



## Cuba warns U.S. relations could be strained if boy isn't returned

BY ANITA SNOW  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

HAVANA — The communist government warned Thursday that failure to return a 5-year-old Cuban boy to his father on the Caribbean island could further harm Cuba's already delicate relationship with the United States.

If Elian Gonzalez is not returned, "the United States will be responsible [for] how the relationship between the two countries develops," Foreign Ministry spokesman Alejandro Gonzalez said during a weekly news conference.

The two countries have no diplomatic relations, and the United States maintains a nearly four-decade-old trade embargo against Cuba aimed at toppling President Fidel Castro. The newest flap threatens to stymie attempts by the Clinton administration to increase contact between the Cuban and American people.

The child's father, Juan Miguel Gonzalez, 31, has asked the Cuban Foreign Ministry to help him get back the boy, who survived a deadly boating accident last week.

The boy was found on Thanksgiving Day, clinging to an inner tube in the waters off Fort Lauderdale. Two other people also were rescued.

The boy's mother, Elizabeth Broton Rodriguez, drowned when the overloaded powerboat she and her young son were traveling in sank during the crossing to Florida. The boy's stepfather also was among the 10 people who died in what the U.S. Coast Guard said was a smug-

gling operation.

Juan Miguel Gonzalez said his ex-wife took their son out of the country without his permission and that he considers the child to have been kidnapped.

In Washington, State Department spokesman James P. Rubin said the Cuban government delivered a diplomatic note on Nov. 27 to the U.S. mission in Havana seeking the child's return.

The Foreign Ministry's warning comes less than two weeks before regularly scheduled migration talks between the two countries on Dec. 13 in Havana.

The United States and Cuba have held the occasional talks since signing 1995 migration accords that helped stem a flood of thousand of illegal immigrants fleeing the island on inner tubes and homemade rafts. Cuba agreed to stop people from leaving the country illegally, and the United States agreed to repatriate illegal Cuban immigrants picked up at sea.

The U.S. government has paroled Elian to the care of his paternal great-aunt and great-uncle in Miami, who say they can give him a better life than he would have in Cuba.

Television images of the boy in Miami "are repugnant, a scene of a kidnapped child surrounded by toys with which they have tried to buy his innocent conscience," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Gonzalez.

As for whether the boy's father will go to the United States to fight for his son in Florida courts, the government spokesman said that "this is not a theme

for negotiations or for legal steps, but is of the highest political sensitivity."

He said the case wouldn't be judged fairly in the courts in Florida, which he said were presided over by "corrupt judges" tied to anti-communist exile groups.

The case's growing politicization underscores the ideological differences that separate Cuban families with members living on both sides of the Florida Straits.

The boy's relatives in the United States say the kindergarten wants to stay with them.

The Cuban American National Foundation distributed flyers with Elian's picture and the phrase "Another child victim of Fidel Castro" to delegates attending the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle.

Castro's government says it has filed documents with U.S. authorities demanding the child's return. U.S. legal experts have said that Florida state courts might ultimately decide whether Elian should be raised in the United States or returned to Cuba.

What might have to be resolved, they say, are two conflicting principles — the child's custody, which in most cases is granted to the surviving biological parent, and his immigration status. The Cuban Readjustment Act of 1966 grants any Cuban who reaches American soil the right to stay.

Rubin said the case has been referred to Florida authorities because state law takes precedence in custody disputes.



Florida congresswoman Ilena Ros-Lehtinen plays with young Elian Gonzalez at his Aunt's home Wednesday in Miami's Little Havana. The five-year-old Cuban boy survived two days adrift at sea after a boat carrying illegal migrants heading for the United States sank.

SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

## To most Egyptians, Y2K problem is incomprehensible

BY SCHEHEREZADE  
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ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO, EGYPT — The Problems of the Year 2000, as the Y2K bug is known in Egypt, seem a light year away for the men puffing on water pipes in a small cafe in a Cairo slum.

"Let me first solve the problem of 1999," declares 50-year-old Fat'hallah Mohran.

A quick briefing about the computer malady that has consumed much of the Western world only confuses him further. Some computers can only read two-digit years, and if they're not fixed, they won't work properly in 2000, when they will assume "00" is 1900.

The same ignorance can be found all over Egypt, where many banks, companies and government services are computerized, but where nearly half the adults can't read and the majority of the 60 million population lives below the poverty line.

And that's exactly how Egyptian authorities want it to be to avoid millennial hysteria.

"If you don't know, you won't panic," said Ehab Mostafa Elwy, head of the government agency in charge of ensuring Egypt's computers are compliant.

Y2K panic might send people rushing to hoard supplies, causing shortages, or spur them to withdraw money from banks, bringing about a collapse of the financial market, Elwy said.

His job is not to make sure the public is Y2K savvy, but to ensure people involved with computers know what to do. The government has organized seminars and training, much of it underwritten by \$4 million in grants from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Elwy insists that although Egypt was relatively late to address it, the millennium bug has been eradicated in all vital services: electricity, water, energy, gas, telecommunications and aviation.

