

Bosnian Muslims, Croats near federation accord

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Bosnian Muslims and Croats worked on the final details Tuesday of a U.S.-brokered agreement, aiming to establish a federation that could move Bosnia a significant step closer to peace.

Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic said that he and Muslim officials "are just now in the final stages of negotiations."

The agreement would bring together two of the three parties in a bloody two-

year ethnic conflict that has cost the lives of more than 200,000 people.

Missing from the equation are the Bosnian Serbs who have gained military control of 70 percent of the former Yugoslav republic.

However, in another promising step, Serb leader Radovan Karadzic announced in Moscow an agreement to open the airfield at Tuzla in Bosnia and said the first relief plane to the city would be Russian. The Serbs are under threat of NATO air strikes if they refuse to allow opening of the airport by next Monday.

At the White House, Clinton bade farewell to British Prime Minister John Major, and the two leaders told a brief news conference that they planned to work together "for a resolution of the crisis" in Bosnia.

Major said the United States and Britain would send a "joint civil planning mission" to Sarajevo, presumably to help put the city back together now that "the cease-fire there is holding."

At the start of a meeting with Vice President Al Gore, Granic commented on the Muslim-Croat negotiations and said a

preliminary agreement could be signed by the end of the day.

Granic and Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic, a Muslim, have been negotiating in Washington over the past three days.

Throughout the discussions in the U.S. capital, Secretary of State Warren Christopher and other administration officials steered clear of sounding overly optimistic.

Christopher said he did not want "to get into the optimism-pessimism business."

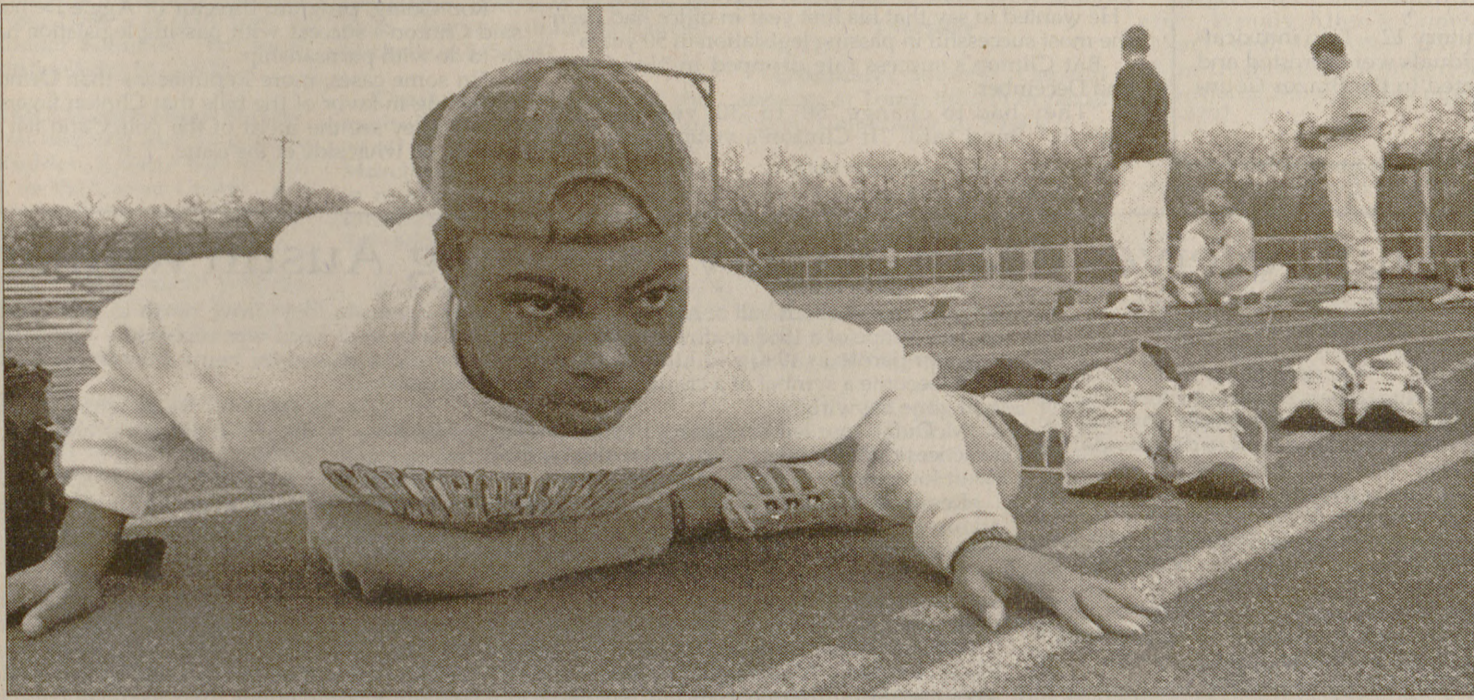
Even as Granic was predicting an agreement, a senior administration offi-

