

Cohen points to Serbian weaknesses, U.S. readies for possible refugee arrival in C

WASHINGTON (AP) — Serb military and police forces in Kosovo, still on the offensive two weeks into NATO's air campaign to protect ethnic Albanians, are "open and vulnerable" to close-range attack by the U.S. Army's deadliest helicopters, Defense Secretary William Cohen said Monday.

"We're going after his tanks, his armored units, his artillery, those forces on the ground that are carrying out this horrific ethnic cleansing," Cohen said in an Associated Press interview. "They are going to be

targeted now and taken out."

Even as it worked out plans for expanding U.S. military involvement in Kosovo, the administration was scrambling on the humanitarian front. It flew more emergency relief supplies to Albania and worked on plans for accommodating 20,000 Kosovar refugees, possibly on the Pacific island of Guam or at the Guantanamo Naval Station in Cuba.

Cohen and other administration officials insisted that the decision to airlift refugees

out of the Balkans was not meant to indicate NATO had given up its goal of reversing the forced exodus from Kosovo.

"This is a temporary arrangement designed to deal with an emergency problem; it's not designed to have permanent relocation of these refugees," said State Department spokesman James P. Rubin. He said the idea was to "alleviate the bottleneck" of hundreds of thousands of refugees in Albania and Macedonia.

Rubin said Secretary of State Madeleine

Albright had received a report on the plight of the ethnic Albanians inside Kosovo from David Sheffer, the U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes. Based on interviews he conducted with refugees, Sheffer concluded that Albanians are being driven from Kosovo not by NATO bombing but by a systematic expulsion by Serb military and police forces, Rubin said.

Sheffer reported that Pristina, the Kosovo capital, is being expunged neighborhood by neighborhood with seemingly cal-

culated efficiencies. He said it was shaken down for their cash, jewelry, and those who resist are

killed by gunfire or by torching

The use of Apache helicopters for the final approval by NATO political and by President Clinton, was an important turning point in the war in Yugoslavia. The higher-flying used so far have been unable to penetrate the Serb armed forces operations.

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