

NEWS DIGEST

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PAGE 2

Yugoslavia bombing continues

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — NATO pounded Yugoslavia for a second night Thursday, following through on a pledge to systematically destroy President Slobodan Milosevic's military forces unless he accepts a peace plan for Kosovo.

Bombs and missiles rained down on Kosovo's capital of Pristina shortly after dark. The sky lit up with bright flashes as three heavy blasts were heard from the direction of an army base next to the airport.

Explosions were also heard north of Belgrade, in northern Kosovo, and in Serbia and Montenegro, the two republics that make up Yugoslavia.

"We're going to systematically and progressively attack, disrupt, degrade, devastate and ultimately — unless President Milosevic complies with the demands of the international community — we're going to destroy these forces and their facilities and support," said U.S. Gen. Wesley Clark, supreme commander of allied forces in Europe.

But there was no hint that the assault was causing Milosevic to rethink his refusal to end his offensive against ethnic Albanian separatists in Kosovo or accept a plan calling for 28,000 NATO troops to enforce the peace.

His aides scorned the airstrikes as "a grave crime against the people" of Yugoslavia, and his forces kept up their rampage in Kosovo, hunting down leading ethnic Albanian politicians and editors and burning villages.

The Pentagon said Thursday night that all NATO planes in the day's raid had returned safely to their bases. Belgrade sounded the all-clear siren at 11:37 p.m. (5:37 EST).

Serbia, meanwhile, ordered foreign reporters belonging to NATO countries to leave. Most journalists heeded the warning — and several were threatened by angry Serbs on their way out.

Yugoslavia also announced it was cutting diplomatic ties with United States, Britain, France and Germany for participating in the airstrikes.

More than 2,000 people have been killed and at least 400,000 forced to flee their homes in a year of fighting between Yugoslav troops and ethnic

"*(Milosevic) knows how to get in touch with us.*"

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT
secretary of state

Albanian rebels in Kosovo, a province in Serbia. The ethnic Albanians have already signed the U.S.-backed peace plan.

A devastating first round of airstrikes Wednesday reportedly killed at least 11 people, injured dozens and delivered serious blows to Yugoslavia's military infrastructure.

Air raid sirens sounded throughout Yugoslavia again Thursday after dozens of NATO warplanes took off from bases in Italy and four warships in the Adriatic Sea launched Tomahawk cruise missiles on the second day of the offensive.

NATO commanders say the barrage will go on until Milosevic capitulates — and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said diplomatic channels were always open.

"He knows how to get in touch with us," she said in Washington.

Serbian television reported hits on a number of targets north of Belgrade on Thursday, but gave no information on casualties.

Ten explosions rattled Kraljevo, 75 miles south of Belgrade, and local television broadcasts appealed for blood donors, the independent Beta news agency said.

Two missiles struck near the central Serbian city of Nis. The official Tanjug news agency reported two explosions in northern Kosovo town of Kosovska Mitrovica.

Six locations — including army bases, an airport, and radar facilities — were hit in Montenegro.

"This will never be forgotten and the aggressors will never be forgiven," Ivica Dacic, a spokesman for Milosevic's Serbian Socialist Party, said in Belgrade.

Russia says it will not use force as retaliation against NATO

■ Officials hint that Russia could provide Yugoslavia with weapons.

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian leaders angrily denounced NATO airstrikes on Yugoslavia on Thursday, but President Boris Yeltsin said Moscow would not use force in retaliation.

Some top officials hinted that Russia could provide Yugoslavia with weapons — flouting an international arms embargo — and demonstrators hurled bottles at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. But Russia has mostly responded to the bombings with little more than harsh words.

"Russia has a number of extreme measures in store, but we decided not to use them so far," Yeltsin said at the Kremlin. "Morally we are above America."

Opposition to the airstrikes is acute across Russia's political spectrum, but there's little the country can do to demonstrate its anger. It is no longer a major military power and it is pleading with the West for aid to revive its shattered economy.

Still, Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov warned Thursday that Russia could pose a military threat.

"We have different responses at our disposal. Regarding military potential, our country is second to no one," he said on Russia's NTV televi-

sion. He then added, "But we aren't taking those steps."

