

making the news

From Associated Press Reports

WASHINGTON — One in four pregnancies worldwide ends in abortion, according to a report released Sunday by an international population study group.

The report by the Population Crisis Committee estimated at least 40 million and perhaps as many as 55 million legal and illegal abortions were performed or induced last year and said the number appears to be growing.

"In most parts of the world, the incidence of abortion is expected to grow as a result of wider preference for smaller families, lack of alternative family planning services and an increase in the number of women of childbearing age," the committee said.

Cynthia Green, one of the staff members who prepared the latest report, said there were 122 million live births last year and an unknown but relatively small number of spontaneous abortions, or miscarriages, which were not counted in the panel's calculations.

The Soviet Union, Japan and Austria have among the highest abortion rates in the world, the report said. More than half of all pregnancies in those countries end in abortion, compared to about one in four in the United States, India,

MOSCOW — Soviet Pres. Leonid Brezhnev ate with a spoon during most of a formal Kremlin dinner, had trouble signing his name, needed help walking up stairs and had lapses of attention during some top-level meetings.

That picture of the 72-year old Soviet leader emerged during French Pres. Valery Giscard d'Estaing's recent visit here. It focused the spotlight again on Brezhnev's health, which is known to be delicate.

"There was nothing dramatic. But it was more the general impression he made," one source said about Brezhnev.

French observers said he was markedly less vigorous and alert than during his visit to France two years ago. But Brezhnev's health goes up and down, and he has just recovered from a serious lung inflammation.

At Saturday's signing of several Franco-Soviet pacts, Brezhnev reportedly needed help signing his name, and headed for the wrong exit.

ST. LOUIS — Nearly 300 suits filed on behalf of Vietnam veterans exposed to the toxic herbicide Agent Orange will be consolidated into one case to be heard in New York.

Six district judges from around the country assigned the cases Friday to U.S. District Judge George Pratt of New York's Eastern District. The suit asks that a \$4.2 billion fund be set up by six chemical companies that it claims made and sold the defoliant to the government, to compensate those injured by the chemical and reimburse federal agencies for benefits paid out.

The companies named in the suit are Dow Chemical Co., Hercules Inc., Northwest Industries Inc., Diamond Shamrock Corp., Monsanto Co. and North American Philips Corp.

LONDON — Young British mothers say they do not like Conservative Party leader Margaret Thatcher's upper middle-class accent and aggressive manner, but they like the Labor Party's socialist policies even less, according to an opinion poll published Sunday.

The poll indicated mothers under the age of 45 — a group whose support some analysts consider vital to victory — will vote for the Conservatives by a 4-percentage-point margin over Labor in national elections for a new Parliament May 3.

A Conservative victory would make Thatcher Britain's first woman prime minister, yet the women polled by the Marplan organization ranked her third in the personal popularity contest behind Labor Prime Minister James Callaghan and David Steel, leader of the Liberals, the third-strongest party. The poll was published in the News of the World newspaper.

Protestors march against nation's nuclear facilities

At least 150 anti-nuclear activists trained in civil disobedience were arrested Sunday when they marched on the gates of a Colorado nuclear weapons plant. Elsewhere, the legacy of Three Mile Island was dramatized with soaring balloons, frightening figures and folk songs.

About 300 Colorado protesters, led by former Pentagon analyst Daniel Ellsberg, had trained for weeks in a plan to blockade three entrances to the Rocky Flats plant about 16 miles northwest of Denver, the nation's only producer of plutonium "triggers" for nuclear weapons.

About two dozen armed federal marshals and security guards from Rockwell International were waiting to greet them at the plant's east and west gates and at a railroad spur leading into the facility. Ellsberg was with a group at the railroad tracks, where he was arrested exactly a year ago Sunday.

To the cheers of other demonstrators across the road, the arrested protesters were loaded into a blue bus from the Denver County sheriff's department and taken to a makeshift booking

station at the U.S. Geological Survey headquarters in Lakewood, a Denver suburb, where magistrates were standing by.

The protesters, who split into three groups as they marched toward the plant following a prayer meeting, were accompanied by six attorneys who had volunteered their services.

On Saturday more than 10,000 demonstrators — three times as many as the organizers expected — assembled in damp, chilly weather to sing, hear speeches, and demand that the plant be shut down or converted to non-military use.

Other anti-nuclear demonstrations over the weekend, given impetus by last month's near-catastrophe at the Three Mile Island reactor in Pennsylvania, were staged at a ski slope in Vermont and a farm in Arkansas, on the banks of the Hudson River in New York and on a Navajo reservation in New Mexico.

As all this was going on, tourists were streaming by the Three Mile Island plant on the Susquehanna River, snapping pictures of the facility, now safely shut down.

U.N. leaders's mediation offer 'firmly' refused

PEKING (AP) — U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim brought his campaign for peace in Southeast Asia to Peking Sunday and told Chinese leaders that unless the situation is defused quickly it could "deteriorate further with consequences far beyond this region."

Waldheim was referring to the stalled peace talks between China and Vietnam after their month-long border war, and Vietnam's continuing war in Cambodia.

"It is therefore imperative that all efforts be directed towards finding a settlement in conformity with the principles of the charter of the United Nations," Waldheim said at a banquet given in his honor at the Great Hall of the People by Foreign Minister Huang Hua.

The search for such a solution is the reason for Waldheim's current Asian tour. He was politely but firmly rebuffed in Vietnam, where Prime Minister Pham Van Dong told him Vietnam was not interested in formal mediation.

As expected, Waldheim got a warmer reception in China, where the leadership had encouraged his mission, than in Vietnam.

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