

# Clinton vetoes \$265b defence authorisation bill

WASHINGTON, Dec 29: President Bill Clinton has vetoed a 265 billion dollars defence bill, ending its demand for a Star Wars-like anti-missile system would waste billions of dollars and jeopardise decades of arms control efforts, reports AP.

The president also objected on Thursday to what he called unfair provisions in the defence policy bill that would ban most abortions at overseas military hospitals and expel service members who test positive for the AIDS virus.

However, in casting the 11th veto of his presidency, Clinton acted to make sure that the men and women of the nation's armed forces - including troops in Bosnia - receive most of the 2.4 per cent pay raise they have been expecting, and that had been included in the bill.

He signed an executive order using existing authority to raise military pay by 2 per cent, effective from January 1. And he asked Congress to quickly pass legislation bringing the total pay hike to 2.4 per cent.

Overall, Clinton said the 1996 defence authorisation bill was shot through with objectionable provisions, including some that would have struck at his authority as commander in chief.

The bill "would unacceptably restrict my ability to carry out this country's national security objectives and substantially interfere with the implementation of key national defence programme," he said.

But Clinton raised no complaint about the bill's requirement that the government buy more B-2 Stealth bombers the Pentagon says it doesn't need.

In a recent interview

Clinton said he could foresee situations in which those warplanes might be required beyond the 20 aircraft now authorised.

Clinton used his veto message to strongly object to the attempt by the Republican Congress to force him to commit to deploying a nationwide Star Wars type of ballistic missile defence system by 2003.

"By forcing such an unwarranted deployment decision now, the bill would waste tens of billions of dollars...." the president said.

And he said that by requiring multiple anti-missile sites it would violate the 1972 Anti Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty with Russia.

"By setting US policy on a collision course with the ABM treaty, the bill would jeopardise continued Russian implementation of the START I treaty as well as Russian ratification of Start II," he said.

Those two treaties reduce the numbers of US and Russian strategic nuclear warheads by two thirds and "will significantly lower the threat

to US national security," Clinton said.

Clinton also said the bill's restrictions on funding for the Bosnia peacekeeping force would invade the president's foreign policy power.

And he said that while he has no intention of placing US troops under United Nations command, a provision in the bill dealing with that possibility would undermine his authority as commander in chief.

Defence Secretary William Perry recommended Clinton veto the measure.



Palestinian women wave flags to celebrate the arrival of Palestinian police in Ramallah city of the West Bank on Thursday. Israeli troops withdrew from Ramallah, the seventh and the last main West Bank town on Wednesday, clearing the path to historic self-rule elections in January '96. — AFP/UNB photo



US President Bill Clinton (L) vetoes the Defence Authorisation Bill on Thursday in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC as White House Office of Management and Budget Director Alice Rivlin (R) looks on. Clinton vetoed the bill claiming that it would provide US\$ 264.7 billion for the armed forces in 1996, US\$ 7.1 billion more than Clinton preferred. —AFP/UNB photo

## Off the Record

### If Willy lucky, he'll get a girlfriend

MEXICO CITY: Kelko, the captive killer whale who escaped in the movie "Free Willy," is leaving his pool again — this time for a bigger one on the Oregon shore. If he's lucky, he'll get a girlfriend in the bargain, reports AP.

After living at the Reino Aventura (Adventure Kingdom) amusement park here for the past decade, Kelko will be moved January 7 to the Oregon Coast Aquarium near Newport.

Preparations for moving the 7,000-pound (3,150 kilogram) mammal are already underway.

"He knows how to get onto the sling that will lift him up," said Renata Fernandez, 25, who has been one of his trainers for five years. She said his diet had been increased from 110 to 175 pounds (50 to 79 kilograms) of fish a day to help him adjust to the lower water temperature in Oregon.

The amusement park is donating the 15-year old whale to the Free Willy Kelko Foundation of San Francisco, which has arranged with the Oregon aquarium to take care of him. Kelko needs more room than the Mexico City amusement park can provide and is suffering from viral skin lesions veterinarians have been unable to cure.

The foundation and the aquarium both say that hope Kelko can be returned to the wild but many doubt that will be possible.

In the movie, the whale escapes with the help of a troubled boy. Many of the scenes were shot at Reino Aventura but those in the wild used a whale robot. The robot was used exclusively in Free Willy II, the sequel.

