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Bosnian Serbs announce reforms; expel war crime suspects

SARAJEVO, DEC. 25. The Bosnian Serb leaders are banishing war crimes suspects from party ranks and promising to appoint non-Serbs in the government in an effort to ensure their ministate's survival.

The Bosnian Serb Prime Minister, Mr. Mladen Ivanic, said his Cabinet may become more multiethnic next year, the news agency ONASA reported on Tuesday. So far, there has been only one Muslim in the Bosnian Serb government, though more than half of the ministries should be in non-Serb hands under the constitution.

Mr. Ivanic said he would organise a meeting of leading politicians to find a solution.

If no agreement is reached, "it is possible that the international institutions will impose a solution," he said.

Mr. Ivanic spoke after receiving a visit last week from Bosnia's top international official, Austrian diplomat Mr. Wolfgang Petritsch.

During the visit, Mr. Petritsch made clear that the Bosnian Serb ministate could be at risk unless the government lives up to its human rights obligations. The other half of Bosnia is the Muslim-Croat federation.

The peace agreement requires both ministates to allow



The Bosnian Serb President, Mr. Mirko Sarovic, (front), votes during the Serb Democratic Party 'SDS' session in the Bosnian Serb controlled town of Banja Luka, some 220 km northwest of Sarajevo on Monday. — AP

displaced persons to return, to hand over war crimes suspects and to introduce equal human rights for all.

But Bosnian Serb leaders have made it hard or even impossible for non-Serbs who fled during

the 1992-95 Bosnian war to return. They have also failed to deliver any war crimes suspects to the U.N. War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands.

As the top international administrator, Mr. Petritsch is empowered to impose laws or fire obstructive local politicians.

A newly adopted election law in Bosnia prevents parties including war crimes suspects from participating in elections.

In an apparent attempt to stay on the political surface under the new circumstances, the strongest hard-line Bosnian Serb Democratic Party on Monday decided to exclude war crimes suspects from its ranks.

This party was once founded by Bosnian Serb wartime leader, Mr. Radovan Karadzic, Bosnia's top war crimes suspect who has been in hiding since 1996.

Monday's decision is no guarantee any suspect, including Mr. Karadzic, will be surrendered to the court in The Hague.

Mr. Ivanic, the Bosnian Serb Prime Minister, has claimed that his police "do not have the strength" to arrest the war crimes suspects, but he said people should prepare for seeing them travel to The Hague. — AP

THE HINDU

26 DEC 2001

Kosovo goes to polls

REUTERS

PRISTINA (Yugoslavia), Nov. 17.— Kosovo today began voting in a milestone general election designed to give the UN-run Yugoslav province self-governing powers but not the independence its ethnic Albanian majority wants.

In the most important political event in Kosovo since NATO's 1999 bombing campaign, its people will elect a 120-seat legislative assembly which in turn will choose a president and a government.

Polling stations in Kosovo, a landlocked and impoverished territory bordering Macedonia and Albania in the south and Serbia proper in the north, opened at 7 a.m. (0600 GMT) and were due to close 12 hours later. About 1.25 million people are eligible to vote.

Daan Everts, head of the Kosovo mission of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, said a Serb turnout of 50 per cent should be seen as a success.



Leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo and a presidential candidate, Mr Ibrahim Rugova, casts his vote in Pristina on Saturday.
— AP/PTI

"We feel they would only hurt their own interests by boycott and abstention, because that would lead to continued or aggravated isolation," Everts, who is the chief organiser of the election, said.

Kosovo's Albanians, hoping the election will move

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their homeland closer to becoming a sovereign state, are expected to turn out in much larger numbers.

Their three main political parties are all demanding independence and also advocate business-friendly policies. The moderate Democratic League of Kosovo led by Ibrahim Rugova is widely expected to come first at the polls.

But UN officials insist the new provisional institutions will not have the power to declare independence, saying Kosovo's final status will be determined at some future date.

"We will make sure that it never gets on the agenda of the assembly," said Hans Haekkerup, head of the UN-led administration which has governed the province since Yugoslav forces withdrew in the summer of 1999.

The former Danish defence minister said he would continue to hold on to powers in the areas of Kosovo's external relations, police, justice and the rights of minorities.

THE STATESMAN

18 NOV 2001

Leftists win in Poland: exit polls

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WARSAW, Sept. 23. — In a vote that promises to realign Poland's political landscape, a Leftist party with roots in Poland's former Communist regime, won a clear majority in parliamentary elections today, according to exit polls.

The elections also mark the political extinction of Solidarity, which failed to get any seats, according to two separate exit polls.

If the results hold, the Democratic Left Alliance and its small ally, the Labour Union, have a majority in the 460-seat Sejm, Parliament's Lower House.

Exit polls by the private polling agency, PBS, show the Democratic Left with 44.9 percent of the vote, representing 232 seats.

Solidarity, which needed 8 percent of votes to stay in Parliament, won just 4.5 percent, PBS said.

Exit polls also showed the Democratic Left won control of the Senate, with 75 of 100 seats.

While the Democratic Left Alliance will control the powerful Lower House, it will also have to contend with an array of smaller Right-wing parties.

The results were a stunning blow for the Solidarity, which led the last government but has lost support with high-level defections, infighting, political scandals and rising unemployment.



A girl peeps out of a polling booth at Warsaw as her family votes during parliamentary elections in Poland on Sunday. — AP/PTI

Brothers and arms

HD-16 29

BARELY A week after it began, Operation Essential Harvest, NATO's 30-day mission to collect 3,300 arms from rebel Albanians in the tiny Balkan republic of Macedonia, has started to appear shaky.

The NATO General-Secretary, Lord Robertson's brief visit to the capital Skopje and the troubled area around the Albanian-dominated town of Tetovo in north-western Macedonia was marred by terrorist attacks and shooting incidents involving the Albanian and Macedonian communities as well as NATO troops.

According to the respected defence weekly, *Jane's*, Albanian rebels possess around 8,000 arms including assault rifles, machine guns, grenades, mortar and rocket launchers and an estimated 50 Stinger missiles (that wreaked havoc on Soviet troops in Afghanistan).

The NATO's estimate of 3,300 weapons is hotly disputed by the Macedonian Government which claims the rebels have anywhere between 60,000 and 100,000 weapons.

The Macedonian Prime Minister, Mr. Ljubco Georgievski, de-

Relations between the Slavs and the Albanians in Macedonia have deteriorated further.

Vaiju Naravane on the arms decommissioning issue.

scribed Operation Essential Harvest as "laughable and humiliating for Macedonia", while the Government spokesman, Mr. Antonio Milososki, said "Museum Harvest" would be a more appropriate name for the mission which, he alleged, had succeeded in collecting less than 500 weapons mostly obsolete, rusty and unusable, dating back to World War II.

The Albanians, he said, were making fools of both NATO and the Macedonian Government and should not be allowed to get away with it.

The generally nationalistic Macedonian press has fiercely attacked the NATO mission, which it has labelled biased and pro-Albanian, inevitably fanning nationalistic sentiment. *Dnevnik*, a popular daily, described the weapons collected by NATO troops as "museum pieces most-

ly of Russian or Chinese origin", while another daily, *Utrinski Vesnik*, said two M-48 rifles handed over date back to World War II.

However, the NATO spokesman, Major Barry Johnson, said the arms collected were of the same quality and calibre as those used by the Macedonian army. NATO also pointed out that over 200 Kosovo Albanians who had gone to Macedonia to help the guerrillas had been detained by Kfor soldiers while crossing back into the Albanian-dominated Yugoslav province. They were unarmed. "This confirms our belief that the National Liberation Army in Macedonia is beginning to disband," Major Johnson said.

The Albanian guerrilla leader, Mr. Ali Ahmeti, told *The Hindu* that as far as his fighters were concerned "the war is over. With the Ohrid agreement, there is no

time being. But our lives have been totally disrupted." In such difficult circumstances, it is now doubtful if the Macedonian Parliament will ratify the peace agreement signed with the Albanian leadership on August 13 following protracted talks in the lakeside town of Ohrid. Under the deal, the country's Constitution will be changed to remove references to the ethnic origins of Macedonia's citizens and the Albanian language will be given official status in certain areas.

An extra 1,000 policemen of Albanian origin will be recruited and more public sector posts will be offered to the Albanians who make up a third of the population. NLA rebels have also been granted amnesty under the peace deal. Over the past week, there has been a tremendous upsurge of anti-NATO feelings amidst the

"We live in daily terror here,"



Albanians in Macedonia line up to hand over their weapons... conflicting claims.

longer any reason to make war. We will hand in all our weapons and we have no reason to hide the number of weapons we possess.

"The Macedonian Government's claims that we have over 60,000 arms are false. The target of 3,300 weapons fixed by NATO was arrived at not by us but by a committee of experts. We waited for this peace for over ten years. Now, hopefully, we have it."

The Macedonian press has slammed the peace agreement, as a "sell out to minority Albanian interests". Several editorials con-

Mr. Bashkim Aliu, a 28-year-old unemployed youth from Skopje, told *The Hindu*. "The Interior Minister Lubje Boskovski is really whipping up anti-Albanian sentiment in the capital and most Albanians have now moved to the old Turkish quarter in the city. Just the other day there was a bomb blast at an Albanian primary school. On paper, we have obtained what is a just solution. But will the nationalist Macedonian Slavs allow this to become reality? I do not think so. In any case, I have sent my family to Kosovo where they are safe for the

Macedonian Slav population. A British soldier was killed by anti-NATO demonstrators who dropped a slab of concrete on his car from an overbridge. The political situation has been further exacerbated by the fact that an election is due by the end of January, 2002.

The Prime Minister and the Interior Minister are both undeclared candidates locked in a fight for the leadership of VMRO against the moderate President, Mr. Boris Trajkovski, and have decided to raise the ante to capture the nationalistic vote.

MACEDONIA / BRITISH SOLDIER KILLED IN SKOPJE

Albanian rebels begin arms surrender

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110-1A 26/8

OTIJA (MACEDONIA), Aug. 27. Ethnic Albanian rebels turned in their first weapons to NATO troops on Monday in this village in northern Macedonia.

French and American helicopters ferried NATO troops to a collection site 10 km west of the northern city of Kumanovo. The area was secured before NATO moved in. A leader of the ethnic Albanian rebel forces in the area who goes by the name Commander Shpati said his men had started handing in their weapons and that everything was going on smoothly. Shpati said the 113th and 114th rebel brigades were taking part in the surrender of arms. The weapons were left at a warehouse at the site, where they were placed under the care of French paratroopers.

Preparations for the handover began early on Monday, outside the warehouse, when French armoured personnel carriers pulled up outside the building. Trucks were also brought to move the weapons from the warehouse to a field where the helicopters were landing for collection. NATO is

planning to collect 3,300 weapons from ethnic Albanian rebels in a mission scheduled to last for no more than 30 days. The rebels, known as the National Liberation Army, will surrender the weapons as part of a peace plan designed to end six months of conflict.

Meanwhile, a British soldier was killed when marauding youths threw a block of concrete that struck the soldier, the first casualty of NATO's mission in Macedonia, officials said on Monday. NATO said the mission would continue despite the attack. Ian Collins (20), of Britain's 9 Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers, was driving an armoured vehicle outside the capital, Skopje, when he was attacked, British military officials said. They said he suffered head injuries. Another person was inside the vehicle, which was believed to be travelling on a military route, but was uninjured, a British Ministry of Defence spokesman said.

The slaying caused unease as NATO geared up on Monday to begin the British-led mission, Operation Essential Harvest, to col-

lect weapons from ethnic rebels. Though ethnic Albanians generally welcome the deployment, ethnic Macedonians have been suspicious and sometimes hostile to the presence of foreign troops. But NATO said it would not postpone or cancel the mission.

Underscoring the tensions in the troubled Balkan country, two bombs blasts rocked Skopje late on Sunday and early on Monday. Both attacks occurred near shopping areas, but no injuries were reported. Macedonians largely blame NATO for the country's six-month ethnic Albanian insurgency, accusing the alliance of failing to choke off weapons and supplies coming from Kosovo — support that is widely believed to be helping the rebels.

NATO officials acknowledge the mission is delicate, but insist it is the only way to prevent further conflict. "There are no guarantees and the path will not be easy and the alternative is clear," said Maj. Gen. Gunnar Lange, the military commander of Operation Essential Harvest. "The alternative is war." — AP



Mr. Angele Cvetkovski, a Macedonian held captive by the National Liberation Army of the ethnic Albanians since August 11, 2001, being reunited with his wife at the Red Cross headquarters in Skopje on Monday. — Reuters

28 AUG 2001

MACEDONIA / BLAST IN MOTEL KILLS TWO

110 16 278
NATO mission suffers a jolt *B Europe*

SKOPJE (MACEDONIA), AUG. 26. An explosion ripped through a motel in northeastern Macedonia early on Sunday, killing two employees and complicating NATO's efforts to start its mission to collect weapons from ethnic Albanian rebels.

The slayings will add pressure on the alliance on the eve of the planned start of Operation Essential Harvest. NATO repeatedly has stressed it is trying to build confidence between ethnic Albanian rebels and the Government. Government officials, meanwhile, met in a special session on Sunday to discuss their response to NATO's assessment of the number of weapons it will collect. They are to be voluntarily handed over by ethnic Albanian rebels. Western diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, say NATO plans to collect about 3,000 weapons. Macedonia's leaders say that figure is far too low.

The explosion rocked a Macedonian-owned building in Celopek, 8 km south of the country's second-largest city, Tetovo. The village is the birthplace of the country's hard-line Interior Minister, Mr. Ljube Boskoski, who is one of the most outspoken opponents of the alli-

ance's plans. The employees killed in the blast had explosives strapped to their bodies, state television reported, quoting police sources speaking on condition of anonymity.

Police also reported an exchange of infantry and artillery fire in the Kumanovo area northeast of the capital, Skopje. Macedonian police accused rebels of provoking security forces who "responded adequately."

The alliance, meanwhile, moved ahead on Sunday with preparations to collect weapons from the rebels despite its failure so far to reach an agreement with the Macedonian Government on how many arms to expect. Both Macedonian security forces and the rebels have agreed to pull back from sensitive areas in order for NATO troops to set up one-day weapons collection points as part of a peace plan, alliance officials said. By midday on Sunday, however, no withdrawal was evident.

The withdrawals "are designed to ensure there is no tension, or the least possible tension, prior to the weapons collection," said Col. Paul Edwards, chief of operations for the mission. A senior NATO official, speaking on condition of anonymity, described the rebel

plan for turning in weapons as a "credible" effort toward disarmament. The alliance hopes to collect about a third of the arms by the end of next week, in time for a key parliamentary meeting on the peace plan.

The peace deal that ended six months of fighting between rebels and Government forces envisions a step-by-step process in which rebels will hand over weapons to NATO in exchange for political reforms in Macedonia. The handover of weapons is set to come in stages, with a third of the weapons handed over in exchange for moves in Parliament. A figure must be accepted in advance.

The Macedonian Government has claimed the insurgents have 85,000 weapons, while the rebels have put the number closer to 2,000. Western observers described the higher Government figure as an attempt by hard-liners to obstruct the peace deal. NATO had presented the President, Mr. Boris Trajkovski, with a figure on Friday, and the continuation of discussions on Sunday fuelled speculation on the extent of the rebels' arsenal. The alliance said the Government has simply asked for clarification of figures NATO has suggested. — AP

THE HINDU

27 AUG 2001

HD-14

MACEDONIA / NATO GENERAL TO ASSESS SITUATION

218

President orders troop withdrawal

SKOPJE, AUG. 20. The Macedonian President, Mr. Boris Trajkovski, has ordered the army to carry out a withdrawal of troops as a contribution towards de-escalation in advance of a planned NATO mission to the country, the Defence Ministry said today.

The Ministry in Skopje said warplanes and helicopters would accordingly not be used in crisis areas and the army was to withdraw heavy weapons from combat positions.

The measures were intended to open the way for NATO to deploy a planned 3,500-strong force to collect weapons from Albanian Uck rebels.

Firefight reported

B. Europe

Meanwhile, a firefight broke out near Macedonia's second-largest city, straining a tenuous cease-fire in the troubled country ahead of the visit by a senior NATO general who will help assess whether it is safe to deploy alliance troops to collect rebel weapons.

A police official speaking on condition of anonymity said ethnic Albanian rebels opened infantry and mortar fire on Macedonian government positions near the village of Poroj, on the outskirts of the city of Tetovo.

"Our forces came under fire, so the orders to return fire were given," he said, describing the situation as "rather serious". An ethnic Albanian rebel commander, speaking on condition of anonymity, said fighting was "very intensive", but he declined to offer details. There was no immediate information on any casualties.

The latest cease-fire violation came as NA-



Ethnic Albanian rebels walk through the village of Sipkovic, some 40 km west of the capital Skopje, Macedonia, on Sunday. NATO has said a lasting ceasefire must be in place before its troops can deploy to collect weapons from the rebel forces, known as the National Liberation Army. — AP

TO's supreme allied commander in Europe, Gen. Joseph Ralston, prepared for a brief trip to the Macedonian capital, Skopje, to meet the Macedonian government and military officials.

Gen. Ralston was to discuss cooperation be-

tween the country's security forces and a British-led NATO mission, dubbed Operation Essential Harvest. The troops are to collect weapons to be voluntarily handed in by the rebels, known as the National Liberation Army. — DPA, AP

THE END

THE END

NATO weighs its options in Macedonia

By Batuk Gathani

BRUSSELS, AUG. 19. A small contingent of NATO troops arrived in Macedonia over the weekend, ostensibly on a "surveillance mission" to assess the prospects of further deployment of troops to disarm ethnic Albanian rebels. There is some confusion about the final deployment of the proposed 3,500 NATO troops in the region.

NATO officials and 19 ambassadors of the member states will take a final decision later this week about various policy and military options, after studying the report by NATO's Supreme Commander, General Joseph Ralston, who travels to Macedonia on Monday.

Doubts have been cast about the "stability" of the Macedonian ceasefire as some commentators feel that NATO troops could be walking into a trap. Western diplomats in the region also feel that the troops are unlikely to "emerge unscathed" within 30 days as planned by NATO leaders.

The current NATO mission is to first disarm ethnic Albanians on a "voluntary basis". Some observers suspect that the Albanians would make some "token gestures" but the bulk of their arms would remain hidden. For example, the Albanians are talking about handing over 2,500 weapons while Macedonians are demanding 6,000. It is an open secret that the bulk of the sophisticated Albanian weaponry is hidden in secret mountain caches.

In northern Macedonia where ethnic Albanians are in a majority, there are reports of sporadic clashes and Macedonian fighter jets are flying reconnaissance missions over the rebel-controlled Tetove region.

Key NATO members such as Germany face serious political problems in winning parliamentary approval for their participation in the NATO force. Germany has pledged only 500 troops and but parliamentarians from the ruling Social Democrats and the Green coalition have expressed

their opposition to the move.

Senior NATO officials led by General Ralston arrive in Macedonia on Monday to make an "on-the-spot assessment" of the logistical and military risks on the ground. Based on his assessment and submission, the NATO Governments will take a decision about deployment of more troops in the region.

This is a very delicate mission since the troops are under orders not to fire in any encounter with the rebels. The first batch of NATO personnel will also assess the "durability" of peace. Much about the peace prospects depends on the attitudes of the Albanians and Macedonians, whose deep hatred for each other is the cause of the current hostilities in the region. The bottomline is that NATO troops do not wish to get caught in the crossfire in the wake of the resumption of hostilities.

There is total lack of trust between the two ethnic communities as both believe that the other side is hiding caches of weapons to use in any future clash. The first batch of NATO troops will liaison with leaders of the ethnic communities and the Macedonian Government to determine whether it is safe to deploy the rest of the troops.

Observers foresee serious disagreements over the quantity of arms and also the agreed political agenda. The more nationalist-minded parliamentarians have vowed to ensure that there is no parliamentary approval for the proposed reforms. Extremist factions in the so-called Albanian National Liberation Army would prefer to continue the hostilities until a "Greater Albania" is created from parts of Macedonian territory.

The current quandary in which senior NATO commanders find themselves in has its roots in the military alliance's "lapsed deadlines" in the Balkans, on the eve of its sixth intervention in the region since hostilities broke out there a decade ago.

IN 70

MACEDONIA / NATO ADVANCE GROUP ARRIVES

↳ Europe

Team readies for arms collection

SKOPJE (MACEDONIA), AUG. 18. A special NATO advance team started its mission in Macedonia on Saturday, laying the groundwork for the arrival of several thousand troops charged with collecting weapons from ethnic Albanian rebels.

Isolated incidents overnight marred a tenuous cease-fire, but the situation overall was quiet. The most serious incident was a relatively minor attack on a Macedonian police position near the country's second-largest city, Tetovo, where two rocket-propelled grenades landed near the site.

Defence officials also reported that they arrested a group of rebels crossing into the country from Albania, but that could not be independently confirmed. Macedonian authorities shut down the main border crossing between Kosovo and Macedonia until further notice, Mr. Simon Haselock, a spokesman for the United Nations in Kosovo, said on Saturday. No official reason was given for the closure, but a Macedonian police source speaking on condition of anonymity said insurgents were spotted at around 3 a.m. near the crossing, prompting the closure. Civilians later blockaded the main road to the border in the town of Stenkovac, stretching out concertina wire and piling sand on the highway to stop NATO-led peace-keepers from travelling back and forth to Kosovo.

Many Macedonians blame NATO for their troubles, in part because the alliance failed to choke off weapons and supplies from Kosovo that are widely believed to be supporting rebel forces. British transport planes flying at about two-hour intervals ferried the first contingent of soldiers into this tiny Balkan country to study the military situation on the ground and complete plans for the British-led Operation Essential Harvest.

About 350 soldiers are set to arrive this weekend. The first troops arrived on Friday, and included French forces, 40 members of Britain's 16 Air Assault Brigade and 120 soldiers from the Czech Republic sent to protect the advance party. The alliance, meanwhile, announced plans to dispatch the supreme allied commander in Europe, Gen. Joseph Ralston, on Monday to take part in the security assessment.

NATO said it will decide next week whether



A French soldier stands guard at the airport in Skopje, Macedonia, on Saturday. — AFP

to send in the rest of the 3,500 troops envisioned for the overall mission. "We can only do our job with the full commitment and support of everybody in Macedonia," said Brig. Barney White-Spunner, the 16 Air Assault Brigade's commander. "We are not here on a disarmament mission. We are not here on a peace-keeping mission."

NATO has said a lasting cease-fire must be in place before its troops can deploy to collect weapons from the ethnic Albanian rebel National Liberation Army. The Macedonian Government spokesman, Mr. Antonio Milososki, said on Friday that he doubted NATO could succeed without forcing the rebels to hand in guns, saying NATO's experience in Kosovo shows "it is impossible without using force to succeed in collecting weapons."

The troops are likely to face an icy reception from Macedonians and a hero's welcome from minority ethnic Albanians, underscoring the deep divisions in the troubled Balkan nation after six bitter months of conflict. Macedo-

nians like Ms. Dragica Vojnovska, whose 51-year-old son remains missing after being kidnapped last month, aren't hoping for much. "NATO isn't going to help us," she said Friday, cupping her hand over her eyes and struggling to hold back tears. "They're only helping the Albanians."

The insurgents took up arms in February, saying they were fighting for greater rights for ethnic Albanians, who account for about a third of Macedonia's 2 million people. Ethnic Albanians see NATO as nothing less than their saviours — and seem thrilled that the alliance is coming to town.

In Skopje's old market, Mr. Mustafa Arifi, 26, sat with his uncle in the cool shadow of the local mosque and gossiped about the deployment. Not only does he want NATO troops to come, he wants them to stay far longer than the 30 days envisioned by the alliance. "I know the big powers are on our side," he said with certainty. "I would love for them to be here for 20 years." — AP

THE HINDU

19 AUG 2001

19/8

MACEDONIA / NATO ADVANCE GROUP ARRIVES

410-12

Team readies for arms collection

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THE HINDU

19 AUG 2001

...possible defences by either country. ty, although they have a massive

MACEDONIA TRUCE VIOLATED

BY ALISTER DOYLE

Skopje, Aug. 17: Macedonia accused ethnic Albanian rebels on Friday of new truce violations as Nato nations prepared to meet in Brussels to decide whether to risk sending a 3,500-strong force to help implement a peace plan.

A vanguard of 400 British troops was due to start arriving in Skopje late on Friday to pave the way for the bigger force when, or if, Nato gives the green light to send a mission to collect rebel arms and try to prevent a fifth Balkan war.

Nato has said that a durable ceasefire is a key condition for sending any more troops for "Operation Essential Harvest," which would be the alliance's third mission to the Balkans alongside peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo.

The Macedonian government said rebels flouted the truce on both major fronts overnight after a policeman was shot dead in the northwestern town of Tetovo, apparently by a rebel sniper, in the worst setback so far to a ragged truce declared on Sunday.

Rebels said the Macedonians started the fighting.

Nato ambassadors were to meet from midday in Brussels to discuss whether conditions are right for full deployment. But one alliance source said the 19 countries seemed unlikely to reach a decision on Friday. "Such decisions take more time to reach," the source said, adding that the policeman's killing was not enough to derail the plans. In Macedonia, defence ministry spokesman Marijan Gurovski said, "We were fired at from the villages of Nikustak and Vistica towards our positions in Umin Dol." (Reuters)



YOUNG REBELS: An ethnic Albanian civilian and a rebel military policeman smile as a group of boys walk with assault rifles in the village of Dobroste, some 40 km west of Macedonia's capital Skopje, on Thursday. The so-called National Liberation Army agreed on Tuesday to hand over their arms to Nato after Macedonia's political leaders signed a plan to grant ethnic Albanians more rights. (AP)

Nato peacekeepers relax control

Merdare (Yugoslavia), Aug. 17: Nato-led peacekeepers on Friday relaxed their control of a buffer-zone that separates Kosovo from the rest of the country, allowing the Yugoslav Army to deploy on the province's boundary, officials said.

The agreement is a final step in a Nato-brokered deal that allows the new, pro-democracy Belgrade government to gradually reclaim the volatile zone just outside Koso-

vo, a predominantly ethnic Albanian province. "The agreement is a next important yet still carefully tuned step-by-step approach that aims to create positive long term cooperation between the different peoples of the region," Lt. Gen. Thorstein Skiaker, the commander of the peacekeepers, said in a statement. Lt. Gen. Skiaker and Yugoslav Lt. Gen. Momcilo Momcilovic signed the agreement on Friday at the boundary village of

Merdare 30 km northeast of the provincial capital, Pristina.

The agreement demonstrates that the Yugoslav Army and Nato troops, now fully agree on the issue of securing the administrative boundary between Kosovo and the rest of Yugoslavia, said Howard Rhodes, spokesman for the peacekeepers. The Kfor commander will retain general authority over the five-km-wide strip along the boundary. (AP)

'US to fund media blitz in Macedonia'

Washington, Aug. 17: The US government plans to finance a media blitz in Macedonia in a campaign for parliamentary passage of the peace agreement signed by the Macedonian government and ethnic Albanian political leaders, the *Washington Post* reported on Friday.

