



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.

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:



Tom Ridge, former U.S. Homeland Security chief, defends Canadian Border



In a speech to business leaders in Toronto, Canada on May 11th, Former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge contradicted the view that Canada's security system is weak. Rather, he had praise for Canada's role in protecting the U.S./Canadian border.

"I don't accept the thesis that Canada is lenient or hasn't done what it needs to do to advance their interest and doing their share to combat terrorism... The law enforcement and intelligence community collaboration is excellent."

The U.S. border with Canada is 4,000 miles long, twice as long as its border with Mexico.

Since September 11, 2001, \$8 billion has been spent by Canada on border security improvements, and Canada plans to spend an additional \$1 billion in the coming year.

Gaza settlers protest planned pull-out
Israel's Independence Day was marked by protests around Gaza as nationalist Israelis rallied against the planned dismantling of 21 settlements in the

region. The settlements house 8,500 Jews, surrounded by 1.3 million Palestinians.

The protests were peaceful as many marched or even held picnics in the settlements. Police estimated a turnout of about 35,000 but organizers estimated 80,000.

This comes after similar, larger protests against Ariel Sharon's plan to end conflict with the Palestinians over the area.

U.S. Senate accuses U.K. and French politicians of accepting oil vouchers from Saddam Hussein

A United States Senate probe has released evidence purportedly showing that two prominent U.K. and French politicians received vouchers for millions of barrels of Iraqi oil in exchange for their support of Saddam Hussein's regime under the UN Oil-for-Food Program (OFP).

Under the OFP, Iraq was allowed to sell the rights to oil to whomever it wanted to and at a below-market price. These people could then re-sell the rights, and in turn make a profit, usually between 3 and 30 cents a barrel. This is what the two are accused of doing.

The Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI) found Hussein-era documents that show the two politicians received the rights. They also heard from officials from the old regime who confirmed the documents.

George Galloway, a recently re-elected member of the British Parliament, is accused of receiving allocations for 20 million barrels of oil. He is also accused of using his Leukaemia foundation for children to conceal the transfer of 3 million barrels.

Galloway, who is a member of his own anti-war RESPECT The Unity Coalition

party in the Britain, won a ferocious campaign for parliament last week in Bethnal Green and Bow, east London, where a sizeable part of the population is of a Muslim southern Asian origin.

Galloway has issued the following statement:

I've now had a chance to read the report which was compiled without this Senate committee asking me a single question about these absurd allegations. I repeat once more. I have never traded or benefited from any oil deals with Iraq.

One of the companies named, with ostensible links to me - Aredio Petroleum - I have never heard of until today and I have certainly had no dealings with. The other company, Middle East Advanced Semiconductors, was owned by Fawaz Zureikat, who was the chairman of the Mariam Appeal. It is well-known that Mr Zureikat traded with Iraq but he did not do so on my behalf. I have not received a penny piece or any oil voucher from Iraq, directly or indirectly.

You would have thought that natural justice would have demanded that these allegations would have - must have been! - put to me, but they haven't been. Senator Joseph McCarthy would have proud of this committee.

The Senate committee will be holding a further hearing on May 17, and have invited Galloway to attend, where he will be given a seat and a microphone.

Charles Pasqua, currently member of the Senate of France, was in the past Minister of the Interior, in charge of law enforcement, safety measures and relationships with local governments. His name has been cited in several corruption scandals inside France, though he has not been convicted.

Galloway and Pasqua have denied any wrongdoing in the oil-for-food programme. George Galloway has already won libel suits against a newspaper which claimed he had accepted bribes from the Iraqi regime.

U.S. Senator Voinovich allows Bolton
United States Senator George Voinovich (R-Ohio) agreed today to vote for President Bush's nominee for United States ambassador to the United Nations, John R. Bolton. The highly controversial and contested nominee has come under scrutiny from members of both parties for his political stance concerning the United Nations. Senator Voinovich previously voted "no", halting the nomination from leaving the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Now that he is voting "yes", the nomination will be put before the Senate for a vote.

Despite voting "yes", the Senator issued scathing remarks concerning Bolton, referring to him as a "bully" and claiming that he is a disgrace to the nation. Also, Voinovich stated that he would vote "no" in the Senate.

Security flaws in Mozilla Firefox internet browser fixed



The Mozilla Foundation have released version 1.0.4 of their popular Firefox browser, which fixes the two major problems discovered earlier this week.

