

News Digest

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1997

PAGE 2

Blair meets with Sinn Fein leader

LONDON (AP) — Punching the air in triumph Thursday and declaring it a "moment in history," Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams became the first political ally of the IRA to meet a British prime minister in London in 76 years.

Protesters shouted "Murderer!" through the railing gates at the end of Downing Street as Adams' Sinn Fein delegation left Prime Minister Tony Blair's official residence after the one-hour meeting.

"In many ways, the engagement can be described as a moment in history," Adams told more than 100 reporters outside the prime minister's office. "All of the hurt and grief and division that has come from British involvement in Irish affairs has to end."

Just yards away, supporters waved the green, white and orange tricolor — the Irish flag, a favorite Irish Republican Army emblem —

and chanted in support.

The meeting appeared to have made no substantive difference to the talks in Belfast, where negotiators, including Sinn Fein envoys, are supposed to agree on a new political deal for the British-run province of Northern Ireland by May.

But it was heavy with symbolism, underlining in many Protestant eyes the IRA's big coup — getting into the negotiations through Sinn Fein without surrendering any weapons.

Aides said Blair sat opposite Adams at the Cabinet table, looked him directly in the eye and asked if Sinn Fein and its ally, the IRA — which has observed a cease-fire since July — were truly committed to peaceful means. Adams said they were.

"When people say to me, 'How can you meet Sinn Fein and Gerry Adams,' I say to them, 'If you are not

prepared to sit down and talk — provided they obey the same rules as everybody else in coming into the process — then you will never move it forward,'" Blair said in a Sky TV interview after the meeting.

Leaders of the pro-British Protestant majority in Northern Ireland reacted with both suspicion and outright fury after TV news repeatedly ran pictures of Sinn Fein's seven-member delegation posing on the steps of 10 Downing St.

The entrance is a few hundred yards from where the Catholic-based IRA landed mortars in 1991. One shell thudded into the back garden of Downing Street while Blair's predecessor, John Major, was holding a Cabinet meeting, though no one was injured.

That attack was the second IRA attempt in the past 15 years to kill a British prime minister. In 1984, Margaret Thatcher escaped injury

when the IRA bombed a Brighton hotel where she and most of her Cabinet were staying, killing five people.

The last time an IRA leader was in Downing Street was 1921, when Michael Collins met David Lloyd George for treaty negotiations that led to partition: The six counties that make up predominantly Protestant Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom, while the other 26 counties formed what is now the Irish Republic.

On Thursday, the main Protestant party, the Ulster Unionists, predicted the IRA will return to violence within months, and rejected a renewed suggestion from Sinn Fein that its leader, David Trimble, meet Adams.

"It was a significantly good moment for the IRA ... the epitome of the ballot-box card that they play along with the gun," Ulster Unionist spokesman Ken Maginnis said.

The Rev. Ian Paisley, leader of the smaller, more hard-line Democratic Unionist Party, declared of Adams's deputy, Martin McGuinness, "If he wants peace, let him surrender the weapons of war."

Paisley is boycotting the Belfast talks because of the presence of Sinn Fein, whose delegation includes nationalists convicted of IRA membership and violence.

In a series of interviews on British and Irish television, Blair depicted his Labor Party government as taking risks for the sake of peace.

Meanwhile, an IRA-convicted double murderer, who escaped from Northern Ireland's Maze prison on Wednesday, remained on the run. Adams publicly wished Liam Averell "good luck" before meeting Blair — a remark British officials said "had not been helpful."

Netanyahu agrees to withdraw from West Bank

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — After weeks of foot-dragging, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is ready to agree to a more significant pullout from the West Bank in response to U.S. pressure, Israeli media reported Thursday.

Although officials are not publicly confirming specifics, the Maariv daily reported that Israel will propose withdrawing troops from at least 10 percent of the West Bank.

However, Netanyahu adviser David Bar-Illan said it was unclear whether a detailed proposal for a troop redeployment could be put together by Wednesday, when Netanyahu is to

meet in Paris with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Albright has said she expects to hear details then on a significant pullback offer. The Americans expect Israel to hand over at least 12 percent of the West Bank in the next pullback — one of three promised by mid-1998, according to media reports.

Bar-Illan denied reports that Albright was increasingly impatient with the Israeli government. "The Americans understand that this is a difficult political maneuver for Netanyahu, and that we are discussing the future of Israel," he told The Associated Press.

The initial plan floated by Israeli officials last month said Israel would hand over only 6 percent to 8 percent of the West Bank to the Palestinians in the upcoming pullback.

The Palestinians, who now have full or partial autonomy in 27 percent of the West Bank, expect much more — and it was not certain that even the improved offer would be accepted. A first pullout offered in March was rejected by the Palestinians as too skimpy, and never implemented. The Palestinians also expect to be in control of 90 percent of the West Bank after the third pullback.

Netanyahu, meanwhile, is under

pressure from right-wing coalition allies to hold firm and not yield too much land. Netanyahu met with settler leaders on Thursday to try to reassure them, but did not outline his withdrawal offer in detail, said Shlomo Silber, a spokesman for the Jewish Settlers' Council.

The settlers have threatened protests against Netanyahu. "It doesn't matter which party is in power — what matters is their actions," said settler leader Uri Ariel.

