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Departure Statement [Prime Minister Bildt-Sweden]--Background Articles 2/20/92 [OA 7568] [2]

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6TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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The Reuter Library Report

October 1, 1991, Tuesday, BC cycle

LENGTH: 496 words

HEADLINE: SWEDISH PARLIAMENT SET TO APPOINT BILDT NEW PRIME MINISTER

BYLINE: By Lars Foyen

DATELINE: STOCKHOLM, Oct 1

KEYWORD:
SWEDEN-GOVERNMENT

BODY:

The Speaker of the Swedish parliament formally proposed Carl Bildt as new prime minister on Tuesday, clearing the way for him to become the country's first Conservative leader since the 1920s.

Bildt has been negotiating with the Liberal, Centre and Christian Democrat parties on forming a four-party government to replace the long-ruling Social Democrats, who suffered a crushing defeat in elections on September 15.

"After consulting with representatives of all parties...I hereby propose to parliament that it appoints Carl Bildt as new prime minister," Speaker Ingegerd Troedsson said during the opening of the assembly's autumn session.

The Speaker ranks second after the monarch in Swedish diplomatic protocol and plays an important constitutional role in proposing a prime minister.

The parliament is due to vote on Bildt as new premier on Thursday, and the Conservative leader is expected to present a new government and a declaration of policy on Friday.

"The new government has gradually evolved, bit by bit. The point of no return was passed a long time ago. We are now ready with the strategic outlines of a joint policy," Bildt said on national radio.

The coalition is likely to lower taxes for small enterprises and trim the vast welfare state in order to tackle Sweden's formidable economic problems which include negative growth, growing unemployment and a rising budget deficit.

But it is no secret that particularly the rural-based Centre Party has divergent views from the coalition majority on several issues such as nuclear power and a decision to build a bridge between Sweden and Denmark, which it opposes.

The proposal of Bildt, 42, a tall, bespectacled patrician, to replace Social Democrat Ingvar Carlsson as prime minister is a watershed in Swedish politics.

Although centre-right governments ruled Sweden in 1976-82, the premiers were always from the Centre or Liberal parties, and it was long believed unacceptable to the Swedish people to have a Conservative as prime minister.



(c) 1991 Reuters; October 1, 1991

Bildt, whose great-great grandfather Gillis Bildt was prime minister in 1888-89, is a defence and foreign policy expert.

In many ways, he is a younger, right-wing version of slain Social Democratic prime minister Olof Palme, sharing his patrician background, passion for foreign policy, intellectual aloofness and sharp tongue.

The coalition overcame its first major hurdle on Monday when the 349-seat legislature voted 184-150 to replace Social Democrat Thage Peterson with Conservative Troedsson, making her the first woman speaker in the history of Sweden's parliament.

The ballot was seen as the first indication of the intentions of the populist right-wing New Democracy Party, which said it was siding with the four coalition parties in voting for Troedsson.

With 25 seats, New Democracy holds the balance of power between the four-party centre-right coalition, which has 170 seats, and the Social Democrats and their leftist allies with 154.



2ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright (c) 1991 The Economist Newspaper Ltd.

September 21, 1991

SECTION: World politics and current affairs; EUROPE; Pg. 60 (U.K. Edition Pg. 60)

LENGTH: 716 words

HEADLINE: Sweden;
All, or almost all, change

BYLINE: FROM OUR NORDIC CORRESPONDENT

BODY:

"THE winds of political change blowing through Europe have finally reached Sweden," said Carl Bildt, the leader of the Conservative Party, on election night. Swedes had voted for change all right on September 15th: they kicked out the Social Democratic Party that has been in power for all but six of the past 59 years. But they also voted for muddle: Mr Bildt and his allies won a mandate for reform but too few seats to be sure of being able to carry it out.