The new version fixes no less than six security flaws, including the two 'extremely critical' flaws. Other fixes include one which prevents another method of running code without permission on a user's computer.

There are also five other general bug fixes.

European MEPs abolish right to opt-out of Working Time Directive

By a majority of 378 to 262, Members of the European Parliament have voted to abolish the right of European Union countries to opt out of Working Time Directive. If agreed by the Council of Ministers, the right to opt out of the directive will be phased out over a period of three years.

Under the "derogation" provision of the directive, employed by the United Kingdom alone among member states, individual workers can waive the right to work no more than 48 hours per week.

Serbia and Montenegro: Red Star advances to cup finals

Red Star (Crvena Zvezda) Belgrade advanced to the Serbia and Montenegro football cup finals, after defeating Partizan Belgrade with a score of 2:0 yesterday. The first goal was scored by Nikola Žigić in the tenth minute (10'). Krivokapić scored the other goal in the final moments of the match - 90'.

The game between city rivals was attended by only about 8000 fans. Aside from heavy rain, many fans of both Red Star and Partizan decided to boycott the game. Red Star's fans were forbidden from performing their traditional choreography at the beginning of the match, probably due to riots that took place the last time Red Star and Partizan played a regular league game. Partizan's fans displayed a large sign reading "Football Association of Serbia and Montenegro = mafia."

Red Star has a chance to win the cup against Železnik, while Partizan is on its way to win the league with 7 point lead.

Line ups:

Red Star:

Randelović, Milovanović, Luković, Đorđević, Dudić, Biševac, Kovačević, Janković, Perović, Žigić, Pantelić

Reserves:

Banović, Joksimović, Krivokapić, Mudrinić, Đokaj, Mrđa, Bogavac

Partizan:

Kralj, Rnić, Mirković, Đorđević, Emeghara, Nađ, Brnović, Ilić, Vukčević, Boya, Odita

Reserves:

Pantić, Ćirković, Radović, Petrović, Milović, Tomić, Grubješić.

Millions worldwide still in slavery

The International Labour Organization released a major report Wednesday, finding that currently more than 12.3 million people are enslaved worldwide. An estimated 2.4 million of them are victims of slave trafficking, and their combined labor generates profits of over 32 billion dollars annually. Forced labor is "a social evil which has no place in the modern world," said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia. Somavia also added, "forced labor represents the underside of globalization and denies people their basic rights and dignity... to achieve a fair globalization and decent work for all, it is imperative to eradicate forced labour."

The new study confirms that slavery remains a major global problem to this day. The report breaks down slaves by continent: 9.5 million forced laborers are in Asia, which is the region with the highest number; 1.3 million in Latin America and the Caribbean; 660,000 in sub-Saharan Africa; 260,000 in the Middle East and North Africa; 360,000 in industrialized countries; and 210,000 in transition countries. It also reveals that slavery is present in all regions and in all types of economies.

Forced economic exploitation is more or less evenly divided between men and women, however forced commercial sexual exploitation involves almost entirely women and girls. In addition, children bear a heavy burden, comprising between 40 to 50 percent of all slaves. There are at least two victims of forced labor for every 1,000 people worldwide.

Dog laws strengthened in Virginia county

Amid publicity that arose from deaths and injuries due to dog attacks in the region, the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to impose tougher penalties on dog owners who let their dogs run free. The Tuesday evening vote, which was preceded by a public hearing, ruled for a new animal control ordinance where dog owners who are repeat offenders face a misdemeanor crime of \$2,500 or up to a year in jail.

Dogs that repeatedly chase cars and run free, or otherwise trespass on property could be euthanized if so ordered by a judge. The county's legal language of a dog running at large is when it is "roaming, running or self-hunting off the property or premises of its owner or custodian and not under the immediate control of the owner or custodian or his agent."

A public debate, sparked by the mauling death of elderly woman attacked by 3 Pit Bulls in her front yard, had in attendance the Virginia State Senator Edward Houke, who said he would raise dog law issues in the January meeting of the General Assembly. As one of the number of people who spoke at the hearing, Houke said, "It's pretty obvious to me that the state law needs to be changed, but saying that and it happening, is two completely different phenomena," he said according to The Free Lance Star. "If there's one thing you learn quickly it's that you don't bring dog bills to the Virginia General Assembly."

The Sullivan daughters, who lost their mother in the mauling attack, circulated petitions in the county and also attended the hearing. Board chairman Robert Hagan noted the Sullivan family presence and thanked them for their efforts to prevent more tragedies.

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