

Bush's first attempt at Mideast shuttle diplomacy rattled

By the Associated Press
INTERNATIONAL

JERUSALEM — A U.S.-mediated meeting of Israeli and Palestinian security chiefs ended without result and violence persisted today, rattling the Bush administration's first attempt at Mideast shuttle diplomacy.

Israeli troops and Palestinian militiamen fought gun battles in three locations today, and Palestinians fired mortars shells at Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip. There were no injuries.

Israeli and Palestinian security officials from the Gaza Strip were to meet today in talks arranged by the new U.S. envoy, William Burns.

He shuttled between Israeli and Palestinian leaders earlier in the week to discuss how to implement the recommendations of an international panel on how to stop eight months of violence.

A meeting Tuesday between both sides' security officials from West Bank showed the deep divisions between them.

During the session, Israel demanded that the Palestinians follow Israel's lead and observe a truce. The Palestinians refused, saying that ahead of a cease-fire, Israel must lift a blockade of Palestinian communities and freeze in settlement construction.

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Several thousand supporters of President Abdurrahman Wahid marched on the gates of Parliament today as legislators inside gave overwhelming support to impeachment of the Indonesian leader.

Passage of the measure, which

ap news capsules

would set the stage for Wahid's possible removal by August, became a certainty when the two largest parties in Parliament backed ordering impeachment. A vote was expected later in the day.

At the gates of the heavily-guarded legislature, about 3,000 Wahid supporters, many carrying sticks and knives, demanded Parliament be dissolved. Thousands of troops backed by armored vehicles and tanks kept them from entering the compound.

In Wahid's home province of East Java, paratroopers fired warning shots at crowds of Wahid supporters in the town of Pasuruan. A local hospital reported that one protester was killed and four wounded. Shots were also fired into air in the city of Malang.

Mobs have burned churches, mosques, and the offices of political opponents over the past three days in East Java, where Wahid is revered as an Islamic holy man.

NATIONAL

SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK, Calif. — President Bush, eager to tout his commitment to protecting the environment, was touring the towering trees and stark granite peaks here today as he promoted initiatives to spruce up the national parks.

Bush was announcing a new directive calling for annual reviews of each national park by rangers, and renewing his call for a five-year, \$5 billion effort to address a heavy maintenance backlog.

On Tuesday, the administration announced it will let stand a proposal

approved in the last days of the Clinton presidency to clean up hazy skies over national parks and wilderness areas. It would require older coal-fired utilities, among others, to be retrofitted with new pollution-control technology by 2013.

NEW YORK — French telecommunications giant Alcatel SA and Lucent Technologies Inc. apparently failed to reach a merger agreement because Lucent officials didn't want Alcatel to have the upper hand in management of the combined company.

In a short statement issued Tuesday, the companies did not disclose why intense negotiations over the long holiday week ended abruptly after financial terms were reached for a deal worth as much as \$32 billion.

While not ruling out attempting a merger with another company, financially troubled Lucent plans to go it alone for now as it attempts a turnaround, said sources close to the negotiations who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Issues of corporate governance and management of the combined company were the main roadblocks preventing one of the largest takeovers of a U.S. technology group by a European company.

Lucent officials balked because they did not believe Alcatel was treating the deal as a merger of equals, several sources said.

The deal breaker was Lucent's insistence for equal representation among the combined company's senior man-

agers and on its board. Alcatel apparently declined to agree to those terms.

MAYO, Fla. — Fire crews around Florida are battling 59 brush fires, including a blaze that has charred nearly 61,000 acres of commercial timberland and swampland between Tallahassee and Gainesville.

The Mallory Swamp fire has burned for 16 days and is one of 59 active fires in the state, a result of Florida's ongoing drought, state fire officials said. The Mallory Swamp fire is the state's largest this year.

Gov. Jeb Bush and state Agriculture Commissioner Charles Bronson will be in Mayo, a small town roughly 90 miles southeast of Tallahassee, today for a briefing on the wildfires, a Florida Division of Forestry statement said.

Hundreds of firefighters dropped water from aircraft, sprayed foam from trucks and bulldozed more fire lines Tuesday around the swamp fire. They said they had the blaze 45 percent contained, while a 1,000-acre fire three miles to the northwest — called the Koon Pond fire — was 35 percent contained.

Crews and equipment were brought in from Arizona, Kentucky, North Carolina, and South Carolina and more bulldozers were coming in from Mississippi and Tennessee to help battle the fires.

TOMS RIVER, N.J. — A New York nurse has been charged with killing two men whose remains were found stuffed in plastic trash bags along New Jersey highways in 1992 and 1993.

Richard W. Rogers Jr., 50, was ar-

rested Tuesday in New York City and charged with two counts of murder. Ocean County Prosecutor David Millard said Rogers "meticulously dismembered" the two victims with a knife and handsaw.

Millard also said police are actively investigating Rogers with regard to other dismemberment cases.

Thomas R. Mulcahy, 58, a Massachusetts computer executive, disappeared July 8, 1992, after attending a business meeting in New York. Two days later, his head and other remains were found.

On May 10, 1993, the remains of Anthony E. Marrero, 44, of Manhattan, were found in a bag along a roadside.

The prosecutor would not comment on a motive but said Mulcahy was known to frequent gay bars and that Marrero worked as a gay prostitute in New York City.

The break in the case came three weeks ago when fingerprints taken off the plastic bags were allegedly matched with Rogers' in Maine, where he had had some contact with authorities.

SUSANVILLE, Calif. — Flames from a 4,100-acre wildfire crept to within 30 feet of homes and coated the town of Susanville with dark soot, giving firefighters an unwelcome taste of what could be ahead for the western fire season.

Firefighters in northern California had the Susanville blaze about 50 percent contained early today. Elsewhere, firefighters battled a 6,500-acre wildland near Nevada's Pyramid Lake. And in New Mexico, rugged terrain hampered firefighters in

the Guadalupe Mountains, where a burning log and strong wind swept a 2,000-acre fire across containment lines.

Interior Secretary Gale Norton said Tuesday that the fire potential in the West was already shaping up as one of the worst in decades.

WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON — The big Pentagon shake-up some expected when President Bush took office — after campaigning on a pledge to modernize the military and repair morale — is looking less likely.

Or at least it is slower in coming. A spokesman for Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said Tuesday that the policy reviews he undertook three months ago to fashion a new approach to defense are likely to produce less dramatic results than commonly believed.

"I think there was a widespread perception that there would be many more near-term announcements of dramatic change than what we're actually going to see," said Rear Adm. Craig Quigley.

Some private analysts who have monitored Rumsfeld's reviews think the Bush administration's approach to defense will turn out more like the Clinton administration's than anyone might have believed even a few weeks ago.

"The new Pentagon team has basically been reinventing the wheel," says Loren Thompson of the Lexington Institute, a think tank. "It is gradually backing into all the beliefs about geopolitical, technological and managerial trends that the Clinton team had arrived at after eight laborious years."

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