

# NEWS DIGEST

MONDAY, MARCH 8, 1999

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## Leaders meet over peace plan

*Albanian rebels expected to approve plan, but not until later this week*

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Ethnic Albanian rebel commanders met Sunday to consider the peace plan for Kosovo, but — contrary to Clinton Administration declarations — it appeared the deal would not be signed before later in the week.

As promised, leaders of the Kosovo Liberation Army gathered in the hills of the Drenica region to vote on a plan for broad autonomy but not the independence they have fought for in a year of bitter ethnic war.

Representatives of William Walker, the U.S. chief of international monitors in Kosovo, attended the rebel meeting held at an undisclosed location, said an American source, who requested anonymity.

The source said rebels were expected to approve the deal, and that they and ethnic Albanian politicians likely would sign around March 12.

Former Sen. Bob Dole, who visited the region at President Clinton's request, declared in London on Saturday that the ethnic Albanians "promised" to sign the deal Sunday.

Dole and U.S. diplomats have pressured

Albanians to sign quickly in an attempt to end a year of fighting between Serb forces and ethnic Albanian rebels that has killed 2,000 people and driven 300,000 from their homes.

A signature by the Kosovo Albanians would step up pressure on Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to accept the plan. Their signature also would be a belated success for U.S. diplomats after they failed to gain the Albanians' full cooperation last month.

The ethnic Albanian negotiating team in Rambouillet, which included politicians and rebels, said it would sign the agreement when they met again with diplomats in France on March 15. They said they needed to consult the people of Kosovo.

Rebels have long been wary of the deal, because it requires them to disarm and falls short of full independence. Albanians also want a referendum on independence after three years, but Western powers oppose that.

Top KLA leader Hashim Thaci spoke favorably Sunday of the peace plan. But he reiterated that the KLA should remain a defensive force, instead of

becoming a political party with some of its members installed as police, as Western diplomats propose.

U.S. officials, who requested anonymity, said Sunday it was unrealistic to pin the ethnic Albanians' factions down to a specific moment when they would sign the deal.

Serbs have agreed to give Kosovo self-rule but oppose the U.S. plan because it calls for 28,000 NATO peacekeepers, including 4,000 U.S. soldiers, to police the deal on Yugoslav territory.

NATO has nonetheless deployed about 8,000 troops in neighboring Macedonia for a peace mission and to underscore NATO threats to launch airstrikes if Milosevic does not sign the deal.

In an example of rising tensions, an ethnic Albanian civilian shot and killed two Serb policemen Sunday in a Pristina suburb who were seeking his son on robbery charges.

Serb police forces responded by searching houses for the father and son and beating the occupants. An OSCE official said 15 ethnic Albanian civilians suffered heavy bruises and broken bones.

### World and Nation DATELINES

#### ■ Venezuela

#### American workers killed were in risky territory

LA VICTORIA (AP) — The three American humanitarian workers kidnapped and slain while trying to help a Colombian native group had ventured in a dangerous and lawless region teeming with leftist rebels.

Authorities sought an explanation Saturday into the killings of the Americans, whose bullet-ridden bodies were found Thursday in a cow pasture just across the border in Venezuela.

They were abducted by suspected leftist rebels on Feb. 25 after spending a week in Colombia working with the U'wa, an 8,000-member Indian group that inhabits a reserve along the border between the two countries.

#### ■ Washington, D.C. Stephanopoulos talks of Clinton in new book

The Associated Press — Former White House aide George Stephanopoulos says in a new book that, after defending President Clinton against "bimbo eruptions" for years, he "felt like a dupe" when he learned the truth about Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky.

Stephanopoulos, who joined Clinton's campaign in 1991 and worked in the White House until late 1996, writes in his memoirs that he doubted Clinton's denials when the Lewinsky scandal broke in January 1998.

Stephanopoulos' book, "All Too Human: A Political Education," was excerpted in the latest issue of Newsweek magazine, available on newsstands Monday. The memoirs arrive in bookstores nationwide on Tuesday.

#### ■ South Africa Newspaper to represent 'richness of democracy'

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A new weekly newspaper hit the streets Sunday with a pledge to defend all of South Africans' rights — including freedom of speech and good garbage collection.

Full of color photos and graphics and with a mix of hard news, features, sports and entertainment, the Sunday World is a weekly aimed at South Africa's black professional class.

President Nelson Mandela welcomed the newspaper as a "reflection of the maturing and richness of our democracy."

#### ■ Suriname Caribbean nations suspend treaty with United States

PARAMARIBO (AP) — Angered by the U.S. position in a trade dispute over banana exports to Europe, Caribbean Community nations have agreed to suspend a treaty of cooperation with the United States to fight drug trafficking, an official said Sunday.

The treaty, signed in Barbados by President Clinton in May 1997, calls for cooperation by Caribbean nations in anti-drug trafficking measures and extradition of suspects. But regional leaders have increasingly complained that Washington has ignored its end of the bargain by failing to address economic issues so important to the Caribbean.

