SG/PRB/D(92)181

AFP: LE MONDE EN BREF

BEYROUTH - Une intense activité de l’artillerie, de la marine et de l’aviation israéliennes était signalée dans la nuit de lundi à mardi au Liban, après une journée de violence qui a fait au moins 3 tués et 18 blessés, selon un bilan partiel provisoire de différentes sources.

VILNIUS - Les anciens communistes réformateurs lituaniens du Parti démocratique du travail de Lituanie (PDTL) ont fait un pas vers le pouvoir dimanche en recueillant 44,7% des voix au 1er tour des élections législatives lituaniennes.

SARAJEVO - Prozor, un village de Bosnie-Herzégovine de 5 000 à 6 000 habitants à majorité musulmane, situé à 70 km à vol d’oiseau à l’ouest de Sarajevo, a été rayé de la carte par une attaque de forces croates, a affirmé le service de presse de l’armée bosniaque.

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CANADA-CONSTITUTION

REUTER: Canadians reject reforms in referendum

OTTAWA - "Canadians soundly rejected a national unity deal on Monday, putting Prime Minister Brian Mulroney’s future in doubt and furthering the cause of those who want Quebec to split from the country. Almost complete returns from a national referendum showed that 6 of the 10 provinces had rejected the agreement. Mulroney admitted that the agreement, which was painstakingly negotiated over a year, was now a footnote of history... With all of the ballots tallied in Quebec, 56.6% of voters had rejected the constitutional reform proposals and 43.4% voted in favour. The agreement also was rejected in Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Only in some small Atlantic coast provinces was the vote strongly in favour of the deal. In Ontario, the most populous province, the vote was too close to call for hours before a narrow endorsement of the agreement was announced."

GATT: AGRICULTURE

AFP: Soisson: Les Américains doivent faire des propositions nouvelles

LUXEMBOURG - "'Si les Américains veulent un accord équilibré, ils doivent faire des propositions nouvelles', a affirmé lundi à Luxembourg le ministre français de l’Agriculture Jean-Pierre Soisson. 'Le problème n’est pas une question de date, mais de contenu de l’accord. Il faut que chacun fasse des concessions et des propositions pour parvenir à un bon accord’, a-t-il ajouté au cours d’une conférence de presse à l’issue de la 1ère journée du conseil des ministres de l’agriculture... La discussion a duré 45 minutes, mais ‘a permis un tour de table au cours duquel les ministres ont exprimé leurs positions’, a souligné M. Soisson... 'Toutes les délégations, avec des divergences d’appréciation, se sont déclarées favorables à un renforcement de la position de la CEE dans les négociations avec les Etats-Unis’, a déclaré le ministre français... M. MacSharry a affirmé que ‘ce qui est prévu dans la réforme de la PAC est la limite de ce qui et acceptable pour la CEE’. La réforme prévoit la mise en jachère de 15% des terres cultivables dans la Communauté et une réduction de 29% des prix garantis aux agriculteurs qui devrait entraîner une baisse des productions communautaires."

LE FIGARO: Australie: menaces de représailles contre la France

SYDNEY - "La Fédération nationale des agriculteurs australiens réclame un boycottage des produits français, et demande au gouvernement fédéral de revoir les contrats passés avec des entreprises françaises... Le ministre du Commerce, John Kerin, et le vice-ministre des Affaires étrangères et du
Commerce extérieur, Neal Blewett, ne cachent pas leurs sentiments à l'égard de l'Europe en général, et du lobby agricole français en particulier. Ils rendent ce dernier responsable de l'écueil des négociations du GATT, survenu vendredi dernier, lorsque la CEE a proposé de nouvelles taxes à l'importation sur les produits agricoles américains. M. Kerin, actuellement en mission commerciale en Allemagne, a violemment critiqué l'égoïsme 'd'une poignée de fermiers français fortement subventionnés' et déclaré qu'il était 'important de faire pression sur la France'.