cial cautioned that issues remained to be resolved.

Granic did not discuss the details of the possible accord other than to say it would lead to a federation between the two parties who would then have close ties with Croatia.

Late last week, the Clinton administration unveiled a proposal for uniting Bosnian Muslims and Croats into an entity. The next step would be an attempt to link that federation with a Serbian entity and form a country comprising two republics.

Preparing for hurdles



Tim Moog/THE BATTALION

Anjanette Kirkland, a sophomore general studies major from Alexandria, La., stretches out before doing 55-meter hurdles at

Anderson Track and Field Complex. She is provisionally qualified for the NCAA Indoor Championships March 11 and 12.

No-smoking policy hits B-CS restaurants

Move follows state, national actions

By Stephanie Dube

THE BATTALION

Many restaurants in the Bryan-College Station area are implementing a no-smoking policy in reaction to a state and national movement against the once common practice.

Texas Attorney General Dan Morales has sued McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Taco Bell, Long John Silver's Seafood Shoppes and Burger King claiming the chains do not properly warn customers and employees about the dangers of secondhand smoke.

McDonald's recently announced that its corporate-owned restaurants would become smoke-free and franchise restaurants would be encouraged to do so also.

Many restaurants and businesses in Bryan-College Station are following suit.

Don Baker, owner of the local Burger King, said he and his wife decided to make their restaurant smoke-free long before secondhand smoke became a political issue.

"We have a smoke-free restaurant because of the type of clientele we service," he said. "The type of people in the College Station area pretty much favor a non-smoking environment."

But Baker said the decision cost them a few smoking customers.

"It would make it a lot better for small businesses if we had a city ordinance for all to follow rather than having to make a hard decision on where to stand on an issue," Baker said.

If all businesses had to follow an ordinance, then no business would stand out, Baker said.

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UPD 'standard procedure' unprofessional, student says

By Eloise Flint

THE BATTALION

Philip Adell just wanted to take a walk around the Texas A&M campus on the morning of Feb. 13.

He walked to Research Park on A&M's west campus at about 5 a.m. and was on his way back to his dorm room in Dunn Hall when he was stopped by officers with University Police Department.

Adell, a freshman electrical engineering major, said an officer stopped him on University Drive and asked him to present some form of identification, which he did not have.

Adell said another officer arrived on the scene and questioned him about where he had been that night, and then the officer inspected his hands.

"He checked out my hands like he was looking for blood," Adell said.

Adell said he did not feel comfortable with the way UPD handled the situation.

"When I asked her what was going on I was answered with a very vague answer to the effect that something had just happened and someone was seen going in the direction I was coming from," Adell said.

Officials with UPD would not comment specifically on Adell's case, but Lt. Bert V. Kretschmar said it sounded like standard procedure.

"When a crime occurs in an area, they have to stop people in the general vicinity that match the description for questioning," he said. "That's standard procedure. Officers must have reasonable suspicion or probable cause to question someone."

But Kretschmar said officers are taught not to come out and specifically accuse somebody of lying.

"Generally speaking, students are supposed to carry their A&M I.D. with them on campus, but if not, then the police can call in for information," Kretschmar said. "It would help a lot if students would carry their I.D. or a driver's license."

Adell said the officers then tried to get him in their car.