### Largest Guinness museum in Taiwan

TAIPEI: Taiwan on Thursday opened the world's largest museum dedicated to the Guinness Book of World Records, featuring more than 100 indoor and outdoor displays, reports AP.

The 4.8 acre (2 hectare) museum in Taichung, central Taiwan, is five times the size of Guinness' museum in London and expects more than one million visitors a year.

Displays include full scale models of the world's tallest man, the smallest bicycle, the longest car, and the biggest cake.

The museum's curators said former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher would attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony January 16.

The 21-meter (69.3 feet) high triangular museum building is modeled on the Guinness Book of Records with graphics on its two sloping sides.

Steve Day, a Taiwanese hat manufacturer who is the major investor in the 500 million Taiwan dollars (US\$ 18.5 million dollars) museum, said Beijing lost its bid to build the museum in China because it offered only 200 million Taiwan dollars (US\$ 7.4 million dollars).

## BRIEFLY

### Nepal marks Birendra's birthday:

A grand reception was held in Kathmandu Thursday by Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to celebrate the 50th birthday of King Birendra. Xinhua reports from Kathmandu.

King Birendra and the royal family members attended the reception. Among the more than 1,500 guests present at the reception were ministers, high ranking officials, parliamentary leaders and MPs of the two houses as well as diplomatic envoys and other dignitaries.

### Newfoundland PM resigns:

After nearly a decade as a leader in provincial politics, Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells announced his resignation Thursday. AP reports from St John's, Newfoundland.

Wells said he has asked his Liberal Party to convene leadership convention as soon as possible after which he will resign.

### 2 shot dead in Tripura:

Two people were killed and two others injured when guerrillas opened fire inside a shop in the troubled eastern state of Tripura, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said yesterday. AFP reports from New Delhi.

Police officials in the state capital Agartala said about 20 guerrillas, from the outlawed Socialist Democratic Front of Tripura, opened fire inside a shop, killing two people and injuring two others.

### Yeltsin resumes work at Kremlin:

President Boris Yeltsin resumed work at his Kremlin office yesterday after withdrawing from public life for over two months following heart trouble, a presidential spokesman said. AFP reports from Moscow.

"He even took a walk through the squares this morning, inside the Kremlin, and talked to people who were there," the spokesman told AFP.

### Cold weather kills 3 in UK:

A child who fell through the ice of a frozen lake and two men who tried to save her died Thursday in one of Britain's coldest winter spells on record. AP reports from London.

Police said 11-year-old Tracy Patterson ran after a dog onto the frozen lake in a park in Hemsworth, in the north England county of Yorkshire.

## Anti-Iran covert action plan Iran asks UN for swift action against US

TEHRAN, Dec 29: Iran has asked the United Nations for a swift action against the United States for its 20-million dollar anti-Iran covert action programme which it says is a flagrant act of state terrorism, reports PTI.

In a letter to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati blasted the recent US hostile move towards the Islamic republic and urged the UN chief to take appropriate action, the Iranian News Agency IRNA said.

What was even more alarming, according to the congressional monitor, at

least two million dollar out of the allocated amount is for subversive activities within Iranian territory, Velayati said.

The few details that have been published indicate that the White House and the Congress have agreed to intervene directly in order to destabilise the Islamic Republic of Iran, which includes measures such as supporting groups opposing the Iranian government and cultivating new opponents," the letter read.

Velayati said that US anti-Iran action programme contravenes the universally recognised dictums

### Govt opens police station in Jaffna

COLOMBO, Dec 29: The government opened a police station Thursday in the captured northern city of Jaffna, signifying its hold on the territory formerly dominated by Tamil rebels, reports AP.

It is the first police station in Jaffna in 10 years. Its inauguration is part of the government's effort to restore civil administration in the region and dispel the appearance of military rule.

The police station was formally opened by police chief Wickremasinghe Rajaguru and the minister of housing and construction, Nimal Siripala de Silva, the state-run radio said.

Tamil Tiger rebels were in undisputed control of Jaffna since 1990. They ran their own police force and judicial system.

### Russian official calls for aiding wounded Chechens

MOSCOW, Dec 29: A top Russian official called Thursday for aid to hundreds of seriously wounded Chechen rebels who are unwilling to seek medical help for fear of being imprisoned or worse for fighting Russian forces, reports AFP.