Citing sources in the Macedonian capital of Skopje and in Washington, the newspaper said the United States could spend up to \$250,000 on radio, television and newspaper advertisements. US officials were also con-

sidering direct mailings to every household, which would be the first such effort in the Balkan country, the *Post* said. The newspaper said the campaign could be launched in the next few days with radio spots and would be coordinated with the office of Macedonia's President, Boris Trajkovski. According to the *Post*, Mr Trajkovski's involvement was regarded as critical, because US officials said they were worried that the project would be construed as interference. The International Republican

Institute, a Washington-based non-profit group that is partially funded by the US government, has commissioned a nationwide voter survey to help Western consultants and presidential advisers tailor what they are calling "public service announcements" to legislators and the public, the *Post* said. "We are trying to ensure that the peace plan is widely discussed and that the public is well-informed," a spokesman for the US embassy in Skopje was quoted as saying. (Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

18 AUG 2001

... THE MOST OF THE MACEDONIAN CAPITAL SKOPJE, ON WEDNESDAY. (AP)

Macedonia truce to hold until Nato arrives

BY ALISTER DOYLE

accused the other side of repeated violations since a ceasefire was declared on Sunday under a plan to end the six-month-old rebellion and prevent the fifth Balkan war in a decade. A durable and sustainable truce is a key condition before Nato nations approve a plan to deploy 3,500 troops to collect rebel arms on a third Balkan mission, dubbed "Operation Essential Harvest" and meant to last just 30 days. Meeting in Brussels on Wednesday, Nato nations agreed to send a vanguard of 400 British soldiers to

Macedonia. Nato spokesman Major Barry Johnson said the soldiers were expected to land in Skopje late on Friday night.

"The ceasefire seems to be improving," he told Reuters. "There were some incidents last night but no significant reports." He said that 15 Nato experts, who arrived in Macedonia on Tuesday, were still assessing the viability of the truce. Markovski said there was sporadic shooting overnight in the northwestern town of Tetovo and that a checkpoint near Vaksince in the north was attacked by rocket launch-

ers and mortars on Wednesday afternoon.

"This morning it's quiet everywhere," he said. Britain is sending the soldiers to set up a headquarters for when, or if, the larger force is deployed. Nato troops are meant to collect weapons surrendered voluntarily by the rebels. The so-called National Liberation Army agreed on Tuesday to hand arms to Nato after Macedonia's political leaders signed a plan to grant ethnic Albanians more rights, including wider use of the Albanian language and more jobs in the

police. A third of Macedonia's two million population are ethnic Albanians. The government says the rebels want to carve up the nation which won independence from former Yugoslavia in 1991.

Nato ambassadors will discuss deploying the full 3,500-strong force at another meeting, possibly on Friday or Monday, a Nato source said. Thursday's Macedonian newspapers gave banner coverage to Nato's decision to deploy and to an offer of amnesty to the rebels by President Boris Trajkovski. (Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

17 AUG 2001

140-17 Mood grim in Skopje despite pact 1518

By Batuk Gathani

BRUSSELS, AUG. 14. Late last night, after much plodding and persuasion, the European Union and NATO officials structured a deal to avert a civil war in Macedonia between the rival ethnic factions.

The Macedonian government and the ethnic Albanian leaders signed a wide ranging agreement to avert a civil war by granting more rights to the ethnic Albanian Muslim minority which constitutes about a quarter of Macedonia's two million plus population. The agreement proposes to give ethnic Albanians in Macedonia a greater share of power, which ranges from police ranks to Parliament, language and education.

Western officials stipulated that only after "a series of conditions" are met would the proposed 3500 more foreign troops under NATO's command enter Macedonia. NATO insists on an "enduring cease-fire respected by all parties" before its troops can begin the task of implementing the latest agreement which may lead to granting amnesty to the rebels and also disarming

them. The E.U. and NATO officials have stated that the peace accord should be approved by the Macedonian Parliament. The Macedonians nationalists have vowed to reject the plan.

Though western officials insist on a "quick implementation" so that the allied peace force can be deployed, according to observers all this could take many days or



The special U.S. and E.U. envoys to Macedonia, Mr. Francois Leotard (left) and Mr. James Pardew, sign a peace agreement in Skopje on Monday. Also seen in the background (from left): the Belgian Foreign Minister, Mr. Louis Michel, the E.U. foreign policy chief, Mr. Javier Solana, the Macedonian President, Mr. Boris Trajkovski, the leader of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) party, Mr. Branko Crvenkovski, and the General Secretary of NATO, Mr. George Robertson. — AFP

weeks. NATO officials are also wary of the mission on this account. Technically, the allied troops are ready and could be deployed within two days of a final decision to deploy them. Currently, there are 4000 NATO troops in Macedonia who provide back-up for some 40,000 soldiers in the neighbouring Kosovo.

Senior NATO officials and 'am-

bassadors' of the 19 NATO member-countries will meet at NATO headquarters here on Thursday to discuss the strategy. The venture is "fraught with uncertainty and carries an element of risk" according to a western observer. There is much speculation about the real intentions and peaceful bonafides of the Albanians. The response of Albanian guerillas is also not

known. At their Thursday meeting, NATO Ambassadors will first discuss whether conditions are right for deployment of new troops. It also remains to be seen how the Macedonian population accepts the peace accord. For example, many Macedonians feel that NATO is more favourably disposed towards ethnic Albanians who are seen "being rewarded for their aggression".

Later this week, NATO may decide first to dispatch an initial probing mission of some 15 to 20 officials of so-called "implementation group" to make an "on spot" assessment of logistical and psychological imponderables. The bottomline is to first decide how the vast majority of the Macedonian population responds to NATO initiative.

According to a senior official, NATO is going in Macedonia with a specific mandate "to collect those weapons" and "when that is done, we will be out from there".

In the background of current ethnic tension and deep distrust between local Christians and Muslims, this may sound a bit simplistic. The ground reality is that the previous cease fire agreement has been ignored by all concerned and hence it is argued that the current accord may not also end the ethnic war. Obviously, there are reservations about peace prospects and some observers fear that the simmering conflict could even escalate into the fifth Balkan war of the past decade.

THE HINDU

BALKAN CRISIS

Warring sides set to sign peace accord

BY MISHA SAVIC

Skopje, Aug. 13: Macedonia's feuding factions prepared to sign a peace accord on Monday to end six months of bitter conflict despite continuing clashes between ethnic Albanian rebels and government forces.

Political leaders representing the Balkan country's Macedonian majority and its minority ethnic Albanian population planned to formally endorse a tentative agreement that gives ethnic Albanians a larger share of power in the police ranks, Parliament and education.

The signing ceremony was planned for 4 pm. Nato secretary-general Lord Robertson, European Union envoy Javier Solana, French mediator Francois Leotard and US envoy James Pardew were among those attending.

Arriving in Skopje with Mr Solana, Mr Robertson called the signing "a remarkable moment for the history of Macedonia. This day marks the entry of Macedonia into modern, mainstream Europe."

Mr Pardew, who helped broker the accord reached last week, was equally upbeat.

"This is the day when we can begin an end to this conflict and take all the political issues off the table," Mr Pardew said. "After this day, there should be no reason for fighting."

The militants took up arms in February, saying they were fighting for more rights for ethnic Albanians, who comprise about a third of Macedonia's population of 2 million. The Macedonian government says the rebels simply want to seize territory.

After the accord is signed, Nato will send in 3,500 troops to disarm the rebels. The British-led operation essential harvest would last 30 days and would include troops from the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Turkey, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Before the Nato troops can be deployed, there will have to be a "durable ceasefire," Mr Robertson said.

"Clearly, there has to be a sustainable ceasefire and clear indications from the insurgents that they mean business in terms of disarming completely and handing over their weapons and ammunition to the Nato troops when they come," he said.

Macedonia's government agreed to pave the way for the signing by reinstating a ceasefire that had gone ignored over the past two weeks. President Boris Trajkovski ordered government forces to stop shooting Sunday "to show goodwill and give a chance" to the peace deal, state television reported. (AP)

Ceasefire fails to hold in Macedonia

By **Batuk Gathani**

BRUSSELS, AUG. 13. Though the Macedonian government and ethnic Albanian rebels last night agreed to reinstate a ceasefire to support a peace accord, there are fresh reports of military skirmishes between government forces and rebels as smoke bellowed round a Christian Orthodox monastery and a number of houses were set on fire in northern Macedonia.

The European Union and NATO mediators are "deeply uncertain" about the turn of events as fighting continued between ethnic Albanian Muslims and Macedonian Christians. This was highlighted by last week's killing of 19 Macedonian soldiers, and raised questions about the viability of the peace process.

The atmosphere in Macedonia today was "sour and uncertain" according to foreign observers. The Macedonian forces are well equipped but ethnic rebels have repeatedly demonstrated their resilience. Albanian rebels have even crossed from neighbouring Kosovo where borders

are patrolled by NATO led peacekeepers. This highlights the fact that the border is very porous.

Macedonian several times claimed that an "imminent defeat" of the rebels was in the offing, but according to observers, the military balance is tilting in favour of Albanian guerillas who do not seem to be short of weapons and fighters in their quest to create a "greater Albania" from parts of Macedonia dominated by Albanians. According to informed observers, current demographic estimates would indicate that less than a third of some two million population is ethnic Albanian and mainly Muslim.

For six months now, yet another nasty secessionist war in the Balkans along the boundary between the provinces of Kosovo, Serbia and a part of Macedonia is being waged by Albanian guerillas. This puts NATO's credibility and impartiality on line. Both Russia and major European powers are committed to maintain post-war territorial integrity of various Balkan states. The Bush administration has yet to come to grips with policy options in the Balkan region.

The U.S. Secretary of State, Gen. Colin Powell, who visited NATO headquarters here recently said the U.S. would fully cooperate with its European allies and seek a consensus approach to the crises. Addressing the U.S. troops the other day, the U.S. President, Mr. George W. Bush, reassured NATO allies: "We have gone in (Balkans) together and we will come out together."

In the past several cease-fires had backfired. In March, the Macedonian government's so-called 'ceasefire' or decision to stop firing at ethnic Albanian rebels came to nothing. Even today, it remains to be seen if in the final analysis, secessionist guerillas will end their armed resurrection and opt for diplomatic negotiations. All indications are they will not and Macedonian military may soon launch a fresh counteroffensive against the rebels.

Mr. Javier Solana, European Union's chief foreign affairs and defence chief, is in Macedonia with senior NATO officials. For the last few days, they had been engaged in structuring a parley at a lake side holiday resort.

THE HINDU

14 AUG 2001

Macedonia's battles draw closer to Skopje

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E. Europe

SKOPJE, (MACEDONIA), AUG. 12. Smoke billowed from an ethnic-Albanian village on the outskirts of the capital on Sunday, as Government forces unleashed a major offensive against ethnic Albanian rebels, a day before the scheduled signing of a peace deal.

Mortars pounded the village of Ljuboten, on a hill some 5 km from Skopje, in an apparent retaliation for the killing of eight Government soldiers, who died on Friday when their army vehicle hit a land mine there.

A resident of Ljuboten, reached by telephone and speaking on condition of anonymity, said a few thousand people in the village were cowering in basements while several had been injured or possibly killed in the streets when sudden shelling with heavy artillery began on Sunday morning.

Authorities closed roads leading to Ljuboten, and no Government officials would immediately comment on the new offensive in which scores of houses apparently were destroyed.

Meanwhile, state-television reported heavy overnight fighting around the country's second-largest and mostly ethnic-Albanian populated city of Tetovo, in the northwest.

Combined army and police troops traded gun and artillery fire with the rebels entrenched in the mountainous area above Tetovo, the key rebel stronghold since the ethnic Albanian insurgency erupted in February.

The area resounded with mor-



Smoke rises around the 14-th century East-Orthodox church in the ethnically mixed village of Ljuboteh, some 10 km north of Skopje, during the fight between Macedonian government forces and ethnic Albanian guerillas on August 12. — Reuters

tars lobbed into rebel-held villages in attacks the rebels said hit homes and other civilian property. The Government said the rebels attacked first. A Government

source said that four Government troops and two civilians were injured in the fighting there.

Eight members of the security forces were injured in clashes

elsewhere, near the northern village of Radusa, where the Government fought throughout on Saturday to retain control of a water supply system vital for capital Skopje. It was also trying to rescue an unspecified number of policemen surrounded by ethnic Albanian rebels. Footage broadcast on state-run television showed Sukhoi SU-25 ground attack jets and army helicopters flying over the Radusa village.

The authorities also alleged that rebels were supported by hundreds of insurgents coming from Kosovo, the mostly ethnic-Albanian populated and NATO-controlled province of neighbouring Yugoslavia. The claim was denied by a NATO official who demanded anonymity.

The escalation of fighting threatened to further undermine a recent tentative peace agreement for the troubled Balkan country. Ethnic Albanian and Macedonian leaders agreed to a settlement last Wednesday that is to be formally signed on Monday, despite the continuing violence.

At least 19 Government soldiers and at least as many on the rebel side have died since the tentative peace deal was agreed to last week.

Macedonia's ethnic Albanian militants say they want more rights for their community, which accounts for a third of the country's population of 2 million. The Macedonians say the rebels simply want to seize a chunk of territory and call it their own. — AP

13 AUG 2001

Ambush kills Macedonian soldiers, peace plan

By Batuk Gathani

40-17
108
b. Gathani

BRUSSELS, Aug. 9. The Macedonian peace deal, so laboriously and carefully structured by the European Union, is now in disarray and on temporary hold, after a deadly ambush yesterday by ethnic Albanian rebels in which 10 Macedonian soldiers died.

The Macedonians are now insisting on fresh terms. Even if a peace deal is signed — scheduled on Monday — there are serious doubts about launching the proposed NATO operation, aimed at disarming ethnic Albanian rebels. Slowly and steadily, the ethnic Albanian rebels are “consolidating” their territorial gains in areas of Macedonia, predominantly dominated by them. Hence, the Macedonian Serbs are insisting that — as a precondition for a settlement — the ethnic Albanians must remove their armed forces from the ‘occupied’ territory.

Confusion prevailed over the contours of the proposed peace plan following the ambush. The ethnic Albanians have not participated in the latest round of talks.

NATO officials here say they have no idea of the number of weapons the ethnic Albanians possess and wonder if they will all be handed in. NATO has structured a so-called “essential harvest” military operation to disarm the rebels but analysts doubt if the weapons could be collected within the original timetable of 30 days. NATO is also reluctant to be bogged down in an “open-ended” military operation.

Its planners are also unsure where exactly its troops should be deployed to collect weapons.

Originally, NATO had proposed sending some 3500 troops.

There is some confusion among the 19 NATO member countries over the operational logistics of the proposed military mission. Greece, for example, insists on sending a ‘reconnaissance’ mission first to assess and identify areas of troop deployment but some members feel it is very dangerous.

Earlier in the week, optimism ran high when Macedonia’s warring ethnic factions reached a peace accord after intense plodding by western officials. But much uncertainty has descended on Macedonia, following the ambush. In some quarters, there is concern that the crises could escalate into an all-out civil war.

Hence, senior western officials are again engaged in a frantic round of talks in what is widely rated as a damage limitation exercise.

The ethnic Albanian insurgents took up arms in February to challenge the authority of the Macedonian government. Ostensibly, the minority ethnic Albanians are seen fighting for greater rights but many Macedonians suspect that a quest for “greater Albania” still motivates them.

After hard negotiations, the Macedonians have agreed to key points of the western peace plan, which grants the restive Albanian Muslim minority a greater role in police, Parliament and education.

Though, in principle, NATO has agreed to deploy 3500 peacekeeping troops to disarm the rebels, this cannot happen until both sides have signed the deal.

THE HINDU

10 AUG 2001

Mild-mannered man who ordered genocide

THE HAGUE, AUG 3. Gen. Radislav Krstic looked the picture of bourgeois respectability as he sat in the dock of international justice, dressed in a dark business suit and an impeccable white shirt.

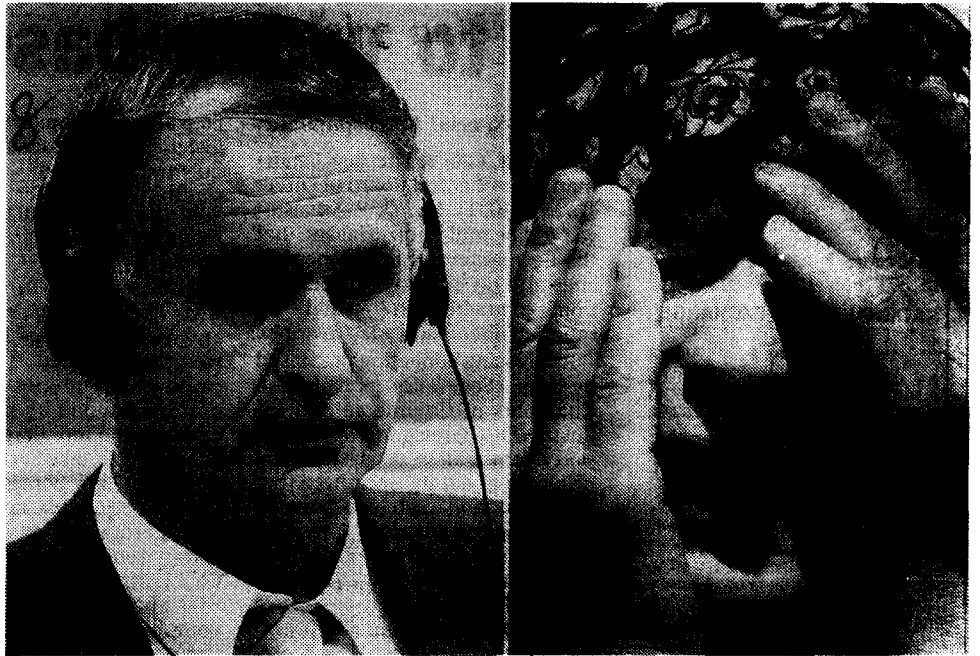
But the 255-page judgment of the United Nations war crimes tribunal laid out on Thursday in unanswerable detail how this mild-mannered man oversaw the worst atrocity committed in Europe since the Nazis. Krstic, sentenced to 46 years in prison for genocide, took command of the Drina Corps of the Bosnian Serb army on July 13, 1995, the day it began "a joint criminal enterprise to kill all the military age men" in the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica.

The town was blocking Serb plans to link their territory into a single break-away republic and the aim of the operation was to "guarantee that the Bosnian Muslim population would be permanently eradicated from Srebrenica". Women, children and old men were separated and deported in buses, with the help of U.N. peacekeepers, who provided petrol.

The men were then slaughtered in a six-day massacre by police, militia, regular infantry units and the 10th Sabotage Detachment, all operating under Krstic's Drina Corps Command. Troops under his direct command participated in the mass execution of 1,200 men — all but one of them in civilian clothes — at the Branjevo military farm.

Between 1,000 and 1,500 Muslim men were taken to the Kravica warehouse where they were machine-gunned or killed with hand grenades. The judgment noted: "The next morning, the soldiers called out to see if any of the wounded men were still alive. Upon identifying some wounded prisoners, the guards made some of them sing Serb songs and then killed them. A water tank was used to wash the blood off the asphalt."

At other sites the men were forced to kneel on the edge of mass graves, with their hands bound by metal wire behind their backs, before being shot in relays with automatic rifles. Bull-



The Bosnian Serb General Radislav Krstic listens at his initial appearance before the International War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague in this Dec. 7, 1998, file photo. (Right) A Bosnian Muslim woman covers her face as she cries during a ceremony recently to mark the sixth anniversary of the 1995 massacre in Potocari, in the wartime U.N. protected enclave of Srebrenica. — AP, Reuters

dozers were used to shunt the bodies into the pits and cover them with earth. The Zvornik Brigade Engineering Company set up powerful lights, allowing the industrial-scale murder to continue late into the summer night. At the Grbavci school, where more than 1,000 prisoners were held, the men were each given a glass of water before being taken out and shot.

The tribunal disallowed the evidence of a NATO radio intercept, played during the trial, in which Krstic allegedly said to his deputy: "Kill them all, we don't want a single one alive." U.N.

investigators have found only 2,000 of the bodies. The tribunal said the rest, listed as missing by the Red Cross, had been dug up and removed in late 1995 in a systematic effort to destroy evidence.

The conviction of Krstic is a first step towards redeeming the honour of the U.N., which contributed to the calamity by drawing refugees into a sanctuary that could not be defended without air support the West was unwilling to provide.— ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2001.

THE HINDU

1998

Nato strikes deal, Albanian rebels pull out of Tetovo

BY ALEKSANDAR VASOVIC

Tetovo (Macedonia), July 26: Ethnic Albanian rebels began withdrawing from positions near Macedonia's second largest city on Thursday, and ethnic Albanian politicians said peace talks would resume with Macedonian officials.

Defence ministry officials said that ethnic Albanian insurgents were pulling back from around Tetovo, dismantling road blocks and barricades on a road from the city to the border crossing with neighboring Kosovo. They said Macedonians who had fled the region would be bused back in the afternoon.

"The withdrawal of the terrorists is ongoing, though I have no information whether it is completed," said defence ministry spokesman Marjan Gjurovski. Hans Joerg Steiff, Nato's ambassador to Macedonia, said without elaboration that the rebels were "in compliance with the ceasefire agreement."

Adding to optimism, ethnic Albanian politicians announced that talks with majority Macedonians meant to improve the minority's status would resume. The breakdown in talks last week led to resumed fighting and fading hopes of settling the conflict. In recent days, the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army overran four villages surrounding northern Tetovo and clashed with government troops at the city's outskirts breaking a cease-fire. (AP)

Skopje seeks trial of rebels for war crimes

Skopje, July 26: Macedonia's interior ministry said on Thursday it had collected evidence allowing it to charge 11 ethnic Albanian guerrilla leaders with crimes against humanity, international law and the state.

The charges came on the day Nato and European Union chiefs arrived in the capital Skopje after Nato brokered a deal with the rebels aimed at reviving a ragged ceasefire between them and the government troops.

The list of those charged included Ali Ahmeti, political leader of the National Liberation Army guerrilla force whose five-month rebellion has put the tiny Balkan state on the brink of civil war.

"According to proof gathered by the interior ministry, the suspects, ideological and military leaders of the so called NLA, have created this vicious terrorist band with the goal to federalise and tear apart the territory of Macedonia," the interior ministry said on Thursday in a statement.

It said it expected prosecutors to issue arrest warrants for the 11 NLA leaders. (AP)

THE ADJAIN AGE

Croatia govt plunges into crisis over war-crime trial

9/7
Zagreb, July 8 (Reuters): Croatia's reformist government plunged into a life-and-death crisis today over a decision to arrest and hand over Croats wanted by the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

"The government has collapsed!" blared the headline on the front page of leading daily *Jutarnji List*, underlining the gravity of the crisis reformists faced 18 months after dethroning nationalists in elections.

Prime Minister Ivica Racan's coalition cabinet voted after a dramatic emergency meeting last night to arrest and hand over suspects named in two sealed indictments to the Dutch-based tribunal.

Four ministers including deputy Prime Minister Goran Granic from his key ally, the Social Liberal party (HSL), resigned over the decision. Racan said he would ask parliament for a confidence vote "very soon".

The parliamentary vote cannot be held before July 15 but the ruling coalition was seen as likely to survive it. The more serious risk was a possible coalition split or social unrest as a result of any arrests.

At stake would be political and economic reforms that have dramatically improved Croatia's international standing after a decade of authoritarian rightist rule. Financial cutbacks under the reforms have been unpopular.

HSL leader Drazen Budisa told journalists the indictments contained "unacceptable qualifications, including genocide and ethnic cleansing".

THE TELEGRAPH

Ex-Milosevic aide jailed on secrets charge

BELGRADE, JULY 7. Mr. Slobodan Milosevic's former chief of security, Mr. Rade Markovic, was sentenced to one year in jail on Friday for releasing state secrets. He is the first senior Milosevic ally to be convicted since the reformers took over last October.

Mr. Markovic will also be tried on other charges, the most serious that he plotted the assassination of a Belgrade journalist and a botched assassination attempt on Milosevic's old political enemy, Mr. Vuk Draskovic.

The sentence is merely a legal way to keep him in jail until he is tried on more serious charges, according to a source close to the case.

Prosecutors had hoped Mr. Markovic would incriminate his former boss, Mr. Milosevic. Democratic reformers wanted to try the former President in Belgrade on charges that he ordered the murder of his political foes, but prosecutors lacked evidence.

Mr. Markovic remained defiantly loyal to Mr. Milosevic throughout the investigation, refusing to implicate Mr. Milosevic or his wife in any criminal affairs.

Mr. Markovic is not related to Mr. Milosevic's wife Mrs. Mira Markovic, but she is credited for getting him the job as head of State security. Confronted with evidence, Mr. Markovic pleaded ignorance, endlessly repeating: "I didn't know that" or "I had nothing to do with that", sources close to the case said.

Mr. Markovic's steadfast loyalty prevented Serbian prosecutors from building a strong case against Milosevic. At the same time, the discovery of numerous mass graves across Serbia focused attention on war crimes, prompting Serb leaders to give up their quest to try Milosevic at home.

With more mass graves in Serbia being found, Mr. Dusan Mihailovic, Serbian Interior Minister, estimated that there were 800 ethnic Albanians buried in Serbia. They were murdered immediately before and

49-62
during NATO's 1999 bombing campaign of Yugoslavia. The Hague Tribunal will use these sites in its case against Mr. Milosevic.

A fragile Macedonian ceasefire negotiated by the NATO appeared to be holding on Friday, despite fighting having continued for hours after it had been meant to come into force.

Calm descended around rebel positions all across northern Macedonia as the Macedonian Army and police ceased their bombardment above the western town of Tetovo, around the town of Kumanovo, and towards the village of Radusa on the Kosovo- Macedonia border.— © Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2001



This picture dated Nov. 30, 2000, shows the former Serbian secret police chief, Mr. Rade Markovic (left) with the former Vice-President of Serbia, Mr. Milomir Minic during a visit to the checkpoint at the entrance to Veliki Trnovac village, on the border of the Serb-Kosovo buffer zone. A Belgrade court on Friday sentenced Mr. Markovic to one year in prison. — AFP

THE HINDU

A STEP BACK IN THE BALKANS

IS IT AT all possible for multi-ethnic countries, torn apart by the destructive force of hatred and vengeance, to be put back together? The one indisputable lesson from the experiences of the Balkans region in the heart of Europe from 600 years of divisive, bloody history is that achieving such reunification is a near-impossible dream. A region that has suffered the ravages of history more than most others is now witness to one more questionable act by the Western nations, led by the U.S. By forcing Yugoslavia, or what is left of it, to surrender one of its leaders, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, whatever his crime, the West has just reiterated that it refuses to learn any lesson from Balkan history. Its action in linking grant of desperately needed, life sustaining economic aid to the handing over of the leader will be seen by large sections of the Serbs as an act of humiliation. It has for now succeeded in laying its hands on the Serb leader but runs the risk of turning a moment of singular triumph into ultimate defeat. By giving a handle and a rallying point to the recently defeated hardliners in Serbia, the West may be setting the region back on the much-trodden path of revenge and destruction. The seeds of bitterness and hate are being sown again. There certainly is no cause for celebration for the West that one of the Balkans' most vicious rulers has been brought before an international tribunal to face justice.

The arrest of Mr. Milosevic in April was widely hailed as the victory of forces of freedom and moderation in Yugoslavia, now reduced to Serbia and Montenegro thanks in the main to the Nazi-style ethnic cleansing wars launched by him in Croatia and Bosnia and finally Kosovo. In a short span of three years, he inflicted the worst suffering on Kosovo as the Serbs launched a campaign of terror and mass deportation. Before the U.S. and European nations could agree on intervention and the launch of a controversial bombing campaign to stop the reprehensive eth-

nic cleansing, half the population had been displaced and a hundred thousand killed as the multi-ethnic Yugoslavia that Marshal Tito stitched together against great odds at the end of World War II lay in shambles. The military campaign and a sanctions regime forced Mr. Milosevic to seek a mandate to govern and the man whose authority was once considered beyond question found himself rejected. Under a democratic regime, and as more and more evidence of his crimes against humanity were unearthed, there was hope that he would be tried in his country by his own people who had shown extraordinary courage in voting him out in the first opportunity they got and followed it up by thwarting his attempts to subvert the election verdict to retain power.

