



## Kostunica admits killings

BY KATARINA KRATOVA  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA** — Yugoslavia's new president has admitted for the first time that Yugoslav army and police forces committed widespread killings in Kosovo last year.

Vojislav Kostunica's remarks during a television interview marked the first time any Yugoslav leader has accepted responsibility and expressed remorse for any of the conflicts in the last decade in the Balkans.

His remarks were reported as the new president scored a significant victory Tuesday, persuading the Serbian parliament to approve a power-sharing administration to run Yugoslavia's main republic until early elections in December.

Those elections will give the democracy forces a chance to remove the last major bastion of Milosevic support within the Yugoslav leadership.

Milosevic has never admitted wrongdoing in Kosovo, steadfastly blaming the West for instigating violence in the region. He was indicted last year for war crimes by the international court in The Hague for atrocities committed by his troops in Kosovo.

"I am ready to ... accept the guilt for all those people who have been killed," Kostunica told CBS News' "60 Minutes II," according to a transcript. "For what Milosevic had done, and as a Serb, I will take responsibility for many of these, these crimes."

Asked whether Yugoslav forces were guilty of genocide in the southern province of Kosovo, Kostunica admitted that crimes had occurred, but that both Serbs and ethnic Albanians were killed. The interview was to be aired Tuesday night.

"Those are the crimes, and the people that have been killed are victims," Kostunica said, adding "there are a lot of crimes on the other side and the Serbs

have been killed."

Under Milosevic, Yugoslav forces launched a massive crackdown on ethnic Albanian separatists in Kosovo in 1998. Thousands of ethnic Albanian civilians were killed and tens of thousands of others forced to flee their homes.

Milosevic depicted the crackdown as a heroic attempt to save Serbia's medieval heartland from independence-minded ethnic Albanian extremists. He and four of his officials were charged by the U.N. war crimes tribunal last year for atrocities committed in Kosovo.

Since taking power after a popular revolt, Kostunica has moved to bring about democratic changes and has shown willingness to cooperate with the tribunal. He has not yet moved to arrest Milosevic, saying the tribunal was a political entity created by the West and that his country doesn't recognize it.

Asked by CBS whether he thought Milosevic would ever stand trial, Kostunica replied, "Somewhere, yes."

Milosevic's party still holds a significant amount of power, which has prevented Kostunica's camp from pushing through much-needed democratic reforms.

Prospects for change improved significantly, however, when Serbia's parliament voted Tuesday to replace Serbia's republican government with a transition administration until early elections are held on Dec. 23. Milosevic's party holds 110 of the 250 seats in the republican legislature.

Under the formula, the current Serbian government will be replaced by a temporary one in which pro-democracy forces will share power to prevent any rigging of the balloting. Previously, the legislature wasn't due for new elections until the fall of 2001.

Parliamentary approval came after Milosevic's former allies in the Radical Party accused Kostunica's camp of staging a "coup" by forcing changes in the republican administration.

The Radicals, which hold 82 seats in the 250-seat assembly, filibustered for seven hours, forcing parliament to adjourn its session without a vote on the reorganization plan. The assembly met again Tuesday, although the session was delayed after Radicals walked out to protest a decision by state television not to broadcast the event.

Yugoslavia is a federation made up of Serbia and smaller Montenegro, each with their own elected governments.

Kosovo is a province of Serbia, but the United Nations and NATO took over the province in June 1999 following NATO's 78-day bombing of Yugoslavia.

Kosovo Serbs, the minority in the province, now commonly complain of being the target of attacks. A rocket-propelled grenade exploded Monday at a neighborhood where most remaining Serbs in Kosovo's capital of Pristina live, blowing a hole in one of the buildings.

### NEWS BRIEFS

#### ■ Candidates make final push as election nears

**MILWAUKEE (AP)** — With neither candidate yet able to seize a decisive lead, George W. Bush and Al Gore are sharpening their attacks in the final two weeks of the presidential campaign.

With polls suggesting a cliffhanger outcome on Election Day, Republican Bush and Democrat Gore were going after undecided voters and crossing each other's campaign paths.

Bush was campaigning Tuesday in Illinois and in Gore's home state of Tennessee, states that went Democratic in 1996 but where Republicans think they have a good chance this year.

Gore also was to be in Tennessee, which he should have wrapped up by now but where polls show an unexpectedly tight race. He also planned events in Louisiana and Arkansas.

#### ■ Separatists say Chinese tortured prisoner to death

**BEIJING (AP)** — Police have tortured to death an organizer of one of the largest uprisings against Chinese rule in China's uneasy Muslim northwest, according to a separatist group.

Abdullah Abdulmejit, imprisoned 44 months ago and repeatedly interrogated and tortured, died Oct. 17 in the Chapchal Su Detention Center in the Xinjiang region's Yili county, said the East Turkistan Information Center, based in Germany.

