

NEWS DIGEST

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Serbs, Albanians still in talks

NATO will not bomb the area if neither side will agree to peace plan

RAMBOUILLET, France (AP) — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, making scant headway toward a Kosovo peace settlement, said Sunday that if neither Serbs nor ethnic Albanians accept the six-nation plan, NATO cannot carry through on its threat to attack Serb targets.

With a new deadline set for Tuesday, Serb negotiators "are not engaging at all" over the critical question of whether NATO peacekeepers would enforce the settlement, while the Kosovar Albanians must still be persuaded to sign on fully with the plan to give them greater autonomy in the Serb province, Albright said.

"They are dealing, and I think we have to appreciate this, with decisions that affect their lives," Albright said. "It is a question of war and peace for them. In think we need to understand the diffi-

culty of the decisions that they are making."

Albright will return to this small town southwest of Paris today for more talks with the ethnic Albanians, a senior U.S. official told The Associated Press.

Albright, talking to reporters, declined to explain what was holding up Albanian approval. In fact, she said, U.S. officials thought the Albanians had given her a green light Saturday.

But other U.S. officials said the renewed negotiations focused on the Albanians' quest for independence after the plan's interim three-year period, and the U.S. refusal to endorse independence. And Albright, ruling out any independence referendum in the agreement, said she was looking for a way

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MADELEINE ALBRIGHT
U.S. secretary of state

"the voice of the people" could be expressed in Kosovo.

But "if this fails because both parties say no, there will not be bombing of Serbia and we will try to figure out ways of trying to deal with both sides," she said.

However, Albright said that if the Albanians give their total endorsement to the complex plan — which would give

the majority Albanians significant autonomy but stop short of independence for Kosovo — and if the Serbs keep holding out, then the Serbs would be attacked.

"The Serbian side is not cooperative. The Serbian side believes that it can have half the deal, which is to talk about the political part of the document. ... There is no deal and no cooperation if they are not willing to engage in what is a basic aspect of the agreement," she said, referring to the NATO peacekeepers.

Albright's spokesman, James P. Rubin, said she left U.S. Ambassador Christopher Hill — the U.S. special envoy to the talks — to continue negotiating with the Albanian representatives.

And British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook also tried pressure the ethnic Albanians to accept the agreement.

Divisions may mar first post-scandal talk

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton and congressional leaders mark the beginning of the post-impeachment Congress with a White House meeting Tuesday, but don't expect much beyond a shaky image of bipartisan cooperation.

Both sides feel pressure from the public to demonstrate they are dealing with the nation's business and moving beyond the Senate impeachment trial, which ended Feb. 12 with Clinton's acquittal. The White House session will be the first meeting in 19 months between the president and Republican leaders.

But Republican distrust for Clinton runs deep, as do partisan divisions on Social Security and tax cuts, major issues facing the two sides.

Given the lingering animosity and the differences on issues, there is little chance that much will occur at the White House beyond symbolic gestures of intent to work together.

"It looks like something that's more for show," said Bill Connelly, a political scientist at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va., who has studied Congress. "The gulf between congressional Republicans and the Democratic White House is

"It looks like something that's more for show."

BILL CONNELLY
political scientist

enormous, and not likely to be bridged by a single meeting."

That distrust was sown in 1995, well before the start of Clinton's 13-month-long impeachment ordeal. Republicans say Clinton used that year's failed White House budget talks to create an illusion that he was working with them but was actually planning to use GOP proposals on revamping Medicare to bash them during his 1996 run for re-election.

The White House has long denied the allegation. Even so, Republicans say GOP trust for Clinton just isn't there.

Neither side is likely to show up with specific new proposals on the major issues confronting them, which will leave gaping partisan and substantive differences to deal with.

Iraq bombed again for fly-zone breach

U.S. reports no damage or casualties, while Iraq broadcasted a Western plane was possibly hit.

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — U.S. and British warplanes attacked an Iraqi missile base and two military communication sites Sunday after Iraqi jets violated the no-fly zone, the U.S. military said.

There was no immediate word on damage or casualties from the strikes near al-Amarah and Tallil, about 170 miles southeast of Baghdad. All the planes returned to their base, a statement from the U.S. Central Command said.

The statement said the strikes were launched after two Iraqi jets violated the zone in southern Iraq. There was no immediate comment from Iraqi officials on the attack. Earlier Sunday, the official Iraqi News Agency said Iraqi air defenses may have shot down a Western military plane in southern Iraq. But the United States and Britain denied any planes were lost.