"They asked if I would mind being driven back to campus, and I said I would rather walk," Adell said. "Then they asked if I would

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Observers evaluate Clinton's progress

By Nicole Cloutier

SPECIAL TO THE BATTALION

Observers of the modern presidency evaluated President Clinton's first year in office Tuesday in a round table discussion and said his election may have been more of a vote against George Bush and a desire for change rather than a vote to get Clinton in the White House.

Tony Coelho, former U.S. representative and majority whip, said the American people are seeking a change.

"There is a transition taking place," Coelho said. "People are looking for something to change, something to happen, and it all boils down to politics are local."

Coelho said the media has been unduly critical of Clinton during his first year in office, and this is surprising because Clinton has stuck to most of his campaign promises.

Dr. George Edwards, director of the Center for Presidential Studies and professor of political science at Texas A&M, agreed Clinton has endured an unusually unpopular beginning of his presidency.

Clinton should be credited with placing new issues on the agenda, Edwards said.

Thomas DeFrank, senior White House correspondent for Newsweek, said the congressional staff is weak and has been in a trial and error period that has hindered their progress.

"Their performance has been erratic," DeFrank said. "They do good on some things and bomb others, but it's early and they're learning."

DeFrank said the main thing hindering the new administration is having a president that is better than the staff.

"They don't know what they don't know," Coelho said.

Despite Coelho's praise of

"People are looking for something to change, something to happen, and it all boils down to politics are local."

— Tony Coelho, former U.S. representative and majority whip



Amy Browning/THE BATTALION

Tony Coelho, former majority whip in the U.S. House of Representatives, speaks about President Clinton's progress in the White House at the Clinton Forum Tuesday afternoon in Rudder Theater.

Clinton, he believes the polls will determine the president's future with the U.S. Congress.

"It's the same game, but now Congress is being pushed from a different side," he said.

Coelho said Clinton has focused more on domestic issues, and most of the panelists agreed CNN is responsible for motivat-

ing Clinton and the public to feel morally responsible for situations like the conflict in Bosnia.

"If it weren't for CNN, the American people wouldn't be concerned for the people in Bosnia at all," Coelho said.

"The public responds to CNN, and Clinton responds to the public."

Israel releases Palestinians in hopes of talks

The Associated Press

HEBRON, Occupied West Bank — Israel released more than 500 Palestinian prisoners Tuesday to coax the PLO back to peace talks suspended after the Hebron mosque massacre.

Officials said another 500 prisoners will be freed by the weekend.

"I think the Israelis are releasing us now to make the Palestinians happy," freed prisoner Wael Salameh, 38, said when he arrived in Hebron. "This is not a real step for peace."

Samir Ghosheh, a member of the PLO's ruling Executive Committee, dismissed the release as "irrelevant to the real issue of providing protection for our people."

He called it "cosmetic surgery" to dampen the violence that has swept the occupied territories and parts of Israel since Friday's massacre.

The PLO won't resume peace talks with Israel unless "certain guarantees are provided" to protect Palestinians living under occupation, he said.

Israeli sources were optimistic the suspended talks will resume following Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's offer of a package of concessions that go partway toward meeting PLO demands.

Western and Arab diplomats in Tunis, Tunisia, the PLO's headquarters, said Israel's concessions include strengthening a Palestinian police force being deployed under the Sept. 13 PLO-Israeli peace accord in what will be self-rule areas in Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho.

Israel also would disarm settlers in those areas.

Rabin also offered to allow international observers into the territories for the first time since Israel captured them in the 1967 Mideast War.

The PLO Executive Committee, the organization's ruling body, rejected the package early Tuesday in Tunis, saying it did not go far enough, said PLO Executive Committee member Ali Ishak.

The worst stumbling block, said Ishak, was the offer of observers. The PLO wants an armed multinational protection force in the occupied lands.

Israeli officials indicated the observers would be empowered only to supervise Israel's military withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho and oversee the handover of authority to Palestinians.

"They won't have a military presence or have the power to interfere," Gad Yaacobi, Israel's U.N. ambassador, told Israel radio.

Rabin has ruled out putting the future of Jewish settlements on the agenda now. Some Cabinet ministers appear more flexible and proposed closing settlements in Hebron and other heavily populated Arab areas.

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