Maariv reported that Netanyahu and Foreign Minister David Levy — who is pressing for a speedy and generous pullback — decided in a 90-

minute meeting Wednesday to hand over at least 10 percent of the West Bank.

"I will not go into any numbers but it's clear that ... we are preparing for the important meeting (with Albright)," Levy said Thursday. "It's very important that the prime minister will come with clear material in hand."

Bar-Illan said before deciding on the scope of the pullback, Netanyahu first needs to win the support of key Cabinet ministers for a tentative map of Israel's territorial demands in a future final peace settlement. Such a map is to be discussed Sunday.

Treaty too easy on developing countries, Republicans say

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a preview of the ratification battle to come, Republicans complained Thursday that the global warming treaty signed in Japan would let developing countries off too easily and send American jobs overseas.

Vice President Al Gore quickly said the Clinton administration would not send the treaty to the Senate unless some Third World nations agree to its terms.

"We will not submit this agree-

ment for ratification until key developing nations participate in this effort," Gore said at a White House news conference. "This is a global problem that will require a global solution."

Meanwhile, President Clinton said skeptics must not be allowed to rule the debate.

"I see already, the papers are full of people saying, 'The sky is falling! The sky is falling!'" Clinton said in Miami.

"Every time we've tried to improve the American environment in the last 25 or 30 years, somebody has predicted that it would wreck the economy. And the air is cleaner. The water's cleaner. The food supply is safer," he said. "So don't believe the critics. Give us a chance to make the case."

The White House will be doing a lot of that over the next year, during which industry opponents, Republicans and labor unions are certain to boost an already massive campaign against the treaty.

As part of the pact, the United States would agree to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases to 7 percent below 1990 levels by the years 2008-2012.

"The stakes are simply too high, environmentally, economically and morally, for us to allow the special interests to get in the way of the common interests of all humankind," Gore said.

The political stakes are high, too. Even before the United States joined 158 other nations in signing the agreement, congressional Republicans, business interests and many of the labor unions normally allied with Democrats named a list of problems they said would keep it from winning the 67 votes needed for Senate ratification.

Industries opposed to the agreement already have mounted a multimillion-dollar advertising campaign that many Democrats

have feared would sway public opinion against the treaty and the Clinton administration.

With the 1998 midterm elections approaching, the unions that could be critical in some states already have crossed swords with the White House over a bill to give "fast track" trade negotiation authority to the president.

Several Republicans made a point of aiming statements at traditional Democratic constituencies.

"This international treaty is bad for working people with manufacturing jobs, specifically those individuals in our coal, steel and automotive industries," said Rep. Bob Ney, R-Ohio.

The next presidential election, still three years away, has played a prominent role in the treaty's aftermath.

The chairman of the Republican National Committee accused Gore of using the treaty to distract voters from legal questions over his fund-raising practices as he gears up to run for president.

"It is clear that Al Gore is using the Kyoto gathering to develop an issue to exploit in his presidential bid in 2000," said Jim Nicholson.

One likely Republican presidential contender, Steve Forbes, blasted the administration for agreeing to a treaty he said would raise taxes and heating costs. The nation's military, too, would be threatened because it would be

required to cut back on its use of fuel, Forbes said.

"This would radically undermine U.S. sovereignty and our national security and is completely unacceptable," Forbes said in a statement. "Who says socialism is dead? Diehard Marxists are green with envy at what the Clinton administration is trying to pull off."

Frank Murkowski of Alaska was one of several Republican senators who declared the treaty "dead on arrival."

And Democrat Robert Byrd of West Virginia, though calling the treaty "a major new beginning," stopped short of endorsing it.

He said it "does not meet the standard" of a July Senate resolution because developing countries don't face binding commitments. "Nor are the impacts on the U.S. of the agreement yet adequately understood to assess with confidence that we will avoid substantial damage to our economy," Byrd said.

But Gore dismissed the criticism as coming from special interests and politicians who haven't considered the big picture.

"The American people are ahead of the politicians where cleaning up the environment is concerned," Gore said. "They want cleaner air, they want cleaner water, they want less pollution and they want new technology that creates new jobs and new businesses."

Daily Nebraskan

Editor: Paula Lavigne
Managing Editor: Julie Sobczyk
Associate News Editor: Rebecca Stone
Assistant News Editor: Jeff Randall
Assignment Editor: Chad Lorenz
Opinion Editor: Matthew Waite
Sports Editor: Mike Kluck
A&E Editor: Jim Goodwin
Copy Desk Chiefs: Nancy Zywiec
Kay Prauner
Photo Director: Ryan Soderlin
Design Chief: Joshua Gillin
Art Director: Aaron Steckelberg
Online Editor: Gregg Stearns

Questions? Comments? Ask for the appropriate section editor at (402) 472-2588 or e-mail dn@unlinfo.unl.edu.

Asst. Online Editor: Amy Pemberton
General Manager: Dan Shattil
Publications Board: Melissa Myles, (402) 476-2446
Chairwoman: Don Walton, (402) 473-7301
Professional Adviser: Nick Patsch, (402) 472-2589
Advertising Manager: Daniel Lam
Assistant Ad Manager:

Fax number: (402) 472-1761

World Wide Web: www.unl.edu/DailyNeb

The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during the summer sessions. The public has access to the Publications Board.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling (402) 472-2588.

Subscriptions are \$55 for one year.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE.

ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1997

THE DAILY NEBRASKAN