

## Israel-Syria peace talks suspended

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a stunning setback, the Clinton administration was forced Monday to call off scheduled peace talks between Israel and Syria amid sharp disagreement between the two sides over a projected Israeli pullback from the Golan Heights.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and senior U.S. mediator Dennis Ross telephoned Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa of Syria looking for a way to move ahead.

Announcement of the indefinite suspension came from Jerusalem, where Barak had been preparing to return to Shepherdstown, W.Va., for the second round of talks this month.

"If it isn't comfortable for the Syrians to come now, and they need some time, they should take the time," Barak said. "We will come when there are discussions, and the delay, if in fact it is agreed on, does not bother us."

Having agreed last week to resume the talks Wednesday, Syria hesitated over the weekend. Syrian officials were frustrated that the negotiations had not met their territorial demands — a promised pullback by Israel from all

the strategic borderline plateau.

Disclosure via an Israeli leak that Syria had offered Israel diplomatic relations as well as arrangements on trade, tourism and transportation may have contributed to the Syrian frustration.

Over the weekend, statements emanated from Syria and Lebanon that indicated President Hafez Assad's government was reconsidering whether to proceed to another round.

In Damascus, an informed Syrian source said Monday that Syria had not suggested the delay. Rather, al-Sharaa concluded from telephone conversations with Albright that Israel was not serious, said the source, who insisted on anonymity.

Al-Sharaa told Albright, with whom he spoke Saturday as well as Monday, the Syrians would not participate in a third round until the Israelis were prepared to demarcate a new border at lines that existed prior to the Six-Day War in 1967, the source said.

When Israel decides to go back to the table to do that, the source said, then there will be another meeting.

Had the United States insisted on going ahead with the talks Wednesday,

*"If it isn't comfortable for the Syrians to come now, and they need some time, they should take the time."*

**Ehud Barak**  
Israeli prime minister

they would have gone forward, a senior U.S. official said.

But with the two sides in sharp disagreement on how to proceed, each wanting its priority demands dealt with first, the outlook for progress was not bright.

For Syria, that demand is recovery of all of the Golan Heights, which Israel captured in the 1967 war. Since then, the high ground has served as a border buffer. About 18,000 Jewish settlers live on the plateau, operating small businesses, wineries and farms.

Syria is insisting on recovery of territory all the way to the Sea of Galilee, Israel's water storehouse. This includes patches of land it captured in the 1950s, then lost in 1967.

Israel and Syria each agreed to send two experts to Washington to

nibble away at issues that are not central to land-for-peace negotiations. After that, the administration will decide how to proceed, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

In a carefully worded statement, Albright blamed neither side for the postponement but said their approaches differed from a U.S.-prepared document that the Americans hoped would form a basis for an accord.

Earlier in the day, before the talks were postponed, Clinton sounded an optimistic note.

"The good news is, I'm convinced that both still want to do it," he said during a Martin Luther King Jr. Day appearance. "And they are not as far apart as they might be. They're not as far apart as they have been."

## Protesters demand change of S.C. banner

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Decrying the Confederate flag as a symbol of slavery and racism, over 45,000 people marched to South Carolina's Statehouse on Martin Luther King Jr. Day to demand the banner be taken down.

They also said the slain civil rights leader should be honored with a permanent state holiday.

South Carolina state workers can take off on the King holiday or another of their choice, including one of several tied to Confederate anniversaries.

"The flag is coming down today," marchers sang as they walked six blocks from a downtown church to the Statehouse. Some carried signs reading, "Your heritage is my slavery."

Across the country, Americans remembered the slain civil rights leader Monday with marches and speeches urging the nation to commit itself to King's principles and fulfill his dream of racial harmony and equality.

This was the first year that the King holiday was observed in some form in all 50 states and the 15th year it has been celebrated as a national holiday.

In Atlanta, Vice President Al Gore joined King's widow, Coretta Scott King, and other family members in placing two wreaths at King's grave. King, who was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968, would have been 71 on Saturday.

"Today, nearly 32 years after we lost him, we still need Martin Luther King Jr. more than ever," Gore said from the pulpit of Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King served as pastor during the civil rights movement.

At the South Carolina rally against the flag, state police estimated the crowd at 46,000 people.

Frederick C. James, a retired African Methodist Episcopal bishop, said he was reminded of marching with King in Washington.

"We were just about as sure in 1963 that we were going to be victorious with the civil rights law, which was enacted in 1964, as we are now that this flag will come down off of that Statehouse," he said.

A few white marchers joined the mostly black crowd.

The National Association for the

*"The flag is a terrible symbol that brings a lot of negative energy."*

**Martin Luther King III**  
Martin Luther King Jr.'s son

Advancement of Colored People is waging a tourism boycott against South Carolina over the flag. Many marchers from out of state honored the boycott by sleeping Sunday night on cots in church basements instead of checking into hotels.

"This is the kind of thing we need to be doing on Martin Luther King's birthday," Martin Luther King III, King's son, said at a prayer breakfast. "The flag is a terrible symbol that brings a lot of negative energy. And while we believe the flag has an appropriate place, it just does not belong on top of the Capitol, because it is not a sign of unification."

