AFP: LE MONDE EN BREF

ROME - M. Eltsine a déclaré dans une interview accordée au quotidien italien LA REPUBBLICA que le président soviétique Mikhaïl Gorbatchev "n’a plus de rôle à jouer dans ce qui va prendre la place de l’Union soviétique" et il a prévu sa démission avant le 15 janvier prochain.

NEW YORK (Nations Unies) - L’assemblée générale de l’ONU a annulé, à l’initiative des États-Unis, une résolution qu’elle avait adoptée en 1975 et qui assimilait le sionisme "à une forme de racisme".

JOHANNESBURG - A quelques jours de leur début, les négociations sur une nouvelle constitution pour l’Afrique du sud ont subi un revers avec la décision du Congrès Panafricain (PAC), un mouvement noir radical, de ne pas y participer.

OECD - TIED AID

REUTER: EC accepts OECD aid credit rules

BRUSSELS - "The European Community on Monday accepted new international rules designed to curtail the use of billions of dollars of development funds to promote rich nations exports. Dutch Finance Minister Wim Kok said EC members agreed to abide by rules set out in October at the OECD to curb so-called tied aid credits to relatively wealthy developing countries... The new rules are aimed at stopping industrialised states from offering cut-price aid money to the wealthiest developing nations, such as Mexico or Hong Kong, on condition they spend it on the creditor country’s goods or services. EC officials said for poorer developing countries with current per capita income of less than $2,465 a year, such tied aid would be prohibited if the project was considered commercially viable. They said only the poorest and smallest nations, such as Bangladesh and Vanuatu, could still be offered tied funds on the grounds they need all the money they can get. Aid experts estimate up to $10bn of development funds a year are now used to ‘buy’ into Third World markets."

FINANCIAL TIMES: EC steps up aid to Soviet republics

BRUSSELS - "EC governments yesterday decided to give the emerging commonwealth of Soviet republics Ecu600m ( $774m) extra in food grants and credits, amid rising concern that economic hardship may accentuate political instability. Foreign and finance ministers of the 12 EC states approved a first Ecu500m tranche of an eventual Ecu1.25bn Community food
credit to the Soviet Union, and Ecu100m out of a promised Ecu200 food grant."

FINANCIAL TIMES: EC seeks compromise over Yugoslav states

ZAGREB/BELGRADE - "Germany came under intense pressure from its European Community partners yesterday to delay recognition of the breakaway Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia. European Community foreign ministers sought a compromise formula to head off a move that many fear would spread the undeclared civil war into Bosnia and other parts of Yugoslavia... Meanwhile United Nations observers are expected to arrive in Yugoslavia tomorrow to prepare for possible full-scale UN intervention to keep the peace between Croats and Serbs."

FINANCIAL TIMES: Central Europeans sign trade accords with EC

BRUSSELS - "Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia yesterday stressed their goal of eventually joining the European Community as they signed far-reaching association accords in Brussels. One last obstacle to the so-called Europe association agreements, which clearly state the central European countries’ aspirations to EC membership, was overcome yesterday when Spain won assurances that the EC would take safeguard measures if there were surges in steel imports from central Europe... The agreements will lead to free trade over 10 years, with the Community lowering its barriers to industrial imports more quickly - within 5 to 6 years - than the central Europeans will be required to do. The latter have already sharply redirected their trade towards the west. Over the 1988-90 period Poland’s exports to the EC rose by 53%, Hungary’s by 27%, and Czechoslovakia’s by 22%; while Poland’s imports from the Ec increased by 59%, Hungary’s 22% and Czechoslovakia’s 17%.

FARM TRADE

REUTER: Japan repeats refusal to open rice market

TOKYO - "Agriculture minister Masani Tanabu on Tuesday repeated Japan’s refusal to lift its ban on rice imports - hours before the deadline for an agreement on liberalising world trade. Tanabu said 2 senior agricultural specialists of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party would leave later on Tuesday for Geneva, headquarters of the GATT, to bolster Tokyo’s arguments on farm trade issues... GATT director-general Arthur Dunkel has set a deadline of midnight on Wednesday for input into the draft agreement during the Uruguay Round. Dunkel is determined to hand the 108 participants in the Uruguay Round a complete draft text on Friday to try to spur the 5-year-long negotiations to a conclusion."

AIDS - AFRICA

REUTER: Aids to kill 6 million Africans in 10 years

DAKAR - "AIDS will kill more than 6 million Africans in the next decade and will eclipse all other diseases as the continent’s number one killer, a World Health Organisation (WHO) conference was told on Monday. Delegates also heard that there will be 4 million infants born with AIDS in the next 10 years. The disease is already decimating the most productive members of Africa’s population and in many rural villages entire families have died from AIDS... WHO estimates that some 6 million African men and women have already been infected by the HIV virus that causes AIDS - one in every 40 adults - and that the number is expected to grow to 14m by the year 2000."

OECD ECONOMIES

United Kingdom

THE INDEPENDENT: New head of Security Service is a woman

"The Security Service - MI5 - has become the first major Western intelligence agency to appoint a woman as its head. Stella Rimington is to become Director General in February, the Home office announced yesterday... The announcement itself is a major break with the all-pervasive official secrecy which had previously covered the identity of intelligence personnel."

Australia

FINANCIAL TIMES: Conrad Black wins battle for Fairfax
"Mr Conrad Black, Canadian publisher of the UK DAILY TELEGRAPH, yesterday extended his media empire to Australia through the A$1.4bn ($1.08bn) acquisition of John Fairfax, publisher of the SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, THE (Melbourne) AGE and THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW. Hollinger, Mr Black’s listed holding company, now controls more than 90 daily and Sunday newspapers on 4 continents, including THE DAILY TELEGRAPH and its Sunday stablemate, THE JERUSALEM POST, and 88 publications in Canada and the US. Fairfax is Australia’s second-largest newspaper publisher, with around 20% of daily circulation, compared with 70% controlled by News Corporation, Mr Rupert Murdoch’s US-based media group."

United States

WALL STREET JOURNAL: Industrial production declines further

WASHINGTON - "Industrial production in the US fell 0.4% in November, the government said, as the manufacturing sector of the economy continued a 4-month slump. The Federal Reserve report was the latest in a series of reports demonstrating weakness in the economy. Industrial production was flat in October after inching up just 0.2% in September and falling 0.1% a month earlier."