

Wednesday, February 14, 1990

Armenian refugees encounter riots over rumors of special treatment

MOSCOW (AP) — A crowd stormed Communist Party headquarters in the Tadjikistan capital of Dushanbe Tuesday in ethnic rioting that has killed at least 37 people and injured 108, news reports said.

Armenians fled the city by the hundreds to escape the violence, which began Monday. The situation worsened Tuesday, with at least 200 new attacks and other incidents despite a curfew and state of emergency, late-night television news said.

Soldiers in tanks and armored personnel carriers were reportedly in control of the central Asian city 1,600 miles from Moscow, but violence was spreading to the suburbs, said Anatoly Larenok, a correspondent for the national newspaper Vozdushny Transport.

"There are tanks guarding key buildings in the center of the city, and the riots have moved to the suburbs," he said.

People began to flock into Dushanbe, a city with about 400,000 residents, early Tuesday to gather in front of Communist Party headquarters. But officials failed to persuade them to disperse and the crowd attacked the building, the television report said.

"There are tanks guarding key buildings in the center of the city, and the riots have moved to the suburbs."

— Anatoly Larenok, reporter

Later, local authorities appealed to the population on Tadjikistan television to repel the "hooligans." They also said local forces were insufficient to control the situation and urged the national leadership to help them.

Television news Tuesday evening said the ethnic attacks were continuing, and showed film footage of bloody clashes between rioters and rows of police, smashed vehicles, and shattered storefronts.

Violence broke out in Dushanbe on Monday after rumors spread that thousands of Armenian

refugees — already fleeing ethnic clashes with Azerbaijanis in the Caucasus — were being given preference for scarce new housing.

There is a chronic housing shortage in Dushanbe for Tadjik families, which traditionally are large.

Larenok said at least 300 Armenians had fled the city aboard special flights to Yerevan, the Armenian capital, and many others had left on regular flights.

About 30 people were arrested for taking part in the violence, the television said.

Ethnic tensions also were reported high in Frunze, capital of the neighboring republic of Kirgizia on the border with China, following rumors that Armenian refugees were to receive apartments in the city, the Komsomolskaya Pravda said. No violence was reported there.

Zaniddin Nasreddinov, an editor at the Tajik-tass news agency, reported another rally in the center of Dushanbe Tuesday morning, but said there was no violence. Communist Party leaders spoke to the crowd and assured them that all Armenian refugees had left the city, he said.

Toymaker introduces bilingual board game

EAST LONGMEADOW, Mass. (AP) — Milton Bradley Co. has brought out a bilingual board game that company officials say marks their first venture specifically targeting the nation's growing market of Hispanic shoppers.

What's unusual about the game, modeled and named after the popular television show called "Sabado Gigante," is that it is not merely an Anglo product with a set of Spanish instructions slipped into the box, said George R. Ditomassi, president of the Hasbro Inc. division.

"This is a product that was developed for the (Hispanic-American) market," he said in a telephone interview from New York, where the game was unveiled at the 87th American International Toy Fair this week.

For Milton Bradley, the 130-year-old maker of board games such as "Chutes and Ladders," the decision to develop a Hispanic game was prompted by market research, Ditomassi said.

"This is the first time that in this industry I've seen a product that's adapted to the market rather than asking the market to adapt the product," he said.

Response to the game, named "Sabado Gigante" (Giant Saturday) after the Univision television network show, has been good, Ditomassi said.

"To be honest with you, it's much stronger than we had anticipated," he said. "I think that we are aware that this has become a very fast-growing market, and we have to recognize it as such."

In terms of plain economics, there are an estimated 20 million Hispanics in the marketplace, with studies indicating Hispanic parents tend to spend more per capita on their children than the average U.S. parent, Ditomassi said.

The importance of the Hispanic market was highlighted in an opening speech by Toy Manufacturers Association Inc. Chairman Jack Stoneham at the 10-day industry trade show this week.

Conference produces accord United States, U.S.S.R. limit troops on foreign soils

OTTAWA (AP) — The United States and the Soviet Union reached an agreement Tuesday on a ceiling for troops they can station on foreign soil in Europe, Canadian External Affairs Minister Joseph Clark announced.

