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Krenz says Berlin Wall will stand

BERLIN (AP) — New leader Egon Krenz said Wednesday he will let East Germans travel abroad more freely but made clear the Berlin Wall, a scar on the city for nearly three decades, will not come down.

In further signs the communist nation is moving toward at least limited reform, the official news agency ADN carried a series of reports that included a news conference by police to address accusations of brutality and a dispatch quoting a prominent dissident.

Tens of thousands of young, skilled workers have fled to West Germany since September and throngs of protesters fill the streets at home to demand democratic reforms in this rigid society.

Late Wednesday, about 200 people carrying burning candles marched silently through downtown East Berlin. Police first stopped the protesters but let them proceed after a brief discussion. No slogans were shouted.

The marchers joined about 2,000 people at a vigil at a church at Alexanderplatz and later dispersed peacefully.

ADN said Wednesday night that about 20,000 people joined in what it called a "march of hope" in the center of Neubrandenburg, a city north of Berlin.

The marchers called for a dialogue with authorities and the city's mayor, Heinz Hahn, promised talks with citizens, ADN said.

With the comment that "no one will be left out of the dialogue," Krenz indicated Wednesday the new regime's willingness to discuss reforms may extend to members of pro-democracy groups. He and the party previously rejected talks with the opposition.

Krenz, who last week replaced Erich Honecker as Communist Party chief, also said Wednesday he was interested in meeting with Chancellor Helmut Kohl of West Germany, but "one has to understand that I have to first attend to domestic political problems."

He said he planned to discuss a summit date by telephone with Kohl, who said Tuesday he was ready for a meeting.

Krenz spoke after meeting with Wolfgang Mischnick, parliamentary leader of the Free Democrats, junior partner in Kohl's coalition.

Mischnick was the first senior West German politician to see Krenz since the ouster of Honecker, 77, a hard-liner who ran the country for 18 years and was Krenz's mentor.

Krenz told reporters who accompanied Mischnick that East Germans would be given greater freedom of travel by year's end.

Under a more liberal law proposed by the Communist Party's ruling Politburo, passports and exit visas would be available for travel to any other country. It also would drop current requirements that family members remain behind

as insurance the travelers would return home.

Officials in East Berlin say financial obstacles still must be resolved. East German marks are not convertible outside the country and officials are unlikely to release much of their hard-currency reserves for Western travel.

Strict curbs on foreign travel have been a prime source of complaint by East Germans, joining with limits on speech and political activity to propel the mass exodus.

A Western reporter asked whether eastern travel to the West would make the Berlin Wall obsolete. Krenz replied: "The wall has a very different meaning than what is implied in your question."

His statement was a clear reference to the government's long-standing position that the wall has been a stabilizing influence in Europe and a necessary to protect East Germany from being "plundered by capitalists."

At the police news conference Wednesday, East Berlin chief Lt. Gen. Friedhelm Rausch acknowledged officers had used "excess and transgressions" against demonstrators that "could have been avoided," ADN reported.

Rausch said 150 people had complained of police brutality. "Police have apologized to those affected and have promised compensation," ADN quoted Rausch as saying.

Israel: PLO involved in terrorist attacks

JERUSALEM (AP) — An official report made available Wednesday said Yasser Arafat's guerrilla faction had ordered 12 bombings and attacks on Israeli civilians since the PLO chairman promised in December to abandon terrorism.

Groups affiliated with the Palestine Liberation Organization carried out 18 infiltrations or rocket attacks across Israel's borders in the same period, the report said.

Yigal Carmon, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's anti-terror adviser, prepared the report and provided a copy to the Associated Press.

It comes at a time when Israel and the United States are at odds over PLO involvement in peace efforts and coincides with a campaign against the U.S. dialogue with the PLO begun 10 months ago, soon after Arafat renounced terrorism.

In his report, Carmon said the attacks "are a violation of the commitment Arafat gave to the United States and shows he can't be trusted and that you can't do business with him."

Israel defines the PLO as a terrorist organization and refuses to deal with it.

Thomas Pickering, then the U.S. ambassador, gave Israel a pledge a day after the U.S.-PLO talks began Dec. 15 in Tunis that "no American administration can sustain the dialogue if terrorism continues by the PLO or any of its factions," the report said.

Washington told Israel it expected the PLO to condemn any act of ter-

ror and discipline the guerrillas responsible, Carmon's report said, and added:

"Not only has the PLO failed to fulfill these requirements, but Arafat's own Fatah organization in particular has itself engaged in terrorist acts . . . and it has, furthermore, encouraged and lauded these attacks even in the midst of these talks."

Anat Kurz, head of a terrorism research group at the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, expressed a contrasting opinion.

She said Arafat had restrained

himself in order to preserve his diplomatic initiative, but the PLO had difficulty controlling organizations that sprang up during the 22-month-old revolt in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Generally speaking, terrorism in Israel did not decline since the start of the intifadeh (uprising), although most of what we call terror activities have been conducted by locally affiliated elements and unorganized groups," Kurz said.

Sources said one reason U.S. officials remain unconvinced by Israeli

claims of Fatah involvement is that they are based on interrogations. The credibility of such information was diminished after a 1987 investigation revealed the use of torture by the Shin Bet security service.

Carmon said PLO factions under Arafat's umbrella were responsible for nine attacks across the border in the past 10 months, many aimed at settlements near Lebanon, in which no civilian casualties were reported. He said the other raids were by pro-Syrian groups opposed to Arafat.

Mexico, U.S. discuss trade policies

McALLEN (AP) — U.S. Agriculture Secretary Clayton Yeutter, meeting his Mexican counterpart for the second time, Wednesday asked Jorge de la Vega to speed up the dismantling of Mexico's protectionist policies.

Yeutter lauded Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's program that has done away with many trade barriers, but added there are some instances in which the United States wants to see Mexico hasten its compliance with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT.

"We've been encouraging the government of Mexico to phase out import licensing for a lot of products coming into Mexico, industrial as well as agricultural," Yeutter said. "Mexico has an obligation to do that under the GATT rules."

Specifically, Yeutter said he wants Mexico to ease import restrictions on oil seeds, soybean products, apples, peaches and nectarines.

De la Vega emphasized that Mexico has opened its

trade considerably in the last year under Salinas, but it can only move so fast.

"Today I'm going to have the opportunity to talk with Mr. Yeutter in terms of the bilateral arrangements we will need in order to promote better understanding between both countries in terms of agriculture and livestock," de la Vega said.

De la Vega said Mexico would consider approving additional cattle inspection stations. Texas cattle producers have complained of delays and expense exporting cattle to Mexico because it only allows cattle inspected at the five Texas Department of Agriculture stations.

Yeutter, de la Vega and U.S. Rep. Kika de la Garza were in McAllen for the 49th Annual State Meeting of District Directors of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

"Some day we're going to see huge advances in economic activity between these two countries," said Yeutter, who negotiated the free trade agreement between the United States and Canada.



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