Palestinians Released As Start of West Bank Pact

NABLUS, West Bank — Israel released about 300 Palestinian prisoners and handed a military government office to the PLO Tuesday in a fitful start to the West Bank

autonomy agreement.

The releases were marred by delays, confusion and PLO accusations over Israel's refusal to pardon four Palestinian women prisoners despite a clause in the accord that says all female detainees are to

By late afternoon, some 300 prisoners had been freed, out of some 1,000 slated for

release that day, radio reports said.

A senior Palestinian official had said earlier in the day that none of the 500 would leave jail, in protest over the continued detention of the women.

But 200 of the prisoners who walked out of prisons in Nablus and other towns had

en held for security offenses.

Sami Zahran, who served three years of a seven-year term for weapons possession, said he would not honor the non-violence

pledge he signed.

One hundred criminals also were set free, and 400 more were to follow by the

Court Hears Arguments Over Anti-Gay Rights Law

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Colorado's solicitor general ran into skepticism from several Supreme Court justices Tuesday when he argued the state's citizens have a right to prohibit laws that protect homo-sexuals from discrimination.

"I would like to know whether in all of

U.S. history there has ever been any-thing like this," Jus-tice Ruth Bader Ginsburg told the state's lawyer, Timothy M. Timothy M. Tymkovich, who asked the high court to reinstate the ban on such anti-dis-



all state and local laws giving homosexuals "special protection" from bias in housing, employment and public accommodations. In a 1992 referendum, 53.4 percent of

Colorado voters approved the am to the state's constitution. But the Colo rado Supreme Court invalidated the amendment before it could take effect, saving it denied homosexuals an equal

voice in government.

Tymkovich said Colorado voters approved the amendment in response to the

success homosexuals had in winning enactment of anti-bias ordinances in Denver,

Boulder and Aspen.

However, Justice David H. Souter was

"Why is discrimination against one group dealt with under state law differently than discrimination against other groups?"

Justice Antonin Scalia appeared more sympathetic to Tymkovich's argument. "They are laws that provide special protection to that particular category of person," Scalia said.

Several justices wondered how far the endment goes in banning bias protec-

Ginsburg compared gay activists' tactic of seeking local anti-bias ordinances to women's suffrage proponents who long ago sought the right to vote in cities when they could not win such a right statewide.

But Tymkovich said voters could decide that all gay-rights issues must be de-cided on the state level rather than by

Statistics Back Up Million Man March Principles

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The state of America's black men is measured with sweeping statistics — too few in the classrooms and board rooms, too many on the streets, behind prison walls and in early

No matter how they succeed, many black men feel feared and mistrusted. Their

frustration and an-ger is shared across economic lines. And it's part of the pull of the Million Man March, a giant rally for black males planned in Wash-

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, origina-tor of the Million Man March, says one of its goals is "showing the world

for their families.

a vastly different picture of the black male."

The midday event — organizers describe it as more of a convergence than a march — will highlight those black men who do stay in school, work hard and care

FARRAKHAN hopes

the march will show a

It is also described as a call for black men to come together to end the inner-city spiral of crime, drugs and unemployment, the conditions that feed adverse media images of black men. Organizers have been criticized for ex-

cluding women from the event, which is one of several reasons the national NAACP refused to endorse the rally.

But many black women support its goals agreeing that black manhood is in crisis.

The statistics are numbing. Black men are eight times more likely to be murdered than white men, and five times more likely to be murdered than black women, according to Census Bureau figures.

Thousands more black men are serving

time in prison or jail than are studying in college. In contrast, white men are nine times more likely to be in class than behind pars, according to researchers at The Sentencing Project, a nonprofit group that advocates alternative prison sentences.

Although black women are more likely than men to live in poverty, in many ways

they have been more successful They live longer lives and are more likely to be employed, Census Bureau sta-

The Million Man March is the most visible embodiment of a strategy that be-came popular in the 1980s — focusing attention on black men in hopes that their economic successes would uplift women

GOP Defense Bill Opposed By Pro-Choice Advocates

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The fax waSHINGTON, D.C.— The Tax machines hummed in Republican lawmak-ers' offices with a message from the Na-tional Right to Life Committee: Defeat a \$243 billion defense bill because of a single clause on abortion.

Although it seemed a long shot, since Although it seemed a long shot, since Republicans had a chance to support one of their top priorities — increasing Pentagon spending — House conservatives heeded the call and rejected the bill. By doing so, they sent a message: Their opposition to abortion would not be compro-

The National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League counts a slim majority of 218 House members as "solidly anti-choice" while in the Senate only 45 out of 100 are so ranked.

The abortion opponents joined Demo-

late last month. The defeat of the defense appropria-tions bill represents the kind of ideological tangle Republican leaders had hoped to

President Ponders Race Issues After Simpson Trial

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Clinton expressed surprise Tuesday at the sharp division between blacks and whites over O.J. Simpson's acquittal and said he is deeply concerned "that we are still polarized in some ways."

"I do think we need to work on it " the

ized in some ways."
"I do think we need to work on it," the president said. "Because we don't have a stake in drifting apart."
Clinton may address the need for racial harmony in a speech next Monday in Austin, Texas, aides said.

Clinton said he's been thinking about the subject a lot in recent days, and "The whole issue of reconciling races in America has been a passion of my life."

Simpson's acquittal in the murder of his former wife, Nicole, and her friend, Ronald Goldman, has highlighted a wide racial divide, with many whites upset over the verdict and many blacks delighted by it. "I think what has struck all Americans

in the aftermath of the trial is the apparent differences of perception of the same set of facts based on the race of American citizens," Clinton said.

zens, "Clinton said.
"I must say, even I — I thought I knew
a lot about how people of different races
viewed things in America, but I have been
surprised by the depth of the divergence in
so many areas, and I do think we need to
work on it."

Clinton said that blacks and whites could have differences "but at least we ought to be able to look at facts and reach some common judgment more frequently than apparently we're able to today."



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