Iraq has made several claims in the past about shooting down Western planes, but none of them has proved to

be correct.

Also Sunday, the government announced that President Saddam Hussein had sent a letter to Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdel-Meguid urging "a new page" in relations with the Arab world.

The appeal followed a fence-mending trip by Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf to eight Arab countries from North Africa to Syria and the Persian Gulf.

"Iraq is ready to open a new page in Arab relations on condition that Arab countries come out with a united stance against the aggression and sanctions imposed on Iraq," Saddam said in the letter, state-run Iraqi radio reported.

Saddam called for the league to delay a March 14 meeting of a committee created to study the Iraq situation until there is Arab reconciliation. He said such a meeting must "come out with a united position, with no doubts from any party," the broadcast said.

The committee was set up last month after Arab League foreign ministers refused Iraqi demands to condemn U.N. trade sanctions and the mid-December airstrikes by the United States and Britain on Iraq. Iraq's delegation walked out of the session in anger.

Advertisers, broadcasters targeted for discriminating

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government is urging advertisers and broadcasters to adopt a system to prevent advertisers from discriminating against radio stations owned by or geared to minority listeners.

Vice President Al Gore and Federal Communications Commission Chairman Bill Kennard make the pitch today at a conference in New York.

Their challenge responds to a report, issued by the FCC last month, that said advertisers often bypass or pay less money to minority-owned radio stations or stations targeting black or Hispanic listeners.

At the conference, Kennard plans to suggest that the industries develop a voluntary code guided by, among other things, the principal of "fair competition," FCC and administration officials said on condition of anonymity.

"Diversity of voices and views is a

pillar of our democracy," Gore says in remarks prepared for delivery to the conference via satellite. "That is why we must ensure that our airwaves provide opportunities for all Americans."

The challenge is intended to be a starting point for the industry to consider, the officials said.

Thus far, the advertising and broadcasting industries have been open to but noncommittal about developing such a code. The American Advertising Federation is assembling a panel to examine its feasibility. The FCC report recommended industry adopt a code of conduct requiring decisions about buying ads to be based on market research.

Gore also plans to announce the creation of a new interagency working group to examine advertising practices and their impact on minority broadcasters' and advertising agencies' ability to compete and thrive.



■ Pakistan

India, Pakistan leaders agree to reduce war risk

LAHORE (AP) — The prime ministers of Pakistan and India, old enemies who declared themselves nuclear powers with underground tests in May, ended a two-day visit Sunday vowing to try to reduce the risk of an accidental nuclear war.

They also promised to give warning of ballistic missile tests. Both Pakistan and India have missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads and of hitting populated areas in both countries.

■ Pakistan

Kurds protest arrest of Ocalan at U.N. building

SULAIMANIYA (AP) — About 4,000 Iraqi Kurds marched to the United Nations office in northern Iraq on Sunday to protest the arrest of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan. Protests were also held Sunday in Iran and Germany.

In Sulaimaniya, hundreds of soldiers armed with automatic rifles stopped protesters about 250 yards from the U.N. building. The demonstrators chanted slogans in support of Ocalan, who was taken last week from the Greek Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, by Turkish agents.

■ Poland

Turner apologizes for joke about Pope

WARSAW (AP) — Ted Turner sought the forgiveness of Catholics after telling an ethnic joke about the Polish pope. Now the media mogul has apologized to Poland.

The apology sent Sunday came two days after Poland's government threatened to halt cooperation with Turner's broadcasting company if he failed to apologize.

■ Russia

Communist Party leader pushes to impeach Yeltsin

MOSCOW (AP) — Gennady Zyuganov, leader of the Russian Communist Party, said Sunday he would urge parliament to adopt a motion to impeach President Boris Yeltsin.

Addressing a rally marking Defender of the Fatherland Day, Zyuganov said an impeachment commission in the lower house of parliament had collected enough evidence to confirm "Yeltsin's criminal activity." The effort to impeach Yeltsin is seen as a long shot.

■ Nigeria

Elections predict Nigeria may return to democracy

LAGOS (AP) — The party of a former general headed toward a narrow win Sunday in legislative elections, giving him a likely edge in an upcoming presidential vote that heralds Nigeria's return to democracy.

With about two-thirds of the vote counted late Sunday, the party of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo had the greatest number of seats in the two legislative chambers. Obasanjo's successes were tempered, however, by the strength of the other two national parties, who are fielding a single candidate for president in next Sunday's presidential vote.

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