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AFP: LE MONDE EN BREF

BAGDAD - Un accord de principe a été passé entre l’opposition kurde et le gouvernement irakien pour permettre aux réfugiés kurdes de revenir vivre en Irak dans un Kurdistan autonome.

SAFWAN (Irak) - Un 1er groupe d’observateurs militaires des Nations Unies s’est déployé mercredi comme prévu sur une partie de la frontière entre l’Irak et le Koweït.

TOKYO - Le gouvernement japonais a officiellement approuvé mercredi la 1ère mission à l’étranger des forces d’auto-défense (armée japonaise): l’envoi de 4 dragueurs de mines dans le Golfe.

BRATISLAVA (Tchécoslovaquie) - 50.000 personnes se sont rassemblées sur la place du soulèvement national, le coeur historique de la capitale slovaque, pour apporter leur soutien au Premier Ministre slovaque déchu Vladimir Meciar.

LAGOS - Les violences religieuses qui se sont déroulées mardi dans l’Etat de Bauchi (nord-est du Nigéria) ont fait 84 morts, selon un responsable de l’hôpital central de Bauchi.

ECONOMIC POLICY COORDINATION

ASAHI EVENING NEWS: OECD against monetary relaxation

TOKYO - "Industrialized countries should be cautious in taking any monetary relaxation policies, as inflationary risks are prone to materialize in a very short term in the world economy, Jean-Claude Paye, the visiting Secretary-General of the OECD, said Tuesday. Speaking at the Japan National Press Club, the head of the OECD, said the general direction of monetary policies is one of the issues which are high on agenda in an OECD meeting slated for early June in Paris... As for other subjects to be discussed in the meeting, Paye suggested they should include making of new rules of economic activities which are not controlled by any of the conventional frameworks such as the GATT. Behaviors affecting the global environment and new types of corporate practice arising from new technology are among the examples of such activities, Paye said."

FINANCIAL TIMES: Germany will not cut rates

BONN - "Germany will resist calls from the US to cut interest rates at next Sunday’s meeting of the Group of Seven leading industrial nations in Washington, according to Mr Karl Otto Pöhl, the Bundesbank president. In an interview with the FINANCIAL TIMES at the central bank’s headquarters in Frankfurt, Mr Pöhl said: ’A cut in interest rates in Germany is not on the agenda. Calls for Germany to cut interest rates are, from our point of view, difficult to understand."

WALL STREET JOURNAL: Disagreement expected

LONDON - "When the seven big industrial powers gather this weekend in Washington, the US may find that its superpower muscle is harder to flex on the economic stage than in the Mideast deserts. US attempts to enlist its allies in a global campaign for economic growth so far have fallen flat. As a result, the Group of Seven meeting Sunday is expected to be a forum for airing differences more than closing ranks... America’s chief difficulty in getting the G-7 campaign off the ground is that the economic allies currently don’t agree on who, or what, the enemy is... In his recent swing through Europe, US Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady repeatedly warned that today’s relatively high interest rates will stifle economic growth around the world... But in Europe, inflation is viewed as
THE TIMES: IMF scales down predictions

WASHINGTON - "Economists at the IMF are confident that Britain, America and Canada would begin to recover later this year from their recessions and enjoy 'significantly positive' growth next year although the predictions for economic growth in industrialised nations this year were scaled back dramatically from the rosier-than-expected figures put out last October... The report was released before the annual spring meeting of the Fund and the World Bank in Washington... Among its most important projections, the Fund report predicts that economic growth in America would grow at a rate of 2.7% next year and at a marginal 0.2% this year compared with last autumn's prediction that the American economy would grow by 1.7% this year... As a whole, the developing world's economy would grow at a 0.75% rate this year, the report said... By far the strongest performer among leading industrial countries is Japan, with an estinted growth rate of 3.6% this year and 3.9% next year."

REFORMS IN FORMER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

THE TIMES: Gorbachev announces fresh elections

MOSCOW - "President Gorbachev yesterday announced a spectacular agreement under which the leaders of 9 Soviet republics, including Boris Yeltsin of Russia, backed his efforts to save the country from social and economic collapse. In return, he effectively promised fresh nationwide elections this year, exposing himself to the risk of being voted out of office... In their joint statement, Mr Gorbachev and the 9 republican leaders called on workers 'to end their economic and political strikes and try to make up for lost production as soon as possible'... The agreement proposed repealing the sales tax on some items, reducing air and train fares and linking salaries to price rises."

REUTERS: Massive price hike in China

BEIJING - "Beijing residents formed long lines outside state stores to stock up on rice, flour and oil on Thursday as big price rises took effect. Anyone still holding April ration coupons could buy at old prices far below the new ones set by the government to try to reduce its crippling budget deficit. The hikes will send the price of flour up 54% and vegetable oil soaring 108%. The rises were effective nationwide on Thursday, said people who had seen a government circular. The prices of all goods made from these staples, including cakes, noodles and even soap, will also go up."

LIBERATION: Loi sur l'indemnisation adoptée

BUDAPEST - "Après un parcours du combattant sans égal dans les annales législatives, les députés hongrois ont finalement adopté, hier, la loi sur l'indemnisation. Rarement un texte aura suscité autant de passion et de controverses dans la Hongrie postsocialiste. Cette querelle sur les 'réparations historiques', à accorder aux 'victimes du communisme' empoisonne la vie politique magyar depuis l'investiture du gouvernement conservateur, il y a un an. En l'absence de cette loi capitale qui régît le droit de propriété, la 'transition vers une économie de marché' était sérieusement handicapée. ••••••

GATT

WALL STREET JOURNAL: Panel findings not enacted upon

GENEVA - "The failure to conclude the so-called Uruguay Round of trade negotiations is making the settlement of trade disputes increasingly difficult, senior negotiators said. Lars Anell, chairman of the council of the GATT, said established dispute-settlement procedures are in a 'very serious situation' because of the trend toward non-implementation of international adjudication-panel rulings. Tran Van-Thinh, the European Community ambassador to the 101-nation GATT, told a meeting of the council, which traditionally operates by consensus, that there were 5 cases recently in which governments delayed changing domestic trade laws to conform with panel findings because they were awaiting new rules from the Uruguay Round."

AFP: La Corée du Sud critiquée

GENEVE - "La Corée du Sud a été assaillie mercredi au Conseil du GATT"
par les États-Unis, le Canada et la Communauté européenne, qui l’ont accusée d’ouvrir insuffisamment son marché agricole. La Corée, qui a renoncé en 1989 à invoquer la clause du GATT qui autorise les pays en développement à appliquer des restrictions pour rééquilibrer leur balance des paiements, s’engageant en même temps à éliminer progressivement les barrières protectionnistes érigées à ce titre, a été vivement critiquée sur les détails de son programme de libéralisation commerciale pour les années à venir… Le représentant américain, M. Andrew Stoler, a déclaré que son pays était ‘profondément déçu par l’étendue, le contenu et la qualité’ de ce programme… Le représentant de la Corée, M. Young Woo Park, a expliqué que ‘comme certains de ces produits représentent d’importantes sources de revenu pour les agriculteurs, le gouvernement coréen a été confronté à de grandes difficultés dans la sélection des produits à libéraliser, face à la sérieuse opposition intérieure des agriculteurs et de leurs organisations’."