A detention center official confirmed Abdullah Abdulmejit's death, but said he died from pneumonia at the central prison in Yining, Yili's county seat, not at the detention center.

## Teen-ager holds classroom hostage

BY JOEL ESKOVIK  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**GLENDALE, ARIZ.** — An armed teen-ager briefly held a classroom full of children and a teacher hostage Tuesday at his former elementary school before surrendering to authorities. No one was injured.

The former student at Pioneer Elementary School gave up after talking with members of a police SWAT team, police spokesman Matt Brown said. The standoff in the eighth-grade classroom lasted about an hour.

"He came here with a purpose, but thank goodness he didn't carry it out," Brown said. He did not elaborate beyond saying the boy discussed the reason for his actions with authorities.

Brown said the portable classroom was full when the student walked in with a 9mm handgun, but he gradually let students go. There were still several people in the room at the time the student surrendered.

The school has classes kindergarten through eighth grades and the children involved were about 13 or 14 years old, Brown said.

Other students were bused to a high school where parents could pick them

up, and the school was closed.

Courtney Smith, who lives across the street from the school, said she saw the suspect enter the school grounds at about 11:15 a.m. He was wearing camouflage and had a hood over his head, but she didn't see a weapon.

"I didn't think anything of it. Next thing we know, there were girls running out of the classroom screaming. They told us there was a kid inside with a gun holding kids hostage," Smith said. "They were hysterical, crying and screaming. They told us he'd threatened to kill them."

Terra Churchill was in her backyard, next to the school yard, when she heard the words "Code 9" announced over the loudspeaker. Her three daughters, Whittney, 8, Britteny, 10, and Tiffeny, 12, all attend Pioneer.

Churchill immediately called the school and was told the campus was in lockdown. About an hour later, she was standing in Smith's front yard when she saw police bring the suspect out.

"This is very frightening," she said. "Just to think of what all those kids are going through."

## North Korean leader indicates he might curb missile program

BY CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**PYONGYANG, NORTH KOREA** — Seeking reconciliation with the United States, North Korea has indicated a willingness to discuss curbs in its missile program, U.S. officials said Tuesday after two days of historic high-level talks.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said she took seriously a remark delivered offhand at a gymnastic exhibition by North Korean leader Kim Jong Il that the country would refrain from long-range missile launches.

Kim had raised the missile issue Monday night, when an image of a Taepo Dong I missile was flashed before the audience. "He quipped that this was the first satellite launch and it would be the last," she said.

Asked at a news conference if she interpreted that as a pledge for a permanent moratorium on missile launches, Albright said, "I take what he said as serious as to his desire to move forward to resolve various questions."

A State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said after Albright and Kim finished their talks that the North Korean leader is agree-

able to discussing "serious restraint" in missiles.

But diplomats offered no further elaboration of Kim's words to Albright in their six hours of talks, including whether his assurances covered all missiles that could be used against other countries.

Lower-level technical talks on missiles were planned for next week.

Many analysts in and out of government are convinced North Korea already has the capacity to strike at the perimeter of the United States with a long-range missile.

That concern has been the main

ALBRIGHT SEE PAGE 5

## Barak seeking to form coalition government with opposition leader

### ■ Three dead after latest clash in West Bank

BY LAURIE COPANS  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**JERUSALEM** — Israeli troops and Palestinians clashed in rain-drenched streets Tuesday, while Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak pressed ahead with negotiations to bring hawkish opposition leader Ariel Sharon into a coalition government.

With no current prospects for a Mideast peace deal, Barak was searching for partners to bolster his vulnerable minority government, which is in danger of collapse. His negotiators held a second day of talks with parliamentary factions, including Sharon, the man many Palestinians blame for igniting the present spasm of violence.

"Friends, this is a time of emergency, and in an emergency, brothers walk together," Barak said on Israeli radio.

Meanwhile, Israeli army Col. Noam Tivon, a commander on the West Bank, said the military didn't expect the clashes to end soon. "We definitely need to prepare for a long period of conflict," he told Israel radio.

Clashes again broke out in the Gaza Strip, where the weather was dry. Rain appeared to dampen but not extinguish clashes in the West Bank on Tuesday. Palestinian authorities reported three more deaths.

A 55-year-old Palestinian man was killed in his house overnight when he was hit in the head by gunfire in Hebron. After daybreak, Palestinian rock throwers confronted Israeli troops along the main street of Hebron, in the West Bank.

A Palestinian teen-ager was shot and killed Tuesday in clashes near the Erez crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel, the Shifa hospital said. Also, a 13-year-old Palestinian boy, Iyad Shaath, died of a gunshot wound to the head suffered four days earlier in the Gaza Strip, the hospital said.

