

Prisoners go home



AP/Wide World Photos
Ahmed Abu Latif (center) smiles broadly as he embraces his little brother, mother and father, who met him following his release from the Ketziot detention center. Israel released more than 500 Palestinian prisoners in its latest bid to persuade the Palestine Liberation Organization to continue peace talks despite Arab outrage over the massacre at a mosque in Hebron.

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South Africa

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The panel, which includes Archbishop Wilfrid Napier of Durban, urged people "to overcome fear and intimidation which might act as a deterrent to voting."

But South Africa may see greater violence — even civil war — after the first all-racial elections next month, according to Makaziwe "Maki" Mandela, daughter of Nelson Mandela, leader of African National Congress.

Maki Mandela, however, stressed that an opposite future, one of racial harmony, is equally possible, and that much depends on how South Africans decide to see themselves and how the rest of the world views South Africa.

"The majority of people living in South Africa, black or white, have prepared for change," she said.

Mandela made her remarks during a March 4 speech to about 300 students at the State University of New York College at Geneseo. Mandela is currently special programs development officer at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Most observers agree that her father will be South Africa's next president.

Although many whites welcome apartheid's end, a large number are fearful of losing their privileged status, she said. And some blacks want revenge for years of white misrule which conditioned blacks to be mere servants for their white rulers. She hopes that most blacks will follow the example of her father who bears no bitterness toward whites despite his decades of imprison-

ment that ended in 1991, she said.

In addition to the potential for greater violence by whites opposed to a black-ruled South Africa, Mandela pointed out that South Africa is made up of various black ethnic groups — all of whom have differing visions for the country.

She noted, for example, that South Africa's potential for civil war lay partly in the extreme positions taken by Zulus and right-wing whites. Both groups have called for homelands separate from the rest of South Africa, a call that the ANC has rejected, she said.

She also criticized the Western press for superficially characterizing what are actually ethnic and political battles between different groups in South Africa's black majority as "black-on-black" violence.

"(The media) does not couch what is happening in Bosnia in such terms," she said.

She added that the United States had its own "white-on-white" violence — namely the Civil War — and that in time, the North and South reconciled, just as she feels all sides in South Africa will someday reconcile.

South Africa hopes to take a page from the United States, a nation that — despite its continuing racial problems to this day — leads the world in innovative approaches to racism, she said.

For example, the United States, she explained, invented affirmative action, a policy which some South African companies have adopted in order to speed up the entrance of blacks into an increasingly high-technology labor market.

This story contains reporting by staff writer Rob Cullivan.

Government, rebels agree on pact

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (CNS) — Mayan Indian rebels and the Mexican government agreed March 2 on a package of economic and political reforms aimed at ending a two-month-old rebellion in the southern state of Chiapas.

The 32-point accord, if accepted by rebel supporters in the Chiapas highlands, will be signed as a formal peace treaty, government-appointed peace commissioner Manuel Camacho Solis told a news conference.

"The formula for peace has been defined," Camacho said after 10 days of talks in the 16th-century cathedral in San Cristobal de Las Casas. "The terms of the peace accords and of the end of hostilities in Chi-

apas have been made clear."

The deal would improve social conditions in the impoverished state of Chiapas, boost democracy and provide a new deal for Mexico's downtrodden indigenous peoples.

Guerrilla leaders were to return to their jungle and mountain strongholds near the Guatemalan border to consult with supporters and fighters.

"We must listen to the voice of our communities," said one leader of the rebel Zapatista National Liberation Army, his features hidden behind a ski mask. "Now this stage of dialogue has ended and it is on a good path."

The government says 145 people were killed in the first days of the uprising.

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