

Soviet says Red Army convoy heads for home

KABUL, Afghanistan -- Convoys of Red Army soldiers and equipment moved slowly toward home through the rugged Hindu Kush mountain range Tuesday, ready to fight their way past Moslem guerrillas if necessary, their commander said.

Lt. Gen. Boris T. Gromov, Soviet commander in Afghanistan, denied U.S. allegations that the Soviets were conducting a "scorched earth" policy as their last units left Afghanistan before a Feb. 15 deadline.

"That does not correspond with reality," he said of the accusation made Monday in Washington by Charles E. Redman, spokesman for the State Department.

In Islamabad, Pakistan, Western diplomats said privately that all Soviet forces were expected to be out of

the Kabul area by Feb. 6, nine days before the deadline set by a U.N.-mediated withdrawal agreement.

Spokesmen in Islamabad for the guerrillas, who began fighting after a communist coup 11 years ago, said four long-range Soviet missiles killed 70 people in villages near the Salang Highway north of Kabul, the main Soviet withdrawal route.

According to the diplomats, an increase in attacks by Soviet and government forces in the past week appeared aimed at pressuring the insurgents toward a political settlement. The guerrillas have refused offers of such a settlement from both the Kremlin and its client government in Kabul.

The last 11 staff members of the U.S. Embassy, which was closed

Monday, left Kabul on Tuesday and a Soviet airlift of food and fuel resumed. The capital's airport was closed Monday by heavy snow.

Six Ilyushin 76 transport planes dropped flares to deflect missiles as they landed in the space of 90 minutes at midday. Each was followed by a camouflaged military helicopter dropping flares.

Guerrillas supported by the United States and Pakistan control the hills and mountains around Kabul and often fire heat-seeking missiles at aircraft near the airport.

They also have attacked supply convoys bound for Kabul on the Salang, which connects the capital to the Soviet border 250 miles away, causing severe food and fuel shortages that made the Soviet airlift necessary.

Gromov told a news conference in an unheated Foreign Ministry building the Red Army convoys were "on their way to the U.S.S.R." He would not say how many there would be or when the last would leave.

He said the number of Soviet soldiers still in Afghanistan was a secret, but Soviet and Western diplomats estimate the figure at 15,000-20,000. Red Army soldiers arrived in Afghanistan in December 1979 and an estimated 115,000 were here when the pullout began May 15.

Some military advisers will remain in Afghanistan in keeping with a Soviet-Afghan agreement, Gromov said. The United States contends such a presence would violate the Geneva agreements of April 14, 1988, under which the withdrawal is being con-

ducted. The Salang has been cut by insurgents several times in recent weeks and Gromov said: "We are ready for combat operations during the withdrawal."

Heavy fighting has occurred between Soviet and Afghan troops and the guerrillas of Ahmed Shah Masoud along the route. Masoud, one of the best insurgent field commanders, controls the Panjshir Valley through which the highway runs.

Gromov said the Afghan government had negotiated with Masoud to make the Salang Highway safe, but he rejected the offer and began attacking Afghan army outposts Jan. 23.

"I think he is sorry now," the general said.

Curfew eased but tensions remain in Armenia

YEREVAN, U.S.S.R. -- Authorities eased a curfew here Wednesday, but ethnic tensions remain high in this republic that was the site of mass demonstrations before being hit by a devastating earthquake in December.

The military commander in Yerevan, in an announcement published in the daily newspaper Kommunist, said the midnight-to-6 a.m. curfew would be reduced further to 1 a.m. to 5 a.m.

The decision was made "considering the stabilization of the situation in the capital and regions of the republic during the past month, the participation of citizens in supporting public order and requests of residents," the newspaper said.

A government commission called for speeding up construction to clear the debris and build new housing in northwestern regions of the republic stricken by the Dec. 7 earthquake,

which killed an estimated 25,000 people and left a half million homeless. The commission complained the organizations involved in reconstruction are bickering among themselves and making little progress.

Also on Wednesday, the Rev. Jesse Jackson visited Armenian leaders in a tour he said would help him determine what further aid can be provided.

The curfew in Yerevan was imposed in November after at least 30 people were killed in ethnic rioting in Armenia and the neighboring republic of Azerbaijan.

The streets of the Armenian capital, which a few weeks ago were dotted with tanks, armored personnel carriers and Interior Ministry troops, were comparatively demilitarized this week.

