

Hundreds of casualties reported after crackdown

Lebanon, France fight over Aoun's fate

BEIRUT, Lebanon - Lebanon and France quarreled Sunday over the fate of Gen. Michel Aoun, whose 11-month mutiny in the Christian heartland was crushed by a Syrian-led military blitz.

Aoun remained inside the French Embassy, where he fled during Saturday's attack and was granted asylum.

Lebanese officials were insisting that the 55-year-old general remain in the country for possible trial on charges including the alleged theft of \$75 million from the state treasury.

Staccato bursts of machine-gun fire echoed across the pine woods surrounding the shell-shattered presidential palace in the Christian suburb of Baabda. Helmeted Syrian troops searched the hills for supporters of the defeated general.

The final casualty toll from the eight-hour crackdown on Aoun's enclave Saturday stood at 160 dead and 800 wounded, by police count.

The casualties included 32 Syrian soldiers killed and 85 wounded. Their bodies were flown to Damascus by two Syrian army helicopters, police said.

Syrian and Lebanese troops set up check-

points on roads leading to the French Embassy in Beirut's Christian suburb of Hazmiyeh. Embassy guards mined the walls.

Syrian soldiers and troops of President Elias Hrawi's army besieged the embassy Saturday night, hours after Aoun and three senior aides took refuge there. The embassy compound also houses Ambassador Rene Ala's residence.

There were no soldiers in the embassy's immediate vicinity later Sunday.

A Lebanese neighbor of the compound, who identified himself only by his first name, Antoine, said the soldiers "left this morning."

Antoine said Aoun arrived at the embassy entrance in an armored personnel carrier early Saturday, 45 minutes after Syrian warplanes and artillery started bombing the presidential palace.

"He was met at the entrance by (Ambassador) Ala. As they ran on foot toward Ala's residence, shells started falling on the embassy compound. They nearly got killed," Antoine said.

The embassy's swimming pool was hit by shells, as was the main lobby. A carpet of glass shards and debris blanketed the main entrance.

With Aoun on Saturday were his senior aides, Maj. Gen. Edgar Maalouf and Brig. Gen. Issam Abu Jamra. The commander of Aoun's military police, Col. Adel Sassine, joined him Sunday. Sassine was seen walking into the

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embassy dressed in civilian clothes and carrying two suitcases.

Antoine said he did not see Aoun's wife and three daughters entering the embassy, but the Christian Voice of Lebanon radio reported Sunday that they were found in the palace after the fighting.

France, the traditional protector of Lebanon's Christians, promptly granted Aoun asylum on Saturday. French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said: "We were talking with Lebanese

and Syrian authorities to allow his departure in good condition."

Ala met with Hrawi in Moslem west Beirut on Sunday to try to resolve the issue, presidential spokesman May Kahhaleh said. Ala left after two hours without making a statement.

"France must pardon us for not swallowing its hasty decision to grant asylum to Aoun," said Cabinet Minister Nabih Berri. "He should stand trial as a plain criminal, not a politician."

Christian warlord Samir Geagea, whose Lebanese Forces militia fought a four-month power struggle with Aoun's men early this year, also said the defeated general "should be brought to justice and tried as a criminal."

Aoun's fall tightened Syria's hold on Lebanon, which the Syrians consider their strategic backyard. Syria, the main power broker in Lebanon, sent 40,000 troops to Lebanon under a 1976 peacekeeping mandate.

Aoun had rejected an Arab League-brokered peace plan to end the war and refused to recognize Hrawi as head of state, calling him a "Syrian puppet." The peace plan provides for the traditionally dominant Christians to share power with the Moslem majority.

GUILT update

Anti-Iraq coalition may fall if U.S. still supports Israel

WASHINGTON - Two months after the United States recruited some unlikely partners to stand against Iraq, experts are asking whether the group can withstand the diverse views of its members.

The clash between the United States and its allies over a U.N. resolution condemning Israel, and Friday's assassination of an Egyptian leader, highlight the possible risks to the international coalition.

From its largest shareholders, the United States and Britain, to its smallest participants, Norway and Denmark, the anti-Iraq grouping has achieved an unparalleled degree of unanimity.

Its stated goal, in defense of which members have deployed military forces and stopped trade with Iraq, is to oust President Saddam Hussein from Kuwait and stop him attacking other oil-rich neighbors.

The first major test of the cohesion came last week, when Yemen, an ally of Iraq, introduced a resolution condemning Israel for killing 19 Palestinians after Jewish worshippers were attacked in Jerusalem.

In an attempt to placate its Arab coalition allies, the United States broke with precedent and agreed to condemn Israel. But it also wanted the U.N. resolution to criticize the Palestinian violence, and rejected language calling for U.N. measures to protect Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

This put President Bush at odds with Egypt, Syria and other Arab members of the anti-Iraq coalition, as well as with his European partners, including France.

"It's terribly important for Bush to succeed on this if he's going to retain credibility as the head of the coalition," said Robert Hunter, a former presidential aide who's now an analyst at the private Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Saddam has, from the start, tried to drive a wedge between the United States and the Arabs by portraying himself as the protector of Palestinians and other downtrodden Arabs in a class struggle against wealthy Americans and their "expansionist" ally, Israel.

He has hit a responsive chord among Egyptians, Syrians and other Arabs, splitting them from their governments which are lined up against him in the sands of Saudi Arabia. Thus, the U.S. refusal to strongly condemn Israel has embarrassed those Arab leaders who are called upon to defend their positions at home.

