

US, UK threaten to use force

UNSC divided on course of action against Iraq

BRIEFLY

First female general in Chile On Nov 17, Mireya Perez will make a bit of history in Chile: she will become the first woman ever to reach the rank of general. AP reports from Santiago.

Jeb Bush elected Florida governor Republican real estate developer Jeb Bush son of former US president George Bush won the Florida governor's race Tuesday. Major US television networks said, AP reports from Miami.

Charles visits Romania The heir to the British throne, Prince Charles arrived late on Tuesday in Bucharest for a three day private visit. The visit takes place ten days after another British senior official, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook visited the Balkan country. Xinhua reports from Bucharest.

Greek PM wins confidence vote Greek socialist Prime Minister Costas Simitis won a vote of confidence from parliament early yesterday, boosting his determination to press ahead with policies aimed at entry to the European Union's planned monetary union. Reuters reports from Athens.

1800 HIV cases recorded in Russia More than 1,800 new cases of HIV have been reported in Russia in the past six months, and 90 per cent of those who contracted the virus were intravenous drug users, the Health Minister said Tuesday. AP reports from Moscow.

Mexican police seizes marijuana Mexican police have seized about 64 kg of cocaine and 14 tonnes of marijuana, likely headed for the United States, in a series of raids across the country, authorities said on Tuesday. Reuters reports from Mexico City.

Malaria claims over 270 in S Yemen An outbreak of malaria has left more than 270 people dead, mostly children, in several parts of southern Yemen, health officials said Tuesday. AP reports from San'a.

India's film industry struggling for survival BOMBAY, Nov 4: India's film industry, the world's largest in terms of output, is struggling for survival amid a growing underworld menace, rising production costs and video piracy, producers and cinema owners say, reports AFP.

Police chief warns of LTTE attack in Colombo COLOMBO, Nov 4: Police are asking hotel owners to report new arrivals to the authorities and to be careful about renting rooms to strangers following reports that Tamil Tiger rebels were planning bomb attacks in the capital, a newspaper said Wednesday. reports AP.

House of Lords to decide on quashing Pinochet's arrest LONDON, Nov 4: With moves under way in seven European countries to extradite Gen. Augusto Pinochet, Britain's highest court will decide whether to quash his arrest at a London hospital and send the former Chilean dictator straight home, reports AP.

Death toll from Hurricane Mitch soars up by the hour MANAGUA, Nov 4: Stunned by the devastation wrought by Hurricane Mitch, officials in Central America said Tuesday the death toll rose dramatically to more than 9,000 and would keep rising, reports AFP.

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Albright intervenes to settle dispute US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright intervened Tuesday over the dispute between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on counter-terrorism measures on the West Bank.

Armed militants storm Tajik city DUSHANBE, Tajikistan, Nov 4: Several hundred armed militants raided a city in northern Tajikistan early Wednesday, battling government troops and seizing several administrative buildings, officials said, reports AP.

Army to protect bid to foil assembly session in Jakarta JAKARTA, Nov 4: The Indonesian military said it would take stern action to prevent protesters from disrupting a special session of the country's top legislative body next week, reports AP.

Khamenei for severing ties with US TEHRAN, Nov 4: Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Tuesday that the United States is intent on "total domination" of Iran and that severing relations with it was in Iran's interest, reports AP.

Indo-Pak talks on Siachen Glacier begin in Delhi today NEW DELHI, Nov 4: India and Pakistan will open talks Friday on the disputed Siachen Glacier — the world's highest combat zone where atrocious weather conditions have claimed more lives than the actual fighting, reports AP.

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UNITED NATIONS, Nov 4: While the UN Security Council stands united in demanding that Iraq reverse its decision to cut dealings with UN weapons inspectors, it remains divided on what to do if Baghdad refuses, reports AP.

The United States and Britain have threatened to use force if necessary, but China has called for dialogue and restraint — and Russia, which is traditionally sympathetic to Iraq, has indicated it wants a peaceful solution.

France recalled its representative in Baghdad for consultations Tuesday and warned Iraq that it faced "total isolation" if it didn't resume cooperation with the weapons inspectors. But diplomats said that France's irritation at the Iraqis did not mean it would support using force against them.

The 15-member Security Council started discussions Tuesday afternoon on a draft resolution submitted by Britain condemning Iraq's decision and demanding that Baghdad rescind it "immediately and unconditionally."

It makes no mention of the threat of force. And it does not declare that Iraq is in material breach of UN resolutions — language that could give the United States and its allies the green light for military action.

The proposed resolution does state that "the situation in Iraq continues to pose a threat to international peace and security." But that language — tough by UN standards — will probably be dropped because Russia's Deputy Ambassador Yuriy Fedotov said before the council meeting began that he doubts the Iraqi action represented a threat to peace and security.

So the resolution, which isn't expected to be finalised until later in the week, is likely to be similar to the press statement that the council issued Saturday, hours after the Iraqis halted the work of the UN Special Commission charged with eliminating the country's weapons of mass destruction.

The Russian Foreign Ministry condemned Iraq's decision saying it blocked prospects for lifting crippling economic sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. Moscow urged Iraq to comply with UN resolutions calling for the dismantling of the country's weapons of mass destruction — a requirement for sanctions to be lifted, Russia, which is owed billions of dollars from Iraq, has previously called for an early lifting of sanctions. A Russian parliamentary delegation visiting Baghdad this week for talks with Saddam called on Moscow to stop abiding by UN sanctions.

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright intervened Tuesday over the dispute between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on counter-terrorism measures on the West Bank.

Albright spoke a second day to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after following up a call Monday to Netanyahu with a call to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

The State Department spokesman, James P. Rubin, said "the Palestinians have met their responsibilities" by submitting a plan to combat terrorism, but "there are other problems we are working on."

Rubin declined to provide any details, but in Jerusalem, Israel's defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechi, said Israel was holding out for a list of 30

Palestinians the Authority had promised to arrest as part of the land-for-security agreement concluded last month.

Mordechai said Israel was also seeking a timetable for the arrests.

Netanyahu, meanwhile, postponed a cabinet meeting that was to have considered ratifying the accord. Netanyahu said he had ordered the delay because the Palestinians had not submitted a complete blueprint for fighting terrorism. He declined to say what was omitted.

"We are aware of the problem," Rubin said after Albright talked to Netanyahu.

The US spokesman reiterated the administration's position that the agreement, in which Israel is to swap West Bank land for tighter security, had gone into force on Monday.

Several hundred armed militants raided a city in northern Tajikistan early Wednesday, battling government troops and seizing several administrative buildings, officials said, reports AP.

The authorities wouldn't give any immediate information on casualties, but the ITAR-Tass news agency said at least 10 people were killed during the fighting that raged for several hours.

Authorities believe the attackers are led by Makhmud Khudoberdiyev, a former army colonel who turned against President Emomali Rakhmonov last year and then fled to neighbouring Uzbekistan.

The assailants seized police and security service headquarters in the city of Khodshan, about 200 kilometers north of the capital, Dushanbe. They also took control of the city airport, said Tajik government officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

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