

# News Digest

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## 229 die in plane crash

■ 36 bodies found, officials are still working to recover the wreckage.

PEGGY'S COVE, Nova Scotia (AP) — A Swissair pilot reported smoke in the cockpit, dumped tons of fuel and was preparing for an emergency landing before his jetliner crashed into the ocean off of Nova Scotia, killing all 229 people aboard, including 137 Americans.

Minutes before the crash, the passengers had been told to put on their lifejackets and get ready for an emergency landing, a top Swissair official said.

Flight 111 from New York to Geneva plunged into the Atlantic on Wednesday night after leaving Kennedy International Airport at 8:17 p.m. It carried 215 passengers — including two infants and 14 crew members.

By Thursday morning, 36 bodies had been found.

The McDonnell Douglas MD-11 reported problems at 33,000 feet, then descended to roughly 8,000 feet before disappearing from radar about 30 miles south of Halifax International Airport, Philippe Bruggisser, chief executive officer of Swissair's parent group, said in Zurich.

The 137 Americans he reported killed — 136 passengers and one crew member — were the largest single group aboard the plane.

A number of bodies were recovered wearing life vests, according to Bruggisser and other Swissair officials.

It took about 16 minutes from the time the crew first reported smoke in the cockpit to when the plane disappeared from radar, according to Roy Bears, an investigator with the Canadian Transportation Safety Board.

The plane was only seven to 10 minutes away from reaching Halifax when it crashed at 9:20 p.m. EDT, Bruggisser said in Zurich.

Pilot Urs Zimmermann, 50, apparently had to decide whether to try to make Halifax or head back to Boston.

Shortly after the Swissair jet was switched from the Federal Aviation Administration radar in Nashua, N.H., to the Canadian system in Moncton, New Brunswick, the pilot radioed that he had a problem, an aviation source in Boston told The Associated Press.

The pilot asked Canadian air traffic controllers whether he should be diverted to Logan International Airport in Boston. The controllers told him he was 190 miles from Logan and 40 miles from Halifax, so he continued on to Halifax, the source said.

Bruggisser said Zimmermann and co-pilot Stefan Low, 36, both of Switzerland, had flown the same jet in the last few days and had reported no problems earlier.

The White House and the FBI said there was nothing to indicate that terrorism was involved. President Clinton, who was visiting Northern Ireland Thursday, was being regularly briefed.

On the ground, people reported hearing sputtering noises from an aircraft passing overhead and then a thundering crash.

"The motors were still going, but it was the worst-sounding deep groan that I've ever heard," Claudia Zinck-Gilroy said.

Wreckage from the crash spread out over six miles. Fishermen helping with the rescue effort said the smell of fuel was overwhelming. Bodies were being taken to a temporary morgue at the Canadian Forces Base Shearwater, 30 miles to the east.

"Divers were using sonar to try to locate the black box, which gives technical data on the flight," Bears said, "adding that the debris was in water that varied from 70 to 150 feet deep."

Searchers had located a chunk of the plane's fuselage under about 100 feet of water.

Swissair said the passenger list will not be released until family members are notified. But in addition to the Americans, it said 41 Swiss nationals and 30 French citizens were killed.

Dr. Jonathan Mann, a former professor at the Harvard School of Public Health and a pioneer in the fight against AIDS, was among the dead, along with his wife, according to the World Health Organization.

The United Nations said seven U.N. workers returning to headquarters in Geneva were on board.

At the airports in New York and Geneva, grief counselors were on hand for relatives of the crash victims. A special lounge was set up in the Delta Air Lines terminal at Kennedy Airport.

Swissair was flying relatives from Zurich to Halifax on a flight today.

## Assassination eyed

### Terrorism prompts senators, FBI to consider legality

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators asked FBI Director Louis Freeh on Thursday to consider the legality of assassinating Osama bin Laden and other suspected terrorist leaders, but Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., warned against such acts.

Referring to terrorist leaders, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., asked Freeh, "What is present law with respect to their takedown?"

Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., said, "I would very much like a legal memorandum from the FBI stating whether or not the prohibition against assassination of heads of state applies to organized crime units and/or terrorist units."

Freeh said that while the prohibition against killing heads of state is clear, he was unsure about the legality of assassinating others and would study the question.

There was no doubt in the Judiciary Committee hearing who the senators had in mind: bin Laden, the alleged mastermind of the Aug. 7 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed more than 250 people, including a dozen Americans.

After the hearing, lawmakers stopped short of advocating an assassination attempt on the exiled Saudi multimillionaire and fundamentalist Muslim. But even public discussion of assassination represents a sharp change on Capitol Hill, where the pressure for the

executive order prohibiting U.S. involvement in assassinations originated in the 1970s.

