

Israel, PLO agree on security issues

CAIRO, Egypt — Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres, Israel's foreign minister, reached agreement Wednesday on some critical security issues that have stalled the Israeli-PLO peace accord.

Peres said he and the PLO chairman had settled "five or six of the most complicated issues" involved in turning over control of the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho to the Palestinians.

Peres added, "We didn't complete our work."

The final deal is to be negotiated

between Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

The two sides were haggling over control of the crossings from the autonomous Palestinian areas to Egypt and Jordan, security for Jewish settlers who remain in Gaza and how much land around Jericho would be ceded to Palestinian control.

Among the issues left for Arafat and Rabin to decide was the size of the Jericho area, Peres said.

Arafat said the new pact was "a very important step to implement the agreement from paper to the ground."

"We can say that Palestine - and the name of Palestine - has returned to the map of the Middle East," he added.

Peres and Arafat initialed a 21-page document, complete with maps, at a ceremony hosted by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak at the end of three days of talks.

As the two were speaking in Cairo, members of the World Jewish Congress in Washington got word of the agreement from President Clinton.

"Another big milestone has been achieved today," Clinton said.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr

Moussa had worked late into the night to smooth over last-minute disputes between Peres and Arafat, amid reports Peres was seeking approval from Rabin.

The negotiations since Monday have included at least seven sessions between Arafat and Peres. Neither has given details on the talks.

The Israeli withdrawal will clear the way for limited Palestinian self-rule in the territories. It was to have begun Dec. 13 according to the PLO-Israel peace accord signed in Washington in September.

Negotiators have repeatedly said any agreement reached here will almost certainly contain some sensitive problems to be settled later by Arafat and Rabin.

Israeli and PLO officials both have said it could take at least two more weeks of negotiations to complete specifics.

The Cairo talks began after more than a week of squabbling over results of the previous Peres-Arafat discussions in Davos, Switzerland. The PLO accused Israel of backing off agreements; Israel denied it.

Leaders remain calm about plan's high cost

WASHINGTON—Republicans claim the Congressional Budget Office delivered a knock-out blow against the Clinton health plan by saying it would worsen the deficit.

Democratic congressional leaders consulted with President Clinton this morning and said there was no reason to panic.

"It's not a problem," said House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., stressing that the CBO report shows the White House plan really can cover everybody and still cut medical bills in the long run.

"The differences are relatively small, and we will resolve them on the Hill," said Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee. "The president has the only sensitive, workable ... plan that provides universal coverage for every American."

Dingell added, "I would urge you not to panic" over the projected deficit impact of the president's health-care plan.

The bearer of the news, CBO Director Robert D. Reischauer, cau-

tioned against reading too much into his agency's calculation that Clinton's plan would drive the deficit up by \$126 billion between 1995 and 2004.

It would also trim the nation's medical bills by one-third of \$1 trillion over the next decade, he said.

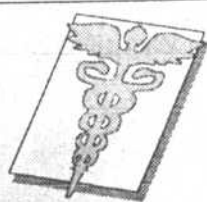
He told the Senate Finance Committee Wednesday that without Clinton's controversial caps on insurance premiums, the costs would be "quite a bit higher."

Reischauer urged lawmakers to "design a health care plan that makes sense. ... You shouldn't let budgetary treatment dictate program design."

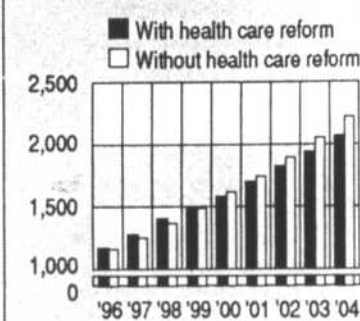
Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell itemized some of the positive points in the CBO analysis from the administration's perspective, including its projection that it would lower businesses' health insurance costs by \$90 billion in 2004 alone.

Reischauer said that "the vast preponderance of that money would be returned to workers in the form of higher wages."

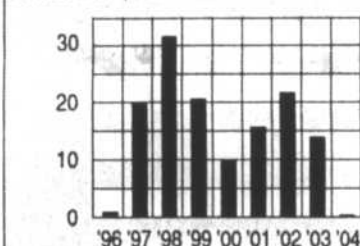
Health care reform costs



National health expenditures under the Clinton health plan, as calculated by the Congressional Budget Office, and expenditures without reform; both in billions of dollars.



Impact of Clinton plan on deficit. Increase to budget in billions of dollars. The impact is less than \$500 million in 2004.



AP/Brian Sipple

United States, Japan find common ground

WASHINGTON — The United States and Japan plan to announce a multi-billion-dollar AIDS and population-control effort and joint initiatives on environment and technology this week, in hopes of casting a positive light on what may be a stormy trade summit.

Crucial talks aimed at narrowing America's huge deficit with Japan appeared deadlocked Wednesday only two days before President Clinton and Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa were to meet to sign an initial agreement.

Hope still existed for a last-minute breakthrough to salvage the discussions, but officials reported both sides were still far apart on the key matter in dispute - how to measure progress in opening Japan's markets to U.S. goods.

While talks had been progressing among lower level officials earlier in the week, a U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the American side walked away from the table Tuesday night, contending that the discussions were at an impasse.

Although the main focus of Clinton's summit with Hosokawa is expected to be trade, the two nations also have worked out a package of agreements relating to the environment.

