

Assassin says he had help

TEL AVIV, Israel — Yitzhak Rabin's confessed assassin suggested Sunday that one of the prime minister's bodyguards helped him, saying that the truth about the slaying would "turn the country upside down."

Yigal Amir fed rumors of a wider conspiracy in the assassination when he said that authorities killed a Rabin bodyguard who helped him by creating confusion during the Nov. 4 shooting at a Tel Aviv peace rally.

"Why don't you publicize that they killed one of Rabin's bodyguards? The one who shouted 'The bullets are dummies,'" Amir yelled to reporters as he was brought into a Tel Aviv courtroom to have his detention extended.

Amir, 25, has in the past insisted that he acted alone, and previous reports indicated Amir was the one who shouted the bullets were fake. No evidence has surfaced so far to support his claim that one of Rabin's bodyguards was killed.

"I can say something that will de-

stroy everything ... Everything until now was a mask," said Amir, wearing a white T-shirt with a gray sweater draped over his shoulders as he entered the court.

"I did not think they would start killing people," he muttered.

"You are killing people," retorted Judge Dan Arbel.

"If I tell the truth, it would turn the country upside down," Amir said, waving his hand dismissively and sitting down.

A government spokesman called Amir's comments "nonsense."

Police investigator Arie Silverman submitted to the court a document he said contained new material "that could change the nature of the charges" and requested Amir's detention be extended eight days beyond the maximum 30 days without charge. The contents of the document were not revealed.

The judge agreed to extend Amir's detention by four days. Amir is accused

of murder, attempted murder, illegal weapons manufacture and possession, sabotaging the investigation, and conspiracy. He has said he shot Rabin to stop the Israel-PLO peace process.

Amir has not yet been charged. Nor has his brother, Hagai, who was ordered detained for four more days. He is accused of supplying the bullets that killed Rabin.

Suspicious against Hagai Amir deepened Sunday when police Sgt. Ronen Saar testified before a government-appointed commission investigating the assassination that he saw the Amir brothers talking just before Yigal shot Rabin.

Hagai claims he knew nothing of his brother's plans.

As the government investigation neared completion, authorities intensified their crackdown on right-wing extremists, charging three leaders of a protest movement with sedition during the tension-packed months that preceded the assassination.

Clinton OKs first troops, won't rewrite agreement

MADRID, Spain — President Clinton authorized a vanguard of 700 American troops to open a risky mission in former Yugoslavia and rejected Bosnian Serb demands Sunday for rewriting the treaty U.S. forces will help enforce.

"When you make a peace agreement, not everybody is happy with it," Clinton said, referring to Bosnian Serb military leader Ratko Mladic's warning that Serbs in Sarajevo will never live under Muslim and Croat rule, as the agreement prescribes.

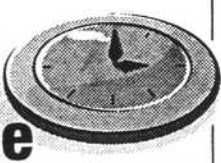
Despite the complaints of Mladic and others, Clinton said, "I don't think the treaty is in trouble and, no, I don't think it should be renegotiated." It is to be signed Dec. 14 in Paris.

Wrapping up a five-day European trip, Clinton announced he had given the go-ahead for sending into Bosnia 700 U.S. troops trained in logistics and communications.

Within a few days, the advance troops will establish a U.S. headquarters in the northeast town of Tuzla in preparation for nearly 20,000 Americans set to follow in a matter of weeks. The Americans, part of a 60,000-troop international peacekeeping effort, will spend the winter and the months after that trying to separate warring parties and disarming land mines hidden by snow-covered fields.

As he headed home from Europe, Clinton faced deep skepticism from Americans citizens and the Congress about the military mission.

News in a Minute



Palestinians raise flag near Bethlehem

BEIT JALA, West Bank — The first Palestinian police who will take control of Bethlehem from Israeli troops by Christmas raised the Palestinian flag on a hill overlooking the biblical city Sunday.

About 400 people turned out to welcome the 12 officers who opened the Israel-Palestinian liaison office in this neighboring village. They raised the red, green, black and white Palestinian flag over the office.

Residents clapped and chanted "We will sacrifice soul and blood for Palestine" when the officers marched in, carrying handguns, flags and pictures of PLO leader Yasser Arafat.

As he raised the flag, Brig. Gen. Ziad Atrash, a senior police commander, announced: "Christmas will be under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority, and Arafat will attend the ceremonies."

Wyoming senator announces retirement

CODY, Wyo. — Republican Sen. Alan Simpson told a hometown crowd Saturday that he will not seek another term after 17 years in Congress, saying simply, "It is time."