Some equipment in hospital intensive care units is not yet compliant, he admits, so hospitals are using a contingency plan — instead of programming the computers by the year, they are doing so by the week.

Elwy claims that the government is

97 percent compliant and that its 166 mainframes and 108,518 other computers are all Y2K ready.

But as is the case for most countries, those claims have not been independently verified.

Ali Moselhi and Mohammed Abdelfattah El Azab, who organized most of the Y2K awareness programs, think authorities are pretty much ready, but the private sector is likely to suffer significant problems.

Only about half the estimated 100,000 mainframe and minicomputers in the private sector will be ready, says El Azab. As a result, air conditioning and elevators could fail in some hospitals, hotels and other buildings.

That would affect some of the 50,000 tourists expected for a New Year dusk-to-dawn pyramids bash just outside Cairo featuring a new opera by the French composer Jean Michel Jarre. Officials say getting cash from ATM machines could also be a problem.

Egypt was cited by the CIA's expert on Y2K, Lawrence Gershwin, in October as being among countries where Y2K preparations have been poor and where significant failures in essential services are possible.

The U.S. ambassador to Egypt, Daniel C. Kurtzer, is quoted on the embassy's Web site, however, as saying in an October speech: "We don't anticipate a major disruption of utilities and services."

Egypt, a country where chaos and bureaucracy are a way of life, is not known for contingency planning.

So if pension checks don't reach the poor on time, for example, there will not be much fuss, Moselhi said. They are never on time anyway.

And because Egypt is more a cash-based than electronic society, experts say it won't be as severely affected as Western countries. Most local bank branches aren't even connected to their central offices, let alone to overseas banks.

New Year's falls within the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, a period of fasting and prayer in this predominantly Muslim nation.

## Boy left in court's holding cell over weekend

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A 13-year-old boy spent the weekend unattended in a courthouse cell after a bailiff forgot to check it before going home.

After a court hearing Saturday, Aaron Robinson was locked in the Juvenile Court holding cell with no food, water or toilet facilities. He was discovered Monday morning.

The bailiff, a 10-year employee of the court, was fired.

Robinson had been arrested and taken to the court building Friday night after his mother told police officers he had stolen her car.

The boy was released after a hearing but feared punishment from his parents and didn't want to return home, according to Superior Court Judge James Payne said. So he was taken to a holding cell and was to have been transferred to a detention center on another floor Saturday evening.

"Aaron has not been able to really sleep. I just keep replaying this in my mind: My child beating on the door and no one able to hear his pleas for help. There could have been a fire or he could have had a panic attack," his mother, Pearlina Robinson said.

## ABC bringing back 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire'

NEW YORK (AP) — There's still hope, would-be millionaires. ABC and Regis Philbin will soon give you three chances a week to get rich before a national TV audience.

The quiz show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire," a ratings sensation in two limited runs, will become a regular part of ABC's prime-time schedule starting Jan. 11, the network announced Thursday.

It will be on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays — three hours of "final answers" each week.

"Tens of millions of viewers sent a very clear message that they wanted more 'Millionaire,' and we're going to deliver," said Stu Bloomberg, co-chairman of ABC Entertainment.

Startling TV executives, viewers flocked to the game show with the apocalyptic music and space-age set design. Its 18-night run in November laid waste to the competition, enabling ABC to win its first ratings "sweeps" month in five years.

Its last airing, the night before Thanksgiving, drew nearly 30 million viewers.

## Archaeology experts outraged after Roman relics found in landfill

ROME (AP) — Preservationists and archaeologists blasted Rome's mayor Thursday for trying to complete a Holy Year project too quickly and allowing trucks to haul away scores of fragments of ancient statues and frescos.

The artifacts turned up Wednesday at a dump outside Rome, sparking a furor when police traced them to the site where construction workers were rushing to complete a multilevel parking garage ahead of Christianity's 2000 Holy Year celebrations.

About 40 demonstrators gathered at the construction site today, waving banners with slogans such as "Stop the rampage!" and demanding the building stop.

"We blame the Vatican for such a greedy approach to the Holy Year," said Carlo Ripa di Meana, a former European Union environmental commissioner. "They have turned a place near to where St. Peter was martyred into a mad business circus," he said.

A top archaeologist, Lorenzo Bianchi, was also appalled. "It is very sad," he said in a newspaper interview. "It is clear the work was done too fast. An archaeological dig takes a very, very long time."

Mayor Francesco Rutelli said he hadn't seen the artifacts, but he said that in Rome, relics are found anywhere one digs.

## Giuliani courts Jewish community, Hillary losing support among women

BY SHANNON MCCAFFREY  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani reaffirmed his long-standing support for a strong Israel on Wednesday before a supportive group of GOP Jews that had sponsored a television ad attacking Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Meanwhile, two polls out Wednesday showed Mrs. Clinton failing to hold an early lead over Giuliani among New York's female voters.

Marist College's Institute for Public Opinion poll, the first conducted since Mrs. Clinton's announcement last week that she definitely was running for the U.S. Senate, had Giuliani leading Mrs. Clinton, 49 percent to 40 percent, among all voters.