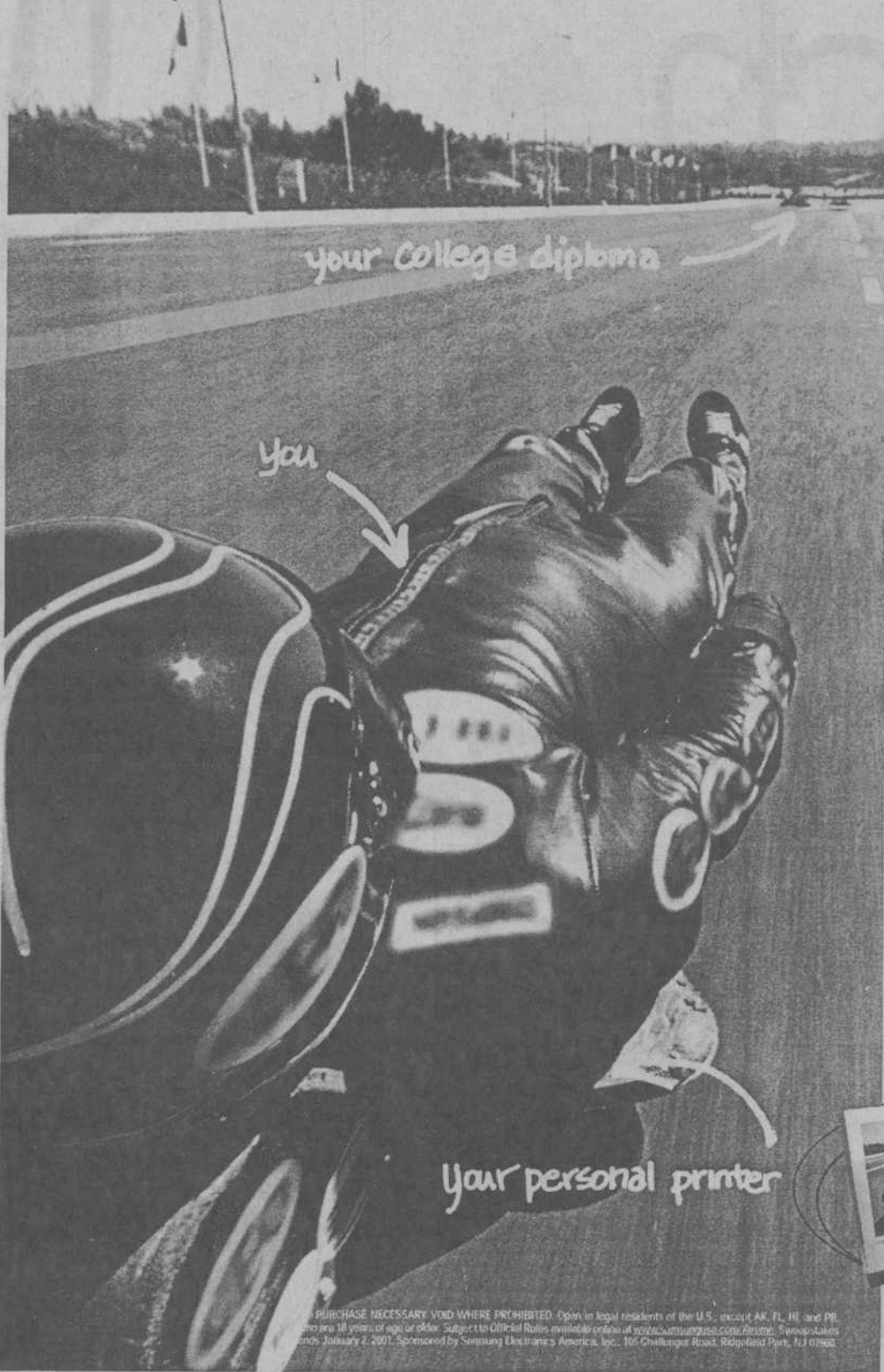
For Palestinians, Tuesday was a holiday marking the ascension of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad to heaven from Jerusalem. The Israeli military called on Palestinians "not to send schoolchildren to violent confrontations with the security forces." The Palestinians accuse the Israelis of using excessive force in the daily confrontations.

In almost four weeks of fighting, which erupted following Sharon's Sept. 28 visit to a disputed holy site in Jerusalem, 126 people have been killed and thousands injured, the vast majority Palestinians.

Israeli army tanks positioned on the outskirts of Jerusalem fired three shells late Monday toward Palestinian gunmen shooting from the nearby Palestinian village of Beit Jalla. Four Palestinians were injured in the Israeli fire. It was the second night of clashes on Jerusalem's periphery, sparked each time by bursts of gunfire emanating from Beit Jalla.

Israel sealed Beit Jalla on Monday in

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