

## Iran says West behind attacks on its embassies



TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran on Monday demanded the extradition of rebels who attacked its diplomatic missions and accused the West of trying to undermine Tehran as it prepares for parliamentary elections this week.

The elections Friday are considered crucial for President Hashemi Rafsanjani as he struggles to gain control over hard-line opponents in parliament and continue his policy of opening Iran to the West.

Tehran radio said the attacks on missions in New York, Ottawa and across Europe were part of a "calculated plot by arrogance (the West) and its mercenaries" to undercut the legitimacy of Iran's elections.

Iranian officials fear that the rift between Rafsanjani and the hard-liners could be exploited by disaffected groups.

The Foreign Ministry in Tehran summoned several European ambassadors to deliver a stern protest over the attacks.

Norway and Germany apologized to Iran for the damages, while Sweden said demonstrators who were not citizens may be expelled, although not to Iran. Swedish law prevents deportation of a person to a country where he may face the death penalty.

The attacks followed Iran's bombing Sunday of a base of the Baghdad-backed Iranian rebel Mujahedeen Khalq inside Iraq. Tehran said the raid was to retaliate for a cross-border Mujahedeen attack on Iranian villages Saturday.

In New York, Iraq protested the air raid and asked the U.N. Security Council to take action against the Iranian "aggression." Iran, also in a letter to the Council, protested the embassy attacks.

On Sunday, Iranian dissidents rampaged through embassies in Germany, Britain, France, Sweden, Norway, Canada, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the Iranian mission at the United Nations to protest Iran's air raid.

State-run media said several diplomats and other embassy staff were injured. The Foreign Ministry called for extradition of those responsible and demanded compensation for damage.

The Foreign Ministry warned Iraq to cease support for the Mujahedeen, which has been based in Iraq since it was expelled from France in 1986 in response to Iranian pressure.

Iranians interviewed at random on the street were not sure whether they believed reports of either the cross-border Mujahedeen incursion or the Iranian air raid into Iraq.

"This is the first I've heard of it," said a 28-year-old Iran-Iraq war veteran who gave only his first name, Abbas. "But if the Mujahedeen attacked, then Iran has every right to bomb their bases."

## Chairman notes rocky Israeli ties

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Republican Party chairman told a Jewish political action committee on Monday that the Bush administration's rocky relations with Israel are temporary and praised the country's restraint during the Persian Gulf War.

"Right now, the average American Jew probably feels more at home with the Democratic Party than the Republican Party," GOP chairman Rich Bond acknowledged in a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

"I know your community is angry, frustrated and nervous. But I hope this will pass over the next few months as differences are resolved."

Ron Brown, chairman of the Democratic Party, also ad-

ressed the gathering. He painted his party as the more consistent ally of Israel and said that nation's security hinged on ousting Bush.

Echoing some themes of Democratic front-runner Bill Clinton, Brown said the Bush administration "is about forgetting close friends. About embracing undeserving foes."

Clinton last week slammed the administration for publicly attacking Israel's policy of establishing settlements in disputed territory and being ungrateful for its decision not to retaliate against Iraqi missile attacks during the war.

Bond said that "time and again, Israel has been asked to do what few other countries have been asked to do."

As for relations with the ad-

ministration, which is trying to hold back \$10 billion in loan guarantees until Israel agrees to stop building new settlements in Israeli-occupied territory, Bond said they will be smoothed out.

"Our friendship is too deeply rooted, the mutual respect too grounded, our values too similar for our relationship to be damaged by this difference," he said.

Brown said the settlement issue should not be linked to the loan guarantee. "Israel has always paid its debts," Brown said.

Bond maintained that his party has acted more decisively to quash anti-Semitic candidates, including campaigning against former Ku Klux Klansman David Duke.

## Baptist church endorses gay preacher

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (AP) — A homosexual man licensed to preach by a Southern Baptist church said Monday he struggled for years before he realized he could be both gay and Baptist.

"I grew up as a Baptist, was raised in a Baptist congregation from birth," John Blevins, 24, said Monday. "I finally came away realizing that I was a Baptist, that I cherished the free-church spirit of the Baptists."

Linda Jordan, senior pastor of Olin T. Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, said the 145-107 vote to license Blevins was taken because the Duke University divinity student attends that church.

But he will have to find a job elsewhere. He was never considered for a job at the church, she said.

The Southern Baptist Convention, which claims 15 million members as the largest Protestant denomination in the country, allows its churches to exercise wide autonomy in policies and religious practices.

"Licensure to preach the gospel means that the congregation recognizes a candidate's gifts for ministry and supports him or her in the final stages of educational preparation," church officials said in a statement Monday.

"It is not equivalent to ordination, but does indicate that a candidate has sufficient preparation to preach in local congregations," the statement said.

The action is expected to anger leading state and national Southern Baptists.

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## SAIF head to manage private insurance firm

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Stan Long announced Monday he's resigning as president of SAIF Corp., the state-owned workers' compensation insurer.

Long, who has had a somewhat turbulent tenure since becoming head of SAIF in November 1988, is resigning as of May 1 to accept an executive position with a New York-based insurance company.

Long, a Eugene lawyer and former deputy state attorney general, stemmed the flow of red ink at the state's largest workers' compensation carrier but drew flak from various groups who opposed his reforms.

He will become president of the new cost containment division of American International Group Inc., the nation's largest underwriter of commercial and industrial coverage.

Former Gov. Neil Goldschmidt appointed Long to the SAIF post in an effort to stem the company's losses, which reached close to \$1 million a week in 1988.

The company's condition turned around after Long tightened claims payment practices and persuaded the Legislature to change some workers' compensation laws.

SAIF reported net income of \$20 million in the 1990 fiscal year and \$11 million in the 1991 year.

Kathy Keene, SAIF executive vice president, will be acting president until a successor to Long is appointed

by the SAIF board of directors, said Chairman Herbert Aschkenasy.

Aschkenasy said Long took SAIF "from the brink of insolvency and made it into one of the most innovative, creative and financially secure insurance companies in the nation."

However, Long's cost-cutting moves drew fire from chiropractors, trial lawyers and organized labor, who accused SAIF of penalizing injured workers to cut employers' insurance premiums.

One of Long's staunchest critics, state Sen. Grattan Kerans, D-Eugene, called the resignation a "red-letter day" for injured workers who had borne the brunt of Long's reforms.

The state Department of Insurance and Finance studied SAIF practices and recently concluded the company was too quick to deny claims for compensation from people suffering from job-related injuries or illnesses.

Long said despite cost-cutting moves, he believes workers with job injuries and illnesses are better off today than when he took over as president.

"I sleep really well at night on the issue of whether workers are well taken care of," Long said.

Goldschmidt appointed him as director of the former state Commerce Department in 1987, and Long helped guide a bill through the Oregon Legislature that abolished the department.