COMPAANIES

HERALD TRIBUNE: GM chairman quits post

WASHINGTON - "Robert C. Stempel resigned Monday as chairman and chief executive officer of General Motors Corp., the victim of the biggest boardroom coup in the modern history of US corporations... John G. Smale, chairman of the executive committee of the GM board of directors and a leader in the recent campaign to dump Mr. Stempel, issued a statement with tepid praise for him and said the board would now get on with the business of dealing with GM's problems... GM's North American operations posted a loss of more than $5bn last year and has continued to lose billions this year, while Ford Motor Co. and Chrysler Corp. have begun to eat into GM's share of the truck and auto market. In December, GM announced it was eliminating 74,000 jobs and 21 manufacturing plants in an effort to increase competitiveness."

HERALD TRIBUNE: IKEA buys Habitat

LONDON - "Storehouse PLC said Monday it was selling its Habitat stores in Europe to IKEA, the Swedish group famous for its huge retail stores offering modern furniture at reasonable prices, for £78 million ($125 million). The deal marks a big shift for Storehouse toward a more streamlined group that the designer and businessman Sir Terence Conran built up in the 1980s... Storehouse is selling 76 Habitat stores in Britain and France and one in Barcelona to IKEA's owner, the Netherlands-based Stichting Ingkas Foundation."

OECD ECONOMIES

Italy

HERALD TRIBUNE: Tax? Grocers won't pay the price

ROME - "... In a sports stadium on the outskirts of Rome, about 10,000 shopkeepers gathered to protest the government’s new austerity measures - the latest in a series of demonstrations inspired by Prime Minister Giuliano Amato’s proposals to increase taxes, cut spending and start to balance the country's books... The shopkeepers were protesting Mr. Amato’s proposal for a law requiring all self-employed people to declare a minimum taxable income equivalent to $20,000, an amount similar to that earned by lower-ranking public servants and lower than the suspected income of most of Italy’s 6 million self-employed... The authorities argue that the self-employed routinely undervalue their earnings on their tax returns. 'We have 4 to 5 million tax evaders', Finance Minister Giovanni Goria said Monday, explaining why the authorities were trying to introduce the across-the-board minimum tax... By contrast, Italy’s guardia di finanza, or financial police, says it has run checks on grocery stores whose earnings were 40 times greater than their declared taxable income. For their part, storekeepers argue that their hidden overheads, such as under-the-counter payments to city officials and extortion payments to the mob - represent a severe financial burden from which the authorities offer no redress."

United Kingdom

WALL STREET JOURNAL: Major ties his future to Maastricht

LONDON - "In a bid to reassert his authority by tying his political future to the controversial Maastricht treaty, John Major has chosen a high-risk strategy in which the odds seem stacked against him. Signals over the weekend that he would resign as prime minister - and possibly call for new elections - if Britain's Parliament rejects the Maastricht treaty were played down by aides on Monday. But dissidents within Mr. Major's own party are clear they still plan to vote against the treaty in a parliamentary debate on Nov. 4, in spite of the damage such a course threatens to inflict on his government... Support for
Maastricht from other smaller parties, including the Liberal Democrats, probably wouldn’t be sufficient to counterbalance the defections from the Tory ranks. Mr. Major’s decision to play for high stakes took its toll on financial markets Monday, with sterling falling 2.75 cents to $1.5885 and declining 3.32 pfennig to 2.4371 marks in London trading.

United States

REUTERS: Fed governor says predictions of bank crisis overblown

WASHINGTON - "Top regulators said on Monday that some large banks may collapse this year and failures will remain high through 1996, but predictions of a banking crisis are overblown. 'Large savings and commercial banks may be closed in the months ahead. In general, though, a turn-around in the banking industry seems well underway', Federal Reserve Governor John LaWare told the Senate Banking Committee. His comments were designed to calm fears fuelled by a Washington Post-sponsored report that more than 1,000 banks are virtually insolvent and that their collapse could rival the size of the multi-billion-dollar savings and loan crisis."