

**US to limit N-tests to 6 annually**

WASHINGTON, July 16: The Bush administration has promised to limit nuclear tests to six annually — a slight reduction from recent years — in an effort to keep Congress from imposing tougher limits, reports AFP.

In a letter to congressional leaders, the administration promised over the next five years to limit nuclear tests to six annually, at least three of them under 35 kilotons.

The aim of the tests will be to check the reliability of US nuclear arms rather than develop new weapons, said the July 10 letter signed by Defence Secretary Dick Cheney, National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and Energy Secretary James Watkins.

**Kashmir crisis can be solved thru' dialogue**

WASHINGTON, July 16: Despite the continued Indo-Pakistani struggle for control over the state of Kashmir, a group of experts assembled in Washington generally agreed that the situation could be ameliorated through dialogue and confidence building, reports USIS.

"Everyone here agrees that the prospects for incremental progress are better now than at any other time," said Robert Oakley, the former US ambassador to Pakistan, and a current fellow at the US Institute of Peace.

But the apparent desire of both Islamabad and New Delhi to resolve the issue of Kashmir has not translated into concrete action because, according to Oakley, "they're not willing — and don't have enough confidence in one another — to run the political risks involved".

Oakley made the comments during a July 14 seminar/workshop on Kashmir sponsored by the US Institute for Peace (USIP). The session was one of five sponsored by USIP during a three-day conference on various conflicts around the world — in Kashmir, Mozambique, Nagorno-Karabakh, Peru and Yugoslavia.

Steven Cohen, professor of political science at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, described Kashmir as "a cluster of problems" that have waxed and waned over the decades, but have become increasingly complicated in recent years.

Both India and Pakistan have unwisely made Kashmir a domestic issue and "a badge of national identity," Cohen said. Meanwhile, Kashmir itself — with borders touching former Soviet states, China, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan — has acquired an unexpected strategic and military importance, which is only heightened by Indian and Pakistani efforts to develop nuclear capabilities, he noted.

The situation is further complicated by what Cohen and others called the "stirrings of a national self-determination movement" on the part of the Kashmiri people. Many noted that Kashmiris are increasingly distrustful of both New Delhi and Islamabad, and Ambassador Oakley declared flatly that "the Kashmiris are fed up with being used as pawns" by those two governments.

To many of the participants, the multi-layered quality of the Kashmir conflict suggest that efforts to resolve it should take place on several different tracks. "I propose addressing a series of problems across a broad front, because we don't know which road will take us there," Cohen noted.

But the conferees were divided on the question of whether outside intervention could move the dialogue forward. According to Oakley, third-party mediation "doesn't work if it's public, or if it appears to be an effort to impose" views on the negotiating parties. On the other hand, "quiet discussion" often plants the seeds that later grow into negotiated settlements, he said.

Cohen opined that outside intervention in the Kashmir dispute is "necessary," though perhaps best left to international groups such as the United Nations rather than Washington or Moscow. Other participants described that suggestion as "almost a non-starter" due to India's long-standing opposition to interference

by outside groups.

Brian Mandell, associate professor at Carleton University in Ontario, noted that in the case of Kashmir, a mediator could provide a kind of "reality check" by outlining the consequences of a continued stalemate.

New York Times reporter Barbara Crossette, while largely skeptical of conflict resolution efforts, suggested that "confidence-building need not be ruled out." Programmes to promote cross-border family reunions, for example, "might help control the paranoia" that each country feels about the other, she said.

Joseph Montville of the US Foreign Service Institute noted that the most important point of the Kashmir issue is that "people get killed," and that any effort to resolve the conflict must acknowledge the need for a psychological healing process. "You can't just walk in with a textbook, and outline a solution to grievances that are often decades — or centuries — old," he said. Montville also stressed the need for a long-term commitment from any party interested in mediating the dialogue.

**Afghanistan, Tajikistan to exchange missions**

ISLAMABAD, July 16: Afghanistan and Tajikistan have agreed to exchange diplomatic missions as soon as possible, a report reaching here from Kabul said today, says Xinhua.

