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# Authorities close off border to refugees

## Negotiator works to gain freedom of three U.S. soldiers as guards bury land

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — Yugoslav authorities sealed off Kosovo's main border crossings Wednesday, preventing ethnic Albanians from leaving as the wave of refugees approached the half-million mark. As NATO stepped up its airstrikes, a Cypriot mediator sought freedom for three captured U.S. soldiers.

NATO planes and cruise missile struck military targets in Kosovo and inflicted heavy damage elsewhere in Yugoslavia.

Albania's parliament approved NATO plans to send in 24 U.S. Apache attack helicopters — a move that should bolster the alliance's firepower against the Yugoslav tanks and armor that have driven ethnic Albanians from their homes in Kosovo.

After forcing more than 400,000 refugees out to neighboring countries, Yugoslav authorities closed the main exit route on Wednesday without explanation, forcing tens of thousands of people back toward the burned villages they had been escaping from.

German Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping warned that the Yugoslavs may be planning to use the civilians in Kosovo as "human shields" against NATO attack.

In Morini, the crossing point for Kosovo refugees into Albania, the flow of cars and tractors suddenly stopped at 3 a.m., witnesses

said. Yugoslav border guards could be seen laying what appeared to be mines and digging fortifications just inside their territory.

"The refugees ... were told to return to their places of residence — whatever is left of those places," said Doran Vienneau of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

**"The refugees ... were told to return to their places of residence — whatever is left of those places."**

—Doran Vienneau  
 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

which has been monitoring the border.

Scharping said Yugoslav forces had begun forcing ethnic Albanians back from the border areas into the province. He showed aerial photos that he said showed Serb tanks surrounding a Kosovo village, separating the men and women, and then opening fire on houses.

The former president of Cyprus, Spyros Kyprianou, began a mission to win the release of three American soldiers seized at the Yugoslav border with Macedonia on Wednesday, which is not a NATO member. Kyprianou had close ties with Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.

Kyprianou flew to Athens, where he was "waiting for the green light" before going to Yugoslavia today.

He said he believed the release of the soldiers was imminent.

Sandy Berger, President Clinton's security adviser, was cautious about the mission but said "we certainly would support any release."

Another nightmare was brewing for thousands of Kosovo refugees as they made it across into neighboring Albania only to be trapped for days in makeshift camps.

With frightening efficiency, Macedonian officials emptied the border city of Prizren Wednesday, hustling thousands of refugees onto buses so quickly that some were left behind from their families.

Macedonia, which has been a NATO ally since 1995, shipped 10,000 refugees to Albania and 25,000 others to NATO tent camps in the country.

# Starr to testify in front of committee on renewal of Independent Counsel law

WASHINGTON (AP) — Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr and the three-judge panel that appointed him will testify April 14 before a Senate committee considering whether Congress should renew the Watergate-inspired law that provided for his job.

The Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, chaired by Sen. Fred Thompson, R-Tenn., will hear from Starr and federal judges Richard D. Cudahy, Peter T. Fay and David B. Sentelle, the panel announced Wednesday.

In his own statement, Starr confirmed that he would testify and said he looked forward to it.

Thompson has pledged to keep the hearings from focusing on Starr's controversial, five-

year investigation of President Clinton, which led to only the second presidential impeachment in history. The Senate acquitted Clinton on Feb. 12.

Since then, Thompson has called former independent counsels and scholars to three hearings on the matter.

But it is Starr's efforts that brought Democrats into line with Republicans long infuriated with loopholes in the 1978 statute and built momentum for letting the law expire June 30 or renewing it only with a major overhaul.

Among the statute's weaknesses, critics say, is that it does not hold independent counsels accountable for the money they spend or the tactics they use.

In addition, critics contend the three-judge Special Division of the Court of Appeals, which hires independent counsels, is ill-equipped to make such appointments.

Lawrence Walsh, the independent counsel who's Iran-Contra probe of President Reagan soured Republicans on the law, told Thompson's panel last month that a special agency within the Justice Department, not a three-judge panel, should appoint independent counsels. The members of that panel should be subject to confirmation by the Senate, Walsh said.

Without the Independent Counsel law, such probes would revert to the Justice Department — which is how they were handled until the "Saturday Night Massacre" in October 1973, when the department's top two officials lost their jobs for refusing to carry out President Nixon's order to fire special prosecutor Archibald Cox.

Attorney General Elliot Richardson quit and Deputy Attorney General William French Smith was fired. Solicitor General Robert Bork fired Cox.

# President Bush raises money for son's candidacy

PHOENIX (AP) — Former President Bush raised an estimated quarter of a million dollars for his son's potential presidential campaign.

A few hours later he was to be raising money for an anti-drug drive.

Bush addressed an invitation-only crowd of about 300 Republicans Tuesday night, including Arizona Gov. Jane Hull, in Texas Gov. George W. Bush's first fund-raising event in Arizona.

Gov. Bush has not announced his candidacy and has

promised to remain in Austin until the Texas Legislature ends May 31.

On Wednesday, the elder Bush was to discuss drug-free workplaces at a luncheon to raise money for Drugs Don't Work in Arizona, a public-private partnership offering help to companies that want to set up drug tests, counseling and rehabilitation programs.

President Bush established the Presidential Advisory Council on Drugs in 1992 that gave rise to the Arizona program.

The luncheon is expected to draw about 500 guests and to raise about \$200,000, backers said.

Arizona's Sen. John McCain and former Vice President Dan Quayle also are potential candidates for the GOP presidential nomination.

Elizabeth, wife of former presidential candidate and ex-Sen. Bob Dole and another potential GOP candidate, has made two campaign appearances in Arizona and plans a third on May 31.

# Study shows online college hinder learning

WASHINGTON (AP) — Naeim, an earthquake engineer in Los Angeles who decided to go to school, did not have time for meetings and classroom lectures when Kaplan's Concord Law School launched last fall, Naeim enrolled in his education through the Internet.

"I figure if I go to a standard four nights a week, that eliminates my chance for me to see my kids and off the computer, and I can't get the kids to bed."

Hundreds of universities are offering courses or degree programs online. But a pair of reports being released today question whether a seat at a computer is as good as a seat in a college classroom.


The reports' complaints range from whether the programs' effectiveness is evaluated properly and whether the cost is too high to whether the programs are fair to certain students.

The College Board warns in a report that Internet courses could hinder the progress of poor and minority students who arrive at college with less access to computers than white or more affluent students.

"There's this rush to get on the virtual ... Colleges, politicians and (Internet) providers who are giving this market need to think about broad access," Larry F. Glaser, senior College Board researcher, said Tuesday.

A second report, by the Institute of Higher Education Policy, says that still lack enough knowledge about Internet-based education to justify rapid growth.

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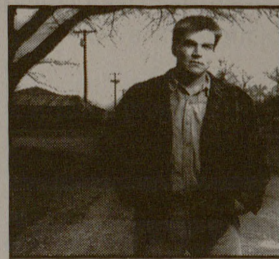
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