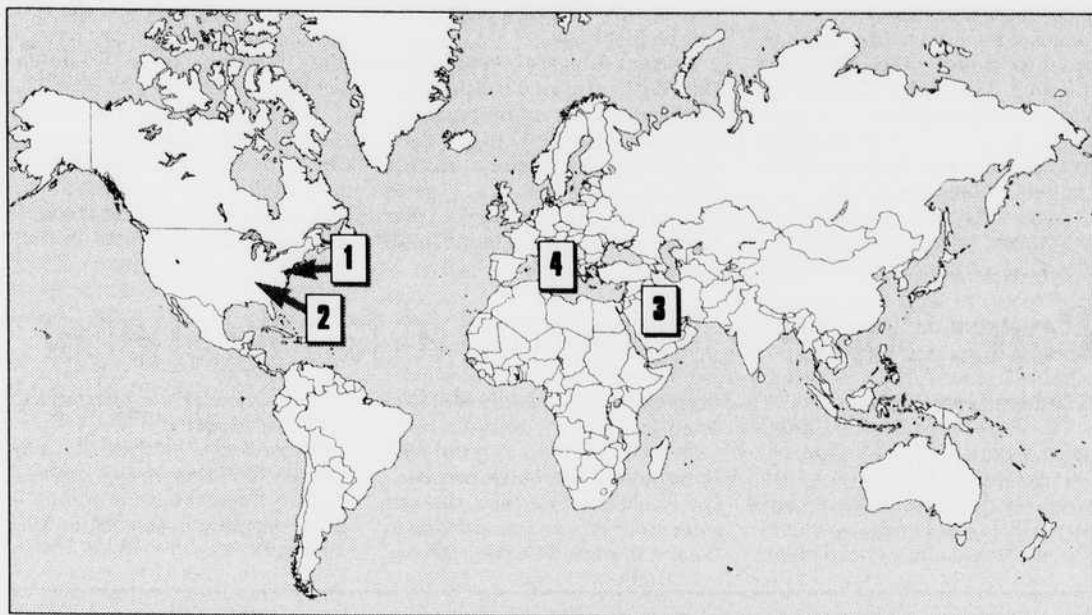


WORLD BRIEFS



1998 could be worst year for police deaths

1 WASHINGTON — Twenty-one police officers were killed in the line of duty in January, nearly double the toll from the same month last year, the National Association of Chiefs of Police reported Sunday.

The association said the 21 confirmed deaths this year compared to 11 in the first month of 1997 and 13 officer deaths in January of 1996.

The group's vice-president said the high figures don't bode well for the rest of the year.

"If these tragic numbers hold up for the rest of 1998, we're approaching the deadliest year ever in the history of U.S. law enforcement," Morton Feldman said. The record is 230 deaths in 1974.

Of the 21, three were female. Only five female officers were killed in all of last year.

There were 158 officer fatalities in 1997, according to the group.

Congress accused of intimidating judges

2 NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Threats to impeach federal judges or oust state judges over unpopular rulings endanger judicial independence and, by extension, American justice, the American Bar Association's president said Sunday.

Jerome Shestack, the Philadel-

phia lawyer who leads the 346,000-lawyer group, accused some members of Congress of trying to intimidate federal judges even though they are protected by life tenure.

Intimidation can take the form of statements such as "If you write one decision we don't like, Congress doesn't like, we are going to impeach you," Shestack told reporters at the bar association's national convention.

"I have no objection to healthy criticism," he said. "Every lawyer who appeals is criticizing a ruling." But Shestack denounced those who form "militia groups" bent on putting judges out of office for decisions with which they don't agree.

House Republican Whip Tom DeLay of Texas caused a stir in Congress last fall when he suggested that "judges need to be intimidated."

Albright promises U.S. support if Iraq attacks

3 KUWAIT — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright assured Israel and its Arab neighbors Sunday the United States would have a "swift and resounding" response to any Iraqi attack in the region.

"The United States stands with you in the face of Saddam's latest threat," Albright told the Israeli people in a televised Jerusalem news conference.

She then flew to the Persian Gulf and gave the same message to leaders of Kuwait. She intends to repeat it Monday to government leaders in Saudi Arabia as part of a swing through the region to line up Arab support for possible military action against Iraq.

During the current impasse between Iraq and the United Nations over weapons inspections, Baghdad has uttered no specific public threat of attack.

Pope makes surprise visit to family home

4 ROME — Pope John Paul II dropped in on a Roman household Sunday after saying Mass in their parish church, giving the clearly awed family a copy of Scriptures.

John Paul, the bishop of Rome as well as pope, told worshippers at the Sacred Heart of Jesus church that he wants "to be close to all the families of the parish."

The pontiff spent about 10 minutes in the fifth-floor apartment where Giuseppe Manago, a 66-year-old businessman, lives with his wife, three teenagers and parents. It was his first official visit to a Roman family.

John Paul gave the Managos a copy of the Acts of the Apostles and a letter he has written to all the Roman Catholic families in the city as part of local churches' preparations for the millennium.



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