It will be the first exchange of mission between Afghanistan's new government and any of the newly independent central Asian republics.

The agreement was reached when a high-level Tajik delegation visited Kabul recently.

The Tajik delegation, led by the country's Prime Minister Akbar Mirzoyev, arrived in Kabul on Tuesday and met with Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

**Mandela wants UN probe to end clashes**

NEW YORK, July 16: African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela called Wednesday for a UN investigation into violence in South Africa's Black Townships and dismissed new measures by F W De Klerk's government to end the clashes, reports AFP.

Mandela spoke in New York hours before the Security Council began meeting in emergency session to discuss the situation in South Africa.

"We request the appointment of a representative of the General Secretary of the United Nations as soon as possible to investigate the violence in Botopong township," Mandela said.

The 15-member council could vote Thursday on a resolution condemning the violence and calling on the South African government to take measures to put an end to it.

In Pretoria late Tuesday, the De Klerk government announced plans to disband three special units of the army.



WEST BANK: Heavily armed Israeli soldiers stand guard at the entrance of the Arab town of Nablus Wednesday, where troops blocked thousands of students inside the occupied West Bank's biggest campus in an operation against alleged Palestinian terrorists. The army declared Nablus a "closed military zone" and imposed a curfew on the town and surrounding Palestinian refugee camps, barring journalists from reaching the university. — AFP/UNB photo

**Fighting rages unabated in Sarajevo: 13 more killed**

SARAJEVO, July 16: Fighting raged unabated in the beleaguered Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, killing at least 13 people, as the former Yugoslav republic's ethnic leaders held last-ditch peace talks in London, reports Reuter.

The Sarajevo crisis centre said 13 people had been killed and 72 wounded in the city over a 24-hour period. Police reported separately that an artillery shell killed two people and wounded five in Sarajevo's Pavle Goranin district.

Bosnia's Muslim Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic said European communist-sponsored talks in London on the conflict would continue on Thursday. He set out proposals to end the fighting, offering to share power with Serbs and Croats.

Silajdzic said the first thing was to stop the killing and put all weaponry under interna-

tional control. But Serb and Croat leaders appeared likely to resist his proposal for an unitary state.

Bosnia's Croat leader, Mate Boban, said the talks had his full support but cast doubt on whether the Croats would accept the principle of a unitary state.

The leader of Serbian forces in Bosnia, Radovan Karadzic, offered a fresh ceasefire and urged canonization of Bosnia according to the Swiss model.

The three leaders, who separately met EC mediators Lord Carrington and then Portugal's Jose Cutileiro, traded accusations of atrocities and argued over who was to blame for the bloodshed.

The United States condemned Serb forces, saying they had forcibly expelled non-Serbs from parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

We condemn and deplore the Serbian forces intensifying campaign of forced expulsions of non-Serbs from areas where fighting is going on, said State Department spokesman Richard Boucher.

Western allied naval forces prepared to start monitoring the coast in support of a UN trade embargo against the camp Yugoslav state comprising Serbia and Montenegro.

But US Defence Secretary reiterated that Washington was not prepared to send in ground troops. "We are working diplomatically and militarily, but we are not prepared to descend thousands of ground troops into Yugoslavia," he said.

The heaviest fighting on Wednesday centered on the Muslim town of Gorazed which Serbs say they will capture within days.

**Iraq's challenge putting at risk truce: US**

WASHINGTON, July 16: Iraq's challenge to UN missions is putting at risk the ceasefire which ended the Gulf War, the US government warned Wednesday, reports AFP.

Iraq must not be allowed to go against "The authority of the Security Council" State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher quoted Secretary of State James Baker as saying in a telephone conversation with UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali late Tuesday.

"By continuing this kind of violations the Iraqi government is putting at risk the ceasefire that concluded operation desert storm," the allied effort to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, Boucher added.

Iraq challenged the United Nations on three fronts Wednesday, refusing to take part in border talks, demanding the lifting of an oil embargo and dismissing weapons inspectors camped outside a government ministry as "stray dogs".

