SOMALIE - Le Conseil de Sécurité de l'ONU a autorisé, jeudi soir, les États-Unis à prendre la tête d'une opération militaire d'urgence pour sauver les victimes de la famine en Somalie. Le Conseil a adopté la résolution 794 en ce sens, à l'unanimité.

La France a fait savoir qu'elle participerait à l'opération militaire. D'autres pays, comme l'Italie, ont laissé entendre qu'ils pourraient se joindre à l'opération. Près de 28 000 soldats américains, des 3 armes, se tiennent prêts pour l'intervention, a indiqué jeudi un responsable du Pentagone. Les premières unités à intervenir seront 1 800 Marines qui se trouvent actuellement à bord de 3 bâtiments au large des côtes somaliennes.

BOSNIE - Un Antonov de la Force de Protection des Nations Unies transportant le général Philippe Morillon, commandant de la FORPRONU en Bosnie-Herzégovine, a été touché par des tirs à l'arme légère jeudi après-midi en décollant de Sarajevo pour Zagreb.

MAREE NOIRE - Un pétrolier grec, l'Aegean Sea, transportant 79 300 tonnes de brut, s'est cassé en deux jeudi matin en s'échouant à proximité du port de La Corogne (Galice, nord de l'Espagne) et a pris feu, provoquant une marée noire sur 2 kilomètres. Le capitaine a été arrêté par les autorités espagnoles.

REUNION - Une flambée de violence a secoué mercredi soir le quartier du Chaudron, à Saint-Denis-de-la-Réunion (Île française de l'océan Indien). Sept policiers et gendarmes ont été blessés et 13 personnes, pour la plupart des mineurs de 12 à 15 ans, ont été interpellées par la police.

NIHON KEIZAI SHIMBUN: OECD revoked special status of Yugoslavia.

OECD ECONOMIES

Japan

JAPAN TIMES: GNP drop for first time since 1989

"Japan's economy shrank by 0.4% during the July-September period compared with the previous quarter, which translates to an annual rate of 1.6%, the Economic Planning Agency reported Thursday. The drop in the GNP was the first since the April-June quarter of 1989... In real terms, the GNP, or total output of goods and services, was ¥105.8 trillion during the July-September quarter. The EPA said it believes the economy hit bottom in the quarter, although recovery will be slow."

HERALD TRIBUNE: Japan slump: in America, they call it a recession

TOKYO - "Japan's economic slowdown reached the status of a full-blown recession Thursday - at least by the American definition - as government figures showed that economic growth turned negative for 2 quarters in a row. The last time Japan suffered a fall in output for 2 consecutive quarters was during the 1973-74 oil shock... Until now, the Japanese economy has been most accurately described as being in a pronounced slowdown, decelerating from the supercharged 5% annual growth rate of the late 1980s to a pace that is less than half as fast but still positive. The Japanese government does not yet consider the economy to be in recession, according to an EPA official, who said that Japan uses a definition that makes it stand apart from most other countries. Japanese workers are certainly not suffering nearly as much as their American counterparts are; unemployment stands at 2.2% because of the lingering effects of a labor
shortage."

Germany

FINANCIAL TIMES: Recession threatens as GNP falls

FRANKFURT - "Germany slid further towards recession in the third quarter this year and new indicators suggest the downturn is accelerating. Gross national product in the west of the country fell a real 1.5% between the second and third quarters of this year, official figures show. Industrial output has fallen sharply since and unemployment has risen further. Meanwhile, the number of company failures has grown by 13% this year after falling steadily for the previous seven. Mr Jürgen Möllemann, economics minister, said the latest growth figures were a clear warning of a further downturn, which must be avoided if recovery in the east was not to be hit... There is worse to come, according to the Ifo economics institute in Munich, which yesterday forecast a real 3% drop in industrial output in 1993, after a 1.5% decline this year."

