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SOMALIE - Cinq avions gros porteurs américains Galaxy et un C141 provenant de bases américaines en Europe ou aux Etats-Unis ont transité mercredi par l’aéroport de Djibouti. Ces appareils pourraient acheminer des hommes et du matériel vers Mogadiscio où l’on s’attend à une action de représailles contre le général Mohamed Farah Aidid, un des chefs de guerre somaliens considéré comme responsable des affrontements qui ont causé la mort de 23 "casques bleus" pakistanais samedi.


ONU - L’ambassadeur des Etats-Unis à l’ONU, Mme Madeleine Albright, a relancé le débat sur un éventuel élargissement du Conseil de sécurité, en particulier au Japon et à l’Allemagne, en affirmant que le président Bill Clinton s’était engagé dans cette direction.

AFP - TOKYO - "Le dollar a plongé sous les 106 yen à Tokyo jeudi, reculant jusqu’à 105,83 avant de coter 105,95 yen à 14h00 locales (05h00 GMT), soit une baisse de 0,38 yen par rapport à la clôture de la veille (106,33 yen). Il était ainsi plus bas que son record historique de la veille à Londres (106,05 yen) et que son cours mercredi soir à New York (106,38 yen). La Banque du Japon est intervenue plusieurs fois, sans réussir à empêcher le dollar de tomber sous les 106 yen déjà dans la matinée."

ABOUT THE GATT

REUTER: GATT, covering 90% of trade, has new chief

GENEVA - "The GATT which announced a new director-general on Wednesday, has expanded its membership and rules to cover some 90% of world trade in goods. In addition to serving as an international court on bilateral disputes, the 111-member GATT is overseeing the Uruguay Round of global negotiations to break down trade barriers - now in its seventh year. Irish lawyer Peter Sutherland, chairman of Allied Irish Banks and a former EC official, will succeed Arthur Dunkel, who has headed the Geneva-based world trade body since 1980. Former Swiss diplomat Dunkel will retire on June 30... Dunkel is scheduled to secure Russia’s formal application to join the trading club in Moscow on Friday. Negotiations to admit Moscow are expected to take a few years and would depend on Russia’s reforms toward a market economy, diplomats say."

HERALD TRIBUNE: Enter the trade referee

BRUSSELS - "Recession, rising unemployment and ever-growing competition from Third World countries may be shaking faith in the creed of free trade in the West, but the new head of the world’s trade organization voices no doubts about his mission. Peter Sutherland... said the completion of the long-delayed Uruguay Round of trade talks and the upgrading of GATT into a more effective arbiter of trade disputes were 'fundamentally important to our peace and our prosperity'. Mr. Sutherland said the industrial powers as a group bore a 'special responsibility' for reaching a GATT accord and warned that so-called managed trade was incompatible with that goal... 'The Uruguay Round is not an optional extra', Mr. Sutherland said. ‘It is an absolutely essential signal about the type of world in which we want to live’. As a European GATT ambassador said, Mr. Sutherland is ‘a man who is strong enough to handle the 2 big boys’, namely the United States and the Community."
LE FIGARO: GATT: la France devant la comission de Bruxelles


EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

FINANCIAL TIMES: EC urged to curb high-tech sales to Iran

LUXEMBOURG - "The US yesterday pressed the EC to curb sales of high technology to Iran on the grounds that the Tehran regime is seeking to develop nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Mr Warren Christopher, US secretary of state, launched the initiative during a meeting with EC foreign ministers in Luxembourg in which he implicitly criticised European companies for selling ‘dual use’ technology to Iran - items with both civilian and military applications... After the meeting, both sides agreed to launch a joint EC-US study on Iran’s effort to acquire weapons of mass destruction and the problem of nuclear nonproliferation. This will include sharing of intelligence, and is intended to be part of a collective western effort to prevent more countries joining the nuclear club."

FINANCIAL TIMES: EC applicants overcome the first hurdle

LUXEMBOURG - "The first and easiest round of EC membership negotiations with Austria, Sweden, Finland and Norway was largely concluded yesterday, after 2 days of meetings in Luxembourg between foreign ministers of the 12 and the applicant countries. These set the seal on a 4-month review of EC and applicant country legislation, to ensure a match and iron out the wrinkles. EC officials said this process was now 85 to 90% complete. The enlargement negotiations are aimed at bringing the 4 countries - members of the loose European Free Trade Association (EFTA) - into the EC in 1995."

OIL

WALL STREET JOURNAL: Exploration agreement in Caspian Sea

ALMA ATA, Kazakhstan - "A group of multinational oil companies signed a preliminary agreement with Kazakhstan to begin work for extensive exploration of what may be a huge oil field in the Caspian Sea. The deal, signed at a ceremony here, includes plans to do preparatory work that may lead to the exploration of Kazakhstan’s portion of the sea that is said to be more than 100,000 square kilometers."

OECD ECONOMIES

Japan - US

JAPAN TIMES: Yen rise will cause US inflation

"The US will face inflation of between 0.4% and 2.2% if the dollar remains around its historically low level of Y105, according to the MITI. ‘The yen’s sharp appreciation will not only pour cold water on Japan’s economic recovery but also hamper exports by the US’, the ministry said in a report released Tuesday. Export prices of industrial products would increase sharply because of the higher prices of parts imported from Japan, the ministry said, basing its analysis on an assumption the dollar will remain at the Y105 level for a year after falling from the Y124 level."

Japan

HERALD TRIBUNE: Why the dirge at the wedding?
TOKYO - "As Japan celebrated the crown prince’s wedding Wednesday, the nation’s bureaucrats braced for the release of data expected to fuel a fractious debate over when the economy will recover. To policymakers in the West, there is more than a little irony in this. Japan’s unemployment rate stands at 2.4%, compared with about 7% in the US and more than 10% in much of Europe, and the Japanese slump so far has not featured the kind of massive layoffs and closed store-fronts that are regular fare in the West. Still, by Japanese standards, many economists say these are the worst times since the end of World War II. And in a week when 2 major economic reports will be released, the only decidedly upbeat news will be the royal nuptials, they say."

END-OF-TEXT