Surrounded by his wife, Anne, and their three children, Simpson said he wants to spend more time with his wife and wants to try something new when his term ends in January 1997.

Simpson is the third senator in the past month, after Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., and Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., to announce plans not to seek re-election in 1996.

Four Republicans, including Simpson, and eight Democrats are leaving the Senate when their terms end 13 months from now. The last time that many senators retired was a century ago — in 1896.

Gingrich will remain a top messenger

WASHINGTON — Republican leaders spoke approvingly Sunday of Rep. Newt Gingrich's decision to steer clear of TV cameras for a while, but said the speaker of the House will remain a top messenger for their party.

"I think he himself feels that maybe it's best now to keep a low profile for a while, because there were some statements made that he regrets," Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole of Kansas said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Caterpillar strikers reject contract

PEORIA, Ill. — Union members at Caterpillar Inc., rejected a contract offer Sunday and ended their bitter 17-month strike worse off than when they started, out thousands of dollars in lost wages and not knowing if they'll get their jobs back.

Union members rejected the latest company offer as the United Auto Workers' central bargaining committee voted to send the 8,700 strikers back to work. UAW officials wouldn't say why they ended the strike.

"I think the company's in complete control. We have to accept defeat," striker Jim Schmidt said.

Algerian journalist and driver killed

ALGIERS, Algeria — A journalist for Algeria's largest French-language newspaper and his driver were kidnapped and killed early Sunday.

Hamid Mahiout was a reporter for Liberte, which is close to the small, secular opposition party Rally for Culture and Democracy.

Assailants kidnapped him and his driver, Abdallah Belkhefallah, overnight and slit their throats, authorities said.

Their bodies were found Sunday morning in the Rais Hamidou neighborhood in western Algiers.

No one claimed responsibility for the killings, but Islamic extremists fighting to oust Algeria's secular regime have targeted intellectuals, foreigners and journalists as well as officials.

Thomason won't release records

Deadline set in travel office investigation

WASHINGTON — Hollywood producer Harry Thomason, a close friend of President and Mrs. Clinton, faces a showdown with Congress for refusing to release documents detailing his role in the White House travel office affair.

Rep. William Clinger, R-Pa., chairman of the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, has set a committee vote for Dec. 12 to authorize subpoenas that would compel Thomason to produce a wide range of records.

"This committee has not received a single explanation as to why Mr. Thomason has refused to voluntarily cooperate with all requests from every other investigative body involved in this matter as well as this committee," Clinger wrote in a stern letter last week to Thomason's lawyer.

Clinger's letter, obtained by The Associated Press, gives Thomason a final deadline of Friday.

But Thomason's lawyer already has told the GOP-led committee there's little chance of cooperation, accusing Clinger of conducting a "political fishing expedition."

Attorney Robert Bennett wrote Clinger two weeks ago, saying the committee's document request was "unreasonably overbroad" and accusing Clinger of being "less concerned with getting the facts than with embarrassing the White House."

Under the current conditions, "Mr. Thomason will continue to decline to cooperate voluntarily," Bennett wrote Nov. 15.

Clinger's committee has been investigating the White House's bungled decision in May 1993 to fire seven longtime White House travel office employees and put a Clinton relative in charge of the office.

The incident put a spotlight on Thomason and his frequent contact at the White House during the early days of the Clinton administration. Subsequent reviews showed Thomason had inquired about the possibility of opening up travel office business to competitive bidding around the time of the firings.

Clinger's committee also is examining a related issue, the removal of documents from White House lawyer Vincent Foster's office shortly after Foster killed himself July 20, 1993.

Clinger asked Thomason in late August to provide any documents he had with information about the firings, the handling of Foster's documents and other matters he worked on with the White House.

Bennett has repeatedly declined, saying the requests were too broad and that his client was convinced he would not be treated fairly by the committee.

Election jostles a changing Savannah

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Three days after this regal coastal city elected its first black mayor, the campaign manager warned the staff: Beware of all packages delivered to the office.

No one had threatened violence but "we can't take any chances," he said.

In a majority black city that has thrived on all-white social clubs, segregated neighborhoods and separate debutante balls for each race, residents are adjusting to the latest shattered racial barrier.

"It was long, long overdue, but changes are happening in Savannah," said W.W. Law, a black historian who led the local NAACP chapter for 26 years. "Now, as the world's eyes look to Savannah, there will be an African-American at the helm, and that's as it should be."

The city is in the national spotlight as site of the 1996 Olympic yachting events and setting for "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," John Berendt's best-selling account of a murder in the historic home of a gay antiques dealer.

Before black newspaper publisher

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