



Cease-fire fails in Middle East

BY RON KAMPEAS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — A tentative cease-fire between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip lasted barely half a day on Tuesday, dissipating in the smoke of gunfights and rockets fired from helicopter gunships.

The renewed fighting, which came as Israeli and Palestinian leaders prepared to attend talks in Paris with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, showed that Israel may have overestimated Yasser Arafat's influence over an enraged Palestinian population. Israel has said Arafat orchestrated the violence to extract concessions from Israel.

In Gaza, at least three Palestinians were killed in a heavy exchange between Palestinian gunmen and troops in an Is-

raeli outpost near the isolated Jewish settlement of Netzarim. One man was unidentifiable, his face blown away by submachine gunfire. Israeli helicopters fired a dozen rockets on the Palestinians assailing the outpost.

Youths who had stoned the outpost ducked for cover when the shooting began. Ambulance workers hastily loaded the wounded and then sped from the site, doors open.

The six days of violence, sparked by Thursday's visit of Ariel Sharon, the leader of the hard-line opposition Likud party, to a Jerusalem site holy to Muslims and Jews, have claimed more than 50 lives so far including the three on Tuesday. A total of 19 people were killed Monday alone.

In the West Bank town of Nablus,

leaders of Arafat's Fatah faction said they had instructed local gunmen not to engage the soldiers near Joseph's Tomb, a flashpoint, because they feared Palestinian casualties.

Gunmen who had escorted a 15-year-old victim of the violence to his grave headed straight from the funeral to the Israeli outpost. They took position behind doorposts, occasionally rushing forward and firing over the fence. Israeli troops responded with fire. None of the gunmen appeared to be Palestinian police.

One woman, apparently shot, was carried to an ambulance.

One of the gunmen, giving his name only as Mohammed, said the attacks on the Israelis complemented the negotiations.

'The meeting in Paris on Wednesday is a step in the direction of the renewal of the negotiations and not just the end of violence here.'

Shlomo Ben-Ami
Acting Foreign Minister

"I think that without putting pressure on them, they will not give us more than they already have," he said, an M-16 assault rifle slung around his neck. "The negotiations are good, but without force, these negotiations will not do anything for us."

Throughout the West Bank, Palestinians said the cease-fire meant little in the face of their fury. "The cease-fire does not mean anything to us," said Anwar Takakh, joining stonethrowers in

Bethlehem. "It is between Arafat and Barak and does not apply to us."

Near the Jewish settlement of Ariel in the West Bank, hundreds of settlers smashed a window on a Palestinian police car and torched a Palestinian-owned mechanic's garage.

After Wednesday's scheduled meetings in Paris, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak heads to Cairo, where Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was planning

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Milosevic calls blockades, strikes 'warfare' on country

■ Milosevic seeks military aid to end wave of protests

BY MISHA SAVIC
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA — The embattled government of Slobodan Milosevic threatened Tuesday to crack down on the opposition, calling them subversive elements waging warfare against the country through strikes and blockades.

The statement, read on state television, suggested the Yugoslav president may unleash one his last weapons against political foes and independent media. The result could lead to street clashes and arrests to try to end the wave of protests that have paralyzed much of the country.

Opposition leaders and supporters remained defiant and insisted Milosevic accept his landslide election defeat. The opposition has ruled out participating in a planned run-off Sunday, insisting Milosevic would only cheat again.

"No one has the right to so bluntly annul the people's will," said challenger Vojislav Kostunica, whom the opposition says won an outright victory in the Sept. 24 elections.

Striking coal miners at the key Kolubara complex, meanwhile, ignored an appeal to return to work by Yugoslav's army chief, Gen. Nebojsa Pavkovic. It marked the first time Milosevic called on the country's military to help end current protests.

"Legal measures will be especially applied against the organizers of these criminal activities," said the government statement, which indicated opposition leaders could be placed behind bars.

The government also threatened to shut down "media which are financed from abroad and are trying to trigger unrest by spreading lies and initiating bloodshed."

After the general failed to resolve the coal mine impasse, the government struck back at opposition-run cities and towns across the country by introducing four-hour power cuts allegedly triggered by the strike. Electricity was lost in parts of capital Belgrade as well as major cities such as Nis and Novi Sad.

In a sign of the government's growing concern for stability, military police were sent late Monday to surround the Kolubara mine where 7,500 miners have put down their tools.

The mine, about 25 miles south of Belgrade, is important because it supplies coal to a key Yugoslav power plant, Obrenovac, which is southwest of Belgrade.

The tougher language in the Tuesday statement follows a Monday address in which Milosevic lambasted opposition leaders, labeling them puppets of the West. The Yugoslav president's challengers staged protests around the country to press him to concede defeat in recent elections.

Milosevic admits Kostunica won more votes but says he fell short of a majority, meaning a second round runoff must be held. The opposition insists that Kostunica won outright, a claim supported by the United States and Western European governments.

The campaign of civil disobedience has involved hundred of thousands of people and represented the most serious challenge yet to Milosevic's 13-year rule. The protests even reached his hometown of Pozarevac, where 20,000 massed Monday on main roads.

High school students blocked Belgrade's Slavija square with garbage containers and tens of thousands of opposi-

tion supporters marched to the statistics bureau, which counted the votes from last month's election. Marchers chanted: "Thieves! Thieves!"

Belgrade police also turned back two opposition convoys en route to block a key bridge north of the capital and the main highway leading to the west of the city — the first sign Milosevic's security forces were getting nervous.

About 50,000 people, who tried to march in the direction of Milosevic's exclusive Dedinje district, were stopped by a cordon of riot police. Protesters went on marching in another direction without incidents.

Barricades remained up around the central town of Cacak where almost all shops remained shut with signs "Closed Because of Robbery" — referring to Milosevic's stealing of the elections — posted on the windows.

One of the country's main highways was also closed early Tuesday, the state Tanjug agency said.

The state bus company rerouted regular bus lines to avoid the blockades. Police arrested two trade unionists in Belgrade's bus company early Tuesday, radio Index reported.

Striking railroad workers cut ties linking Yugoslavia's dominant republic, Serbia, with its smaller republic, Montenegro. Buses traveled only to the border of the two republics.

Chris Patten, the European Union's foreign affairs commissioner, said Tuesday that he hoped the popular backlash against Milosevic will prove "irreversible."

"I suppose he may be able to hang on by his fingertips but I think the writing is on the wall now," Patten said in an interview with BBC radio. "The brave people of Serbia have made their views pretty clear."

GOP report alleges White House refusal to turn over e-mails

BY PETE YOST
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Clinton White House threatened computer technicians and engaged in obstruction while failing to turn over thousands of e-mails to investigators, Republicans on a House committee conclude in a new report.

Summarizing a probe by the House Government Reform Committee that began early this year, the GOP report says that the White House's "failure to report the missing e-mails is the latest in a long string of actions meant to thwart Congress-

sional and criminal investigations focused on the White House."

The GOP conclusions are bizarre, reckless and false, committee Democrats said in a rebuttal. The White House said Monday that the GOP report was timed to coincide with the first presidential debate.

"Many sensational allegations have been made, but none have been supported by the facts," states the Democrats' rebuttal.

The GOP report will be voted on Thursday.

The Republican-controlled com-

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