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov on Thursday condemned the bombings as an effort to "enforce a political, economic and military dictatorship by the United States" — yet he insisted that wouldn't herald a new Cold War.

"We aren't calling for rupturing relations with the United States, we treasure those relations," Ivanov told a news conference.

When the attacks began Wednesday, Yeltsin said Russia was ceasing cooperation with NATO and recalled Russia's chief military envoy to the Western alliance. But the ITAR-Tass news agency reported Thursday that Russia would keep its mission at NATO headquarters in Brussels open and apparently would continue to take part in other alliance programs.

Ivanov would not say directly whether Russia would break the U.N. arms embargo on Yugoslavia, many of whose weapons are Soviet-made. Several hundred people demanding an end to the attacks protested Thursday outside the U.S. embassy in Moscow and the U.S. consulate in St. Petersburg, hurling bottles, eggs and other objects. Police detained several protesters in brief scuffles outside the Moscow embassy.

"We would have liked to use grenades, but all we had were eggs," protester Denis Yasov said in St. Petersburg.

Letters sent out using ID numbers

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — Who says that students who go to big colleges get treated impersonally, like they're just numbers?

Truman Bradley, of Boulder, Colo., for one.

The parents of Bradley, a prospective Arizona State University student, recently got a letter from the school that began: "Congratulations on 987-65-4321's admission." (The number used in this story has been changed.)

The letter, addressed to Truman's father, Jeff Bradley, added that as a parent "you will be a partner with the university in encouraging 987-65-4321 to succeed."

The father's reply: "Thank you for offering our son, 987-65-4321, or as we affectionately refer to him

around the house — 987 — a position in the ASU class of 2003. His mother, 123-45-6MOM, and I are very happy ..."

Tim Desch, director of undergraduate admissions, said the impersonal letter was a glitch in a batch of several thousand letters sent to prospective students.

In the first five, the computer picked up the student's Social Security number instead of the name. Those were supposed to have been discarded but inadvertently were mailed, Desch said.

"We don't know how it happened," he said.

The mother of at least one other prospective student informed the school that she'd received such a letter, Desch said. He could not recall her name.

World and Nation DATES

■ Illinois Minister who conducted gay marriage goes on trial

DOWNERS GROVE (AP) — A Methodist minister who presided at the "wedding" of two gay men went on trial Thursday before a jury of 13 pastors in the first test of a church law banning same-sex ceremonies.

The Rev. Gregory Dell of Chicago, a pastor for 30 years, could be defrocked if found guilty. A verdict is expected Saturday.

In opening statements, a minister acting as a church prosecutor said the ceremony Dell performed last September made "a mockery of church law."

■ Washington, D.C. FCC will stop regulating cable prices next week

The Associated Press — Cable TV customers will have to pay whatever their cable companies want to charge them when federal price regulation ends next week. But even with government controls, the rates rose sharply over the past few years.

Following the directive of a 1996 law, the Federal Communications Commission will stop regulating most cable TV services March 31. Specifically, it will lift federal price controls for the expanded basic services that include CNN, MTV and ESPN.

■ Paraguay Paraguay's president goes on trial for abuse of power

ASUNCION (AP) — Facing abuse of power charges, President Raul Cubas went on trial in Paraguay's Senate Thursday, proceedings hastened by the assassination of the vice president.

In a tense four-hour session, senators read opening statements and laid out the accusations that could drive Cubas from office.

Cubas is accused of abusing his powers by freeing former army chief Lino Oviedo, who was sentenced to 10 years for attempting to oust then-President Juan Wasmosy in 1996.

■ Australia Hijacked helicopter captures inmate from secured prison

SYDNEY (AP) — A hijacked helicopter scooped up an inmate in a daring escape from a maximum-security prison yard Thursday, carrying him through a hail of guards' bullets to freedom.

The helicopter was commandeered during a tourist flight over the Sydney Olympic stadium by a female passenger, who held a revolver to the pilot's head and ordered him to land inside the city's Silverwater prison, police said. John Killick, 57, was due in court later that day.

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