Among women, she was favored by 45 percent, while 42 percent opted for the Republican mayor — a statistical dead heat given the margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

In February, while sympathy was still strong for Mrs. Clinton after the Monica Lewinsky scandal, Mrs. Clinton led Giuliani among women voters, 56 percent to 38 percent, in a Marist poll.

Also Wednesday, a Journal News-Manhattanville College poll had Giuliani ahead 46 percent to 43 percent among all voters surveyed, a statistical tie.

Among women, the first lady was ahead 47 to 44 percent, also a statistical dead heat. That poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

Giuliani talked up his Jewish credentials in a speech before the Republican Jewish Coalition.

The group recently paid for a television ad showing and criticizing Mrs. Clinton for embracing Yasser Arafat's wife after she accused Israelis of using "poison gas" on Palestinian women and children.

The Jewish vote in New York is large and influential. Giuliani said that Jerusalem should remain the undivided

capital of Israel and that the U.S. Embassy should be moved there from Tel Aviv.

He also said there was no moral equivalent between the state of Israel and the Palestinian authority. And in a seeming jab at Mrs. Clinton, the mayor said his views were driven by conviction, not polls.

"Everything I just said to you was my view 20 years ago, was my view yesterday and would be my view if I became the senator from New York," Giuliani told the crowd at a Washington hotel.

Although Giuliani is expected to enter the Senate race against Mrs. Clinton, he hasn't committed yet to running.

Also Wednesday, Giuliani said Mrs. Clinton's plane had delayed other flights from taking off and landing at LaGuardia Airport in New York, a charge the Clinton camp and the Federal Aviation Administration denied.

"Yesterday, there were planes being delayed because a certain candidate for the Senate who still doesn't live in New York was having the flights delayed that come into LaGuardia Airport," Giuliani said.

The mayor was joking about how he had to get back to New York City because his plane might be delayed.

Giuliani spokesman Bruce Teitelbaum said the mayor wasn't making an accusation, but was repeating anecdotes he had heard about the delays from others.

Ron Morgan, the FAA's director of air traffic, said that 241 flights had been delayed Tuesday night at LaGuardia because of weather and high volume and that Mrs. Clinton's plane had been among them.

"The first lady's aircraft experienced an arrival delay much like the other aircraft," Morgan said. "She received no special treatment."

Mrs. Clinton's spokesman, Howard Wolfson, said Giuliani "ought to get his facts straight and stop spreading lies."

## No evidence to link magnetic fields, childhood cancer, study says

BY EMMA ROSS  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON — New research concludes that there's no evidence to support the controversial theory that children face an increased risk of cancer from electrical wiring in the home or power lines.

The study, led by a Cambridge University scientist, is the largest ever undertaken into childhood cancers and electromagnetic fields. But World Health Organization scientists say it's not the definitive study they had hoped for.

The study, published Friday in the British medical journal "The Lancet," concluded that children exposed to high levels of magnetic energy from nearby power lines or from home appliances were no more likely to get leukemia or any other childhood cancer than children exposed to low levels.

The study of 4,452 children under 14 compared 2,226 children diagnosed with cancer in the past four years — including all the nation's leukemia cas-

es — and matched each of them with a healthy child of the same sex and birthday.

The researchers, led by Nick Day of Cambridge University, measured the level of magnetic emissions from power lines within 200 yards of each child's home and school.

In addition, they measured the magnetic emissions from electrical wiring inside the children's homes, testing everywhere from next to the children's beds to the middle of the kitchen.

To verify the doses found inside the home were the same as those absorbed by the children, 100 of the children wore monitors for one-week periods, three times a year. The levels matched.

The study found that about 2 percent of the children were exposed to levels higher than 0.2 microtesla, the threshold at which other studies have suggested a link with cancer.

In a commentary in "The Lancet," World Health Organization scientists said the investigation was "very large and well conducted, [but] it is not the

'definitive' study that scientists have been hoping for."

They noted that while high levels of exposure are rare in Britain, a U.S. study reported 10 percent of children above that level and a Canadian study had 15 percent.

Day said the higher levels in North America were because electricity is supplied at 110 volts, compared with 220 volts in Europe. That means that for the same power consumption, North Americans use twice as much current as Europeans, which produces a stronger magnetic field.

Only 17 children in Day's study had readings of 0.4 or more, but that didn't change the results. Eight had cancer, while nine did not.

Day said the number of children exposed in the study to 0.4 or more was too small to draw conclusions about safety at that level.

"Almost all of the high exposures were not due to proximity to overhead power cables, but to electrical wiring in the house," Day said.

Only seven children lived near a power cable, but they also had no increased cancer risk.

The issue of whether exposure to electromagnetic fields increases the chances of childhood cancer has been debated for years.

A high-profile study by California-based researcher Robert Liburdy in 1992 linked power lines to cancer, fueling fear among people living near them.

In 1994, Liburdy's lab reviewed the findings after a student challenged his results. The U.S. Office of Research Integrity, contacted by the lab, later found he intentionally falsified and fabricated data. Liburdy was forced to resign from his job at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory but has stood by his findings.

Scores of subsequent studies have found little evidence to support his findings, while others have found a weak link.