The Social Democrats had their worst election since the late 1920s. Their share of the vote dropped by five percentage points (see table). Along with a decline in support for the Left Party (formerly the Communists), the combined left-wing total fell from 49.0% of the votes cast to 42.7%. Ingvar Carlsson, the Social Democrat prime minister since 1986, conceded defeat early on election night. The Greens, by failing to reach 4%, lost all their seats.

But it was not only the left that suffered. The two centre parties, the Liberals and the Centre, which over the past three parliaments have sometimes worked with the Social Democratic minority government, were punished for their collaboration. Their poor showing leaves Mr Bildt's potential government without a stable majority. Instead, Swedes emphasized their disillusion with the old order by voting in two new parties: the staid, anti-socialist Christian Democrats and the populist, fun-loving New Democracy. New Democracy now holds the balance between left and right.

Sweden thus joins its Nordic neighbours, Denmark and Norway, in having a fragmented parliament with no clear majorities of either left or right. In Denmark Poul Schluter, with an equally weak parliamentary base, has kept shifting right-of-centre coalitions in office for nine years, so perhaps there is hope yet for Mr Bildt.

Only 42, Mr Bildt is probably the brightest talent to emerge in Scandinavian politics since the late Olof Palme. Like Palme, his main interest is in foreign affairs. He speaks fluent French, German and English, with a sharp tongue in all of them. Indeed, he may be too acerbic and serious ever to become widely popular. Visitors to his office find the television permanently tuned to CNN. If anything he considers exciting appears on the screen, such as an exchange in the British House of Commons or a comment from President Bush -- but not the result of Sweden's performance in the world ice-hockey championships -- he clicks on the sound and the visitor has to wait until the excitement is over.



(c) 1991 The Economist, September 21, 1991

Mr Bildt, whose party went ahead from 18.3% of the vote to 22.1%, has set about trying to form a government. He would like a four-party coalition with the Liberals, the Centre Party and the Christian Democrats. But he may well end up with a coalition of only Conservatives and Liberals.

The Liberals' leader, Bengt Westerberg, and Mr Bildt are close friends. Last winter they presented a joint programme, "New Start for Sweden", which is in effect a blueprint for a Conservative-Liberal coalition. It calls for tax cuts, curbs on government spending, greater choice in education and health, and a programme of privatisation. "Set Sweden free", the Liberals' campaign posters urged. Yet the policies they are recommending would reform rather than abandon the so-called Swedish model: the coalition partners want to trim the welfare state's excesses, not to dismantle it.

Mr Westerberg, who walked out of a television studio on election night when the leaders of New Democracy walked in, said during the election campaign that he would not serve in a government that was dependent on New Democracy for its support. But other influential Liberals do not agree with him and this week he has softened his line.

Voters expecting big tax cuts will be disappointed. Next year, says Mr Bildt, will be a nightmare for the economy. Real GDP will fall a bit this year and show little improvement, if any, in 1992. Manufacturing output is down 6% so far this year. Unemployment is rising fast, and so is the budget deficit.

"New Start for Sweden" is a careful strategy for structural change. But its good intentions will be hard to put into practice under economic and parliamentary duress. It could be less of a new start for Sweden than a new stutter.

GRAPHIC: Chart, From model to muddle; Picture, A thorny bunch for Bildt

FEBRUARY 10, 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR BETH HINCHLIFFE

FROM:

MICHELE NIX *MN*

SUBJECT:

PRIME MINISTER BILDT OF SWEDEN

On Thursday, February 20, at 1:30 p.m., from the South Lawn, the President will deliver remarks to an audience of approximately 300 people for the departure of Sweden's Prime Minister Carl Bildt.

NSC's Jane Holl has sent down a bootleg draft for the event.

The LOC is sending me some Scandinavian proverbs that might work well in the remarks. I should get those some time today.

