

Protesters boycott World Bank

WASHINGTON (AP) — World Bank critics launched a global campaign Monday to boycott the institution's bonds, hoping to deliver a potent economic punch to force changes in the bank's treatment of poor nations.

Boycott organizers announced their plans just as environmental demonstrators blocked a street and triggered a confrontation with police. Seven were arrested.

Protesters, believing the World Bank imposes crushing austerity demands on poor countries, are building up to a massive rally Sunday when world finance ministers are to gather in downtown Washington for the World Bank and International Monetary Fund spring meetings.

Protesters believe that the bank imposes a crushing debt on poor nations, making it impossible to spend money on social programs. The agencies argue that belt-tightening programs are needed to help stabilize their

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James Wolfensohn
World Bank president

economies.

President Clinton has favored a plan to reduce the debt of poor countries, but not eliminate it as the demonstrators demand.

Officials in Washington, a city where protests are routine, quickly took notice of the plans.

Senate Minority Leader Thomas Daschle, D-S.D., gave reporters the Senate's schedule for the week, provided "we can get into work through the demonstrators."

George Washington University, located near the World Bank and IMF headquarters, decided to close from Friday

through Tuesday morning because of expected disruptions.

The anti-bank groups want to convince labor unions, churches, brokerage houses, commercial banks, universities, municipalities and average investors not to buy the bank's bonds, which now enjoy the highest rating.

"We want to chip away at their AAA rating," said Dr. Kevin Danaher, director of public education for Global Exchange, a San Francisco human rights group. He said that while some boycott organizers want to reform the bank, others want it abolished.

Added Pratap Chatterjee, an

environmental commissioner of Berkeley, Calif.: "We want to break the bank."

The activists said they hoped bond rating firms such as Moody's Investors Service Inc. and Standard & Poor's Corp. would downgrade World Bank bonds, meaning it would cost more for the bank to borrow money.

Some of the organizers said they would target Citigroup's heavy purchase of the bonds.

World Bank President James Wolfensohn called the bond boycott "a misguided effort aimed at the wrong target."

"Investors ... are unlikely to be swayed by this campaign," Wolfensohn said Monday.

In a message to the World Bank staff, he said they should be proud of the work they do. "We are leading in many of the areas people are complaining about, such as the fight against poverty," he said.

Washington Post wins three Pulitzer Prizes

NEW YORK (AP) — The Washington Post won three Pulitzer Prizes on Monday — for public service, criticism and feature photography. In journalism's highest awards, The Wall Street Journal took two honors and The Associated Press won for investigative reporting.

The Wall Street Journal won for national reporting on U.S. defense spending and military deployment in the post-Cold War era and for commentary for Paul Gigot's columns on politics and government.

Denver's two newspapers each won a Pulitzer for their coverage of the massacre at Columbine High School. The staff of The Denver Post won for breaking news reporting and the Denver Rocky Mountain News photo staff won the spot news photography award.

The Associated Press was recognized for its series uncovering the alleged mass killings of South

Korean civilians by American troops at the start of the Korean War.

The AP's account of U.S. soldiers shooting hundreds of South Korean civilians at No Gun Ri had never been reported. It was written by AP Special Correspondent Charles J. Hanley and reporters Martha Mendoza and Sang-hun Choe and was published in September. Researcher Randy Herschaft contributed to the project.

"We are very grateful to the Pulitzer board and jurors for recognizing the significance and the professionalism of our work. We're proud of the No Gun Ri reporting," the four said in a statement. "But our celebration is tempered by the nature of what we confirmed."

"In fact, we feel the greater tributes today belong to the U.S. Army veterans, men of conscience, who helped us, and most of all to the Korean survivors who would not let their quest for truth die."

Barak, Clinton meet, discuss Syria talks

■ After a report of no progress, aides unsure if peace talks will resume.

JERUSALEM (AP) — As Prime Minister Ehud Barak headed to Washington for talks with President Clinton, his aides expressed pessimism Monday over resuming peace talks with Syria.

Clinton and Barak meet Tuesday to discuss efforts to revive Syrian talks as well as negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians that have reported no progress ahead of a May deadline for a framework peace deal.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who also has been called to Washington for talks with Clinton on April 20, urged international intervention in the talks and accused Barak of adopting an "extremist" stance in negotiations.

Before leaving Monday, Barak said he was ready to compromise.