Only a handful of soldiers and one armored personnel carrier were vis-

ible on Opera Square, the site of street protests last year. In the most recent violence, the square was surrounded by troops and military vehicles.

On Lenin Square, there were no tanks, although six armored personnel carriers and a handful of troops were deployed at main government buildings.

Armenian refugees from the violence in Azerbaijan gathered Wednesday, as they have for several weeks, outside the Agriculture Committee offices to discuss their fate. Soviet authorities say about 300,000 people - Armenians who were living in Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis from Armenia - have fled to their ancestral republics.

Since February 1988, residents of the predominantly Armenian region of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan have been agitating to be made part of the republic of Armenia. Armenians

are predominantly Christian, while Azerbaijanis are predominantly Moslem.

People in a crowd of about 100 refugees said the government is refusing to give them jobs or homes. They said they were afraid their lives would be in danger if they returned to Azerbaijan.

"I consider that it's better to die here in Yerevan than to try to live there," said Gena Agabekyan, an ethnic Armenian who fled the Azerbaijan capital of Baku two months ago.

Authorities have been trying to persuade the refugees to return to their homes, but have met with only limited success.

Yuri Khodzhamiryan, a deputy premier of Armenia, told Soviet and foreign journalists the government was not forcing any of the refugees to return.

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Computer system to be put in

By Natalie Weinstein
Staff Reporter

After nearly a four-month delay, IBM technicians will install \$1.7 million worth of computer equipment in Nebraska Hall this week-end.

The IBM 3084/QX mainframe computer system will be used for administrative needs on all three campuses, said Joe Rowson, director of public affairs for the University of Nebraska. This includes daily business operations, payroll, accounting and student registration, and does not serve academic needs, he said.

Rowson said the computer, a used model which will need to be replaced in two years, is only a "temporary solution" to the capacity problems the university has faced.

The current mainframe computer system, an IBM 3081D, had been running close to capacity since student registration in August, he said.

"In two years we will have to re-address the problem," he said.

NU is using a lease-purchase arrangement, Rowson said. The university will make periodic payments during the next two years. At the end of the two years, the university will own the system and resell it, Rowson said.

The 3084/QX, which is being purchased from Comdisco, Inc. of Rosemont, Ill., will increase capacity by three times over the current system, Rowson said.

The computer itself costs \$1,238,400. NU also is purchasing two IBM disk controllers and an IBM disk storage unit for \$438,200. The NU Board of Regents approved the request at its Jan. 14 meeting.

On Oct. 14, the regents rejected a request for a new \$5 million computer. The board decided to reconsider the proposal and had a teleconference Oct. 19. At this meeting, the regents once again rejected the plan. The board instead requested additional analysis of the university's needs before purchasing a unit, Rowson said.

After that request, the regents discovered that the computer had been stored in Nebraska Hall since Oct. 8 in order to receive a \$100,000 discount from IBM. The computer later was returned.

The current university computer system, which is about four years old, will be offered to other state agencies, Rowson said. If no agency takes it, he said, it will be offered for public bid.

IBM technicians are scheduled to begin assembling the 3084/QX Friday. Installation is scheduled to be finished Sunday.

Director's goal is reasonable system

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Additional staff members, fewer computer problems and fewer changes from Congress will allow the process to run smoother, he said.

Beacon said second semester loan checks will no longer be available to students in November. Instead, checks will be available at the beginning of second semester, he said.

"We want to go back to a situation that is more reasonable," he said. Students should spend their loan money on school, not Christmas presents, he said.

Beacon advised students to mail their financial aid forms in mid-February. Students should not wait until March 1 to mail them, he said.

Beacon also said that this spring the finan-

cial aid office will physically merge with the Admissions Office after the staff members have an opportunity for input.

Beacon said the wall between the offices will be torn down. He said the offices will still function separately "for the most part" but will be able to help each other when necessary.

The financial aid office has set up an assistance booth in the north entrance of the Union. Office personnel will be available to help students with their forms from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 6 through 8, 13 through 15 and 20 through 22.

Next Wednesday, faculty salaries will be the topic of the UPC forum. Jennie Johnson, chairperson of the committee, said the committee is asking state senators, administrators and Robert Diffendal, Faculty Senate president, to attend.