In this positive setting comes the decision to hand Mr. Milosevic over to the war crimes tribunal in The Hague. Ironically, Washington's insistence on this handover and linking it to grant of financial assistance can prove counter-productive, provoking a wave of sympathy for nationalist hardliners in Serbia. Already, the moderate President has spoken out openly against the extradition. If the rejection of Mr. Milosevic in the elections was a triumph of democracy and reason and an affirmation that the people had had enough of ethnic wars and self-inflicted sufferings, the forced deportation of the former ruler and undoubted hero is a slap in the face for the nation. Not just the Serbs and their allies in Russia but many in the rest of the world will have cause to wonder also at the apparent double standards that attend treatment of such "criminals". Cold War friends and allies like Chile's Pinochet have been treated with kid gloves. The latest beneficiary is the former Peruvian President, Mr. Fujimori, who is wanted in his country and has sought and received the sanctuary of Japan, the land of his ancestors.

Milosevic defies tribunal

REUTERS

B. B. 5-1-5

THE HAGUE, July 3. - Cool, calm and totally defiant, Mr Slobodan Milosevic today branded the Hague tribunal a front to justify Nato's 1999 bombing of Yugoslavia and refused to plead guilty or not guilty to the war crimes charges against him.

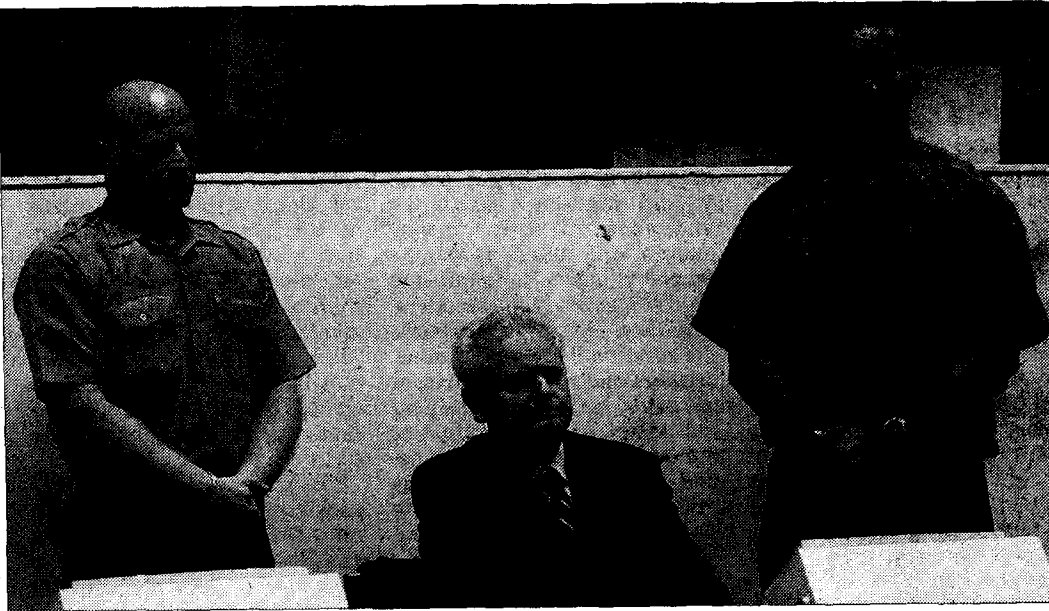
He refused headphones preferred to him by a UN court policeman, saying, "That's OK," and answered the court in accented but clear English in a firm tone.

"That's your problem," Mr Milosevic said dismissively when presiding judge Mr Richard May asked if he wanted the 32-page indictment to be read out in court.

After consulting his colleagues on the Bench, Mr May added: "We will treat your response as waiving your right to have the indictment read."

Urging Mr Milosevic to reconsider his decision to appear without benefit of the defence counsel, Mr May warned that the proceedings to come would be long and complex. He told Mr Milosevic a plea of "not guilty" was being entered on his behalf.

During the 12-minute hearing, the former Yugoslav President and Serbian nationalist hero gazed impassively at the



Slobodan Milosevic appears before the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague on Tuesday. - AP/PTI

chief prosecutor, Mr Carla Del Ponte, the three-man judges' panel and journalists.

A wall of 11 bullet-proof glass panes, floor to ceiling, separated him from the gallery.

Mr Milosevic waited about five minutes in this goldfish bowl for the Bench to take its place but never lost his composure.

At the very first opportunity, he said the tribunal was illegal.

"I consider this tribunal a false tribunal and the indictment a false indictment," he

said. "It is illegal. So I have no need to appoint counsel to an illegal organisation."

Mr Milosevic had dismissed his two Belgrade defence attorneys on Monday and therefore sat alone on the defence side of the special court, flanked by two guards.

Dressed in a well-pressed, dark blue suit with white shirt and a red-blue-and-white striped tie, he stood with his hands lightly folded in front of him when asked to do so as the

judges entered and at the adjournment.

"This trial's aim is to produce false justification for the war crimes committed by Nato in Yugoslavia," he told the court.

Mr May admonished him politely, saying: "Mr Milosevic, this is not the time for speeches."

More information: The USA signalled readiness to provide additional information to the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague to ensure successful prosecution of Mr Slobodan Milosevic.

917

dan Milosevic.

"I'd say that we've provided a lot of information to the tribunal and would be prepared to provide additional information as necessary," the state department spokesman, Mr Richard Boucher, told reporters yesterday.

However, he didn't specify if the new information would contain declassified intelligence data legal experts say would be necessary to win a conviction.

Mr Milosevic, who was extradited to The Hague last week, has to face formal charges today over his role in the crackdown on ethnic Albanians in Kosovo that prompted a Nato bombing campaign in 1999.

He will have 30 days to enter a plea.

He is also likely to face future indictments over atrocities committed by Serb forces during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia following the break up of the former Yugoslavia.

About 200,000 people perished in these conflicts.

Mr Boucher said the USA had shipped to the Hague extensive information about Serb atrocities in Kosovo.

A FBI forensic team visited Kosovo shortly after the end of the Nato bombing campaign and participated in the probe of war crimes committed in the province.

THE STATESMAN

Milosevic team to implicate U.K. leaders

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, JULY 2. Britain's joy over the humiliation of the deposed Yugoslav leader, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, facing trial at *The Hague* for atrocities in the Kosovo conflict, has been tempered by reports that three former British Foreign Secretaries may need to do some explaining for their alleged role in propping up his regime at the height of the bloodshed.

It has been reported that Mr. Milosevic's defence team plans to name Lord Hurd, Lord Carrington and Lord Owen as among leading Western negotiators whose actions helped him to remain in power. The team is expected to allege that they had "secret deals" with him, according to *The Sunday Telegraph* which said it was part of the Milosevic team's strategy to "implicate British and American diplomatic figures in the bloody break-up of Yugoslavia." "They will claim that he was given a 'green light' for many of his most controversial actions, including the use of force, by Western Governments", the newspaper said.

It quoted one of Mr. Milosevic's lawyers as saying that British peers and Foreign Office diplomats were involved in negotiating peace deals designed to keep him in power despite his record. "Milosevic's lawyers plan to call former peace envoys to give evidence. These include Lord Carrington, the chief negotiator for the European Union in 1991-92; Lord Owen who co-brokered the 1993 Vance-Owen peace deal; and Richard Holbrooke, the American who brokered the Dayton accord on Bosnia", *The Sunday Telegraph* said.

The Guardian today confirmed that a key element in Mr. Milosevic's defence strategy would be to disclose the "long list of Western statesmen and officials who were eager to negotiate with him in the 1990s". It said: "Lord Hurd, who as Douglas Hurd, was

British Foreign Secretary until 1995 was especially criticised in Bosnia and Croatia for his perceived pro-Serb bias in the mid-90s." It also highlighted his "key role" in propping up the Milosevic regime by negotiating a billion-dollar privatisation deal which provided Mr. Milosevic "with his war chest for his Kosovo campaign in 1998-99."

The Telegraph, in a report today, said Lord Hurd negotiated the deal in 1996 after he left the Government to become deputy chairman of Natwest Markets. Lord Hurd denied any impropriety saying the deal happened after the Kosovo crisis had blown over and "we were trying to make Milosevic see sense". "I don't quite see how it could be connected with any accusations about atrocities", he told the paper.

Lord Owen shrugged off the controversy saying: "I am sure lots of things will be claimed. There were no secret deals while I was around." A senior Foreign Office official was quoted as saying that Britain's "hands are clean" but he pointed a finger at France which, he said, "may well be nervous about its friendly relationship with Milosevic right upto 1999."

The embarrassing disclosures climaxed a week of "celebration" in political and media circles here over the fate of Mr. Milosevic gleefully described as the "Butcher of Belgrade". Conscious of NATO's contentious role in the Balkan conflict and the cash-for-extradition deal which made Mr. Milosevic's journey to The Hague possible, the more liberal sections of the British media have emphasised that his trial must be conducted in the most exemplary fashion possible. "... it is crucial that justice is not only done but that it is seen to be done in every detail", *The Observer* said in an editorial arguing that the trial should be a "model of fairness, no matter that most believe Milosevic to be guilty."

Yugoslav politicians battle to save union

Rory Carroll
Belgrade, July 2

11-11

YUGOSLAVIA'S CONTINUED existence hung in the balance last night as politicians tried to cobble together a new Federal Government without calling fresh elections which could allow Montenegrin separatists to break from Serbia.

President Vojislav Kostunica will today lead an attempt to save the federation by wooing back into the Government a Montenegrin Socialist party which quit in protest at the hand over of Slobodan Milosevic to the UN war crimes tribunal in the Hague.

Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran Djindjic, yesterday moved to defuse the crisis by calling for constitutional reform and playing down differences within the reformist alliance. "We must find a concept for a reformed federation and then put it to the people in Montenegro as a possible solution to this crisis," he said.

Elections were unlikely in the short term, he added, but if the two republics failed to agree on a new state concept "then we should just separate". He has suggested that the federation's functions should be reduced.

Kostunica and Djindjic are expected to come up with a list of reshuffled cabinet ministers



'YUGOSLAVIA DESTABILISED'

Moscow, July 2

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin warned on Monday that the extradition of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic to the UN war crimes court had "destabilised" Yugoslavia and its leadership. "Yugoslavia is destabilised, its president is destabilised. We are on the verge of a collapse of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia," he said at a Press conference **AFP**

to placate Montenegro's Socialist People's party (SNP). The tiny republic is Serbia's last partner in the Yugoslav federation.

The SNP, which favours the federation, hinted that it would rejoin the Government despite its fury at last Thursday's sudden handover. Kostunica expressed confidence that it would return.

The Guardian

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Milosevic takes humiliation in stride

Belgrade, June 30

SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC stepped aboard a Serb police helicopter, took what was likely to be his last look at Yugoslav soil and said: "Brother Serbs, farewell."

While being led to the helicopter, Milosevic reportedly turned to his escort, and with apparent irony, said: "Congratulations on a job well done."

The man whose years in power brought Yugoslavia to ruin was "dignified and arrogant" as he began his journey to face international justice, according to a special edition of *Weekly Telegraph*, published on Saturday that has close-up pictures of Milosevic's departure.

"You've got the wrong man," the magazine reported him telling a Hague representative after he was read the indictment against him. "Nato is the right address, they are the villains."

"The Hague tribunal is no court, its a political circus set up to destroy the Serbian nation," Milosevic, who ran Serbia and then Serb-dominated Yugoslavia from 1987 to 2000, reportedly

added. The tabloid news magazine, which reportedly has sources within the security forces that handled Milosevic's transfer, rushed out a 16-page special sprinkled with images of the former Yugoslav leader starting his journey on Thursday to the UN War Crimes Tribunal.

Milosevic's pudgy features and snowy hair stared straight at the photographer in the first clear pictures since he was jailed by the Serb Government in April.

A tough-looking man in jeans, T-shirt and dark glasses led the way to the helicopter at the Institute for Security in the Banjica suburb of Belgrade. Five uniformed Serbian police followed Milosevic, with one carrying a small green suitcase and an overcoat. From Belgrade Milosevic was flown to a US-run airbase in Tuzla, northern Bosnia, where he was transferred to a British military plane that took him to Holland. A second helicopter ride took him to Scheveningen jail in The Hague on Friday.

Milosevic's defiant words, rejecting the court's authority, suggested the 59-year-old ex-Pres-

ident of Yugoslavia has not resigned himself to the prospect of spending the rest of his life behind bars far from his native land. If convicted on the four charges he currently faces, including three of crimes against humanity for atrocities committed by forces he controlled in the Serbian province of Kosovo in 1999, he faces a maximum of life in jail.

Milosevic's lawyers say he wants them to defend him as a "political prisoner", confirming that the banker turned warlord regards the court as an agent of the NATO forces that bombed Yugoslavia in 1999 to end Serb repression in Kosovo.

Prosecutors have already widened the scope of the Kosovo-related indictments, adding a detailed list of ethnic Albanian victims of Serb terror campaigns. They are also planning charges relating to wars in Croatia and Bosnia, which Milosevic is in part blamed for instigating through his nationalist policies, and he may also be charged with the ultimate tribunal crime — genocide.

Reuters



A supporter of Slobodan Milosevic kisses a poster showing the former Yugoslav President's face, in Belgrade on Friday.



THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Yugoslav PM resigns over Milosevic transfer

BY CARLOTTA GALL
New York Times Service

Belgrade, June 30: The Yugoslav Prime Minister resigned on Friday in protest against the extradition of Slobodan Milosevic to The Hague tribunal, causing the collapse of the Yugoslav government and opening the first cracks in the alliance of democratic reformers who removed him from power eight months ago.

Prime Minister Zoran Zizic, leader of the Montenegrin faction in the Yugoslav government, former allies of Milosevic, announced his resignation on Friday. "It can be said that the Feder-

al Republic of Yugoslavia is at the beginning of a crisis," he told the press after meeting with President Vojislav Kostunica.

His action will automatically cause the Yugoslav government to fall, although ministers will continue working as a caretaker government until a new one is formed, or until new parliamentary elections are called.

Mr Kostunica's position as President of Yugoslavia remains unaffected since he is directly elected. It was not clear how Mr Kostunica would resolve the political crisis but he announced that he would appoint a prime minister-designate on Monday and would choose

someone who would continue the same programme of reform.

Mr Zizic said his Montenegrin Party would not participate in a future government but said he had asked Mr Kostunica to work to preserve Yugoslavia. The

Yugoslav government and Parliament, formed from deputies from the two republics that make up Yugoslavia — Serbia and her much smaller sister republic, Montenegro — are increasingly being revealed as unworkable anachronism.

While Mr Kostunica's personal popularity and authority remain

strong, the federation in many ways does not function. Milosevic's extradition has also revealed new cracks in the alliance that brought Mr Kostunica to power. His party announced on Friday that it was breaking away from the

alliance's parliamentary block in both the Serbian and

Yugoslav Parliaments.

The move will not bring any immediate change but it showed the differences that are growing between Mr Kostunica, who opposed the extradition, and the reformers led by Prime Minister

Zoran Djindjic, who pushed it through.

But even as several thousand supporters of Milosevic rallied on Friday evening in front of the Yugoslav Parliament, it seemed that the political fallout of the extradition could not threaten the reformists.

Mr Djindjic defended his government's action to extradite Milosevic forcefully on Friday morning on the Belgrade radio station B92. "Any other solution except cooperation would lead the country to disaster," Mr Djindjic said.

His move had been backed by all the ministers in his government

except one from Mr Kostunica's party, he said.

He added that he had discussed the extradition with Mr Kostunica and had warned him that his government could not respect an order from the constitutional court — packed with Milosevic-era appointees not to carry out the extradition.

Mr Djindjic said that after the constitutional court decision, it was clear that the Serbian republican government had to take responsibility. Belgrade newspapers published pictures of Milosevic as he was escorted to a waiting helicopter to take him to an air base in Bosnia.

WAR CRIMES

HD-16 17

His luck runs out

“THEY SOLD him for less than thirty pieces of silver. What is a billion dollars in today’s world? Slobodan Milosevic has been betrayed, sold by corrupt, greedy, power hungry politicians who want to line their own pockets. Quite a bit of the money will go back to the donor countries by way of payments to companies contracted to build our roads and infrastructure, re-start our factories. As usual, us poor folks will get nothing.”

A Yugoslav worker, Mr. Boban Stavic (52), is furious over the unseemly haste with which the former Yugoslav President was handed over to the International Criminal Tribunal on the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague.

In return for aid pledges of \$ 1.28 billions from the world’s richest nations, the Serbian Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Djindjic, and his Government over-ruled the Yugoslav Constitutional Court that banned the extradition on Thursday.

Mr. Stavic is not alone in screaming out his anger. Thousands of Yugoslavs took to the streets to protest Mr. Milosevic’s arbitrary removal to The Hague. Yugoslavia once again lurched towards political uncertainty as the Federal Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Zizic, resigned and other former Montenegrin allies of Mr. Milosevic threatened to lead a split between the country’s two remaining republics, Serbia and the much smaller Montenegro.

About 6,000 supporters of Mr. Milosevic, some shouting “Treason!” and “Let’s Rise Up!”, massed in front of Belgrade’s Federal Parliament to protest the Serbian Government decision to surrender the former Yugoslav President.

“This is outrage. This is banditry. This is a blatant violation of all laws,” said Mr. Miodrag Sekulic, 56, a retired teacher from Belgrade and a Milosevic supporter, as he painted a fresh banner saying: “We will arrest the traitors”.

But the turnout was smaller than expected, and it showed how popular support for Mr. Milosevic has dwindled since his nationalist campaigns led to four Balkan wars. Most Serbs expressed relief at the prospect of putting his 13-year era of ruinous rule behind them.

“This man brought a once-proud country to its knees. He must pay for his misdeeds. Now we live in total poverty. In the past couple of months enormous evidence of systematic mass killings of Albanians in Kosovo has been earthed. The man was a monster. Besides these are times for pragmatism. We desperately need

Mr. Slobodan Milosevic’s extradition has caused Yugoslavia to once again lurch towards political uncertainty. Vaiju Naravane reports.

western aid for reconstruction and development,” says political analyst Branka Bogdanovic.

The Yugoslav Federal President, Mr. Vojislav Kostunica, however, denounced the decision to hand over the man he replaced as “illegal and unconstitutional”, saying the extradition was carried out without respect for legal procedure. His party, Democratic Party of Serbia (DOS), angry at the extradition, decided on Friday to leave the parliamentary groups of the ruling DOS reformist alliance and demanded a reshuffle of Governments on both levels. But party leaders said this did not mean they were leaving the 18-party DOS, which united to oust Mr. Milosevic last October.

Mr. Djindjic, who pushed through the extradition, said Yugoslavia had no choice but to turn over Mr. Milosevic or face renewed

international isolation and the loss of much-needed foreign aid. “Basically his head went for \$1.3 billion,” said the Sarajevo-born film director, Mr. Emir Kusturica.

The political resignations, however, mean the collapse of the Cabinet, which is made up of Serbia’s pro-democracy officials and Ministers from Montenegro. Mr. Kostunica can now propose a new Prime Minister, but if that is rejected in Parliament, he will have to call new federal elections.

Mr. Kostunica met army leaders to discuss the mounting tensions. A terse statement after the talks said the crisis “must be resolved by political means”.

The extradition was welcomed by Ms. Carla del Ponte, the United Nations’ chief war crimes prosecutor, who said the handover meant others who did Mr. Milosevic’s bidding in a decade of Bal-

kans conflict and ethnic cleansing could be brought to trial. She was referring to Mr. Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb political and military leaders who are charged with genocide for the widespread torture and massacre of Muslims and Croats during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The first head of state to be indicted for war crimes while in office, Mr. Milosevic has been given three days by the U.N. tribunal to prepare for a first court appearance on Tuesday morning.

Mr. Milosevic and his aides, who all occupied high state positions at the time the indictment was issued, are accused of deporting 740,000 ethnic Albanians from Kosovo and of murdering 340 Albanians identified before May 24, 1999, when the indictment was confirmed by a judge, during NATO’s bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. An estimated 20,000 died in the Croatian war of independence that ended in 1995. In Bosnia, fighting between 1992 and 1995 killed over 200,000. In Kosovo in 1998-99 an estimated 10,000 died in Serbian ethnic cleansing.

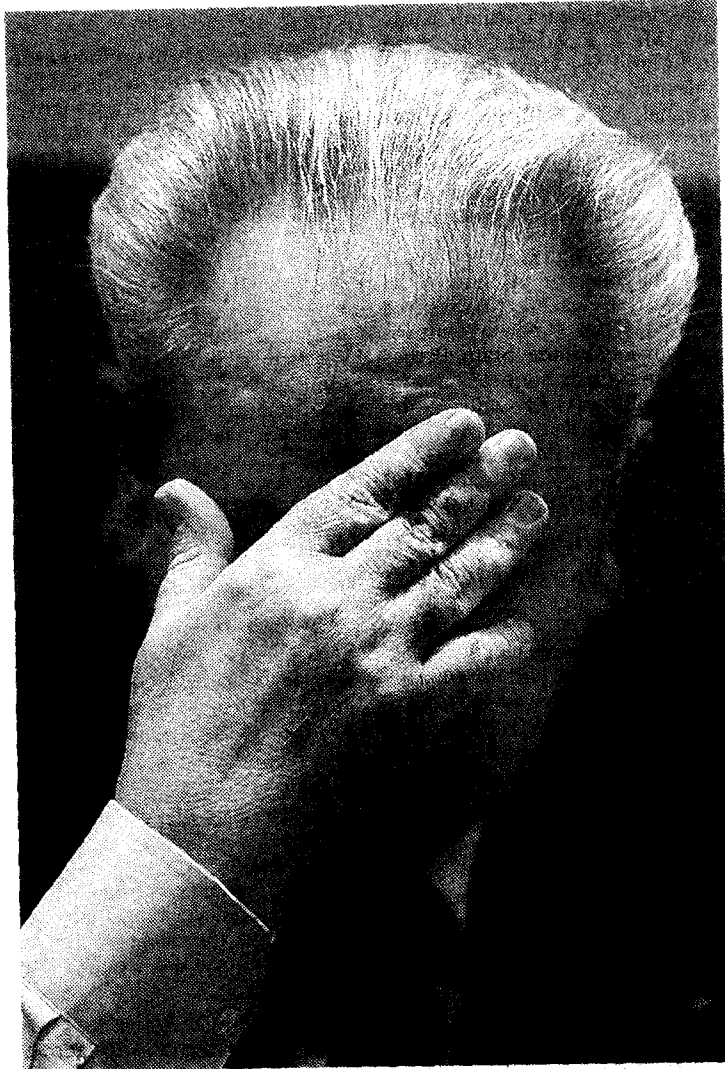
Topped last October, Mr. Milosevic had brandished a gun and threatened to shoot himself three months ago rather than submit to his initial arrest. If convicted on the four charges, including three of crimes against humanity in the Serbian province of Kosovo, the 59-year-old fallen strongman faces a maximum of life in jail.

Prosecutors are still considering further charges relating to wars in Croatia and Bosnia. Ms. Del Ponte said they could still charge him with the ultimate crime at the tribunal — genocide.

Mr. Milosevic who underwent an initial medical examination after being delivered by helicopter to the walled compound of Scheveningen prison has summoned an eight-man defense team from home.

Throwing a damper on the West’s enthusiasm over Mr. Milosevic’s extradition, the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov, said it could bring about a further split in Yugoslavia as the international community battles to avert a war in Macedonia.

“This will without doubt play into the hands of separatists in Kosovo and Montenegro wanting to leave the (Yugoslav) federation,” Mr. Ivanov said in a statement. “They will probably not pass up the chance to use the current situation... it is not difficult to imagine what it could lead to.”



Mr. Slobodan Milosevic... paying for his crimes.

Milosevic in Hague jail, to face tribunal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

ROME, June 29. - Former Yugoslav President, Mr Slobodan Milosevic, will face his first hearing before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague on Monday or on Tuesday, the ICTY chief prosecutor, Ms Carla Del Ponte, said today. Mr Milosevic would face the ICTY "between Monday and Tuesday", she said in an interview published in the Italian daily, *La Repubblica*.

Asked when she would meet Mr Milosevic, Ms Del Ponte said: "Not before the preliminary hearing, which will take place between Monday and Tuesday." "It will be a routine interrogation. After the hearing, I will see him and personally set out a work schedule with him," she said, specifying she was referring to "an interrogation calendar". Ms Del Ponte gave the interview after Mr Milosevic landed in The Hague last night. The former Yugoslav Presi-



REQUIESCAT: Ramiz Ymeri (64), an ethnic Albanian villager, touches the gravestone of his son, Murtez Ymeri, at the Racak cemetery in Kosovo on Friday. Murtez Ymeri was one of 45 ethnic Albanians who were killed in a massacre in the central Kosovan village of Racak on 15 January 1999. The Racak killings were cited by the UN war crimes tribunal in its May 1999 indictment of Slobodan Milosevic and four members of his inner circle. - AP/PTI

dent was handed over to ICTY ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. The UN war crimes court officials late last night. The ICTY has indicted him on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the 1998-1999 Serbian crackdown on crimes committed in wars in Bosnia and Croatia in the nineties, a report from Zagreb says. Bosnian and Croatian leaders have repeatedly said Mr Milosevic should also be indicted for his role in 1991-95 Serbo-Cro-

atian conflict and 1992-95 Bosnian war. Mr Milosevic had admitted, after his arrest in April, that his regime financed secessionist Serb forces in wars in Croatia and Bosnia.

World reaction: World leaders have hailed Mr Milosevic's extradition to the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

Mr George W Bush said the handover sent "an unequivocal message to those persons who brought such tragedy and brutality to the Balkans."

"It's a day that will be remembered not for vengeance, but for justice. It's a victory for accountability over impunity," UN Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan said. The British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair, called the move "a thoroughly good thing." British foreign secretary, Mr Jack Straw, said Milosevic's conviction was not a foregone conclusion and his trial would be fair.

Russian foreign minister Mr Igor Ivanov said Milosevic's extradition could fan separatism in Kosovo, adds Reuters, Moscow.

It's payback time for Slobodan

The Hague, June 29

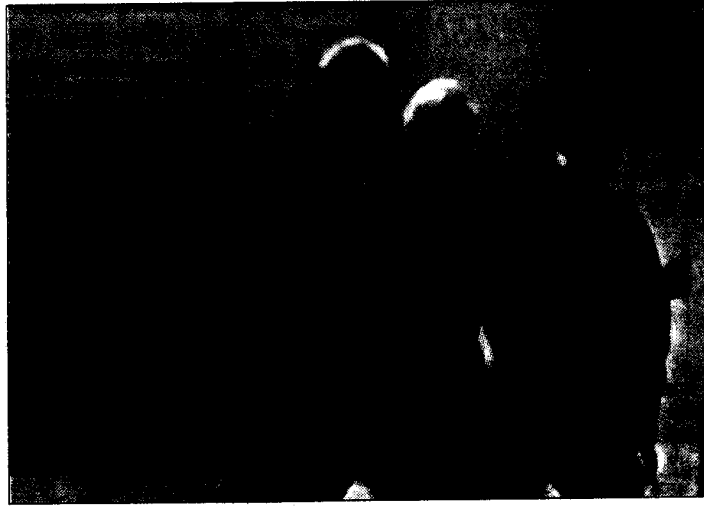
SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC was imprisoned here today — a humiliating end to his battle to avoid prosecution before the UN war crimes tribunal for “crimes against humanity”.

The Tribunal ordered him to make his first court appearance on Tuesday to hear charges for his part in a decade of Balkan wars that claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. Tribunal officials expected him to be arraigned within a week.

The former Yugoslav President, behind bars at The Hague, underwent an initial medical examination after being delivered by helicopter to the walled compound of Scheveningen prison in the early hours of the morning, then spent his first night in international custody.

He was shown by Dutch television being led across the prison yard by two guards in the only, fleeting footage of his familiar white hair and portly figure to be captured during the drama. There were no reports of medical problems.

