
AFP: LE MONDE EN BREF

KENNEBUNKPORT (États-Unis) - Le président George Bush a annoncé que les États-Unis reconnaissaient l’indépendance des 3 États baltes, mais n’a pas voulu s’avancer quant aux autres républiques qui veulent quitter l’URSS. Les 3 États ont fait part de leur satisfaction.

BELGRADE - Quelques heures après la signature à Belgrade de l’accord sur le cessez-le-feu en Croatie et son contrôle par des observateurs européens, l’une des parties impliquées dans les conflits, les Serbes de Krajina et Slavonie, a rejeté le plan de paix de la CEE dont le succès semble ainsi déjà menacé. Les combats, qui avaient commencé en fin de matinée à Petrinja (à 70 km au sud de Zagreb), en Croatie, ont repris dans la soirée, a rapporté l’agence croate HINA.


EASTERN EUROPE

HERALD TRIBUNE: USSR: Radical shift of power from center to republics

MOSCOW - "President Mikhail S. Gorbachev joined with republican leaders on Monday in calling for sweeping constitutional changes that would reshape the Soviet Union as a loose confederation of independent states, ending nearly 74 years of centralized rule from Moscow. The proposals, which were offered at an emergency session of the Congress of People’s Deputies, the full Soviet parliament, envisage the establishment of a transitional legislature and government until a new constitution can be drafted... Addressing the Congress on behalf of Mr Gorbachev and the leaders of 10 of the Soviet Union’s 15 republics, Nursultan A. Nazarbayev, the president of Kazakhstan, said that the coup had created a 'historic opportunity' to speed up the course of change. He said that the measures were designed to prevent the ‘further collapse of structures of power’ prior to the creation of an entirely new political sytem. Mr gorbachev said later that he would be meeting representatives of the Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, to work out a formula for recognizing their independence... The Congress has agreed to take a stand on the issue of Baltic independence during its session, which is due to end Wednesday."

THE GUARDIAN: Thatcher aids 'free market Comecon'

MOSCOW - "Margaret Thatcher has agreed to launch a Soviet-backed bid to set up a free market successor to eastern Europe’s former Comecon organisation. Delegates from the Union of Leaseholders and Entrepreneurs of the USSR, which claims to represent more than 10 million workers in the country’s growing free market economy, yesterday left Moscow to put the idea to their counterparts in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria... Plans to set up a free market alternative to Comecon are to be discussed at the international meeting in Moscow on October 22, the organisation’s counsellor, Kazimir Ivankiv, said yesterday. Mrs Thatcher has been asked to preside over the meeting because of her sympathy with the organisation’s views, he said."

THE GUARDIAN: Government seeks powers to bypass parliament

WARSAW - "Poland’s Solidarity government unveiled plans yesterday to bypass parliament temporarily on most economic issues and issue decrees with the force of law. The government sent a bill to the Sejm (Lower house) seeking special powers to issue decrees and break a legislative
logjam holding up many free market reform measures. A communiqué said it would also ask the Sejm to pass constitutional changes permanently strengthening the executive at a special sitting this week. The Prime Minister, Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, decided to demand the measures after a confrontation last week with parliament over drastic budget cuts forced by a steep recession. He emerged from the clash with a vote of confidence after offering the government’s resignation."

PHILIPPINES

HERALD TRIBUNE: Banks and Manila reach debt accord

MANILA - "The Philippines said on Monday that it had agreed with foreign banks on a new debt-reduction package that could provide $2.3bn over 6 years in debt relief and fresh funding. The central bank governor, Jose L. Cuisia, said the debt package would probably go ahead only if the Philippine Senate ratified a new agreement allowing US forces to use Subic Bay Naval Base for 10 more years... The aim of the debt agreement is to reduce the Philippines medium-and long-term bank debt of $5.3bn by $1.5bn over 6 years."

ARGENTINA

REUTER: Government, industry sign pact to boost output

BUENOS AIRES - "Argentina’s government and industrial leaders signed on Monday an agreement aimed at holding down prices while encouraging investment, production and employment. The pact, initialled by President Carlos Menem and Israel Mahler, head of the Argentine Industrial Union (UIA), included a government commitment to provide credit and energy charges at international rates and reform labour laws that raise costs of hiring and firing workers. In turn the UIA pledged to increase investment and production, create new jobs and cooperate with the authorities to cut tax evasion... In the past 6 months Menem’s tough austerity programme has cut monthly inflation from 27% to under 1.5%, the lowest rate in almost 2 decades."

OECD ECONOMIES

United Kingdom

THE TIMES: Economic boost sends market to fresh peaks

"Share prices and bonds on the London market surged to their highest levels ever, bolstered by a steady stream of good news on political and economic fronts. A future-led advance saw the FT-SE 100 index touch an all-time trading high of 2,680.4, despite the absence of trading on Wall Street, which was closed for Labor Day... The equity market began the 2-week trading account confidently, helped by the latest economic survey from the Confederation of British Industry, the employers’ organisation, claiming that all areas of industry were starting to report that the first signs of a pick-up were filtering through... The CBI’s findings will come as an additional boost to the government, which has slipped ahead of the Labour party in the latest political opinion polls for the first time in months."

THE INDEPENDENT: IBM wins top role in Navy contract

"The US computer giant IBM has won the battle to be prime contractor on a 1.5 pound sterling Royal Navy contract for 44 EH-101 Merlin anti-submarine helicopters, Tom King, Defence Secretary, announced yesterday. The helicopters will be built by Westland, IBM’s partner in the deal, in conjunction with Agusta of Italy, co-developer with Westland of the EH-101. The role of prime contractor was won in the face of fierce competition from a consortium of British Aerospace and GEC."

Finlande

LES ECHOS: Helsinki condamnée à l’austérité

"La récession finlandaise amorcée dès la fin de 1989 s’est amplifiée au cours de l’année dernière. D’après le rapport que l’OCDE vient de consacrer à ce pays, la reprise ne devrait pas se dessiner avant 1992 et encore sera-t-elle très limitée... Après avoir connu des taux de croissance annuelle du PIB de plus de 5% en 1988 et 1989, les chiffres provisoires font état d’une progression nulle en 1990. Selon les prévisions de l’OCDE, le PIB finlandais devrait même chuter cette année de 2,4%
pour se redresser faiblement en 1992 avec une croissance prévue de 0,9%... Si la croissance avait été spectaculaire entre 1987 et 1989, la récession semble elle aussi nettement plus prononcée que dans les autres pays de l’OCDE. La production industrielle qui s’est réduite au dernier trimestre de 1990 de 6% en rythme annuel pourrait chuter en 1991 de 2% sur l’ensemble de l’année, soit la plus forte baisse depuis la guerre. Le taux de chômage qui atteint déjà plus de 6% devrait encore augmenter cette année."

Germany

REUTER: Half employees of E. German Treuhand firms on short-time work

BERLIN - "Half of the 2 million employees of eastern German companies run by the Treuhand privatisation agency have been put on short-time work, Germany’s national labour federation (DGB) said on Monday... A DGB statement said twice as many workers were on short time in the 10,000 firms overseen by the Treuhand as in east German enterprises as a whole. About 3,000 former communist companies have been sold to private investors. The DGB said short-time work was up to 62% in the electronics and textile industries. State industries have folded en masse from competition, and the official unemployment rate has risen to 12% since unification last October. But the jobless rate jumps to near 40% when short-time work and early retirement is taken into account."