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AFP: LE MONDE EN BREF

LE CAIRE - Une rencontre irako-koweïtienne aura lieu samedi ou dimanche à Djeddah (ouest de l'Arabie saoudite), a annoncé mercredi le président égyptien Hosni Moubarak, affirmant que "les campagnes de presse et la guerre des déclarations entre les 2 pays prendront fin dès jeudi".

VIENNE - Le Premier Ministre est-allemand Lothar de Maizière a évoqué pour la 1ère fois mercredi lors d'un voyage en Autriche la possibilité d'un compromis pour tenter de mettre fin à la crise de sa coalition gouvernementale à Berlin-Est, laissant entendre qu'il était prêt à discuter d'un territoire unique pour les élections générales allemandes du 2 décembre prochain.

MOSCOU - Le Président Mikhaïl Gorbatchev a déclaré illégales les milices armées qui se sont créées en URSS ces derniers temps et leur donne, dans un décret rendu public mercredi, un délai de 15 jours pour se dissoudre et remettre leurs armes aux autorités.

M. Gorbatchev a par ailleurs affirmé mercredi avec fermeté son refus de discuter de la question des îles Kouriles, annexées en 1945 par l'URSS et dont le Japon réclame la restitution.

L'URUGUAY ROUND

AFP: Vers un accord de procédure sur la phase finale

GENEVE - La réunion de l'Uruguay Round s'acheminait mercredi vers un accord de procédure et de calendrier sur la phase finale des négociations commerciales multilatérales, qui pourrait voir l'institution d'un 'super-TNC'. Cet accord, qui devait être formalisé jeudi par une déclaration finale, prévoirait, selon les hypothèses avancées par les négociateurs, l'organisation d'une réunion à haut niveau siégeant de façon permanente, en 'stand-by', du mois d'octobre à la fin de l'Uruguay Round... M. Arthur Dunkel, directeur général du GATT, s'employait mercredi, au cours de consultations avec les membres du Comité des négociations commerciales (TNC), à obtenir sur les diverses échéances des engagements susceptibles de permettre au marchandage mondial de se terminer, comme prévu, par une conférence ministérielle le 3 décembre prochain à Bruxelles."

EAST-WEST RELATIONS

THE TIMES: USSR to clear German debt with Bonn aid

"The Soviet Union will pay back all its outstanding debt to West German companies by the end of next week, according to Dr. Leonid Abalkin, the deputy Soviet prime minister. Dr. Abalkin said at a meeting with West German businessmen in Bonn that, of the DM1.5bn which is currently owed to West German companies, about DM1bn has already been paid back with the balance to be repaid during the next few days. Dr. Abalkin's announcement came less than 2 weeks after Dr. Helmut Kohl, the West German chancellor, agreed to provide a government guarantee for a DM5bn commercial bank loan to the Soviet Union."

AFP: Bonn autorisé à multiplier par 5 son plan Marshall pour la RDA

BRUXELLES - "La Commission européenne a annoncé mercredi qu'elle autorisait une forte augmentation du soutien de la RFA à la RDA dans le cadre d'un programme hérité du plan Marshall, qui totalisera finalement cette année 6 mrd de DM (environ 3,5 mrd de dollars) sous la poussée des demandes d'aides. La Commission avait déjà approuvé en mai l'utilisation en RDA de 1,2 mrd de DM restant du plan Marshall. Mais un 'raz-de-marée de demandes' de la part de la RDA a obligé la RFA à multiplier par 5 les sommes prévues."

REUTER: EC makes progress on applying farm policy to East Germany

BRUSSELS - "EC farm experts have made substantial progress in talks on applying EC farm policy to East Germany after unification with West Germany, a top EC official said on Wednesday. Farm Commissioner Ray MacSharry said he hoped to have a package of measures ready by August 21... Under a tentative deal, East German cereals farmers will face the same automatic cuts in price support as other EC farmers if overall EC production exceeds 160m tonnes a year. But East German output of cereals will not be counted in determining whether the target has been breached."

