

Philippines blame terrorist group for deaths

around the world

by the Associated Press
INTERNATIONAL
ZAMBOANGA, Philippines — Philippine authorities blamed the notorious Abu Sayyaf terror group for a bombing attack that killed an American Green Beret and two Filipinos outside a restaurant frequented by troops. The explosion Wednesday evening shattered an open air market and injured more than two dozen people, including another Green Beret who was airlifted out of the country for treat-

ment, a U.S. official said today. Gen. Hermogenes Ebdane, the national police chief, blamed the attack on the al-Qaida linked Abu Sayyaf, known for kidnappings and beheadings throughout the predominantly Muslim southern Philippines. The driver of a motorcycle in which the nail-laden bomb was stashed was identified as an Abu Sayyaf member

from a sketch based on witness accounts and his body, Ebdane said today. The man was killed when the bomb went off.

SEOUL, South Korea — After a two-year lull, a U.S. envoy visited North Korea today to resume security talks with a nation that President Bush described as part of "an axis of evil."

The dispatch of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly signaled Washington's willingness to pursue different tracks with its declared enemies.

Kelly's trip to North Korea was not expected to yield breakthroughs on contentious issues: the North's weapons programs, its concentration of conventional forces near the Demilitarized Zone that separates the two Koreas, and its suppression of human rights.

The trip, which ends Saturday, dovetails with what appears to be a concerted push by North Korean leader Kim Jong Il to improve ties with traditional adversaries that are critical to the revival of his decaying economy.

NATIONAL

FREMONT, Calif. — The only major vehicle production line west of the Mississippi ground to a halt as the West Coast port shutdown began to burden shipping-dependent industries across the country.

The sole glimmer of hope Wednesday came with word that dock workers' union representatives and shipping lines would resume federally mediated contract talks today. The stalemate has stopped all commercial shipping at 29 ports in California, Oregon and Washington.

New United Motor Manufacturing Inc. in Fremont was one of the first major plants to shut down production as the normally steady supply of auto parts dried up Wednesday and engines, transmissions and vehicle frames sat idle in cargo holds at the Port of Oakland.

The stalled Fremont auto plant employs about 5,500 workers and an annual payroll of \$300 million. There were no immediate plans for layoffs.

TRENTON, N.J. — Republicans said they would look to the U.S. Supreme Court to keep Democrats from putting former Sen. Frank Lautenberg on the November ballot instead of Sen. Robert Torricelli, who shocked the political world this week when he abruptly dropped his re-election bid.

The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled 7-0 Wednesday that Lautenberg could replace Torricelli, who quit Monday amid questions about his eth-

ics and fears that a loss could cost the Democrats their narrow Senate majority.

But a lawyer for the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee said GOP nominee Douglas Forrester would ask that the U.S. Supreme Court delay the New Jersey high court ruling today.

The lawyer, Alex Vogel, also said a separate lawsuit would be filed in U.S. District Court in New Jersey on behalf of overseas military personnel who have requested absentee ballots.

"Federal law requires they should already have gone out," Vogel said.

NEW YORK — Prosecutors may have moved a step closer to Martha Stewart in their investigation of her alleged insider stock deals.

Douglas Faneuil, an assistant to Stewart's stockbroker, pleaded guilty Wednesday to a misdemeanor charge of receiving money and other valuables for keeping quiet about Stewart's sale of ImClone Systems Inc. shares last December.

"This public plea is designed to convince Martha Stewart to lay down her sword and admit that she traded on inside information," said Seth Taube, a former Securities and Exchange Commission lawyer now in private practice.

Faneuil and his supervisor, Peter Bacanovic — Stewart's broker — have been fired by Merrill Lynch. The assistant, who faces a maximum year in prison, will likely get probation under the plea deal.

He would also testify against Stewart and others who might be charged in the case.

Stewart dumped nearly 4,000 shares of ImClone just before the stock price began to plunge on news that the Food and Drug Administration would not review its application for its highly touted cancer drug, Erbitux. Allyn Magrino, a spokeswoman for Stewart, declined to comment on Faneuil's plea.

WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON — Senate moderates remain unable to bridge the chasm separating Republicans and Democrats over labor rights in the proposed Homeland Security Department.

Democrats John Breaux of Louisi-

ana and Ben Nelson of Nebraska, joined by Republican Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, could not win agreement Wednesday on their latest attempt at compromise, which moved closer to the White House position. As a result, the Senate logjam continues after almost five weeks.

A spokeswoman for Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., repeated his pledge that the Senate would keep trying for a deal even as it moves on to other issues, such as use of force against Iraq.

President Bush has threatened to veto the homeland security legislation unless it gives him greater power to hire, fire and move around the proposed agency's 170,000 workers.

Democrats, backed by their labor union allies, contend that Bush's proposals would undermine the civil service system and threaten collective bargaining rights.

