

US fears Chinese veto on sanctions against DPRK

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 22: Fearing a Chinese veto, the United States stopped short of pushing for economic sanctions against North Korea on Monday and instead began a drive in the Security Council for another appeal to Pyongyang to cooperate, reports AP.

US Ambassador Madeleine Albright told reporters the United States had drafted a resolution calling on North Korea to allow the inspections.

"This is not... a sanctions resolution. This is one which really calls on them to return to an inspections' regime," Albright said.

The threat of sanctions could be made in a second resolution the United States could introduce if the first fails to persuade the North Koreans to cooperate, diplomats said.

The Chinese, close allies of the North Koreans, are likely to support or at least abstain in a vote on a resolution that stops short of sanctions, but they did not state their position in Monday's meeting. Clearly, the United States was not pushing immediately for sanctions because of the fear

China would veto them now. Albright spoke after discussing North Korea's refusal to allow full international nuclear inspections with the other four permanent members of the Security Council: China, Russia, France and Britain. Adoption of the resolution is expected next week. Hans Blix, the director of the UN agency that tried to inspect North Korea's nuclear facilities is expected to brief the Security Council on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Clinton administration Monday put new military and economic pressure on North Korea to open its suspect nuclear sites for international inspection.

But the moves, including an announcement by President Clinton that Patriot missiles would be sent to South Korea, were designed to allow more time for a diplomatic solution.

Senior officials told the Associated Press the administration wanted to show China, Japan and South Korea that it was doing everything possible to settle the dispute without a confrontation.

US move to smooth relations with India, Pakistan

WASHINGTON, Mar 22: Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott will go to New Delhi next month to affirm US interest in maintaining strong relations with India, the State Department said Monday, reports AP.

The visit to New Delhi comes at an uncomfortable period in US-India relations, with a year-long delay in nomination of a US ambassador.

Talbott will also visit Pakistan where he will push a new initiative designed to put a cap on Pakistan's development of nuclear weapons ingredients, officials said.

The idea is to persuade Pakistan to accept restraints that could lead to the lifting of Congressional restrictions on US aid.

It will be Talbott's first overseas trip in his new post.

State Department spokesman Mike McCurry said the April 5-13 journey will also take Talbott to Warsaw, Poland; Bratislava in the Slovak

Republic, and Brussels, Belgium.

In India and Pakistan, Secretary of State Warren Christopher has instructed Talbott to "focus on all aspects of those bilateral relations with a special emphasis, of course, on non-proliferation issues," McCurry said.

New reports last week said Clinton likely would nominate Frank G. Wisner, Undersecretary of Defence for policy who has been ambassador to Egypt and the Philippines. McCurry, without mentioning Wisner by name, indicated there was enthusiasm in the department for the choice.

This followed Rep. Stephen Solarz' withdrawal from consideration after he was investigated for ties to a Hong Kong businessman who had a criminal record. Solarz said he didn't want to burden Clinton with any objections that might be raised to his nomination, even though he was cleared of wrongdoing in a Justice Department investigation.

McCurry said the United States considers its relationship with India critical, adding, "I think it is fair to say

that given some of the currents that we've heard expressed in the region itself, that the secretary would take the step of dispatching the deputy secretary on his first trip to underscore the importance we attach to that relationship."

McCurry said the United States is continuing a "balanced approach" to relations in South Asia.

"We continue to believe that the problem of Kashmir must be settled by India and Pakistan together, working together as envisioned in the Simla Accord, taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people," he said when asked about Kashmir.

US ties with Pakistan are also shaky due to the US decision to end aid to Islamabad because of its nuclear arms programme. The administration wants to complete a sale of jet planes to Pakistan, which could be on Talbott's agenda.

Somalian talks fail

NAIROBI, Mar 22: For the fourth time in three days, Somalia's faction leaders Tuesday postponed announcing plans to stop fighting and set up a new government in the lawless, war-torn country, reports AP.

Somalia's principal warlords, Ali Mahdi Mohammed and Gen. Mohamed Farrah Aideed, and the leaders of 13 other factions were expected to declare a cease-fire and say who will rule the Horn of Africa nation.

