

International

UN, US express deep concern

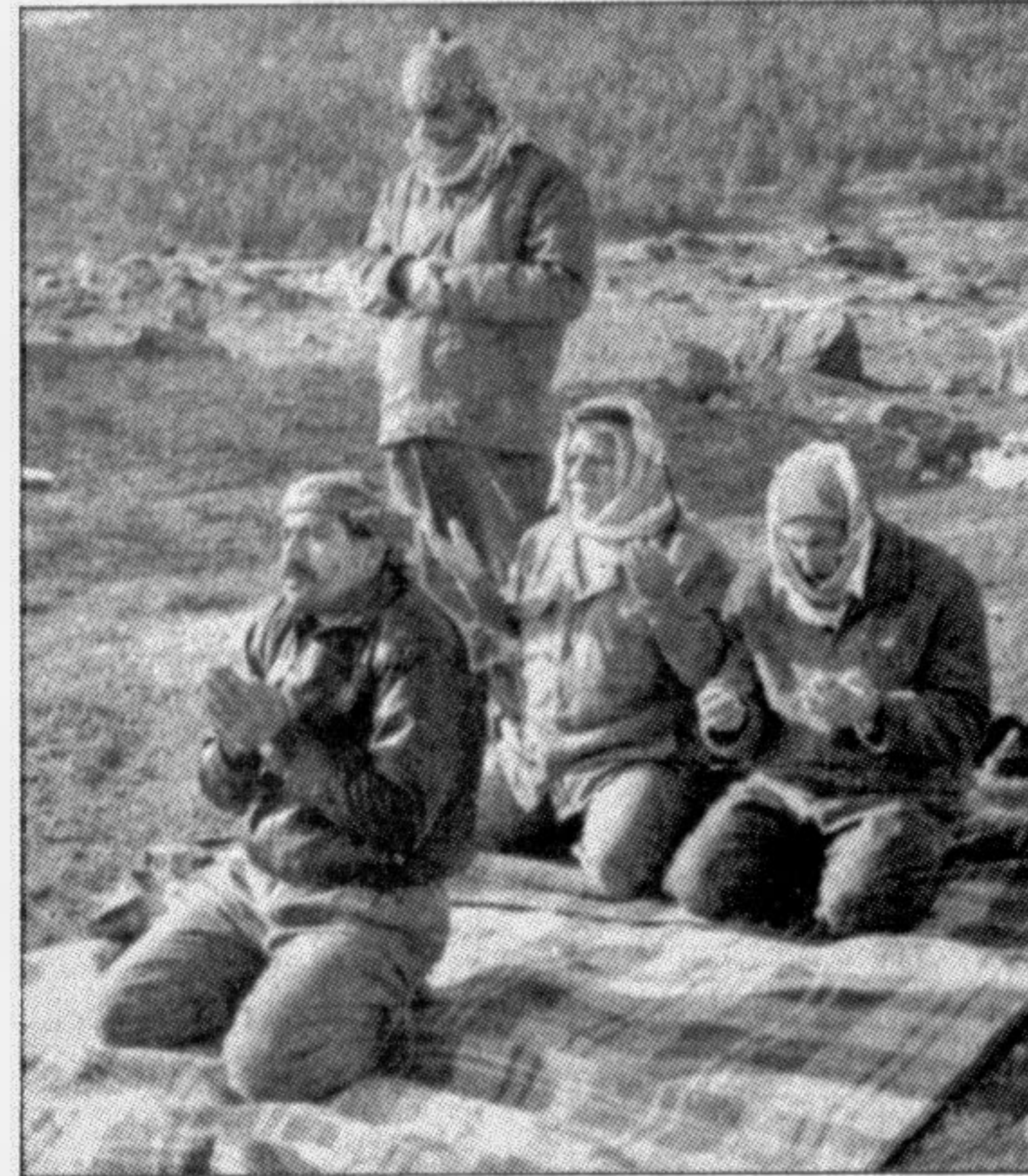
Israel begins Jewish settlement work

JERUSALEM, Mar 19: Israeli bulldozers under heavy guard ploughed up a hillside for a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem on Tuesday...

ing a halt to a controversial Israeli building project in Arab East Jerusalem. In identical letters to both the Council President and Secretary-General Kofi Annan...

south of occupied East Jerusalem. The Israeli occupying authorities closed off the area...

which captured it during the 1967 middle east war. We call upon the Security Council to convene an immediate, official meeting to consider this serious situation...



