

Kosovo civilians injured in street fight

KOSOVSKA MITROVICA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Sixteen French peacekeepers and 24 civilians were wounded today when a street fight escalated into a fiery battle in this ethnically divided town, another sign of the difficulties NATO faces in easing tensions in Kosovo.

Two rockets later hit a high-rise apartment complex in the northern, Serb-held part of Kosovska Mitrovica, where dozens of ethnic Albanians had recently been resettled by NATO peacekeepers. An apartment on the seventh floor of one building was damaged, but there were no injuries.

Earlier in the day, a fight between a Serb and an ethnic Albanian sparked a brawl, a French spokesperson said. Then shots were heard.

"That created panic," said Lt. Matthieu Mabin, a spokesperson for the French peacekeepers. "Hand grenades were thrown, we don't know from whom or from where ... but it created very many injured, especially French soldiers."

About four to five grenades exploded. Twenty Serbs, 16 French peacekeepers and four ethnic Albanians were injured in the fighting, according to Lt. Col. Patrick Chanliou, another spokesperson for the French peacekeepers. A seventeenth peacekeeper was injured in a separate incident, he said.

Four suspects have been arrested, Mabin said. They were not identified.

The number of wounded today is the highest since

Oct. 12, when 33 people were wounded near the bridge that connects the ethnically divided neighborhoods.

French peacekeepers today immediately began door-to-door searches in the Bosnjacka Mahala neighborhood, which was predominantly ethnic Albanian before the war between Yugoslavia's Serb government and ethnic Albanian guerrillas began in Kosovo in 1998.

NATO's 78-day bombing campaign last year forced an end to the Serb crackdown in Kosovo, a province of Serbia, and the pullout of Yugoslav forces.

Kosovska Mitrovica, 20 miles northwest of Kosovo's provincial capital Pristina, has been the scene of repeated ethnic unrest in recent weeks, resulting in several deaths and dozens of injuries.

Earlier reports said the fighting took place outside a U.N. registration center for displaced Serbs, but the violence was later linked to the street fight. NATO peacekeepers recently returned dozens of expelled ethnic Albanians to the Serb-controlled northern side, sparking violent protests. They also plan to return displaced Serbs to the ethnic Albanian-controlled southern side.

According to Oliver Ivanovic, a Serb official in Kosovska Mitrovica, the violence began after an ethnic Albanian man attacked a Serb with a metal bar.

When the Serb moved toward the ethnic Albanian, another unidentified man appeared and shot at the Serb. People gathered around the men, and ethnic Albanians then threw hand grenades into the mob, Ivanovic said.

Attack upon Serb sector stirs tensions

Automatic gunfire and multiple grenade explosions wounded peacekeepers and 14 Serb civilians in the Serb-held part of Kosovska Mitrovica. Peacekeepers immediately began searching for Little Bosnia, which was predominantly ethnic Albanian before Kosovo began in 1998.



Source: Compiled from AP wire reports

But members of a group of about 50 ethnic Albanians who fled to the southern side today, said Serbs thrown grenades at their homes, moving from an Albanian house to the next to drive out residents of them, Aida Kadriq, said her uncle had been injured in a grenade blast.

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Treasury to buy part of national debt

WASHINGTON (AP) — Welcome to the brave new world of bulging government surpluses. For the first time in 70 years, the U.S. Treasury is buying back part of the national debt — \$1 billion on Thursday.

While the buy back will represent just a tiny drop of the \$5.7 trillion national debt, the repurchases — limited to 30-year bonds sold between 1985 and 1990 — will let the U.S. Treasury Department do a test run of its new procedures.

The announcement of the initial \$1 billion buyback effort was expected to be followed later this month with another \$1 billion repurchase.

Any investors who own 30-year bonds, which are to mature between 2015 and 2020, can offer to unload them through a process known as a "reverse auction," in which the government will select offers on a competitive basis based on the lowest prices.

The government is hoping to save in financing costs by redeeming the bonds, which carry coupon interest rates as high as 11.25 percent.

Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers announced in January that the government hoped to buy back up to \$30 billion of the \$5.7 trillion national debt this year. The administra-

tion's budget projects that the entire \$3.6 trillion of the national debt held by the public could be wiped out by 2013 under current projections for budget surpluses. The rest of the national debt is held by the government's large trust funds, primarily Social Security.

The Clinton administration, which counts elimination of soaring budget deficits as one of its greatest achievements, has argued that the most responsible thing to do with the excess cash is to reduce the national debt, putting the government on a sounder footing to deal with rising costs when the baby boom generation begins retiring in a few years.

While the administration and Republicans in Congress agree the surpluses generated by Social Security payroll taxes should be dedicated to paying down the debt, they are split on how to use the non-Social Security surpluses, estimated to total \$800 billion or more over the next 10 years.

House Ways and Means Chairperson Bill Archer, R-Texas, said Tuesday that the surpluses resulted from Republican efforts to restrain Clinton's spending plans.

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News in Brief

1 in 4 Hispanics below poverty level
WASHINGTON (AP) — Census data shows that more than a fourth of the Hispanics, the nation's fastest-growing minority, live below the poverty level. Only one in 10 is college-educated.

More than 25 percent of the nation's 31 million Hispanics lived below poverty level in 1998, considered then to be \$16,600 for a family of four. About 8 percent of non-Hispanic whites lived in poverty in 1998.

The Hispanic population is expected to triple to 98 million in 2050. Hispanics could become in the half-century the nation's largest minority group with their percentage rising from about 12 percent now to 24 percent.

President rejects Papon pardon plea
PARIS (AP) — French President Jacques Chirac has rejected a plea for pardon by Maurice Papon, the former Vichy official convicted of complicity in crimes against humanity, the president's office said today.

Papon, 89, was convicted in April 1998 for his role in the arrest and deportation of Jews from Bordeaux to Nazi death camps while he was a police supervisor in the Gironde region during World War II.

Papon, a former budget minister under conservative President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, fled briefly to Switzerland in October 1999, but was apprehended and brought back to France.

It is widely believed that Papon's politically powerful friends lobbied for his pardon, but that his attempt to flee French justice ruined his chances.

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"If you are not a part of the solution, you are part of the problem."

The purpose of this article is to make clear the Department of Residence Life's beliefs regarding the acts of insensitivity recently directed towards individuals living in the residence hall community. Specifically we are referring to the incident where a Black History Month poster was burned on a bulletin board.

Such incidents show a lack of respect for others and are destructive to our residence hall community. As a department, we strive to foster an educational environment where individuals communicate respect for one another and take responsibility for their actions.

Our changing population calls for tolerance, respect, and most of all inclusiveness. We ask that all members living in our residence halls and their guests accept the responsibility of creating and maintaining a welcoming environment for every member of our community.

If anyone has any information regarding individuals involved in this incident we would appreciate your assistance in our follow up.

Please contact any Residence Life Staff member with any information, questions, or concerns.

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