Vladimir Rubanov, deputy secretary of Russia's influential Security Council, estimated that 500 militants are in need of hospitalisation, the Interfax news agency reported.

Some rebels wounded in the year-old war have gone to nearby fellow Muslim countries like Azerbaijan and Turkey for medical care, he said. But most are in serious condition in mountain rebel strongholds.

## US urges for global strategy to combat alien-smuggling

WASHINGTON, Dec 29: A new US government report reveals a growing trade in human cargo and urges a global strategy to combat the smuggling of illegal immigrants, the Washington Post reported on Thursday, says AFP.

According to the report delivered last month to President Bill Clinton and obtained by the Post, smugglers are using transit points from Europe to China to the Caribbean in a trade netting them billions of dollars a year.

It says the illicit trade is facilitated by "staggering levels of official corruption." Compiled by a special committee composed of officials from among others, the Justice and State Departments, Federal Bureau of In-

vestigation and Central Intelligence Agency, the nine-month study said Europe had become "a major gateway to the United States for illegal migration and alien-smuggling."

It blamed in part the collapse of a strong central government and decreased border controls in the former Soviet Union.

Moscow has become a "major transit hub" for illegal immigrants, with some 200,000 aliens awaiting departure at any given time, the report added. Among them are some 60,000 Chinese and an estimated 40,000 South Asians.

It said corruption of "airline personnel, airport authorities and government officials is a key factor in the smuggling of illegal Chinese," and that gangs in China are

sending around 50,000 people to the United States each year with fees reaching 35,000 dollars per head.

Taiwan, meanwhile, was singled out for "unsatisfactory" cooperation against the illegal trade. One State Department official quoted by the Post said: "It's huge irritant in our relations."

The study reported that all seven countries in Central

America were used as transit points for an annual flow north of 100,000 people from outside the region and 300,000 from the area. The report urges the United States to press foreign nations to adopt laws against alien smuggling, and recommends denying visas to foreign officials who facilitate the trade.

Other recommendations remain secret, the Post said.



A local family pass by a totally destroyed APC as they return to their battered hometown of Gudermes on Wednesday. Russian forces have been in control of the town since December 25 after 12 days of fighting that according to Russian officials killed hundreds of people, including 267 civilians. — AFP/UNB photo

## Army reaffirm support for secular Turkey

ANKARA, Dec 29: While political leaders on Thursday sought an alternative to a pro-Islamic government, the army reaffirmed its support for a secular Turkey, reports AP.

The Turkish armed forces are a reformist, unshakable power against any kind of fanaticism," said chief of staff Gen. Ismail Hakkî Karadayi during a military ceremony in the central city of Kayseri.

Karadayi made similar remarks two days before Sunday's elections, in which the pro-Islamic Welfare Party finished first, winning 158 seats in the 550-member Parliament.

Turkey's population is overwhelmingly Muslim but the country has a Western-style, secular system. Its armed forces have been seen as the guarantor of the modern Turkish state, now a

NATO member, since its foundation in 1923.

Turkey's then-military rulers in 1980 arrested Welfare Party leader Necmettin Erbakan, who at the time was pushing for an Islamic state.

Welfare's gains brought down Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, who now maintains a caretaker position. Her center-right True Path Party won 135 seats.

Ciller's arch-rival Mesut Yilmaz, the leader of the center-right Motherland Party, continued negotiations on Thursday to form a coalition government to block Welfare.

But disagreement between Yilmaz and Ciller was likely to force President Suleyman Demirel to ask Erbakan to form a government. His chances appear slim because all the other leading parties have ruled out a coalition with Welfare.

## US suspends ban against Serbia, Montenegro

WASHINGTON, Dec 29: President Clinton suspended US sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro on Thursday and said they had achieved their goal of helping to end the war in Bosnia, reports AP.

The president also warned that the sanctions could be reimposed if the Serbs repudiate the peace agreement their leaders reached at Dayton, Ohio, last month.

"Before agreeing to sanctions suspension, we insisted on a credible reimposition mechanism to ensure no backsliding on the commitments made by the Serbs," the president said in a statement.

Clinton said that if the NATO commander in Bosnia

determines that the Bosnian Serbs are not meeting their obligations under the peace agreement, "economic sanctions may again go into effect against Serbia."

Clinton said the likelihood that sanctions would be lifted was a major consideration leading Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to initiate the agreement at Dayton and to sign it a ceremony in Paris on December 14.