I've included the following info:

- Bootleg draft from NSC
- Background articles about Bildt's election
- Color -- about Sweden, their anthem, excerpts of constitution
- Past departure statements



4TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Inter Press Service

October 4, 1991, Friday

LENGTH: 547 words

HEADLINE: SWEDEN: FOUR PARTY COALITION GOVERNMENT FORMED

BYLINE: by Ylva Lindhahl

DATELINE: STOCKHOLM, Oct. 4

The new Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt announced today the formation of a four party coalition government, promising lower taxes and a clear orientation toward the European Community (EC).

In his first appearance as prime minister, Bildt presented the government manifesto agreed after two and a half weeks of negotiation by the center-right coalition.

Bildt was formally elected prime minister yesterday, supported by his own conservative moderates, the Liberal Party, the Center Party and the Christian Democratic Party.

He stressed the coalition's intent to "Europeanize" Sweden by securing active membership in the EC, and to adjust the running of the Swedish economy along lines closer to EC policies.

The former social democratic government, which lost power in the Sept. 15 election, applied for EC membership last July.

Bildt said Sweden will continue to work towards its target of using one percent of its gnp for economic assistance to foreign countries. But he also said that the aid policy will change towards preference for democracies and market economies.

Vietnam was mentioned by Bildt as one country whose development aid from Sweden will be ended completely unless a clear democratization process is begun.

The government manifesto has emphasized the need to invigorate the stagnated economy.

Tax cuts, primarily on capital, goods and services, are to be implemented through the 1990s. Deregulation to stimulate private enterprise was also promised, as well as the breaking up of state monopolies in the social sector.

The new government plans to cut public spending by 10 to 15 billion Swedish crowns (\$1.7-\$2.5 billion) next year.

The other three parties in the Parliament voted no or abstained on Bildt's nomination as prime minister, a token protest in the face of his leadership of Sweden's second biggest party with 23 percent of the votes, and the biggest



1991 Inter Press Service, October 4, 1991

bloc of parties.

The so-called "four-leaf clover" does not enjoy a majority in Parliament, however. It will therefore depend on the new populist right-wing New Democracy Party to outvote the socialist bloc -- the Social Democrats and the former communist left party.

The government manifesto and the division of cabinet position were agreed only after seemingly tough negotiations among the four.

The moderates and the Liberal Party had put forward a joint government manifesto before the elections, and the Christian Democrats largely supported that program.

The main problem was to reach an agreement with the center Party, a former agrarian party which increasingly defines itself along environmentalist lines.

The Center Party has objected to plans to build a bridge to Denmark, and radically differs with the other parties on policies on energy, infrastructure and resource exploitation.

But the party made its mark on the manifesto that finally was agreed on, especially through the strong but general emphasis on environmental concerns.

The other two small parties in the coalition, the liberals and the Christian Democrats, are both particularly concerned with foreign aid and domestic social issues.

The main issues for the moderates are less public spending and the orientation toward the ec, both which formed central themes in the new government manifesto.

October 6, 1991



3RD STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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October 7, 1991

SECTION: Vol. 74 ; No. 11 ; Pg. 13

LENGTH: 1580 words

HEADLINE: Sweden's temperate revolution: challenging 'Big Broder

BYLINE: Moran, Michael

BODY:

STOCKHOLM

FOR ALMOST two centuries Sweden has been quite content to stand apart from the power struggles and ideological debates raging elsewhere in Europe. Although initially this tendency to remain aloof earned it a reputation in the West as a permanent outsider, eventually it came to be heralded as a utopia: a country that prosperously fused compassion and productivity, democracy and socialism.

But last September 15, when they went to the polls, Sweden's voters seemed to suggest that they were ready to at least partially give up their isolationism, and that the best days of their market socialism were past. They turned against the long-dominant Social Democratic Party, the inventor of their unique system, and replaced it with a conservative government headed by Carl Bildt, who promised to cut taxes and lead Sweden into the European mainstream.

Bildt, the 42-year-old chairman of the Moderate Party, is now Prime Minister.

