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VOL. 1 NO. 25

VANCE TO RESIGN AS

MEDIATOR IN PEACE TALKS

by Marina Gilbert

New York, Apr 1 (IPS) -- Cyrus Vance, the United Nations representative at the Geneva peace conference on the former Yugoslavia, is to resign from his post as mediator in the Bosnian conflict.

Fred Eckhard, the official spokesman of the Geneva conference, said Vance "is preparing to resign,, because the negotiations on Bosnia-Herzegovina are now "in the hands of the Security Council."

For the past seven months, Vance and his British colleague, European Community (EC) representative David Owen, have jointly conducted peace negotiations aimed at ending the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Last week, Bosnian Muslims agreed to the so-called Vance-Owen Peace Plan which was signed earlier by the Croats.

However, the Serbs are still refusing to accept two of the four chapters of the agreement and are the only factor onto boycott the international community's efforts to end the bitter ethnic conflict in the Balkans.

NO BUYERS FOR NEW YORK

CITY U.N. PROPERTY

by Thalif Deen

New York, Apr 1 (IPS) - The United Nations is stuck with a piece of New York City real estate for which it cannot find buyers.

U.N. Controller Jacques Baudot described the building that once housed the U.N. Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) as "an uncollectable asset" in the U.N. budget.

The U.N. Secretariat has been trying since last year to get rid of the mid-rise building, located on prime property on a street just across from the U.N. headquarters in Manhattan.

The world body decided last year to close down UNITAR and absorb its 10 staff members within the (continued on Page 5)

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The Security Council is currently discussing a package of sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro to force the Bosnian Serbs to sign the controversial peace plan.

The latest resolution, which the Security Council is expected to approve on Friday, is intended to completely isolate Belgrade and cut off its oil supplies and flow of goods by deploying patrols in border areas and along the river Danube.

However, this measure is also likely to affect neighbouring countries, such as Hungary, whose trade could be seriously affected. Hungary, a non-permanent member of the Security Council, has expressed its deep concern at the effects of the sanctions, but has received no support from the authors of the plan, the United States, Britain, France, Russia and Spain.

The draft resolution grants the Bosnian Serbs, led by Radovan Karadzic, a two-week period to accept the peace plan. Otherwise sanctions will be imposed.

However, the resolution also contemplates "lifting all previous measures" if the Serbs halt their aggression against the Muslims and Croats and agree to sign the Vance-Owen Peace Plan. Although the Security Councils present sanctions against Belgrade have seriously affected the economy, caused food shortages and sparked an inflationary spiral, they have failed to force a change of policy by (continued on Page 2)

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Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic.

The draft resolution begins by ratifying the arms embargo against all warring parties in the former Yugoslavia, despite U.S. promises to the Muslims that it would consider lifting the weapons ban should all other peace measures fail.

The United States still refuses to give full backing to all aspects of the Vance-Owen plan, preferring to praise the efforts of the negotiators rather than making a real commitment to their proposals.

In any case, the draft resolution is likely to undergo several changes before Friday, according to non-permanent members of the Security Council, who saw the text Wednesday for the first time.

Since few expect the Bosnian Serbs to adhere to the Vance-Owen Peace Plan, senior U.N. diplomats believe that the application of sanctions is still the most viable option.

On Wednesday, the Security Council passed a resolution authorising the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to shoot down Serbian aircraft violating the no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The resolution, whose approval was delayed by two weeks as a result of initial Russian objections, authorises U.N. member states and their regional organisations to "use all necessary measures" to ensure the no-fly zone over Bosnia is respected. However, the resolution also specifies that no land targets, such as airports or landing strips may be attacked, something that was not included in the original version of the text.

The measure will come into effect in two weeks time to allow the UN protection force in former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) to take precautions against possible Serbian reprisals. I

U.N. COMPENSATION

COMMISSION BEGINS WORK

IN EARNEST

by Appan Menon

New York, Apr 1 (IPS) -The United Nations has taken a decisive step towards compensating victims of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The world body Thursday appointed nine jurists and experts to the Geneva-based Compensation Commission, a body which will now examine the claims of more than a million foreign workers.

The nine Commissioners are from Argentina, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Finland, Ghana, Morocco, Russia and Switzerland, and the Governing Council comprises Security Council members.

According to the United Nations, most of the workers uprooted by the 1991 war were from South Asia and the Philippines. Several U.N. member-states have put forward claims on their behalf but no one has as yet received reparations. Only 700,000 claims have so far been made, but experts believe that a total of 100 billion dollars will be claimed by the time the Compensation Fund begins operating by the end of the year. The deadline for individual claims is Jul. 1.

