen will be released within the next five days and Terry Anderson by the end of this month, Waite told the press Monday.

Both men looked thin and tired and Waite said they had spent the past five years chained to the walls of their cell but Sutherland described Waite as being in very good health.

Waite stooping slightly and wearing a shabby cardigan, described how he and Sutherland were sitting together: "In our cell chained to the wall as we have been for the last five years and ... one of our captors came in and told us that Tom and myself would be freed this afternoon."

Their abductors told them "We apologise for having captured you."

One of them said "We recognise that now this was a wrong thing to do, that holding hostages achieves no useful, constructive purposes."

Sutherland, looking well and sounding articulate and alert thanked United Nations officials for their help in their

release and said their job was not yet complete.

He said they had left Anderson only three or four hours previously.

He is no longer chained to the wall but he is still in a room with little fresh air and very little daylight, Sutherland said.

We are happy to have received our first gulps of Lebanese and Syrian fresh air, he said adding they looked forward to feeling the sunlight on Tuesday.

Waite said he asked one of his captors about the two German hostages still held.

"I'm sorry to say that at that point he could not give me positive information," said Waite. He did say that he hoped very much that the matter would be cleared up as soon as possible.

Sutherland joked: "All I can say about the English is they take a helluva long time to get things done, he (Waite) came here five years ago to get me out and finally he is taking me home."

Waite, an envoy of Dr Robert Runcie the former archbishop of Canterbury, was abducted in

Beirut in January 1987 while trying to obtain the release of Sutherland and other hostages. At the end of the news conference Waite made an impassioned appeal to those holding all hostages to release them and gave a graphic description of being shelled while in chains.

"In the last years we have lived through some of the sufferings of the people of Lebanon. We have been under shellfire constantly and to be under shellfire when you are chained to the wall is not pleasant, Waite said.

Waite and Sutherland left Syria early today on separate flights to Cyprus and Germany.

**US-Pak talks on nuclear, aid issues**

ISLAMABAD, Nov 19: Pakistan and the United States began here Tuesday formal talks on South Asia's nuclear non-proliferation problem and a related freeze on American aid to Pakistan, reports AFP.

**Fighting on in Vukovar**

ZAGREB (Yugoslavia), Nov 19: Despite Serbian claims that all Croatian fighters in Vukovar have surrendered, the Red Cross said shooting was continuing Monday evening and all resistance to the army onslaught had not died, reports AFP.

Marco Altherr, head of the international committee of the Red Cross team in Croatia, said an ICRC delegate monitored the surrender of 3,000 Croats, including 200 fighters, to the Serbian-dominated army.

He said their evacuation to other Croatian towns began immediately.

But he said that fighting was continuing in the centre and in the north of the virtually destroyed city by the Danube.

Tanjung, the Belgrade-based news agency, had reported

earlier in the day that the Croatian commander in Vukovar, Mile Dedagovic, had ordered an unconditional surrender, as sought by the Federal forces.

But Croatian officials here said Dedagovic had been dismissed from the post on Saturday, reportedly because he precisely opposed such a surrender.

The Croatian Health Minister, Andrija Hebrang, said on Croatian Television. The Croatian forces have not surrendered and we are only discussing the evacuation from the city of the wounded, children, old people and exhausted civilians.

The Minister was speaking at Zagreb's hotel 1, headquarters of the European Community's observation mis-

**China's arrogance disappoints US**

WASHINGTON, Nov 19: The United States is "very disappointed" with China's failure to embrace human rights issues during Secretary of State James Baker's visit to Beijing, the White House said Monday, reports AFP.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said Baker presented Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping with a letter from President George Bush of which "the central thrust ... was to press for human rights improvements."

"We're very disappointed," Fitzwater said. "One of the major missions that Secretary Baker took to China was to try to get progress on human rights."

Baker said Sunday on his return from Beijing that China had agreed to grant exit visas to persons against whom no criminal proceedings were pending

**World forum for Suu Kyi's release**

WASHINGTON, Nov 19: An international coalition has been formed to seek the release of Burmese dissident and 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi and to restore democracy to Burma, coalition members said Monday, reports AFP.

The International Burma Campaign was created during a three-day international conference on Burma which ended here on Sunday, said a statement issued by members of the campaign.

The coalition has been launched by Burmese solidarity organizations from the United States, Japan, Thailand, Canada, Australia, Britain, France and Germany, the statement said.