A great-grandson of a 19th-century Swedish prime minister, he is the closest thing to a Thatcherite one could find in politics here. He heads a shaky coalition of four parties and needs the cooperation of a fifth to pass his government's program, yet few challenge his claim that the election was "a great defeat for the Swedish social democratic Left and a blow to the Swedish model."

It would be a mistake to assume, as some have, that voters were largely reacting to the collapse of Soviet Communism and recent developments in Eastern Europe. The outcome of the September contest owes at least as much to a profound dissatisfaction among Swedes with the amount of control, regulation and taxation exerted by their government, known unaffectionately in some circles as "Big Broder." To be sure, the state's heavy hand has not always provoked such scorn. Since the Great Depression, the Social Democratic Party has carried out an unparalleled experiment in market socialism and transformed a backward agricultural society into a world economic leader. At the same time, the party steered Sweden clear of history's two most destructive wars. Its reward was victory in all except one election between 1932 and 1991.

But about 15 years ago, economic growth slowed considerably and the Social Democrats began to find it harder to secure Parliamentary majorities. In 1986, the unsolved assassination of Prime Minister Olof Palme sent a shock wave through this country of 8.1 million people that is still felt today. As the latest balloting approached, the economy was in recession, inflation was



The New Leader (c) 1991 IAC

climbing and the country that had enshrined the concept of full employment had a 3.1 per cent jobless rate--the highest it had experienced since World War II. Perhaps most important, a generation of Swedes born after the War saw less to spurn in Europe than did their elders.

The election was viewed here and abroad as a potential watershed. It was the first test of Swedish socialism since the collapse of Soviet-led Communism, long a point of reckoning for the Social Democrats as they charted the country's "middle road" between the capitalist and Communist worlds. Moreover, it sparked a previously unthinkable debate: Should Sweden join the European Community (EC)? Popular sentiment swung so strongly in favor of membership that the Social Democratic government of Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson reversed its anti-EC stance in mid-campaign and applied for membership.

In essence, the Swedish voters decided that their bold experiment needed to be modernized. They chose a conservative government, but they kept the Social Democrats the largest single party in Parliament, thereby ensuring that no part of Sweden's welfare system will be scrapped without a fight.

Bildt's coalition--his Moderates, along with the Liberal, Center and Christian Democratic parties--holds a meager majority. Together the four "bourgeois parties" (as Swedish parlance has it) took only 47.1 per cent of the vote and 170 seats in the 349-seat Riksdag. In addition, they are badly divided on a number of crucial issues, including the proposed terms of EC membership, the future of nuclear power and the environmental wisdom of a planned bridge across the Baltic to Denmark. Alluding to these differences, Center Party Chairman Olof Johansson said the election results created "about as difficult a situation as I could have fantasized."

Certainly the election was not quite the requiem for the Social Democrats that many had expected. Despite a stagnant economy and a disorganized campaign, they managed to retain 38 per cent of the vote, leaving the liberal bloc --when combined with the 4.5 per cent won by the Left (formerly Communist) Party--a total of 156 seats in Parliament. Given the disputes within his coalition, Bildt realizes he may have to work with the opposition on an issue-by-issue basis to pass some of his proposals. "Cooperation," he says, "is going to be the key word of politics in the 1990s."

Presenting his government on October 4, the Prime Minister announced to the Riksdag that he intends to cut about 4 per cent from government spending next year, reduce taxes on small businesses and eliminate the highly unpopular value-added taxes on food. He also said Sweden would terminate its assistance to Cuba and curtail aid to Vietnam until it shows signs of democratic reform. His program reflected an awareness of the mixed signals sent by voters: If it was radical by Swedish standards, it was nonetheless shrewdly temperate compared with his campaign rhetoric.

Bildt appears to believe that once EC membership negotiations begin next year, Sweden will be forced to implement the type of painful economic reforms he could never squeeze through Parliament on his own. He is therefore concentrating instead on answering the electorate's clearest request--to get government off its back.

