Crews Pack Up As Malibu Fire 97 Percent Contained

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Weary firefighters began packing up their gear, burned-out structures and the crews for the strength to rebuild, and one isolated canyon town threw a picnic for firefighters as the blaze that ravaged the Santa Monica Mountains finally died down.

By Michael C. Morgan

About 570 engine companies, half of what the fire had commanded, and more than 5,400 first responders worked the fire on Monday as the 4,565 firefighters and support personnel doused hot spots and cleaned brush.

By Tuesday afternoon the flames continued to die down during the afternoon, the crews were dismissed. About 2,000 firefighters and support personnel in 193 fire engines remained on duty overnight, monitoring the massive but still smoldering fire, county officials said.

U.S. Postpones Trade Sanctions Against China, Taiwan

WASHINGTON

The Clinton administration, which has twice warned China and Taiwan to end illegal trade in products of endangered animal species, Monday said it will not impose immediate trade sanctions against the two countries to stem the trade.

Instead, the White House announced it would hold off until March, when import restrictions could be imposed if China and Taiwan do not "make verifiable, measurable and substantial progress" in curbing the illegal trade.

The issuance of a third warning, rather than punitive action, was interpreted by conservation groups, who say the world's remaining rhino and tiger populations are in grave peril from poachers who sell rhino horns, tiger bones and the like to Asian consumers who use them for traditional medicinal purposes.

"It's hard to imagine a more compelling case for trade sanctions than these two species," said Jim Leop, senior vice president of the World Wildlife Fund. "For six months the administration has been making threats, and those threats have yielded promises. If it now appears the threats are empty, then I think the promises will be, too."

Book Says Bush Tried to Keep Related Documents from Congress

WASHINGOTT D.C.

A book to be published Monday contends that former President Bush was personally involved in efforts to keep Congress from getting documents revealing the extent of U.S. assistance to Iraq before the Persian Gulf war.

Three unidentified Bush administration officials are quoted in the book, "The Missing Bush Documents" by Ronald H. Brown and his national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, who were the driving force behind the effort to keep the records from congressional committees in 1991 and 1992.

Written by Alan Friedman, an investigative reporter with the Financial Times of London, the book provides other details about the role of U.S. policy under Bush and former President Reagan in Iraq's military buildup.

Among the allegations are reports that U.S. military weapons were illegally transferred to Iraq from a NATO base in Germany, and that a CIA operation was deeply involved in the financing of Iraqi weapon programs by the Atlantic office of an Italian bank.

Attempts to reach Bush and Scowcroft Sunday were unsuccessful. Both previously have denied any wrongdoing and have maintained that U.S. policy toward Iraq was aimed at moderating the behavior of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. The Bush White House also argued that its actions in responding to congressional requests for materials were legal, and simply aimed at ensuring a coordinated flow of information.

Weather Fair and cool

By Michael C. Morgan

A large anticyclone over the eastern US will gradually shift eastward allowing temperatures to gradually recover to more normal levels on Tuesday. The moderate southerly flow of moisture will increase on Tuesday allowing some moderate rain showers to move into southeastern England. Its only influence on the "sensible" weather here will be to draw an arc from near south of the area early Thursday. With the passing of the anticyclone a return of cloud and cool conditions should develop by next weekend.