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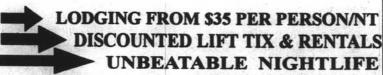
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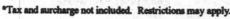


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# **Spotlight**

# Tensions mount in Balka

### A Serb crackdown on ethnic Albanians raises concerns of renewed war.

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) -Sobbing relatives filed past the disfigured corpses of loved ones slain in a Serb crackdown.

At the same time, a U.S. envoy visited the tense province of Kosovo Tuesday, trying to prevent simmering hatreds from boiling over into a new Balkan war.

The diplomat, Robert Gelbard, demanded that international forensics experts be allowed to examine the bodies of the ethnic Albanian victims, but within hours, ethnic Albanian officials said Serbians had taken away 49 corpses and buried them in a mass grave.

The claim could not immediately be confirmed. If true, it is certain to inflame widespread outrage over Serbia's behavior in the troubled province where a Serb police crackdown last week killed at least 74 ethnic Albanians.

Gelbard conveyed Washington's revulsion at the Serbs' use of "brutal, disproportionate and overwhelming force" in the southern province and demanded that both sides halt the violence.

Acting under strong international pressure, Serbia for the first time offered to talk with Kosovo

We think the violence should stop; we're talking about deaths of many people. ..."

> BILL RICHARDSON U.S. ambassador

Albanians, saying it is "the only way to improve political processes" to solve "vital issues."

The ethnic Albanians, who outnumber Serbs 9 to 1 in Kosovo, did not immediately respond to the offer, which was announced Tuesday night by Yugoslavia's official Tanjug news agency.

If the offer is sincere, it will put pressure on ethnic Albanian leaders who have always advocated pacifism but insist on independence.

Turmoil in Kosovo has revived fears of a new Balkan conflict. Many ethnic Albanians want to secede from Serbia, the dominant republic in the Yugoslav federation. On Monday, the United States and five other Western powers imposed a ban on sales of arms and other equipment to Yugoslavia.

As mourners came to view their relatives' and neighbors' bullet-riddled, charred bodies, chances of dialogue with the Serbs seemed remote.

"Look what the Serb savages did. They killed women and chil-

dren," said a man who identified himself only as Fazli. "How does anyone expect us to forget this terrible massacre?"At the United Nations, meanwhile, the Security Council considered the possibility of an arms embargo against Yugoslavia on Tuesday.

We think the violence should stop; we're talking about deaths of many people, and the international community is working together to find a strong response," U.S. Ambassador Bill Richardson told reporters.

Gelbard, while condemning Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's forces' actions in Kosovo, also renewed his message Tuesday that Washington is opposed to any further splintering of the former Yugoslavia.

"The United States feels inde pendence is not the answer," he said at a news conference in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. "The future of Kosovo lies within the borders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia."

## IRA rebels blamed for attack on police

BELFAST, Northern Ireland dissidents today in an early morning mortar attack that targeted a police barracks southwest of Belfast, forcing civilians to flee but wounding no one.

At daybreak, police and British army explosives experts discovered that only one of the five shells landed within the police compound, causing little damage. A second detonated on the road outside, damaging cars and breaking windows, while two others overshot the compound and landed among nearby houses.

Police and soldiers found another shell stuck inside the sixbarrel launcher hidden behind trees beside the base in Armagh, 40 miles southwest of Belfast. They kept the area sealed off they searched backyar and gardens for the missing sixth

Nobody claimed responsibili-(AP) - Authorities accused IRA ty for the attack. Police and politicians suspected anti-British dissidents opposed to the Irish Republican Army's nearly 8month-old cease-fire.

> A soldier on patrol found a cache of mortar tubes shortly after midnight, a discovery that gave police time to evacuate their barracks but not enough time to try to disable the mortars.

> About 25 minutes later, a salvo of shells went off, apparently by timer, as police evacuated nearby houses. They took about 100 people to a shelter set up in a high school gym.

Martin McGuinness, chief negotiator of the IRA-allied Sinn Fein party, said the attack may have been committed by "a tiny number of Irish republicans who are hostile to the cease-fire and to Sinn Fein's efforts to bring about a peace settlement."

## Inspection team ends latest search of Iraqi sites

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) -An American-led team of U.N. weapons inspectors ended its latest mission to Iraq on Tuesday after searching eight sen sittle sites - areas that Iraqi sources said included the Defense Ministry and barracks of the elite Republican Guards.

The six-day mission by American Scott Ritter and his 50member team had been considered a first test of Iraq's compliance with a Feb. 23 accord on the U.N. searches for banned weapons.

Janet Ann Sullivan, a spokeswoman in Baghdad for the U.N. inspectors, declined to identify the sites visited by Ritter's squads but said: "All sites were inspected to the satisfaction of the inspection team."

The pro-government AllIraq newspaper said in a front-page editorial that Ritter "will not get more than what the other inspection teams have gotten - nothing."

Also Tuesday, a U.N. envoy arrived in Bahrain to form diplomatic group to accompany arms inspectors on the true test of Iraqi compliance: searches of Saddam Hussein's palace compounds.

Iraq once vowed it would never open the palaces to arms inspectors. But under threat of a U.S.-led attack, it backed down as part of last month's accord with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The accord brokered a compromise by which the palace inspections would go through, but only with an escort of U.N. diplo-

The first inspections of palaces are expected laterithis month.

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