THE PEOPLE are full of complaints about the incongruities of their system: a starting doctor earns the same salary as a starting trash collector; the

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average personal income tax is 60 per cent of wages, while corporate taxes peak at 30 per cent; food prices are geared to nutritional value, rather than market demand; taxes are used as a means of social engineering.

"Swedes are very tired of the government trying to regulate their behavior by putting incredible taxes on alcohol and cigarettes," notes Pieter Tham, a business reporter for Channel 4, which is attempting to become Sweden's first private TV station. "People want more control over their earnings and do not want to be told how many pieces of bread they should eat every day."

Nobody tapped into this popular disaffection with greater gusto than Ian Wachtmeister, a Swedish nobleman who led his upstart New Democracy Party into Parliament. Wachtmeister is known as the "Crazy Count" for his distinctly un-Swedish irreverence. During the campaign debates, he ruffled feathers by referring to Left Party Chairman Lars Werner as the leader of the Communists, a blunt reminder that Werner's group changed its name only last year.

"We are too polite as a nation," Wachtmeister declares. "We should not be so afraid of what others think." He advocates taking a tough stance in upcoming talks with the EC, tightening asylum laws and launching a drive "to make life in Sweden more fun" by lowering prices on alcohol and cigarettes. His populist message won 6.2 per cent of the vote, giving his party 24 Riksdag seats, currently the balance of power.

New Democracy is shunned by both the Social Democratic and bourgeois blocs, but Wachtmeister has made it clear that he agrees with Bildt "on just about everything." The Prime Minister calls New Democracy "an electoral phenomenon, "and thinks it attracted mostly protest votes. Whatever the case, the Crazy Count will play a vital role in keeping Bildt on top.

One policy that remains unshaken by all the talk of protest and reform is Sweden's dedication to neutrality. Even Bildt, who is suspected by many of harboring a secret desire to join NATO, promised during the campaign that "Swedes will never be obligated to come to the defense of another country," an unthinkable statement from a Rightist politician in any other country.

The sacredness of neutrality is instilled here at an early age. At the National Museum in Stockholm, school children file past a painting by the Swedish master Gustaf Cederstrom, Bringing Home the Body of Carl XII, that portrays the slain King being borne by his troops back to Sweden. Another painting depicts the death of Carl's revered ancestor, King Gustavus Adolphus, the great warrior who led Swedish armies to victory in the Thirty Years War but died of battle wounds near Leipzig. The fates of these heroes have long served as a warning to Swedes about foreign entanglements, and this is reinforced in young men during compulsory military service.

The campaign slogan of Bildt's Moderate Party, "Set Sweden Free," sought to raise a chorus of discontent. What it actually stirred was a polite assent to lighten the government's hand and to bring Sweden the economic advantages of a united Europe. At the same time, Swedes showed that they do not want major structural reform. Bildt has a confrontational style and fancies himself a free market crusader. But if he tries to lead a revolution, he may find the next thing voters want to change is him.

KING



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SUBJECT:

Prime ministers, Elections ; Sweden, Politics and government

NAME:

Bildt, Carl, Elections AZSweden's long history of isolation and socialism took an abrupt turn in the Sep, 1991 elections as the voters selected conservative Carl Bildt as their Prime Minister. Bildt has promised to lead Sweden into the economic advantages of the European Community.

GEOGRAPHIC:

Sweden

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LOAD-DATE-MDC: January 27, 1992



3RD STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1991 The Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

September 16, 1991, Monday, Home Edition

SECTION: Part A; Page 1; Column 2; Foreign Desk

LENGTH: 749 words

HEADLINE: DEFEAT PROMPTS SWEDEN'S RULING PARTY TO RESIGN

BYLINE: By WILLIAM TUOHY, TIMES STAFF WRITER

DATELINE: LONDON

BODY:

Sweden's Social Democratic Party, founders of Europe's model welfare state, suffered its worst defeat in 60 years to center-right parties in parliamentary elections Sunday.