South Carolina raised the flag in 1962 during the Civil War centennial, and it flies atop the Statehouse along

with the U.S. and state flags.

Supporters say the banner is a symbol of the state's heritage and honors Confederate soldiers killed in the Civil War. More than 6,000 Confederate flag supporters marched a week ago at the Statehouse.

Only South Carolina's Legislature can lower the flag.

While South Carolina is the only state still flying the flag from its Capitol, Georgia incorporated the symbol into its state flag in 1956.

Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition now wants tourists to boycott Georgia until the emblem is removed. Activists are threatening to begin the boycott on Jan. 30, the day of the Super Bowl, which will be played in Atlanta.

## 'Bubble' law to be argued

DENVER (AP) — The morning calm on a tree-lined residential street is pierced as sign-carrying protesters shout at women entering an abortion clinic.

"It's an office of death! Don't kill your baby! Do you know what you're doing?" they yell from 8 feet away at women partially shielded by a 4-foot brick wall outside the Planned Parenthood clinic.

It is a scene dictated by Colorado's 1993 "bubble" law, which requires protesters to keep their distance from patients entering health-care facilities.

On Wednesday, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments on whether the law legally protects patients from harassment and intimidation or violates the protesters' right to free speech.

The decision could establish guidelines for other states and cities that have grappled with ways to maintain peace between protesters and women seeking abortions.

The state of Colorado argues that the law balances free-speech rights with the right to access to health care. The Legislature passed the law after hearing patients complain of being spat on, kicked and harassed.

"It's all right to protest. That's fine. But when it gets down to intervening with another person's recognized right, the Legislature felt obliged to step in," said Deputy Attorney General Ken Lane.

James Henderson of the Virginia-based American Center for Law and Justice, which represents the protesters, counters that the law tramples on free-speech rights.

"My way of sidewalk counseling is to be gentle and to be compassionate. Colorado's way is to put me so far away I have to scream and yell," said Jeanne Hill, one of three protesters challenging the law.

Around the country, some cities have tried creating buffer zones between protesters and clinic patients, and between protesters and churches. Others have required protesters to obtain permits for demonstrations.

Fourteen states and the District of Columbia have laws that prohibit protesters from blocking clinic entrances, said Elizabeth Arndorfer, an attorney with the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League.

The Colorado law bars people from counseling, distributing leaflets or displaying signs within 8 feet of others, without their consent.



### Spain

#### Pinochet petition problem falls on British court

MADRID, Spain (AP) — Spain put the Pinochet ball squarely back in Britain's court Monday, sending London a judge's request for a new medical exam to determine whether the former Chilean dictator is mentally fit to stand trial.

The move came a day before Britain's deadline for opinions on the case.

Last week, Britain's Home Office said doctors believe Gen. Augusto Pinochet, 84, is too ill to be extradited to Spain to face charges. Home Secretary Jack Straw said he was considering canceling the extradition, but he asked for opinions from Spain, France, Belgium and Switzerland.

Soon after, Spanish Foreign Minister Abel Matutes said the Spanish government would not send Britain any more petitions from Judge Baltasar Garzon, the magistrate who wants to try Pinochet in Madrid. Spanish leaders have always been uneasy about their involvement in the case, which has potential implications for their relations with Chile and Britain.

Matutes' office later qualified its statement, saying the petition would be forwarded but only if it contained new material. On Monday, Spain decided to forward Garzon's petition after all.

Garzon's call for a second medical examination was joined by four groups: Amnesty International, the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, the Association of the Relatives of the Disappeared in Chile, and Redress.

### Russia

#### Putin asks groups to see

#### Russia's side in Chechnya

KURCHALOI, Russia (AP) — Federal forces bombarded roads and footpaths in Chechnya's southern mountains Monday, trying to prevent rebel raids into Russian-controlled villages, while acting President Vladimir Putin appealed to European human rights leaders to see Russia's side in the war.

Russian airplanes and artillery pounded the Vedeno region, a stronghold deep in the mountains, about 35 miles south of the capital. Troops took three settlements in the region, the Interfax news agency said.

According to Russian reconnaissance reports, rebels are active in the region and are planning to storm Russian-held villages.

The federal forces want to prevent a repeat of the raids on Russian-controlled towns earlier this month, which cast doubts on the military's reports of success in Chechnya.

### California

#### NASA calls it quits on Mars

#### Polar Lander mission

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — NASA on Monday gave up trying to contact the missing Mars Polar Lander, confirming what had been suspected for more than a month: the \$165 million spacecraft was dead-on-arrival.

Engineers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory listened for the spacecraft one last time and heard only silence.

"It is closure in the sense that I think we did everything we could to re-establish contact, and, yes, it's time to get on to other things," said project scientist Richard Zurek.

The spacecraft vanished Dec. 3 while trying to land on Mars. It was to have studied the atmosphere and dug for ice during a 90-day mission.

## WEATHER

### TODAY

Partly cloudy,  
high 43, low 27

### TOMORROW

Partly cloudy,  
high 51, low 22

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