"I just want to know what the law is," Biden said.

Feinstein said arrest of terrorists is the best option but said that other "robust" strategies should be considered.

"We have to think in a different way than we thought before," Feinstein said. "It's a very dicey thing to get into a situation where you're going to have licensed hit squads. At the same time we need to find ways to be proactive."

"It's a bad idea," Kerrey, vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said of assassination. "We are the most open society on earth. We are the most forward-deployed on earth. And as a result of those things, our leaders and our citizens are at risk of retaliation."

"Retaliation for the U.S. cruise missile strikes on targets in Sudan and Afghanistan on Aug. 20 is already in the planning," said Freeh.

"We can predict with some certainty that we will see a reaction by bin Laden and his organization," Freeh said. The potential targets are not limited to embassies overseas. "We've identified people in the United States or people who have transited the United States who are associated with him," Freeh said bin Laden poses "about as serious and imminent a threat as I can imagine."

“It's a very dicey thing to get into a situation where you're going to have licensed hit squads.”

DIANNE FEINSTEIN  
California senator

An executive order, approved by President Ford in the mid-1970s and affirmed by President Reagan in 1981, states: "No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, assassination." Ford issued the order after extensive hearings that exposed CIA assassination plots.

"The prohibition is not limited to assassination against heads of state," said Steve Aftergood of the Federation of American Scientists, a Washington-based watchdog group that follows intelligence matters.

The legalities of killing a specific person in a military strike are less clear.

"I don't think the prohibition applies if you're undertaking a military action," said Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa.

## First lady visits N. Ireland

■ Hillary Clinton speaks about children dealing with problems of violence.

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton opened a playground for Northern Ireland's youngest generation Thursday and said students here and in the United States are learning difficult lessons about violence.

"In America, we have many children who, like children of Northern Ireland, also have seen friends and relatives gunned down, because of gang wars or drug problems," Clinton

said, standing next to Cherie Blair, wife of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Speaking to Protestant and Catholic students seated in the grassy field, Clinton said, "So they, too, need to learn from what has been done here in Northern Ireland in dealing with the problems of violence."

Clinton and Blair embraced each other amid the crowd of children from a Catholic elementary school and from a state school whose students are predominantly Protestant.

The new playground along the River Lagan in Belfast's largely afflu-

ent south side will be used to bring different school groups together.

Since arriving Wednesday ahead of her husband, Clinton hasn't commented on personal strains caused by the Monica Lewinsky scandal — a fact noted on a front-page headline of a newspaper President Clinton was handed at the airport today when he arrived.

Hillary Clinton and Cherie Blair later sat in the front row of Belfast's downtown Waterfront Hall as their husbands addressed a gathering that included Northern Ireland's new cross-community Assembly and senior politicians from all sides.

## Former altar boy sues archdiocese

### He says church was aware of priest's sexual tendencies

OMAHA (AP) — A former altar boy at St. Richard Catholic Church has sued the Omaha Archdiocese and Daniel Herek, a priest convicted last week of fondling the boy.

The lawsuit was filed Wednesday in Douglas County District Court on behalf of an adult male referred to as John Doe.

The complaint accuses the church of negligence.

"Despite the fact that the archdiocese officials knew that Herek had exhibited dangerous pedophile traits, they did not remove him from contact with minor boys," attorney Harold Zabin wrote. The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages.

"The archdiocese did not warn the staff or church leadership or parents ... of his pedophilic tendencies and alcoholism abuse," the suit

states.

Archdiocese officials have said they received no complaints about Herek that raised alarm or warranted removing him from contact with children. The Rev. Michael Gutsell, chancellor of the archdiocese, said Wednesday he had not seen the lawsuit and could not comment.

Herek's attorney, Steven Lefler, declined to comment.

Herek pleaded no contest Aug. 28 to charges he sexually assaulted a then 14-year-old boy from St. Richard and manufactured and possessed child pornography. He is waiting to be sentenced.

The lawsuit filed Wednesday alleges that after gaining the trust of John Doe, Herek sexually assaulted, molested and exploited him many times between 1992 and 1997.

The lawsuit states Herek engaged boys in sexual contact or tried to do so at nine churches. At some of the churches, the lawsuit states, the priest gave boys alcohol.

The lawsuit states the archdiocese knew Herek possessed pornographic magazines and was seen in the presence of partially clothed young boys. The archdiocese also knew, according to the lawsuit, that Herek had fondled boys and had an alcohol problem.

Herek has been a priest in the archdiocese for 26 years, serving in 11 parishes in Omaha and the Nebraska communities of Coleridge, Belden and Beemer. He served the St. Richard parish for five years.

On Tuesday, Omaha Archbishop Elden Curtiss said Herek will never again serve as a priest.

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