Palestinians pray in front of the Jabel Abu Ghneim hill, Har Homa in Hebrew, shortly after that Israeli bulldozers started to work at the disputed hilltop in south east Jerusalem Tuesday.

BRIEFLY



Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga waves after the closing of local council election campaigning in the capital Colombo Tuesday.

Ex-minister's wife jailed in India: An Indian court has jailed the wife of a former cabinet minister on charges of illegally receiving foreign currency...

ROK minister offers resignation: South Korean Labour Minister Jin Nyum has offered to resign in connection with a revision of a controversial labour law...

2 Tigers held in S India: Two Sri Lankan Tamil Tiger guerrillas were arrested in southern India while trying to smuggle out motorcycles...

Gunmen kill cops in Pakistan: Unknown assailants gunned down policemen overnight in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad...

50 children hospitalised in Russia: More than 50 Russian school-children were hospitalised suffering from food poisoning apparently contracted at their school...

2 Malaysian choppers missing: Two Malaysian air force helicopters went missing after a mission in the eastern Sabah state...

Army defies PM's order to free foreign mercenaries in Papua New Guinea. PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea, Mar 19: The standoff between the government and the army deepened Wednesday...

Gunmen kill 3 worshipers in Pak Punjab. ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, Mar 19: Unidentified gunmen killed three worshipers and injured another in an attack on a Sunni mosque in strife-ridden Punjab province late Tuesday...

Unemployment, war worry Europeans most. LONDON, Mar 19: What do Europeans worry about most when they look at the world? reports AP.

Shipload of N-waste arrives in Japan. ROKKASHO, Japan, Mar 19: A shipload of high-level nuclear waste arrived Tuesday morning at a northern Japanese port...

Rebels reiterate demands for Berisha's resignation. GJROKASTER, Albania, Mar 19: Albanian rebel leaders Tuesday reiterated demands for President Sali Berisha to resign at a meeting with Greek media...

Bandit queen seeks presidential pardon. NEW DELHI, Mar 19: India's former 'Bandit Queen' Phoolan Devi is seeking a presidential pardon over charges she murdered 20 men in 1981...

Annun seeks additional UN police in Bosnia. UNITED NATIONS, Mar 19: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Tuesday asked the UN Security Council for an additional 306 international police in Bosnia...

Lankan opposition accuses ruling party of intimidating voters. COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Mar 19: Sri Lanka's opposition Wednesday accused the ruling party of intimidating voters to keep them away from Friday's local government elections...

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Clinton, Yeltsin meet today to lay foundation for Russia-NATO ties

HELSINKI, Mar 19: President Bill Clinton and President Boris Yeltsin meet Thursday for a long-awaited US-Russia summit that will attempt to lay the foundation for Russia-NATO ties and a new European security framework...

liminary talks with the Russians, and both sides are sticking firmly to their positions. I can not imagine that we will resolve all the issues (in Helsinki) that are pending...

The eastward expansion of NATO, fiercely opposed by Moscow, will be the focus of talks set to take place on Friday at the Finnish president's official residence...

The Helsinki Summit, the seventh between Clinton and Yeltsin since 1993, will begin Thursday evening with a dinner hosted by Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari.

The success of the Summit is in no way guaranteed. The White House has noted no "breakthrough" in recent preliminary talks with the Russians...

And last Friday, Yeltsin warned that "we may not reach an agreement on NATO" while adding that "we should not see this as a tragedy."

