

# US official accused of meddling in ROK's internal affairs

SEOUL, Mar 2: A senior US State Department official was accused Wednesday of meddling in South Korea's internal affairs when he demanded a South Korean security law be repealed, reports AP. Thomas Hubbard, deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, stirred controversy by urging the Seoul government to repeal its national security law as a way to promote democracy and human rights. The law has long been a political issue even in South Korea, with the opposition demanding its abrogation. The opposition charges that the edict has often been used by the government to crack down on political dissent.

"It is regrettable if the deputy assistant secretary made such remarks concerning (our) domestic law," Ha Soon-bong, a spokesman of the governing Democratic Liberal Party, said in a statement. Ha said the law is needed to counter North Korea's efforts to ferment a Communist revolution in capitalists South Korea. The leading opposition Democratic Party welcomed Hubbard's remarks in principle and said the American official's remarks should not be interpreted as an effort to intervene in South Korea's internal affairs. "Our party believes that he made the remarks out of his desire to see improvement in democracy and human rights," Park Ji-Won, a Democratic spokesman, said in a statement.

In a dispatch from Washington, South Korea's national Yonhap news agency said Hubbard made the demand in a keynote speech at a seminar on US-South Korea relations, sponsored by American University on Feb 25. A test of Hubbard's speech was obtained Tuesday, Yonhap said.

Hubbard reportedly praised South Korea for making "heartwarming success in establishing democracy and marked improvement on the human rights front" under the new civilian government of President Kim Young-sam. "Despite (these) successes — or perhaps because of them — the United States still wishes the Republic of (South) Korea would repeal the national security law," Hubbard said.

Hubbard's remarks drew special attention here because he was the chief US negotiator

# Muslims, Croats reach accord on federation in Bosnia

WASHINGTON, Mar 2: Bosnian Muslims and Croats agreed Tuesday on the framework for establishment of a federation that could move Bosnia a significant step closer to peace. "It shows that peace is possible," Secretary of State Warren Christopher said, reports AP.

Brokers by the United States, the agreement would bring together two of the three parties in a bloody two-year ethnic conflict that has cost the lives of more than 200,000 people. Missing from the equation are the Bosnian Serbs who have military control over

for foreign affairs, national defense and commerce. The president and vice president will be elected by a two-house legislature with the two ethnic groups alternating yearly in holding the two positions. The government will be headed by a prime minister.

The cantons will have authority over police, education, culture, housing, public services and radio and television. With Christopher looking on, the agreement was signed at the State Department by Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic of Bosnia, Foreign Minister Mate Granic of Croatia and

calls for a confederation with Croatia that would include open borders and strong economic ties. A deadline of March 15 was set for drafting a constitution for the new state and for completing work on the Confederation with Croatia.

The administration hopes that creation of the entity would increase pressure on the Serbs to join in a peace agreement that would finally end the fighting in the former Yugoslav republic. "We hope and pray this is the first step toward peace," said Silajdzic.

Serb leader Radovan Karadzic announced in Moscow an agreement to open the airfield at Tuzla in Bosnia. He said the first relief plane to the city would be Russian. The Serbs are under threat of NATO air strikes if they refuse to allow opening of the airport by next Monday.

The agreement in Washington was reached after four days of intensive negotiations by Muslim and Croatian leaders. Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic said earlier in the day the talks were in their final stages.

The details were not immediately available. At the White House, Clinton bade farewell to British Prime Minister John Major, and the two leaders said at a brief news conference that they planned to work together "for a resolution of the crisis" in Bosnia. Granic and Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic, a Muslim, have been negotiating in Washington over the past three days. Throughout the discussions in the US capital, Christopher and other administration officials steered clear of sounding overly optimistic.

Even as Granic was predicting an agreement, a senior administration official cautioned that issues remained to be resolved. Granic did not discuss the details of the possible accord other than to say it would lead to a federation between the two parties who would then have close ties with Croatia.

Late last week, the Clinton administration unveiled a proposal for uniting Bosnian Muslims and Croats into an entity. The next step would be an attempt to link that federation with a Serbian entity and form a country comprising two republics.



Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic (L), Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic (C-seated) and Bosnian Croat Kresimir Zubak sign a treaty in Washington March 01 to establish the framework of a federation that could move Bosnia closer to peace. Standing is US Secretary of State Warren Christopher representing the United States who brokered the treaty — AFP photo

more than half the former Yugoslav republic. The agreement creates a federation of cantons made up of area where the majority of the population is either Muslim or Croat. They would have equal rights, with a central government responsible

Bosnian Croatian President Kresimir Zubak. Each of the signers paid tribute to the United States role in brokering the agreement.

