

China permits Korean inspections

WASHINGTON — China will permit the U.N. Security Council to approve a resolution urging North Korea to open its suspect nuclear sites to international inspectors, South Korea's foreign minister said Wednesday.

The minister, Han Seung-joo, said the resolution would impose "minimum requirements," and the State Department spokesman said it may be a month before another, tougher, resolution is presented to the council.

The International Atomic Energy Agency in the meantime will evaluate data collected during inspections in March to determine whether North Korea has an active program to develop nuclear weapons, department spokesman Michael McCurry said.

Such a finding would have "grave consequences," he said.

Han, talking to reporters after a 50-minute meeting with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, said "the Chinese are on board in the sense of discussing the form and contents of a Security Council resolution."

Though this means "there will be minimum requirements" in the resolution, "I think it is unlikely the Chinese will veto the kind of resolution we are working on right now," Han said.

China has urged a go-slow approach toward North Korea. Christopher has decided to stagger the resolutions in a way that would give North Korea more time to accept international inspectors before risking U.N. economic sanctions.

"I think we're very much in a unified position with respect to the United Nations Security Council," Christopher said.

"We are going to be urging a resolution there. One thing I would stress is that we're consulting very closely with all the parties, including the Chinese, about the best way to encourage the North Koreans to take the steps that the international community wants them to take."

Han lined up his government with the United States in trying to pry open suspect North Korean nuclear sites.

He said there were "some differences in emphasis" with China.

Reporting to Christopher on talks in Japan and China, he said "the Chinese have been emphasizing the importance of dialogue." The goal, he said, should be adoption of an "effective and realistic" resolution by the Security Council.

Anthony Lake, national security assistant, briefed President Clinton on the situation en route to a golf club outside San Diego.

Lake said U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright was meeting with Chinese, British, French and Russian diplomats in New York "to work through a resolution that can take care of some of the Chinese concerns and still come up with a very firm international position."

Lake said that could lead to "broad talks" with North Korea about its future and the nuclear issue.

"Korea is a very serious issue, but it is very important that we not over-react to North Korean rhetoric," the White House official said.

Government lifts limits on corn planting

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — The United States corn crop could yield record-setting proportions this year.

With supplies low after last year's flood-ravaged harvest, the federal government has lifted limits on how much corn farmers can plant this spring.

Last year's Midwest flood and other weather-related woes cut the fall harvest by 33 percent, prompting the government to encourage farmers to plant more corn.

Weak land idled in previous years will be seeded and sprayed with chemicals, increasing the risk for erosion and runoff into streams and rivers. Farm suppliers are competing to tap into the larger demand for seed, fertilizer and herbicides.

Taxpayers have a stake, too. If the weather is favorable and corn yields climb, prices will plunge, triggering billions of dollars in government payments to farmers.

This kind of corn won't end up salted and buttered on the cob. This crop, worth \$16.5 billion in 1993, is turned into livestock feed, alcohol fuel, sweeteners, food ingredients — even packing material.

On Sept. 1, the surplus from last year's crop is expected to be only 802 million bushels, or 61 percent of what Illinois alone produced in 1993.

To replenish stocks, nearly 7 million additional acres could be planted in the United States, pushing total acreage to 80 million in dozens of states around the country, the highest since the mid-1980s. The Agriculture Department will make its first estimate of spring planting on Thursday.

Farmers would not be planting more corn without a nudge from Washington. The government usually requires farmers not to plant a crop on a portion of their corn acreage, a measure intended to balance supply with expected demand. In exchange, they

qualify for cash payments if prices fall below \$2.75 per bushel.

The land that is set aside can go as high as 10 percent, as in 1993, or zero, which is the 1994 policy announced last fall.

Rain during the planting season or no rain in early July, a critical growth period, could trigger fears of another bad year and send corn prices above \$3 a bushel. The 5 1/2-year high was \$3.11 3/4 at the Chicago Board of Trade on Jan. 13.

If the weather is good, prices could tumble to \$2.20 and kernels would be piled in glittery mounds like 1992 when farmers posted a record harvest of 9.4 billion bushels.

