

U.S. military forces headed to Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — If the United Nations mission fails to restore democracy in this Caribbean country, hordes of Haitians will flee toward the United States, Prime Minister Robert Malval warned Sunday.

He spoke after a night of heavy gunfire in the capital, a stark reminder of the volatile political passions that many fear will force the U.N. peacekeepers into fighting, as has happened in Somalia.

A U.S. warship carrying hundreds of GIs to take part in the U.N. mission is to arrive on today. A small contingent of U.S. and Canadian peacekeepers arrived last week.

The U.N. troops are part of a U.N.-brokered plan to restore democracy more than two years after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's first freely elected leader, was deposed in a military coup.

After Aristide's ouster, countless Haitians began fleeing by boat for the United States. U.S. military ships began intercepting them and returning them to Haiti, sparking outraged criticism that Washington was turning away refugees of political oppression.

If the U.N. plan fails, "more and more people will leave the island. It will no longer be a problem for Haiti. It will be a problem for Florida," Malval told reporters, speaking from the porch of his home.

"Even the U.S. 6th Fleet will be unable to prevent Haitians from fleeing a less and less hospitable land," Malval said.

Malval rejected comparisons with Somalia, asserting that 90 percent of Haitians wanted to restore democracy here. However, his transition government has received little cooperation from the Haitian army, and civilian gunmen

sidearms and ammunition, which U.S. officials said would only be used in self-defense. The force is to total 1,600 troops.

Six hundred American troops have been committed to the mission, which has been the subject of a debate within the Pentagon. To protect the arriving American troops, a greater concern following the attacks in Somalia, the Pentagon said Friday that the Harlan County will remain off Haiti's coast, ready for possible rescue missions. Another warship, the USS Fairfax County, is to arrive Oct. 20 carrying hundreds more troops and tons more materials.

Worn down by a worldwide petroleum embargo and other economic sanctions, Haiti's army agreed in July to a U.N. plan in which commander Raoul Cedras and police chief Joseph Michel Francois would leave their posts and Aristide would return by Oct. 30.

He disclosed that Western Hemisphere foreign ministers were planning to fly here Oct. 30 for the scheduled return of Aristide.

The U.S. amphibious warship Harlan County headed toward Haiti on Sunday, carrying military engineers, medics and civil affairs specialists, along with troop trucks, bulldozers, earth movers, tents and rations for a six-month mission. Also to be unloaded are M-16s,

Tanker explosion could lead to 'major spill'

GALVESTON, Texas — Salvage crews scrambled Sunday aboard a gasoline tanker ripped open by an explosion that peeled back part of the deck "like a sardine can." Three people were believed killed.

The Coast Guard strung containment booms in case of a possible fuel spill from the damaged OMI Charger, which was carrying no cargo but held 365,000 gallons of fuel.

"There is a potential for a major spill," said Capt. Paul Prokop, commander of the Coast Guard station at Galveston.

The Houston Ship channel, one of the world's busiest waterways, was closed part of the day because officials feared ship wakes could endanger the tanker. Officials later allowed restricted use of the channel, which serves the Houston petrochemical industry.

Coast Guard officials said they were convinced none of the fuel had

spilled from the 660-foot ship. It was partially afloat in about 40 feet of water. Crews planned to remove the fuel.

Witnesses said the ship was hit by two explosions Saturday. The first blast around 8 p.m. was felt more than four miles away, while a less intense explosion occurred about an hour later. The fire burned out of control for about 5 1/2 hours.

Two men were confirmed killed and one other was missing and presumed dead. Three of the 35 crew members remained hospitalized Sunday, one in serious condition. About a dozen others were treated and released.

The blasts opened a gaping hole along the left side of the ship, exposing its interior. Pipelines on the deck were twisted like blackened spaghetti.

Part of the main deck was "peeled back like a sardine can," said Coast



Guard Cmdr. Roger Peoples, who flew over the wreck Sunday. The ship's stern had sunk to the channel bottom and it listed to port, but Peoples said it was in no danger of sinking.

Twenty-seven crew members were rescued from the burning ship minutes after the blast by the crew of a passing oil rig supply boat.

Owners of the ship and the Coast Guard would not say what caused the blasts.

Officials estimated the insured ship was worth about \$10 million.

Support continues to grow for warlord Aidid

2,000 Somalis demonstrate in Mogadishu

NAIROBI, Kenya — Some 2,000 Somalis demonstrated in the capital of Mogadishu on Sunday in support of fugitive warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid, a U.N. spokesman said.

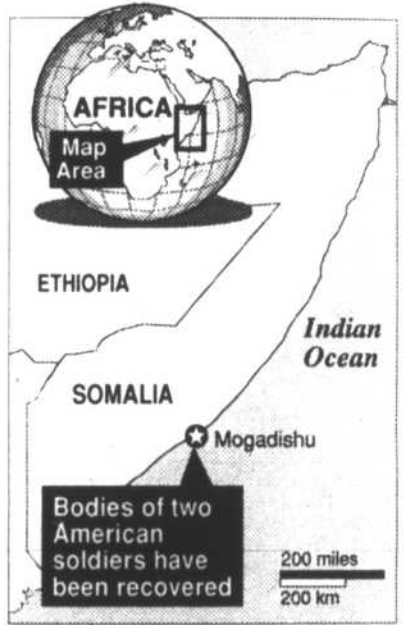
Maj. David Stockwell, the U.N. military spokesman, said the demonstrators shouted slogans against the United Nations and the United States. He had no other details about the rally.