But UN officials said an hour before the planned announcement that the group was still locked in disagreement and that there would be a 24-hour delay. They already had postponed the announcement twice Sunday and once Monday.

The faction leaders have been meeting in Nairobi for more than a week with funding from the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia.

UN spokesman George Bennett said Monday that if the Somalis failed to reach an agreement as promised Tuesday, "I don't think the UN is going to fund their stay for any longer in Nairobi. When the announcement was post-

poned from Tuesday to Wednesday, he said there were no major points still under negotiation.

"Last night there were three things remaining," Bennett said. "I don't think it should be very difficult for them to be able to agree on them."

UN officials have declined to reveal details of the talks.

Aideed and Ali Mahdi are the main figures trying to take control of Somalia. The United Nations also brokered a ceasefire in March 1992 after fighting between the two forces had destroyed three-quarters of the capital, Mogadishu, and killed up to 30,000 people.

The international community has feared that the country will revert to chaos after most Western forces withdrew from Somalia in the coming days. Aideed and Ali Mahdi previously have announced separate plans to set up a transitional government after foreign troops leave.

Italian troops are leaving Mogadishu by ship this week, and the Americans will complete their withdrawal on Friday. Germany, France, Belgium and a number of other nations have already pulled out.

Nepal-Bhutan talks resume on Mar 28

KATHMANDU, Mar 22: Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala today told Parliament that ministerial-level talks between Nepal and Bhutan on the repatriation of Bhutanese refugees would resume later this week, reports AFP.

Koirala expressed confidence that the talks — to be held between March 28 and 30 in Kathmandu — would make concrete achievements, a report said.

Since 1990 more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees of Nepalese descent have fled Bhutan for Nepal, alleging persecution by the authorities after harsh cultural restrictions were imposed on them.

They are being sheltered in camps in southeastern Nepal by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other non-governmental organisations.

The first high-level talks on the issue were held last year, resulting in the creation of a joint ministerial committee to identify the status of those in the camps who claim to have come from Bhutan. The committee last met in October.

Replies to a question in the House of Representatives Monday Koirala said: Repatriation of refugees to their homeland is not a unilateral issue.



Actress Anna Paquin of New Zealand poses with the 1993 Oscar she won for best supporting actress during the 66th annual Academy Awards Monday. Paquin, 11, won for her performance in the movie 'The Piano'. — AFP photo

List of Oscar winners

LOS ANGELES, Mar 22 (Reuters): The following winners were announced Monday at the 66th Annual Academy Awards:

Best documentary feature: "I am a Promise: The Children of Stanton Elementary School" — Susan Raymond and Alan Raymond, producers

Best original score: John Williams — "Schindler's List".

Best cinematography: Janusz Kaminski — "Schindler's List".

Best foreign language film: "Bebe Epoque" (Spain).

Best film editing: Michel Khan — "Schindler's List".

Best original song: "Streets of Philadelphia" from "Philadelphia" — Bruce Springsteen.

Best visual effects: Dennis Muren, Stan Winston, Phil Tippett, Michael Lantieri — "Jurassic Park".

Best makeup: Greg Cannom, Ve Neill, Yolanda Toussieng — "Mrs Doubtfire".

Best sound effects editing: Gary Rydstrom, Richard Hymns — "Jurassic Park".

Best animated short film: "The Wrong Trousers" — Nicholas Park, producer.

Best live action short film: "Black Rider" — Pepé Danquart, producer.

Best sound: Gary Summers, Gary Rydstrom, Shawn Murphy, Ron Judkins — "Jurassic Park".

Best costume design: Gabriela Pescucci — "The Age of Innocence".

Best documentary short

subject: "Defending Our Lives" — Margaret Lazarus and Renner Wunderlich, producers

Best documentary feature: "I am a Promise: The Children of Stanton Elementary School" — Susan Raymond and Alan Raymond, producers

Best supporting actor: Tommy Lee Jones — "The Fugitive".

Best supporting actress: Anna Paquin — "The Piano".

Best art direction: Allan Starski, art direction, Ewa Braun, set direction — "Schindler's List".

Best visual effects: Dennis Muren, Stan Winston, Phil Tippett, Michael Lantieri — "Jurassic Park".

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