

Philippine president promises ‘long and bloody war’

By The Associated Press INTERNATIONAL
ZAMBOANGA, Philippines — The Philippines’ president promised a “long and bloody war” against Muslim rebels who claim to have beheaded an American hostage — a claim questioned by the military.

As President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo made her grim warning, the military said it found three Filipino bodies, including a Muslim cleric, in territory of the Abu Sayyaf.

“We will meet fire with fire, and more,” Arroyo said at a nationally televised news conference. “No ransom. No deal. No cease-fire. No suspension of the military operation.”

Abu Sabaya, an Abu Sayyaf leader, said in a radio interview at dawn Tuesday that he had killed Guillermo Sobero, 40.

Yellow ribbons adorned the trees in Sobero’s neighborhood in Corona, Calif., east of Los Angeles.

The group also holds two other Americans — Christian missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham of Wichita, Kan. — and about 25 Filipinos captured in three raids in the last 2 1/2 weeks.

NATIONAL

One week after Tropical Storm Allison first rumbled onto the Texas and Louisiana coasts, states across the South are dealing with traces of the storm that left a deadly path of destruction in its wake.

Florida suffered the brunt of the storm’s wrath Tuesday as drenching rains, powerful wind and tornadoes hit the state.

The storm has been blamed for

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nine deaths in Florida — four of them since Monday.

The five others drowned last week off the Florida Panhandle in choppy waters caused by Allison.

In Texas and Louisiana, at least 21 deaths have been blamed on the first named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season.

Residents continued to clean up and tally the damage in Houston, where nearly 3 feet of rain in parts of the city turned freeways into rivers and subdivisions into lakes.

Early estimates peg the damage in the nation’s fourth-largest city at \$1 billion.

In South Carolina, the remnants of Allison spun off a series of tornadoes, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

NEW YORK — The same jury that feared it would create a martyr by executing a terrorist who killed 213 people at the U.S. embassy in Kenya will decide if his co-defendant should be put to death for killing 11 people in the nearly simultaneous bombing in Tanzania.

After five days of deliberations, a federal court jury said Tuesday it could not agree on whether to impose the death penalty against Mohamed Rashed Daoud Al-’Owhali, effectively sparing his life.

Al-’Owhali, 24, a follower of Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden, received life in prison without parole for his role in the Aug. 7, 1998, attack

in Nairobi.

In a lengthy “verdict sheet” used by the jurors to reach their decision, 10 members of the 12-person panel believed that killing Al-’Owhali might make him a martyr. Nine doubted it would relieve victims’ pain.

Al-’Owhali rode in a bomb-hauling truck in Kenya and threw a stun grenade to distract embassy guards.

His co-defendant, Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, 27, was convicted of helping build and deliver a bomb to the U.S. embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

The same Manhattan jury is to begin hearing Mohamed’s penalty case next Tuesday.

NEW ORLEANS — Disturbed by high divorce rates, the Southern Baptist Convention is developing a blueprint for pastors on preventing divorce and ministering to single parents.

Few details of the strategy have been finalized, but the aim is to strengthen the church and have Southern Baptist families serve as models for non-Christian couples, said the Rev. Thomas Elliff, who leads the convention’s Council on Family Life.

The country’s largest Protestant group, with almost 16 million members, plans to conclude its two-day annual meeting today by sending churchgoers home to heal broken marriages within their own congregations.

The denomination that sees itself at war with American culture over abortion, gay rights and the place of faith in daily life will turn a critical eye on itself and present its plan at next year’s meeting.

The estimated 9,100 church representatives were to vote today on a resolution asking congregations to promote covenant marriage, in which couples voluntarily impose limits on their ability to divorce.

WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON — The price of President Bush’s education plan is one of the few issues remaining after Senate Democrats defeated a Republican attempt to give poor students federal money to attend private or parochial schools.

The vote came as leaders in both parties worked to wrap up the education legislation by week’s end. Senators still faced debate on, among other issues, school repair and after-school programs.

