

Arafat, Netanyahu meet privately at summit

Middle East leaders gather in Washington to resolve a faltering peace.

By **BARRY SCHWEID**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat met face-to-face over lunch Monday at the White House.

The Mideast summit, hosted by President Clinton, was held against a backdrop of mistrust and violence.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry, reporting on Clinton's sum-

mit talks on the faltering peace process and a spate of violence last week, said "it was clear they could work together and have the kind of dialogue that could resolve their differences."

The two feuding Middle East leaders also shook hands and exchanged pleasantries in the White House Roosevelt Room before a session with Clinton in the Oval Office.

Even while registering a sharp change in the atmosphere from the gloom the administration projected before the summit, McCurry also said "they are not at the point yet that they are tabling proposals."

Clinton and King Hussein of Jordan left the room so Netanyahu and Arafat could have their discussions in private, the White House official said.

"A great deal of anger, frustration, suspicion had begun to permeate the atmosphere," McCurry said. But over lunch, he said, "the discussions have

gone a long way to re-establishing the notion of trust" that led Israel and the Palestinian Authority into interim settlements three years ago.

The lunch was in the White House library, while Secretary of State Warren Christopher met across Pennsylvania Avenue in Blair House with senior Israeli and Palestinian officials.

Clinton was prepared to intervene, if asked, McCurry said, but added that the one-on-one approach is the best way to proceed.

At the outset, no one-on-one encounter between Netanyahu and Arafat was planned. The White House said it would not disclose much about the talks while they are underway.

The distrust between the two leaders is so intense they are barely on speaking terms, a senior administration official said Monday at the State Department.

"We can help them, but we can't

make decisions for them," said the official.

The summit arranged by Clinton is both unstructured and politically risky. There is no guarantee Netanyahu and Arafat will find a formula to end violence on the West Bank and in Gaza.

If Clinton tries to push Netanyahu into concessions to the Palestinian Authority, he runs a political risk five weeks before the presidential election. If he pressures Arafat, he risks alienating the Arabs.

"We are at a very difficult moment," the White House spokesman cautioned. "We have not passed through the crisis."

McCurry underscored Clinton was not applying pressure to Netanyahu. "Pressure does not work in the Middle East peace process; it never has," he said.

"What we have to do is to create understanding between parties," the

spokesman said.

McCurry said Clinton's conversation with Netanyahu was very warm. "It was clear from the body language of the two they enjoyed their conversation," he said.

With the presidential election five weeks away, Republican candidate Bob Dole and GOP congressional leaders have urged Clinton not to back Netanyahu into a corner or to isolate the Israeli leader.

McCurry also spoke warmly of Arafat, saying "the president has a great deal of respect for the chairman."

While giving few details, the spokesman indicated Netanyahu's proposal for open-ended Israeli-Palestinian negotiations after the summit was taken up by Clinton.

"There are a number of ideas advanced by all of the parties," he said. "There are substantive discussions of that nature."

Supreme Court to decide on doctor-assisted suicides

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court agreed Tuesday to decide whether states may ban doctor-assisted suicides, setting the stage for a momentous ruling on the "right to die."

The court said it will decide by July whether doctors can be barred from actually giving life-ending drugs to mentally competent, terminally ill patients who no longer want to live. The decision will come six years after the court recognized a constitutional right to refuse lifesaving treatment.

Most states have such laws, but lower courts this year struck down assisted-suicide bans imposed by New York and Washington state. By reviewing those two rulings, the justices are expected to set national guidelines.

"This is one of those watershed legal issues that will be out there until the nation's highest court makes a decision," Washington Attorney General Christine Gregoire said after learning of the court's action.

Susan Dunshee, president of Seattle's Compassion in Dying group that successfully challenged the Washington law, said the court now has "an opportunity to benefit patients throughout the country."

The constitutional right to die was

first recognized by the Supreme Court in 1990. Assuming that such a right exists, the justices said then that a terminally ill person may refuse life-sustaining medical treatment.

Just last year, however, the justices rejected a challenge by Dr. Jack Kevorkian to Michigan's ban on assisted suicide.

One of Kevorkian's lawyers and the prosecutors who three times tried unsuccessfully to have him convicted of helping someone commit suicide said the lower court rulings will be overturned.

"They took the two cases that supported Kevorkian's view so they could overturn them," Kevorkian attorney Geoffrey Fieger said.

"It is my prediction that the court will reverse (the New York and Washington) decisions and allow individual states to make political decisions based on policy rather than the Constitution," prosecutor Richard Thompson said.

The generally conservative high court may choose to overturn the appeals courts' rulings, said Howard Simon of the American Civil Liberties Union in Michigan.

"There is just as much danger that they're going to do violence to the

rights of Americans as they are likely to protect the rights of Americans," Simon said.

