

Officials looking to plane systems for crash details

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Federal investigators removed part of the twisted and charred fuselage of an American Airlines jet yesterday in an effort to get to computers that controlled the aircraft's mechanical systems.

The computers could help investigators learn whether Flight 1420's spoilers, reverse thrusts and braking systems were functioning properly when the plane landed in a storm Tuesday night and skidded off the end of the runway, broke apart and caught fire, killing Capt. Richard Buschmann and eight passengers.

Investigators consider information from the computers crucial to determining whether mechanical failure, human error, weather or some combination caused the first domestic commercial airline deaths in 1 1/2 years.

"Everything is a possible cause. What we need to do is ... start narrowing the scope," Greg Feith, lead investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), said.

The computers are located in the lower part of the MD-82's fuselage, underneath the cockpit and inaccessible until the main wreckage is lifted and removed, Feith said. Removal of the larger pieces will likely begin today, when a lull in air traffic would permit closing a runway to move

the hull to a private hangar near the crash site.

Investigators have recovered and are analyzing the plane's flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder, and have interviewed witnesses.

"They give us a lot of information, but they don't give us all the answers," he said.

"They (the plane's onboard computers) give us a lot of information, but they don't give us all the answers."

The jet's spoilers — panels on the trailing edge of the wings — were supposed to be raised at touchdown to break the plane's lift and slow the aircraft. Reverse thrusts from the engines are engaged until the plane slows to a speed at which the pilot can safely steer it on the ground.

In an interview Friday, First Officer Michael Origel said he believes the captain set the spoilers. A flight data recorder indicates they never popped up when the plane landed.

While much of the early investigation focused on a severe thunderstorm, Origel told the NTSB the plane approached the airport through a break in the clouds.

Origel, who was released Saturday from a hospital where he had been recovering from a broken leg, told authorities he believed the jet hydroplaned on the runway. Investigators have said the runway was adequately grooved and that the jetliner had a firm grip on the pavement.

— Greg Feith
Lead investigator, National Transportation Safety Board

Piece of cake



Amanda Ramccyk (left) presents Betty T. Dickchat with her prize after Dickchat won the cake walk at the third annual Brazos Oncology's Cancer Survivors Day Sunday. The celebration was held at Central Park in College Station in conjunction with National Cancer

Spending, youth crime lead issues in Congress

WASHINGTON (AP) — Guns and money dominate the agenda as Congress returns today from a weeklong Memorial Day break, with Republicans hoping to master two issues that have caused them fits this year.

The House Judiciary Committee plans to write a wide-ranging juvenile justice bill this week that Republicans hope will avoid the kind of setbacks GOP senators endured in May.

Senate Democrats, seizing on the public outcry after shootings April 20 at Colorado's Columbine High School, forced Republicans to add gun restrictions to a juvenile justice bill approved by a 73-25 vote.

The House and Senate also could vote this week on spending bills, from agriculture to defense, for the budget year beginning Oct. 1.

These must-pass measures

have caused heartburn for Republicans; the bills cut domestic programs too much or not enough, insist competing groups of GOP lawmakers.

"I hope we can agree on an agenda and transmit that agenda to people concerned about our focus," Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., a presidential contender who has taken on Senate leaders before, said.

On the crime front, the House's juvenile justice bill will not reach the full chamber until the week of June 14.

Rep. Henry Hyde, chair of the House Judiciary Committee, has said the bill's gun-control provisions will be similar but not identical to the Senate's. These include background checks of firearms purchasers at gun shows and requirements that handguns be sold with trigger locks.

Hyde's bill is expected to be broader than the Senate measure, however, offering proposals he said would "curb the culture of violence that has engulfed our young people."



HYDE

KUKES, Albania (AP) — Intent on remaining an armed force and swelled by new recruits bent on revenge, the Kosovo Liberation Army could upset NATO's plans for the future of the province.

The rebels are fighting hard to push as deep into Kosovo as possible before Yugoslav forces leave and American and other international peacekeepers arrive. NATO says Yugoslav forces are counterattacking, hoping to crush the rebels before then.

"As the Serb forces pull out and the NATO forces move into Kosovo, we expect the Kosovo Liberation Army ... not to try to take advantage of the situation," NATO spokesperson Jamie Shea said. "NATO forces will be operating under strict rules of engagement and, of course, they will not tolerate any hindrance to their mission. More specifically, we hope the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) will renounce violence."

Regardless of the outcome of the latest fighting, the bloodied, 17,000-strong KLA is in a position to become a key player in postwar Kosovo, having gathered sweeping popular support by taking on far superior Serb forces.

"The KLA will be the sole force in Kosovo creating institutions. It will be the strongest force influencing the future of Kosovo," Kadri Kryeziu, a spokesperson for the group, said in the frontier town of Kukes on Sunday.

On the brink of extinction after the Serbs accelerated their crackdown when NATO began airstrikes March 24, the resurgent KLA can rightly claim to have helped the allies achieve



MILOSEVIC

Talks slow as B-52s bomb Serb forces

KUMANOVO, Macedonia (AP) — Talks bogged down Sunday between NATO and Yugoslav generals on putting a Kosovo peace plan into action, while the alliance kept up the pressure by pounding Serb troops with attacks by B-52 bombers.

Maj. Trey Cate, speaking for the American delegation, said there had been "very little progress" on the second day of meetings and signaled the discussions were at a critical stage.

"There is very little chance of us going into another day," he said during a break after 10 hours of talks. He said the session would resume Sunday night and "will go through tonight until it is complete."

The head of the Italian contingent, Col. Carmine di Pascale, said, "There are all kinds of problems."

He and other alliance officials would not elaborate on the difficulties.

NATO insists the talks are only to spell out

victory in Kosovo. NATO acknowledges that KLA attacks flush out Serbian armor and ground troops, exposing them to deadly airstrikes.

The Serb crackdown prompted a flood of volunteers from the vast refugee population and ethnic Albanians living in Europe and North America. Many among the hundreds of thousands of expatriates help fund the guerrillas via a three percent "Homeland Calling" levy on their incomes.

At refugee camps, children chant "UCK," the Albanian acronym for the KLA, and teen-agers

terms of a withdrawal and are negotiations. The Yugoslav side reportedly is asking more time to extract its troops, and guarantees that convoys would not be

As the talks labored on, Air Force dropped bombs on Yugoslav army positions near the Albania-Kosovo border.

The strikes were directed at troops and guerrillas of the Kosovo Liberation Army. Yugoslav artillery continued to fire.

Russian Lt. Gen. Yevgeny Barmianchev, military attaché at the embassy in Belgrade, arrived at the meeting in the afternoon.

Although Russia helped draft the plan, not participated in the implementation. Barmianchev came only as an observer.

NATO has said it will persist in its campaign, which was in its 75th day Sunday. It verifies Yugoslav army and special units are pulling out of Kosovo.

wish they were 18 so they could join the roes in the mountains. Mothers proud sons and daughters to fight.

A large majority of the Kosovo regard the KLA as its shield against future repression — a role the guerrillas are assume.

That is not necessarily good news. United States and its partners as they for a peacekeeping mission. NATO expects KLA to transform into a political movement.

Although NATO launched its air campaign ostensibly to protect Kosovo Albanians

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