Moscow has come to recognize that it will not be able to prevent the alliance from expanding to central Europe — most likely Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic — but it is formally opposed to the future membership of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the CIS countries, notably Ukraine.

Rebels reiterate demands for Berisha's resignation

GJROKASTER, Albania, Mar 19: Albanian rebel leaders Tuesday reiterated demands for President Sali Berisha to resign at a meeting with Greek media...

Kranidiotis, who is the only official from a European Union country to have met the Albanian rebels, said he would report back to Greece's EU partners.

The rebels reiterated to me the need for Sali Berisha to go and their support for Bashkim Fino's government of national unity...

He reiterated Greece's commitment to "political dialogue between the rebels and the government to bring about a solution without violence and bloodshed."

The aim of my visit is to get a clear picture of the current situation through contacts with all the parties involved...

Meanwhile, Albanian officials called again for the West to send troops to the crisis-hit Balkan state, the head of the European Union mission visiting Albania, Count Jan d'Ansembour, said Tuesday.

The Greek minister said he hoped to meet Fino, who was last week appointed Prime Minister, at Gjrokaster.

Some of them wanted troops but I made it clear that is not our mandate. We are not a military organisation...

Contacts have been made for a possible meeting on Wednesday, he added.

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Zairean PM ousted: Angola intervenes in conflict

KINSHASA, Zaire, Mar 19: Zaire's prime minister, widely blamed for sweeping military losses to rebels in eastern Zaire, was ousted from power Tuesday by a nearly unanimous parliament vote...

Kengo was his choice for the job. Mobutu had surgery for prostate cancer last August and was admitted to a hospital in Monaco on Friday.

rebels said they would move toward Eastern Kasai province, of which Mbuji-Mayi is the capital. The rebel advance across eastern Zaire has been eased by the lack of discipline among Zaire's poorly paid soldiers...

There was no immediate reaction to Kengo's ouster in the capital, which has been gripped by fear of an impending military coup or the fall of the government.

Military leaders had been among Kengo's harshest critics, blaming him for setbacks in the war against rebels who have captured most of eastern Zaire in the last seven months.

Kengo, whose mother was of Rwandan Tutsi descent, was accused of secretly backing the rebels, who are believed closely linked to the Tutsi-led government in neighbouring Rwanda.

His dismissal came after his government's worst setback in the war, the loss of Kisanangani, Zaire's third-largest city, over the weekend.

Earlier Tuesday, government soldiers looted Mbuji-Mayi, the hub city of Zaire's lucrative diamond industry, an official of the government-owned mining company said.

Another report says: Angola has put between 1,000 and 2,000 Zairian exiles at the disposal of Zaire's rebel forces, reviving an American-inspired feud between Angola and Zaire that dates back to the Cold War, US officials say.

Parliament spokesman Vikansa's Kinkela said 464 members of the 470-seat transitional parliament took part in the vote tonight. Nine members voted against his removal and 10 abstained, he said.

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No replacement was immediately named. Kengo was elected prime minister by parliament in 1994, but only after President Mobutu Sese Seko made clear

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Zairean stand on a taxi that drives out of Kinshasa Tuesday. As military patrols are on duty in Kinshasa, the population fears a replay of the pillaging, looting and rape that reportedly accompanied the Zairean army retreat. The government Monday urged Zaireans not to panic and said that Mobutu Sese Seko would return home next weekend.

Bandit queen seeks presidential pardon

NEW DELHI, Mar 19: India's former 'Bandit Queen' Phoolan Devi is seeking a presidential pardon over charges she murdered 20 men in 1981, the Indian Express said today, reports AFP.

Devi, now a high-profile member of parliament, sent the appeal to President Shankar Dayal Sharma ahead of her expected surrender to a court in the northern city of Kanpur on Thursday, the daily said.

"You cannot imagine the trauma and agony I am undergoing," she was quoted as saying.