**Gunshots rock Algiers**

**7 FIS leaders jailed**

BLIDA (Algeria), July 16: An Algerian military court on Wednesday jailed Muslim fundamentalist leader Abassi Madani and his deputy Ali Belhadj for 12 years on charges ranging from plotting against the state to armed insurrection, reports AFP.

One defendant in the leadership of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was jailed for six years and four others for four years.

The military prosecutor, Major Belkacem Boukhar, who had asked for sentences of life, 20 and 15 years for the seven, said he accepted the court's decision and would not appeal.

Some of the charges against the seven carried the death penalty.

Families of the defendants complained in interviews with Algerian Radio that the sentences were excessive.

Madani's son, Okba, said "the Algerian people will judge" his father.

Belhadj's brother said the FIS leaders "ought not spend one more day in jail."

The court dismissed several of the charges laid against the FIS leaders, which ranged from armed insurrection and plotting against the state to, in Belhadj's case, the torture of kidnap victims.

The seven were detained on June 30 last year after anti-government strikes and demonstrations that left 55 dead by the official toll.

The six-year jail term was

given to Kamal Guemazi, head of the greater Algiers Council, one of the municipal authorities won by the FIS when it swept the board in Algeria's first free elections in June 1990, winning many local polls.

All seven defendants are members of Council of Elders.

Reuter adds: Bursts of automatic gunfire echoed through Algiers overnight, hours after a military court sentenced two Muslim fundamentalist leaders to 12 years' imprisonment.

Shooting started shortly before midnight in the darkened Algerian capital. It was apparently centred on Belcourt, a stronghold of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)

**Israel's campus siege enters third day**

JERUSALEM, July 16: Israeli soldiers encircled the West Bank's largest university for a third day Thursday, and more than 100 Palestinian leaders staged a hunger strike to protest the siege of hundreds of people on campus, reports AP.

The standoff began when students resisted soldiers' demands to search them for arms as they left campus. It has soured the atmosphere for peace efforts just before US Secretary of State James A Baker III's arrival in the Mideast.

Israeli reports said army officials and Palestinians were seeking a compromise to the standoff at Al-Najah University in Nablus. University trustees were scheduled to talk with military officers, later Thursday.

Figures on both sides said the incident arose at a crucial time when newly named Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has promised to speed up Arab-Israeli peace talks.

"The Al-Najah case is a stumbling bloc created also unwisely by ourselves," Rabin said on state television Wednesday night.

Rabin, a former military chief of staff, said soldiers should have tried to prevent armed activists from entering the campus rather than demand to search those students leaving.

Faisal Husseini, an adviser to the Palestinian peace talks delegation, blamed Israel for the confrontation. "Whoever decided to close in on the university and start this military action has put Rabin to the test," said Husseini, one of those on hunger strike.

**Off the Record**

**Bad news for poor Britons**



LONDON: The bad news for Britain's poor is that under Margaret Thatcher their incomes fell by six per cent while wealthier people saw their incomes swell by a third, reports Reuter.

Government statistics released on Wednesday show a bizarre and slightly out of focus picture of how the bottom half live.

The Conservative government halted the data as showing how well Britons did between 1979 and 1989 in the Thatcher era of popular capitalism.

The opposition Labour Party said it exposed inequality and the failure of policies to "help the poor by letting the rich help themselves."

The survey by the Social Security Department covers the decade up to 1989, just before Britain slid into its latest recession from which it has yet to recover.

Average household incomes rose by 30 per cent over the decade, but the bottom 10 per cent of income earners had six per cent less to spend in 1989 than in 1979. But, it adds, half the bottom 10 per cent had video recorders while 70 per cent telephones and heating in their homes.

**Yeltsin assures Russians of no more coup**

MOSCOW, July 16: President Boris Yeltsin told Russians they could take their August holidays without fear last year's headline coup would be repeated but said he was likely to stay in Moscow all the same, reports Reuter.

