NAACP isn't behind the signs, Execu-

The NAACP is leading a tourism boy-

cott of South Carolina that began Jan. 1

to force legislators to remove the flag

from the dome. Legislators are the only

ting hammered out in private by key sen-

ators to remove the flag were pre-empt-

In the Senate on Tuesday, plans get-

Ford's plan would remove the flag

But Sen. Darrell Jackson, D-Hopkins,

said Ford has been in discussions among

key senators trying to find a new plan to

bring down the flag. Jackson said he

thought the timing was wrong to intro-

duce a bill. "I'm disappointed he took

part of some of the things that we're work-

ing on to do it now, but he has a right to

best chance of getting through the Re-

publican-controlled House because key

lawmakers like Rep. Jake Knotts, R-West

Columbia, are behind it. But Knotts said

he supports no plan to remove the flag

when the NAACP's boycott is in place.

Ford said he thinks his bill stands the

do that," Jackson said.

ones who can take the flag down.

FLAG

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heads," he said.

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NATION & WORLD

'Some of those folks can't afford to show they want to bring

tive Director Dwight James said. 'We won't throw rocks and hide our Sen. Robert Ford D-Charleston

down the flag.'

"Some of those folks can't afford to show they want to bring down the flag," Ford said. A flag bill must pass the Senate or House by May 1, or it needs a twothirds vote to even be considered.

Ford's bill isn't the only flag plan on the table. A bill by Sen. Dave Thomas, R-Greenville, would remove the flag from the dome and fly it at a new Confederate history park near the Statehouse.

CLINTON

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to try to help settle the Kashmir dispute, but India has rejected outside mediation. In Islamabad, Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar said he hoped that Clinton could use his "healing touch" to find a peaceful resolution.

Clinton expressed reluctance about getting deeply involved. "I'm not going to be dragged into something that, first of all, India doesn't want us to be part of. And secondly, that I got dragged into from deliberate acts of violence. I just don't think that's right."

He made his comments in an interview with ABC News.

Despite tensions, Vajpayee declared: "There is no threat of war. India is committed to peaceful means. We are prepared to solve all our problems, discuss all problems on the table. We do not think in terms of war, and nobody should think in those terms in this subcontinent."

Refusing to endorse the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Vajpayee, wary of threats from Pakistan and that country's own nuclear capability, said he explained to Clinton "the reasons that compel us to maintain a minimum nuclear deterrent."

He said: "I have reiterated our firm commitment not to conduct further nuclear explosive tests, not to engage in a nuclear arms race and not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against any coun-

But government lawyers said the INS

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ELIAN

But in his ruling, Moore rejected that argument, saying the wording of the law contradicts itself and if taken literally could be harmful in some cases, such as when a child is kidnapped abroad and brought to the United States.

Attorneys for the Miami family have argued that the INS violated the boy's rights by refusing to grant him a political asylum hearing.

"Elian has not had his day in court, but today's ruling gives us some hope that after we complete the entire legal process, including appeals and reconsideration, he just may," said Spencer Eig, one of the family's attorneys.

did a thorough investigation and found no basis for an asylum claim. And they argued that Elian's father opposed asylum for his son, and that his wishes should be respected over those of the boy's great-

Reno said the judge's ruling affirms the Clinton administration's position that "only Elian's father can speak for his son on federal immigration matters."

While the boy's relatives back in Cuba say he has told them over the telephone that he wants to return to his homeland, the family in Miami claims that he wants to stay.

"We're not talking about the family or the government or the politics, but they need to look at what this 6-year-old wants," Elian's cousin Marisleysis Gonzalez said. "They haven't looked at what he wants, what he feels and what his needs

Elian, who was at school when the judge issued his decision, returned home at about 6 p.m. EST and was greeted by

After the ruling, about 50 people peacefully protested outside the home where the boy has been staying, Many held signs in support of Elian's remaining in the United States, and some prayed for the boy.

"This is a triumph for Castro and his government, and that is what we have to stop," said Maximino Perez, 72, who was wearing a T-shirt with a cartoon drawing of Fidel Castro and President Clinton lying in bed smoking cigars.

Elian's great-uncle Lazaro Gonzalez thanked the crowd for its support. "We are not going to lose the faith," he said. "We are going to keep praying."



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