The conference was attended by Sein Win, head of the Democratic Opposition National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, who welcomed worldwide support to his cause and expressed "confidence in the ultimate victory of the democracy movement."

The International Burma Campaign said demonstrations would be held around the world on December 10 to press for the unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest in Burma for more than two years.

The date coincides with World Human Rights Day and the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony in Stockholm.

Aung San Suu Kyi, 46, heads the opposition National League for Democracy which won overwhelmingly in Burma's May 1990 general elections, but the current military junta has refused to relinquish power, the statement said. It added that since the mili-

**Off the Record**

**Brando daughter in murder case**

PARIS: Actor Marlon Brando's daughter, Cheyenne, flew from France to Tahiti under police custody Monday as part of an investigation into the killing of her lover, officials said, report AP.

Accompanied by two doctors and two police officers, Miss Brando, 21, left Charles de Gaulle-Roissy airport aboard a French military flight Monday morning.

She will be interrogated on her arrival in Papeete, Tahiti, by Judge Max Gatti, who had been investigating Miss Brando's link to the slaying of her lover Dag Drollet, in May 1990.

It was not clear whether Miss Brando would be kept in custody once Gatti finished the interview.

Miss Brando's half-brother, Christian Brando, is serving a 10-year prison sentence for voluntary manslaughter in California for shooting Drollet to death near Marlon Brando's mansion in southern California.

US prosecutors battled unsuccessfully to subpoena Miss Brando to testify at Christian's trial in Santa Monica. She was considered a key witness, because she had dined with her brother hours before the shooting and reportedly told him that Drollet, 26, had been abusing her.

Miss Brando, a resident of French Polynesia, was never charged by US authorities. Gatti issued an arrest warrant for her in an independent investigation requested by Drollet's family.

Drollet's family complained that the US trial never fully addressed the possibility that Miss Brando played a direct role in the killing.

**Brawlers shaved bald**

JAKARTA: Authorities here have forcibly shaved bald the heads of 1,010 high school students in the past two months in a campaign against student indiscipline and mass fighting between schools, reports said Tuesday, reports AFP.

The Kompas daily quoted Jakarta military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Permana as saying the youths were involved in mass street brawls or had disturbed public order.

The cases of 119 of those caught are now in the hands of the police because their actions tended towards crime, Permana added, without elaborating.

Strict measures against indiscipline youth, including shaving their heads bald, were launched in August following a spate of gang fights between schools which left several pupils dead or seriously wounded.

A joint military and police operation codenamed "Wiyaya Kusuma" (the name of local flower) has been conducted against the students in and near schools and public places, aimed at those involved in mass inter-school street brawls or loitering in public places during school hours.

**Family ties abiding**

SPRINGFIELD, Mass: Americans are placing more importance on family and turning away from materialism, a study released Monday indicates, reports AP.

Americans feel under increasing financial pressure, given the recession, but at the same time, there may be a silver lining, said Rebecca Shahmoon Shanok, a psychologist who helped analyze the results of two polls and other interviews for the study's sponsor, Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co.

"Materialistic values are on the decline," she said. "It's sort of wonderful in a way."

Lazarus Inc., a Washington polling company, interviewed Americans in focus groups and then followed up with a telephone survey of 1,200 adults, both in 1989 and again in September.

The polls found 47 per cent of adults rate as one of their most important values "respecting one's parents" — an increase of 9 percentage points since 1989. The number who felt that way about "respecting one's children" also 9 points, to 43 per cent in 1991.

