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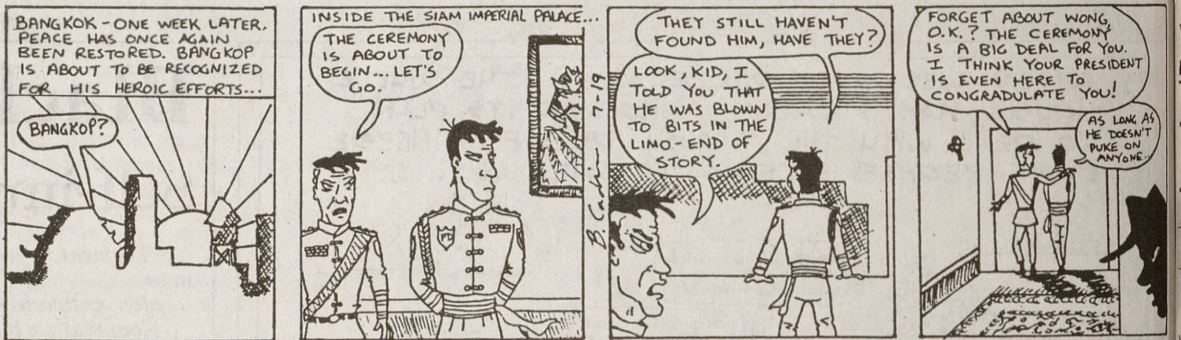
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Serbs seize strategic position

Muslim defense lines broken in 3 places on Mount Igman

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina - Bosnian Serb fighters pressed their drive to take a strategic mountain at the edge of Sarajevo on Sunday while desperation grew in the capital over dwindling food and supplies.

The Serbs broke through defense lines on Mount Igman in three places Saturday and shelled government positions, state-run Bosnian radio reported.

Capture of the mountain, which overlooks Sarajevo's airport, would be a major strategic and psychological blow to Bosnia's Muslim-led government. Government army sources acknowledged the attack, but said defense lines were holding.

Fierce fighting also was reported a few miles west of the capital in Hadzici.

The assaults boosted pressure on Bosnian leaders to accept a Serb-Croat plan to end the war by partitioning Bosnia into ethnic Serb, Croat and Muslim mini-states.

Gen. Ratko Mladic, commander of Bosnian Serb

forces, also intensified the pressure in an interview published Sunday in the Belgrade daily newspaper Vecernje Novosti.

"I will no longer allow the Muslims do one thing, talk another and think something else still," he said. "They must lay down their weapons."

He said he hoped Sarajevo's fate could be resolved by "political means," but added that he would no longer allow Sarajevo to be supplied through international organizations.

"The world must get that clearly," he said.

Sarajevo is running short of fuel to run generators at the main hospital, bakery and water pumping stations. Serbs let some U.N. supplies reach the city last Thursday after blocking them for nearly two weeks at the airport.

Peter Kessler of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said Sunday that Croats and Serbs had blocked more than half of the relief supplies headed toward Bosnia.

"This is sheer obstructionism, sheer inhumanity to man," he said.

Japanese vote for reform, shake party strongholds

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOKYO - The Liberal Democratic Party, which led Japan from postwar ruin to affluence but became stained by scandal, lost to newly strengthened opposition groups in elections Sunday that could end the party's 38-year grip on power.

Results in the powerful 511-seat lower house of parliament showed the LDP fell short of winning a majority.

That leaves the country's political compass spinning.

The LDP may be able to form a coalition government with other parties and even retain the prime minister post. The opposition parties and independents also could form their own coalition, but that appeared unlikely given their ideological differences.

Whoever takes power, Japan is likely to have its weakest government in decades. Any new leader would have a difficult time changing policies and practices set by powerful bureaucrats.

Reform was a buzzword in most of the campaigns. All parties promised to toughen campaign-finance laws and change the electoral system to reduce the cost of campaigns.

The LDP, in particular, has been the focus of several scandals in which huge amounts of money were channelled to politicians.

The election also was viewed as a major turning point for Japanese democracy, an opportunity for development of a more effective political opposition to counterbalance the still dominant Liberal Democrats.

"This was a difficult election, and that difficulty is reflected in the results," said a grim Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, the LDP president.

"I feel a beginning of a new era that is a break from the past," said Satsuki Eda, head of the small opposition United Social Democratic Party.

The absence of strong politicians to control the competing interests of the major ministries also could hinder trade negotiations with the United States and other nations.

U.N. considers progress made in Iraq standoff

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq - U.N. envoy Rolf Ekeus spoke of progress Sunday after two rounds of talks with Iraqi officials on a standoff over long-term monitoring of Iraq's weapons programs.

Ekeus, who heads the U.N. commission overseeing the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, refused to speculate on the outcome of his mission. But he said his planned departure Sunday was postponed a day to allow for further talks.

"We have cleared a large number of issues," he said after a 3 1/2-hour evening session. "Now we have to sum up the results."

Asked if he was optimistic, he said: "It is too early to give promises. ... You can't decide the outcome of the talks until you see the results."

Ekeus arrived Thursday to try and head off a possible U.N. military strike on Iraq over its refusal to allow U.N. surveillance cameras at the Yawm Al-Azim and Al-Rafah missile sites, 45 miles south of Baghdad. Iraq rejected a U.N. compromise to seal key equipment at the sites until the camera issue was resolved.

Somali warlord orders retaliation

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOGADISHU, Somalia - Fugitive warlord Mohamed Farah Aidid urged his followers Sunday to rise up against the multinational force in retaliation for U.S.-led bombings of his strongholds.

"We cannot accept foreign domination. I am asking the Somali people to wake up and defend our independence," Aidid said in a statement read by aides to a rally of his Somali National Alliance faction.

Aidid has been in hiding - probably in southern Mogadishu - since mid-June when U.N. special envoy Jonathan Howe ordered his arrest. That order came after a June 5 ambush by Aidid followers killed 24 Pakistani peacekeeping troops.

As the demonstrators listened to

Aidid's statement, U.S. helicopters were seen above a neighborhood about two miles away. The aircraft was supporting U.N. forces carrying out weapons searches.

The troops were going house-to-house in the Medina suburb near the U.N. headquarters compound, which has been the target of several mortar and gun attacks.

Much of Aidid's message was repetitive sloganeering against the United Nations and the approximately 4,000 U.S. troops who are in the peacekeeping force. Aidid charges the United States with indiscriminately using gunships in densely populated areas of the south section of the city he controls.

"They call us warlords. We are the peace lords," said Aidid, whose fighters are blamed for attacks that have left 35 peacekeepers dead since June 5.

Aidid said the United Nations

was trying to impose a system of control over Somalia without consulting him and other faction leaders who he claimed represented the majority of the east African nation's 6.5 million people.

"They are talking with weak people who have no support," he said. "They want to return us to colonialism."

Colorful paintings were on display at the rally, showing blazing buildings under attack by American gunships and war planes. The paintings were headlined "Aid from America" and cartoon-type balloons from the pilots' mouths contained the message: "We have come to help you."

In the last bombardment, July 12, an alleged command center of Aidid fighters was hit by missiles and heavy-caliber cannon, killing 57 people, according to the International Red Cross.

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