In addition to the provisions for the bi-communal Bosnian state, the pact also

He also said he hoped that "American involvement will continue." Christopher said the United States and its allies would join in efforts to implement the agreement and also to rebuild war-ravaged Bosnia.

In another promising step,

# Clinton, Major urge S African parties to take part in polls

WASHINGTON, Mar 2: US President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister John Major urged Tuesday that all parties in South Africa take part in the country's first multi-racial elections in April, reports AFP.

"We want to strongly encourage all the parties in South Africa to responsibly participate in the elections," Clinton said at a joint press appearance with Major at the end of the British Prime Minister's two-day visit to Washington.

Major said that Tuesday's meeting at Ulundi between African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela and Mangosuthu Buthezi, leader of the mainly Zulu Inkatha Party was "an extremely important meeting."

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# 4 guerillas killed in S Lebanon

Four guerillas were killed in South Lebanon Tuesday in clashes with Israeli forces and the proxy South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia, Israeli and SLA officials said, AFP reports from Tyre, Lebanon.

The SLA said it shot dead two fighters of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah in the central sector of Israel's self-declared "security zone."

**Japan sets up ties with Macedonia:** Japan established diplomatic relations on Tuesday with the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia. Reuter reports from Tokyo.

The two countries exchanged notes in the Macedonian capital of Skopje, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. European Union countries and the United States have also begun establishing diplomatic relations with Skopje, despite pressure from Greece. Athens says use of the name Macedonia implies a territorial threat against its own northern Macedonia province.

**Israeli settler shot dead in WB:** Palestinians shot dead an Israeli settler Tuesday when they opened fire on his car near Biddiya village in the north of the occupied West Bank, a settler spokesman said, AFP reports from Jerusalem.

The settler's wife was seriously wounded in the attack. Troops later sealed off the area.

**Georgia ratifies CIS membership:** The Georgian Parliament ratified Tuesday the country's membership of the Commonwealth of Independent States, grouping former Soviet republics, after a noisy debate, AFP reports from Tbilisi.

The vote was carried by 124 to 47, prompting protests from members of the opposition National Radical Party, who complained of procedural irregularities.

The decision announced in October by President Eduard Shevardnadze to join the CIS gained Moscow's support in his successful struggle against the armed uprising led by his ousted predecessor, the late Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

**4 women held for church blast:** Lebanese security forces arrested four women on Tuesday suspected to be linked to the bombing of a Maronite Church that killed 10 worshippers, security sources said, Reuter reports from Beirut.

They said the women were arrested at dawn and initial investigations showed they planted the bomb next to the altar during Sunday mass at Sayyidat Al-Najat (our lady of salvation) north of Beirut.

The sources said a fifth woman, thought to be the leader of the ring, had fled the country shortly after Sunday's bombing.

# Arafat insists on UN resolution to safeguard Palestinians

TUNIS, Mar 2: PLO leader Yasser Arafat told top US and Russian officials Tuesday that he would insist on UN guarantees for the Palestinians before resuming peace talks with Israel, the Palestinian news agency Wafa said.

Arafat's bottom line was ringing in the ears of key delegations as the UN Security Council resumed debate late Tuesday on the massacre of up to 52 Muslim worshippers in Hebron.

In a telephone call to US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Arafat insisted on a UN Security Council resolution to safeguard Palestinians in the occupied territories, Wafa said.

UN debate snagged Saturday on Washington's opposition to Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) demands for the deployment of an international peacekeeping force there.

Christopher later told a committee of representatives subcommittee in Washington: "I hope the next several days will see greater assurances given to the Palestinians."

"I hope in the next few days they will begin to feel the sense of security that will enable them to resume the negotiations."

Arafat had the same message for Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, sent by Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozayev to get a first-hand response from the PLO and Israel to Friday's massacre, Wafa reported.

The PLO leader's "bottom line" demands included the dispatch of international peacekeepers and a concerted

effort from UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and from the co-sponsors of the peace process, Russia and the United States, to find a way out of the crisis.

In a two-hour meeting, Arafat told Ivanov he wanted all Israeli settlers disarmed and certain Jewish extremist settlements demolished, Wafa said.

According to the agency, Ivanov said Russia looked favourably on the PLO demands.

On Sunday the Israeli cabinet decided to have six Jewish extremists arrested immediately, and agreed to confiscate automatic weapons from

known troublemakers and to restrict their movements.

Israel released 500 Palestinian prisoners Tuesday in a bid to mollify Palestinian outrage at the massacre. It has also agreed to pay compensation to victims' families.

Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin said Monday he would agree to the presence of unarmed international monitors, but he has rejected demands for a peacekeeping force.

