

NEWS DIGEST

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Yugoslavs say NATO bombed refugees

■ Pentagon officials counteract by saying they attacked only military vehicles along the road.

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — Yugoslavia accused NATO jets of blasting apart a convoy of refugees under Serb police escort Wednesday. The alliance said its pilots fired on military vehicles only, and the Pentagon suggested that Serbs may have been responsible for the carnage.

Video of the scene taken under Serb control showed bloody bodies scattered along a roadway, damaged farm vehicles and bombed-out buildings nearby. People in rough peasant clothing loaded the dead and wounded into cars or wheelbarrows to transport them. A young boy sobbed bitterly.

The civilian bloodshed came as NATO warplanes zeroed in on Serb targets throughout Kosovo, hammering ground forces in an effort to limit troop movement and force Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to accept a peace deal for the province.

It also came amid diplomatic peace efforts. The European Union voiced support for a U.N. plan that calls on Milosevic to end his crackdown in Kosovo, while Germany called for a 24-hour halt in bombings to allow Serb and Yugoslav forces to withdraw from the province.

NATO said it would study the German plan, but it did not endorse it, and there was no sign that Yugoslavia was interested.

Pressing its version of the attack on the convoy, Yugoslavia railed against NATO's "crime against humanity." Serb officials put the death toll at 64 and the number of wounded at 20.

Hours later, NATO said its pilots had fired on military vehicles on the same road in "controlled attacks," and that they had been fired on from the ground with surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery.

"The pilots state they attacked only military vehicles," the allied military command said in Belgium several hours after the attack. The allies said no civilian casualties could be confirmed but promised a full investigation.

Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said relief organizations in the area reported that refugees entering Albania had said Yugoslav planes attacked civilian convoys. But he couldn't confirm that any of these refugees had spoken of an attack Wednesday.

If the reported death toll is accu-



NEWLY ARRIVED ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo cry after arriving to the Stankovec camp near Skopje, Macedonia, on Tuesday after crossing the border near Blace. Many more refugees flooded the camp Wednesday and relief organizations say at least 1,000 more are waiting to cross the border.

rate, it would mark by far the largest single loss of civilian life during the military action between NATO and Yugoslav forces.

The Serb Media Center said the first refugee column hit was made up of more than 1,000 people on tractors and trailers, in private cars or on foot near the southwest Kosovo town of Djakovica. The second convoy was hit on the road between Prizren and Djakovica, it said.

Refugees crossing into Albania said they saw three aircraft drop bombs that hit two tractors in the convoy, killing many people, said World Food Program aid worker Jeff Rowand.

The strike was audible from across the Albanian frontier at Tropoja, 12 miles away.

The videotape showed tractors that had been hauling flatbed trailers. Most of the bodies shown were near a single smashed trailer.

Yugoslav Foreign Ministry spokesman Nebojsa Vujovic denounced the strike.

"The bodies are literally littered on the highway," he said. "Even those who are spinning these malicious lies can hardly swallow them."

NATO hints attacks may last till summer

WASHINGTON (AP) — NATO's air campaign in Yugoslavia could stretch into the summer, U.S. officials suggested Wednesday, as the first Apache attack helicopters began arriving in Albania as part of a major buildup of forces.

Clinton administration officials, in closed-door meetings with congressional officials, have signaled NATO is poised to continue the air campaign for several weeks longer, possibly into midsummer if Serb forces continue fighting ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

Army Gen. Henry Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told lawmakers that while bombing has been hampered by weather, conditions usually improve in the Balkans in June and July, the officials said, speaking on condition of

anonymity. That would make it longer than the U.S.-led, six-week Gulf War in 1991.

"This is going to be a sustained campaign," said one lawmaker who was briefed.

In the move to bolster the NATO force, the Apaches began arriving in Albania, and the Clinton administration was preparing to call up of at least several thousand military reservists and deploy 300 more warplanes to join NATO airstrikes. That would bring the total air power to 1,000 aircraft — two-thirds of them American.

