

## Gorbachev cuts Baltic Sea nuclear forces

HELSINKI, Finland -- Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev said Thursday that Moscow will cut its nuclear forces in the Baltic Sea and will destroy four aging submarines and the nuclear missiles they carry.

Gorbachev also said the Soviet Union has removed all tactical nuclear missiles that could strike the northern European region and will take certain types of sea-launched nuclear weapons out of the Baltic Sea.

In a 45-minute speech to Finnish business leaders, politicians and other guests on the second day of a three-day visit to Finland, Gorbachev repeated his hope to eliminate nuclear weapons from the 148,600-square-

mile Baltic Sea.

"We are prepared to come to agreement with all the nuclear powers and the Baltic states on effective guarantees for the nuclear-free status of the Baltic Sea," he said in a nationally broadcast speech in Helsinki's Finlandia Hall.

Gorbachev said the Soviet Union was taking the steps unilaterally, dropping previous conditions that Western countries first agree to a nuclear-free zone.

In Washington, White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater said, "We do not believe nuclear-free zones contribute to security in Europe.

"Most of these proposals have been designed to affect NATO deterrence capability while leaving Soviet nuclear weapons intact," Fitzwater said. "On the other hand, we do appreciate the intent of this and if it can develop into something concrete, why, that might be a hopeful sign."

Later, Fitzwater revised his remarks, saying, "In fact we do not consider this a hopeful sign."

Gorbachev said the Soviet Union already has taken two of its six Golf-class submarines out of operation from the Baltic Sea and pledged to destroy the remaining four by the

end of next year.

"We will also destroy their standard nuclear missile payloads and we have no plans for their replacement," Gorbachev said.

Six Golf II subs, 321 feet long with a displacement of 2,950 tons, have been deployed in the Baltic Sea since 1976, according to the British reference book Jane's Fighting Ships. The Soviets have said the subs carried 18 ballistic missiles.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has described the Golf II as obsolete and predicted they would be removed from service because they are of limited value.

## Bush approves \$3.45 billion in earthquake aid

SAN FRANCISCO -- President George Bush's signature Thursday added \$3.45 billion to help northern California heal the wounds of a killer earthquake, as residents and businesses tear down what can't be fixed and look to the emotional salve of a World Series and Halloween.

Crews were starting to tear down some of the "red-tagged" buildings -- those determined unsafe -- and demolition went on at a 1 1/4-mile stretch of Interstate 880 in Oakland.

However slowly, the area is recovering, as are some of the victims. Dockworker Buck Helm, rescued

after four days in the rubble of I-880, remained in serious condition Thursday in Oakland's Highland General Hospital. But his kidney function has returned to normal, and he is conscious most of the time, said spokeswoman Pat Pino.

## Bush proposes food safety legislation

WASHINGTON -- President George Bush called for legislation Thursday that would allow dangerous pesticides to be taken off the market more quickly, saying the government's ability to ensure a safe food supply was being called into question.

But his proposed changes in how pesticides and other chemicals on foods are regulated were criticized immediately by environmentalists and some members of Congress who said provisions of the president's plan could instead make foods less safe.

While Bush's proposal to streamline regulation was praised, critics said other provisions of his

plan would ease the risk levels used to determine if a pesticide is to be banned and also would have the government preempt state pesticide-control laws that often are stronger than federal rules.

The president, in announcing the proposed legislation, alluded to widespread publicity earlier this year over the use of Alar on apples and the government's inability to remove the cancer-causing chemical from the market swiftly.

"These stories have fueled the public concern about cancer risks, and more important for us, have called into question the government's ability to ensure a safe supply of food for our citizens," Bush said.

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