

## Aidid skips latest peace talks

MERCA, Somalia — Marines came ashore at this Somali coastal town Thursday, briefly putting aside their weapons to help out at clinics and win some good will in a nation where that sentiment is often hard to come by.

In the capital of Mogadishu, U.S. and U.N. officials were stood up for the second time in four days by Gen. Mohamed Farrah Aidid's Somali National Alliance. The faction belonging to his rival, Ali Mahdi Mohamed, also was to have attended the meeting.

Army Col. Steve Rausch, the U.S. military spokesman, criticized Aidid's faction for backing out at the last minute without giving a reason. The group also failed to show up Monday, then agreed

Wednesday to attend another session Thursday.

"It is really disappointing that they didn't show," Rausch said. "We hope to have full involvement in the future. We know these things ebb and flow." About 400 Marines deployed in the region around Merca for four days to help out at medical and dental clinics set up for Somali civilians four miles to the south. They are also to take part in joint exercises with the Moroccan troops who control the area for the United Nations.

The Marines came ashore aboard three air-cushioned landing craft which churned up walls of foam with their huge fans. In a little over an hour, Humvees, trucks and water trailers were mak-

ing their way to the Marines' temporary home.

The 200-by-600-yard area had a spectacular ocean view, and some military advantages, including a dirt landing strip and flat area for helicopters to touch down. The loose sand also made it easy to dig foxholes.

The Marines did plenty of that Thursday, frequently taking breaks to get used to the heat and humidity in this region 30 miles from the equator. The only shade was under two tents made from camouflage netting. Platoons took turns taking breaks there.

About 1,950 Marines from Camp Pendleton have been based on a four-ship expeditionary unit off shore.

## Pair of freight trains collide in Washington

KELSO, Wash. — Two freight trains slammed into each other Thursday, flinging cars in the air, a fireball into the midnight sky, and thousands of gallons of flaming diesel fuel all around.

A crewman's body was found near the wreckage of the two trains, which were pulling more than 80 cars each and traveling at least 40 mph when they collided head-on just south of this southwest Washington town. The four other crew members were unaccounted for.

"The train just started tumbling and flying straight up in the air. It was horrible, just horrible," said Randy Pinson, who was northbound on Interstate 5 less than a quarter-mile away when the trains collided.

The accident, which occurred shortly after midnight, "lit up the sky and gave us a backdrop to see," he said.

Rail cars "went straight up in the air, at least 100 feet straight up," said John McGanney, who was traveling with Pinson.

Washington State Patrol trooper Dean Burt, working nearby, reported "the biggest ball of fire you could imagine — a mushroom and a big ball of flames."

Rescue teams with search dogs waited until about 8 a.m. for the wreckage to cool before approaching the crushed, burned-out engines. As early morning fog lifted, a helicopter searched the area for signs of the crew members.

The collision involved a southbound Burlington Northern train, en route from Everett to Portland, Ore., with five engines, 110 cars and a crew of three, and a northbound Union Pacific train, headed from North Platte to Seattle with 83 cars, three locomotives and a two-member crew.

Railroad officials did not immediately release the crew members' names. The body recovered at the scene was that of a Burlington Northern crew member.

More than 20 cars derailed, but none of the derailed cars were carry-



## Officials look at reasons for deadly crash

CANTERBURY, England — A doctor who treated Americans injured in a tourist bus crash said Thursday that nine passengers might not have died if they had been wearing safety belts.

The crash on Wednesday, which also killed the British driver, has focused attention on a dispute within the European Community about safety belts.

"It is apparent that those who died were thrown out of the side of the coach, which landed on top of them," said Dr. Susan Brooks, director of accident and emergency services at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

"Had they been restrained within the coach, they would have been protected."

Police said the coach clipped a van, then careened off the M2 highway in southeastern England and shot down a 20-foot embankment.

Robert Key, the government minister responsible for roads, said Britain had been pressing for European Community rules requiring seat belts on buses.

Officials at EC headquarters in Brussels said coach manufacturers are required to attach safety belts only to "exposed seats" — those in the front of the bus and along the aisle.

Britain, Denmark and Germany have joined the community's executive agency in pushing for tougher regulations that would require all seats to be equipped with seat belts.

Although Britain could require British manufacturers to install belts throughout, it could not bar buses from other EC nations.

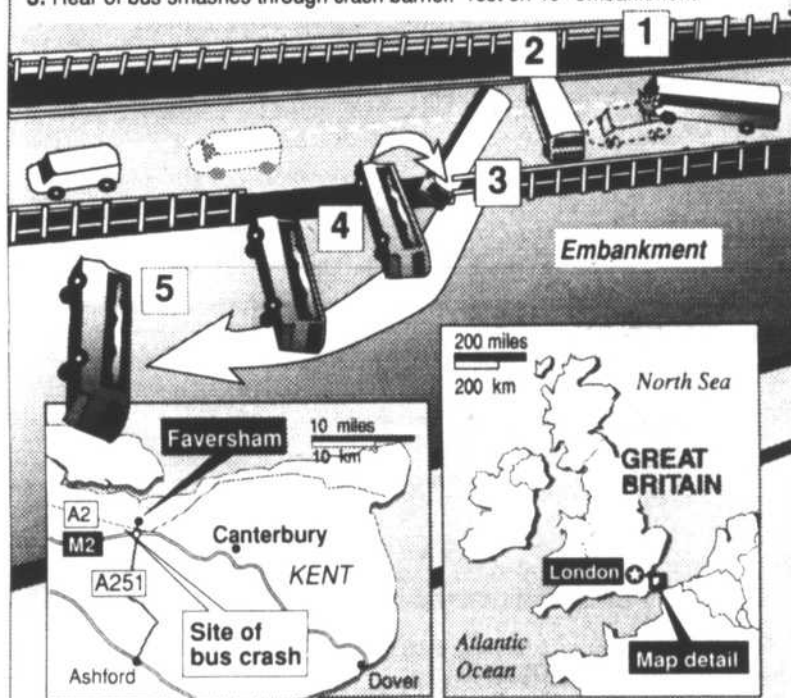
One woman, who was not identified, remained in intensive care at Kent and Canterbury Hospital, operated by the government's National Health Service. She was conscious and making progress, the hospital said.