Milosevic, the first former head of state to face the UN court, was handed over Thursday by Serb officials, despite a Yugoslav court ruling that barred his extradition to stand trial for alleged atrocities in Kosovo.



Slobodan Milosevic (centre) escorted by two men into Scheveningen prison in The Hague on Friday, in this TV image — the only available one.

A Tribunal spokesman, Jim Landale, said Milosevic spent an uneventful first night in the UN wing of the Dutch prison. He was assigned temporarily to a private cell, pending a final decision on whether he will be segregated from the 38 other war crimes defendants, Landale added.

Milosevic and the others facing charges stemming from the Balkan wars are housed in a special prison unit spread over four floors with 12 cells each, patrolled by UN guards. Inmates

in the UN wing each have their own 17-by-10-foot cell, with shower, toilet, washbasin and desk.

The dramatic decision to deliver Milosevic to the tribunal threatened to plunge the Balkan country into a political crisis.

Milosevic's successor, Vojislav Kostunica, has denounced the handover as “illegal and unconstitutional”.

West hails move, Russia angry

President Bush praised Yugoslavia for handing over Milose-

vic, saying the move showed the Balkan nation wants to turn away from “its tragic past and toward a brighter future”.

US officials said the administration planned to make a pledge in the range of about \$100 million for a Yugoslav assistance package.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair hailed the handover as “a thoroughly good thing”. Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel said the Yugoslav government was “turning over a dark page in European history”.

The Russians reacted angrily. The move set a “bad precedent” and further destabilise Yugoslavia, its leaders said. Its lawmakers fear that some day the West may seek the extradition of President Boris Yeltsin and other Russian leaders for “war crimes” in Chechnya.

“Five-ten years from now, if the situation changes and Russia further weakens, the West may seek extradition of Yeltsin and even Putin,” nationalist lawmaker Alexy Mitrofanov cautioned in a live interview on NTV minutes after the news of Milosevic's extradition broke last night.

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has said the extradition will encourage the secessionist forces in the Balkans.



STILL A HERO: Hundreds of Milosevic supporters demonstrate at Belgrade in front of Army headquarters damaged during Nato bombing against the former President's extradition.

Victim of a ruined nation hungry for dollars

Belgrade, June 29

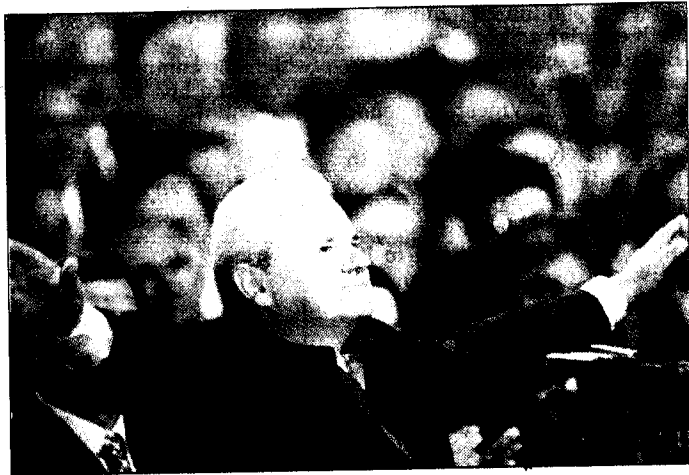
SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC refused to acknowledge electoral defeat. He refused to surrender when police came to his door or to accept a warrant from the UN War Crimes Tribunal. But none of that helped him in the end.

Faced with the loss of \$1 billion in foreign aid desperately needed to repair the damage from his 13 years in power, Yugoslavia's new leaders sent Milosevic packing today en route to The Hague to face the UN War Crimes Tribunal for alleged crimes against humanity committed during a crackdown he ordered in 1989.

Milosevic's successor, Vojislav Kostunica, had resisted extraditing the former President, claiming national honour dictated that he should answer to his own people first for the misery he had brought them.

In the end, however, the Government bowed to international demands — the price it had to pay for millions of dollars in aid desperately needed to repair the economic misery left by Milosevic's misrule.

It was an ignoble end for the



master tactician who had managed for years to sell himself as the hero of the Serbs despite losing four wars, impoverishing his people and turning Yugoslavia into an international pariah.

As his country sank into economic, political and social ruin, Milosevic's people abandoned him — first in an election in September during which he refused to concede defeat and again two weeks later when hundreds of

THE JOURNEY TO DOOM: FROM A CHARISMATIC MASS LEADER TO A HUMILIATED WAR CRIMINAL

thousands rose up in Belgrade and forced him to concede.

On April 1, Milosevic finally surrendered to police after a chaotic 26-hour standoff at his villa.

He was jailed pending an investigation into charges by the new, pro-democracy Yugoslav Government of corruption and abuse of power.

However, authorities were unable to build a solid case against Milosevic, claiming he



had carefully covered his tracks.

In prison, Milosevic remained as defiant as ever. He refused to accept an arrest warrant when a UN War Crimes Tribunal official showed up at his jail cell May 3. The official eventually left it tucked between the bars on the tiny window of his cell door.

He was jailed pending an investigation into charges by the new Government of corruption and abuse of power.



That warrant focuses solely on Kosovo. It accused Milosevic and four subordinates of orchestrating a “campaign of terror and violence” in 1999 against ethnic Albanians that included systematic murders and deportations.

The Serbian province at the heart of his downfall was also the launch-pad for his Machiavellian leap from little-known Communist Party apparatchik to Serbian hero.

Yugoslav PM steps down in protest

Belgrade, June 29

DISMAYED BY Slobodan Milosevic's extradition to the UN War Crimes Tribunal, the Yugoslav Prime Minister and his Montenegrin ally in the federal government announced their resignation on Friday.

The move by Zoran Zizic and other former Milosevic allies could lead to early federal elections for Yugoslavia and possibly even hasten a split between its two remaining republics, Serbia and the much smaller Montenegro.

The officials said their resignation meant the collapse of the Cabinet, which is made up of Serbia's pro-democracy officials and ministers from Montenegro who turned their backs on Milosevic after his ouster last October.

The Montenegrin officials, who met in the republic's capital Podgorica, said in a statement that Milosevic's extradition to the Tribunal in The Netherlands was “illegal and unconstitutional” and “jeopardises the functioning

of Yugoslavia and its existence”.

The leader of the Montenegrin faction, Predrag Bulatovic, said the move means “the fall of the Government” and an end of the Serb-Montenegrin coalition on the federal level.

About 3,000 Milosevic supporters rallied last night in Belgrade, chanting, “Treason.” Some turned on television crews covering the demonstration.

At the headquarters of Milosevic's Socialist Party, Zivadin Jovanovic, the party's acting head, said the handover amounted to a coup d'etat. “What happened is that Djindjic suspended the constitutional system of Yugoslavia,” Jovanovic said. “Djindjic introduced dictatorship, and the responsibility for that lies on him and all others who did nothing to prevent this.”

Djindjic, however, said there was no choice for Yugoslavia but to surrender Milosevic or face renewed international isolation and a freeze on financial aid, leading to “unprecedented humiliation”.

Yugoslavia: 1,000 years of ethnic bloodbath

MILLENNIA OF fighting has left the Balkans with ethnic hatred as its most prominent legacy. Polarisation through the ages bred generations of hatred — of Serbs for Croats, Croats for Slovenes, Slovenes for Montenegrins, Montenegrins for Muslims, Muslims for Macedonians, and Macedonians for Albanians.

After the Slavic tribes' arrival in the seventh century, ethnic groups formalised into nations. The Great Schism between the Roman and Byzantine churches in 1054 would lead to further divisions among the inhabitants of the Balkans.

Serbia remained independent until 1389, when it fell to the Ottoman Turks. Foreign domination of the region lasted 400 years.

Serb nationalism took centre stage in 1914 when an assassin who advocated Serb expansion assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, in Bosnia. This gave a pretext for World War I. Following the war, the Serbs annexed Bosnia and then joined Croatia and Slovenia to form one nation under the

Serb king, which was named the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (South Slavs) in 1929.

After World War II, when a Nazi supported Croatian regime slaughtered thousands of Serbs, Jews and Gypsies, a Communist Government, under Josip Broz Tito, created Yugoslavia, joining together Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Tito's Government broke with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in 1948 and became a staunch ally of the West, which helped finance a socialist Yugoslav State.

After Tito's death in 1980, the country began to dissolve. The first free elections held in Yugoslavia in 1990 brought nationalists to power. Slovenia and Croatia declared independence in June 1991.

Macedonia voted for independence in 1991 and Nato peacekeepers were sent to the region to prevent bloodshed.

The Muslims of Bosnia declared independence in 1992, but Serbs and Croats fought to remain allied with respective nations. A war left thousands dead and millions displaced.

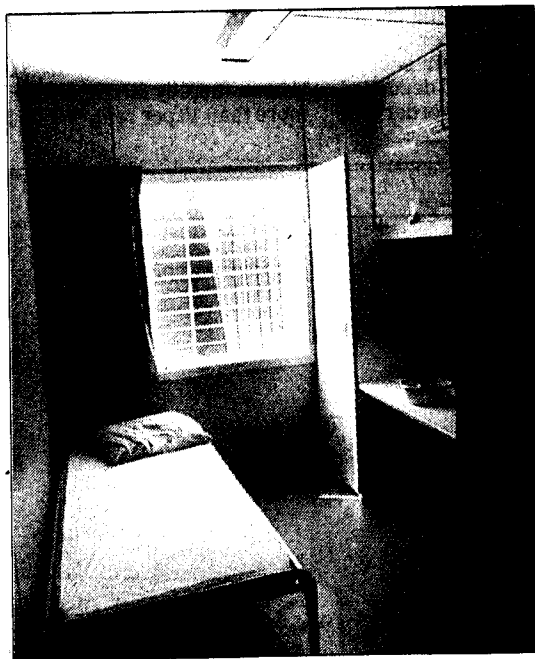
Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic was accused of supplying the Serb side with material and moral support. Years of sanctions on Serbia helped change Milosevic's position. He became a peace broker during a conference held in Dayton, Ohio in 1995 and a fragile peace was established.

In 1991, a self-proclaimed ethnic Albanian parliament voted for independence but only their cousins in Albania recognised the territory as a sovereign nation. Serbs reacted to the movement with violence.

The Kosovo Liberation Army began attacking Serb targets in 1996. The Yugoslav military began retaliation in 1998. The UN and Nato tried to get both sides to sign a peace deal, but diplomatic efforts collapsed in early 1999. Albanians fled the province and Nato air strikes began on March 24.

Milosevic buckled only after Russia came to an agreement with the West and added its voice to the calls for Serb withdrawal from Kosovo.

That was the beginning of his end.



A view of the high-tech prison where Milosevic will be kept while standing trial.



A 1999 photo shows covered coffins of 18 Muslims being buried in the Vlakovno cemetery. They were killed by Serbs in 1992 and their bodies exhumed from a mass grave site in Kalinovik.

Western aid package prompted decision to extradite Milosevic

By Vajju Naravane

PARIS, JUNE 27. The decision to extradite the former Yugoslav President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, who through four extremely bloody wars was the architect of Yugoslavia's break-up, was prompted by the prospect of a billion dollars in aid from the developed world.

Western donor nations had specified that unless Mr. Milosevic, who has personally been held responsible for thousands of deaths in the past 10 years, was handed over to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at the Hague, they would withhold a billion dollars in aid.

Yugoslavia desperately needs the aid to rebuild its infrastructure and economy destroyed by 10 years of war and by the 78-day bombing campaign unleashed by NATO in 1998. The donor meeting begins in Brussels on Friday.

Mr. Milosevic is the first former Head of State to face a war crimes trial at the U.N. tribunal, established in 1992. If convicted, he faces a life sentence. He was indicted by the ICTY in May 1999 and charged with crimes against humanity.

The extradition was carried out swiftly because of fears of demonstrations by his supporters. Mr. Dragan Petrovic, a journalist in Belgrade, told *The Hindu* by telephone that a motorcade took Mr. Milosevic away from the central prison in Belgrade at around 4 p.m. "He was handed over to ICTY investigators in Belgrade after a meeting of the Serbian Government on Thursday."

Mr. Milosevic, who is the president of the Serbian Socialist Party, lost the elections last October but refused to recognise the opposition victory. He relinquished power after mass demonstrations shook Serbia and demonstrators

tried at home. After evidence of largescale massacres of Albanians in Kosovo by Serbia's army and paramilitary units came to light, they no longer have sympathy for the man who led them to ruin. His support within the country has also dwindled rapidly.

The extradition came hours after the Yugoslav Constitutional Court temporarily suspended the decree which would allow his extradition. The Serbian Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Djindjic, had said that Mr. Milosevic would be delivered to the U.N. tribunal no matter how the Constitutional Court ruled, as international law was a higher priority.

The Constitutional Court's unanimous decision was made on the grounds that the Government also had obligations to the domestic law. It said it was not rejecting its international obligations and would invite overseas scholars to help with detailed deliberations on whether the decree was constitutional.

At the start of proceedings, the head of the Court — appointed when Mr. Milosevic was in power

— sprang a surprise by submitting his resignation. "I think it is for the best that I do not participate in the work of the court and I will not vote on the issue," the Court President, Mr. Milutin Srdic, said at an open session of the body.

A number of reformist leaders said before the hearing that the Court was not independent as many of its officials were Milosevic appointees.

Earlier today, the Supreme Court rejected an attempt by Mr. Milosevic's legal team to dismiss three court officials involved in his extradition. The lawyers wanted the three removed because they were working on both the extradition and domestic corruption cases against the ex-President.

Mr. Zdenko Tomanovic, an attorney for Mr. Milosevic, told the Supreme Court that the same judges and prosecutor should not be involved in both cases because of "doubts about their impartiality". Mr. Milosevic has been in prison since April 1 while allegations of abuse of power and corruption are investigated.

U.S. to attend meet on aid to Yugoslavia

By Batuk Gathani

BRUSSELS, JUNE 28. Nine months after the fall of Mr. Slobodan Milosevic as President of Yugoslavia, a historic conference on aid to the country takes place here on Friday.

The Yugoslavia Aid Conference will be jointly chaired by the European Commission and the World Bank. The main agenda is devise an aid programme of \$1.2 billions to restructure the country's economy.

The United States confirmed on Wednesday night that it would also attend the conference in view of the moves to extradite Mr. Milosevic to the war crimes tribunal at the Hague. The U.S. administration has been under pressure in Congress not to participate in the conference unless Mr. Milosevic was extradited to the Hague.

History was made in Belgrade in November last when the newly-elected parliamentarians in the post-Milosevic era approved the country's first communist-free Government in more than half a century. This happened after elections that led to the downfall of Mr. Milosevic.

The new Government of Yugoslavia is dominated by a pro-democracy coalition that supports the President, Mr. Vojislav Kostunica. His Government is striving to end years of isolation and decline of the country. During the last nine months, the Government has liberalised trade and introduced a new reform programme to eliminate the vestiges of the

socialist era. Yugoslavia is still in the grip of poverty with salaries remaining very low and an unemployment rate of nearly 50 per cent. In the past 10 years, the industrial output has fallen by 60 per cent.

According to European Union officials, the new Government will soon embark on a programme of political, economic and fiscal reforms with help from the E.U., U.S. and other NATO countries. Yugoslavia is also coming out of its self-imposed diplomatic "purdah".

The Western Governments now have the satisfaction of being able to hold Mr. Milosevic accountable for violating human rights and triggering a major ethnic conflict in the Balkans. However, in Yugoslavia, there is intense political pressure from Serbian nationalists to abandon the current efforts to extradite Mr. Milosevic and others. The issue has also split the Yugoslavian Cabinet.

The West is busy mending its diplomatic and economic fences with what is left of the Yugoslavian Federation as the country may soon become a member of organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and the Council of Europe.

Depending on the pace and scale of democratic and economic reforms, Yugoslavia may also apply for membership of the European Union. Last October, the U.S. Congress approved a \$100-million package to Yugoslavia with the proviso that the aid would be suspended after March 2001 if the country failed to cooperate with the Hague court. Most Yu-

goslavians have serious reservations about complying with American and Western demands on the human rights issue.

Historically, Russia and Greece are rated as the only two "real allies" of the Serb nation. Senior Russian officials and Ministers visit Belgrade regularly. At the same time, European Governments are also wary of creating another Muslim state in the Kosovo region. Europeans also feel that the so-called American "fast diplomacy" for "instant solutions" has yet to pay dividends in the Balkans. The Europeans are frustrated by the reality that the E.U. still lacks a common foreign and defence policy. The NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia two years ago were bitterly opposed by Russia, France and Greece. Moderate NATO allies like Germany had "second thoughts" about launching NATO air strikes. At the same time, prospects of an Islamic "greater Albania" emerging on the E.U.'s border is also a worrying issue.

Currently, there is some speculation about structuring a general Balkan conference to "clear up the mess" after over a decade of ethnic strife between Orthodox Christians and Muslims which has created two "new colonies" on the European soil — Bosnia and Kosovo. With the civil war escalating in the third region, Macedonia may be soon emerging. The first two are now run by international civil servants under NATO's military command, as the whole Balkan region remains unstable with ethnic and political strife.

THE HINDU

23 JUN 2001

Macedonia teeters on brink of flare-up

Skopje, June 26 (Reuters): Macedonia strayed perilously close to wider conflict today, as fresh clashes overnight followed fierce protests in the capital by Slavs enraged by a Western bid to stop the army attacking ethnic Albanian rebels.

Local residents in the unstable northwestern city of Tetovo, near the border with Kosovo, said there was heavy firing early in the morning. Army spokesman Blagoja Markovski said ethnic Albanian rebels had been attacking security forces in the mountains above the city and at some posts on the outskirts of Tetovo overnight and in the morning, but on a lesser scale. The troops responded, he said.

Washington urged the majority Slavs and minority Albanians in the former Yugoslav republic to stay calm. Britain's foreign secretary Jack Straw called off a visit, saying it would now be inappropriate. The European Union said President Boris Trajkovski remained in control and would address Macedonia later in the day.

Yesterday, one policeman was killed and five wounded in clashes around Tetovo.

The capital Skopje was quiet in the morning after a fierce protest late on Monday in which police reservists broke into parliament and fired volleys into the air from Kalashnikovs.

Thousands of Macedonians, including some unarmed army conscripts, cheered them on.

"Albanians to the gas cham-



An Albanian refugee family arrives in Kosovo at the Kosovo-Macedonian border crossing of Jazine. (AFP)

bers! Give us weapons!" people chanted while others fired shots in the air from the square.

The numbers grew as news spread that the policeman had been killed. Macedonia's hawkish interior minister Ljube Boskovski slammed Nato for escorting "terrorists" out of the village of Aracinovo near Tetovo under a ceasefire deal and pledged to wipe the rebels out.

"Peace will be restored only when we clean up terrorists from the state," he told reporters outside parliament.

"How can we have a ceasefire

when they killed a policeman and wounded three right above Tetovo?" he said, before being chased back inside the parliament building by the angry mob.

Fighting in Tetovo broke out shortly after the guerrillas left Aracinovo under an escort including US, French and Italian soldiers as well as international monitors.

The evacuation had been meant as a first step towards easing tensions and edging towards a political settlement involving rebel disarmament in return for more rights for the minority.

Milosevic to challenge decree

BELGRADE, JUNE 24. A decree enabling the former Yugoslav strongman, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic's extradition to the U.N. War Crimes Tribunal went into effect today, and the former President's lawyer said he would challenge the government measure in Yugoslavia's constitutional court.

Mr. Toma Fila, head of Mr. Milosevic's 10-member defence team, talked with his client at the Belgrade central prison, informing him of the details of the decree adopted by the Yugoslav Government the day before in a session boycotted by some Ministers.

Mr. Fila has assailed the measure as "legal piracy," claiming that under Yugoslavia's constitution, cooperation with The Netherlands-based Tribunal can only be regulated through a law and not by a government decree.

"This was a political decision and it renders the law helpless against such bullying methods," Mr. Fila said. He said Mr. Milosevic had given him instructions for subsequent moves but would not divulge any details before tomorrow.

The decree — adopted two years after the U.N. tribunal indicted Mr. Milosevic for alleged crimes against humanity in Kosovo — cleared the way for the former President and other Yugoslav suspects to be sent to the U.N. tribunal by overriding legislation banning the extradition of Yugoslav citizens.

The west has indicated that disbursement of billions of dollars of aid for Yugoslavia, impoverished during Mr. Milosevic's 13-year rule, is linked to the authorities' willingness to extradite him to the tribunal at The Hague, The Netherlands. — AP

100-12
24/6
MILOSEVIC / YUGOSLAVIA MEETS DONOR NATIONS' DEMAND

Cabinet split over extradition

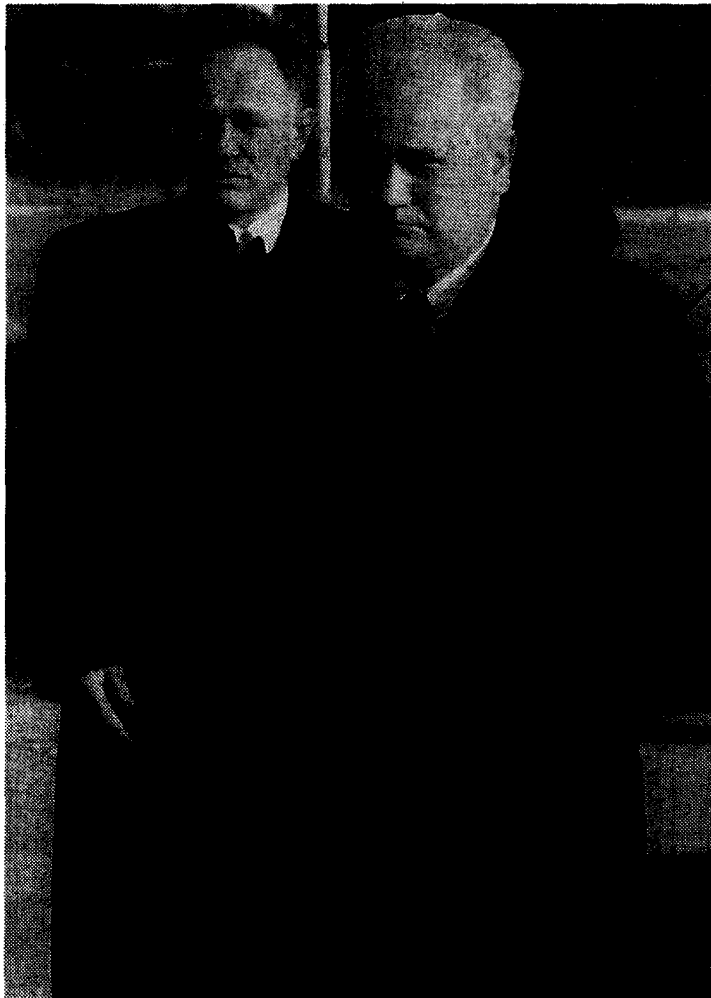
BELGRADE (YUGOSLAVIA), JUNE 23. The Yugoslav Government adopted a decree on Saturday to clear the way for Mr. Slobodan Milosevic's extradition to the U.N. war crimes tribunal.

The former President's extradition is a key Western condition for Yugoslavia to receive billions in aid money. The Information Minister, Mr. Slobodan Orlic, said some "minor changes" were made to the decree, but it "includes extradition" to the U.N. tribunal. No other details from the document were immediately available.

It was not known when Mr. Milosevic would be extradited to The Hague, Netherlands. Government officials said on condition of anonymity that the decree would take effect on Sunday, after it is published in Yugoslavia's official gazette.

Ministers from Serbia's pro-democracy coalition drafted the decree on Friday after abandoning efforts to push a bill through the Yugoslav Parliament on cooperation with the U.N. tribunal. The Cabinet session went ahead despite opposition to the decree by Government Ministers from Montenegro, the smaller republic that together with Serbia forms Yugoslavia. Pro-democracy Serb officials lack a majority in the Federal Parliament, but have enough strength in the Federal Cabinet to pass the decree without their junior partner.

Montenegrin Ministers boycotted the meeting and offered to resign from the Cabinet — a move that could lead to early elections. The decree was intended to provide a legal basis for cooperation with the U.N. court, including extradition of Yugoslav citizens — a move banned by current legislation. "Yugoslavia's international obligation as a U.N. member state is to cooperate with The Hague



The former Yugoslav President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic (right), and the former chief of police, public security, Mr. Vlastimir Djordjevic, seen in this file photo in Belgrade, in October, 1997.

tribunal," said Mr. Nebojsa Covic, a Serb pro-democracy leader, before the session. "We must no longer allow ourselves to be Milosevic's hostages."

Only a couple of dozen Milosevic supporters gathered outside the Federal administration building to protest the Cabinet meeting, chanting "down with the

NATO Government" and "treason." The decision on extraditing war crimes suspects such as Mr. Milosevic has become increasingly urgent ahead of a key donors conference in Brussels, Belgium.

The United States and other Western countries insist that Mr. Milosevic face justice at the tribunal or Yugoslavia risks losing bil-

lions of dollars in desperately needed financial assistance.

The decree was designed to give the Prime Minister and his Cabinet from Serbia or Montenegro — depending on which republic the defendant is from — final authority to decide on extradition. The Serbian Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Djindjic, strongly supports Mr. Milosevic's extradition. The Yugoslav President, Mr. Vojislav Kostunica, who initially rejected the idea of sending Mr. Milosevic to The Hague, also backs the extradition efforts now.

Montenegrin Ministers, who were once allied with Mr. Milosevic, remained resolute in their opposition, claiming the court is biased. Their adamant stand has led to speculation they still hold some loyalties to the former president, even though they officially switched sides after his ouster last October.

Pro-democracy parties in Montenegro, who have been pushing for independence from Serbia, boycotted the last Federal elections. Shortly before the Cabinet meeting, the Montenegrin Ministers from the Socialist People's Party announced they would not attend to protest the decree and offered to resign their ministerial posts. The resignations must be approved by the party's main board, however.

Mr. Milosevic has been in Belgrade's central prison since April 1 pending an investigation into allegations of corruption and abuse of power during his 13-year rule. But the U.N. tribunal wants him tried in The Hague for alleged war crimes against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Mr. Milosevic's crackdown on Kosovo's ethnic Albanians led to NATO's 1999 bombing campaign that ultimately forced Serb troops out of the southern province. — AP

THE MIRROR

Macedonia ignores Nato, resumes assault on Albanian rebel positions

Ilinden (Macedonia), June 23

MACEDONIA RESUMED its assault on a village held by ethnic Albanian guerrillas on Saturday despite a blunt Nato warning to stop and the arrival of a top Western envoy hoping to revive peace talks.

Ignoring Nato pleas to stop the "madness," Mi-24 helicopter gunships swooped in on Aracinovo for a second day and tanks slammed shells into a village the Macedonians have vowed to recapture in a risky bid to seize the upper hand.

Reuters beside the nearby Athens-Belgrade highway saw troops exchanging machinegun fire inside Aracinovo, just six miles from Skopje, and plumes of smoke rose from its battered rooftops as the artillery bombardment continued.

"The infantry are already in the village," army spokesman

Blagoja Markovski said. "We have already retaken one third of it, but we do not expect to conquer it fully today."

Western diplomats doubt the army has enough effective troops to pull it off. They suggest the main objective may be a show of strength to put pressure on Albanian parties to drop demands for wholesale constitutional changes as part of a peace accord.

"They want to be seen to be doing something while they reinvent the plan," one envoy said. "It achieves nothing unless it's for the Macedonian media."

Flurry of diplomacy

A Su-25 warplane roared over downtown Skopje and the area around Aracinovo four times Saturday morning, as European Union foreign affairs chief Javier Solana arrived on his latest mission to coax both sides of

the ethnic divide into a deal.

