

Serb troops move into Albania

Milosevic's forces seize border town; no casualties reported

BAJRAM CURRI, Albania (AP) — Igniting fears of a widening conflict, Serb forces pushed into northern Albania on Tuesday, fought an hour-long skirmish with Albanian troops, seized a border hamlet and torched homes before withdrawing, Albanian officials and international observers said.

With Albania a major staging ground for NATO forces, even Tuesday's incident — short-lived, small-scale, with no reported casualties — brought a warning from Washington that Yugoslavia would make a grave mistake in expanding the fighting.

In Belgrade, Yugoslav officials denied any incursion into Albania. The chief of the army information service, Col. Milivoje Novkovic, said on state television that Yugoslavia's defense of its own borders was "being fabricated as an alleged invasion."

Albania, in turn, said the Serb push into its territory would carry consequences. Sokol Gjoka, an Albanian Foreign Ministry official, said his country would take necessary steps to defend itself, "in close coordination with our allies."

These days, that means NATO, which has taken over Albania's airfields, airspace and military infrastructure. In coming weeks, a force of Apache attack helicopters and thousands more allied troops will be based in Albania.

White House spokesman Joe Lockhart said Washington had received "credible reports" of a Serb incursion, as well as past instances of Serb

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forces crossing the border or shelling Albanian territory.

The warning came as NATO moved to more than double its air armada. In Brussels, Belgium, the supreme allied commander in Europe, U.S. Army Gen. Wesley Clark, said he had requested 300 more U.S. aircraft as well as additional air power from other NATO allies.

The Albania border clash, by the account of international monitors watching from nearby, began when about 50 Serb infantrymen advanced on lightly manned Albanian border posts early Tuesday afternoon.

Listening in on the Albanian border police radio frequency, international monitors say they heard police urgently ask Albanian soldiers stationed a few miles away what to do. They were told to stand and fight, but soon reported they were surrounded and retreating.

After an exchange of fire — possibly light artillery, according to the monitors — the Serbs pulled back, but not before torching several houses.

Artan Jakupi, a translator with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which monitors the border area, watched

from the village of Bajram Curri, seven miles away, as a cluster of houses burned in Kamenica, including his own.

In the three weeks since NATO began airstrikes aimed at forcing Milosevic to pull his forces out of Kosovo, agree to a peace deal and end the mass expulsions of ethnic Albanians, Yugoslavia has scorned any compromise.

On Tuesday, however, deputy Prime Minister Vuk Draskovic hinted Yugoslavia might find "certain preconditions for agreement," claiming the alliance had "abandoned key goals regarding Kosovo," including a NATO-led force in the province and "independent-like" status for the Kosovo Albanians.

NATO, meanwhile, said its bombardment of a passenger train in southern Serbia on Monday was "an uncanny accident." The alliance said the target was the bridge the train was crossing.

The refugee drama also continued Tuesday, as more ethnic Albanians reported systematic Serb atrocities. Before dawn, 4,800 more refugees entered Albania and hundreds more crossed into Macedonia. They said Serbs had methodically emptied their villages near Pristina, Kosovo's capital, and taken up positions in newly vacated areas.

In Yugoslavia, a night of airstrikes continued into the daylight hours Tuesday. Four big detonations were heard at midmorning.

The allies hope to reduce the movement of Yugoslav troops, particularly in and out of Kosovo by cutting off military fuel supplies.

World and Nation DATELINES

■ Washington, D.C. Inspectors again declare meat unfit to eat

The Associated Press — Federal food inspectors declared unfit for human consumption 21 million pounds of meat and poultry produced by the same Arkansas plant from which 30 million pounds of meat products were recalled three months ago.

The meat, products of the Thorn Apple Valley's Forrest City, Ark., plant, was being housed in warehouses and waiting to be shipped to distributors, officials with the Agriculture Department's food safety and inspection service said.

In January, Thorn Apple Valley recalled 30 million pounds of hot dogs and luncheon meats produced at the same Arkansas plant. That recall was because of possible contamination with the listeria bacteria.

■ Great Britain Glenn Miller fan shells out money for logbook

LONDON (AP) — An American fan of bandleader Glenn Miller paid \$35,000 Tuesday for a military logbook that holds a clue to Miller's mysterious disappearance aboard an airplane during World War II.

"I've never done anything like this in my life," said William Suits, a 76-year-old businessman from Boulder, Colo., who bid for the book by telephone to Sotheby's auction house.