It coincided with the arrival in Mogadishu of Robert Oakley, a former Bush Administration official who is seeking a diplomatic solution in Somalia and a negotiated end to the fighting between Aidid's militiamen and U.N. peacekeepers.

A U.N. official in Mogadishu, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Aidid's reported offer Saturday for a cease-fire appeared to be a way of opening dialogue with Oakley.

Militiamen loyal to Aidid have brazenly attacked the peacekeepers since June. At least 15 American soldiers were killed Oct. 3 in one of the fiercest battles yet. Two more bodies believed to be those of U.S. servicemen were recovered Friday, and one soldier was still unaccounted for.

Oakley met Saturday with President Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, who has a mandate from the Organization of African Unity to handle interna-



AP/Carl Fox

tional negotiations on Somalia.

The United Nations accuses Aidid of masterminding the attacks on U.N. peacekeepers and has issued a warrant for his arrest. And despite the apparent cease-fire offer, Stockwell said the U.N. military mission had not changed.

"Aidid is still vulnerable to detention," Stockwell said.

Earlier, another U.N. military spokesman, Capt. Tim MacDavitt, said the United Nations had not received official notice of Aidid's offer.

Since the Somalia operation began in December, 31 Americans and 90 peacekeepers from other countries have been killed.

STATE WIRE

Hastings man kills police officer, himself

HASTINGS — A man searching for his estranged wife took a hostage, shot and killed a police officer, led authorities on a high speed chase and then apparently committed suicide, authorities said Sunday.

Sylvester Frank Pettit, 35, who lived about 15 miles away from Hastings in south-central Nebraska, was searching Saturday for his wife, Pauline Pettit, at the home in Hastings of a woman who was providing her shelter, Adams County Attorney Steve Scherr said.

He failed to find Mrs. Pettit twice during the day Saturday and forced his way into the house Saturday night, Scherr said.

"There were four young boys there, frightened to death," Scherr said. "He entered the house shotgun in hand."

One of the boys had shotgun pellets removed from his head, apparently struck by a blast Pettit directed at the front door, Scherr said.

Pettit took the woman hostage after failing to find his wife, Scherr said. The woman's name was not released Sunday.

Police Officer Joel Conklin, 37, responded to a disturbance call at the house and was shot at near pointblank range and was killed, Scherr said.

Pettit fled with the woman and was spotted by authorities near Alma, about 60 miles southwest of Hastings, Scherr said. At some point, Pettit pushed the woman out of the car and the high-speed chase ended with Pettit shooting himself, apparently committing suicide, Scherr said.

Authorities believe Pettit had lived

in the Spring Ranch area of Clay County for about one month and was working in Hastings as a tow truck driver for an auto repair shop.

Mrs. Pettit had left her husband about one week ago and filed for a protection order against him. The sheriff couldn't find Pettit Friday to serve him with the document, Scherr said.

Pettit had been found guilty of manslaughter in the late 1980s in Blaine County after his then-wife, Pandora, was shot and killed with a hunting rifle, Blaine County Attorney Doug Stack said.

The conviction was overturned and the case later dismissed after Pettit appealed and the Nebraska Supreme Court found that the jury instruction on manslaughter was inappropriate, Stack said.

SPORTS WIRE

Barkley has tests after collapse on court

PHOENIX — Charles Barkley, who collapsed during training camp after his legs went numb, underwent tests Sunday to determine when he can resume playing.

The NBA's Most Valuable Player was running wind sprints with teammates after an hour-long scrimmage Saturday night at the Phoenix Suns' training site in Flagstaff when he suddenly pitched forward and collapsed. He remained on the floor for more than 30 minutes before being helped to the locker room, where he underwent treatment for an hour.

"My back and legs had been really tight, but I was running well," Barkley said Saturday after leaving practice. "I kept running. Then I kept getting slower and slower. It

was like my legs started going into the floor. I couldn't lift my feet. I couldn't move my legs at all. It scared me to death."

On Sunday, Barkley was brought to Phoenix, where he was examined by team doctors, said Suns' spokeswoman Julie Fic. "Most everything is speculation until all the tests are done. It's not like we're trying to be uncooperative," Fic said.

Team doctor Richard Emerson said before the tests were conducted that there was no immediate indication of nerve damage and Barkley's problem was consistent with a disk injury.

Barkley was diagnosed with a bulging disk in August but was treated with an epidural cortisone

shot and reported no pain when preseason drills opened Friday night at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff.

Emerson examined Barkley at the start of practice Sunday and decided to bring him to Phoenix for magnetic resonance imaging tests by a radiologist.

"My main concern right now is that the tests show my back is not any worse," Barkley said before being helped into a van for the 140-mile trip to Phoenix. "Right now, I'm a little scared and nervous. You don't want to go full speed on a basketball court and then collapse. You don't want that hanging over your head."

Search

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forth," he said.

"Last time, we made two trips for interviews in Chicago. We also interviewed candidates outside of Omaha

Four sets of interviews were conducted in the last search, he said. at Mahoney Park," Milliken said. "The

board went to Kansas City and interviewed three of the final four candidates at a convention there, as well."

The committee wants to save money by avoiding such globe trotting this time around, he said.

"We want to avoid that this time, and we think we will," Milliken said.

Milliken said the committee is exploring the possibility of using some members' private means of transportation to help cut down costs.

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