### British tourbus disaster

A bus carrying American tourists to Canterbury Cathedral careened off a rain-slicked highway, killing 10 people and injuring more than 30 when it plunged down an embankment.

#### Sequence of events:

1. Bus clips rear of transit van at high speed.
2. Bus goes into a tail-spin.
3. Rear of bus smashes through crash barrier.
4. Bus flips over onto drivers side.
5. After sliding the bus comes to rest on 40° embankment.



Source: Kent County Police Department

Two of the 19 people hospitalized overnight were released and eight others were expected to leave during the day. Six people had surgery for broken limbs.

"They are being very well cared for," said U.S. Consul-General Elizabeth Ann Swift. "In terms of morale they're bearing up very well."

Carla Walker of Lafayette, La., broke down and cried as she walked into the hospital to visit 75-year-old

Patricia Becnel, who lost two of her four daughters in the accident.

Ms. Walker, the fiancée of Mrs. Becnel's eldest son, Tom, said the mother and her two surviving daughters "are doing quite well."

"We will be bringing the Becnel family home soon," she said. "There's definitely an upside. Three did survive and they're all very close."



## Irish quarterback confident before big game

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Before Notre Dame's final preseason scrimmage, quarterback Kevin McDougal told coach Lou Holtz that he could lead the Fighting Irish to the national championship.

That was a mighty bold statement considering Holtz had just informed his senior signal caller he would probably start the season on the bench, backing up freshman Ron Powlus.

"I'm thinking, 'We can't even get a first down, and he's talking about a

national championship,'" Holtz said.

At the time, McDougal was playing poorly and looking like a benchwarmer. Now he's looking like a prophet.

McDougal, who became the starter when Powlus broke his collarbone in that final scrimmage, has led the Irish to a 9-0 record and No. 2 ranking heading into Saturday's showdown against No. 1 Florida State.

If Notre Dame beats Florida State, McDougal's prediction of a national

championship could well come true.

"You can't destroy his confidence. You can't get him riled up. You can't get a smile off his face," Holtz said.

Florida State's Charlie Ward is considered the top quarterback in the country and the Heisman Trophy favorite. Ward has gotten a lot more publicity than his Irish counterpart, but McDougal doesn't mind.

"I like being in the background — it's more relaxing," he said. "I just wait and turn it on at gametime."

## Disney plans to build theme park in Virginia

HAYMARKET, Va. — Undaunted by staggering losses from its European venture, the Walt Disney Co. pressed forward Thursday with plans for a "Disney America" theme park near a Civil War battlefield in Virginia.

Disney selected a 3,000-acre site in the rolling, heavily wooded northern Virginia countryside after an exhaustive search, said Peter Rummell, president of Disney Design and Development Company.

The opening-date target is 1998.

Rummell said Disney would invest "hundreds of millions of dollars" in the project, a 100-acre park surrounded by a residential and commercial development. "We're here because we think we can succeed. We don't plan on quitting," he said.

The goal, he said, is to build a theme park that will complement numerous historical attractions in the nation's capital, some 30 miles to the east, as well as Civil War battlefield sites in Manassas and Fredericksburg, Va., and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello home near Charlottesville, Va.

The plans include a Civil War-era village and fort, an American Indian setting including a waterway for rafting, exhibits and show halls telling the story of immigrants and various cultures, and a factory town built around a high-speed thrill ride.

"We love Disneyland, but this is not Disneyland," said Bob Weis, senior vice president of Walt Disney Imagineering. "This is about all the fun and excitement of Disneyland,

but we are going to do a lot more here."

In the factory town, visitors to the park will be able to take a roller-coaster through a building modeled after a steel factory, replete with blasting furnaces. "You're going to feel like a piece of steel going through a factory on an upside-down roller coaster," Weis said.

Park planners envision heavy reliance on "virtual reality" techniques and a lot of high technology to take visitors beyond normal rides and attractions. A person could find himself parachuting into enemy territory or taking part in a harrowing Lewis and Clark-like river expedition.

Thursday's announcement came after a report earlier in the week showing that the Disney Co. posted a quarterly loss of \$77.8 million. Euro Disney, outside Paris, said that its 18-month-old theme park lost \$921 million in its first fiscal year.

To say Euro Disney is not a success "is not fair," Rummell said. "It's having economic problems because of the recession in Europe."

Rummell declined to speculate on the revenue potential of the theme park in Virginia. However, he said he expected attendance to be "more modest" than at Disney World in Orlando, Fla., or Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., which are reported to draw 30,000 or more a day.

He said it would be "priced competitively" with other attractions in a part of the nation that has been a magnet for tourists.

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