The agreement on AIDS and population is aimed at helping poor countries slow their birth rates and combat

AIDS. Japan will commit \$3 billion by the end of the decade, and the United States will pledge \$9 billion, said U.S. and Japanese officials.

The two countries also are completing details on a joint project for environmental protection and clean-up in Eastern Europe, and on efforts to protect tropical forests in Asia.

Japan will commit \$1 billion toward environmental work in Eastern Europe. The United States is not making a financial commitment, but will provide personnel and technical help, a senior administration official said.

Other agreements expected to be announced Friday involve coordinating research into global warming and developing high-speed rail technology.

The package of accords stems from an agreement between Clinton and then-Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa to discuss areas of cooperation beyond the stubborn trade issues.

In the trade talks U.S. officials insisted they would not accept an agreement that only papered over differences between the two nations as a way of giving Clinton and Hosokawa something to announce on Friday.

The officials repeated veiled threats made by Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen in Tokyo last month that the United States would consider other options if the framework negotiations aren't successful.

Law firm shreds Whitewater evidence

WASHINGTON — The Rose law firm where first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton was a partner shredded documents last week relating to Whitewater Development Corp., The Washington Times reported Wednesday.

The paper cited its source as an unidentified Rose employee who said the documents included material showing the involvement of President and Mrs. Clinton, along with James B. McDougal and his then-wife Susan, in the Arkansas real estate venture.

Special counsel Robert B. Fiske Jr., appointed Jan. 20 by Attorney General Janet Reno, is looking into whether McDougal improperly diverted funds from the Madison Guaranty Savings Loan Association, which he controlled, to Whitewater and Clinton gubernatorial campaigns.

The Times said it was not clear whether the reported shredding would

violate state or federal laws.

In Little Rock, Ronald M. Clark, managing partner of the Rose firm, called the report "totally false." Asked whether documents related to Whitewater were shredded, Clark said: "Absolutely not. To my knowledge, we have no documents in the firm's possession related to Whitewater, and if we do, we are accumulating them in single location awaiting the appropriate time that they will be examined."

Associate Attorney General Webster L. Hubbell and the late White House Deputy Counsel Vincent Foster Jr., also were partners in the Little Rock law firm with Mrs. Clinton before moving to Washington to serve in the Clinton administration.

Foster committed suicide, and the White House has acknowledged that papers relating to Whitewater were taken from his White House office last July after his death. The information

was turned over to the Clinton's personal lawyer in Washington before investigators could examine it.

"There's absolutely no doubt that the records destroyed last Thursday were those the firm had on Whitewater," the Times quoted the Rose employee as saying. "There were a lot of papers, and the process took quite a long time."

"A bunch of the stuff was there to be read, and it was felt that this could be very bad," the newspaper quoted the employee as saying.

It reported that a second Rose employee who took part in the shredding would not talk about it, but declined to say the incident had not occurred.

"I'm not going to comment," the paper quoted the second employee as saying. "I'm not going to say anything about what happened. I would just prefer not to say anything about this at all."

Noncommercial movies top Oscar nominations

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — A German businessman who protects Jews from the Nazis. A mute New Zealander who leaves her husband. Innocent women and men accused in an Irish Republican Army bombing.

Academy Award voters this year honored seemingly uncommercial storylines and the largest beneficiary was Steven Spielberg's Holocaust drama "Schindler's List," which received a leading 12 Oscar nominations Wednesday. Its nominations include best picture and best director.

Other films receiving multiple nominations include the New Zealand drama "The Piano" and the IRA story "In the Name of the Father," both among the five best picture nominees.

"This is a very special moment for all of us who have dedicated ourselves to this subject," Spielberg said of "Schindler's List." "The news of 12 nominations was overwhelming."

In addition to best picture and director, "Schindler's List" was nominated for best actor for Liam Neeson (who played Schindler) and supporting actor for Ralph Fiennes (who played sadistic Nazi commandant Amon Goeth).

Spielberg's "Jurassic Park," the highest-grossing release in movie history collected three nominations in technical categories.

"Philadelphia," the first big studio film about AIDS, got five nominations, including best actor for Hanks and best original screenplay.

"In the Name of the Father," a little-seen account of a falsely convicted

Irish rebel Gerry Conlon, received seven nominations, including best picture and best actor for Daniel Day-Lewis.

Robin Williams' cross-dressing performance in the hugely successful "Mrs. Doubtfire" was overlooked. "Sleepless in Seattle" received just two nominations.

In the best picture category, the nominees were "Schindler's List," "The Fugitive," "In the Name of the Father," "The Piano" and "The Remains of the Day."

For best director, Spielberg will face "The Piano" maker Jane Campion, only the second woman to be nominated in the category (Lina Wertmuller lost for 1976's "Seven Beauties"). Also nominated for best director were Jim Sheridan for "In the Name of the Father," James Ivory for "The Remains of the Day" and Robert Altman for "Short Cuts."

Others nominated for best actor were Anthony Hopkins for his role as the butler Stevens in "The Remains of the Day" and Laurence Fishburne for playing the abusive Ike Turner in "What's Love Got to Do With It."

The best actress selections were Angela Bassett for singer Tina Turner in "What's Love Got to Do With It"; Stockard Channing as society wife Ouisa Kittredge from "Six Degrees of Separation"; Holly Hunter as the mute mail-order bride Ada in "The Piano"; Emma Thompson for housekeeper Miss Kenton in "The Remains of the Day"; and Debra Winger as dying writer Joy Gresham in "Shadowlands."

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