The Fund, established by the Security Council in 1991, is theoretically supposed to be financed on the basis of 30 percent of the price of every barrel of oil exported by Iraq.

But because of the U.N.-imposed sanctions against Baghdad, the country has had to curtail its exports.

The Council agreed this week to keep the sanctions

regime in place pending another review in two months time, although some countries felt it was hurting the people more than the Iraqi leadership.

The Council passed a resolution last September freezing Baghdad's oil assets abroad to fund the United Nations' Iraq-related activities and the Compensation Fund.

But according to the Commission, only 2.1 million dollars has been pledged to the Fund, and even this amount has not been received so far.

Governments and corporations can also claim compensation for the losses incurred by the war. But these losses must be the direct result of the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait, according to the Commission.

This ruling automatically excludes countries affected by the trade embargo imposed by the Security Council after the Iraqi invasion. The link between the invasion and the losses suffered is not sufficiently direct, according to a decision taken by the Governing Council of the Compensation Commission last November.

Developing countries, including India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, suffered because of the embargo on the oil trade with Iraq. They have proposed a Reserve Fund to help countries affected by sanctions but no action has been taken either by the Security Council or the General Assembly. I

CLINTON FACES 'TOWNS-

VERSUS-JOBS, CONTROVERSY

by Jim Lobe

Washington, Apr 1 (IPS) - U.S. President Bill Clinton will walk into a veritable buzz saw of controversy involving labour, industry, and environmentalists when he chairs Friday's 3 Timber Summit in Portland, Oregon.

The Summit, to which Clinton is taking certain Cabinet members and Vice-President Al Gore, is designed to gather facts and perspectives about the so-called 'towns-versus-jobs' debate which has roiled the politics of the Pacific Northwest.

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Washington, which has lectured Third World governments on the importance of preserving their natural environment, now has to decide what it is willing to do to conserve its own threatened forests and their biological diversity.

The issue will test Clinton's assertions that the United States should protect the environment and jobs at the same time.

While the White House says the summit is only "about listening and learning", Clinton warned this month that his eventual recommendations "will probably make everybody mad".

The controversy over the ancient forests has become white hot in the Northwest since a 1991 ruling by a federal judge in the city of Seattle on the 20-year-old Endangered Species Act (ESA) and how it affected the survival of the northern spotted owl. After the owl was designated by federal authorities as an endangered species in 1990, Judge William Dwyer banned logging in those parts of the government-owned ancient forests where the owl lives, pending a government plan to protect it.

The ban covered about three million acres of forest land -- or 1.2 million hectares -- about one-tenth of the massive forests which once covered the US. Pacific coastlands and mountains.

The ban, imposed as the United States was headed into recession, was immediately attacked by industry and labour advocates who warned that fencing off the old-growth forests from logging will cost 25,000 to 50,000 jobs.

That would make many small lumber towns in the region, already hard hit by changes in the industry during the 1970's, into virtual ghost towns, according to interests who contend the costs of the owl's protection are simply too high.

But ecologists say these figures are exaggerated. Automation and the export of one-fourth of the regions' total timber harvest -- mostly to Japan -- have had a far more devastating impact on jobs than any conservation measures, they argue.

They also note that lumber companies have accelerated the decline by moving more of their operations to the southeastern part of the country.

During the 1980s alone, they say, Washington State and Oregon lost more than 26,000 timber-related jobs for reasons unrelated to conservation issues. Since the 1991 ruling, another 13,000 jobs have disappeared, according to recent studies.

But environmentalists say this rate of loss is no worse than jobs in many other industries hard-hit by the recession. They have also been bolstered in their cause by certain federal reports. Last June, for example, a team of scientists found through detailed satellite photos that the national forests in the Northwest had become far more damaged and fragmented than previously believed.

Recent studies on habitat loss have shown that once an ecosystem becomes too fragmented, the chances of its survival are greatly reduced. Another study by Forest Service biologists has recommended that protective measures for the owls be extended to more of the estimated 600 animal species found in the ancient forests.

Since the owl was listed as endangered under the ESA, the marbled murrelet shorebird and three species of salmon have been found to be similarly threatened. Environmental groups say these additions

only add urgency to the need for a solution that will protect the habitat.

"Behind the spotted owl lies the salmon," says Mark Shaefer of the Washington-based Wilderness Society. But one perverse effect of the two-year ban is the surge in prices for lumber from old-growth forests, especially for redwoods from northern California.