Glenn Miller led one of the most popular "swing" bands of the 1930s and '40s, which had huge hits with songs like "In The Mood," "Kalamazoo," and "Pennsylvania 6-5000." He was at the height of his fame when an airplane carrying him disappeared over the English Channel on a foggy December day in 1944.

■ Washington, D.C. Government approves nonsurgical stress test

The Associated Press — Thousands of heart disease patients may soon be taking a "super stress test." The government approved the first nonsurgical test Tuesday to predict who is at risk of sudden cardiac arrest in time to prevent death.

The device, made by Cambridge Heart Inc. of Bedford, Mass., works by enhancing one of the world's oldest heart tests, the electrocardiogram.

■ Washington, D.C. U.S. defends decline of China's trade offer

The Associated Press — The administration today defended its decision to walk away from a Chinese offer to lower its trade barriers to a wide range of American products. U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky said the deal simply did not measure up in several critical areas.

Barshefsky told a congressional committee that China had been willing to make a number of trade concessions last week during high-level meetings between President Clinton and Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji.

She said the offers were not significant enough, especially in the area of enforcement. The United States is insisting that China give it the right to impose unilateral trade sanctions on China even after the country joins the World Trade Organization.

Clinton likely will have to pay penalty

■ The fine was imposed in a contempt-of-court ruling about Lewinsky testimony.

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton probably will pay a financial penalty imposed in a contempt-of-court ruling that he gave "intentionally false" testimony about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky, a top adviser suggested Tuesday.

Officially, the White House declined to comment on whether or not Clinton would appeal the ruling and referred questions to Robert Bennett, Clinton's private attorney. Bennett did not return calls.

Bennett was held in contempt of court Monday by U.S. District Judge Susan Webber Wright, who presided in the sexual harassment suit brought by Paula Jones. Wright found that Clinton gave "false, misleading and evasive answers" in a January 1988 deposition in which he denied having sexual relations with Lewinsky.

Wright ordered Clinton to pay "any reasonable expenses," including legal fees incurred by Jones as a result of Clinton's false testimony. The judge also directed Clinton to reim-

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burse the court \$1,202 for her travel to Washington to preside over taking the deposition. She referred the matter to the Arkansas Supreme Court's Professional Conduct Committee, which has the power to revoke Clinton's law license or to impose other sanctions.

A top adviser to Clinton, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the "most likely course" being discussed by the president's lawyers would have Clinton pay the penalty without contesting it, provided that Jones' demand for reimbursement was reasonable.

This adviser said Clinton was interested in keeping his law license and that his attorneys might contest any regulatory effort in Arkansas to revoke it.

White House press secretary Joe Lockhart refused to answer questions about the case. Lockhart said he was not aware that the White House was considering its own appeal on the constitutional point of separation of powers.

Starr to explain opposition to special prosecutor law

WASHINGTON (AP) — Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr, whose investigation of President Clinton revived a debate over special prosecutors, will tell Congress on Wednesday he opposes renewing the law that put him in power, The Associated Press has learned.

Starr, scheduled to testify before the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, submitted prepared remarks Tuesday laying out his rationale against renewing the Independent Counsel Act.

The officials, who spoke only on condition of anonymity, said Starr opposes renewing the law on several grounds, including that it violates the constitutional separation of powers between the executive and judicial branches.

Starr also raises concerns about the costs and delays incurred by many independent counsel investigations, and the relentless political attacks

against the special prosecutors, the officials said.

His testimony Thursday before the Senate panel will offer Democrats the first chance to question Starr since the Senate's Feb. 12 acquittal of President Clinton on House impeachment charges arising out of Starr's investigation.

The Whitewater investigation that Starr inherited in 1994 expanded to include the Vincent Foster suicide, White House travel office firings, alleged misuses of FBI files and Clinton's Oval Office affair with Monica Lewinsky.

The investigation has cost taxpayers at least \$46 million through the end of last year.

Starr's probe has produced more than a dozen convictions of Arkansas figures, including then-Gov. Jim Guy Tucker in 1996 and both of the Clintons' Whitewater business partners, as well as the referral that prompted the president's historic impeachment in December by the House.

Clinton's supporters have relentlessly attacked Starr, alleging that his staff used abusive and unfair tactics with witnesses and pressed the investigation into areas outside his jurisdiction. They also have questioned Starr's motives.

Starr is a former federal appeals court judge and Republican solicitor general who argued President George Bush's cases before the Supreme Court.

With his testimony, Starr joins lawmakers of both parties who widely oppose renewing the law without at least major changes in it.

Daily Nebraskan

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