

Battalion Classifieds

Guerrillas threaten ex-king if he leads postwar government

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Radical Afghan fundamentalist guerrillas warned Sunday they will assassinate their country's ousted king if he tries to head a postwar government in Kabul.

The threat comes after reports that an envoy of the United States, a major rebel backer, met with the exiled king in Rome, where he has lived since his nephew grabbed power in a 1973 coup.

"He takes a very grave risk of being shot," said Nawab Salim, spokesman for the hard-line Hezb-i-Islami party run by anti-American Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. "The mujahedeens (holy warriors) will not let Zahir Shah come to Afghanistan."

Also Sunday, Pakistan's army chief of staff told reporters Moscow appears ready to abandon its ally, Afghan President Najib, and, in a departure from previous Pakistan stances, recommended the resistance negotiate with remaining leaders of the Afghan Communist Party.

After more than six months of trying to forge unity within the fractious guerrilla coalition, Washington reportedly is considering alternatives, including the former monarch.

Even Afghanistan's ruling Marxists and their Soviet backers have accepted the king as a compromise solution to head a transitional government.

But the rebels, who have received millions of U.S. dollars in military and humanitarian aid during the decade-long war with successive communist governments, are bitterly divided over a possible role for the 74-year-old king.

Abdul Rahim, a spokesman for the guerrillas' government-in-exile, said a royal return is tantamount to rebel defeat. "It would mean the mujahedeens and the people of Afghanistan are defeated," Rahim said.

Royalists among the rebels, notably Syed Gailani's National Islamic Front of Afghanistan, said the king is the only Afghan able to ward off warring factions.

Asim Nasser-Zia, a spokesman for Gailani's group, predicted Zahir Shah will fly to Kabul from Rome in January or February and retire, convening a traditional Afghan council to oversee general elections.

This could happen only after Najib was out of Kabul, he said.

Pakistan's army chief of staff, Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg, meanwhile, said the Kremlin appears willing to abandon Najib.

In a rare briefing for reporters, Beg said Armand Hammer, U.S. magnate and confidante of Moscow's powerbrokers, "indicated the Soviets may drop Najib."

He recommended the Afghan resistance negotiate with remnants of the Afghan government after a Soviet sweep of the party.

U.S. faces inundation of Soviet Jew immigrants in spirit of glasnost

WASHINGTON (AP) — Now that the doors of the Soviet Union have opened after 20 years of American knocking, the United States is faced with the dilemma of handling an unprecedented surge of Soviet emigres.

Critics charge the administration's response, as presented this week on Capitol Hill after seven months of deliberations, is inadequate, unimaginative and risks missing a historic opportunity.

Some say the U.S. government could learn a thing or two from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's open door policy.

The administration argues it is doing its best in the face of shrinking budgets and the problem of dealing with 14 million refugees worldwide, many of whom would like to move to the United States.

Of the 125,000 refugee slots allocated for fiscal 1990 — that starts Oct. 1 — 50,000 will be reserved for Soviet applicants, most of whom are Jews.

The administration predicts as many as 150,000 Soviet Jews will apply for refugee status in fiscal 1990. Jewish groups say as many as 500,000 Jews may seek to come here in the coming years if the doors remain open, especially in light of rising anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

An internal State Department report used by Immigration and Naturalization officers in Moscow concluded that glasnost, with its liberalized rights to free speech and press, has spawned discrimination against Jews throughout the Soviet Union.

Religious groups and many on Capitol Hill also argue that Gorbachev's reforms and his political future are by no means assured success, and their failure could strand thousands of persecuted people wishing to leave.

"Soviet history has painfully demonstrated that lulls in government repression are usually followed by harsh oppression," said a letter to Congress from World Relief, which represents Evangelical Christians. The Evangelicals constitute a small percentage of those seeking to come here.

Members of Congress say if tight budgets are the problem keeping more Soviets from coming to the United States, "creative financing" should be considered.

Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, suggested the government help additional refugees by lending them money for their relocation, which would be paid back once they're settled.

"When the faucets start opening... the United States finds itself totally incapable of dealing with the very policy it is demanding," Rep. Howard Berman, D-Calif. said.

The administration agreed. "The United States is to some degree a victim of its own success," Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said.

But he argued that although the demand for liberalized Soviet emigration was a cornerstone of U.S. policy for nearly 20 years, "now was it said that the U.S. has an obligation to take them all in."

He urged other countries, including Western European states, Australia and Israel, to share the burden.

Town hopes to pull Hatfield, McCoys tourism

MATEWAN, W.Va. (AP) — The Hatfields and McCoys don't fight anymore and many of them would just as soon forget their ancestors' feud. But some in the community are trying to find a way to commemorate the bloodshed.

"There are a lot of grandsons of Devil Anse (Hatfield) and his brothers around here," Paul McAllister, director of the new Matewan Development Center, said. "Most of them are in their 60s and they're a little bit bitter about the reputations they had to grow up with and live with."

The Matewan Development Center, located in the only three-story building in the town of 800, features a photo display on the massacre and other incidents in the town's history. It draws a few people each week.

McAllister is hoping the National Park Service will help turn Matewan into a tourist attraction. He envisions a museum, for instance, within 10 years.

It's been 100 years this month since a jury sentenced eight Hatfield clan members to life in prison and ordered a hanging for the slaying of five McCoys, ending the bloodshed in which 10 to 20 people died.

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