Like abortion, the right to die is the kind of emotional powder keg the court tries hard to avoid.

In fact, Justice Antonin Scalia told a college audience in Virginia last April that assisted suicide is not a question the Supreme Court should decide.

"Why would you leave that to nine lawyers, for heaven's sake?" Scalia asked students at Bridgewater College. "It's better to let the people decide."

A month earlier, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals had struck down the Washington law that barred doctor-assisted suicide, ruling it violates due-process rights.

In the New York case, the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in April struck down two laws that barred doctor-assisted suicide, ruling that they unconstitutionally failed to treat people equally.

It is discriminatory, the appeals court said, to refuse to let terminally ill patients end their lives with medication, yet allowing other dying patients to end their lives by granting their requests that life-support systems be disconnected.

Both states appealed.

Spending bill passed by Senate, president

The \$389 billion measure has money for education and drug-fighting programs.

WASHINGTON (AP) — With just hours to spare Monday, the Senate passed and President Clinton signed a \$389 billion spending bill for scores of federal agencies and a tightening of immigration laws, the Republican-led 104th Congress' last major legislation.

Clinton signed the measure two hours short of Tuesday's start of the 1997 fiscal year, ensuring there would be no repeat of last year's partial government shutdown when agencies' spending authority lapsed.

The catch-all bill, approved 84-15 by the Senate in early evening, contains \$6.5 billion in extra money that Clinton demanded for education, drug-fighting and other programs and pushes overall spending nearly as high as it was before Republicans captured Congress two years ago.

It also drops GOP-written immigration provisions the White House argued were too severe, such as one barring federally paid AIDS care for illegal immigrants.

In a signing statement, Clinton called the omnibus bill "good for America," because it ensures substantial amounts of money for education and training, environmental protection and law enforcement.

"It moves us further toward our goal of a balanced budget while protecting our values and priorities — educating our children, providing a clean environment, fighting crime, protecting our families from drugs, and combating terrorism," he said.

However, the president said he was disappointed that the bill did not include one of his priorities, a ban on physician "gag rules" that would have given doctors in managed-care programs the freedom to inform their patients of a wider range of medical treatment options.

"Several states have passed similar legislation," Clinton said, "and Congress should have reached agreement on this measure."

Republicans said the two-year Congress had stayed the budget-cutting course the GOP had promised, even though the White House won extra spending in round-the-clock talks that ended at dawn Saturday.

In an election-year drive to soften their image, Republicans used the legislation to restore spending for programs they had tried to cut since last year.

Republicans used much of the restored money for popular programs.

Kaczynski indicted by grand jury

Death penalty option to be explored by prosecutors

WASHINGTON (AP) — Theodore Kaczynski, the math professor turned hermit, was indicted Monday by a federal grand jury in the Unabomber mail bomb attack that killed an advertising executive in New Jersey in 1994.

Already charged with seven other Unabomber bombings in five states, Kaczynski was named in three counts returned by a grand jury in Newark, N.J., in the Dec. 10, 1994, killing of adman Thomas J. Mosser.

The Justice Department, which announced the action in Washington, said

that it intends to prosecute the New Jersey indictment after completion of Kaczynski's impending trial in Sacramento, Calif.

The 54-year-old former Berkeley math professor pleaded innocent in June to a 10-count federal indictment returned in California. It charged him with four bombings that killed computer store owner Hugh Scrutton in 1985 and timber industry lobbyist Gilbert Murray in 1995 and maimed University of California geneticist Charles Epstein and Yale computer expert David Gelernter in 1993.

Arrested by federal agents at his remote Montana cabin last April 3 after an 18-year investigation, Kaczynski was charged by the grand jury in Newark with transporting the bomb that killed Mosser from Montana to San Francisco and then mailing it to Mosser's home in North Caldwell, N.J. When Mosser opened the package, it exploded.

Like the charges in Sacramento, the first two counts in New Jersey carry a possible death penalty. The third New Jersey count carries a mandatory, consecutive sentence of 30 years in prison.

Federal judge rejects Perot's request; Reform Party still banned from debates

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge Monday rejected Ross Perot's bid to be included in Sunday's presidential debate, ruling that the court lacked jurisdiction over such events.

U.S. District Judge Thomas F. Hogan rejected efforts by Perot's Reform Party and the Natural Law Party

for injunctions to force the Presidential Debate Commission to include their candidates in the two presidential debates.

Hogan said the complaints belong with the Federal Election Commission.

"This court, and other courts, have

ruled the FEC is bound by these procedures and must follow them," Hogan ruled.

Although Perot's attorneys said they would appeal, Hogan's dismissal of the complaint dealt a serious blow to Perot's hopes of being included in Sunday's debate in Hartford, Conn.

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