

The Battalion WORLD & NATION

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Violence in Azerbaijan continues

MOSCOW (AP) — Extremists ambushed a military convoy in Azerbaijan, killing two reserve soldiers and a woman bystander, Soviet media said Tuesday. The KGB said the republic was on the brink of anarchy, and local politicians pushed for secession.

Radio Moscow said the situation in the Soviet Caucasus, where Armenians and Azerbaijanis have been battling for 11 days, remained "very, very tense" Tuesday.

It said leaders of Soviet Azerbaijan and Armenia continued negotiations to end the ethnic violence, but little progress was reported.

The death toll rose to 170, including those killed in anti-Armenian riots in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku and the clashes that ensued among Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Soviet troops.

The soldiers, who smashed into Baku to quell the ethnic uprising Saturday, are "more and more often being chosen as targets" by local fighters, Tass quoted Interior Ministry Maj. Gen. Yevgeny Nechayev as saying.

Radio Moscow said "irresponsible people" were spreading anti-army and anti-Russian sentiments through unsigned letters and anonymous phone calls.

Soviet TV reported Tuesday night that gunfire continued in some areas of Baku, and warships remained blocked by militants from leaving the Caspian Sea city's port.

Baku Radio, monitored by the BBC in London, said two soldiers and a woman bystander were killed in an attack on a military convoy.

Azerbaijan's KGB expressed alarm in its appeal to residents of the republic for calm, Radio Moscow said.

"Azerbaijan is on the edge of the abyss, which lie chaos and anarchy," the KGB warned. The public appeal was virtually unprecedented for the usually secretive state security agency.

Azerbaijani activists said sentiment to break away from Moscow was rising. Jeikhun M. Zade, a political scientist, said the Azerbaijan Communist Party leadership was meeting Tuesday and Wednesday and would consider a break from the national party, as Lithuanian Communists did last month.

In Gyanje, Azerbaijan's second-biggest city, the City Council demanded the Azerbaijan parliament call a referendum on the republic's secession from the Soviet Union, according to Ilyiyar Nusbobov, a Baku attorney. Azerbaijan lawmakers have already threatened to do that if Soviet troops are not pulled out soon.

Congress convenes second session with agenda full of old, new issues

WASHINGTON (AP) — The 101st Congress convened its second session Tuesday, facing an agenda suddenly expanded by the emergence of democracy in Eastern Europe and a plan to cut Social Security taxes at home.

Lingering issues also abound, including child care, capital-gains taxes and deficit reduction.

Not waiting for President Bush to send up his own budget and legislative proposals, the Senate almost immediately began debating a far-reaching plan for cleaning up the air — a bill that is more costly and more sweeping than the president wants. Opposition is based more on geography and competing regional interests than on party lines.

The House made plans for another confrontation on Wednesday, an attempt to override Bush's veto of legislation aimed at preventing the deportation of Chinese students who have sought refuge in the United States. The House originally passed the bill on a 403-0 vote.

"There really is no good reason to override the president's veto unless it is just straight-out politics," said Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole of Kansas. He said Bush has done as much for the students through administrative actions as the bill would do. But Republicans were generally conceding Bush faces a one-sided defeat.

The president, traveling in the Midwest, said he is hoping to renew a spirit of cooperation with Congress. But he attacked as "a sheep in wolf's clothing" an anti-crime bill sponsored by Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr., D-Del., chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"It will be tougher on law enforcement than on criminals," Bush said of the bill. The measure generally would prohibit use of tainted evidence, bar racially discriminatory executions and ban the sale of assault weapons.

The first day of the session was marked by friendly reunions. Rep. Jack Brooks, D-Texas, told colleagues he'd nearly died of a pancreas ailment during the long break, and he accepted hugs and applause on the House floor.

On the other side of the Capitol, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y., formally introduced a bill to reduce Social Security taxes — an idea that had prompted a full-scale White House attack when he proposed it last month. Moynihan says workers are being deceived because their Social Security taxes are being used to make the federal deficit appear far smaller than it is.

In advance of Bush's budget, which will be submitted on Monday, and his State of the Union message, which will follow on Jan. 31, three of the president's top aides met with Republican senators to discuss the wealth of issues facing Congress in this election year.

Typewriter may help FBI crack case

ENTERPRISE, Ala. (AP) — A junk dealer offered prayers and cooperation as FBI agents searched his warehouse Tuesday looking for an old typewriter that could help solve the mail bomb killings of a judge and a civil rights lawyer.

Wayne O'Ferrell ate lunch with FBI agents and accompanied them to his warehouse Tuesday afternoon, one day after about 100 agents scoured O'Ferrell's home, warehouse and abandoned store, about 75 miles from Montgomery in southeastern Alabama.

O'Ferrell, 46, a one-time rural preacher, said he asked several members of his church "to pray for my family so that we can get through this thing, and I've asked them to

pray for the FBI to find whatever they are looking for."

FBI agent Chuck Archer said there have been no arrests and that three search warrants have been approved for property other than O'Ferrell's.

Agents unearthed the top of O'Ferrell's home septic tank Tuesday afternoon and began pumping out its contents. Authorities also plan to dig up a septic tank at the warehouse.

Archer declined to describe O'Ferrell as a suspect. "He is one of many people we have interviewed," the FBI agent said.

Court records show O'Ferrell lost a lawsuit heard on appeal by U.S. Circuit Judge Robert Vance. The

judge was killed Dec. 16 when a package bomb sent through the mail exploded at his home in suburban Birmingham.

Robert Robinson, a black civil rights lawyer in Savannah, Ga., was killed two days later by another exploding package, and similar mail bombs were defused at the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta, where Vance served, and at National Association for the Advancement of Colored People headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla.

FBI sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed published reports that typewritten correspondence in O'Ferrell's court case appears to match typewritten correspondence allegedly sent by the mail bomber.

Craftsmen hold rally, denounce communism East Germans want free-market reforms

EAST BERLIN (AP) — More than 10,000 skilled workers held a rally Tuesday to denounce communism for killing East German craftsmen and to demand free-market reforms to revive it.

"We absolutely and unconditionally need conversion to a full market economy," Burkhard Schmidt, spokesman for the Craftmen's Union, told the Associated Press before the rally. Many of those attending also favored reunification with West Germany.

"Better to close for four hours than forever," said Lutz Scheibner, an electronics repairman. "We need to show the government we know what needs to be done."

The rally was called on short notice, despite the opposition of top union leaders still loyal to

the Communist system that rewarded them with comfortable bureaucratic positions.

While Hans Modrow, the Communist premier, and opposition leaders dicker over how to share power before free elections May 6, the general attitude toward compromise has soured.

Pro-democracy advocates from the Social Democratic Party and New Forum declared Tuesday they were not prepared to negotiate a role in the interim government and said coalition talks have been postponed.

Opposition reluctance to prop up the government reflects the atmosphere of uncertainty in East Germany, which does not have a unifying pro-democracy figure like Czechoslovakia's Václav Havel or Lech Walesa of Poland.

Since they have no obvious alternative to the

distrusted Communists, East Germans increasingly look to the West and call for unification with prosperous West Germany.

Up to 2,000 East Germans flee to the West every day, bleeding the country of skilled workers and undermining chances for economic recovery.

Weekly rallies by hundreds of thousands of people have moved from demanding reform outright rejection of the Communist system that has guided the nation through its existence.

ADN, the official news agency, said a clash between "young leftists" and supporters of German unity was narrowly averted at the rally of more than 100,000 people Monday in Leipzig, where zeal for reform is strong.

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