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Off The Wire

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Solidarity supporters have May Day protests

WARSAW, Poland — Thousands of Solidarity supporters mounted May Day protests in seven Polish cities Tuesday with free trade union founder Lech Walesa leading demonstrators in Gdansk. Riot police responded with rubber clubs, water cannon and tear gas.

Clashes were reported in Warsaw, Czestochowa, Gdansk, Wroclaw, Elblag and Szczecin, and in Nowa Huta scores of youngsters were besieged in a church where they sought refuge after stoning security forces. Witnesses said dozens of demonstrators, many of them teenagers, were detained in Nowa Huta, whose steel mill near the southern city of Cracow was a Solidarity stronghold before the union was banned under martial law.

Bikinians begin homecoming effort

WASHINGTON — One thousand Pacific islanders bombed out of their homes by U.S. nuclear weapons tests Tuesday begin a last-ditch effort to return to their "promised land." The people of tiny Bikini Atoll say the United States has legal and moral obligation to clean up their home after blasting and contaminating it for 12 years with atomic and hydrogen bombs.

The Bikinians this week set out on a campaign that will take them to court and Congress Tuesday and later to the United Nations in an effort to make the United States live up to a promise they say it made 38 years ago. "When we left in 1946 we were told not to worry, that Uncle Sam would look after us, and as soon as the United States was done with testing we would be returned home," Senator Henchi Balos, who represents Bikini in the Marshall Islands legislature, told Reuters. "But we are still exiles."

Evidence found in Libyan embassy

LONDON — Police searching Libya's former London embassy have found proof that shots were fired from a first-floor window and have also discovered guns and ammunition, a senior police officer said Tuesday. Commander Bill Hucklesby, head of the anti-terrorist squad, said his men also had found parts for other weapons. They are investigating the murder of a young policewoman outside the embassy two weeks ago which led to an 11-day siege of the building and the rupture of diplomatic ties with Libya. Witnesses to the shooting, in which 10 demonstrators opposed to Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi were wounded, said the shots had come from the first floor of the embassy. Home (interior) Secretary Leon Brittan, the minister responsible for law enforcement, told Parliament police had found "fire-arms residue" on the carpet below the window and, nearby, a spent cartridge of the kind which killed the policewoman.

Afghan rebels holding out

WASHINGTON — Afghan rebels fighting for control of the strategic Panjsher Valley have apparently taken heavy casualties but have not been defeated by government and Soviet forces, State Department officials said Tuesday. Spokesman Alan Romberg said the rebels' strategy appeared to be to withdraw to high ground and nearby areas as the Soviet offensive continued.

Last week Romberg reported that Soviet forces had launched their seventh offensive in the valley with what he called high-altitude saturation bombing. He said this was an escalation in the four-year-old war.

Biologists may breed 'superfish'

OTTAWA, Canada — Canadian biologists hope within three years to breed superfish — giant rainbow trout five times their normal size that would be a challenge to any angler. Two biologists at McMaster University in Hamilton, pioneers in the field of genetic engineering, also say the huge trout could transform eating patterns as man runs increasingly short of new sources of protein. "The world population will be up 30 percent by the year 2000. Fish is the food of the future," said Dr. Ronald Sonstegard. He and Dr. Tom Chen plan to produce the superfish by cloning the trout's growth hormone gene and introducing extra copies of the gene back into fertilized eggs of the fish.

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