The president, responding to questions from leading Russian journalists, said holiday makers should carry on with their summer plans. His remarks were printed in the Daily Izvestia on Wednesday and were scheduled for television broadcast.

"I cannot tell them they will return to heaven after the holidays," the president said.

"But as for peace as for the fact that there will be no coup that much I can say. They can have their holiday assured that will not happen."

Nonetheless, Yeltsin said he was planning not to leave town for his traditional seaside vacation: "I have not decided yet. In all probability, no I want to be here in August."

On August 19, 1991 top leaders of the state and the Communist party announced they had deposed Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, imprisoning him at his Black Sea holiday residence for three days.

Yeltsin led the successful

resistance movement and emerged as the country's de facto leader, eventually forcing Gorbachev out of power and bringing down the Soviet Union.

Yeltsin, Russia's first ever elected leader, also used the interview to undercut charges by nationalist and neo-communist critics, that he had allied the country exclusively with western interests.

And he denied persistent reports of serious divisions within his own administration.

"From the outside, our policy does seem exclusively pro-western... but we had to start with basic questions.

**BRIEFLY**

**Jordan to allow UN team:**

Jordan will allow a team of UN officials to visit the border with Iraq to inspect the kingdom's efforts to prevent banned material from entering Iraq, a senior government official said Wednesday, reports AP from Amman.

The move came three weeks after Jordan angrily rejected a US proposal to station 50 UN observers in the kingdom to monitor enforcement of United Nations sanctions against Iraq.

The decision appeared designed to ease tension between Amman and Washington and head off possible UN action against Jordan.

The Jordanian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the 14-man UN team would arrive at the end of July for a week-long visit. He did not give a specific date.

Jordan insists that only medical supplies and food — both exempt from the sanctions are being transported to Jordan.

**Argentina won't join arms race:**

Argentine Defence Minister Antonio Erman Gonzalez told the Pentagon on Wednesday his country has no money for an arms race, AP reports from Washington.

The Argentine embassy reported that Gonzalez visited US Deputy Defence Secretary Donald Atwood.

"To be sure" the embassy reported him as saying, "we do not have not are we prepared devote important resources to an arms race or immediate re-equipment."

He said he supported the initiative of President Bush to eliminate unconventional weapons from the region — nuclear, long range chemical and biological.

**Bogoslof volcano erupted:**

Bogoslof volcano, a 331-foot (100 metre) Aleutian island 900 miles (1,400km) southwest of Anchorage, has erupted in a plume of steam and ash, the Alaska Volcano Observatory said on Wednesday, reports Reuter from Alaska.

Pilots late on Tuesday reported a plume rising to 12,000 feet (3,600 metres) above sea level, observatory officials said. The volcano's last confirmed eruption was in 1931, officials said.

No towns have been dusted by ash and no airline traffic has been disrupted, officials said.

Tiny Bogoslof is Alaska's second-youngest island. Early settlers reported watching the island being created by a three-day eruption of smoke, steam and lava in 1796.

**Quake hits Japan:**

An earthquake with an estimated magnitude of six on the Richter scale shook northeastern Japan Thursday the Meteorological agency said, reports AFP from Tokyo.

The epicenter of the quake, which occurred at 9.01 am (0001 GMT), was located about 20 kilometers (12 miles) undersea far off the coast of Iwate prefecture in northeastern Japan.

There were no reports of injuries or property damage.

**Guatemala peace talks in Aug:**

Leftist rebels waging the last and longest insurgency in Central America will renew peace talks with the government in August, a mediator announced Wednesday, reports AP from Guatemala.

The talks will involve the administration of President Jorge Serrano and rebels of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, or URNG, said Roman Catholic Bishop Rodolfo Quetzada Toruno.

Speaking at a news conference, the mediator said Mexico City would be the likely venue for the start of talks between Aug. 3-8. His announcement marked another major step in the process to try to end the 30-year civil war.

The last round of talks, held in the Mexican capital, broke off last August amid a failure by either side to find common ground on key issues or even agree to a truce while negotiations were being held. "The time has arrived for direct talks between both sides," the Bishop declared.

