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U.N. forces fire on Somalia; more than 100 die Mideast

The Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia — American Cobra Helicopters fired on Somali women and children Thursday in what the United Nations claimed was a "last-resort" effort to keep them from killing peacekeepers.

Nearby residents said the street was littered with the bodies of as many as 100 Somalis.

A U.N. spokesman said a Pakistani soldier was killed and three Americans and two Pakistanis were injured.

The peacekeepers had come under fire from heavy weapons by Somali militiamen and were trying to withdraw when women and children joined in the attack with grenades and small arms, said Maj. David Stockwell.

Stockwell, the chief U.N. military spokesman, initially said a mob of women and children was swarming over the U.N. vehicles when the helicopters fired on them with 20mm cannons.

Later, he said the women and children had joined militiamen in attacking the soldiers from behind walls lining the route of their withdrawal and were clambering over roadblocks in their way.

"The women and children were combatants," Stockwell said.

"When the helicopters came in they shot at the gunmen behind the walls, and the women

and children who were actively engaged as combatants as well," Stockwell said. "Whoever was behind the walls was shot at."

"There were some people swarming on the roadblocks, but not directly on the vehicles ... and the helicopters shot down the middle of the road to persuade people to leave," Stockwell said.

The incident was sure to fire the debate in the U.S. Congress over American involvement in Somalia and to add fuel to the arguments of some U.N. members that the United Nations has lost sight of its humanitarian mission in the country.

Stockwell blamed the attack on the forces of fugitive warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid, wanted by the United Nations for a series of assaults that have killed 48 peacekeepers and wounded more than 175 since May.

Stockwell said he had no information on the number of Somalis killed or wounded, but told reporters, "What I am acknowledging is that if you go out there tomorrow, you may find some women and children casualties."

The report of scores of Somalis killed could not be independently confirmed. Stockwell acknowledged that U.N. troops and tanks, armored personnel carriers and helicopters used "heavy casualty-producing weapons" in defending themselves.

Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Thursday that U.S. troops should stay in Somalia "for the foreseeable fu-

ture" to ensure the success of the U.N. operation there and to preserve America's credibility.

The U.N. road-clearing crew consisted of 100 Pakistani soldiers, three tanks, four armored personnel carriers and an American bulldozer.

One of the tanks was hit by what Stockwell said was a 106mm recoilless rifle and set ablaze.

"They got hit pretty hard," Stockwell said. Stockwell said a platoon of 30-40 soldiers from the U.S. Quick Reaction Force was called in, then swiftly withdrawn without engaging the militiamen when it became apparent it could not be adequately reinforced.

Reporters who ventured near the fighting said they saw an American patrol exchanging machine-gun, grenade and automatic rifle fire with Somalis.

Stockwell said the remaining two Pakistani tanks, the four armored personnel carriers and the bulldozer were withdrawing from the initial ambush when they were surrounded by the mob.

The initial attack, he said, was by "a sizable militia force."

It was the first time Somali militiamen have engaged heavily armored vehicles.

After the helicopters fired into the mob, Stockwell said, the U.N. vehicles and troops withdrew into a nearby stadium that houses a Pakistani brigade.

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the agreement "a historical breakthrough which was the result of the foresight, vision and courage of chairman Arafat and the leadership of Israel."

In Jerusalem, Rabin's 10-member inner Cabinet voted unanimously to approve the mutual recognition agreement.

Three hours after Arafat convened the PLO's ruling Executive Committee to approve the recognition and self-rule accords, the committee was still heatedly debating the pacts. Holst was still in Tunis, awaiting the decision.

PLO officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the PLO's foreign minister, Farouk Kaddoumi, boycotted the meeting in protest. Arafat still was believed to have the necessary majority of eight or nine of the 12 committee members still in attendance.

Holst was then to take the text to Israel for signature, said Yasser Abed-Rabbo, one of the Palestinian officials closest to Arafat.

Clinton, in Cleveland, hailed the accord as a "huge development" toward Middle East peace and said "I am very, very hopeful about the future." He cautioned that "there are a lot of things that still have to happen" to continue the peace process.

NAFTA

Continued from Page 1

15 years there will be a move towards free trade with the rest of Latin America.

"Many Latin American companies are familiar with American products, and that gives us the advantage over Japan and Germany," he said.

"If the rest of Latin America follows in Mexico's footsteps, on the whole, the U.S. will gain more than the rest of Latin America gains."

Other criticisms of NAFTA come from environmental groups who fear that the lack of environmental standards in Mexico could be detrimental.

"A whole lot of the controversy boils down to the environmental standards in Mexico," said Charles Kennicutt, chief chemist at A&M's Geochemical and Environmental Research Group.