"I don't think the coalition can withstand this sort of double standard by the United States," said Rashid Khalidi, Associate Director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Chicago. "It's a weak link."

The resolve of the Arab leaders could also be threatened by more concrete forms of Iraqi intimidation.

On Friday, gunmen killed Egypt's parliament speaker and four security men outside a luxury Cairo hotel, days after the government warned that terrorists might punish Egypt for opposing Iraq.

There was no claim of responsibility in the slayings, but they increased government nervousness.

Experts predicted the resolve of Egypt and other Arabs, who have traditionally struck a united front against the West no matter what disagreements they had, could be systematically weakened if Iraqi proxies start a campaign of terror.

Other experts believe that time and an erosion of domestic support are the greatest enemies.

"As time goes on, each party discovers that its own interests aren't necessarily compatible with those of the others," said Judith Kipper, a scholar at the Brookings Institution.

If the confrontation with Saddam drags on without resolution, Americans might start demanding that President Bush bring home the 165,000 troops he has sent to the region, 31 of whom have been killed in accidents.

Israel says it won't cooperate with investigation of shootings

JERUSALEM - The government decided Sunday against cooperating with a U.N. team investigating the shooting deaths of 19 Palestinians by Israeli police, and said the delegation should stay away from Israel.

"We have read the Security Council's decision... and it is completely unacceptable," a Cabinet communique said. "As a result Israel will not receive the delegation of the U.N. Secretary-General."

Radio stations said right-wing Housing Minister Ariel Sharon proposed that the investigators be barred from Israel, but Sharon's spokesman, Nimrod Granit, denied that.

Israeli officials, however, made it clear that they expect the three-man mission to stay away.

"This is not an invitation to come; it's an invitation not to come," said Deputy Foreign Minister Benyamin Netanyahu.

Police opened fire Oct. 8 on Palestinians during a riot on the hallowed Temple Mount, sacred to both Moslems and Jews. The Moslems call it Haram-es-Sharif.

The riot began when Palestinians threw rocks onto worshippers praying

below at the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest site. Police first used tear gas and rubber bullets, then live ammunition.

The U.N. Security Council voted Friday to condemn Israel, and to send a delegation to investigate. In a rare gesture, the United States joined in the censure of its ally.

Israel's Cabinet, at its regular weekly session Sunday, said it saw no reason for the United Nations to intervene when it had ignored worse incidents in other countries.

But opposition politicians questioned the Cabinet decision.

Haim Ramon, head of the opposition Labor Party's parliament faction, said the U.N. mission could not be prevented from coming and should be allowed into Israel at a non-diplomatic level.

"I wouldn't play angry with the whole world. I would accept the delegation at a low level, to meet with police officers," Ramon told Israel television.

Foreign Minister David Levy said the U.N. investigation would violate Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem and pave the way for stationing U.N.

forces in the city.

The Temple Mount is in Arab east Jerusalem, which Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East War and later annexed. Israel maintains its police were provoked by the barrage of stones onto Jews at the Western Wall, also known as the Wailing Wall.

An Israeli human rights group on Sunday accused police of indiscriminate shooting and "criminal negligence" in the bloodshed. The group, Betsalem, said the government has attempted to "hide the facts, mislead the public... and evade responsibility" in the shootings.

Officials first said Palestinians planned the stoning of Jewish worshippers in advance, hoping to provoke an incident that would divert world attention from the Persian Gulf crisis.

But Police Commissioner Yaacov Termer later said he believed the riot was spontaneous.

It was the bloodiest incident in Jerusalem since the 1967 war, and the worst loss of life in a single day of the 34-month-old Palestinian uprising against Israel occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

German states have elections

BERLIN - Voters in what used to be East Germany chose governments Sunday for the five states their nation has become and again backed the conservative party of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, projections said.

Kohl's conservative Christian Democrats easily won the most votes in four of five states, Thuringia, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Lower Pomerania, according to projections by the television networks ARD and ZDF.

However, the Christian Democrats were losing the state of Brandenburg to the left-leaning Social Democrats, the main opposition.

The early projections still showed the Christian Democrats to be the dominant party in East German territory, thus giving something of a preview of the united German elections Dec. 2.

Those elections will be the first united German balloting in 60 years. Kohl, the politician most responsible for uniting the German states Oct. 3, is widely favored to win.

The state elections were important because they finally gave people in East Germany governors and state legislatures who will have to assume a major responsibility for removing much of the entrenched Communist system.

The elections will help give the former nation a new political and regional identity.

The five state governments face the monumental task of forming separate administrations from the vestiges of the old centralized Communist system, where all power emanated from the national party bosses.

The states will have to quickly assume responsibility for police, education, transportation and some social services.

The television projections said the renamed Communist Party had won more than 5 percent of the votes in each of the states in the former East Germany, guaranteeing them seats in the state parliaments.

Elections also were held in Bavaria, a wealthy state in former West Germany. The arch-conservative Christian Social Union suffered losses but appeared able to hold on to its majority.

ARD and ZDF, the two TV networks, said their projections showed the ultraright Republican Party close to clearing the 5 percent hurdle to get into the Bavarian legislature.

After 40 years without free elections, people in the former East Germany have now held three in six months, and they face a fourth in December.

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