"We are getting closer to the decisive moments, and we will know how to make the tough decisions that are necessary on the way to peace," he said.

Barak stopped briefly in Cairo, Egypt, and discussed the Syrian and Palestinian talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa said there was still hope for the resumption of talks between Israel and Syria, insisting, "The Syrian track has not closed."

However, Israeli Cabinet ministers were pessimistic about talks with Syria.

"I don't see a breakthrough happening on this trip," said Shlomo Ben-Ami, the public security minister.

Foreign Minister David Levy warned Syria would get nothing if it did not negotiate in good faith.

"If the Syrian view of peace is to dictate to us, and to demand a borderline set by force, then the Golan will remain in the hands of Israel," Levy told an international conference of mayors in Jerusalem.

Talks between Israel and Syria broke down in January and a Geneva summit between Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Assad that was hoped would revive them

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Israeli Foreign Minister

ended with no progress.

Israel has indicated it would be willing to withdraw from the Golan Heights, the plateau it captured in 1967 but would not give in to Syrian claims on part of the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee at the base of the Golan. The lake is Israel's main source of drinking water.

Concerning the Palestinians, Barak told his Cabinet on Sunday that he would hand two West Bank suburbs bordering Jerusalem to Palestinian control in the future and that he would give the Palestinian entity territorial contiguity, a key prerequisite for statehood.

On Monday, Arafat said Israeli and Palestinian negotiators meeting in Washington had made no progress.

Arafat said outside intervention was needed.

"We insist on an active American, European, Canadian and Arab role in the negotiating process," Arafat said after a meeting in Gaza City with Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien.

Arafat chose much harsher language in an interview with several Egyptian newspapers.

"Barak does not respect his word and has given in to the extremists and the settlers and considers himself the leader of the extremists," Arafat said in the interview after meeting Mubarak on Sunday.

WEATHER	
TODAY	TOMORROW
Partly cloudy high 60, low 35	Partly cloudy high 65, low 42

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World Wide Web: www.dailynebraskan.com	
The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 20, 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 \$60 for one year.	
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■ Indiana

Woman remains on jury after drawing hangman

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A juror who suggested a game of "hangman" during a death penalty case will remain on the jury while it considers whether the defendant should be executed, a judge ruled Monday.

Judge Patricia Gifford rejected a request by defense attorneys to remove the woman after she drew a hangman gallows during a break. The juror also drew a picture of an electric chair, lawyers said.

Gifford questioned the unidentified juror in her chambers and ruled that she did not do anything to warrant her removal.

Defense attorney Robert Hill learned of the incident Saturday, after the jury convicted Jeremy Gross in the 1998 killing of an Indianapolis convenience store clerk.

■ England

Government proposes letting pubs stay open 24 hours

LONDON (AP) — Hoping to cut down on binge drinking and pub brawls, the British government proposed a novel idea Monday: Allow bars to stay open 24 hours a day.

Under the government proposals, released as a discussion paper, any pub, licensed cafe or restaurant can apply to stay open for 24 hours, seven days a week. The current closing time is 11 p.m.

While some U.S. cities and towns are moving toward earlier bar closings to combat heavy drinking, in Britain, the bureaucrats, police and bartenders all believe that longer hours will reduce binge drinking and alcohol-related crime.

■ Washington

Study says airline consumer complaints have increased

WASHINGTON (AP) — The airlines spent a lot of time last year promising things would get better for their customers, but a new study suggests just the opposite occurred: Consumer complaints more than doubled.

Consumer complaints were up 130 percent from 1998 to 1999, said Dean Headley of Wichita State University. They rose from 1.08 complaints per 100,000 passengers in 1998 to 2.48 per 100,000 last year.

The annual report, based on data collected by the Department of Transportation, scores the air carriers on on-time performance, baggage handling, consumer complaints and denied boardings.

■ Bolivia

Economic problems lead to deadly confrontations

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) — Five people were killed and dozens injured in confrontations across Bolivia as thousands of people protested against rising water rates, unemployment and other economic problems.

In Achacachi, 80 miles north of the capital La Paz, farmers blocked roads and threw rocks at soldiers, who responded with rubber bullets and tear gas. Hundreds of the protesters then stormed government offices, destroying furniture and documents and setting fires.

Army units also fought with Aymaran Indian farmers who formed road blocks in Batallas, another Andean town located 45 miles north of La Paz.

Three soldiers and two farmers were killed and dozens injured in the confrontations Sunday.