Prices for some kinds of lumber have doubled or more over the past two years, spurring a logging spree in private lands which surround the national forests.

Clinton himself is holding his card close to the vest, but Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has already hinted that he favours plans that would continue the ban on logging in those forests whose ecosystems are healthiest, while easing the ban on more marginal areas.

Some environmentalists and unions also have joined in proposing greater restrictions on the export of raw logs from the Northwest which they say was the principal cause of lost jobs since the 1970's.

ARAB POPULATION MEETING

TO ADDRESS EXPANDING

FOREIGN WORK FORCE

by jam Dayal

New York, Apr 1 (IPS)- A conference in Amman, Jordan next week will discuss the key issue of migration and the growing non-Arab work force in oil-exporting countries.

The Apr. 4-8 Arab Population Conference is sponsored by the UN. Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and the League of Arab States.

A background paper by the co-sponsors highlights the consequences of both international migration and inter-Arab migration in the region.

The paper says that while migration from the Al-Maghreb countries -- Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia -- to Europe has totaled some two million people, migration to a handful of Arab countries is greater still.

The paper says labour migration flows to the 'Gulf Cooperation Council' (GCC) countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates rose from 1.1 million in 1975 to 5.2 (continued on page 4)

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million in 1980, a growth rate of 10.2 percent

It says that compared to their national populations, the GCC countries have received a disproportionate number of non-national migrants.

In fact, in 1990, the six countries received almost 10 percent of the worldwide migrant population.

Their own population, including non-nationals, was only 0.4 percent of the world's population that year, say the co-sponsors.

Saudi Arabia figured as the biggest magnetic pole, attracting more than 60 percent of the economically active non-nationals in the mid-1980s. The United Arab Emirates attracted 14 percent of the non-national work force, Kuwait 13 percent, Oman eight percent, Qatar four percent, and Bahrain two percent.

The paper says that since the resumption of economic and social life in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia following the 1991 Gulf War, the size of the regions' foreign work force in 1995 may be even greater than the year preceding the War.

And the paper says that there will be a significant change in the national distribution of foreign workers, with fewer Arabs and more Asians.

The Arab share of the total migrant non-national work force in the Gulf may drop to 20 percent in 1995 compared to 47 percent in the mid-1980s, says the paper.

It says that the polarisation among Arabs following the War has resulted in greater opportunities for Asians to increase their share of Gulf labour markets. Roughly one million migrant workers from Yemen, Jordan, Palestine, and Sudan were expelled from the GCC countries as a consequence of the Gulf War.

Roughly 390,000 Egyptians were returned to their country, while some 225,000 Jordanian-Palestinians went home. Another reason for the decreasing Arab share of the non-national work force is the difference in wages paid to Arab and Asian workers, says the paper.

It states that available data during 1987-89 shows that in Saudi Arabia, an Arab worker was paid, on average, twice as much as his Asian colleague in 1987, and three times as much in 1989. And Saudi workers are paid, on average, more than their non-Saudi Arab or Asian colleagues in all occupations, says the paper.

For example, a Saudi professional and technical worker was paid 1.4 times more than a non-Saudi Arab, and 3.6 times more than an Asian worker performing the same occupation.

The paper says the human rights of both Arab and international migrants must be respected and that the deterioration of political relations among Arab countries should not lead to the deportation of migrants or to the loss of their rights. It says that inter-Arab migration will remain high on the regions' agenda for the next 25 years.

According to the United Nations, faced with an average growth rate of three percent per year, the region's current 235 million population could increase to 449 million people by 2020.

Next week's five-day conference will examine the Arab world's population policies and programmes, women and development, health and family planning. In addition, the regions' ministers will adopt the second "Amman Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development in the Arab World". The

meeting will consist of a three-day expert group meeting followed by a two-day ministerial meeting. It is being held in advance of the Sept. 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt. 1

TUG-OF-WAR OVER HUMAN

RIGHTS DECLARATION

by Ramon Isberto

Bangkok, Apr 1 (IPS) - The focus of the Asian human rights conference is shifting from the public statements of governments and human rights groups to the behind-the-scenes negotiations on the declaration to be issued at the end of this weeks meeting.

There have been serious differences between Asian countries on various human rights issues, a fact underscored by the acrimonious verbal exchange between India and Pakistan on the session floor Wednesday.

Still, officials of various governments privately expressed confidence that the 49 Asia-Pacific countries participating in the first-ever regional meeting on human rights would come up with a declaration they could all sign.

