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U.N. Millennium Summit gathers Leaders, protesters to bring various agendas

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Tuesday urged the kings, generals and presidents descending on New York for the U.N. Millennium Summit to use the unprecedented meeting to forge peace and end poverty in the 21st century.

But some heads of state are expected to use the three days of speeches, discussions and meetings beginning Wednesday to push their own agendas — including those that are critical of the United States.

In a taste of what may come, North Korea denounced the United States as a "rogue state" Tuesday, claiming the government was responsible for allegedly ordering the strip search of members of the delegation as they switched planes in Germany. The incident prompted Pyongyang to call off the summit trip by its No. 2 leader, who had been scheduled to meet South Korean President Kim Dae-jung.

North Korea's U.N. Ambassador Li Hyong Chol warned that the humiliating security check could prove "quite expensive" for U.S.-North Korean relations, even though the State Department quickly said it deeply regretted the incident.

Washington is also expected to come under fire from Cuban President Fidel Castro, who came to New York on Tuesday for the first time in five years. He is expected to speak out against American domination of the United Nations in his five minutes on the podium Wednesday.

Foreign Minister Felipe Perez

The United Nations role in the 21st century

The Millennium Summit, taking place Sept. 6-8 at the United Nations, is addressing how to strengthen the role of the world body in the 21st century. It is the largest-ever gathering of heads of state or government. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has outlined his vision for the United Nations in a globalized world — an action plan to make globalization work for people everywhere — and asks member states to consider various goals and take action on:

<p>Freedom from fear Internal wars have claimed millions of lives and driven people from their homes. Weapons of mass destruction cast shadows of fear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent conflicts Address problems with intervention Strengthen peace operations Target sanctions Control small arms transfers Reduce dangers of existing nuclear weapons and of further proliferation 	<p>Globalization and governance Faster growth, higher living standards and new opportunities are all good but these benefits are distributed unequally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen states so they act together to help with internal wars and distribution of power Learn to govern better 	<p>Freedom from want Nations must confront the extreme poverty and inequality among countries and take action on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty Access to water Education Health and HIV/AIDS Upgrading slums Debt relief Needs of Africa Bridge digital divide Access to trade
<p>Sustaining our planet for future generations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change Water crisis Pro and cons of biodiversity Conservation 	<p>Renewing the United Nations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural reform Identify and build on core strengths Network with private and non-governmental agencies Improve interaction through technology 	

Source: United Nations

Wm. J. Castella, S. Hoffmann

Roque told a press conference in Havana last week that Cuba would lambast "the growing tendency of a small and powerful group of countries" to violate the U.N. Charter and intervene militarily in member countries without Security Council approval — a reference to the U.S.-led NATO bombing of Yugoslavia.

The United States also can expect to get an earful from more friendly countries.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Jiang Zemin are likely to use the gathering to continue rallying international support against U.S. national missile defense plans.

President Clinton's announcement last week that he would leave it to the next administration to decide whether and when to deploy such a

system will certainly be welcomed by many leaders who have criticized the U.S. plans as a threat to 30 years of arms control treaties.

But analysts have predicted that Jiang will use the summit — and a one-on-one meeting with Clinton — to pressure the United States to cancel the missile defense proposal altogether. Beijing fears that the anti-missile shields will render useless its growing arsenal of missiles and force China into a costly arms race.

Jiang, however, will have his own controversies to deal with as members of the Falun Gong spiritual movement stage continuous demonstrations against the Chinese leader for Beijing's crackdown on the sect — part of the 91 demonstrations planned this week.

Red Cross discourages cluster bombs, deaths

GENEVA (AP) — The Red Cross is urging governments to suspend the use of cluster bombs because they can kill and maim long after a war ends, an official said Tuesday.

A new study by the International Committee of the Red Cross found that, compared with land mines, those injured or killed by cluster bombs were 4.9 times as likely to be children under the age of 14.

The 50-page report focused on the aftermath of NATO's 78-day bombing of the Yugoslav province of Kosovo.

Children are especially at risk because the bombs are usually an eye-catching yellow with little parachutes attached, said Peter Herby, an ICRC specialist.

"People think they are duds because they didn't go off at first, but they are highly unstable and can be set off easily," Herby added.

The ICRC found that cluster bombs killed 50 people and injured 101 in Kosovo during the first year after the bombing ended in June 1999, the report said.

Land mines killed 30 people and wounded 169.

Victims of land mines often survive, although they may lose feet or legs, but cluster bombs generally kill anyone near them when they explode.

Herby said the ICRC, charged with enforcing the Geneva Conventions on the conduct of war, has sent governments its study with an appeal for a new international law on the weapon.

"The use of cluster bombs should be suspended until an international agreement on their use and clearance has been achieved," said a message to diplomats in Geneva.

Although cluster bombs were used in the Gulf War and the Indochina war in Laos, Kosovo provided the Red Cross with its first chance to study their long-term impact, Herby said.

A single cluster-bomb canister, dropped to destroy airfields or tanks and soldiers, typically scatters 200 to 600 bomblets over an area the size of a football field.

News in Brief

Rebels refuse to release American

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AP) — Muslim rebels holding an American hostage in a southern Philippine jungle refused Tuesday to exchange him for a suspected guerrilla.

Jeffrey Schilling, 24, of Oakland, Calif., ended a hunger strike and is being held in a heavily guarded bamboo hut, said a government envoy. On Monday, police said they had arrested a 73-year-old man suspected of belonging to the Abu Sayyaf rebels and accused him of taking part in kidnappings on Basilan island.

Rebel spokesman Abu Sabaya identified the man as his grandfather, but refused to swap him for Schilling, who was kidnapped Aug. 28.

The rebels will not release Schilling for "even 10, even 100 of my grandfathers," Sabaya told the Radio Mindanao Network.

The rebels, who say they are fighting to establish an Islamic state in the southern Philippines, have insisted that the arrested man, Ahmad Opao, be freed before they begin talks for Schilling's release.

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