Markovski said the plane, clearly audible throughout the capital, was "engaged in surveillance" and would not attack.

Western diplomats, anxious to broker a deal before the four-month-old conflict spirals into civil war, met Albanian leaders Friday night in a bid to salvage peace talks which have effectively stopped, though informal negotiations continue.

Albanian parties, whom diplomats suspect of wanting to draw in NATO to police a partition of the tiny country, are refusing to resume formal dialogue unless the attack is called off. They appear to have taken heart from Nato's forthright condemnation.

Macedonian officials want Solana to lean on the Albanians to drop demands for concessions.

Reuters

Truce ends, Macedonian army raids rebel town

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AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SINGJELIC (Macedonia), June 22. - The Macedonian army pounded an ethnic Albanian town on the outskirts of the capital Skopje with helicopter gunships, mortars and artillery today, ending a two-week truce between security forces and Albanian rebels.

The attack came as Nato's secretary general, Mr George Robertson warned that Macedonia was "close to civil war", following the collapse of peace talks on Wednesday between the political leaders of Macedonia's Slav and Albanian communities.

An army spokesman, Colonel Blagoja Markovski, said the assault was launched at 4 a.m. using Ukrainian Mi-24 helicopter gunships. The attack was designed to "destroy the terrorists in Aracinovo", he added.

Meanwhile, Commander Hoxha, the rebels' leader in Aracinovo, said: "Three civilians had been killed and 18 injured in the attack. If they don't stop the offensive I'm going to mortar bomb Skopje."

Hoxha added the security forces were advancing on his men's positions on the edge of Aracinovo.

Aracinovo, a town whose



BALKAN CAULDRON: A Macedonian Army helicopter attacks rebel strongholds at Aracinovo, seven km east of Skopje, on Friday. - AP/PTI.

population is mainly ethnic Albanian, is less than 10 km from the centre of the capital

and about 10 km from Skopje airport, an important logistical hub for Nato's peacekeep-

ing operations in the neighbouring Serbian province of Kosovo.

49-16 'Skopje becoming a cruel, intolerant place'

By Vajju Naravane

SKOPJE, JUNE 21. In the huge bronze statue that stands near the centre of Skopje, "Majca" Teresa looks frozen solid and surprisingly ugly. The statue, executed in the style of 1950s communist art was donated by a wealthy businessman who one day hopes to become president of Macedonia.

Not far from the statue is a plaque marking the place where Mother Teresa's home once stood. Like most of central Skopje it was destroyed in the devastating earthquake that razed the city in 1963.

Sister Alodina from Kerala is among four nuns that run the Sisters of Charity mission in Skopje. "There is so much for us to do here. There is enormous poverty and with the Albanian crisis the situation is getting worse. We run a soup kitchen every day and the numbers there have doubled in the past weeks.

Now there are about a hundred people who turn up every evening. People are afraid and there is hostility between the two communities. We also have 11 chil-

dren here, either orphans or abandoned by their parents. Requests are pouring in but we cannot cope with more. Skopje is becoming a cruel, intolerant place," she says.

A small incident bears out her words. It is a scorching hot day and two small gypsy children jump into the inviting waters of the fountain near Mother Teresa's statue. They are chased, kicked and spat upon by a group of Macedonian schoolchildren.

"The Roms always get the worse end of the stick. They are a bit like the untouchables in India. We are somewhere in-between.

But now with the reconciliation talks under way our lot should improve. If these talks fail we will surely head for civil war," explains an Albanian-Macedonian foreign service officer on condition of anonymity.

He is among the 20-odd Albanians to have made it to the foreign service which has about 440 officers. He has served in Paris and has a passion for India. "We make up over 30 per cent of the population of this country. Can you imagine a politician from Ta-

mil Nadu or Maharashtra being denied the right to use his mother tongue in Parliament? India has given 15 languages official status. Why can our Government not do the same?"

But most Macedonians dismiss such demands out of hand as "unrealistic and exaggerated". Talks under way amongst members of the national unity government which includes Albanian parties are deadlocked and Albanian politicians in Macedonia de-

INSIDE MACEDONIA — III

manded international mediation in peace talks on Wednesday after the Macedonian President, Mr. Boris Trajkovski, accused them of blocking negotiations.

Macedonian leaders have ruled out international mediation, saying it would amount to unacceptable outside interference in its internal affairs. The current ceasefire which has held despite sporadic firing and isolated incidents runs out on June 27.

In Washington, the U.S. Secre-

tary of State, Gen. Colin Powell, said that a political settlement in Macedonia would need constitutional changes to meet Albanian grievances.

"They have now received the bill of particulars, the desires of the Albanian side as to what they really would like to see happen, and it's going to require, at the end of the day, some constitutional changes," he said.

"So we're pressing that as hard as we can, because it is only through a political solution will they be able to keep moderate Albanians and Macedonians from joining the extremists," he added.

NATO has offered to send 3,000 troops to Macedonia if Slav and ethnic Albanian leaders were able to reach a peace agreement. However, the alliance stressed the move would come only after a political agreement was reached, a prospect that faded with Trajkovski's declaration.

Mr. Trajkovski accused ethnic Albanian politicians of being in league with armed extremists who have seized several villages in northern Macedonia. He said talks broke down because ethnic

Albanians were seeking "a practical division of the country".

"I am ready to accept talks about anything that could be useful in improving democracy in Macedonia," he told reporters. "But I am not ready to accept any concept that will change the internal character of Macedonia."

Ethnic Albanian politicians reacted with surprise. "First he wants Albanians to present their demands but then he does not want to accept them," said Mr. Zehir Bekteshi, spokesman for the ethnic Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity.

A NATO official said the allies had not addressed the question of what to do if the Macedonian talks failed. The situation on the ground has worsened with several reports of human rights abuses, beatings and torture of ethnic Albanians by Macedonian police and army units.

"At this rate the Macedonians are going to create terrorists where none exist," Professor Abdula Aliu, an MP belonging to the Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity told *The Hindu*.

(Concluded)

B. B. 19-11

A people under siege 21/6

By Vaiju Naravane

MATKA (MACEDONIA), JUNE 20. Matka is a tiny village of less than 400 inhabitants perched in the mountains around the Macedonian capital of Skopje. There are 45 Albanian families here and only eight Macedonian ones.

Mr. Kovan Blagoja has just come from the woods and looks like a tree, covered in foliage from head to foot. "I have a couple of goats and a donkey and I bring them fresh leaves whenever I can," explains the tree-man. "I am Macedonian. My neighbours are Albanian. We have lived here forever, peaceably, amicably as long as I can remember. My window gives on Zeair's courtyard and my wife is always chatting with his wife Hanife. Now, all of a sudden, we are supposed to be enemies. I don't understand it," he says.

Haizie is a woman of 80. Her face is lined and worn and she has trouble breathing. "Come, I will show you," she says taking me by the hand. "The helicopters came and made so much noise that the ground shook. And my old house just

INSIDE MACEDONIA — II

fell down." Haizie is bewildered. She gets Marks 22 per month as pension and has to rely on her neighbours for food. "Now, even my house has collapsed," she says weeping softly into her apron.

In these villages there is a sense of bewilderment. "We have all been equally poor and we have all shared our poverty. I hate the Government. They have created all these problems. The President and the Prime Minister are both fighting for power and the Albanians become a scapegoat," says Zeqir, farmer and father of 10 children.

It is close to midnight. The car hurtles down the pot-holed road, swerving dangerously on the curves. Bashkim is nervous and would like to get to Skopje as soon as possible, "without incident". As we turn towards the Skopje valley, two very powerful electric torches are turned on, practically blinding us. There is the rat-tat-tat of automatic guns fired in the air. The car screeches to a halt. The doors are flung open by machine gun-toting army reservists. They are rough, rude men, ready to use their weapons at the slightest provocation. Who are we? Where are we coming from? Where are we going? Where are

our papers? After a thorough search during which my notebooks are shaken open for any photographs, my camera examined and my bags rifled, we are allowed to go with admonitions not "to use the phone too much". As a parting shot the leader of the checkpoint tells Bashkim: "Tell the lady we don't like foreigners here. We are not impressed by whether she is a journalist or from the U.N. It's foreigners like her that are destroying our country and we won't let it happen."

Bashkim has turned pale. "Ever since the guerillas started firing in the hills, I have to endure this and worse every day," he says. "Now when I go back after taking you to your hotel they will stop me again but even more rudely. I live in dread although I am not afraid of dying. I have a wife and old parents. Many of my countrymen have fled to the West. Although I have a visa I shall not run away. If they want to kill me let them come to my house."

I travel east towards the town of Aracinovo. The 25,000-strong town is controlled by Albanian fighters from the National Liberation Army (NLA) and is surrounded by Macedonian troops.

My accreditation is in order. Written in Cyrillic it says, I, accompanied by my interpreter Bashkim Aliu, have free access to the entire country. The soldiers read the letter carefully. The letter is signed by the Director of the Macedonian Information Agency. I cannot read the name but am told it is Albanian. "A letter signed by an Albanian Director. Accompanied by an Albanian interpreter. You must go back to Skopje and get another permit signed by the Interior Ministry. Now jump back into your car before we get tough," says the sergeant, tapping me on my back.

NATO has called the uprising "illegal" and is preparing to send a special force to disarm the guerillas. But amongst the Albanian population in Macedonia the rebels enjoy tremendous popular support. Says journalist Sefer Musliu of Macedonian TV: "The success of the KLA in Kosovo encouraged our boys to take up arms. This uprising was inevitable. The 1992 Constitution is a step backwards, not forward. We fought non-violently through the ballot box and through democratic debate for 10 years. At least now they are listening".

THE HINDU

10

An effort to mix 'oil and water'

HO-16
20/6

By Vaiju Naravane

TEJZE (NORTH WESTERN MACEDONIA), JUNE 19. Jonuz Halil is sixty years old. His feet encased in worn embroidered slippers, he drags himself forward supported by his wife Cesnje. With shaking hands, Jonuz hitches up his shirt to show the bullet wounds riddling his abdomen just below the thoracic cavity.

"We were very, very lucky — these were only flesh wounds. Had the bullets pierced his chest cavity he was lost". Holding out her palms, Cesnje turns her eyes heavenward, murmuring "Fali-mender!" (thank you).

Jonuz was riding his donkey near his fields in Kalje village in the hills near Tetovo when the shooting began. "They could watch me with their binoculars down below. They could see I was an harmless old man on a donkey. But still they kept shooting. The animal perished. I managed to crawl to safety. My family came looking for me and took me to hospital," he says showing me the blood stained, bullet-riddled shirt he was wearing at the time. "We are poor peasants, humble people. What do we know of terrorists? Do I support the terrorists? Not really. I don't support violence. I do not want anyone killed or hurt. But I do want more rights for our people, our children," he says. There is a barrage of gunfire and Jonuz covers his ears in terror.

INSIDE MACEDONIA — I

"He's been like this since he got shot," his son Hamdi explains.

In the village of Drenovic which overlooks Tetovo, the 65,000-strong predominantly Albanian town near the border with Kosovo, Haji Saiti Taip looks at the ruins of his home. Macedonian troops have used helicopters and heavy ammunition to blast its roof and walls. All that's left is an empty shell. Many other houses nearby have suffered the same fate. "Tell me, do I look like a terrorist to you? We are all quiet people. But we support the NLA demands. We want equal rights for the Albanians. We have suffered enough at the hands of the Slavs," he says.

As the conflict in Macedonia nears its fifth month, positions on both sides, Albanian and Macedonian appear to be hardening. Guerrillas with help from Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo have launched an insurgency in the north west of Macedonia. Over the past two weeks they have captured towns close to the capital Skopje and threatened to bomb the airport and oil refinery.

Albanians make up a third of this Balkan republic's population of two million. They say they are discriminated against, in terms of equality of opportunity, language, status and jobs.

Macedonians are dismissive of these complaints. "They don't get jobs because they don't want to study and work. They want easy money through crime," says Jovan, who waits tables at a cafe in Skopje. Such views are expressed not just by the unsophisticated and undereducated.

Mr. Georgj Marianovic, is professor of criminal law at the Uni-

versity of Skopje and president of the Macedonian Democratic League. "If we are elected we will give them equality," he sneers. "We will make them pay taxes like everyone else. Albanians don't pay taxes. They are tax evaders. Macedonians on an average have three children. Albanians have 10. If we are elected we will make them pay taxes for the fourth child onwards. Macedonians and Albanians are like oil and water. They can never mix," he says.

Negotiations are now under way to find a political solution to the crisis which began almost five months ago. The national unity government set up in May under international pressure and which includes Albanian parties is meeting behind closed doors to work out a compromise. Both sides have declared a ceasefire until June 27 to allow the talks to proceed calmly although sporadic violations have been reported. Reports filtering out of the conference rooms say Albanian leaders are holding out for official status for their language alongside Macedonian.

The Macedonian President, Mr. Boris Trajkovski, has said he is willing to accept changes to the country's Constitution if that would help avert civil war.

Mr. Ljubomir Frckovski, one of his principal advisers who helped draft the 1991 Constitution said: The preamble to the Constitution could be completely redesigned. In the present Constitution Albanians are listed as "minorities" while Macedonians are described as "founders of the nation".

A western diplomat described the changes as "extremely symbolic in a country where symbols are overwhelmingly important." But Mr. Xhevat Halili, a professor of French at the University of Tetovo said that these changes "might come too late". He says there is a radicalisation of positions on both sides. "We tried through peaceful means for ten years to make Macedonians see reason. It was only when certain Albanians took to arms that the Government sat up and listened. I am afraid the compromise might come too late. Our people have been hurt very badly," he said.

Mr. Halili was referring to several incidents of torture and human rights abuses which have taken place recently. This correspondent was able to meet Ismail Jakupin who was tortured by the Macedonian police recently.

Nazim Bushi, an Albanian serving in the police force guarding Skopje's international airport was also brutally beaten up by his colleagues who suspected him of giving out maps and airport details to the rebels.

Several times this correspondent was stopped and searched and on two occasions threatened by army reservists at road blocks leading to Albanian villages near Tetovo and the capital Skopje. At one such roadblock the soldiers were clearly drunk and abusive.

Mr. Sasko Klekovski of the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation says the Government is not aware of such incidents. However, with reports of brutality on the rise the Government has decided to call back weapons given to Macedonian reservists.

Ex-King sweeps Bulgaria polls

Sofia, June 18

6 hours
19/8
THE PARTY of Bulgaria's former king swept to power in parliamentary elections, with results on Monday showing a decisive win for the former monarch who pledged to fight corruption and raise living standards.

With most of the vote counted, preliminary results announced by the central electoral commission gave the ex-king's party 43 per cent.

Running second was the governing Union of Democratic Forces, with 18 per cent; followed by the Socialist Party, with 17 per cent; and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms with 6.7 per cent of the vote.

Final official results are expected on Wednesday, when small minor parties will also be assigned seats. It was not immediately clear whether Simeon's party, the National Movement Simeon II, will need a coalition partner to govern.

The party's promises of job creation programmes, pay increases and tax cuts to spur investment were welcome in a country where the average salary barely tops \$100 a month, nearly one in five workers is out of work and approximately 70 per cent of the population live at or below the official poverty line.

Some 67 per cent of voters nationwide cast ballots, the central electoral commission announced.

At a news conference late on Sunday, Simeon outlined his priorities: stable economic growth,

speedy admission into the European Union and Nato and a decisive fight against corruption.

"I voted for democracy. We all have to foster it," the ex-monarch said as he cast his ballot in Sofia's Gorublyane suburb.

He said he was voting for the first time in his life.

After five decades in exile in Spain, the 64-year-old ex-king Simeon returned to Bulgaria early this year to cheering throngs.

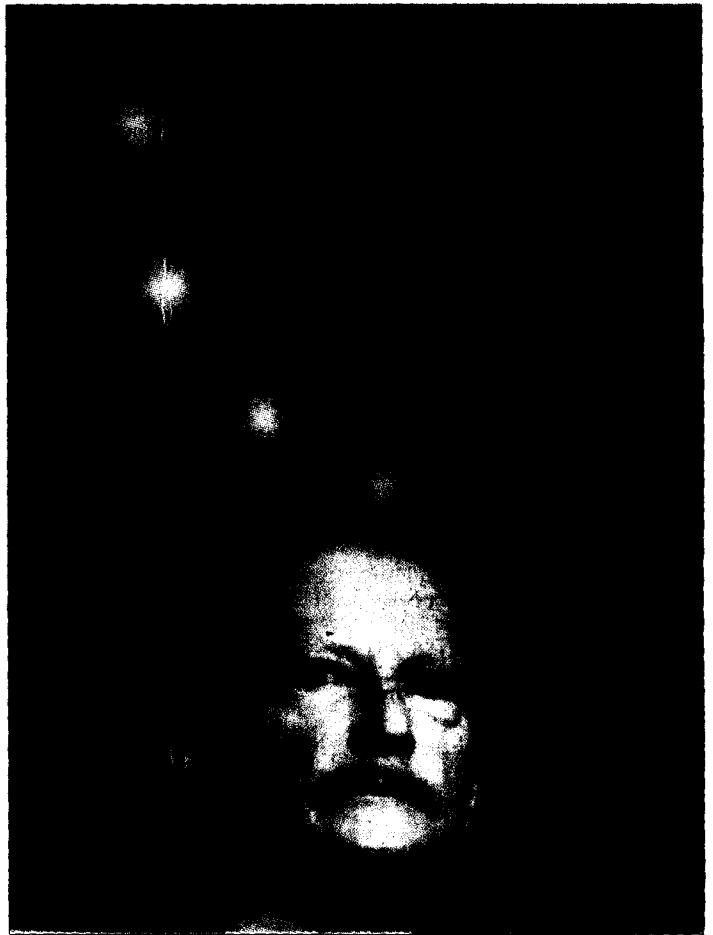
Though he had hoped to run for president, he was barred by the courts because he hadn't lived in Bulgaria long enough. Simeon then set up his own political party to run in the parliamentary race.

Simeon has refused so far to say whether he would accept the post of prime minister.

Visibly touched by the huge crowd of journalists and supporters that waited outside the polling station, Simeon denied he had any desire to restore Bulgaria's monarchy.

Simeon ascended to the throne in 1943 at the age of 6 after the death of his father, Boris III. He reigned with regents until 1946, when the communists called a referendum that abolished the monarchy.

The royal family then went into exile, settling eventually in Spain. Prime Minister Ivan Kostov conceded defeat on Sunday night, blaming his loss on the heavy burden of the reforms, while also admitting his own government's mistakes and failures.



REUTERS PHOTO

Bulgaria's former King Simeon II looks on during his first press conference after the elections in Sofia on Sunday.

"We demanded from the Bulgarian people to pay a higher price than the one they were ready to pay," a grim-faced Kos-

tov said.

Fifty parties and coalitions vied for 240 seats in the unicameral parliament.

AP

Macedonia rebels offer peace plan, see Nato role

Skopje, June 14: Ethnic Albanian rebels spelled out their demands for ending a four-month insurgency in Macedonia for the first time on Thursday, calling for political reforms, amnesty and the deployment of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation troops.

The plan, a communiqué signed by the political leader of the self-styled National Liberation Army Ali Ahmeti, contained several demands for political concessions to a one-third Albanian minority already rejected by Skopje's unity government.

The National Liberation Army said Nato military intervention,

a prospect played down by the alliance on Wednesday though diplomats say Western powers could become intermediaries in a disarmament process, was essential to ending the rebellion.

"With the presence of Nato it would be possible to reach the agreement for the transformation and demilitarisation of the National Liberation Army," said the plan, a copy of which was sent to Reuters.

It called for "North Atlantic Treaty Organisation intervention in the whole territory of Macedonia, as a guarantee for reaching a lasting peace."

A shaky joint truce entered a fourth day on Thursday but was

punctuated by overnight exchanges of mortar and machine gun fire on the outskirts of Tetovo, the biggest ethnic Albanian city.

The National Liberation Army demanded an immediate ceasefire, to be signed by both sides and guaranteed by Nato.

"This would be a step towards cessation of hostilities and would create... Facilities for the deployment of Nato forces," its communiqué said.

The government refuses to talk to rebel forces it condemns as terrorists, but there is increasing acceptance among Western powers that they may have to act as go-betweens, diplomats

say.

A peace plan proposed by President Boris Trajkovski, which Nato chief George Robertson urged political leaders to flesh out on arrival in Skopje on Thursday for talks, covers incentives for the rebels to quit, but these have not yet been spelled out.

The National Liberation Army, making its first reaction to the plan President Boris Trajkovski unveiled last week, said it wanted a general amnesty for all of its gunmen except those proven to have committed war crimes.

It also listed political demands for reforms to give greater

rights to ethnic Albanians, who say they are discriminated against by the Slav majority in all walks of life.

Many of these are already on the agenda of Macedonia's multi-ethnic coalition government but others, such as the total secularisation of the Macedonian constitution and unrestricted use of the Albanian language, are highly contentious.

The government is prepared to discuss demands to rewrite the Constitution to give Albanians and their language equal status but wants guarantees from Albanian parties that these rights will not be exploited as a first step to federalisation.

But it does not want to talk about this with the National Liberation Army, which continues to demand a place at the table and the involvement of the European Union, whose foreign affairs chief Javier Solana joined Nato's Mr George Robertson on a brief trip to Skopje on Thursday.

The rebels called for "a negotiating process, mediated and guaranteed... By the United States and European Union, with the participation of the National Liberation Army, in which a political agreement will be reached, as a basis for the change of the Macedonian Constitution." (Reuters)

Macedonia Army shells rebel targets

BY SEAN MAGUIRE

Near Lopate (Macedonia), June 11: The Macedonian Army blasted villages held by ethnic Albanian rebels with artillery and helicopter gunships on Monday, ignoring threats by insurgents to attack Skopje unless the onslaught ceases.

A rebel commander, whose forces seized a town 10 km from Skopje on Friday to bring the four-month conflict to the fringe of the capital, said he was awaiting orders to strike after the Army ignored his ultimatum.

Military experts said it was

unclear whether the rebels, who say they are fighting for more rights for minority Albanians, had mortars or rockets with sufficient range to hit the centre of the city from the small town of Aracinovo.

The Army hit the villages of Slupcane and Matejce shortly after dawn at 6:15 am with a heavy artillery pounding that subsided into sporadic firing.

Two helicopter gunships later blasted the village of Matejce, one of a group of villages around 40 km northeast of Skopje which the rebels have held for more than a month. From a hill outside Lopate, near the combat zone, plumes of

smoke could be seen rising from around the villages as the echo of impact blasts rolled around the valley. The attacks did not seem intense enough to support a ground assault on the villages.

The National Liberation Army

SPOTLIGHT

insurgents did not immediately back up their threats, which the Macedonian government dismissed as empty but which have spread fear in the capital city.

"I am waiting orders to strike at Skopje. They have not only

ignored our warning but have also wounded civilians. So, they have to hear our guns now," the rebel commander codenamed Hoxha told Reuters by mobile telephone.

The rebels say they have rockets and 120 mm mortars in Aracinovo, about 10 km from central Skopje and about seven kms from its international airport. Defence experts say the range of their mortars is up to about seven km.

But the rebels could cause chaos by simply firing onto the nearby highway, the main route from Belgrade to Athens. The gathering ethnic tension within the city also has the potential to trigger a deadly

incident. Analysts say a rebel attack from Aracinovo would risk high civilian casualties and spark retaliation by Macedonian Slavs against ethnic Albanians, bringing the small Balkan state closer to a much-feared civil war.

Shops opened as usual and traffic filled Skopje's streets on Monday as the government tried to reassure nervous citizens. "There is no danger that can threaten the life and property of the citizens," the interior ministry statement said.

The airport was open but some airlines, including British Airways, Swissair and Greece's Olympic cancelled flights. (Reuters)

Macedonian rebels capture town

By Vaiju Naravane *14/6*

PARIS, JUNE 10. With the European Union Foreign Policy Commissioner, Mr. Javier Solana, arming them, Macedonia's Albanian and Slav leaders have agreed to a new peace plan.

The agreement, signed in the backdrop of fierce hostilities between army units and ethnic Albanian rebels, is likely to be short-lived.

In a fresh upsurge of fighting, Albanian rebels who have mounted a four-month-long insurgency against the Skopje Government, captured the town of Aracinovo, which lies within sight of the capital, bringing the likelihood of a bloody civil war one step closer.

Guerilla commanders said their forces were now within striking distance of logistical targets such as the country's oil refinery and international airport. The rebels have managed to open a second front and Macedonian forces are extremely stretched in their attempts to put down the insurgency.

Government forces have pounded rebel positions with heavy artillery and with helicopters borrowed from Ukraine but



Ethnic Albanian women and children sit by candle light in an improvised shelter in Aracinovo village, 10 km from the Macedonian capital of Skopje, fearing shelling by Government forces. — Reuters

have been able to make little impact on the rebels who withdraw into the hills only to re-emerge and strike again.

The rebels, who get their weap-

HD-12
ons from Serbia's NATO-controlled province of Kosovo, are much better armed than Macedonian army units. About 800 Albanian rebels are estimated to be holed up in Aracinovo, using rocket launchers and machine guns to repel Macedonian forces.

The rebels say they do not want war and that they are fighting for equal rights for Macedonia's large Albanian minority which faces discrimination at the hands of the Slav majority. Last May, a new national unity Government which includes Albanians and Slavs was installed in Skopje. But negotiations have failed to produce a satisfactory peace plan.

Meanwhile, Macedonian border guards banned several ethnic Albanian men to cross the frontier into Kosovo. The Macedonian Prime Minister, Mr. Ljubco Georgievski, is likely to ask Parliament to declare a state of war in the country. Such a declaration would give his Government powers to draft all able bodied men. With this perspective in mind, border guards have been instructed to prevent Albanian men from leaving the country.

THE HINDU

Shadow over Macedonia

THE CLOUDS of war are gathering over Macedonia, the only Balkan state to have avoided hostilities in the decade of strife that has plagued the former Yugoslavia. There are fears that the state, which peacefully broke away from the Yugoslav federation ten years ago, is drifting towards a bloody civil war between the Macedonian majority, mainly Slavs and Christians, and the large Muslim Albanian minority.

For the past four months Albanian guerrillas holed up in the hills surrounding the northwestern town of Tetovo, which lies close to the border with Serbia and its NATO-controlled province of Kosovo, have waged a relentless war against Macedonia's small army.

On Wednesday, unidentified gunmen fired shots at the office of Macedonia's President, Mr. Boris Trajkovski, in central Skopje. The Prime Minister, Mr. Ljubco Georgievski, exasperated by the hostilities and lack of progress in the negotiations between the Slav and Albanian communities, called for the declaration of a state of war "in order to achieve peace".

The rebels say they are not for

There are fears that Macedonia is drifting towards a bloody civil war. Vaiju Naravane reports.

inantly Albanian areas of southern Serbia and northwestern Macedonia.

The idea of formally declaring a war situation was first mooted by Mr. Georgievski last May. However, western powers prevailed on him to keep that idea in abeyance and instead broaden his coalition to establish a national unity government. But the recently-formed grand coalition, bringing together parties from the Left and the Right as well as Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, has failed to produce any concrete proposal for ending the conflict.

A declaration of war, which would require the backing of two-thirds of Macedonia's 120-member, multi-ethnic Parliament, would give the Government emergency powers allowing it to

believe and thousands of civilians trapped in the villages but they have made little headway. The party criticised Mr. Trajkovski for not carrying through with a promise to first fight the rebels and then progress to talks.

The Prime Minister represents the hardline elements within the Slav-dominated social democrats and he has been pushing for fresh elections as early as September. It is in Mr. Georgievski's political interest to further radicalise the Slav position.

Analysts say the President is also closely watching political developments. If it appears that the majority of Macedonians has been gun to favour stronger action against the rebels, he would not be beyond declaring Parliament deadlocked. He could then unilaterally declare a state of war through presidential decree.