OECD IN THE NEWS

FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW: Asia, go West slowly

"... With few independent experts to guide them, most Asian countries are still not sure whether the demise of the Soviet Union's European empire will bring them luck or misfortune. Reassurance and advice has come from the Paris-based club of rich countries, the OECD. The OECD's recent report on the economic outlook includes for the first time an assessment of business prospects in Eastern and Central Europe, and it should prompt some Asian leaders to put away their worry beads for the time being. There is comfort for those in Asia who have been watching with jealousy as officials at the EC's Brussels headquarters propose ambitious trade and aid initiatives designed to draw Eastern and Western Europe into a closer economic unit. Cautionary counsel is provided by the OECD for Asian NICs, which may view the political and economic changes taking place in Eastern Europe as a way of making a fast buck. Go West, certainly, but do not expect instant miracles, the report says. Despite the headline-grabbing East-West encounters, economic interaction between the 'two worlds' will remain modest... Asia's economic ties with the OECD are far stronger. Six Asian economies - South Korea, Taiwan, Hongkong, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia - accounted for nearly a third of the OECD's US\$463bn of exports to the rest of the world in the first 9 months of 1989."

CEE: AGRICULTURE/ENVIRONNEMENT

AFP: La CEE envisage des primes à l'environnement pour ses agriculteurs

BRUXELLES - "La CEE devrait distribuer des primes à ses agriculteurs pour les inciter à respecter davantage l'environnement, a proposé mercredi la Commission européenne. La Commission a proposé aux ministres de l'Agriculture des Douze de lancer 3 primes différentes: - jusqu'à 180 écus par hectare (1 écu = 6,14 FF) pour les agriculteurs qui réduiront leur utilisation de pesticides et d'engrais; - 150 écus par hectare, au maximum, pour l'entretien de terres abandonnées qui risquent de provoquer des incendies ou de contribuer à l'érosion des sols; - enfin une augmentation - pouvant aller jusqu'à 100 écus par hectare - des primes versées pour la mise en jachère des terres."

OECD ECONOMIES

Japan/United States

REUTER: Japan overtakes US as world's leading investor - new study

WASHINGTON - "Japan has overtaken the US to become the world's biggest spender on new factories and industrial equipment, according to a new study on America's flagging performance in the global economy. Despite an economy less than half the size of that of its American economic rival, Japan spent \$36bn more on capital investment in 1989 than the US: \$549bn vs \$513bn... The figures were compiled by the Washington-based Council of Competitiveness... According to the study, US investment in plant and equipment has consistently fallen below the average of the other Group of Seven countries over the past 2 decades. In 1989, US capital investment accounted for 12.5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), compared with an average of 17.3% in the other countries."

United States

WALL STREET JOURNAL: Businesses slow to cope with job shifts

NEW YORK - Many work force dilemmas predicted for the year 2000 are already here - and most US businesses are coping poorly, a new study says. The study reports pressing shortages of technical, professional and secretarial workers at many companies, 'skills gaps' that are causing high turnover, and fast-growing diversity in the labor pool. But managers

aren't responding to the changes quickly enough, the study suggests. It cites a lack of 'leading-edge' recruitment and training strategies, as well as a scarcity of progressive 'support structures' for women and minority workers such as day-care centers and mentor programs. Conducted by the Hudson Institute, an Indianapolis, Indiana, research group, and Towers Perrin, a New York benefits consulting firm, the study is billed as the first major follow-up to the influential Workforce 2000 report issued in 1987 by Hudson and the US department of Labor."

United Kingdom

DAILY TELEGRAPH: Major reaffirms commitment on ERM

"The Chancellor John Major sought yesterday to counter a sudden speculative decline in sterling by underlining the government's commitment to the European exchange rate mechanism and by welcoming the pound's recent strength. But fears about the timing of ERM membership prevented sterling regaining sharp overnight falls in New York... Sterling opened 2 pfennigs lower following heavy selling in New York, reportedly by Far Eastern investors. The currency then drifted lower for the rest of the day as investors waited nervously for some guidance from the Chancellor, closing 2.68 pfennigs lower at Dm2.9343 and 1.5 cents down at \$1.8085."

END-OF-TEXT