

Netanyahu may agree to Palestinian state with limitations on sovereignty

JERUSALEM, Dec 20: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would accept the creation of a Palestinian state, but with severe limitations on its sovereignty, a top aide said in an interview published Friday.

Fujimori rejects demands by rebels Peruvian rebels free 4 hostages

LIMA, Dec 20: Communist rebels freed four hostages from an embassy residence Thursday, including one man in a wheelchair, while Peru's government prepared for negotiations to free hundreds more.

The president's Council of Ministers approved the measure earlier in the day on Thursday, but didn't disclose it for hours. A one-page statement was faxed to local media early Friday morning.



This January 09, 1996 file photo shows US citizen Lori Berenson during her presentation to the press by the Peruvian anti-terrorist authorities in Lima, after her sentencing to life imprisonment for helping rent a safe house for the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA).

BRIFFLY

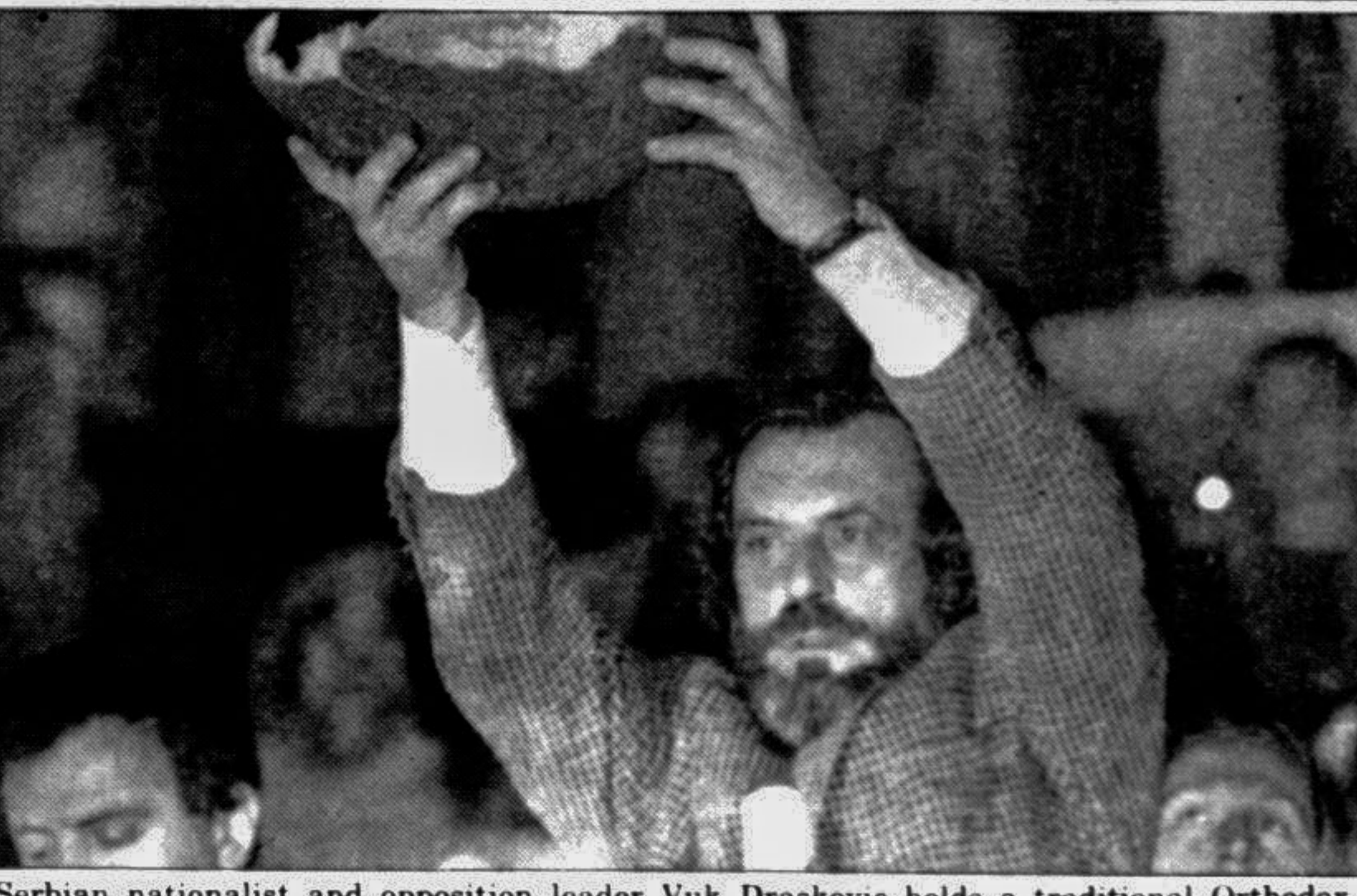
Rafsanjani arrives in Turkey: Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on Thursday arrived for a four-day visit to Turkey aimed at bolstering economic ties.