Maj. Gen. Charles Wald, a strategist for the Joint Chiefs, called the buildup and intensifying air campaign against Serb forces "an indication of our resolve that we're going to see this thing through to the end."

Missing tax deadline costly

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the estimated 34 million taxpayers who have yet to file their income tax returns: The headaches will only get worse if they miss deadline.

Although the Internal Revenue Service offers extensions, they can be quite costly. And the worst thing to do is not file anything by the stroke of midnight on April 15.

"The worst strategy, one that can add thousands of dollars to your tax bill, is to do nothing," said Lawrence Torella, an accountant and partner with Richard A. Eisner & Co. in New York.

Torella said a "whole new generation" of taxpayers with problems filing returns on time could be created by income from the booming stock market, an increase in the number of people who have stock options and windfalls from sales of small businesses. Tax returns are also more complex now.

The penalty for failing to file a

return is 5 percent of the balance per month, up to a maximum of 25 percent.

Taxpayers who aren't going to meet the filing deadline should send the IRS a request for extension until Aug. 16 using Form 4868, which is available on the Internet, IRS offices and some banks and post offices. The IRS automatically approves such requests.

But people seeking extensions should still pay an estimate of their taxes due, or at least as much as possible, by doing so will lessen the sting of interest — now 8 percent on late payments — and penalties of a half-percent per month.

The IRS will refund any amount overpaid, once the final return is submitted. Last-minute forms from the IRS are available in several ways. The fastest is through the Internet at www.irs.ustreas.gov. Taxpayers also can call from a fax machine at (703) 368-9694 and have a form faxed.

World and Nation DATES

■ Nebraska

Couple attempts to sell baby to undercover cop

GRAND ISLAND (AP) — Needing money, a woman tried to sell her 6-week-old boy, police said Wednesday.

Zenaida Rios-Hernandez, 23, and Pedro Vasquez-Jarquín, 28, both of Grand Island, were arrested Tuesday after trying to sell the baby to a woman wired by police in a sting operation.

Rios-Hernandez, the baby's mother, was charged Wednesday with felony child abuse. Vasquez-Jarquín was charged with aiding and abetting felony child abuse.

■ Indiana

Former vice president pledges renewed values

HUNTINGTON (AP) — Former Vice President Dan Quayle, trying to refurbish his image and jump-start his GOP presidential campaign, declared his candidacy Wednesday by pledging to rebuild American values after "a dishonest decade of Bill Clinton and Al Gore."

Seeking office for the first time since he and President Bush succumbed to Clinton and Gore in 1992, the former Indiana senator sought to push beyond a history of political gaffes and controversies.

■ Michigan

Kevorkian says he won't eat in prison

DETROIT (AP) — Dr. Jack Kevorkian says he will refuse to eat while imprisoned on his murder conviction, and a new jail policy prevents him from being force-fed.

The assisted-suicide advocate, sentenced Tuesday to 10 to 25 years in prison, said he would begin a hunger strike immediately. The Oakland Press reported Wednesday.

State prison officials said they reversed their policy on force-feeding Tuesday.

■ California

Little increase found in minority journalists

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Little progress has been made in recent years to increase the number of minority journalists at daily newspapers, according to a study presented at the annual convention of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

The percentage of Asian-American, black, Hispanic and American Indian newsroom employees increased from 11.46 in 1997 to 11.55 in 1998, based on figures released Tuesday. The survey also found that female journalists represent about 37 percent of news staffs.

■ Pakistan

New missile test-fire may spark response

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan test-fired its newest ballistic missile Wednesday, a weapon capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and hitting deep inside its neighbor and rival India.

The eight-minute test flight of the Ghauri II was launched from Dina, about 35 miles east of the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, government officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Analysts had anticipated that Pakistan would respond to a similar test by India on Sunday.

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