Soon after the polls closed and after Swedish television broadcast computer projections of results, Social Democratic Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson said his government will resign today.

He thereby acknowledged that the famed Swedish model of cradle-to-grave welfare had been rejected by Swedish voters in favor of lower taxes, less bureaucracy and perhaps a reduction of social benefits in favor of greater personal choice.

Television projections, based on official results from more than half of the 720 polling districts, showed the Social Democrats winning only 37.8% of the vote, compared to 42.2% in the last election in 1988.

"This result is such a sharp retreat for the Social Democratic Party that I will offer the resignation of the government," Carlsson, who took over in 1986 after Olof Palme was assassinated, said late Sunday.

Social Democratic Secretary Bo Toresson, whose party governed Sweden during 53 of the past 59 years, added: "It's obvious that we have suffered a major loss, but we are still happy to note that we have regained 10% of the vote since last spring, when we hit the bottom in the opinion polls."

In early projections from 398 out of the 720 key polling districts, Swedish TV said that the conservative bloc would win 170 seats in the 349-member Riksdag, the single-chamber Parliament, five short of an outright majority.

The Social Democrats and the Left Party (formerly the Communist Party) would have 155 seats, a loss of 22, while the Greens were eliminated altogether because they did not win the needed 4% minimum needed to gain representation.

Conservative political leader Carl Bildt, 42, is expected to be the new prime minister, heading a coalition of his own Moderate Party with the Center Party, the Christian Democratic Party and the Liberal Party. Together, the four won 45.7% of the vote, according to the projections.



1991 Los Angeles Times, September 16, 1991

The most dramatic showing was that of a couple of rightist parties, the rejuvenated Christian Democrats with 7.6% and the fledgling New Democracy Party, which won 6.6% in its first national test.

Bildt is expected to have some trouble forging a government, political sources said, because the Christian Democrats and Liberals -- key parts of his coalition -- don't want to have to make a deal with New Democracy, which was formed in February and campaigned on promises to cut taxes, turn the government back to the people and "make Sweden more fun."

New Democracy also is opposed to immigration and foreign aid, earning itself a reputation as an isolationist, populist political grouping, appealing to the more selfish interests of the voters.

Further, Ian Wachmeister, the New Democracy leader, has gone out of his way to needle the leaders of all the other parties, calling them out-of-date political hacks. Such attitudes complicate his party's chances of taking part in a governing coalition.

Swedish voters lately have become unhappy with the heavy burden of taxes needed to finance their welfare state, according to political experts.

Average workers pay about 60% of their income in taxes, and every third worker is a public employee.

Conservative figures such as Bildt promised to get the economy moving by increasing competitiveness, encouraging free enterprise and reducing the public sector.

The government, under pressure from the conservatives, voted recently to apply formally for membership in the European Community.

Swedish social scientist Soren Holmberg said Sunday that one-third of the nation's 5.5 million voters have changed their party affiliation this year, compared to switches of 20% in previous years, indicating the degree of their dissatisfaction with the traditional political figures and parties that have run that Scandinavian country.

Background on Sweden

* Basic facts:

Population: 8.5 million

Capital: Stockholm

Per capita income: \$21,761 (1989 figure)

History: Organized as an independent unified state in 10th Century. In 1809, became a constitutional monarchy.

* Political structure:

King Carl XVI Gustaf does not participate in government. Riksdag (Parliament) has one chamber with 349 members. Before Sunday's election, Riksdag consisted



1991 Los Angeles Times, September 16, 1991

of 156 Social Democrats, 66 Conservatives, 44 Liberals, 42 Center Party, 21 Leftists, 20 Green Party.

