

THE CAPITALS

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A world of trouble in '89

The new year promises to be another year of thrills and spills. Here are some places to keep your eyes on, starting with the obvious ones:

- The dear old Mideast where Israel will be squeezed hard to make some sort of deal with the Palestinians. A quick war with, say Syria, would put the kibosh on any peace plans, think some leading Israeli hawks.
- Will the Vietnamese really pull their remaining troops out of Kampuchea and will 38,000 Cubans really start to pack up and leave Angola?

• And, that 64 ruble question, will the Soviets withdraw the last of their occupation forces from Afghanistan by March, as they have promised? Even if they do, this is by no means certain, watch for a nasty civil war in Afghanistan between just about everyone involved — including Iran, which is now taking an active role. The 3.5 million Afghan refugees will remain the world's largest group of displaced persons.

• Mikhail Gorbachev's USSR will continue to startle, fascinate and mystify the outside world. No one really knows what's going on in the Kremlin, or even who's really in charge. Still, watch for more economic upheaval, a growing consumer revolt and an increasingly wobbly Communist party. Trouble now seems to be brewing in the Ukraine. Chances of a Stalinist-style backlash remain high. We may even see a public falling out between the party, army and KGB. In 1989, the Soviet Union wins top billing for political theatre. Standing room only for this show.

- A united Europe will come a year closer. When this happens, in 1992, there will still be lots of spats and need for marital counselling, but there's no doubt a united Europe will change the world power balance. One forgets the French, Germans and Brits used to rule



Eric Margolis
in New York

• Imam Khomeini may join his ancestors in 1989. If so, watch for much political trouble in Iran. Note, though, that his older brother is still in great shape. Both live on nuts and yogurt.

• Elections are coming up in India. If the opposition can ever get its act together, PM Rajiv Gandhi may be back flying airliners, which he used to do before taking office. He'd probably be a lot happier.

• Strife-torn Burma might implode. This would bring China and India into direct confrontation in a most interesting crisis. So would more troubles in Tibet.

• China's panda-bear look-alike leader, Deng Xiaoping, may also step down or meet his ancestors in 1989. Chances for a big political punch-up in China are fairly high. As in the USSR, the big 1989 show will be: Can the communist party manage to stay in power and pay the household bills?

• Koreans are getting more fired-up by the day. Maybe North Korea's Kim Il Sung will make good on his promise to "liberate" the south. This strategic peninsula will stay as hot as a bowl of Korean kimchee.

• The Yugoslavs managed to pull back from the brink of civil war, but new outbursts of political and ethnic passions are expected in 1989. A brawl between Serbs, Albanians and Croats could turn into an extremely nasty crisis for Europe and the USSR.

• Environmental issues — including animal rights —

will be the big stories for next year. People everywhere.

are fed up with little wars and economic numbo jumbo.

But what the world will really want to know in 1989 is

the outcome of that gripping drama: Will Ontarians be

allowed to shop on Sunday? Stay tuned.

Mark Bonokoski is on vacation