

Monday, August 28, 1989

Banks say Third World countries will owe \$5 billion in interest in '89

WASHINGTON (AP) - Major Third World countries are expected to fall nearly another \$5 billion behind in interest payments to U.S. and other banks this year, but, unlike individual debtors, there's no car to repossess and no home to foreclose on.

Sovereign governments do not allow foreign bankers to seize the property of their citizens, although sometimes lenders are allowed to buy up pieces of it in debt-equity swaps.

Fifteen countries singled out by the United States for special help will fall behind by another \$4.868 billion in their interest payments this year, raising their arrears to a record \$15.079 billion, according to the banks which are owed the money.

Brazil, Argentina and Mexico owe the most, according to figures on the 15 major debtors compiled by the Institute of International Finance, a group of the leading lending banks, and

made available to the Associated Press last week.

Bankers know them as "the Baker 15" after Secretary of State James A. Baker III, who made up the list in 1985 when he was secretary of the Treasury. Most are in Latin America, but the list also includes Nigeria, the Philippines and Yugoslavia.

By the end of 1990, the 15 countries will owe about \$524 billion to lending banks and governments, with nearly another \$50 billion in interest payments falling due. Most have not paid anything on the principal of their debt since the crisis began in 1982.

Christian Barrett, an economist at the institute, said falling behind on servicing the debt is a conscious policy of Third World government leaders.

"Their governments need capital, and that's the way they decide to get it," Barrett said. "But

it's a policy that discourages new lending from abroad and discourages their own citizens from bringing home the money they've sent abroad."

More money has been leaving Third World countries than has arrived in them this decade. Leaders of the debtor countries complain that the net outflow — about \$30 billion last year — is unnatural and a major cause of their declining standards of living through the 1980s.

"Poverty has increased because of debt," said Finance Minister Bernard Chidzero of Zimbabwe, whose country owes a modest \$2.5 billion.

"Malnutrition has increased as a result of more money going into debt service," Chidzero said. "There is a decline in social services, because they cannot be maintained because people want to service debt. And I think that is an untenable situation."

Ice volcanoes seen on moon of Neptune

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — Voyager 2's close-up photos of Neptune's moon Triton reveal what appear to be active ice volcanoes that erupt explosively, spewing nitrogen ice particles and gas more than a mile high, a scientist said Sunday.

"I believe they are active," or erupted at least within the past 100 years, said U.S. Geological Survey geologist Larry Soderblom, a member of the Voyager photographic imaging team at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. "There's 16 or 20 or 30 — lots."

"This is a crazy idea, but it's probably the best we have at the time" to explain the pockmarked terrain, he added.

Soderblom compared the new type of ice volcanoes with sulfur-spewing volcanoes on Jupiter's moon Io, but said the volcanoes on Triton are produced when underground liquid nitrogen rises to the surface, where "it's got to explode and will shower ice particles and gas."

Based on dark-colored, plume-shaped deposits that stretch up to 50 miles from the volcanoes, Soderblom estimated the eruptions eject debris at scores of miles per hour, perhaps faster, sending it perhaps 1 1/2 miles skyward.

If Soderblom is right, Triton would be only the third object in the solar system known to have active volcanism. Io and Earth are the others.

Close-up photos of Triton also show more details of another type of volcano identified last week: broad, flat craters called calderas.

Walesa: Poland will collapse if standards do not improve

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Solidarity leader Lech Walesa said Sunday that the nation's historic political and economic reforms will collapse unless Poles' living standards improve within six months to a year.

"Society's patience has its limits," Walesa said in a telephone interview. "It is so bad that if there is no visible effect (of reform) in half-a-year to a year then everything will collapse."

"In my opinion they (Poles) will not stand any more of it," he said.

He said another wave of strikes could result, or society could lose confidence in the Solidarity labor

movement's ability to initiate change.

Walesa said he issued the same warning during a meeting in Gdansk on Sunday with Norbert Blum, West Germany's labor and social affairs minister.

The new Solidarity-led government of Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the first non-Communist leader of a Soviet bloc nation, has been urging Western nations to increase economic investment in Poland.

Walesa met Saturday with Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole, R-

Kansas, and his wife, Labor Secretary Elizabeth Dole, and gave them a letter for President Bush seeking more U.S. economic aid than the \$119 million already promised.

Chinese soldiers to check citizens for I.D. papers

BEIJING (AP) — Security forces will begin stopping people on the streets and checking their identification papers in a new effort to round up alleged dissidents, the official *Beijing Daily* said Sunday.

Starting Friday, residents must carry identification papers whenever they leave home "to be prepared for examination," the paper said. Drivers licenses also will be examined.

"Counter-revolutionary elements have not been thoroughly cleaned up and motor vehicles often are used as tools of crimes," the paper said. "Therefore the martial law troops and police must, according to the law, strengthen inspections of motor vehicles and drivers."

The order runs counter to a recent, although gradual, lessening of the security presence on streets of the capital since the June 3-4 military crackdown on pro-democracy protesters.

Martial law imposed May 20 remains in effect, but most army checkpoints on city streets have been removed.

NRA supporters fear gun lobbyists' attitudes hurt progress of group

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some of the National Rifle Association's best friends are worried that the gun lobby may be shooting itself in the foot.

A conservative editor and activist says NRA absolutism has kept it from cooperating with some of its natural allies, among them conservative groups, police organizations and, in some cases, Republicans.

Patrick B. McGuigan, writing in *Policy Review*, a journal published by the conservative Heritage Foundation, says that has cut into NRA political clout and put the organization on the defensive.

"Many of the NRA's current difficulties are the result of self-inflicted wounds," he writes.

"During the past few years, the organization has refused to play coalition politics with its natural allies in the conservative movement including, most especially, elements of organized law enforcement.

"A go-it-alone approach and a refusal to compromise on less than critical issues is jeopardizing the NRA's effectiveness in winning political support on those issues that it considers most important."

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