Consumers probably won't feel the effect of volatile prices at the grocery store. The cost of corn as a food ingredient is outweighed by processing, transportation and promotion expenses, Good said.

Israel, PLO agree on Hebron protection

CAIRO, Egypt — The PLO and Israel reached an agreement early Thursday for protection of Palestinians in the West Bank town of Hebron, opening the way for resumption of overall peace talks.

Israeli negotiator Uri Savir said two days of talks produced a compromise on sending an international observer force to Hebron, site of the Feb. 25 mosque massacre.

Up to 100 Palestinian police also would be assigned to keep the peace.

Savir declined to give details about the foreign observers, saying they would be announced at a news conference later in the day.

"There is an agreement on all issues relating to the security for Hebron and the resumption of talks on Gaza and Jericho," he told The Associated Press.

The PLO has demanded protection for Hebron's 80,000 residents before returning to overall peace talks on Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

The broader talks have been halted since a Jewish settler killed 30 Palestinians in the Hebron mosque attack. The Israeli army's

slaying Monday of six PLO activists in the occupied Gaza Strip threatened to again disrupt the negotiations.

On Wednesday, sources at PLO headquarters in Tunis, Tunisia, said the two sides agreed that up to 100 Palestinian police officers would join Israeli forces on their patrols in Hebron.

Disagreements remained on the number and nationalities of foreign observers to be sent to Hebron.

The PLO was demanding American and Russian observers as part of the force, arguing that a U.N. Security Council resolution urged an "international" presence.

Israel wanted only observers from Norway, which was deeply involved in the secret talks that led to the Israel-PLO accord in September. Israel also was insisting the observers be under Israeli control.

The arguments have as much to do with politics as protection of Hebron's Palestinians. The PLO wants an international force to undermine the idea of continued Israeli rule. Israel has always resisted any foreign interference during its 26-year occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

American woman beaten amid babysnatching uproar

GUATEMALA CITY — An Alaskan woman, suspected of stealing Guatemalan children for their organs, was severely beaten by a mob armed with machetes, sticks and stones.

Guatemala has been rife with rumors that Americans are abducting children and selling their body parts for transplant purposes.

Earlier in March a tourist from New Mexico was chased by a mob who suspected she was trafficking in organs. Police rescued her, but the mob burned down their station.

Officials identified the woman beaten Tuesday as Diane Werneck Jung, 52, of Alaska. She was in serious condition at a hospital in Coban, about 75 miles north of the capital.

Coban Fire Chief Mauro Rene Ac Chun said Jung had been stabbed eight times and had a broken arm, a probable skull fracture and other injuries.

Witnesses said a mob gathered in the main plaza in San Cristobal Verapaz after an Indian woman screamed that Jung had tried to steal her 8-year-old boy. The boy, who had been missing, turned up later at an Easter Week celebration.

Jung took refuge in a judge's office in a municipal building, but the mob overpowered police, said Roberto Alvarado, a reporter for Radio Coban who witnessed the attack.

Witnesses said the mob set the building on fire, ignoring pleas from local officials and a local Catholic

bishop. Jung was rescued by firefighters and rushed to Coban, a town 18 miles away.

An American man who arrived at the scene to offer translation assistance also was beaten, but less severely. The army sent troops a few hours later to restore order and arrested 15 people, according to Eduardo Sam Aldana, another radio reporter.

Reports of the sale of organs of kidnapped Third World children have been around for years, first surfacing in Honduras in early 1987. U.S. officials said the allegations became an integral part of Soviet and Cuban anti-American propaganda. The issue had been dormant in Guatemala for some time but reemerged late last year.

Adoptions by Americans in Guatemala average about 10 a week, and suspicions about the practice are fed by child stealing and baby trafficking in the country.

The U.S. Embassy said a senior Public Health Ministry official, Guillermo Carranza Targena, had inflamed the situation by suggesting that some unscrupulous traffickers are Americans.

Three weeks ago outside Guatemala City the presence of an American provoked large demonstrations and violence over two days. The woman, Melissa Carol Larson, of Taos, N.M., was taken to safety by police.

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