"Sanctions relief was clearly anticipated as a consequence of the accord," Clinton said.

The economic sanctions promoted by the Clinton administration are credited with curtailing delivery of manufactured goods, gasoline,

### Dini may offer resignation today

ROME, Dec 29: Premier Lamberto Dini will offer his resignation Saturday, a political supporter said, setting the stage for a period of political limbo, reports AP.

Dini called a Cabinet meeting for Friday, the prelude to his expected offer to resign.

The Cabinet ministers were to consider a final package of tax increases and spending cuts to plug a 5.3 trillion lire (3.3 billion dollars) hole in the budget and a measure to fund Italian troop deployment in Bosnia.

Dini, who has headed a Cabinet of politically non-aligned technocrats since January, has promised to step aside once the budget was wrapped up.

## Aid thru' private charities may lose US influence over govts

WASHINGTON, Dec 29: A new report warns that the United States would lose influence over governments that receive US aid if the aid were distributed through private charities as has been proposed in the US Congress, reports AP.

The report pointed to problems of accountability for funds under such a programme and to the tendency of charities to stress person-to-person aid rather than large projects designed to develop a country's economy.

It also noted that many nongovernmental organisations avoid cooperating with host regimes and do not want to be linked closely with the US government.

The report by the General Accounting Office, Congress' investigative arm, reflects a

major disagreement between the Clinton administration and Congress' Republican leadership.

Administration officials believe "there should be a close link between the provision of US assistance and specific US foreign policy interests," the report said.

But Sen Jesse Helms, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and many Republican colleagues want to eliminate the aid-administering Agency for International Development and avoid any foreign policy-foreign aid linkage. Helms tried to replace AID this year with a foundation to distribute aid money to private voluntary organisations, or PVOs. He withdrew the plan after the Clinton administration and congressional

Democrats denounced it.

The view of the chairman is that aid has failed, and to the extent that foreign aid is to continue, it should go through PVOs," Chris Walker, foreign aid specialist on Helms' committee staff, said Thursday.

Rep Lee Hamilton, senior Democrat on the House of Representatives International Relations Committee, requested the GAO aid report before a Republican sweep of elections last year cost him his job as committee chairman. He is a strong supporter of using aid to further foreign policy.

"In almost every case, there's a policy element in aid," he told The Associated Press. "Take Egypt, which is one of the biggest recipients. We try to get Egypt to adopt

market policies and open up its political institutions. That's also the case in Russia and the other republics of the former Soviet Union."

The GAO report said support for the idea that nongovernmental charities should have a bigger role in US aid is due to disappointment with results of government-to-government aid over 40 years.

America's current aid programme, which already funds many projects through private groups, began after the Marshall Plan helped devastated Europe recover from World War II. President Harry Truman proposed extending aid to poor countries elsewhere.

The Agency for International Development's record of success has been mixed,

but it noted that AID enjoys access to governments and has expertise to help them analyze policies and reshape economies.

Hamilton said he was glad to read the report's praise for AID.

"The report gives us some good news about programme," he said. "That's unusual. You rarely hear a good word for aid. The partnership works pretty well between USAID and PVOs. The taxpayers get their money's worth."

The federal government spends much more on foreign aid than the total spent by all 384 private agencies registered with AID. In 1992, the latest year with published figures, PVOs had about 5.2 billion dollars available for

foreign operations. Of that, 1.51 billion dollars came from US government sources.

That year Congress appropriated almost 11 billion dollars for US government assistance, not including military aid.

The report also questioned how accountability over public funds could be guaranteed by putting disbursement in private hands. It cited a complaint by AID's inspector general that four out of six private agencies working with Palestinians kept inadequate records of US assistance they received.

Congress would have to accept more risk and less accountability for funds expended if more government aid money went through private agencies, the report said.

### Federal probe into Haryana school fire

NEW DELHI, Dec 29: Federal Police will investigate the cause of a fire that killed at least 538 people at a school party in a northern state last weekend, news reports said on Thursday, says AP.

Mobs demanding a broader probe have held street protests for three days in Bahawal, the farming town 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of New Delhi where the inferno raged through a tin-roofed tent on Saturday.

It was India's worst disaster in two years. Preliminary investigation by the Haryana state police blamed an electrical short circuit that ignited synthetic cloth and plastic sheets, news reports said.