Arafat was due to meet late Tuesday with Carlos Papoulas, the Foreign Minister of Greece, which currently holds the six-month rotating presidency of the 12-nation European Union.

# UNITA chief ready to call truce to fighting

HUAMBO, Angola, Mar 2: UNITA head Jonas Savimbi said Tuesday he was ready to call a global truce to fighting in Angola's 18-year-old civil war, saying he could see no hope of victory for either side in continued bloodshed, reports AFP.

In an interview at his headquarters here with AFP and the Paris newspaper Le Figaro, Savimbi said: "No one is going to win this war, not even if it continues for 10 years." "I am ready to call a meeting of the (UNITA) political commission to decree a ceasefire," the leader of the union for the total independence of Angola said.

Referring to the formerly Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government, he added: "We will see how the MPLA responds." He said a "global ceasefire could help us politically, and could accompany an accord which is on the point of being reached in Lusaka." Peace talks have been being held in Lusaka since November, with little apparent progress.

The rebel movement has been fighting the MPLA government for 18 years, but this is not the first time UNITA has proposed a truce.

A ceasefire proclaimed unilaterally by UNITA last September brought a lull in the fighting but fighting resumed two weeks ago.

# Final batch of US army leaves Somalia

MOGADISHU, Mar 2: A final batch of 66 men and women from a key US army unit that was 3,600 strong at the height of hostilities last October left Mogadishu on Tuesday, signifying the beginning of the end of US military involvement in Somalia, reports AFP.

The departure of the army unit, the Falcon brigade from the tenth mountain division of the tenth aviation brigade based in Fort Drum, New York, now leaves only 2,700 US troops inside Somalia and another 4,000 marines and navy units off-shore.

The United States is to complete its withdrawal from the war-ravaged country by the end of the this month.

# Half of Wales people unhappy with Charles

CARDIFF, Mar 2: More than half of Wales people are unhappy with Prince Charles, titular head of their principality, an opinion poll showed on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

It was published as Charles, 45-year-old heir to the British throne, began a tour of Wales hoping to win back the loyalty of his future subjects.

A British Broadcasting Corporation polls on the national day of Wales' patron saint St David showed most Wales people considered Charles, who carries the title 'Prince of Wales', had represented them badly.

It said 52 per cent of people questioned were unhappy with his performance as ceremonial head of the principality, with only 40 per cent satisfied.

# Off the Record



British model Claire with sunflowers painted on her body, during the launch of Elizabeth Arden's new "Sunflowers" fragrances in London March 01. — AFP photo

# Punishment indeed!

JOHANNESBURG: A man accused of raping a young girl was attacked by two men who sliced off his penis, a local newspaper reported Tuesday, says AFP.

Police were unable to find the severed organ and it is believed the men took it with them, the citizen said. Christoffel Johannes Botes, 34, who is standing trial on charges of raping a five-year-old girl, was being treated in Klerksdorp hospital some 150 kilometres (90 miles) west of Johannesburg.

He was taken to hospital by his wife, who was believed to be at the scene of the attack at 4 am Monday at a building material traders where Botes works as a security guard, the newspaper said.

One of the men Pinned Botes to the ground while the other cut off his penis with a knife.

A hospital spokesman said his conditions was satisfactory, but he was "pale and weak."

# Two-year old girl locked for 6-hr in minus 8 F temperatures

REGINA, Saskatchewan: A 2-year-old girl accidentally locked outside her home for almost six hours in subzero temperatures was "like a block of ice," by the time she was found lying on her front doorstep, doctors said, reports AP.

Karlee Kosolowski had no heartbeat and was nearly frozen when she arrived at Plains Hospital in Regina early Monday. She remained in serious condition Tuesday.

"She was practically dead," said John Burgess, one of the doctors who revived her. "It's just amazing to get a child this age who literally comes in like a block of ice."

The girl apparently followed her father out of the house when he left about 2:30 am to begin work at a dairy in Regina, the capital of the central Canadian province of Saskatchewan. He did not notice Karlee following him, wearing a coat and boots over her pajamas.

She was trapped outside when the front door swung shut and locked behind her. Her mother found her after nearly six hours in temperatures of about minus 8 F (minus 22 C). An ambulance rushed her to the hospital 30 miles (50 kms) away.

"It took nearly an hour and a half for her heart to start beating," Burgess said.

Dr. Joy Dobson said the girl was in intensive care with extensive frostbite to her legs, one of which may have to be amputated. But she said Karlee was alert and improving.

# Male chastity belts

ROME: Rome sculptor Angelo Camerino, who made headlines four years ago by exhibiting sculptures of female chastity belts, is cashing in on a male version in the wake of the John and Lorena Bobbitt case, reports Reuter.