In a long-awaited vote Tuesday, 11 Republicans and independent Vermont Sen. James Jeffords joined 46 Democrats to defeat the voucher amendment, sponsored by Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., one of three Democrats who broke ranks to vote for the amendment, called vouchers “a short-term educational lifeline” for children in failing schools.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., expressed most Democrats’ views when he said the private-school allowances would drain money from

public schools but wouldn’t keep private schools from rejecting children with learning disabilities, limited English skills or other problems.

The final vote was 58-41. Along with Lieberman, Sens. Tom Carper of Delaware and Robert Byrd of West Virginia joined Republicans.

WASHINGTON — Teen-agers appear to be getting the message that abstinence from sex or consistent use of birth control equals fewer babies.

On Tuesday, the government reported that the teen pregnancy rate continued to fall, hitting a record low in 1997, the latest year for which complete figures are available.

The abortion rate fell by nearly a third since 1990, also reaching a record low.

Researchers don’t know why teens decide against having sex or to use birth control.

“That is almost wholly up to speculation,” said researcher David Landry of the Alan Guttmacher Institute, which focuses on reproductive health issues.

It may be a subject worth speculating on. Those who support a greater emphasis on abstinence — telling teens to just say no to sex — tend to credit an increase in support for these programs, which saw a massive infusion of government money beginning in 1997.

Those who believe the availability of birth control is key point to new, more reliable methods of contraception. Those include Depo-Provera, an injectable drug that came onto the market in 1993, and Norplant, capsules that are surgically inserted under the skin and last about five years.

trated with months-long negotiations with a White House wary of potentially large jury awards against insurance companies and businesses that offer their workers health plans, a source familiar with the negotiations said Tuesday.

The key to Norwood’s frustration is the Bush administration’s resistance to allowing patients to pursue claims in state courts, which often award greater damages, the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Senate Democrats hoped to start work as early as Thursday on the sweeping plan, which would provide new rules for what health maintenance organizations must cover and new rights for patients to sue in state or federal courts if they are denied needed care.

WASHINGTON (AP) — A congressional commission would plan the best way to mark the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling that ended school segregation, under efforts by Rep. Jim Ryun, R-Kan., and the rest of the Kansas delegation.

Cheryl Brown Henderson, daughter of the lead plaintiff in the case, said the Brown vs.

Board of Education of Topeka case “is one of the top three most significant judicial turning points in this country’s history.”

“Yet it is so largely misunderstood,” added Henderson, now president of the Brown Foundation for Educational Equity and Research. She was at the U.S. Capitol to see Ryun introduce his legislation Tuesday.

Her father, Oliver Brown, became involved because he wanted to enroll another daughter, Linda, in a white elementary school nearby.

The case was in the making for decades and involved several black families in Topeka and across the nation.

To commemorate the May 17, 2004, anniversary, the commission could help develop a series of public lectures, sponsor writing contests or try to convince history textbook publishers to include more about the Brown case.

St. Francis girl loses life in roll-over accident

A 16-year-old St. Francis girl was killed about 11:10 p.m. Friday night when her vehicle rolled east of town, throwing her out. Her companion, a 16-year-old St. Francis boy, escaped with only minor injuries.

Sheriff Eddie Dankenbring said Kelsey Cooper was driving a 2000 Ford Explorer eastbound on the Wheeler Road east of St. Francis when she swerved to miss an object in the

road and lost control. The Ford Explorer rolled several times in the ditch before Cooper was ejected, and then crossed the fence, ending up in a pasture on its wheels, headed west.

Justin Lindsten, the passenger, was not thrown from the vehicle. He had minor injuries and was taken to the Cheyenne County Hospital, where he was treated and released the next day.

Cooper was also taken to the hospi-

tal, where she was pronounced dead.

Sheriff Eddie Dankenbring said neither Cooper nor Lindsten was wearing a seatbelt. He said there was no alcohol involved.

Cooper would have been a junior at St. Francis Community High School this fall. She played basketball and ran track for the Lady Indians, and ran cross country with the Goodland High School team as St. Francis does not

offer cross country. She was on the pom-pom squad and a lifeguard at the St. Francis pool. She was a member of Peace Lutheran Church.

She was the daughter of Mark and Toby Cooper of St. Francis. She had an older brother Wes and a younger sister Mindy.

The funeral was held Tuesday at the church, with burial in the St. Francis Cemetery.

The

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