## Search called off for 40 Haitians

MIAMI (AP) — The Coast Guard has called off its search Sunday for up to 40 Haitians who apparently drowned trying to sneak into the country in what is described as the deadliest smuggling attempt ever off the South Florida coast.

"At this point they're presumed dead," Lt. John Pierce said. "We searched right up until midnight without results."

Two boats loaded with refugees sank Saturday in the early morning hours. Crew members on a passing freighter reported hearing screams from the water about 30 miles east of West Palm Beach.

Rescuers found only three survivors. A Coast Guard cutter recovered the bodies of two men.

The Coast Guard was not sure of the exact number of people missing. U.S.

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Border Patrol Senior Patrol Agent William Brett told the Sun-Sentinel of Fort Lauderdale that interviews with survivors led him to believe there were 43 people in all — 16 men and two women on one boat and 20 men and five women on the second boat.

The men rescued from the choppy waters of the Atlantic Ocean told the border patrol that one of the boats broke down and that the other boat approached to help. Both boats then went under, the survivors said.

One of the survivors, Louis Pierre, was in good condition at Good Samaritan Medical Center in West Palm Beach and spoke to The Associated Press through a translator.

Pierre, 42, said he hopes to receive political asylum and settle in Delray Beach. His wife and four children are still in Haiti.

"I would love for them to come, but not in the boat," he said.

## Trimble invites talk with Sinn Fein heads

#### ■ The Protestant leader is hoping to meet the agreement deadline.

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — The Protestant leader charged with forming Northern Ireland's new government said Saturday he has invited the senior Sinn Fein leaders to urgent talks, the first time he's done so.

Although Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble began talking with Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams six months ago, until now such contact has always been at the behest of the Irish Republican Army-allied party.

Trimble's invitation comes as the deadline set by the British government approaches to hand back power to local politicians in accord with last year's peace agreement. Britain, which has directly ruled Northern Ireland since 1972, has already conceded the Wednesday deadline is likely to be missed.

In a radio interview with the BBC, Trimble said he wanted to help Sinn Fein leaders "carry out their obligation" to deliver IRA disarmament "by arranging for the formation of the executive to follow as quickly as possible."

Sinn Fein denies it has such an obligation. But the party said Adams and deputy leader Martin McGuinness probably would accept the invitation from Trimble.

Though a definite time had yet

to be confirmed, sources in both parties said Tuesday was most likely.

The peace accord said Sinn Fein should exercise "whatever influence it may have" with the IRA to achieve complete disarmament of the outlawed group by May 2000. But it specified no starting point, nor did it tie this goal to the plans for a new Catholic-Protestant government.

In the immediate wake of the Good Friday accord, the British and Irish governments appointed Canada's former army chief, Gen. John de Chastelain, to lead a commission that would gradually disarm all of Northern Ireland's outlawed paramilitary groups.

So far only one, a small anti-Catholic gang that initially opposed the peace accord, has handed over any weaponry to de Chastelain. And that group, the Loyalist Volunteer Force, on Saturday threatened to break its 10-month-old truce if any harm comes to its imprisoned commander, Mark "Swinger" Fulton.

In December 1997 anti-British extremists assassinated Fulton's predecessor, Billy "King Rat" Wright, inside prison, an act that triggered the killings of 10 Catholics. In a statement, the Loyalist Volunteers accused prison authorities of leaving Fulton vulnerable to the same threat.

Fulton was arrested in December after allegedly firing a handgun in the air and threatening a man's life.

## Statistics released for U.S. carjackings

WASHINGTON (AP) — Just over half the nation's annual average of nearly 49,000 carjacking attempts are successful, and almost two-thirds of the incidents occur within five miles of the owner's home, the Justice Department reported Sunday.

Reporting on data for 1992 through 1996, the most recent available, the Bureau of Justice Statistics said that each year an average of 48,787 carjackings are tried, and 24,520, or 50.3 percent, succeed.

Victims were injured in 23 percent of the completed carjackings but in only 10 percent of the unsuccessful ones. A weapon was used in 83 percent of the incidents.

The report said 84 percent of victims were not injured, but 4 percent suffered serious injuries, such as gunshot or knife wounds, broken bones, internal injuries or loss of

consciousness. The remainder had minor injuries like bruises or chipped teeth.

The bureau defined carjacking as a theft when a vehicle was taken or attempted to be taken by force or threat. It counted carjackings by strangers, not by acquaintances or relatives.

Using FBI data based on police reports, the bureau said strangers committed an average of 27 murders involving automobile theft each year during 1992-1996.

Only 22 percent of carjackings occurred at or near the victim's home, but 65 percent were within five miles or less. The bureau offered no explanation, but law-enforcement and automobile club officials privately suggested that most cars are within five miles of the owner's home most of the time.

### Daily Nebraskan

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