The weekend has, however, raised slender hopes of peace. On Thursday, NATO strongly condemned the killing of the five soldiers and threatened action. The same day the rebels of the National Liberation Army in a surprise move declared a unilateral ceasefire. "The NLA will refrain from fighting as of midnight June 7, if it is not provoked by the military and police of the Republic of Macedonia."

Observers say the move is part of a secret deal between the rebels and the Government worked out by European Union diplomats who have played an active role in containing the conflict and restraining Skopje's hand. On Friday, Mr. Trajkovski announced a peace plan, which would allow Albanian guerrillas to lay down arms and leave for Kosovo.

The Trajkovski plan is roughly modelled on a ceasefire agreement worked out between ethnic Albanians and the Serbian Government in the Albanian-dominated regions of Presevo, Medveđa and Bujanovac in southern Serbia. There, NATO officials helped decommission and disarm the rebel fighters and work out the terms of the amnesty. The NATO general secretary, Lord Robertson, welcoming Mr. Trajkovski's plan, said the organisation would be willing to play a similar role in Macedonia.

This is only a beginning. Much will depend on how the stalled negotiations on the rights of the Albanian community will develop.



Albanian rebel positions in the village of Vaksince, near Skopje, are hit by artillery fire by Macedonian forces.

With heavy artillery and sniper fire, they have harassed Macedonian soldiers sent to flush them out. Their arms are bought with generous contributions sent by Albanians living in the West and with money earned from their stock in trade: the smuggling of cigarettes and weapons.

This past week has seen an escalation of the fighting with five Macedonian soldiers killed in an ambush by ethnic Albanian rebels. Angry Slavs vented their anger by torching Albanian houses in the southern city of Bitola to which three of the five dead soldiers belonged. Bitola was the scene of riots last April following a similar incident.

secession. Their demands concern mainly the use of Albanian, which is not recognised as a state language. They also want an Albanian police force and more jobs for Albanians in Government and the public sector. However, many Macedonians believe that these innocuous-sounding demands are only the first step towards creating "a state within a state" before final secession in order to create a Greater Albania.

Albanians in neighbouring Kosovo, from where the rebels in Macedonia receive most of their logistical support, do not hide their desire to establish a sovereign state, which would include Albania, Kosovo and the predom-

call in reservists and launch a full-scale military offensive against the rebels. Albanians parties would oppose it.

The situation is further complicated by a power struggle between the President and Prime Minister, who both belong to the same Slav party. Recently, prompted by the Prime minister, the party criticised the President for his handling of the four-month-old conflict with the Albanian guerrillas which Mr. Trajkovski had described as an "all out onslaught" to destroy rebel strongholds.

Security forces have used artillery and helicopter gunships on loan from Ukraine against the re-

men behind to take care of their neighbours

Violence spreads in Macedonia

B. B. 10-12

SKOPJE (MACEDONIA), JUNE 9. Scores of people fled Macedonia's capital on Saturday as police blocked roads around a suburb to stop ethnic Albanian militants from seizing control of territory dangerously close to Skopje.

"We are closely watching every movement in Aracinovo," said a police spokesman, adding that only civilians who wanted to leave the mostly ethnic Albanian suburb were being allowed through checkpoints.

The Interior Minister, Mr. Ljube Boskovski, acknowledged that 700 to 800 militants were in control of Aracinovo, which is within shooting range of Skopje's airport. He vowed to "break up" the rebel presence there but said the insurgents had amassed "an enormous amount" of weapons and ammunition.

As fears spread that Macedonia's ethnic conflict has come within striking distance of the capital just 7 km away, more than 500 ethnic Albanians from Skopje crossed into neighbouring Kosovo and said they were leaving as a precaution.

Local relief agencies who met them at the main border crossing at Djeneral Jankovic fed them and worked to reunite them with family members who had crossed into Kosovo earlier. The U.N. refugee agency says more than 20,000 people have fled Macedonia since the hostilities began in February.

The European Union's security affairs chief, Mr. Javier Solana, held talks on Saturday in downtown Skopje with top leaders of Macedonia's majority Slavs and minority ethnic Albanians in an attempt to avert a new escalation of the crisis.

"Nothing can be achieved through violent means, and people know that," said Mr. Solana.

After meeting Mr. Solana, the top ethnic Albanian leader, Mr. Arben Xhaferi, called anew for an

immediate cease-fire. But he criticised as "shapeless" a tentative peace plan by the President, Mr. Boris Trajkovski, that would give amnesty to fighters who have not committed serious crimes.

Officials said the plan envisages the deployment of international monitors, a greater inclusion of ethnic Albanians in state institutions and the "reintegration into society" of rebels who disarm.

Fighting first erupted when militants from the country's sizable ethnic Albanian community took up arms, saying they were fighting for broader rights. The Government, which contends they are separatists bent on dividing the country, launched an army offensive to drive them out of villages in the north of the country where the rebels are based.

On Friday, Mr. Trajkovski pledged to defeat the militants "both politically and militarily". He said the Slav-dominated government would place the army and police under a single command to increase efficiency and speed up "the neutralising of the terrorists".

Government forces on Saturday resumed their shelling of a rebel stronghold about 30 km northeast of Skopje, currently the worst battle zone spreading over several ethnic Albanian villages not far from the border with Kosovo.

But the rebels have resisted the government offensives, and the appearance of uniformed members of the rebel National Liberation Army has triggered panic in Aracinovo, where most of the 1,000 Slavic residents also have fled.

Western governments have condemned the insurgents and have urged both sides to avoid an all-out war. Macedonia was formed when the former Yugoslavia broke up in the early 1990s, and until this year, it was the only former Yugoslav republic to escape bloodshed. — AP

196

THE END

Macedonia launches massive offensive

Skopje, May 25

THE MACEDONIAN army launched a massive offensive yesterday to recapture 10 villages held by ethnic Albanian rebels for almost a month.

Tanks, artillery and helicopter gunships attacked the rebel strongholds of Slupcane and Vaksince, and their mountain positions at 8am. The rebels responded with an almost constant chatter of machine-gun fire.

Later attack helicopters flew in low over the vineyards, firing rockets at the hills above Vaksince. Less than a mile away, peasants continued ploughing their poppy-fringed fields.

Macedonian artillery has been shelling the rebels almost every day for three weeks, but yesterday infantry followed up the barrage to try to retake the villages. Army spokesman, Georgi Markovski, called the offensive "a response to increasingly frequent and arrogant actions" by the rebels.

Despite suggestions from the West, Macedonia believes its security forces can easily beat the rebels. A former interior minister, Ljubomir Frckovski, said troops could retake the villages within 24 hours without "significant civilian casualties".

The International Committee of the Red Cross believes some 10,000 civilians are in the area sheltered in basements. Until now, this has had a deterrent effect.

The Guardian

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

2256 MAY 2 2001

26 MAY 2001

Macedonia orders new offensive against rebels

By DOUGLAS HAMILTON

Skopje, May 24: Macedonia battled to save its national unity coalition on Thursday and ordered its armed forces to take the offensive against ethnic Albanian rebels.

The country's political crisis deepened sharply when it emerged that ethnic Albanian party leaders had made a peace deal in secret talks with Albanian rebels.

Reports of the deal emerged in local media and were quickly confirmed by government and political party officials speaking to Reuters on Wednesday.

On Thursday morning, an Army spokesman said that Macedonia had ordered

its armed forces to launch an offensive to drive ethnic Albanian rebels of the National Liberation Army from villages they have held for the past three weeks.

"Today at 8 am, the Army took offensive measures with the goal of surrounding villages, isolating and dispersing the terrorists from this area," Colonel Blagoja Markovski said.

Breakup of the grand coalition government, forged 11 days ago under heavy Western pressure, would plunge the republic of two million people deeper into crisis, opening a gulf between majority Slavs and the one-third Albanian minority.

Macedonian Slav leaders want the rebels to

withdraw unconditionally not under any "back door" compromise deal that might give them political legitimacy.

Diplomatic sources said top Western envoys were meeting in the capital, Skopje, to thrash out a joint position on the political crisis. Albanian political leaders were in the talks.

Controversy surrounded the role played by senior diplomat Robert Frowick of the United States, who is Balkans envoy of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and who is believed to have facilitated secret talks.

"Is Frowick to leave Macedonia quickly?" asked *Dnevnik*, the country's main indepen-

dent political heavyweight newspaper. It said the envoy's activities were seen as "interfering in the internal affairs of the country."

Macedonia's main private television network speculated that Mr Frowick might be declared persona non grata.

In Brussels, a spokeswoman for European Union foreign and security affairs chief Javier Solana strongly disagreed "with making the rebels part of the political process."

"Solana has always supported the grand coalition as the best way out of the crisis. He has already stated several times that the NLA should not be part of this political process," she said. (Reuters)

Yugoslavia forces set for final push

By ANDREW GRAY

Bujanovac (Yugoslavia), May 24: Yugoslav forces began moving back into the final sector of a buffer zone next to Kosovo on Thursday in an operation intended to bring the curtain down on a 16-month ethnic Albanian rebel insurgency.

At 8 am the commander of Yugoslav forces in southern Serbia, General Ninoslav Krstic, gave the order to start "Operation Bravo" and the first contingent of some 4,000 troops and paramilitary police began moving back into "Sector B" of the five km wide zone. Nato imposed the zone at the end of its 78-day bombing campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999 to protect international peacekeepers and Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority, leaving a security void

that was filled by the rebels. Belgrade has said it expects little resistance to the Nato-approved return of its forces after the rebels agreed to disband and more than 300 gave themselves up to peacekeepers. However Yugoslav officials have warned there are a large quantity of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines in the sector, which contains only one paved road.

"We don't expect major provocations, but we do expect possible minefields, and this could slow down the return," Army spokesman Miodrag Jetic told journalists. An ethnic Albanian rebel group emerged in January 2000 to exploit the security vacuum in the zone to attack the police and Army. Around 5,000 people have been killed since the insurgency began in the Presevo Valley area of southern Serbia. (Reuters)



LOADED GUNS: Masked Serb policemen walk on a mountain road near the town of Vranje, some 360 km south from Belgrade, on Wednesday. Yugoslav government forces entered the Sector B buffer zone on the border with Kosovo on Thursday. (Reuters)

Macedonia halts assault on Albanian rebels

Skopje (Macedonia), May 13

MACEDONIA'S ARMY and police halted their assault on ethnic Albanian rebel positions on Sunday ahead of a Parliament session called to approve a new national unity Government.

In a fresh effort to contain the budding ethnic Albanian insurgency, the Macedonian Parliament was scheduled to meet on Sunday afternoon to endorse a new, all-party multiethnic Government.

Formation of the national unity Cabinet in Macedonia is a major development. Backers hope the new Cabinet will help bridge ethnic divisions and unite political forces in finding a negotiated solution to the crisis.

Hours before the session, last-minute negotiations were under way on the composition of the future Cabinet. Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski is likely to keep his post, but his foreign minister has been replaced.

The Government deal was

reached on Friday after an ethnic Albanian party dropped its objections. The Party of Democratic Prosperity had demanded that the Government first halt its push against the rebels.

The party's spokesman, Zahir Bekteshi, said on Sunday that PDP will hold the ministries of justice and local self-rule in the new Cabinet, as well as one of the vice-premier positions.

"If everyone in this coalition takes its part of responsibility, it will have the capacity to help overcome the crisis in the country," Bekteshi said.

In a sign of goodwill, the Macedonian Army would show restraint on Sunday in its offensive against the rebels in the north, military spokesman Blagoja Markovski said.

Markovski said the rebel-held north was quiet overnight and Sunday morning following a strong Government push against the insurgents a day earlier.

Machine-gun, rocket and tank fire shook the villages of

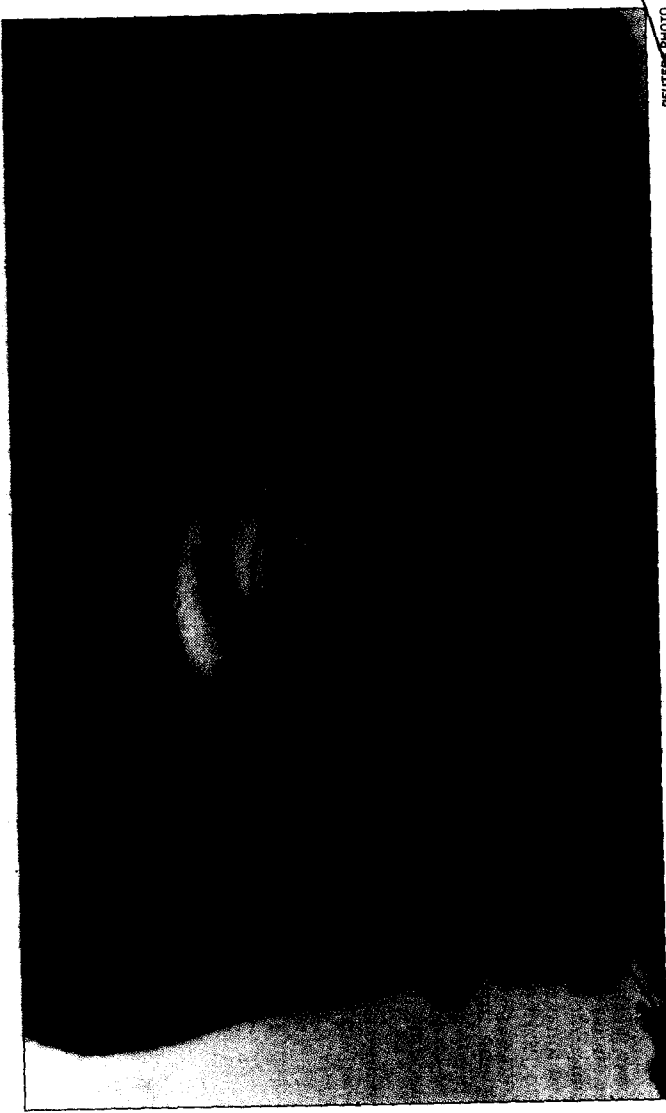
Vakince and Slupcane on Saturday. Markovski claimed the rebels suffered heavy losses, but refused to confirm reports that more than 30 of them were killed.

Ethnic Albanian rebels are demanding equal rights with the majority Slavs, and are calling for the constitution to be changed. The militants of the National Liberation Army say the changes are a basic step to empowering Macedonia's ethnic Albanians, who make up as much as one-third of the country's 2 million people.

The rebels themselves, however, were not invited to the bargaining table. The government refuses to negotiate with the militants, describing them as terrorists bent on carving up Macedonia to create a separate country.

Thousands of people from northern villages have been streaming from the area of the fighting and into Kosovo, an ethnic Albanian-majority province in neighboring Yugoslavia.

AP



REUTERS PHOTO

A Macedonian policeman positions himself in a bunker at Mateiche village on Sunday.

Macedonia unlikely to declare war

Skopje, May 7

MACEDONIAN HELICOPTERS rocketed rebel ethnic Albanian positions northeast of the capital on Monday as NATO Secretary General George Robertson landed at Skopje airport, within earshot of the battle. Macedonian Army artillery reportedly began shelling early in the morning.

Around 7.45 am, two Soviet Mi-8 helicopters flew low over suspected rebel positions at the edge of Vackince, firing rockets at targets out of sight to reporters.

"Our aim is to continue the operation until the terrorists are neutralised. The fact that Robertson is here does not mean that we have to let the terrorists march in to Skopje Central Square," said Government spokesman Antonio Milosovski.

He said the Government expected Parliament to take a decision tomorrow whether to introduce a state of war, expanding the powers of the presidency and security forces, or heed Western appeals not to take such a radical step.

The foreign policy chief of EU, Javier Solana, arrived in Skopje late on Sunday in a bid to support the Government and persuade it that declaring a state of war would not help defeat the ethnic Albanian insurgency, which Macedonia says is coming from Kosovo.

After talks with President Boris Trajkovski and Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski, EU sources said Solana felt that "we're not going to see a declaration of war".

The rebel National Liberation Army again offered a ceasefire in exchange for direct talks with the Government to prevent what it said would be further civilian deaths from the army's "indiscriminate use of force".

The Government has ruled out talks with the guerrillas.

Reuters

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

8 MAY 2001

410-12 Macedonia orders evacuation

SKOPJE (MACEDONIA), MAY 5. Macedonia's Government issued a fresh warning to civilians today to leave an area being bombarded by security troops in a bid to dislodge ethnic Albanian rebels.

The latest upsurge of fighting in Macedonia has reignited fears for the Balkans' fragile stability. The fate of civilians trapped in the fighting, most of them ethnic Albanians, is also a major concern. The Government spokesman, Mr. Antonio Milosovski, said citizens should leave their villages in the northeastern Kumanovo area, some 40 km northeast of the cap-

ital Skopje and head to Kumanovo town. "We are setting another deadline because we have information that civilians are trying to leave the area," he said.

Since Thursday, when fighting erupted, only 150 civilians had left, mostly from the villages of Slupcane and Orizari.

Mr. Carlo Ungaro, ambassador of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), cited three possible reasons for civilian reluctance to move out — unwillingness to become refugees, intimidation by the rebels, or sympathy for them,

particularly among younger people. The guerillas have killed 10 Macedonian soldiers and police in a week, prompting anti-Albanian riots in several areas of the country.

They have been condemned by the West for undermining dialogue on Albanian demands for more rights. The rebels say they are fighting for equal rights for Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority — around one third of the two million population. But their actions have been condemned by Western powers as a spark for wider Balkan conflict.— Reuters

YERU HINDU

26 MAY 1991

Muslim-Croat federation gets Sarajevo suburb

Sarajevo, April 25

HT-11

AN IRISH judge ruled yesterday that most of the Bosnian Serb republic-controlled part of a Sarajevo suburb disputed since the 1992-5 war is to become part of Bosnia's Muslim-Croat federation.

Former Irish High Court Judge Diarmuid Sheridan was appointed by Wolfgang Petritsch, Bosnia's top international peace overseer, to resolve years of dispute and some sporadic violence in the Dobrinja suburb. His ruling means many Serb families will eventually have to move out.

"I have become convinced that the persons almost exclusively from the federation side were dispossessed of their homes and the only matter that my conscience allows me to do is to restore them accordingly," Sheridan told a news conference. His decision will take effect at midnight

Reuters

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

26 APR 2001

MONTENEGRO POLL / DJUKANOVIC LIKELY TO WIN

Result may trigger freedom fever in Balkans

By Vajju Naravane

PARIS, APRIL 21. The tiny mountainous republic of Montenegro goes to the polls on Sunday to elect a new Parliament. With its large and powerful neighbour Serbia, Montenegro makes up what remains of the once prestigious Balkan federation of Yugoslavia.

It is an election which is causing a great deal of worry in western capitals. If the Socialist Party of the present President, Mr. Milo Djukanovic, wins the poll, as it is tipped to do, this consultation will lead to a referendum next June on the total independence of the 600,000-strong Balkan state. This is a worrying scenario because four different and potentially hostile communities live there together.

The Montenegrins themselves do not make up more than 50 per cent of the population. The north of the country is populated by a Serb majority which is very close to Belgrade. The south of the country is dominated by the Albanians (between seven and nine per cent of the population). The centre of the country, that is to say the Montenegrin part of the Sandjak region is peopled by Muslims of Turkish and Bosnian descent.

In this situation, Mr. Djukanovic has promised everything to everyone, guaranteeing that should independence become a reality, each community would be given a large degree of autonomy including freedom of education in



Two Montenegrin young women walk by ruling "Democratic Coalition" posters in a Podgorica suburb. — Reuters

the various languages.

But the real problems of the republic lie elsewhere and the European Union managed to place its finger on them last February.

The E.U.'s view of the situation, which is now shared by the U.S. as well, runs as follows: the independence of Montenegro could once again upset the very fragile equilibrium in the Balkans and could even lead to another war in

a region which has above all need of reform and integration into Europe's geo-political and economic system.

The independence of Montenegro could in effect awaken similar aspirations in Kosovo, which, since the victory of the Federal President, Mr. Vojislav Kostunica, in Belgrade, demonstrated its determination to break away from Serbia, despite

U.N. Resolution 1244 which strictly rules out such a possibility.

Kosovo's case would not be an isolated one. Even the former autonomous Serbian province of Voivodina, peopled by a Hungarian majority, could see the rise of nationalistic demons and claim independence.

In fact, all the big and small Balkan states could succumb to inde-

pendence fever. Herzegovina, inhabited mainly by Croats could redouble its demands for Croat-dominated territories to be attached to Zagreb, as Croat nationalists have been doing these past weeks. The Bosnian Serb Republika Srpska could ask for independence or for its attachment to Serbia. The West fears the creation of a series of mini-states, a Balkan sieve, which would return the geo-strategic situation in the region to what pertained during the first decade of the 20th century.

The international community's perplexity is not limited to this reality. For many years now, Montenegro has been seen as "a problem state". On its territory, hundreds of mafia barons find refuge, mainly Italians, but also Greek, Turkish, Bulgarian and Russian. The port of Bar in southern Montenegro

is the centre of intense smuggling in drugs and cigarettes. Boats leave from there for the Italian coast from where the merchandise is expedited to the rest of Europe and the U.S. The Podgorica government's main source of revenue comes from illicit activity.

The independence of Montenegro is seen by many as the emergence of a mafia state which would enter into a liaison with neighbouring Albania, already highly tainted by illegal activity. This would make the eastern coast of the Adriatic sea the centre of all kinds of traffic, from arms, drugs, cigarettes to prostitution and illegal immigrants.

HP-16

The show is over for Milosevic

IT WAS a small envelope containing a three-page note that led to the dramatic arrest last weekend of the former Yugoslav President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic. It is unclear as to whose signature was appended at the bottom of the page. It has been strongly hinted in Belgrade that the letter, handed over to Yugoslavia's new President, Mr. Vojislav Kostunica, was signed by "W" himself.

99

Wump

Mr. Milosevic's last stand too was predictable — sabre-rattling and a show of strength which ended in humiliation and unconditional capitulation, says Vaiju Naravane.

supremely unmoved. That is when he decided to throw in the towel and give himself up," she says.

Mr. Milosevic's last stand too was predictable — sabre-rattling and a show of strength which ended in humiliation and unconditional capitulation. During the preceding decade, he had unerringly and consistently played out the same

scenario with his country, losing huge swathes of territory, sowing seeds of hatred, extremism and discord, reducing a once-proud people to political and economic dwarfdom.

"Milosevic's arrest revealed the man's weakness and inconsistencies. He started out defiantly, his heavily armed guards firing back at the special police units sent to arrest him. Towards the end he was a pathetic figure, threatening to blow up his own family, assassinate his wife and daughter. That was a coward's last stand. And the Yugoslav people finally saw him for what he really is, a pathetic, hollow, insecure little man, all threat and bluster but without any real courage, not even the courage to take his own life. We discovered a veritable ammunition depot in his house in Dedjine — rocket launchers, mortars, enough arms and ammunition to keep a little army going for several months," says

the special services officer, Mr. Jajco Stepic.

Mr. Slobodan Milosevic stands accused of crimes against humanity for the excesses committed in Kosovo by the Yugoslav army and paramilitary forces. NATO and western leaders are asking that he be extradited to the International Criminal Tribunal at The Hague. For the time being he has been charged with corruption and fraud, for stealing from the Yugoslav people and the state. It is unclear how long Yugoslav leaders will be able to resist international pressure to hand him over to the chief war crimes prosecutor.

The letter was personally handed over to Mr. Kostunica by the U.S. Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Mr. William D. Montgomery. An unequivocal ultimatum, the letter told Mr. Kostunica in no uncertain terms that failure to imprison Mr. Milosevic by March 31 would mean kissing good-bye to the first half of a \$100-million development aid package from the U.S. Government, vital to jump-start the jammed Yugoslav economy.

Sources in Belgrade say that the U.S. President, Mr. George Bush, "ordered" Mr. Kostunica to "continue to cooperate" with the International Criminal Tribunal on The Former Yugoslavia (ICTFY) and to "ensure" that Mr. Milosevic is brought to "a speedy trial" in the international court.

The U.S. dikat could not have been more crudely put. The arrest and transfer to prison had to take place by March 31. If not, the U.S. Congress would vote against the \$50 million aid package to Belgrade for this year. More importantly, the U.S. would oppose any World Bank or International Monetary fund credits to the former Yugoslavia.

Neither Mr. Kostunica nor the Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Djindjic, had much choice in the matter. However, the country's new leaders did not have much to lose beyond a bit of nationalistic pride. And even that has become a rare commodity in Yugoslavia today. Opinion polls indicate that Yugoslavs no longer care about what happens to the "Butcher of the Balkans".

Over 70 per cent of those questioned say they want his arrest. "All we want is to be like ordinary citizens. "We have realised that heroism is not for us. We want bread and meat in our stomachs, shoes on our feet, education for our children and a decent, peaceful lifestyle. We are tired of war. We have been humiliated so much already. Much of that was caused by Mr. Milosevic. Now let him pay the price for his folly," said Ms. Braka Stepanovic, a journalist, explaining the fairly straightforward way in which the Milosevic arrest was carried out. "The former President did try to make a stand, did try to mobilise the population but he managed to get only a couple of hundred up-country bumpkins. Belgrade remained



The former Yugoslavian President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic... abject surrender.

Following the death of the dictatorial Franjo Tudjman and the establishment of a democratically-elected Government in Croatia, the authorities there have begun cooperating with the international court. For the first time Croatia appears determined to truly examine the horrors committed in the name of nationalism and the misplaced ideal of "Greater Croatia."

With the arrest of Mr. Milosevic on the demands of the U.S., the capitulation of Serbia is now complete. Many Yugoslavs feel they have to "fall in line" like the other Balkan states and like the rest of "pacified and globalised" former eastern Europe.

"What Serbia needs is an absence of aggression, of hostility, of war. We must set up a national truth and reconciliation commission and look at what we have done to ourselves, to others these past ten years. I think we have lost Kosovo and we must come to terms with that," says Dragan Predrag, a journalist.

But people like Ljubisa Ristic, a noted theatre director, an advocate of a certain idea of Serbia and a die-hard supporter of the Milosevics looks at the tragedy of the former Yugoslavia and the present state of Serbia as "the inevitable result of a process of neo-colonisation." For him this only a passing phase. "They wanted to destroy the Balkans. They have done it. Serbia has been humbled. The Balkans has been decimated. The West has won again. But my people shall rise up. We have done so in the past, again and again. We are not the types to accept humiliation for long."

THE HINDU

8 APR 20

Milosevic should not be extradited, says Kostunica

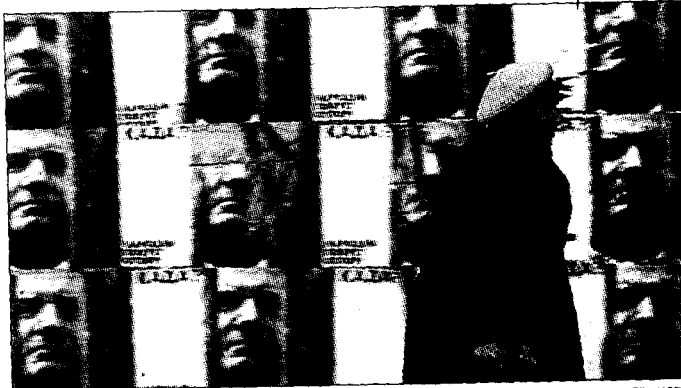
New York, April 3

FORMER YUGOSLAV President Slobodan Milosevic should never be extradited to the UN war crimes tribunal in the Hague, his successor told *The New York Times* newspaper in Tuesday's editions.

Kostunica said he was ready to help the court investigate war crimes. Milosevic, who has so far been accused of criminal conspiracy and abuse of power, should be brought to trial on war crimes charges too, but before domestic courts. Extradition was out of the question, he said.