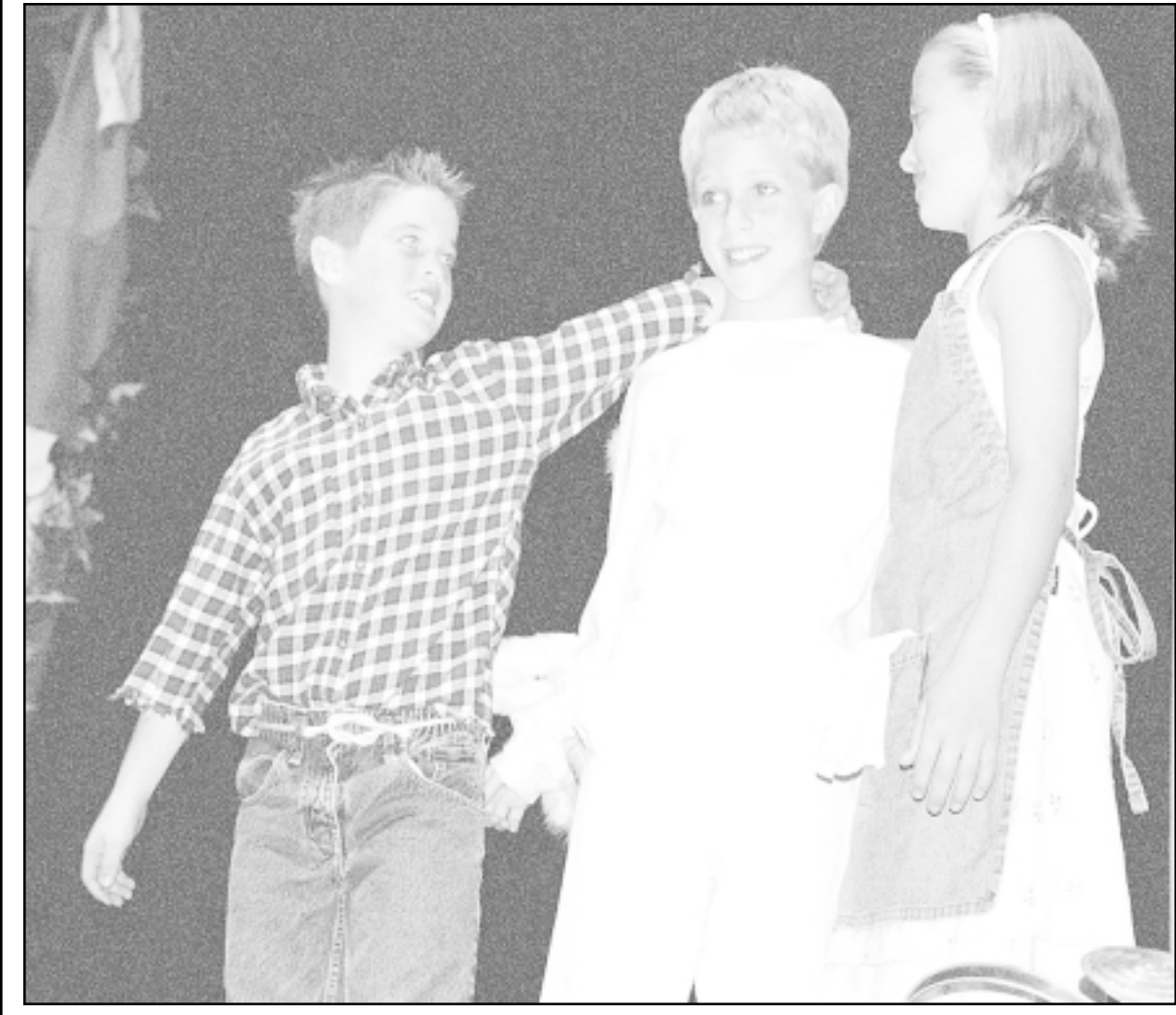
WASHINGTON — Al Gore says he hasn't made a decision about his own political plans, but he has a very clear position on the economic policy of President Bush, who defeated him in 2000.

"America's economy is in big trouble and I'm worried our current approach is failing us," Gore said Wednesday at the Brookings Institution. The former vice president said Bush is lost in an economic wilderness, "racing in the wrong direction" while critical domestic issues are drowned out by international affairs in the final weeks of the midterm campaign.

Gore, who is considering whether to run for the White House again, said the president should focus as intently on the faltering economy as he has on foreign affairs.

In his second speech in just over a week harshly criticizing the Bush administration, Gore called for a short-term stimulus program.

Jack convincing his mother



Jack (Hazen Deeds) presented the Goose who laid the golden egg (Parker Sieck) to his mother (Courtney Sheldon) and tried to sell her on the value of the goose in the Little City Productions' rendition of Jack and the Beanstalk Saturday at the Sherman Theatre. Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Daily News

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