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### Millions worldwide still in slavery

The International Labour Organization released a major report Wednesday, finding that more than 12.3 million people are enslaved worldwide, and their combined labor generates profits of over 32 billion dollars annually. There are at least two victims of forced labor for every 1,000 people worldwide.



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### Critics against USA and Israel in Summit of South American-Arab Countries in Brazil



Brazil's capital city of Brasilia is hosting the Summit of South American and Arab Countries from May 10th to the 11th, according to the Brazilian Ministry of External Relations. The summit was proposed by Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva during his visit to several Arab countries in December, 2004.

According to Radiobras, President Luiz

Inácio Lula da Silva said in his speech during the opening ceremony of the summit, that it is necessary to define a new economic and commercial international geography. "We are searching for trade that is fair and balanced, rid of the subsidies imposed by the rich countries, and which assures the poor countries the benefits of globalization. We want to establish a new relationship of solidary collaboration with international financial agencies, and we are striving for the Mercosur and the Gulf Cooperation Council to be able to conclude an economic cooperation agreement", he said.

Mahmoud Abbas said that the troops of Israel should unconditionally withdraw the Arab occupied territories. He also proposed the creation of an Arab-South American bank.

The President of Algeria Abdelaziz Bouteflika said during his speech that Israel should leave the Palestine territories. He defended the criterion of a Palestine state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Bouteflika said that the situation experienced by the Palestinians is "a denial of justice" that can no longer be tolerated. A long round of applause from Summit participants followed his declarations. "We must find a definitive solution for everyone to do his best, to get Israel to submit to international law and accept the negotiated peace," he added.

The President of Venezuela Hugo Chávez said that the Arab and South American countries are related because they both were subjected to exploitation by the richest countries. He said that after World War II, South America has been victim of domination mechanisms by an international financial architecture and by an old international organizations structure. According to him, there is no international democracy. Chávez said that South American and Arab countries are

### Soviet Cold War rockets on sale in Moldovan breakoff region



It is reported that Soviet Cold War Alazan radiation rockets are for sale in the Moldovan Republic of Transdniestria. A reporter was able to go undercover through a Transdniestria secret police office and meet with an arms dealer, who offered to sell three of the rockets for USD \$500,000. The rockets could be used to contaminate an entire city center. Full story

### North Korea removes spent nuclear fuel rods



North Korea's official news agency is reporting that the country has finished removing all its spent nuclear fuel rods, over 8,000 of them, from the main reactor in the Yongbyon nuclear plant. The rods could be used to make nuclear weapons

Weather:

the biggest oil sources and that this fact stimulates the "American imperialist voracity".

According to the Minister of Foreign Relations, Celso Amorim, the final document of the Summit of South American-Arab Countries will condemn terrorism. In addition to condemning terrorism, the document will include a paragraph about the "right of resistance to foreign occupation, according to international humanitarian law," said the minister.

The minister said that the document will also mention the sovereignty of the Falklands Islands, under dispute by Argentina and the United Kingdom.



### White House and Capitol Building evacuated as small plane enters no-fly zone

Two men were taken into custody for violating the no-fly zone surrounding the U.S. national capital in Washington D.C.

The Capitol Building, the Supreme Court, the Department of the Treasury and the White House were evacuated around noon Wednesday. People in the vicinity were told to head to a rail station approximately a half mile south of the White House, and reporters in the White House itself were told to move into the basement.

President Bush was not in the White House at the time; CNN and Bloomberg have reported that the President was on a bicycle ride; CTV has reported that he was at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Beltsville, Maryland. Wire sources report the cause of the evacuation as being a small plane that wandered into the no-fly zone. The craft is reportedly a Cessna 150, which flew into restricted space, left the area, and then returned. It was then escorted out of the zone by two F-16s that fired warning flares at it.

MSNBC reported that a 'lure motorcade' drove away from the White House.

Authorities gave the "all-clear" signal a few minutes after the evacuation. Other government agencies outside of the immediate area were largely unaffected.

At the time of the police-ordered evacuation, Sen. Richard Shelby, R-AL, was on the Senate floor. "They said get out of here, so I ran. There's no joking about this kind of stuff," Shelby said.

The two men who were flying the aircraft were on their way to an air show when they slipped into Washington D.C.'s Restricted Airspace (image at right). Their plane was escorted to a Maryland airport where they were taken into custody and interviewed by authorities. Once it became clear the incident had been a mistake, the two men were released

In Washington, D.C., a 25 km radius from the Washington Monument is restricted air space.

### Foot and mouth scare in New Zealand likely to be a hoax



The New Zealand Government is forced to act because of a letter sent to Prime Minister Helen Clark which claimed that the disease Foot and Mouth is being intentionally spread on Waiheke Island.