Source: Statesman's Year Book

GRAPHIC: Photo, Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson, center, helps pass out ballots in Stockholm. Social Democrats suffered worst loss in decades.
Associated Press

TYPE: Infobox

SUBJECT: CARLSSON, INGVAR; BILDT, CARL; SWEDEN -- ELECTIONS; SWEDEN -- GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS; SWEDEN -- ECONOMY; SOCIALISM; GOVERNMENT REFORM; RESIGNATIONS



2ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1991 Financial Post Ltd.
The Financial Post

October 7, 1991, Monday, WEEKLY EDITION

SECTION: SECTION 1; News; NEWS DIGEST; Pg. 2

LENGTH: 656 words

HEADLINE: News Digest

BODY:

The watchdog that oversees the Canadian Security Intelligence Service will investigate the 1985 downing of an Air India jumbo jet by a presumed terrorist bomb. The Security Intelligence Review Committee first proposed an inquiry two years ago but was blocked at that time by objections from the RCMP and the Justice department. The Mounties feared an independent inquiry might hurt the continuing criminal investigation into the bombing.

Tough anti-smoking laws and high tobacco taxes have changed attitudes among high school students and triggered a drop in teenage smoking in Canada, researchers said Friday. Teenage smoking has fallen by more than a third over the past 14 years as tobacco taxes, which boost the price of pack of cigarettes as high as \$ 7, put cigarettes beyond the pockets of young people, researchers at the Addiction Research Foundation said Friday.

The New York Rangers of the National Hockey League Friday obtained All-Star forward Mark Messier from the Edmonton Oilers in return for three players. The Rangers, who have not won the NHL championship since 1940, sent veteran Bernie Nicholls and young players Steven Rice and Louie DeBrusk to the Oilers for Messier and future considerations.

Only hours after losing a final court appeal to have his political party restored to a parliamentary election ballot, Canadian businessman Stanislaw Tyminski said he is leaving Poland and returning to Toronto. Tyminski had been embroiled in a nasty legal battle for weeks that had left himself and his Party X virtually banned from Polish politics.

The U.S. government Friday announced its largest anti-smoking program ever, a seven-year, 17-state campaign that it says will prevent 1.2 million smoking-related deaths. The money will go toward community health programs in 17 states that distribute anti-smoking messages through the mass media, physicians, dentists, workplaces and schools.

President George Bush threw cold water on reports Friday that a Middle East peace conference was being set for Europe at month's end, saying things had not advanced that far and no date or place had been set as far as he knew. "There are no preparations in the sense of logistics for that, that I know of. No dates have been set. A lot depends on what happens in the next couple of weeks as to whether such a conference will take place at that time," Bush said.

South African human rights activists expressed outrage Friday that a black teenager, who was burned by a white farmer for stealing a television set, was imprisoned for theft while the farmer received a suspended sentence for attempted murder. The 16-year-old was held on a steel table, doused with

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1991 The Financial Post, October 7, 1991

gasoline and set on fire after the farmer accused him of stealing the TV. The farmer was fined \$ 1,925, given a suspended five-year sentence and ordered to pay \$ 14,700 compensation. The youth, after admitting previous convictions, was sentenced to up to five years in a juvenile prison for the theft, which he continues to deny.

Sweden's new prime minister Carl Bildt, seeking to stress his support for democracy abroad, announced Friday that his centre-right government would cut off aid to Cuba, reduce assistance to Vietnam and boost economic support for the newly independent Baltic nations. In his first full day as prime minister, Bildt told parliament that: "Development assistance policy will be reorganized, with greater emphasis on support for democracy and market economies."

About 1.5 million people, a third of them children, have now developed full-blown AIDS, the World Health Organization said Friday. WHO estimates that between 30 million and 40 million people will have been infected with the HIV virus by the year 2000.

At least seven Georgians were wounded and one killed Friday in a fierce shootout with rebel guardsmen on the outskirts of Tbilisi, which killed hopes for calm in the volatile Soviet republic.