FINANCIAL TIMES: IG Metall deal raises hope for inflation fight

FRANKFURT - "... In the early hours of yesterday, IG Metall, the most powerful union in the country, accepted a basic deal for steel workers worth between 3% and 4% over 18 months. This followed a 12-month, 4.2% agreement in the insurance industry. Compared with forecast inflation of less than 4% and expected average productivity gains of around 2% next year, the settlements suggest that pay-induced pressure on the price index could ease significantly if remaining negotiations reach similar conclusions."

Switzerland

WALL STREET JOURNAL: EEA vote threatens balance of peaceable cultures

ZURICH - "... In a national referendum on Sunday, Swiss voters will decide if Switzerland will join a 19-nation European Economic Area in which goods, services, labor and capital flow freely between countries of the European Community and the European Free Trade Association. Through an emotional and sometimes bitter referendum campaign, a division has emerged between the country's German and French speakers. Some 74% of Swiss are German-speaking; 20%, French-speaking; 5%, Italian-speaking; and 1% speak Rhaeto-Romansh, a Latin language dating back to the Romans. Surveys show French Swiss overwhelmingly in favor of EEA membership, with their 5 cantons all prepared to deliver a strong 'yes'. But surveys also show their 'yes' could be drowned out by a 'no' from the skeptical German Swiss."

CURRENCIES

THE TIMES: Sterling surges as Germany tips into recession

"The pound surged to its highest level since mid-October and gilt-edged prices jumped 1 1/2 points, after official figures confirmed that Germany was in recession and the continuing turbulence in Europe led analysts to describe Britain as a 'safe haven' for funds, outside the troubled ERM... The news from Germany led to a fall in the mark against all major currencies. But sterling's advance did not just reflect the mark's weakness, since the pound also gained against the dollar and yen. Against the mark, the pound jumped 4 1/2 pfennigs to DM2.4750, its highest since October 14. Against the dollar, it rose 2 cents to $1.5680, its best since October 28."

FINANCIAL TIMES: Weakness of DM eases devaluation fears for franc

LONDON - "Fears that the French franc would have to be devalued retreated yesterday after a much weaker DM gave the currency a temporary reprieve. String of gloomy economy figures from Germany, and news that the steelworkers had agreed on a low wage settlement, sent the DM sharply lower against other European currencies and the dollar. Ireland, meanwhile, arranged to borrow up to DM4bn ($2.5bn) from German banks to support the punt, which has been under strain within the European exchange rate mechanism... Dublin's strategy to defend the currency resembles the UK's Ecu10bn ($12.3bn) borrowing programme announced on September 3 in an effort - ultimately unsuccessful in Britain's case - to hold sterling above its ERM floor."
BEIJING - "China said Thursday that Governor Chris Patten must abandon his project for democratic reform in Hong Kong or risk calling into question the basic agreements covering the handover of the territory in 1997. ‘The issue facing the British side is now whether the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the other agreements reached between the 2 sides are still needed’, Li Jianying, the acting Foreign Ministry spokesman, said at a weekly news briefing. Mr. Li’s statement was Beijing’s strongest suggestion yet that it might consider reviewing China’s entire arrangement with London over Hong Kong unless Mr. Patten dropped his democratic reform package."

F.T.: Shares fall sharply, Beijing threatens to end deal on Hong Kong

HONG KONG - "The row between Britain and China over democracy in Hong Kong deepened yesterday when Beijing hinted that it might revoke the 1984 Sino-British agreement on the colony’s future. The warning is the latest move in the campaign by Beijing to persuade the UK to withdraw its proposals to extend the scope of democracy in Hong Kong. In the 1984 joint declaration Beijing promised the territory would be allowed to maintain its capitalist system for 50 years. The threat came after the Hong Kong stock market registered its largest one-day drop in share prices since June 1989 when the Tiananmen Square demonstration and the suppression of the Beijing democracy movement led to a more than 20% fall in the market. At the close yesterday, the Hang Seng index, the market’s barometer, was 434.44 points, or 8%, lower at 4,978.21. Since its peak 3 weeks ago, the index has fallen nearly 23%. Selling was frantic, with turnover of HK$5.3bn ($688m)."