"Their regulations are inferior to those of U.S. companies, and they will have to conform to that."

If the Mexican government doesn't begin to enforce environmental standards, Kennicutt said, there will be a free incentive to export polluting technology.

"U.S. companies will be able to save large costs by moving to Mexico where companies are not regulated by the government," he said.

"These polluting technologies move into Mexico and dump their waste into rivers that drain into the U.S., and then the pollution has to be dealt with on the American side."

But, Kennicutt said, the environment by itself is not enough to stop NAFTA, even though it might hurt the issue.

Aside from the controversies behind NAFTA, Gaspar said, U.S. exports to Mexico are increasing.

Gaspar cited that in 1987, there were \$8 billion in exports to Mexico and last year there were more than \$40 billion in exports.

If free trade increases further, he said, the U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that each billion dollars increased by export generates 20,000 jobs in the United States.

"NAFTA will have a positive effect overall for both countries," he said.

"It will increase the number of jobs because of an increase in exports and economic growth."

"By increasing exports both countries will be gaspar said.

"There will be an increase in jobs and an increase in income levels. The more Mexicans employed, the more their income increases and the more purchases they will make of U.S. products, and that means more American jobs."

Another benefit of free trade with Mexico is that as the level of Mexican jobs increases, incentives for illegal immigration decreases, Gaspar said.

"This means there is less pressure on the border and social programs," he said.

Gely said the positives of NAFTA outweigh the negatives in the long run.

"The main concern is how to get to that point," he said.

"Who will pay the highest price is where the debate is now."

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Senate votes to tighten Clinton's military policy on homosexuals

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate branded homosexuality an "unacceptable risk" to military morale and voted Thursday to tighten President Clinton's policy toward gays in the military.

In the first floor vote on the issue since Clinton unveiled his "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue" policy in July, the Senate rejected a measure that would have left the matter to the president's discretion.

The vote was 63-33, with members of the Democratic leadership, including Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell of Maine and Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia voting against the amendment.

Part of the fiscal 1994 defense budget, the gays in the military measure overshadowed debate on billion-dollar weapons systems.

The House and Senate worked Thursday on the overall spending plan for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

The House Armed Services Committee has already adopted the same legislative policy as the Senate, and the full House was expected to pass it next week.

Clinton could veto the legislation to eliminate the congressional policy but he would also lose the entire defense budget. Clinton has signaled to Congress that he finds this new policy acceptable.

The legislative policy states that Congress has the constitutional right to make rules for the military, that the armed forces are unique and "persons who demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline" in the military.

Clinton's compromise policy ended the practice of questioning recruits and service members about their sexual orientation, but allowed the military to continue to discharge homosexuals.

The president's plan centers on the premise that orientation is not a bar to military service and calls for an end to witchhunts to ferret out gays.

It also urges even-handed enforcement of the Uniform Code of Military Justice for heterosexuals and homosexuals, a provision sought by gay rights groups.

The legislation makes no mention of orientation, witchhunts or the code, and says a future defense secretary could reinstate the policy of asking recruits their sexual orientation.

Reaction

Continued from Page 1

his family for generations.

He said the land would be valued at \$1 million today and thinks the Israelis should reimburse the Palestinians for all the lands that they've lost.

"I insist that our leaders understand the demands of the free Palestinians and prevent their loss," he said.

"I don't approve any compromise without full right for stolen land."

Reuben Ehrlich, religious vice president of Hillel, said he is very pleased with the outcome of the agreement yet he is still worried about the future.

"This could be peace for the first time in thousands of years," he said.

But, Ehrlich said he is skeptical of the agreement.

He said he is curious to see if the agreement written on paper can happen in real life.

"I have never seen peace in the Middle East in my life, so it's hard for me to envision it," he said.

"We don't want to celebrate just yet because peace hasn't actually happened yet. All we can do

is just sit back and watch what happens and pray for the best."

Sharon Sernik, a senior veterinary medicine major and president of Aggie Friends of Israel, said she is "cautiously optimistic" about the agreement.

Sernik, whose family lives in Israel, said it is hard for Israel to trust the PLO because they are an organization built for the destruction of Israel.

"I'm worried that even if (Yasser) Arafat is reasonable he may not have control of other factions such as Hamas and other Palestinian fundamentalist groups that will be satisfied only with the destruction of Israel," she said.

Sernik said she is confident in Israel's decision and that they have taken a very bold step.

"I, like all Israelis and Jews, am dreaming of peace and we hope and pray that everything turns out for the best," she said.

Tarlow said the agreement could bring peace that has been missing from the Middle East for centuries.

"Hopefully now they will put their energies into turning the Middle East into the Garden of Eden instead of the killing fields they've become," he said.

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- Rabbi Peter Tarlow

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