"It should never happen," Kostunica said in an interview with the newspaper on the day Washington decided Yugoslavia could receive US aid but had to cooperate with the tribunal to win US support for a donor conference in the summer. "It think that it's possible to do everything so that it should never happen," Kostunica said.

The tribunal indicted Milosevic in 1999 for crimes against humanity over Belgrade's



A woman passes by placards with photo-montage in Belgrade showing former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic behind bars.

treatment of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and UN prosecutors say they are also preparing indictments over his role in earlier wars in Bosnia and Croatia. The paper said that in negotiations before his arrest on Sunday, Milosevic had sought and received written assurances that it was not a precursor to a transfer to The Hague.

It quoted Kostunica as saying a transfer would not be

legitimate. "Other presidents are not being sent to The Hague," he said. "I must make some compromises, but there is a line I cannot cross."

"Even among those people in the Serbian and Yugoslav Governments who don't think about legitimacy but about what might be politically useful, the prevailing view is that it would be unacceptable."

Reuters

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

4 APR 2001

Send Milosevic to trial, says West

Belgrade, April 4

WESTERN GOVERNMENTS are urging Yugoslavia to send Slobodan Milosevic to the UN war crimes tribunal even though the country's President says such a move is "not on my mind at all".

British foreign secretary Robin Cook is expected to press the case for Milosevic's extradition when he arrives in Belgrade on Wednesday. Cook will be the first high-ranking foreign official to visit here since Milosevic was arrested last weekend on charges of corruption and abuse of power.

Milosevic's arrest has been hailed by the United States and its allies, which hope the move against the deposed Yugoslav President will lead to his extradition to the UN tribunal in the Hague, Netherlands.

However, Yugoslav leaders insist they want to try Milosevic first at home. Serbia's interior minister, Dusan Mihajlovic, said on Tuesday that Milosevic might

be charged with more serious criminal offences, which carry the death penalty.

Despite western pressure, Yugoslavia's new President, Vojislav Kostunica, ruled out sending Milosevic to the Hague anytime soon, saying the issue was not a priority for his Government.

"The Hague court is not on my mind at all," Kostunica told reporters on Tuesday. "We are not thinking about extradition now. We are dealing with Milosevic's responsibility before our own nation and before our own courts."

Many Serbs distrust the tribunal, claiming it is biased against them because it never indicted leaders of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo for atrocities against Serbs during the Balkan wars of the last decade.

Yugoslav officials are hoping that with Milosevic behind bars, the pressure for his extradition to the Hague might ease some-

what in the months to come.

The United States, the principal country demanding Milosevic's extradition, agreed after the former President's arrest to release \$50 million in aid.

Washington had threatened to withhold the funds if Belgrade did not demonstrate cooperation with the Hague tribunal. The European Union security affairs chief, Javier Solana, said on Tuesday in Athens that the 15-member EU has "full trust" in the Yugoslav authorities.

"We are not going to put any pressure on them to do anything because they know what they have to do and they are going to do it," Solana said, referring to the Yugoslav leadership. Milosevic was indicted by the Hague court for atrocities committed by Serb troops against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Those atrocities triggered NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999.

Since Milosevic was arrested last weekend on financial charges, Yugoslav authorities

have stepped up their investigations into other possible criminal complaints against the 59-year-old deposed leader.

Milosevic has steadfastly maintained his innocence and is expected to mount a vigorous defence when the case comes to trial.

His appeal for immediate release was rejected on Tuesday.

In a statement on Monday, Milosevic admitted diverting \$390 million worth of Yugoslav dinars and German marks but claimed the money went to bankroll Serb rebels fighting in Croatia and

Bosnia-Herzegovina rather than into his personal bank accounts. That marked the first time Milosevic had publicly acknowledged bankrolling Serb armies in the Bosnian and Croatian wars. A former customs chief, Mihalj Kerter, who is also charged with Milosevic and was a key player in his dealings, was questioned on Tuesday.

AP

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

• 5 APR 2001

Damper on Milosevic shift

Belgrade, April 3 (Reuters): Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica today said the transfer of Slobodan Milosevic to The Hague war crimes court was not on the agenda for now and criticised his arrest as "clumsy and not well thought out".

"The Hague is not in our thoughts at the moment, especially not in my thoughts at all, with all the other problems occupying this country at the moment such as the problems in southern Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and poverty," Kostunica said.

Any decision to transfer Milosevic to the International War Crimes Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague "does not fall within my jurisdiction," Kostunica told his first news conference since the arrest on Sunday.

"However, as a President, I must have a stand on this issue and my stand is: The extradition of Slobodan Milosevic or this kind of cooperation with The Hague is not a topic in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at the moment."

The trial of Milosevic, accused

Arrest clumsy and not well thought out: Kostunica

of diverting state funds for himself and his party, "should be as non-political as possible", Kostunica said. He must answer "primarily to his own people".

Kostunica said he was not properly informed of the bid to arrest Milosevic, which began late on Friday afternoon, and had received his first official report some 12 hours after the action began.

"The police action got off to a very uncoordinated start and without enough reports — I remind you that I got the first written report on March 31 at around 8 am," said Kostunica, who was on a visit to Switzerland around the time the action began.

Asked about charges by the reformist government that senior army officers tried to block the ar-

rest, Kostunica said the army had acted correctly throughout the process.

"Everything the Yugoslav Army did during Milosevic's apprehension for the investigating judge was done in absolute accord with the effective regulations, and this applies to all ranking Yugoslav Army officers," he said.

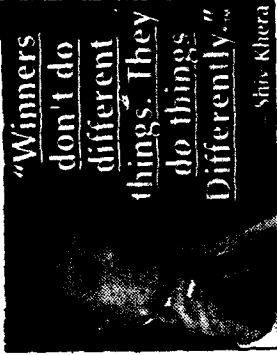
Kostunica said Milosevic bore great responsibility for damage to the country, but he also blamed the international community for the violent break-up of Yugoslavia.

He said he was confident that the US would not carry out a threat to block an aid donors' conference for Yugoslavia due in the summer.

Officials were driven off by armed guards when they first

tried to take Milosevic into custody on Friday. A second attempt using anti-terrorist commandos resulted in a shootout with four policemen injured and a second retreat.

Milosevic, who was armed with handgun during the tense 36-hour stand-off, gave himself up after lengthy negotiations, but not before vowing at one point that he would never be taken alive.



"Winners don't do different things. They do things differently."

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HD-16
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Kostunica not for Milosevic extradition to Hague

NEW YORK, APRIL 3. The former Yugoslav president, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, should never be extradited to the U.N. War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, his successor told *The New York Times* newspaper in today's edition.

Mr. Kostunica said he was ready to help the court investigate war crimes and that Mr. Milosevic, who has so far been accused of criminal conspiracy and abuse of power, should be brought to trial on

war crimes charges too, but before domestic courts. Extradition was out of the question, he said. "It should never happen," Mr. Kostunica said in an interview with the newspaper.

The tribunal indicted Mr. Milosevic in 1999 for crimes against humanity over Belgrade's treatment of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and U.N. prosecutors say they are also preparing indictments over his role in earlier wars in Bosnia and

Croatia. It said in negotiations before his arrest on Sunday, Mr. Milosevic had sought and received written assurances that it was not a precursor to a transfer to The Hague.

It quoted Mr. Kostunica as saying a transfer would not be legitimate. "Other Presidents are not being sent to the Hague," he said. "I must make some compromises, but there is a line I cannot cross. Even among those people in the Serbian and Yugoslav Governments who

don't think about legitimacy but about what might be politically useful, the prevailing view is that it would be unacceptable".

Death penalty?

Mr. Milosevic could face charges for serious crimes that carry the death penalty, the Serbia's Interior Minister, Mr. Dusan Mihajlovic, said today. Speaking to reporters in Vienna, he said: "we have indications that Mr. Milosevic was also involved in serious crimes which carry the death penalty. But we are talking about investigations, we need proof. If we get this we will ask the justice authorities to bring charges." He did not specify what the additional charges might be. Justice authorities in Serbia have not so far accused Mr. Milosevic of any offence serious enough to carry the death penalty. At present he faces charges of corruption and criminal conspiracy. However, many of his opponents have accused him of involvement in politically motivated killings, which could in theory result in the death penalty. The penalty has not, though, been carried out in Serbia for many years. Mr. Mihajlovic, on an official visit to Austria, said he had been joking when he suggested last night that the former Yugoslav leader might choose voluntarily to face international war crimes charges at a tribunal in the Hague.

"It is really of historic importance that there should initially be a court hearing in Serbia," the Minister said. "It is important that Mr. Milosevic is put on trial in Serbia for what he did there, for what he did to the people. Otherwise false myths could arise and we have had enough false myths in the past." Mr. Mihajlovic said last night that Mr. Milosevic might wish to be handed over to the Hague to avoid the death penalty at home and escape the harsh conditions in Belgrade's prisons.— Reuters



Ms. Mirjana Markovic, wife of the former Yugoslav President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, talks to a guard while she leaves the central prison in Belgrade on Monday after visiting her husband. — AP

THE HINDU

APR 2001

MILOSEVIC CAUGHT

by [unclear] 4/2/01
Consolidating the revolution

YUGOSLAVIA'S October revolution is now moving to complete its unfinished agenda with Milosevic's arrest, following a dramatic armed standoff, a month after Rade Markovic, his secret police chief, was also placed under arrest. The decisiveness displayed by Yugoslavia's democratic government contrasts sharply with the situation in Indonesia where, under Abdurrahman Wahid's dispensation, members of the *nomenklatura* installed by Suharto are still entrenched, leading to political instability, riots and violence on the streets with no end in sight. Milosevic's bluff has been called and a dictator's mystique exploded. There were a couple of botched arrest attempts before, and Milosevic had claimed that he would never be taken alive. The army had maintained an ambiguous stance, handing over the key to his house to loyal Milosevic guards rather than to the police who had come to arrest him. Yet, in a manner typical of his rule, Milosevic gave in and surrendered once he found that the odds had run out on him. Western pressure clearly had something to do with his arrest, which came a day before a deadline set by the US Congress considering \$50 million in economic aid to Yugoslavia. The US and the European Union, though, want to put Milosevic on trial before a UN tribunal for war crimes at The Hague, while the Yugoslav authorities are considering trying him for corruption, defalcation of funds and abuse of power. Nationalist compulsions dictate that Milosevic cannot be seen to be handed over to powers that so recently bombed Yugoslavia. Yet Western powers may not be satisfied if the man who turned Bosnia and Kosovo into theatres for "ethnic cleansing" and caused them so much trouble, is indicted on charges that carry a maximum five-year prison term. Turning off the aid tap would cut off access to funds Yugoslavia desperately needs to rebuild. It has been said that Yugoslavs had essentially been shamed into overthrowing Milosevic, due to the isolation from the European mainstream that they had suffered thanks to Milosevic's efforts to resurrect the spirit of the ultra-nationalist Europe of the 1930s. Having done so, the logical end of the democratic revolution should be to prosecute Milosevic for the full extent of his crimes.

An opinion poll showed that more than half of Yugoslavs believed that Milosevic was responsible for war crimes, and 75 per cent brand him a bad President, although he may still have some pockets of support within the army. If handing over Milosevic to a UN tribunal proves unacceptable, Yugoslav authorities should stage an internationally acceptable trial where Milosevic is called to account for the full extent of his crimes. This would amount to a clean break with Yugoslavia's ruinous last two decades, and also serve as a warning to dictators everywhere who contemplate ethnic cleansing as state policy.

THE STATESMAN

3 APR 2001

MILOSEVIC DEPRESSED BEHIND BARS

By DOUGLAS HAMILTON

Belgrade, April 2: Very few people in life go from being national hero to public enemy number one. On Monday, his first night in jail, that was Slobodan Milosevic's novel predicament and he was not enjoying it.

Milosevic's defence lawyer, Toma Fila, said his client was depressed, on tranquillisers, and scarcely able to believe what had befallen him over the past dramatic weekend.

Mr Fila planned to lodge a request on Tuesday to have the 59-year-old ex-President of Yugoslavia set free pending his investigation on charges of stealing state funds.

But he said he did not seriously expect the

application would be granted.

Milosevic could get five to 15 years if convicted of diverting over \$100 million in customs funds to feather the nest of his Socialist Party and maintain his grip on power.

But what the rest of the world was interested in was the chance of him being transferred soon to The Hague on war crimes charges for Serb actions against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

Serbia's reformist leaders said their priority was justice at home for domestic crimes, insisting that they would have to introduce a new law before considering "extradition."

Western leaders, scenting final victory over an adversary who has made many surprise comebacks while fanning the flames of war in the Balkans, welcomed the arrest as a

courageous move by the new government and a first step to international justice.

The arrest nearly went badly wrong.

Two initial attempts to bring Milosevic in on Friday night failed, the second in a hail of bullets after a group of anti-terrorist-style masked police smashed their way into his villa complex.

Milosevic, who at one point vowed he'd never be taken alive, agreed in overnight talks to surrender peacefully.

His daughter Marija, 36, could not accept the decision and fired five shots at the convoy of cars that took her father away at dawn. Arraigned on Sunday, he pleaded not guilty on all counts. Serbian radio later said the police found an arsenal at the Milosevic complex, including two armoured personnel

carriers, some machineguns and 20 pistols. The find did not appear to significantly exceed earlier reports of what Milosevic diehards had stashed in the place, or what Army guards left behind.

The radio said the police also seized "plans for an uprising in April" and several Milosevic supporters had been arrested.

The weekend drama generated a record-breaking rumour mill even by Belgrade's high standards during a decade of autocratic rule and deepening international isolation.

More seriously, it exposed what President Vojislav Kostunica called a lack of synchronisation between army and the police — code for what some earlier described as deliberate Army efforts to block the arrest. (Reuters)

US welcomes Milosevic's arrest, quiet about aid

By RANDALL MIKKELSEN

Washington, April 2: President George W. Bush on Sunday welcomed Yugoslavia's arrest of its former President, Slobodan Milosevic, but gave no sign whether the action would avert a cut-off of \$50 million in US aid.

Mr Bush urged that Milosevic be tried for "crimes against humanity" by a UN war crimes tribunal, and urged Yugoslavian President Vojislav Kostunica to work with the tribunal. "Milosevic's arrest should be a first step toward trying him for the crimes against humanity with which he is charged," Mr Bush said in a written statement.

Secretary of state Colin Powell was expected to announce as early as Monday whether Yugoslavia had co-operated sufficiently with the tribunal to prevent a cut-off of aid mandated by Congress.

The United States is seeking to pressure Yugoslavia to hand over suspected war criminals for trial under international law.

The deadline imposed by Congress was Saturday. Although there has been speculation that Mr Powell would allow the aid to flow, some key senators said on Sunday it was too early to ease off on the pressure. White House officials declined to comment on the aid decision. At stake is about \$50 million in aid payments set aside for Yugoslavia this year. If certification was denied, the US would also oppose loans to the Balkan state. (Reuters)



LOCK UP: A poster designed by anti-Milosevic activists, shows former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic behind bars, on display on central Belgrade wall on Sunday. (AP)

Milosevic will be handed over: UN court

The Hague, April 2: The UN War Crimes Tribunal said it was confident that Yugoslavia's former President Slobodan Milosevic would be handed over by Belgrade to the Hague-based court.

"The arrest is a positive sign. It will facilitate his delivery to The Hague," chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte was quoted by her spokeswoman as saying, after Milosevic surrendered on

Sunday, after a tense standoff with Yugoslav security forces.

The international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, set up in 1993, has indicted Milosevic on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity during the conflict in Serbia's province of Kosovo in 1999.

The court says Milosevic should face trial in The Hague, before going on trial at home, as

international law takes precedence over national law. The Yugoslav authorities have said he should be tried in his own country for abuse of power and corruption.

Mr Del Ponte's spokeswoman Florence Hartmann played down early declarations from Belgrade that Milosevic would not be handed over yet, but said the court was prepared to turn up the pressure.

"These heated declarations can not be interpreted as reflecting Belgrade's official position," she said.

"If these declarations continue and become the official policy of Belgrade, we will obviously react."

The tribunal and the Yugoslav authorities are also at odds over the law being drafted in Belgrade governing cooperation with the tribunal. (AFP)

THE ASIAN AGE

3 APR 2001

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Detained Milosevic pleads not guilty

Belgrade, April 2

POLICE SEIZED a vast cache of weapons from the mansion that former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic transformed into a fortress before authorities arrested him to face corruption charges in his 13-year rule.

Milosevic, who surrendered before dawn on Sunday, maintained his innocence, telling an investigative judge that he was not guilty of "a single count of the charge sheet."

Nevertheless, the judge ordered him arrested for at least 30 days while police continue investigations into allegations of criminal conspiracy and diverting millions of dollars of State funds.

France, Germany, Italy and Nato praised Milosevic's arrest as a first step toward his trial at the UN Tribunal in The Hague. The spokeswoman for the tribunal, Florence Hartmann, said the court expected Milosevic in The Hague by the end of the year. Many Yugoslavs, however, consider the tribunal to be a political instrument of US foreign policy rather than an impartial court.

The Yugoslav Constitution bars the extradition of Yugoslavs to courts abroad. The new government plans to change the law but is under pressure by its allies in Yugoslavia's smaller republic, Montenegro, to hold off until after elections there on April 22.

The Government's ally, which used to support Milosevic, faces a strong challenge from rivals who want to declare independence and fears its supporters might turn against it if the Belgrade Government takes steps to extradite the former president. Mindful of a possible backlash from Milosevic supporters, authorities maintained that the former president would be treated fairly.

"He has his own room," Serbian Justice Minister Vlado Batic said. "He will be given food, allowed visitors, to have his own clothes and footwear, money, books, newspapers. He will not be subjected to any kind of physical harassment, no psychological pressure."

But Milosevic's lawyer Toma Fila said his client was exhausted after his ordeal and would have to adjust to life behind bars. "This is no five-star hotel," he

told reporters, pointing to the huge, gray, Communist-era building behind him. "This is a Balkan prison. Some cells are better, which means he has hot and cold water, but no TV or radio." Fila said Milosevic surrendered because he "did not want any more Serb blood to be spilled." Charges against Milosevic include allegations that as President of Serbia and later Yugoslavia, he conspired with four top aides to steal about \$390 million in Yugoslav dinars and German marks from the country's treasury.

The charges carry a maximum of five years in prison on conviction. More serious charges could be raised over the months ahead, possibly including involvement in a series of political assassinations. The questioning was to resume on Tuesday. Fila told reporters that Milosevic was innocent and insisted to the judge that he was not guilty of "a single count of the charge sheet."

"He responded to all the questions in a normal way. He decided to defend himself," Fila said. "He will speak up and tell the

truth."

After Milosevic was whisked away to Belgrade's central prison, police entered his compound in the tree-lined Dedinej district and said they found a vast arsenal, including two armoured personnel carriers, 30 automatic weapons, three heavy machine guns, an anti-tank grenade launcher, 23 pistols of varying calibers, 30 rifle grenades, two cases of hand grenades and several boxes of machine gun clips and other ammunition.

Milosevic had promised never to be taken alive and brandished a pistol during negotiations that led to his surrender. His daughter Mirjana fired pistol shots after her father agreed to give up, officials said, but there were no injuries. It was a bizarre end to the political history of a leader who presided over the destruction of Yugoslavia, triggering and losing four Balkan wars that left his country in political, economic and spiritual ruin.

Milosevic agreed to give up only after Government negotiators assured him he would not immediately be handed over to

the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, which indicted him in 1999 for alleged atrocities by his forces against ethnic Albanians in the province of Kosovo.

That crackdown triggered the 78-day Nato bombing and the takeover of the province by the United Nations and Nato. Still, Yugoslav authorities face intense international pressure to extradite Milosevic. The Bush administration is expected to declare on Monday whether steps taken so far are enough to avoid a cutoff of \$50 million in American aid. In Washington, US President George W Bush said Milosevic's arrest represented an important step towards ending "the tragic era of his brutal dictatorship." He reminded Belgrade that the United States considers the arrest a first move toward Milosevic's trial at the war crimes tribunal. "We cannot and must not forget the chilling images of terrified women and children herded onto trains, emaciated prisoners interned behind barbed wire and mass graves unearthed by UN investigators," Bush said. AP

World leaders welcome arrest

PARIS, APRIL 1. The French President, Mr. Jacques Chirac, on Sunday welcomed the arrest of the former Yugoslav President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, as a sign the Balkan country had embraced democracy and the rule of law. "The President of the republic is overjoyed by the arrest of Slobodan Milosevic that took place early this morning in Belgrade, and is also overjoyed that the Yugoslav authorities have confirmed their faith in the path of democracy and law," Mr. Chirac said in a statement. "This day has been long awaited. Justice should now be done," he added via his spokeswoman, Ms Catherine Colonna.

21A
The German Foreign Minister, Mr. Joschka Fischer, hailed the arrest but said Mr. Milosevic should eventually face a United Nations court on charges of crimes against humanity. "The Yugoslav Government's prudent approach shows

that the democratically elected powers in Yugoslavia are determined to follow the rule of law," Mr. Fischer said in a statement. "The Yugoslav Government's intention to start a criminal procedure against Milosevic initially under national law is a first step toward bringing him to account for the gravest offences and human rights abuses he is charged with," he said.

b/w
The German Government believes that all countries must fulfill their obligations under international law for cooperation with international criminal jurisdiction. This also applies to Belgrade," Mr. Fischer said. "In the end, those accused of human rights crimes in the International Tribunal for Yugoslavia in The Hague must be handed over."

NATO welcomed the arrest of Mr. Milosevic, saying it hoped this would lead to a trial of the fallen leader before the War Crimes Tri-

bunal in The Hague. "Justice must be served," the NATO spokesman, Mr. Robert Pszczel, said. "We expect that the arrest of Mr Milosevic will be the first step on the road leading eventually to the Hague to answer charges of war crimes."

The European Union said it welcomed the arrest and called the action "an important step towards bringing peace and justice" to the Balkan region.

HO-16
The E.U. also welcomed other concrete steps taken by authorities to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal over the past weeks, the Swedish E.U. Presidency said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Russia warned that other countries should stay out of the controversy. The Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mr. Alexander Yakovenko, appeared to make oblique criticism of the U.S. position. — AP, Reuters, DPA

THE HINDU

- 2 APR 2001

Milosevic sees reason, surrenders

HD-1 2/4 BBW/ya

BELGRADE, APRIL 1. The former Yugoslav President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, gave himself up to police today, ending a 24-hour armed standoff with security forces.

The sudden surrender early in the day came after a tense night of negotiations as Mr. Milosevic and his entourage, which police said included up to 50 heavily armed supporters, became increasingly erratic.

"He was in a pretty bad mental state," Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Zarko Korac, told BBC television. "He was unbalanced, threatening and showing his gun, saying he will kill himself and his family." But, true to the brinkmanship that marked his political career, Mr. Milosevic left his surrender to the last minute, after his supporters had thwarted one special police bid to grab him and another assault was being prepared.

As he was taken to a waiting convoy of vehicles from his up-market Belgrade residence, shots were heard from inside as his distraught daughter, Ms. Marija, began firing wildly about her. Five shots were heard just before five vehicles, parked by the wall surrounding the residence sped off.

Mr. Milosevic will be grilled by an investigative judge on charges of abuse of power and financial misdealings, officials said. At the first hearing, the judge would decide whether Mr. Milosevic should remain in custody. If so, the judge could order a month-long detention, which could later be extended for up to six months.

But Mr. Milosevic could also be freed pending his trial. His lawyer, Mr. Toma Fila, said the former President was being held in Belgrade's central investigative prison, awaiting the hearing.

Mr. Milosevic was indicted in May 1999 by a U.N. tribunal for war crimes allegedly committed in Kosovo, but he was arrested on



Supporters of the former Yugoslav President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, flash the traditional Serb salute behind a cordon of riot police on Saturday. Inset: a file photograph of Mr. Milosevic. — AP, Reuters

the lesser charges of financial misdealings and abuse of power.

Asked how Mr. Milosevic had accepted it, the Serbian Interior Minister, Mr. Dusan Mihajlovic, said, "common sense has prevailed." "We have witnessed very dramatic events, from claims that the police would not be able to take him alive, to others that he would kill his daughter and wife before killing himself. But, maybe, when these things were cleared up and when more reasonable

members of his party helped him to understand the reality of the situation he was in. He became aware that resistance was nonsensical."

The British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Robin Cook, was first to comment on the arrest, saying: "This is very welcome news to all those who have struggled so long to bring peace and justice to the Balkans." The French President, Mr. Jacques Chirac, was "delighted" with the news, his spokeswoman

said. In Washington, the U.S. President, Mr. George W. Bush, welcomed Mr. Milosevic being taken into custody and urged that he be tried for "crimes against humanity".

Mr. Bush urged Yugoslavia to work with the U.N. war crimes tribunal, but made no statement on whether he would step up pressure for a trial through the tribunal by cutting off aid to Yugoslavia. — AFP, Reuters

More reports, picture: Page 16

THE HINDU

- 2 APR 2001

Milosevic blinks first and lands in prison

Belgrade, April 1 (Reuters): Yugoslav ex-president Slobodan Milosevic, the central figure in a decade of Balkan wars, was arrested and jailed today after a 36-hour armed stand-off with the reformists who ousted him last year.

His lawyer said he pleaded not guilty to charges of diverting state funds and was remanded in custody for the customary 30-day period in Belgrade's central prison.

A doctor examined the one-time national hero, 59, and found him exhausted from the weekend ordeal with slightly elevated blood pressure but otherwise in good health. He was prescribed tranquillisers, defence counsel Toma Fila said.

Western governments hailed the arrest as a first step towards trying Milosevic at the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague, where he is charged with crimes against humanity in 1999, when atrocities were committed against Kosovo ethnic Albanians.

"Milosevic's arrest should be a first step toward trying him for the crimes against humanity with which he is charged," US President George W. Bush said. "His arrest represents an important step in bringing to a close the tragic era of his brutal dictatorship."

But Belgrade's reformists insisted the move, their most dangerous since they took power last October, had been carried out purely so Milosevic can face domestic charges of abuse of office for stealing well over \$100 million in state funds. "The decision was made to start an investigation and the detention has been set for 30 days, as usual," Fila told reporters through the barred gates of Belgrade's central prison.

"He has a special conditions...but that only means he has running hot and cold water. It is not a five star hotel.

Milosevic's ominous vow

never to be captured alive was just "something people say when they get emotional," Toma said.

He knew such a stand could also mean the deaths of a score of loyal bodyguards and that was why he surrendered peacefully.

"Milosevic said at the hearing that he was not guilty. Not under any single count on the charge sheet," Fila said, adding in a radio interview that Milosevic was "depressed" and did not know why he was being incarcerated.

His highly influential wife Mirjana visited him in prison.

An investigative judge will question Milosevic on the basis of the preliminary charges, which say he used four of his top aides to redirect almost two billion Yugoslav dinars and foreign funds from 1994 to his ouster in October last year.

The arrest ended several days of drama, tension and confusion over the fate of the former President that included a shootout between black-clad masked police commandos and his own private guards during one of two failed attempts to grab him.

In the end, Milosevic agreed to give himself up and was transferred to Belgrade's central prison in the early hours of the morning from the official residence in Belgrade that he had continued to occupy despite his political downfall. The former President's adult daughter Marija fired several shots in the air in anger after Milosevic was taken away, according to Serbian interior minister Dusan Mihajlovic.

"Mr Milosevic will enjoy all the rights granted to him by the law," said Mihajlovic. He must be brought to trial within six months and could face five to 15 years in prison if found guilty of the charges levelled against him.

"We can decide on extraditing Milosevic or any other Yugoslav



WHAT A RELIEF! A couple hugs each other in front of a resistance movement poster in Belgrade showing Milosevic smoking a cigar and the slogan saying "Who is guilty?" (AFP)

citizen only after a law on cooperation with The Hague tribunal is passed," said Serbian Justice Minister Vladan Batic.