The Express said President Sharma was "deferring the issue" and Devi, a member of the Socialist Party, had met Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda several times in recent weeks to request him to intervene on her behalf.

The 35-year-old Devi, who was elected to parliament last year from the northern state of Uttar Pradesh where she allegedly killed the 20 men, has said she must be pardoned because she has already spent several years in prison.

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Off the Record

'Politics in Washington DC really mean, nasty'

NEW YORK: If it wasn't already apparent, retired US Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf says he has no interest in a political career, reports AP.

"Politics in Washington, DC, has become a really mean business. Really mean and nasty," he said in the latest issue of George magazine.

"It's very intrusive upon your life, and more important, it's intrusive on your family's life. It's very hard to accomplish anything in such a hostile environment."

But the field commander of the 1991 Gulf War thinks his former colleague, Gen. Colin Powell, is, as they say in the Army, good to go.

"I think he will run. He's as good as any other candidate we've got out there," Schwarzkopf told George editor and publisher John F. Kennedy Jr.

Schwarzkopf after retiring, turned his energies to various causes — among them the Nature Conservancy, the recovery of the grizzly bear and a partnership with Paul Newman in a camp for sick children.

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Unemployment, war worry Europeans most

LONDON, Mar 19: What do Europeans worry about most when they look at the world? reports AP.

also considerable differences," Michele Corrado of London-based Market Opinion and Research International (MORI), which directed the survey, told a news conference.

When asked to identify the most pressing global problems, 41 per cent of Europeans polled cited war and violence, 27 per cent cited famine and 25 per cent cited environmental degradation.

Overall, their prime concern is war, according to a 13-nation poll released Tuesday. But the Germans, who fought in two world wars this century, generally view the environment as a bigger problem, and the Italians are equally worried about war and jobs.

MORI interviewed over 13,000 people last fall in Austria, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. The margin of error was plus or minus 3 per cent.

The survey was conducted on behalf of the United Nations Population Fund to assess views on population, domestic and international problems, and foreign aid following the 1994 UN population conference in Cairo.

At home, unemployment topped the list of worries, according to the survey, one of the largest ever conducted on European social concerns. But the Irish worry most about drug abuse, the Belgians about child sex abuse, and the Dutch about the environment.

War was cited most often by the Swedes, the Danes and the Finns and least often by the Germans and Austrians. While almost half the Swedes mentioned the environment as a major concern, only about one in 10 Britons, French, Belgians and Spaniards cited it.

Even on famine, which we would have anticipated people to mention as a global problem, there are differences by nation, Corrado said. Forty three per cent of Spaniards mentioned it compared with only 13 per cent of Belgians.

Witnesses said the two gunmen arrived at the mosque on a motorcycle. One entered the gate and opened fire on worshippers leaving the mosque while the other stood guard in the street, police said.

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Shipload of N-waste arrives in Japan

ROKKASHO, Japan, Mar 19: A shipload of high-level nuclear waste arrived Tuesday morning at a northern Japanese port, where hundreds of protesters criticised the shipment as an environmental risk, reports AP.

old shoes at the entrance and shouted slogans comparing Japan's nuclear program to useless footwear. There was a brief scuffle with security, but no arrests, Kyodo News reported.

The Pacific Teal, carrying 20 tons of waste reprocessed in France, docked in a fishing village 520 kilometers (320 miles) northeast of Tokyo and was inspected by local officials.