The letter, which is assumed to be a hoax, could have a major impact on New Zealand's meat industry. Agriculture Minister Jim Sutton went so far as to say that the suspension of meat exports by some countries was a real possibility.

Thorough testing of animals over the next week or two is required.

### North Korea removes spent nuclear fuel rods



North Korea's official news agency is reporting that the country has finished removing all its spent nuclear fuel rods, over 8,000 of them, from the main reactor in the Yongbyon nuclear plant.

The rods could be reprocessed for several months to extract weapons-grade plutonium. Officials say the rods could be able to provide enough plutonium to make two nuclear bombs.

This could possibly signal that North Korea is preparing for a nuclear arms test. North Korea may already have enough materials to make six nuclear bombs.

North Korea has also announced plans to continue operating the Yongbyo facility, as well as to begin construction on a larger reactor.

### Italians interested in investing in Romanian tourism

A group of businessmen and politicians from the Italian region of Trento have expressed their interest in investing up to €700 million in Cluj county, Romania, for tourism development. Marius Nicoară, the president of Cluj County Council, stated that the council would be interested in collaborating with the Italian investors for the development of mountain roads and ski resorts in the area.

Cluj county, which is located in the centre of Transylvania, is one of the most mountainous areas of the country. The county receives tourists, mainly for winter sports like skiing, and also has agritourism. The county's capital, Cluj-Napoca, is one of the largest cities in Romania.

Corrado Fedrizzi, the president of the Trento Development Agency, said that the Italian delegation needs an estimate of the number of tourists which could be

attracted to the area if the development takes place, the amortisation time for the investment and the European Union (EU) funds which could be awarded to support the project. Romania plans to become a member of the European Union in 2007, but currently receives a significant amount of pre-accession funds from the EU.

### **Romanian opposition gets more TV time than governing coalition**

A recent survey carried out by the National Broadcasting Council of Romania has shown that the largest Romanian opposition party, the Social Democrats, made a greater number of TV appearances than members of the governing Justice and Truth Alliance. However, the politician with the most TV appearances remained the Prime Minister, Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu.

The opposition Social Democratic Party (PSD) made 350 TV appearances in the past month, followed by the governing Justice and Truth Alliance, with 270 appearances, the Great Romania People's Party, with 59 appearances, the Conservative Party with 36 appearances and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, with 24 appearances.

PSD representatives had the greatest amount of TV appearances on TVR, the state-owned broadcaster, Antena 1, ProTV and Realitatea TV. Prima TV was the only TV network which broadcast more appearances by the Justice and Truth Alliance than the PSD.

The most covered politician was the Prime Minister Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu, with 73 appearances, trailed by the leader of the Social Democratic Party, Mircea Geoană (53 appearances) and the former Prime Minister, Adrian Năstase (37 appearances). In fourth place was the former President, and current Social Democrat senator, Ion Iliescu, followed by Vasile Ion, the father of Marie-Jeanne Ion, one of the three Romanian journalists kidnapped in Iraq in March. Other featured politicians include Dumitru Dragomir, from the Great Romania People's Party, Nicolae

Văcăroiu, from the Social Democrats, and Eugen Nicolaescu, spokesman of the Justice and Truth Alliance.

On the state-owned TVR network, representatives of the opposition had 42% more news coverage than the governing coalition. 33% of this coverage was positive, 9% was negative and the remainder was indifferent. The private station ProTV featured the greatest coverage of the Social Democrats, with 67%, 30% of which was positive.

One important political figure which was left out of the study is Romania's President, Traian Băsescu. The National Broadcasting Council did not monitor Băsescu's appearances because he is not a member of any political party.

### **Accuser admits he lied, former Canadian immigration minister cleared of wrongdoing**



The Canadian parliament's Ethics Commission said former immigration minister, Judy Sgro, did nothing wrong and her staff had put her into a conflict of interest. Harjit Singh, the pizza shop owner who signed an affidavit accusing her of offering help for him to stay in Canada in exchange for pizza deliveries and help on her election campaign, admitted he lied. The controversies forced Ms. Sgro to resign from her post in January.

Ms. Sgro read a letter from Mr. Singh in the House of Commons Tuesday. "Reputations should not be tarnished by unsubstantiated allegations and innuendo solely for partisan politics," she added.

After a 17-year fight to stay in Canada, Mr. Singh was deported to India in February. In his letter he said: "I now admit that I did not have a meeting with

Judy Sgro. Further, at no time, did Judy Sgro request any campaign assistance from me nor did she help me with my immigration problems. I am providing this apology and retraction voluntarily and of my own free will."

In a press conference, Ms. Sgro also discussed the confidential letter she'd received from ethics commissioner Bernard Shapiro. In his letter informing her of the commission's decision Mr. Shapiro wrote "It appears that you have acted appropriately but that your staff did not." The report on the incident from the commission is not actually finished, according to the commissioner, but he said Ms. Sgro was free to release the letter.