11 killed in Taipei fire: Three pre-dawn fires in homes around Taipei left 11 people dead Thursday, police said.

Ghali to return home in Jan: Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the outgoing UN secretary general, will return home to Egypt in January to write books.

Elephant kills 5 in Bihar: A wild elephant trampled five people to death in the eastern Indian state of Bihar, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported yesterday.

Madras seeks int'l help to clean rivers: The civic body in the southern city of Madras plans to seek international help to clean up its rivers and canals that are choked with sludge.



Serbian nationalist and opposition leader Vuk Draskovic holds a traditional Orthodox Christmas Slava cake during anti-government demonstrations in Belgrade Thursday.

Milosevic's aides threaten crackdown against unrest

KRUSEVAC, Yugoslavia, Dec 20: President Slobodan Milosevic's aides are warning of a possible crackdown against swelling unrest, and orchestrating rallies denouncing the United States and Germany as "dark powers" behind the tumult.

Japan bars bureaucrats from taking gifts

TOKYO, Dec 20: Reacting to a bribery scandal that ensnared top health ministry officials, Japan's government on Friday forbade bureaucrats to accept gifts or favors from business people whom they regulate.

Fulci upset over threats against UN personnel in Tajikistan

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 20: To protest mistreatment of UN observers in Tajikistan, the Security Council president said Thursday he would ask the country's ambassador what is being done to prevent the harassment.

Off the Record

Unforgivable error: BANGKOK, Dec 20: A Thai woman nearly blinded herself when she mistook a tube of super glue for eye drops.

Netanyahu studying Arabic!: JERUSALEM: Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's hardline prime minister, wants to communicate better with the Arab world.

VCR-Americans' favourite invention?: CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts: The internal combustion engine? Satellite communication? The Internet?

China welcomes US-Japan military link

WASHINGTON, Dec 20: All East Asian countries — even China — welcome the US-Japanese alliance as a deterrent against Japanese military resurgence.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin rocks with pop musicians at a campaign rally concert. Yeltsin's energetic stumping, defying rumours of deteriorating health, won him re-election a week later, but also sealed his candidacy for multiple heart bypass surgery by autumn.

Minister says Islamabad may raise defence budget

ISLAMABAD, Dec 20: Pakistan's Defence Minister Shahid Hamid Thursday said Islamabad might increase its defence budget in view of threats from rival India.

Suharto's call to donate 2 pc of profits to poor

JAKARTA, Dec 20: President Suharto, in a decree released by the state secretary today, ordered wealthy Indonesian individuals and companies to donate two per cent of their profits to the poor.

Rao erodes credibility of Cong(I), democratic polity of India

NEW DELHI, Dec 20: P V Narasimha Rao, who could have gone down in history as one of India's great prime ministers, wrecked his reputation with a desperate, futile attempt to cling to power following corruption allegations.

But it added that Rao had become "vengeful" after consolidating his position at the head of the party and "turned dictatorial and distant."

shown any moral sense, which all politicians so singularly lack, he may have been a great prime minister. His promise went up in a smoke of corruption.

US unlikely to change policy on Iran

WASHINGTON, Dec 20: Calling Iran "a dangerous force on the world scene," US Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Thursday he sees no basis for any change in the US policy of seeking to contain Iran.