"The countries attending this meeting have little choice but to come up with something," said the chief of one delegation.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on the other hand fear such unanimity may be achieved at the cost of producing a statement that would tend to water down the basic principles of existing international human rights agreements. "We're basically engaged in a damage-control operation," said Cecilia Jimenez, spokesperson of the Asian NGO Conference on Human Rights.

Conference organisers have kept a tight lid on the deliberations of the official drafting committee. But a draft declaration reportedly prepared by Iran, which chairs the committee, may give an indication of where the debate is headed.

The draft reaffirms the Asia-Pacific countries' commitment to the principles contained in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights as well as the "full realisation of all human rights throughout the world".

That phrase seems to be a concession to the View
(continued on Page 5)

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expressed by countries like Japan that there must be no dilution of the principle that human rights are universal.

But nine of the 20 points in the draft document seems to reflect the views of countries like Indonesia, Singapore and Iran which stressed the need to take into full account the regions cultural, political and social diversity in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Point no. 3 of the draft document, for example, states that Asia-Pacific countries should "discourage any attempt to use human rights as a conditionality for extending development assistance". Point no. 4 underlined the need to respect the principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in a country's internal affairs and reiterates that all countries have the right to determine their political system and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

NO BUYERS FOR NEW YORK CITY

U.N. PROPERTY

(Continued from Front Cover)

UN. system.

The Secretariat then agreed to inherit the building for non-payment of an 11-million-dollar loan which the United Nations advanced to the Institute.

The debt included a 4.5-million-dollar loan extended to UNITAR to buy the land. The balance -- 6.5 million dollars -- represents advances to UNITAR to meet shortfalls in its administrative budget in previous years.

Deputy Controller Susan Miller told the UN.

Administrative and Budgetary Committee last week it was unlikely that the United Nations could even recover the value of the land, let alone that of the building.

"The real estate market in New York is at a very low point, if not a record low point," therefore it is not the wisest thing to try to sell the building at this juncture, she said.

And to compound the problem, the Secretariat says that if it is to take over the building, it will require about 647,000 dollars annually for maintenance and security.

At the same time, an additional 2.9 million dollars would be required to make the necessary repairs and improvements before the building is put to any productive use.

The Committee, which is discussing revised estimates of the 1992-1993 U.N. budget in relation to the current restructuring of the UN. system, has authorised a sum of 200,000 dollars to cover requirements until June.

P.M. Boin of France told the Committee that even though the building would require repairs, the operational role of the structure -- as an office or warehouse, for example -- should be considered. If

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The draft document also reaffirms the "right to development" as a "universal right and integral part of fundamental human rights" and says the "main obstacle to the realisation of that right" (lies) at the international macroeconomic level as reflected in the widening gap between the North and the South".

Though the authorship of the document remains uncertain, the paper does reflect the positions expressed by Iran Wednesday. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, said it was necessary

to recognise the "cultural diversity of the human family and respect the values of various cultures" in order to enhance the universality of human rights. He said the right of development has not been given the same importance and attention as civil and political rights, adding that the link between human rights protection and the principles of sovereignty and non-interference had not been adequately discussed in international forums. I

there was no such operational role, sale of the building should be considered, he said.

UNITAR was closed down here for mainly financial reasons. Erik Jensen, Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for Public Affairs, told a UN Committee last year that UNITAR had for several years been encountering serious financial difficulties". He noted that "this situation cannot be allowed to continue". The Secretary-General concluded that the best course would be for the United Nations to take over the building in New York in return for the cancellation of its debt, he said.

UNITAR has traditionally been funded with voluntary contributions, but these have declined over the years.

Its budget had been in deficit for 15 of its 26 years of existence, and only 55 countries have ever made contributions.

Several Third World countries supported the move to keep UNITAR alive. Nigeria's K.O. Olisemeka told the Economic and Financial Committee last year that UNITAR had trained more than 13,200 specialists from 173 states and UN agencies.

Some 8,000 persons had also participated in the Institute's research seminars, and about 16,000 attended its international conferences and roundtables.

"It is paradoxical therefore that a large number of governments are willing to avail themselves of the services of UNITAR, but are reluctant, if unwilling, to contribute to the funding of its operations," he said.

U.S. delegate John Hurley told the Committee that Washington opposes any regular budget financing for UNITAR.

"The United States recognises that this is a critical time for UNITAR but it would be a mistake to continue to prop up an institute with U.N. funds precisely when its future must be based on the more solid faith of its members," he said. I