

Caribbean nations pledge support in Haiti

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Clinton administration's plan to force Haiti's military junta to quit the country will get a boost Tuesday when Caribbean foreign and defense ministers assemble in Jamaica with pledges to join a U.S.-led military coalition.

Several countries are expected to announce they will contribute troops to the coalition that would move into Haiti to stabilize the country — whether or not Lt. Gen. Raoul Cedras and his cohorts depart under pressure of U.S. economic sanctions and international condemnation.

Barbados, Jamaica and Belize have already agreed to contribute troops to the coalition, most of which will come from the United States. But in a strong sign of unity, about a

half-dozen other countries are expected to step forward during the high-profile Jamaica meeting.

"The planning is proceeding and it is incorrect to say that the timetable has been set back because of Cuba," said a senior U.S. official, commenting on published reports that the tide of Cuban refugees has put on the back burner plans to restore elected Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The U.S. delegation to Kingston, Jamaica, will be headed by Strobe Talbott, the deputy secretary of state, and John M. Deutch, the deputy defense secretary.

Leon Fuerth, an official of the National Security Council who reports to Vice President Al Gore, will be there as well. Sunday's assassination in

Port-au-Prince of the Rev. Jean-Marie Vincent, 49, who saved Aristide's life seven years ago, underscored the violence that increased after a bloody army coup ousted Aristide in September 1991.

Antoine Joseph, former president of Haiti's lower house of parliament, compared Vincent's killing to the assassination of another Roman Catholic priest by thugs in the last months of the brutal Duvalier dictatorship in 1985.

"The first killing was an ill omen for the Duvalier dictatorship. This one is an ill omen for the de facto regime" that has run Haiti since Aristide's ouster, Joseph said.

State Department spokesman Michael McCurry condemned the assassination and said in a public message to

"those who continue these inhuman and senseless assassinations: Your crimes only increase our outrage and strengthen our resolve to end Haiti of your abuses."

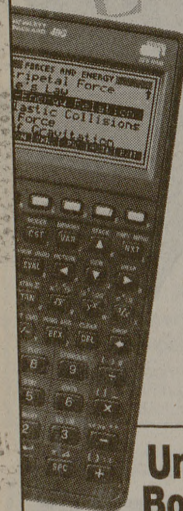
The planned coalition force of thousands of troops, supported by police, civilian technicians and administrators would have the task of stabilizing Haiti — by forcibly removing Cedras and other military leaders if they do not quit the country first. If the junta leaves, the coalition's task is to restore order.

It would be followed by peacekeeping force being assembled by the United Nations.

Some 40 countries are expected to contribute to this second-phase operation. Half have already signed on.

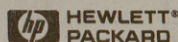
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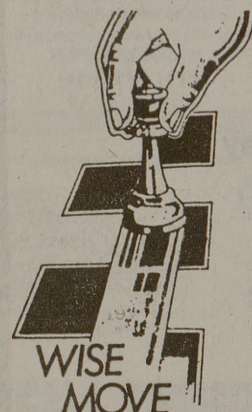
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Philippine coal mine blast leaves 79 dead, 20 missing

Second blast to occur in past six months

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — An explosion in the Philippines' largest underground coal mine left at least 79 workers dead and 20 missing, officials said Tuesday.

The Monday night blast, in a tunnel about 500 miles south of Manila, was the second at the mine in the past six months. An explosion there in March killed 11.

There were conflicting reports about what caused the blast. One official said miners hit a pocket of methane gas that exploded, but a local mayor said the accident was triggered by a dynamite blast.

The explosion was at the state-run Philippine National



Oil Co. mine, which is near Malangas in a remote area with poor communications. The mine produces about 200,000 tons of coal annually.

In a telephone interview from the provincial capital of Pagadian, Gov. Isidoro Real Jr. said that 79 bodies had been counted by Tuesday evening.

Real said an estimated 20 to 30 more workers were still missing, and many relatives crowded near the site waiting for word.

At least nine workers were flown to central Cebu City to be treated for burns.

Nazario Vasquez, president of the PNO Energy Corp., which operates the mine, said about 170 miners were working about 150 yards under ground at the time of the accident.

Mayor Cecilio Tura said rescuers couldn't enter the tunnels because the mine has already collapsed.

High ozone levels cause breathing problems for Texans this summer

DALLAS (AP) — More than two weeks have passed since Texas has seen an ozone alert, and Texans in many part of the state are breathing easier.

But over the past few months, accumulations of high levels of the colorless, slightly acrid gas that vexes Texas every summer have been blamed for a number of ailments, mostly respiratory, among North Texans.

Scientists have only recently begun studying the effect of ozone on people's health, so not much is known. However, many believe the gas can cause symptoms ranging from drowsiness, headaches and crankiness to aggravated asthma and allergic reactions.

"People have less tolerance to exercising," said Dr. Lazarus Loeb, a Fort Worth asthma specialist and a clinical assistant professor at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas.

"If they stay out in it during the day, they develop chest discomfort during the day. ... Some of them have a very horrible cough," he said.

"It's interesting. In the past week or past two weeks we've seen more asthma. Yesterday, we had two asthmatics who needed more than the usual treatment," said Dr. Steve Apaliski, an Arlington allergy specialist.

The gas comes from a reaction of engine emissions to hot summer temperatures and accumulates in the absence of summer breezes.

This summer has brought an increase in the number of daily alerts issued for the state's urban areas, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission said Tuesday.

"It has been really bad this year," said Sally Campbell, vice chairman of the North Texas Clean Air Coalition.

"I'd say there's been at least a 30 to 40 percent increase in the number of patients in this particular group," Loeb said.

The Dallas-Fort Worth area has endured 26 daily ozone alerts since May 31, six more than state officials issued for the area during all of 1993, said Ron Wells, a meteorologist for the state natural resource board.

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