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Peres finalizes Gaza-Jericho plan

Jerusalem foreign minister meets with secretary of state

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Foreign Minister Shimon Peres met secretly with Secretary of State Warren Christopher in California as an agreement on interim Palestinian self-rule seemed near, radio reports said Saturday.

Peres was reporting to Christopher about talks he held with a PLO official over a plan to grant limited Palestinian autonomy in the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, Army radio said.

Reports said that Peres, who has denied meeting last week

with the PLO official in Stockholm, Sweden, was seeking American help in cementing the deal. One report said the Peres-Christopher meeting took place Friday night at the secretary's vacation home near Santa Barbara, and that Peres was expected back in Jerusalem for the weekly Cabinet session on Sunday.

A State Department spokeswoman had no comment on the reported meeting, and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's spokesman Gad Ben-Ari would neither deny nor confirm the report.

But Police Minister Moshe Shal confirmed it indirectly, telling

the radio, "I wish him a good trip and fruitful discussion."

He said "preparations being made today are to ensure this will be a fruitful round" of Mideast peace talks, which resume Tuesday in Washington.

In Beirut, Lebanon, meanwhile, three Arab states and the Palestine Liberation Organization said on Saturday they would participate in the upcoming round of negotiations.

The announcement by the foreign ministers of Syria, Lebanon and Jordan and the PLO's top diplomat came despite differences over the Gaza-Jericho plan.

Typhoon kills two, injures four in Japan

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Two people were reported killed and four others injured as a strong typhoon battered Japan's northeastern coast on Saturday, a day after drenching Tokyo with torrential rain.

The National Police Agency said more than 7,800 homes and businesses were flooded. Dikes, bridges, roads and railways were washed away at 21 locations and 67 landslides were reported.

Typhoon Vernon grazed the coast southeast of Tokyo Friday afternoon, moved up Japan's northeastern coast and, after being downgraded to a tropical storm, finally veered into the Sea of Okhotsk Saturday afternoon, weather officials said.

The storm, with winds of up to 86 miles an hour, dumped up to 12 inches of rain, triggering floods, knocking out power to tens of thousands of people and snarling air, sea and land traffic.

The Tokyo area was hard hit on Friday, with millions of people affected by disruptions on rail and subway lines and cancellation of flights. Thousands of homes were inundated along swollen rivers and pedestrians waded in knee-deep water at low-lying intersections.

Bosnia demands U.S. presence in peace talks

The Associated Press

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — Any agreement to end Bosnia's 17-month war must come with U.N. Security Council guarantees and direct U.S. participation, the Muslim-led government said Sunday.

Delegates from the warring sides were due back in Geneva on Monday to try to resolve remaining differences over a plan to partition Bosnia into three ethnic states.

Parliament president Miro Lazovic told reporters on Sunday that the Muslim-led government will return to Geneva to try to win more land at the bargaining table. But without offering specifics, he said the government, which controls only 10 percent of the country, would not sign any deal unless the Security Council is prepared to back it up and NATO and the United States promise support.

"Without the active involvement of the United

States of America, it (the settlement) will not be respected," he said. "We are asking for their political or military support, if necessary."

Lazovic wouldn't say whether the government was seeking direct involvement of U.S. troops.

He said the government would seek more territory in eastern Bosnia, an area where Muslims held the majority before Serbs seized it.

The Muslims say the current plan rewards Serb aggression and the expulsion of Muslims by occupying forces.

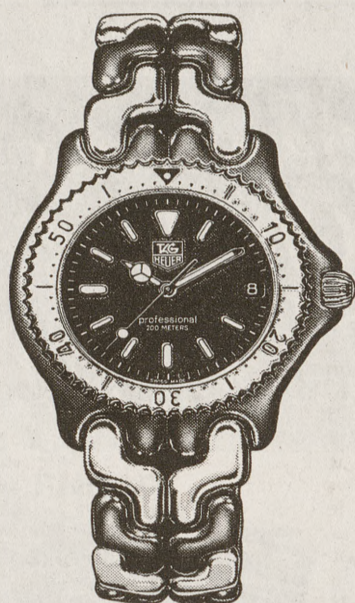
Bosnian Serbs and Croats have said they will compromise no more, and their assemblies accepted the plan on Saturday.