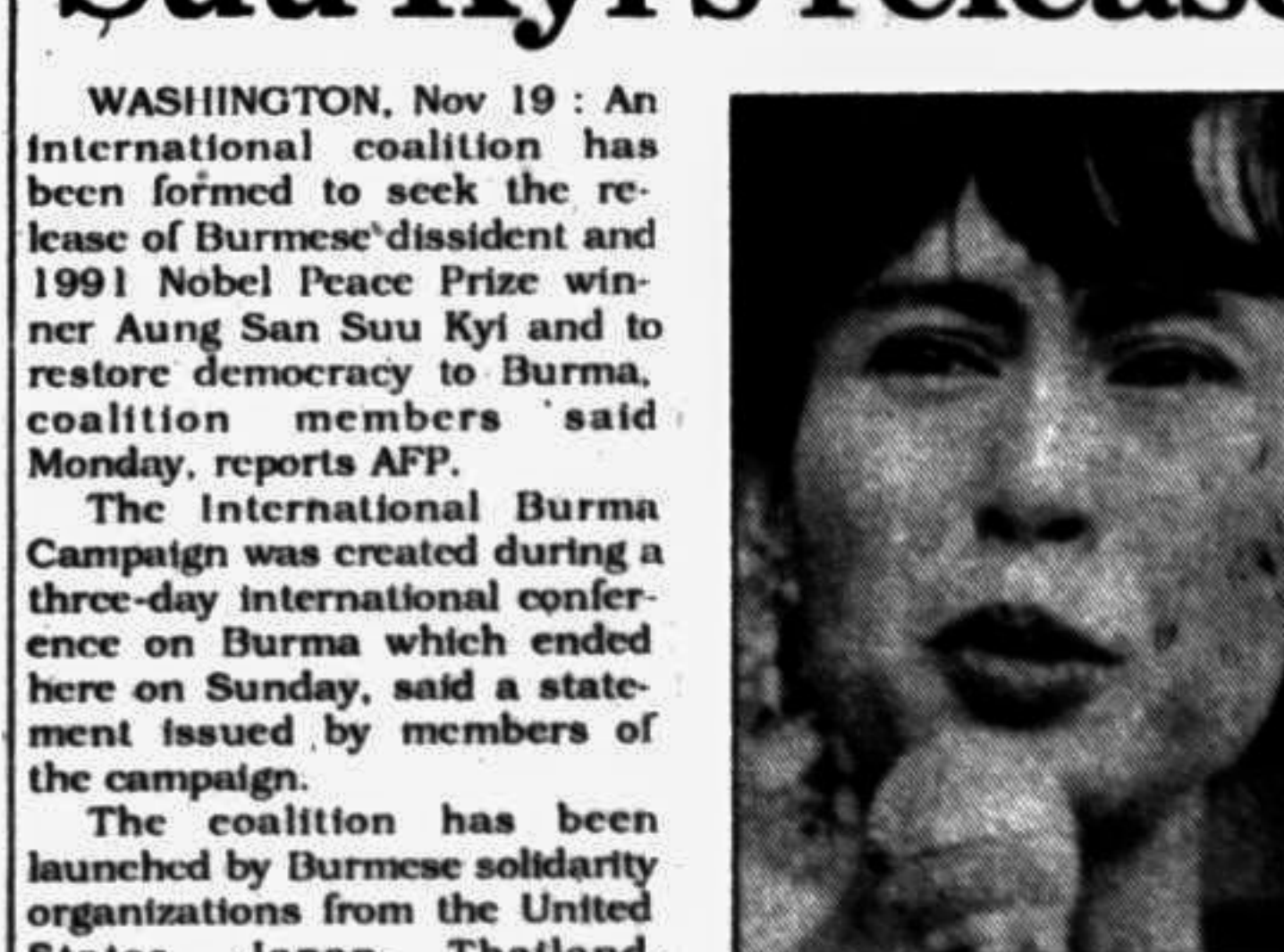
Over the past two years, the number of Americans who identify "having nice things" as a very important value has slipped 10 points, to 26 per cent.

"As the economy has changed, as people are having a more difficult time, they are reverting back to their family as a source of strength," said Eva Dion, a vice president of Massachusetts Mutual, based in Springfield.

The study found a 9-point rise, to 38 per cent in 1991, in those who embrace "leaving the world to the next generation in better shape" as one of their most important values.

Eighty-four per cent of adults now strongly agree that "family is the place where most basic values are instilled" — a rise of 22 percentage points.

Despite that view, 68 per cent of Americans believe the entertainment industry has the most influence on the development of young people's values.



lary regime took power in a bloody coup three years ago, "elected representatives have suffered torture, imprisonment, exile and death."

**Seoul, Tokyo talk war reparations**

BEIJING, Nov 19: Japan and North Korea on Tuesday discussed Pyongyang's claim to compensation for 35 years of Japanese colonial occupation, one of the major areas blocking talks on normal relations, reports AP.

Japanese Embassy spokesman Yūji Kumamaru said Japan reiterated that it does not accept the claim for what North Korea considers war reparations.

North Korea, meanwhile, held firm to its position stated in the previous four rounds of talks that Japan should pay reparations for its 1910-45 rule of the Korean peninsula, Kumamaru said.