Camerino on Tuesday said he had sold three male chastity belts to an American living in Rome. The belts are stainless steel and lined with leather.

"He asked me for the belts, which he wanted to send to some friends in New York," the sculptor said. "He told me they would wear them at night so that their wives can't do a Mrs Bobbitt."

Lorena Bobbitt, freed on Monday from a mental hospital, was acquitted by reason of insanity on January 21 on a charge of slashing off her sleeping husband's penis.

Camerino said the male belts cost 2.5 million lire (1,500 each) but he had sold the client the third for a cut price of two million (1,200).

# Burundi pledges to restore law and order

GENEVA, Mar 2: Burundi on Tuesday pledged to halt ethnic massacres and restore law and order to the tiny central African state, reports Reuter.

Foreign Affairs Minister Jean Marie Ngendahayo also said "tens of thousands" had died in ethnic violence following the killing of the president during a failed coup last October.

Representing the new government formed less than a month ago in Bujumbura, he was addressing the UN Human Rights Commission, holding its annual session in Geneva.

"The government's priority is to halt massacres and to reestablish peace by putting all state institutions back in operation," Ngendahayo said in a speech.

He denounced the killing of President Melchior Ndadaye, Burundi's first president from the majority Hutu tribe and the first democratically-elected leader since independence from Belgium in 1962 — by renegade Tutsi soldiers.

# Deja vu for Whitney Houston at the 36th annual Grammys

NEW YORK, Mar 2: It was deja vu for Whitney Houston at the 36th annual Grammys Tuesday night as she took the awards for best pop female vocalist and song of the year, reports AP.

Just three weeks ago, she collected eight trophies at the American Music Awards for her single, "I Will Always Love You," and the soundtrack to the movie, "The Bodyguard."

"I think everyone can dig and understand 'I Will Always Love You'," she said backstage.

Dolly Parton, who wrote the torch song two decades ago, presented the Grammy to Miss Houston. The single has been one of the fastest-selling tunes in music history, and the movie soundtrack has sold more than 10 million copies.

The Disney soundtrack for "Aladdin," Tony Bennett and country star Mary-Chapin Carpenter were among the early winners of Grammy Awards as the recording industry honored its top performers.

Sting, Billy Joel, Miss Houston and Neil Young were

among the competitors for the prestigious record of the year to be awarded during the televised portion of the show.

Other early winners were Aerosmith for best rock group, and U2 for alternative music.

Bono of U2 was greeted with cheers and gasps when he used a four-letter word in delivering "a message to the young people of America."

He returned a short while later to present a lifetime achievement award to Frank Sinatra and apparently didn't stray from his prepared introduction.

After a standing ovation, a tearful Sinatra said: "That's the best welcome I ever had."

He took a couple of deep breaths trying to regain his composure, then said: "This is like being in baseball, the bases are loaded and you're at bat — you don't know what you're going to do."

Before the telecast, the "Aladdin" soundtrack was responsible for four Grammys. Last year, the movie won two Academy Awards.

Peabo Bryson and Regina Belle won the award for best

pop performance by a duo or group for singing, "A Whole New World (Aladdin's Theme)."

Carpenter, the country singer who grew up in New Jersey, won the best female country vocal performance. Lucinda Williams' "Passionate Kisses," which Carpenter covered, received the award for best country song.

Bennett's "Steppin' out," beat Barbra Streisand's "Back to Broadway" for best traditional pop vocal performance.

"What a thrill," Bennett said. "I don't know what Barbra's going to say about this."

Outside Radio City Music Hall, a group of protesters that included Kim Gordon of Sonic Youth and members of the Breeders criticized the elimination of the award for best female rock vocal.

The other awards for "Aladdin" were: best musical album for children, and best instrumental composition written for a motion picture or for television. The theme song won best song written for a motion picture or television.



The rock band Aerosmith show off their Grammy Award for best rock performance by a group with vocal, won for "livin' on the Edge," March 01 at Radio City Music Hall, in New York. — AFP photo

# Austria to present Euro literature prize to Rushdie

VIENNA, Mar 2: Austria is to present a European literature prize to condemned British author Salman Rushdie two years after it was awarded, officials said Tuesday, citing security reasons for the delay, reports AFP.

Culture Minister Rudolf Scholten said the national prize for European literature, awarded to the author of the Satanic Verses in 1992, would be presented "in the near future."

"The recipient of the 1992 award was only revealed more than a year after he was chosen, because of fears of security. Official excuses about security fears caused indignation among the Austrian literary world."

Scholten said he spoke by telephone to Rushdie last week and told him officially he had been awarded the prize. They discussed possible arrangements for presenting the prize, he said.

Rushdie agreed to accept the prize, worth 200,000 schillings (17,000 dollars).