International mediators have set Monday as the deadline for accepting their proposal, which gives the Muslim-led government 31 percent of Bosnia. Serbs would get 52 percent, down from the 70 percent of Bosnia they now control, and Croats 17 percent. The republic would have a weak central government.

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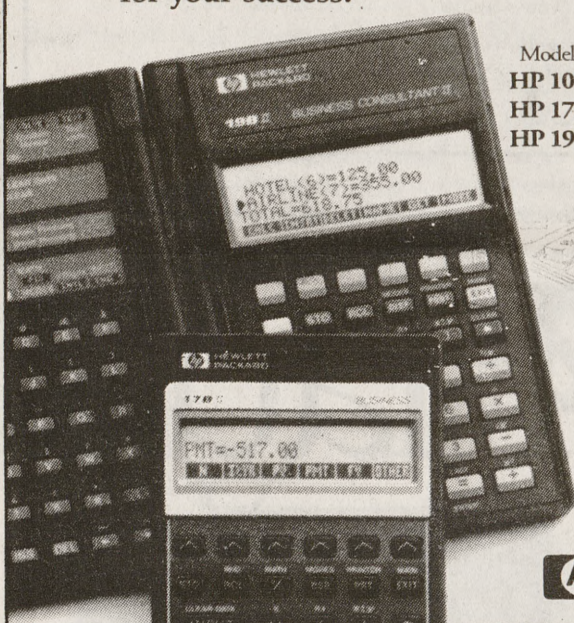
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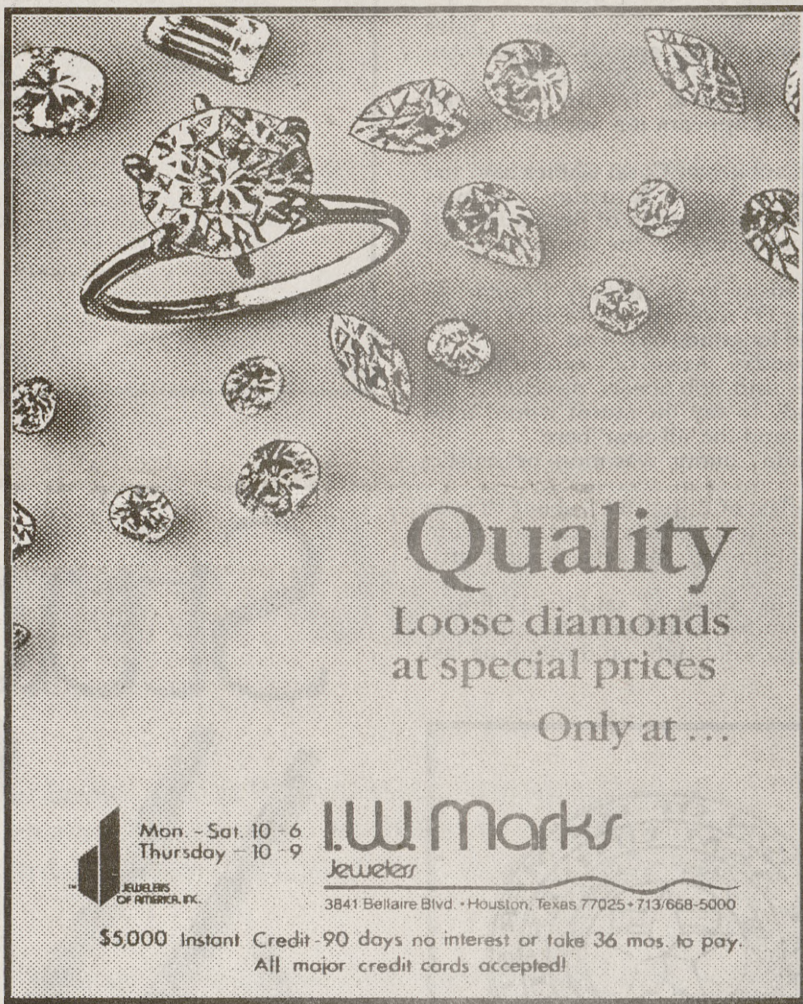
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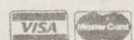
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