### **Soviet rockets on sale in Moldovan breakoff region**



Three Soviet Alazan radioactive rockets from the Cold War era are reportedly for sale in the Moldovan Republic of Transnistria.

A Sunday Times reporter went undercover through a Transnistrian secret police office. Posing as a middleman for an Algerian Islamic group, the reporter met with an arms dealer, who offered to sell three of the rockets for US\$500,000 (£263,000).

The Alazan is an 82mm diameter rocket originally developed to distribute cloud-seeding chemicals such as potassium or silver iodide. With a range of eight miles, the rockets could be used to contaminate an entire city center. These rockets were part of fifty thousand tons of equipment that Soviet forces left in the republic after the Cold War.

Some were converted into improvised munitions and modified to carry explosive warheads. Others were retrofitted with a warhead reputed to contain up to 400g of radioactive caesium-137 and strontium-90, to help scientists track clouds and other



meteorological events.

The arms dealer offered to allow the reporter to inspect the rockets with a Geiger counter to confirm that they contained caesium and strontium.

### Chesapeake Bay Program issues first-ever water quality forecast



For the Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the United States, a first-time-ever "water quality forecast" was issued Monday for the upcoming summer season by the Chesapeake Bay Program. The eastern mid-Atlantic region's heavy spring rainfalls are predicted to increase nutrient levels in bay waters, leading to oxygen eating algae blooms and leaving deep water dead zones.

Project leader William Dennison, of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Studies said, "The forecast indicates that recent weather conditions and heavy pollutant loads could lead to a bad summer for the Bay." The prediction is for this to be the fourth-worst season for dissolved oxygen in two decades.

The Chesapeake Bay Program launched the new forecast to build on a base of environmental data gathered over the last two decades as water quality concerns have grown. The forecast is meant to be a proactive tool that provides resource managers with information that can be used to guide policies for the bay's protection and restoration.

Cars, fertilizer, human and animal wastes, industrial and agricultural pollutants all play a part. "This means that we need to do a lot more to reduce phosphorus and

nitrogen pollution from getting into the bay," said Beth McGee, of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. "The biggest source of pollution in the bay is agriculture, and we've got to find a way to provide farmers with more resources to manage the land better."

Nutrient rich pollutants composed mainly of nitrogen and phosphorous come from far away places carried by rivers, and nearby the bay from farm and metropolitan runoff. They collect in the huge bay and meet tidal flows from the ocean.

Algae feed off the nutrients, and they are either consumed by aquatic life or sink at the end of their life cycle. With such an abundant food source, algae blooms can cover large surfaces of water and choke off sunlight to underwater plants. Later when the plants die, the process of their decomposition on the bottom consumes oxygen to a state where the water becomes anoxic, and unable to support life.

As notorious as weather forecasters are for often being wrong, it should come as no surprise if this first forecasting step by the federally funded program misses its mark. Forces such as heavy storms or hurricanes, which churn water, would have an effect. Excessive wind and unexpected precipitation, or nutrient level jumps, would also contribute.

### Canadian Liberal government loses House of Commons vote, won't call election



The Canadian Liberal government lost a key vote on a censure motion in the House of Commons, but has ignored demands by the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois to resign and call an election.

Liberal House leader Tony Valeri told Parliament after the vote, "We will continue to govern on behalf of Canadians," through a chorus of dispute.

Opposition parties claim they have triggered a constitutional crisis by clearly indicating the government no longer has the right to rule, but they have refused to ask Parliament to be dissolved. The opposition have been working for weeks to bring about a technical maneuver such as this when the government is weakened by months of wrangling over the Sponsorship Scandal.

The vote involved amending a report from October 2004 recommending the government resign for failure to address "governance of the public service."

The Canadian constitution calls for a government to dissolve and hold elections when there is a Parliamentary vote of no confidence, or a vote defeating a budget or money bill. The government says the censure amendment vote does not constitute an official vote of no confidence. Constitutional experts have said that the vote does raise a question-mark over confidence, and that this will therefore have to be settled expeditiously with a true confidence motion.

The event is likely to paralyze Parliament. The Conservatives have promised to shut down the Parliament, by voting each morning to end the day before any work is done.

The current status of the Parliament has the Liberals with 132 seats. The Conservatives hold 99 seats and are working in concert with the Bloc Québécois who hold 54 seats. Prime Minister Paul Martin recently worked a deal with the New Democrat Party, whose 19 seats have strengthened his position but still lack a majority. The remaining three independent seats and one vacancy quite literally may determine the outcome of a no-confidence vote if held later this month.

The government is only 10 months old, having been elected June 28, 2004, and is a rare minority government in Canadian history.