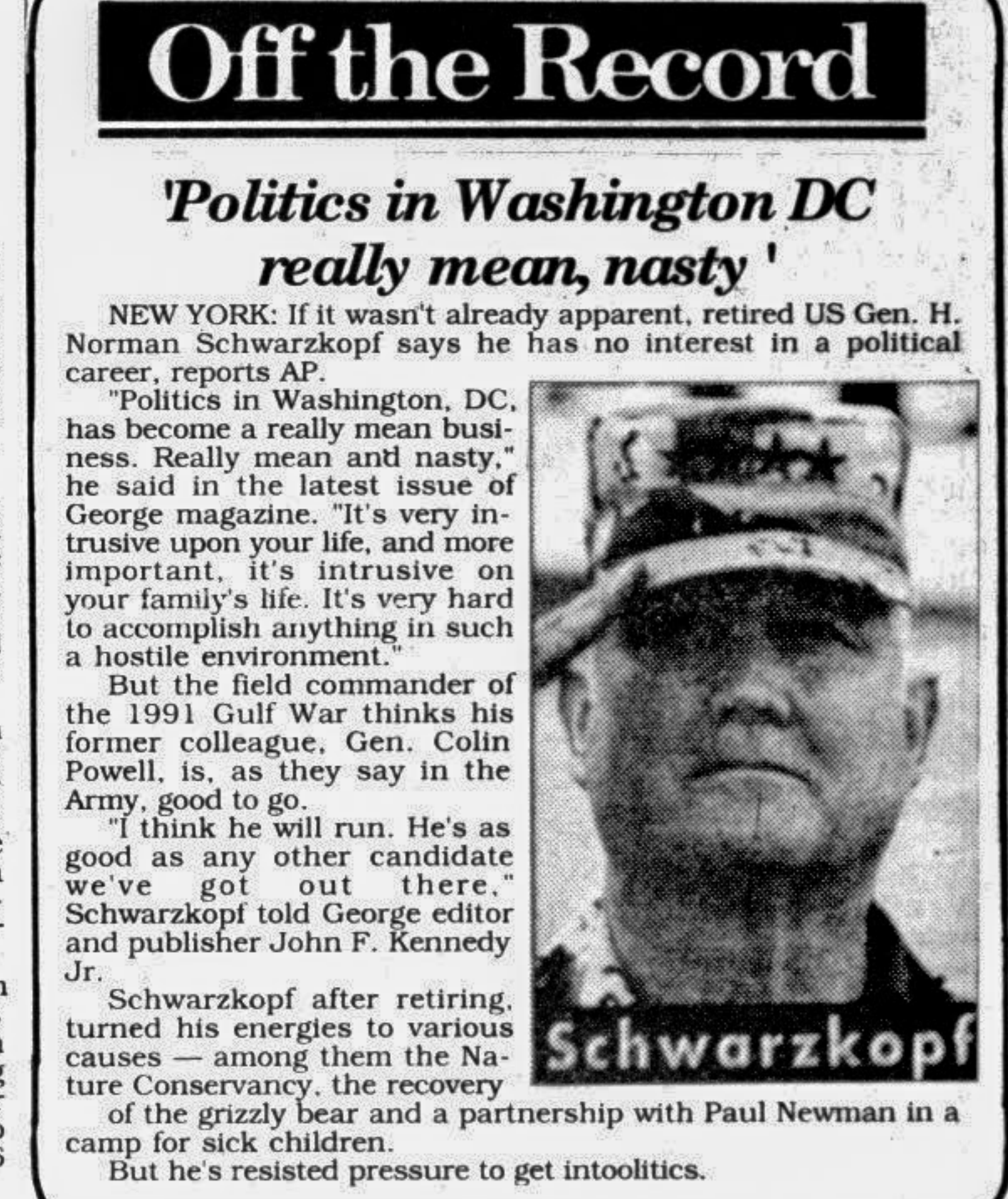
The shipments have been attacked at home and abroad as risky. Critics say an accident could spill the waste into the sea, or that the cargo could be stolen or damaged by terrorists. Several countries banned the ship from their waters.

Japan has little capability to reprocess spent fuel and it sends the waste to Britain and France, where it is treated and sent back to Japan. This was the second shipment of high-level waste; the first was in 1995.

This shipment has caused controversy around the planet and has become a symbol for the environmental, public health and proliferation risks of Japan's nuclear program, Hideaki Takemura of Greenpeace Japan said in a statement.

About 300 demonstrators protested at the front gate of the port. A group of 30 put a line of

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