

Treaty passage unlikely

PANAMA CITY, (AP) — Gen. Omar Torrijos was told in blunt terms Wednesday by Sen. Howard Baker, R-Tenn., that the proposed Panama Canal treaty stands

no chance of Senate passage in its present form.

The Panamanian leader said Baker's warning was "so important" that he would call a special

meeting of his Cabinet and other top aides to try to come up with some answers for Baker before he leaves the country Saturday.

Torrijos' comments left open the possibility of the Panamanians allowing changes in the treaty to make the accord more palatable to Baker and others in the Senate who now oppose it. The Panamanian Cabinet has not met to discuss the treaty since last August.

"What he (Baker) told me was so important that I must meet with my government members to discuss the subject," Torrijos said.

"I must commit those things he put forth to a consensus of my government."

Baker, the Senate minority leader, told Torrijos he could not personally support the treaty unless it undergoes significant revision. The senator told reporters earlier that the pact could win bipartisan support if "understandings" were made to clarify certain provisions on the canal's future defenses.

The treaty needs a two-thirds majority to win ratification. And Baker, who is visiting here at Torrijos' invitation, holds what could be the crucial vote when the issue reaches a Senate showdown.

Conferring at Torrijos' seaside villa at Farallon after an all-day flying tour of the country, Baker, two other Republican senators and Torrijos agreed on only one thing: that the treaty should be dealt with as soon as possible.

World at a glance

From Associated Press reports

Alabama Wallaces split up

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — George and Cornelia Wallace got a divorce decree on their seventh wedding anniversary Wednesday after the Alabama governor agreed to pay his wife's bills and give her \$75,000 and property including the deed to a lakeside lot.

The out-of-court settlement was reached moments before the start of what was expected to be a bitter divorce trial behind closed doors.

Carter prepares military cuts

WASHINGTON — The Carter administration is preparing its first major cut of military bases, a move that is likely to spark a fight with congressmen worried about election-year job losses in their districts.

Pentagon officials said they expect to announce a list of "candidates" for closure or reduction late this month or in February. The armed services are now drawing up their recommendations.

Billionaire hospitalized

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Billionaire John MacArthur, one of the world's richest men, is hospitalized here with inoperable cancer of the pancreas.

The 80-year old MacArthur, who built an insurance and real estate empire, had undergone exploratory surgery Tuesday when the cancer was discovered.

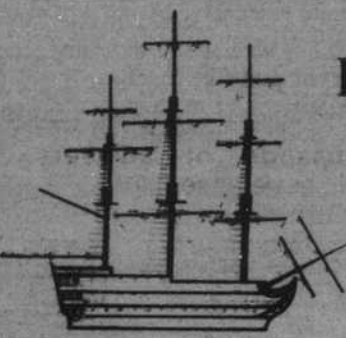
Tax forms now easier to read

SALEM (AP) — This year's state income tax forms will be easier to read because they're aimed at the eighth-grade reading level, Director of Revenue John Lobdell said Wednesday.

Last year's tax forms were written for the 11th grade level.

Gone are words such as decedent (dead person) and domicile (home). Sentences and words are shorter. The new forms also contain a glossary of terms.

One million of the forms were mailed this week to taxpayers. The forms have to be completed and returned to the Department of Revenue by April 15.



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