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AFP: LE MONDE EN BREF


EILAT (Israël) - Quatre Israéliens ont été tués et 23 autres blessés, dont 5 grièvement, dimanche matin, par un homme vêtu d’un uniforme égyptien.

WASHINGTON - Les États-Unis souhaitent que le Conseil de Sécurité de l’ONU donne jusqu’au 1er janvier à l’Irak pour qu’il se retire du Koweït.

FRANCFORT - Plus d’une centaine d’Allemands qui étaient retenus par le Président irakien Saddam Hussein sont arrivés dimanche à l’aéroport de Francfort.

BERLIN - La grève des cheminots est-allemands qui a débuté dimanche à Berlin s’est rapidement étendue dans la soirée à de nombreuses grandes villes de l’ex-RDA.

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TRANSITION IN EX-SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

REUTER: Kohl steps up aid to Moscow

BONN - "German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, stepping up his campaign to help the Soviet Union fill its empty shelves this winter, on Friday chose his closest foreign policy adviser for an urgent fact-finding mission to Moscow. Horst Teltschik, Kohl’s top aide on East-West issues, will leave next Tuesday with experts from 5 Bonn ministries to see what Moscow needs to combat spreading food shortages. The decision to drop Economics Minister Helmut Haussmann, his original choice to head the mission, indicated that helping Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev survive the harsh winter was now one of the chancellor’s highest priorities...

Teltschik, who will meet Deputy Prime Minister Stepan Sitaryan, will also assess Moscow’s economic reforms in preparation for a European Community summit next month that is due to decide on Bonn’s plan for an international aid package. Some aid would come from Berlin’s emergency stores of food and other supplies built up to protect the once-isolated city from a repeat of the 1948-1949 Soviet blockade."

WALL STREET JOURNAL: New USSR union treaty offered

MOSCOW - "Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has unveiled a crucial document outlining the future of the Soviet Union as a nation and has warned that he is running out of patience with contentious republics...

The long-awaited treaty of union defines a new structure of central government and relations between the republics and the central authorities, eliminating all mention of ‘socialism’... Although vague in certain details, the treaty is carefully worded to give the republics a voice in many policy areas while keeping ultimate control in the hands of the central government... Those republics that sign on will be defining the basis for their future existence; At the same time, the Kremlin’s treatment of those republics that resist will demonstrate how sincere Mr. Gorbachev is about creating a union of voluntary, sovereign members and thus reveal how the central government will really share power."

Mrs. THATCHER’S RESIGNATION

THE GUARDIAN: What cabinet reshuffle?

LONDON - "The certainty of a new prime minister in Downing Street by
Thursday night yesterday prompted speculation about the extent of the cabinet reshuffle which will follow, in particular Michael Heseltine’s role if he fails to carry off the glittering prize. It is generally assumed that Mr Heseltine would keep both Douglas Hurd as Foreign secretary and John Major as Chancellor, and that either would keep the other in his present job. There would be minimal sackings and promotions for the time being, even if Mr Heseltine won. If he does not, Mr Hurd would say no more yesterday than that he would consult him if he emerges on top, but most campaign managers and MPs assume that the need for party unity after this month’s blood-letting will oblige a new leader to bring the former Defence Secretary back into the fold."

THE OBSERVER: Interest rate cut likely

LONDON - "The Bank of England intends to continue resisting City pressure for interest rate cuts, despite growing euphoria in the financial markets over the change in the political outlook. At the same time, a battle is developing between the Treasury and the Bank over interest rate policy which could prove an early test of the Bank’s muscle in its fight for independence. If some of the more optimistic City forecasters are to be believed, interest rates could come down by as much as 1% later this week. And majority opinion certainly has it that a reduction of 1/2% is on the cards... Whoever leads the Conservatives, the subsequent ‘united’ team will want base rate reductions which lead to mortgage rate cuts before an election next year, while the Bank will be fighting for independence against a background in which events in Europe are moving in its favour."

TECHNOLOGY

THE EUROPEAN: Home videophones by 1995 in France

PARIS - "French Post and Telecommunications Minister Paul Quiles has unveiled plans to have video telephones in French homes by the year 1995. The aims for the video telephone were part of an overview of the French telecommunications industry presented to the Cabinet by Mr Quiles on Wednesday. It is being developed by France Telecom, a public operator which is due to become autonomous in January. The first 200 video telephones, costing FFR60-80,000 ($12-16,000) each, should be available to professionals next year. Within 4 years, the price should be down to about FFR 5,000 ($1,000) to bring it within the reach of the general public... No market research has been carried out yet but France Telecom is confident that it had a bright future. Some of his confidence comes from predictions in Japan, where they expect to have millions of video telephones in homes by the year 2000... France Telecom thought that France was about equal with Japan on technological advance and was ahead of other European countries."

HERALD TRIBUNE: Computer of the future has arrived

NEW YORK - "The long-running debate about how best to make computers thousands of times more powerful than they are now, appears to be ending in a stunning consensus. The leading US computer designers have agreed that a technology considered the underdog as recently as 2 years ago has the most potential for the next generation of the world’s fastest computers, called supercomputers. The winning technology is known as massively parallel processing, and it involves hundreds or thousands of independent processors – silicon chips that perform calculations – teaming up as one computer to solve problems far too imposing for even the most powerful computers today."

OECD ECONOMIES

United States

HERALD TRIBUNE: Boskin sees 1991 recovery

WASHINGTON - "The chief White House economic adviser, Michael J. Boskin, said Sunday that the US economy would probably rebound from its current slowdown by the middle of next year once oil prices decline... ‘The oil shock will cause difficulties in the economy, especially in the fourth quarter this year and early next year’, Mr Boskin said. ‘But the overwhelming bulk of forecasters believe the economy will merely skirt a recession or if we have one, it will be brief and rather mild, and we will be out of it sometime within the middle of next year’, he said."

France
LE MONDE: Déficit commercial en baisse

PARIS - "Le déficit du commerce extérieur de la France s’est très sensiblement réduit: il a été de 5,86 mrd de francs en octobre au lieu de 10,6 mrd de francs en novembre (chiffres corrigés des variations saisonnières). Le déséquilibre de nos échanges extérieurs reste très élevé mais sur les 10 premiers mois de l’année il a diminué: 38,5 mrd de francs à comparer au 39,5 mrd de francs de la période correspondante de 1989. Sur cette tendance, le déficit pour l’ensemble de l’année pourrait se limiter à une cinquantaine de milliards de francs soit moins que ce qui était généralement attendu, l’INSEE le chiffrant notamment à 60 mrd de francs. En 1989, le déficit de la balance commerciale avait déjà atteint 45,7 mrd de francs."