

S. Africa violence kills 18

Gunfire breaks out after ANC funeral

TOKOZA, South Africa — Gunmen fired on people returning from the funeral of a slain anti-apartheid activist Monday, sparking battles that left at least 18 blacks dead, police said.

The bloodletting in Tokoza, southeast of Johannesburg, was the worst outbreak of violence since the government and leading black groups signed a peace accord on Sept. 14.

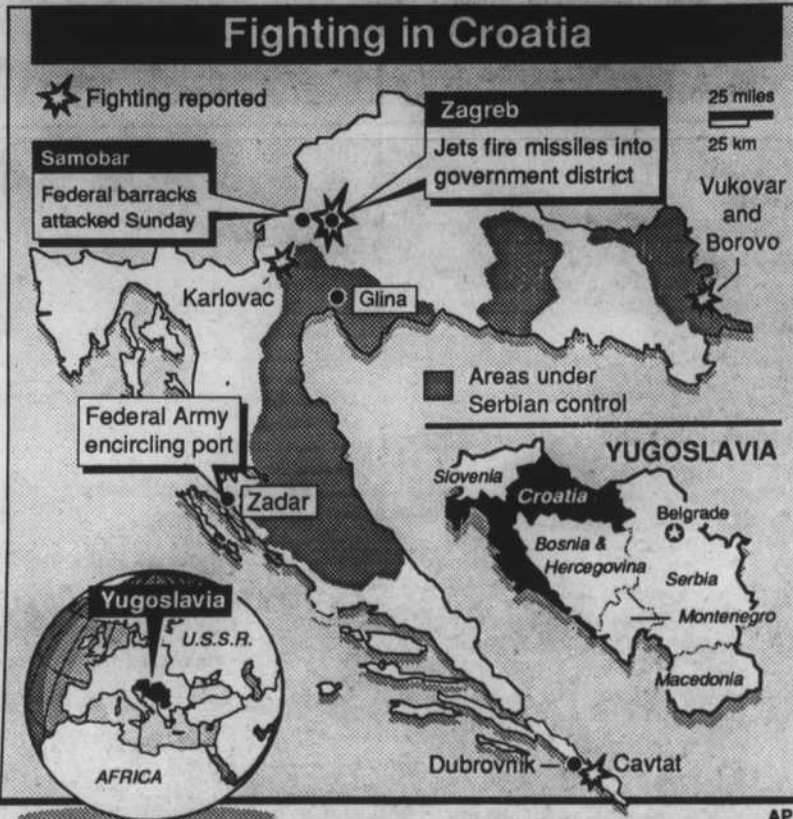
The violence has bedeviled efforts by President F.W. de Klerk to bring black organizations to the negotiating table to draw up a new constitution to end apartheid.

Security forces had anticipated trouble. Armored military vehicles and scores of soldiers and police patrolled the streets.

Skirmishes broke out as about 15,000 people headed home from a stadium after a funeral for Sam Ntuli, a prominent African National Congress member shot Sept. 29.

Many ANC supporters who attended the ceremony carried guns, knives, spears and clubs.

Police blamed most of the deaths on gunmen who drove around Tokoza in vans.



Yugoslav planes narrowly miss Croatian leaders

ZAGREB, Yugoslavia — Yugoslav air force jets rocketed the presidential palace in the capital of secessionist Croatia on Monday, narrowly missing the republic's leaders and the federal premier.

The precision onslaught came hours before a deadline set by the European Community for the parties to cease hostilities or face economic sanctions. It also came despite an appeal from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev not to escalate the civil war.

Many residents of Zagreb fled to shelters Monday night. Phosphorous flares illuminated the sky and explosions could be heard.

"It was by sheer miracle that we

stayed alive," Premier Ante Markovic, a Croat and leader of the Yugoslav federal government, told his office in Belgrade by telephone, according to the Tanjug news agency.

Markovic said he was meeting with Stipe Mesic, the Croatian chairman of the federal presidency, and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman in the palace when "the hall we were in was hit by a rocket from an air force plane," Tanjug said.

The Croatian Defense Ministry said the rockets were fired by a federal air force jet. The federal military denied ordering the bombing of Zagreb and said, "It is not to be excluded that the Croatian leadership staged this attack."

Abrams pleads guilty on Iran-contra charges

WASHINGTON — Former Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams pleaded guilty Monday to two misdemeanors in the Iran-contra scandal and agreed to cooperate in the continuing probe of top officials from the Reagan administration.

Abrams, 43, appeared in U.S.

District Court, where he admitted withholding information from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Oct. 10, 1986. He concealed Oliver North's involvement with a secret network to supply the Nicaraguan contra rebels with guns, he said. Abrams thought that "disclosure of Lt. Col. (Oliver) North's activities

in the resupply of the contras would jeopardize final enactment" of a \$100 million congressional appropriation for the contras, Iran-contra prosecutors said in an eight-page statement of facts filed in U.S. District Court.

"How do you plead?" U.S. District Court Judge Aubrey Robinson asked

Abrams twice.

"I plead guilty," Abrams replied each time in a clear voice.

"I take full responsibility for my actions, for my failure to make full disclosure to Congress in 1986," Abrams told reporters later outside the U.S. Courthouse.

American freed Iran lets go engineer held on spy charge

WASHINGTON — In what could be another sign of diminished hostility toward the United States, Iran on Monday freed a U.S. engineer imprisoned for five years on spy charges.

Jon Patis, 54, was said by officials to have been heading for the United States via Europe. Officials declined to issue further comment because he was released on the promise that publicity be kept at a minimum.

His release appears to be part of an improving climate in U.S.-Iranian relations since the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in June 1989.

Iranian officials have recently spoken about the possibility of reaching agreements with the United States on a range of issues once the hostages in Lebanon are freed and frozen Iranian assets abroad are released.

Patis worked for Cosmos Engineers of Bethesda, Md., at Iran's main satellite ground station at Assadabad. He was arrested after the station was bombed by Iraqi jets during the Iran-Iraq war in 1986.

He was sentenced to 10 years in

prison in 1987 by a revolutionary court on espionage charges.

Patis, of Aiken, S.C., reportedly confessed to spying for the CIA. He was quoted in a television interview in 1986 as saying he had worked in Iran on various projects since 1969 and supplied the agency with information on telecommunications sites and projects, black market money rates, rumors about the health of Khomeini and other internal matters.

The State Department denied in 1986 that Patis had been working for the U.S. government.

Iran last year freed a Savannah, Ga., businessman, E. David Rabhan, whom it had held for a decade on espionage charges.

The United States and Iran have not had diplomatic relations since shortly after American hostages were seized in Tehran in 1979.

Although State Department officials declined to comment Monday, moderates appear to have gained the upper hand in Tehran over their more radical rivals lately.

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