Essentially, the accord, worked out during an "open skies" conference, represents Soviet acceptance of the initiative President Bush unveiled in his State of the Union address Jan. 31.

Clark said the United States and the Soviet Union each could have 195,000 soldiers on Europe's central front — for the United States, basically West Germany.

Additionally, Clark said, 30,000 U.S. troops could be based elsewhere in Europe.

The United States now has about 305,000 troops in Europe, of which about 275,000 are on the central front and 30,000 are in Greece, Turkey, Italy, Spain and Britain. The Soviet Union has about 565,000 in East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia — four nations that have shed their hardline communist governments.

Announcing the settlement, Clark said, "It overcomes one of the most difficult obstacles" to a treaty NATO and the Warsaw Pact are negotiating in Vienna on limits to conventional forces in Europe.

Other key elements in the projected treaty would cover limits on tanks and other non-nuclear weapons.

However, only Monday, Secretary of State James A. Baker III stressed in a speech to the conference that the United States and the Soviet Union were in disagreement on limits for combat aircraft. Without such agreement, a treaty would be more difficult to reach.

During Baker's talks in Moscow last week, Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev proposed a somewhat different troop arrangement — equal levels for the United States and the Soviet Union on European soil of either 195,000 or 225,000 each, with no sub-ceiling for Central Europe.

Baker took that proposal to the foreign ministers of the 15 U.S. allies in NATO, who were assembled in Ottawa for a two-week conference with the seven members of the Warsaw Pact.

Texas congressman: add 20 federal judges

WASHINGTON (AP) — Continued neglect of the federal judiciary in Texas threatens to shut down the criminal and civil justice system, a member of the House Judiciary Committee said Tuesday in calling on Congress to create new judgeships for areas overwhelmed by drug cases.

Rep. Lamar Smith, R-San Antonio, said he would introduce legislation next week to add 20 new federal judges to districts most affected by drug-related criminal activity, becoming the latest Texan to join the call for an expanded judiciary.

The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Jack Brooks of Texas, has already said he supports expanding resources for the federal judiciary, but that President Bush must first address filling dozens of vacant judgeships around the country.

The Senate has approved legislation that would create 20 new judgeships. Smith said his bill would be the first measure introduced in the House this year addressing the nationwide need for more federal judges.

The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, meanwhile, is recommending the creation of 75 new federal judgeships nationwide, including 13 for Texas.

Smith acknowledged that passage of his bill would still not meet the ju-

diary's needs, but said that "given the realities of existing federal bench vacancies and the inherently slow nomination process, we must prioritize the assignment of new judges."

"In recent years, federal courts have witnessed an explosion in the number of criminal cases filed, particularly those related to drug felonies."

— Lamar Smith, R-San Antonio

Smith said nine of the 20 judges could be assigned to two judicial districts in Texas that border Mexico — with three going to the Western District and six to the Southern District.

Those two districts currently have criminal caseloads that are three and four times greater than the national average.

"In recent years, federal courts have witnessed an explosion in the number of criminal cases filed, particularly those related to drug felonies," Smith said in a statement. "The federal judiciary in the state of Texas has been overwhelmed."

Colombian radio: Guerrillas kidnap two Americans

CARTAGENA, Colombia (AP) — Leftist guerrillas kidnaped two Americans to protest President Bush's visit here next week and said they would put their captives on trial, police said today.

The Americans, snatched in the drug capital of Medellin, were identified as David Kent and James Archer Donnelly, a police spokesman told the Associated Press.

The Colombian radio network Caracol said its Medellin station received a telephone call from an anonymous man. The man claimed to be a spokesman for leftist guerrillas who claimed responsibility for the abductions.

The man said the two men would be put on trial and would be released in five days, Caracol said. The caller did not explain why there would be a trial and captives would be released.

The Colombian radio network RCN said Kent was from Indianapolis. The police said he has lived in Medellin for several years and was a teacher at the bilingual, private Colombo school.

There was no way to confirm if the kidnappers really are leftist guerrillas. Drug traffickers have been found in the past posing as leftist insurgents.

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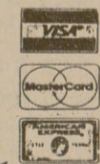
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