**Clash leaves 7 hurt in Haiti:**

Soldiers and plainclothes security agents wielding clubs and firing guns broke up a student demonstration at the medical school Wednesday, the Haitian News Agency reported, AP says from Haiti.

The agency said at least seven students were injured, including one hospitalised with a bullet wound.

The news report said some 400 students were holding an anti government demonstration Wednesday in front of the State University medical school when about 20 soldiers and 30 armed plainclothesmen chased them inside.

**AIDS epidemic in poor regions feared**

AMSTERDAM, July 16: The grim vision of a global epidemic running out of control overshadows the opening Sunday of a weeklong review by 10,000 AIDS experts of setbacks and gains in their struggle to stop the disease, reports AP.

The epidemic has leveled off in the United States and western Europe. But many fear some of the world's poorest regions could be ravaged by the spread of the AIDS virus through heterosexual intercourse.

This year's International Conference on AIDS is the eighth in the short history of the epidemic. It brings together the top minds on the disease from more than 100 countries — doctors, scientists, social workers, activists, government health officials and people dying of AIDS.

They will hear 986 speak-

ers on subjects ranging from antibodies and Aids-related cancer to homophobia and the "commercial sex industry" and the meeting's euphemism for prostitution.

Behind these often highly technical summaries of lab work and sociological investigations are two sobering challenges.

The disease is already rampant in parts of Africa and is spreading with alarming speed through India, Thailand and other parts of Asia. No country is likely to escape entirely, but the threat to impoverished regions seems especially great.

No effective treatment is in sight, nor is a vaccine near. The virus is proving to be an amusingly resourceful foe, constantly changing itself to escape new medicines and the body's own defences.

Harvard University is sponsoring the conference and

originally intended to hold it in Boston. It was moved because AIDS activists threatened to disrupt it over US immigration rules that limit entry into the country of foreigners infected with AIDS.

"The six days in Amsterdam could be a critical week in the history of world AIDS," said Dr Jonathan Mann of Harvard, the conference chairman.

In Mann's view, the meeting will help solidify a consensus that stopping the epidemic will require seeing AIDS as part of a larger problem of economic and social inequity around the world.

"Take a country with hardly any AIDS today and you can predict that, within 10 years, the virus will more likely affect those people who are discriminated against because of gender, religion, race or sexual preference," he said.

According to a recent study

Mann directed, 13 million people around the world are infected with HIV, the AIDS virus. People from Africa and Asia will be an important presence at this year's meeting, and for good reason.

Nearly 8 million of the world's infected people live in Africa, mostly in western and southern parts of the continent.

The number infected has tripled in just five years. In Abidjan in the Ivory Coast, 7 per cent of adults carry HIV up from 1 per cent five years ago.

About 1 million are infected in Asia, but the epidemic there may overtake Africa by the end of the decade. Mann predicts that, by the late 1990s, India could have more people infected with HIV than any other country.



THAT'S HER: The only official police handout of defunct Marilyn Monroe, taken on August 5, 1962 at the Los Angeles Westwood Village Mortuary shows the Hollywood actress said out after the autopsy. The authenticity of the photograph was confirmed towards the German magazine TV movie by Allan Abbott, a doctor conducting the post mortem, who has been present after the autopsy. "That's her, I helped to dress her." — AFP/UNB photo

**Men can also get abused**

NEW YORK: Bill L., a 32-year-old Californian, figures his girlfriend hit him hundreds of times in their two years together, reports AP.

She bit, scratched and punched.

"She threatened to kill me a couple times," he said. "She said she would wait until I'd fallen asleep and then kill me."

And there was the day, after he finally had moved out, that she came at him with a five-foot-long (1.5 meter) barbell bar because he had a date for a Rolling Stones concert and she didn't.

So when he read the other day that the American Medical Association's new guidelines on domestic violence focused on female victims, "it was as though my suffering didn't occur to the rest of the world because I'm a man."