The drama played out as a US-imposed deadline expired last night for Yugoslavia to show it was cooperating with the war

crimes tribunal and embracing democracy or risk losing vital financial support from Washington.

The US made clear that arresting Milosevic would help Belgrade get a favourable verdict. state department officials said

their decision would be revealed tomorrow.

Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia said he was innocent of all charges. "The first act of a staged political trial has begun," party vice president Branislav Ivkovic said.

A vintage cliffhanger

Belgrade, April 1 (Reuters): True to his inimitable style, Serbia's master of brinkmanship and Houdini escapes held the nation in thrall today in what many hoped would be the last starring role in his self-directed tragedy.

He was remanded in custody for 30 days by an investigating judge, Serbia's BK television said, citing Milosevic's lawyer.

As so often before, he remained out of sight as speculation mounted over how his tense 36-hour standoff with police who had twice failed to arrest him on corruption charges would end.

Some predicted he would kill himself, like his mother, father and uncle had done. Others believed he would resist arrest to the last, going down in a hail of bullets and playing out a final act of destruction to ensure the most bitter and divisive of legacies.

Or, he might would vanish mysteriously from the villa where he was holed up for over 24 hours after two failed bids to bring him into custody on charges of corruption and abuse of power.

He could be spirited out of the mysterious bunker under the official presidential compound by diehard loyalists, sparing an divided and ambivalent government the embarrassment of seeing him shot in a desperate third raid or led out in manacles.

But just when a pre-dawn shoot-out looked inevitable, with

reports of flak-jacketed police moving up towards the residence, Milosevic surrendered himself to justice. It was a quiet, almost anti-climactic ending reminiscent of his disarming retirement speech, in front of a fireplace, at the height of last October's uprising.

The trappings of power were gone and instead of a speech to the nation, all Serbs could see of the denouement was a convoy of official vehicles heading into Belgrade central prison.

It was a vintage Milosevic cliffhanger, riding the odds to the limit to see how far his opponents were prepared to go, then folding his hand without apparent fuss, as if it had all been a bluff.

In the past 10 years, he managed to wrong-foot exasperated major powers with totally unexpected shifts and twists that thwarted their efforts to stop his brand of ruthless nationalism from wrecking the Balkans.

Many expressed private, reluctant admiration for a bizarre talent that was somehow never quite negated by his steady retreat to international pariah status for the bloodshed and ethnic cleansing he allegedly authorised.

Despite being cornered at last, Milosevic again managed to appear master of his own fate, again able to involve the whole Serbian nation in his decision.

Milosevic loyalists put up stiff resistance

B. Banovic 10-16

BELGRADE, APRIL 1. The drama began shortly after 7 p.m. on Friday during a routine session of the Yugoslavian Parliament. Capitalising on the live television coverage, Mr. Branslav Ivkovic, a leader of Mr. Slobodan Milosevic's Socialist Party, announced that police cars and an ambulance were heading towards the former President's Belgrade villa.

As darkness fell, self-proclaimed Serb patriots gathered at the compound in the upmarket suburb of Dedinje to defend Mr. Milosevic. About 100 congregated at the front gates, chanting: "We won't give you up, Sloba!" Another 200 loyalists poured through the back entrance. Here, the atmosphere was more menacing — this was the expected epicentre of the battle to arrest Mr. Milosevic.

Most of the "patriots" at the front gates were middle-aged or elderly people who had spent weeks on rotating shifts, guarding their "President". Those at the back included younger men in leather coats and ski jackets — with bulges indicating concealed weapons.

The atmosphere was tense and the talk was of a showdown with the Serbian police that could end in bloodshed. "The police have become traitors and servants of the West," one armed man said. "I will die before I allow them to take our leader."

On the rear drive, three vehicles with tinted bullet-proof windows waited with their engines running. Silhouettes of men could be seen. When a Serbian police wagon carrying officers pulled into the drive at around 11 p.m., the minders formed a blockade. The police made no attempt to break past the cordon and soon turned back. Cheers rose from the crowd. Then Mr. Ivkovic emerged from the compound, saying he had just met Mr. Milosevic who thanked



The Yugoslav President, Mr. Vojislav Kostunica (centre right), reads a statement after the meeting of top state officials about the crisis over the arrest of the former President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, in Belgrade on Saturday. In the front row (left to right) are Mr. Miroslav Labus, Yugoslavia's Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Djindjic, Prime Minister of Yugoslavia's main republic, Serbia, and Mr. Vladan Batic, the Serbian Minister for Justice. — AP

all of them for coming to defend him.

At about midnight, police contacts advised journalists to go to the judicial complex in central Belgrade. Some officials began saying that Mr. Milosevic had been arrested, but Mr. Ivkovic said this was not true. "You can believe me now or you can believe me tomorrow when you see it was a lie," he said. "You should come back to the house because this is far from over."

Indeed, the former President soon emerged from his villa on Uzicka Street where he briefly greeted his supporters. "I am not afraid," he told the Belgrade independent radio and television station B92. "I expect this story to end in a just manner and for the benefit of our people."

Meanwhile, a conflict was becoming apparent between the local Serbian police and the Federal Yugoslavian army. Mr. Zoran Djindjic, Serbia's Prime Minister,

said the head of the army unit assigned to guard the compound had handed the keys of the main gate to members of Mr. Milosevic's private guard.

By about 2 a.m. the crowd of "patriots" was growing angrier as they anticipated an imminent raid. Mr. Ivkovic and another senior Milosevic aide, Mr. Ivica Dacic, emerged from the back gate with a megaphone. They told the crowd that the media and Government were spreading lies

in an attempt to clear the "patriots" from the property to make way for the raid. As he finished speaking, several police vans sped up. Dozens of riot police charged the crowd. Fighting erupted. "Are you Serbs or Americans?" Milosevic supporters screamed at officers. Some chanted "UCK, UCK" at them — using the local initials for the Kosovo Liberation Army.

At about 2.30 a.m. the riot squad managed to clear a space in front of the gate, allowing their vehicles to move closer. Ski-masked commandos from the Serbian Special Police jumped from the vehicles with automatic rifles and sprinted to the 10-foot walls of the compound. They hurled stun grenades over the gate before scaling it. A white van with no windows sped right up to the gate which one of the commandos had opened and more masked officers poured through.

A few minutes later, gunfire broke out both inside and outside the compound, but it was impossible to determine who was shooting. Many among the crowd outside the gates threw themselves to the ground. Dozens of regular police officers and journalists hid behind nearby cars and trees.

Concussion grenades continued to explode inside the compound, accompanied by sporadic gunfire. Fifteen minutes after the raid had begun, two wounded police officers were carried to an ambulance, while one of the "patriots" was reported injured by gunfire.

A quiet then fell on the scene before two black vehicles carrying Government negotiators roared up the road. Unidentified men got out and entered the compound. An hour or so later they left, only to return after 30 minutes. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London. 2001

THE HINDU

2 APR 2001

Commandos storm Milosevic home

REUTERS

BELGRADE, March 31. — Masked commandos stormed into the grounds of Mr Slobodan Milosevic's home early today amid shooting in a bid to arrest the former Yugoslav President after an earlier attempt went wrong.

At least two persons were injured. The move came on the eve of a deadline set by the US legislature for President George W Bush to declare whether Yugoslavia is cooperating with the UN War Crimes Tribunal, which has indicted Mr Milosevic, or impose economic sanctions on Belgrade.

Media said police had been asked to arrest Mr Milosevic during the night. But silence from inside the compound after the storming raised the possibility of a stand-off between the commandos and Mr Milosevic's own guards.

Earlier, the Serbian deputy Prime Minister and another source said Mr Milosevic, ousted in a mass uprising last October, had been arrested and taken to a courthouse to face a judge.

But the convoy of jeeps which arrived at the courthouse in central Belgrade left again and Mr Milosevic was seen greeting some support-



Yugoslav special police take position at Mr Slobodan Milosevic's home in Belgrade on Saturday. — AP/PTI

ers outside his home. He has reportedly vowed that he will "not go to prison alive".

The interior minister, Mr Dusan Mihajlovic, said Mr Milosevic was under house arrest and would remain so until he agreed to appear before an investigating magistrate. Speculation that the former leader's arrest was im-

minent soared earlier yesterday after a police van, an ambulance and several cars showed up near his home. But the justice minister said no one had been arrested.

A political source said problems with the arrest were due to the different stances of the police and army, which guards the official residence

in which the former President has continued to live despite his downfall. Serbia's reformist rulers have said the former leader will not be arrested on war crimes charges before the US deadline. But they have left open the possibility of arresting him on charges of abuse of office and financial crimes.

THE STATESMAN

31 APR 2001

Special police commandos storm the house of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade early on Saturday. (Reuters)

US keeping close watch on situation in Belgrade

Washington, March 31 (Reuters): The United States monitored the situation in Belgrade today, the deadline it had set for deciding whether Yugoslavia had made enough democratic progress to warrant continued US aid.

Washington awaited the outcome in Belgrade after a confusing night in which two attempts were made to detain Yugoslavia's former president, Slobodan Milosevic, who is wanted by a UN court on war crimes charges.

"We are currently monitoring the situation and we will not have anything to say until we have all the facts," said a US state department official.

Last night, a different US official had said Washington had "received communications" from the Yugoslav government that Milosevic had been arrested. Yugoslavia has said Milosevic was under house arrest in his Belgrade home for abuse of office and fraud — not for genocide and other crimes. A US official said Milosevic's arrest yesterday was a "good step".

"It's a start toward accountability for his crimes, domestic and international," the official said last night.

Holed-up Milosevic vows not to go to prison alive

FROM DOUGLAS HAMILTON

Belgrade, March 31 (Reuters): Will it be like Edgar G. Robinson in *Little Caesar*, or Hitler and Eva Braun in their Berlin bunker? Or will he come out with his hands up?

"Everyone chooses his own end," said a Serbian government source as observers held their breath for the outcome of the standoff that followed the gunbattle that erupted when Yugoslavia's new leaders tried to arrest its ex-President.

The image of the Chicago gangster smashing a window with his tommy-gun to yell out "You'll never take me alive, copper!" fits Slobodan Milosevic's alleged gangster kingpin status.

The suicide bullet in a bunker was another final scenario imagined by some in the showdown with Milosevic, whose aggressive nationalism brought his people to ruin and turned Yugoslavia into an international pariah.

Tolstoy said it was not "possible to find the factors leading to warfare in the personal actions of a single man", that they lay rather in the myriad decisions of whole peoples, multiplied by unbroken chains of unpredictable circumstance.

But many, in the Balkans and

beyond, have no doubt that Milosevic bears the heaviest responsibility for the wars that engulfed Yugoslavia in the past decade, killed hundreds of thousands and linked Serbs indelibly with the crime of "ethnic cleansing".

Come up and get me

The "Al Capone" charges that he faces, of serious financial and political misdemeanours rather than crimes against humanity, were widely welcomed by the West late yesterday as an "important first step" on the way to an international war crimes trial.

Like the 1920s US hoodlum boss and Public Enemy number one, who died of syphilitic dementia after serving a prison sentence in Alcatraz for federal tax evasion, Milosevic seemingly does not intend to fall into the clutches of the law. "You can put it like this — Milosevic will be under house arrest until he agrees to show up in front of an investigating judge," Serbian interior minister Dusan Mihajlovic said today after two dramatic bids to seize the ex-President went badly wrong.

Milosevic would have to stay holed up, with heavily armed police outside his official residence in a smart Belgrade suburb, until he agreed to appear before an investigating magistrate, Miha-

jlovic said. Milosevic vows he will "not go to prison alive".

As he steadily gambled away bits of the old Yugoslavia, then his own country and its remaining prestige, Serbs used to recount his wife's alarm at finding hundreds of heavily-armed men appearing in the garden of their villa by night. "It's okay, Mira," she had Milosevic saying. "They're just our border guards."

No more joking

It all came true during the night as masked commandos with machineguns stormed his house in a second attempt to grab the ex-statesman. A gunbattle broke out with Milosevic's well-armed private guard, who were still with him today.

By morning, the government was assuring the country that Milosevic would be nabbed "when employees of the ministry of interior estimate that it is possible to carry out the arrest". Political sources had said Yugoslav army officers loyal to the old chief had thwarted the police to protect Milosevic, who was ousted in a mass uprising. Milosevic never a ranting demagogue played it cool in a call with Belgrade radio station B92. "At the moment I am drinking coffee with my friends here and I am very well."

THE TELEGRAPH

Fresh clashes erupt along Kosovo-Macedonia border

Skopje, March 31

ETHNIC ALBANIAN rebels and Macedonian forces exchanged mortar and small-arms fire on Saturday along the Kosovo border, the army said.

There were no casualties on the Macedonian side, a military spokesman said. The army, however, said it was checking unconfirmed reports that one of the guerrillas was killed.

A rebel commander reached by mobile telephone said he was not aware of new fighting. But he said guerrilla units were operating independently in the rugged mountains and were not always able to stay in contact with one another.

In a related development, US troops patrolling the border detained 30 men suspected of being ethnic Albanian rebels crossing from Macedonia into Kosovo, US Spokeswoman Alayne

Cramer said on Saturday. The men, which Cramer said were "military age," were detained on Friday during the day in two groups of 11 and also other smaller groups.

Also found with one group of men were several machine guns and sniper rifles, along with ammunition, Cramer said. Word of renewed fighting came only a day after the army declared success in its nearly weeklong drive to flush the insurgents from strongholds in the hills along the frontier.

Saturday's fighting broke out before dawn and continued sporadically for hours about 10 kilometers north of Skopje, the Macedonian capital, said military spokesman Blagoja Markovski. He said about half a dozen rebels had slipped across the border from Kosovo and began sniping at a Macedonian army watchtower. The army responded with mortar

and small-arms fire, he said.

Also on Saturday, the Macedonian military said it had completed a mine-clearing operation in the Sara mountains above Tetovo, Macedonia's second-largest city. Last Sunday, the Government launched an offensive in the area to drive rebels from their positions.

Ahead of that attack, most civilians in the ethnic Albanian villages fled their homes — some to seek shelter in safer Macedonian towns and villages away from the fighting; others to Kosovo.

The Government of this former Yugoslav republic said its offensive was meant to drive the guerrillas out of the country prior to talks with leaders of the country's ethnic Albanian minority. It has refused to negotiate directly with the rebels, whom it considers terrorists who want to split up Macedonia.

AP

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

31 APR 2001

Homeless Macedonians trek to safety



AFP PHOTO
An elderly ethnic Albanian stands by the ragged gate of his house in the village of Selce, northwest of Tetovo.

Donje Ljubinje (Yugoslavia), March 27

THEY TRUDGED 20 hours, partly in the darkness of a moonless night, through mountains with snow so deep their horses stumbled beneath bulky loads of clothing and food.

All night, hundreds of families emptied the Macedonian village of Vejce and trekked to safety in neighbouring Kosovo. Their Sunday-to-Monday exodus was the largest single movement of refugees — more than 1,000, according to the UN refugee agency — since fighting between ethnic Albanian rebels and Macedonian forces began six weeks ago. Fleeing gunfire from Macedonian helicopters and soldiers, they brought children — among them a 20-day-old infant named Elvis Is — and matriarchs with faces weathered in the wind-swept Macedonian hills they call home.

The hills above the Macedonian city Tetovo are the flashpoint of the fighting now tearing apart the only country that peacefully

separated from Yugoslavia. Hanif Hyseni was drinking coffee at 6 am when Macedonian troops arrived by helicopter at Vejce, 10 km away from Tetovo, trying to encircle the National Liberation Army — the rebels.

"The helicopters kept dropping Macedonian soldiers," he said. "We were just forced to grab clothes that I'm wearing."

Hyseni (38) left his horses and sheep locked in their stalls. Old people were carried on others' backs, and children were perched on the wooden saddles of horses. Young men stayed behind to watch the homes — but also are likely to take up arms with the rebels.

Soon, word spread across the ethnic Albanian village of 1,200 that it was time to go, abandoning their land for the first time since World War II. Some decided to leave immediately. Others waited for dark to keep out of Macedonian gunners' sights.

"While walking through the hills, helicopters came above our heads and started firing into the

woods, which were filled with refugees," said Arif Azemi (35), of his trek to Kosovo with five children in tow.

The Sar mountains are so rugged that Nato troops acknowledge even their soldiers have trouble traversing some sections on the Kosovo side of the border.

The refugees' horses arrived soaking wet up to their bellies. The refugees' shoes were covered in mud, their fingernails filled with dirt from gripping slopes that sometimes run practically vertical. "You can't describe it. It's all uphill," said Zaim Hyseni (25). "The horses were stumbling and falling. When dark fell we couldn't see the road."

Isak Poti (36) left with his two children and 25 family members around 10 am on Sunday and didn't arrive in Donje Ljubinje until 6:30 am yesterday — a trip of more than 20 hours.

He said along the way he saw two people abandoned in the snow, and had no idea if anyone was helping them finish the journey. For the trip, Poti carried a

small bag containing a half-eaten loaf of bread and a single shoe.

The pinpoints of flashlights could be seen moving across the peaks along the Kosovo border on Sunday evening. The residents of the remote mountain town of Donje Ljubinje were trying to find refugees.

German troops patrolling that area were also looking, using their night-vision gear to spot warm bodies in the woods. But the soldiers, with their body armour and machine guns, scared the Macedonian refugees fleeing their own country's army.

The townspeople persuaded the troops to let them move closer to the border to coax the refugees out.

"Come down, come down, it's us," Zaim Karadolami (36) shouted to the hills.

Slowly, throughout the night, the villagers emerged from the trees, picking their way through fields laced with mines left over from the Kosovo war. There were no tears, only exhaustion.

AP

Macedonia acts tough against Albanian rebels

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MACEDONIA, March 25. -- Heavy mortar barrages echoed through the hills surrounding Tetovo early today as fighting escalated between Macedonian forces and ethnic Albanian rebels in the start of a long-promised government offensive to flush out the insurgents.

The early morning explosions, which were the heaviest in days, came as both sides were warning of major actions.

A convoy of armoured vehicles rumbled down the centre of downtown Tetovo just before

dawn, turning toward the ethnic Albanian village of Gajre, four km outside the centre of Tetovo. Yesterday, rebels and Macedonian gunners had exchanged fire on several occasions in the early afternoon.

As three tanks rumbled over cobblestone streets in the city's Slavic neighbourhoods, people gathered on street corners and cheered. Dust and smoke rose above the mountains just south of the city centre. A few small fires burned out of control.

The Macedonian army confirmed that the military had begun a "strong operation to clear

out the terrain from the terrorists on the Sara Mountain." "We are using all available means," Blagoja Markovski, an army spokesman, said.

The barrage came just one day after helicopters had thundered over Mount Sar Planina, the focus of attacks southwest of the city's centre, firing several rockets that sent up a large plume of dirt and smoke. It was not immediately clear what they were targeting or whether anyone was wounded.

The attacks by MI-24 attack helicopters, acquired just a day earlier from Ukraine, also came

a few hours after two shells apparently fired from rebel positions slammed into a Slavic neighbourhood near a police checkpoint, spraying shrapnel through a cobblestone alley and injuring four people. The ethnic Albanian struggle in Macedonia has been linked to the war in Kosovo.

Although the rebels in Macedonia say their aim is more rights for ethnic Albanians within Macedonia, the government accuses them of seeking independence and drawing on Kosovo for fighters and weapons.

THE STATIONAR

26 MAR 20

...of which state they belong to.

31-10 Balkan Battles 29/3

The situation on the Macedonian-Kosovo border raises fears that the Balkan may see yet another conflagration. Armed Kosovars are crossing the Macedonian-Kosovo border, attempting to establish their dominance over Kosovar majority areas of Macedonia. This former republic of Yugoslavia has more than 20 per cent Kosovar population. The idea appears to be to attempt to create a greater Albania including Kosovo of Serbia and Kosovar inhabited areas of Macedonia. Though there is a multinational UN force in Kosovo, they have not succeeded in promoting inter-communal harmony between the Kosovars and Serbs in Kosovo nor have they been able to prevent the Kosovars from infiltrating the border belt in Serbia and the Macedonian territory. In other words, what the Serbs predicted about the Albanian-Kosovar expansionist plans appears to be on way to implementation. NATO has asked the Serbian army to patrol the five kilometre belt from which it had earlier excluded them. NATO is warning the Kosovars not to push the Macedonians too far. Macedonia has already called up volunteers to resist the Kosovar penetration of their territory. The Kosovars in Kosovo are putting pressure on the Serbian minority to carry out ethnic cleansing, and the K-FOR, the NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo, has its hands full in attempting to restrain the Kosovars. Kosovo appears to be a repetition of the US performance in Afghanistan. In order to confront and push out the Soviet forces, the US encouraged in an undifferentiated way all kinds of Islamic extremists including Osama Bin Laden.

Subsequently the Frankenstein monster of Islamic extremism turned on the US. Similarly, the US encouraged and helped to arm the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) to punish then Serbian president Slobadon Milosevic. It is now established that the KLA was used to provoke the conflict to justify the bombing of Yugoslavia. The KLA is no longer under the strict control of the US agencies which trained and armed them. The KLA has made no secret of its objective of securing an independent sovereign Kosovo as a step towards establishing greater Albania which would include besides Kosovo, territories from Macedonia and Greece. In other words, even as the US is advocating multi-ethnic states in Bosnia, Yugoslavia and Macedonia, the Kosovars are posing a major challenge to the concept of the multi-ethnic pluralistic state and are intent on promoting the two-nation theory based on religious doctrine. The US has already taken a stand against redrawing the state boundaries in the Balkans. The US wisdom has come somewhat late. It is not going to be easy for the US and NATO to restrain the KLA extremism and effort in that direction would mean a prolonged stay of the NATO forces in the Balkans in their role as peacekeepers. It is also time for the international community to take a stand against forces and philosophies which fragment existing states in the name of ethno-nationalism. A lot more is at stake in the Macedonian conflict than merely a local ethnic uprising. It is also a lesson to the US that shortsighted opportunistic policies like arming Mujahideen in Afghanistan and the Kosovo Liberation Army in the Balkans have long-term costs not only to the US but to others in the international community.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

24 MAR 2001

Macedonia in final push against rebels

FROM ANATOLY VERBIN

Tetovo (Macedonia), March 20 (Reuters): Macedonian guns blasted houses on the edge of Tetovo today as tanks and troops gathered for what the government said would be a final drive to oust ethnic Albanian rebels from hills around the town.

In Skopje, European Union security chief Javier Solana urged a political rather than military solution to the conflict. "The solution has to be political," Solana told Spanish state radio from the Macedonian capital where he arrived yesterday for talks with senior officials. "The Balkans have suffered too many wars already, too many people have suffered."

Troops with armoured personnel carriers and firing from behind a wall of sandbags directed

long volleys of fire into two houses close to the Tetovo city football stadium. The buildings were on fire and belching thick smoke.

Yesterday, the Macedonian army brought up tanks and several hundred troops and a government spokesman said a "final operation" was being readied to oust the rebels. It was not clear how authorities would conduct an assault in the steep, thickly wooded hills against elusive rebels.

Interior ministry troops have pounded rebel targets in the hills for the past six days. A government spokesman in Skopje said yesterday that security forces had destroyed the main guerrilla stronghold on a hill overlooking Tetovo, a town of around 70,000 people.

"The Macedonian security forces will soon start a final opera-

tion to destroy the terrorists," Antonio Milosovski said. "That will happen when our commanders in the field decide that there will be a minimum risk of losing lives of security forces," he said.

But Macedonian forces had not yet managed to destroy guerrilla underground tunnels, he said. Macedonian forces have mortared and machinegunned rebel targets since Wednesday in an effort to dislodge what Macedonia says is a force of several hundred guerrillas of the self-styled National Liberation Army (NLA).

There has been little return fire in the past two days and an interior ministry spokesman said guerrilla attacks were subsiding. "The intensity of the attacks against our forces is slowing down," said spokesman Stevo Pendarovski.

Earlier a guerrilla commander said the rebels had held onto their positions despite the bombardment and said government forces were being pushed back towards Skopje. There has been no evidence to back up the assertion.

Ethnic Albanians make up one-third of Macedonia's two million population. Both Skopje and the West are worried about the risk of a slide towards ethnic conflict that could not only tear the public apart but ultimately drag in neighbouring Bulgaria, Greece, Albania or Yugoslavia.

The rebels say they are fighting for more rights for Macedonia's Albanians. In a statement, the National Liberation Army appealed for financial help from "Albanians wherever they are," adding they had decided to create a fund to support the fighting.



Spent cartridges litter the ground during a shootout between Macedonian forces and Albanian rebels in Tetovo. (AP)

Spectre of a new war in the Balkans

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Tetovo (Macedonia), March 15

ETHNIC ALBANIAN guerrillas have brought their insurgency from Macedonia's countryside to the second-largest city, exchanging gunfire with police in an escalation of violence near Kosovo that threatens to flare into a new Balkan war.

Southern Serbia, the other potential flashpoint, was edgy but calm yesterday as Yugoslav troops moved into an area held by Albanian insurgents.

A truce appeared to be holding, but the fighting in Macedonia overshadowed the successful deployment. Police said the clashes began yesterday when about 15 rebels started firing in Kale, a suburb of Tetovo and in the nearby village of Setec.

"Police are being shot at and they are responding," Macedonia-

ian defence ministry spokesman Blagoja Markovski said.

One person was killed, Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski said. Raim Thaci, director of Tetovo Hospital, said at least 14 people were wounded, including 11 policemen. The clashes spread yesterday to villages on the nearby slopes of Mount Sar Planina, State Radio reported. Police said they had sent in more officers to prevent "more terrorists" from moving toward Tetovo.

Fearing the worst, Macedonians — the country's Slavic majority — began fleeing Tetovo.

Macedonian forces also were fighting ethnic Albanian rebels outside the border villages of Malino Malo and Brest.

Until yesterday, rebel activity had been limited to villages on the border with Kosovo. Government troops had hoped to keep the fight-

ing away from the urban areas.

President Boris Trajkovski convened a meeting with senior military officials ahead of emergency talks with the ambassadors of NATO and EU countries.

Earlier in the day, about 5,000 ethnic Albanians rallied on Tetovo's main square in support of the rebels. The unrest is linked both to Kosovo, a largely Albanian-populated province in southern Serbia, and the buffer zone adjoining it, where Yugoslav troops deployed yesterday.

The Yugoslav deployment in the buffer zone brings the troops close to rebels and to an ethnic Albanian population that deeply resents them.

Though NATO mediated a ceasefire, the rebels say they can't guarantee that all their fighters will follow it. NATO hopes the Yugoslav troops will calm the

zone and reduce the movement of rebels and weapons.

Tensions soared in Kosovo as well yesterday as some 50 Serbs clashed with NATO-led troops in the ethnically divided town of Kosovska Mitrovica to protest the arrests of three Serbs wanted for illegal weapons possession. Peacekeepers fired stun and tear gas grenades.

USA withdraws troops: The Bush administration is withdrawing about 750 of the US peacekeeping troops from Bosnia and is consulting with NATO allies on additional cutbacks, two US officials said.

However, a pledge by Secretary of State Colin Powell to stay the course in the restive Balkans, where more than 9,000 US troops patrol Bosnia and Kosovo, remains in effect, a report from Washington adds.

AP

Talk of 'Ceausescu scenario' in Belgrade

By Vaiju Naravane

BELGRADE, MARCH 11. "How do you call someone on Death Row in the States? Dead man walking, right? I am almost certain that Slobodan Milosevic is in such a situation today," says Mr. Bozidca Spacic, former senior member of the Serbian secret service who today runs a detective agency called SIA.

Mr. Spacic is on a government committee called TIM, which is investigating persons who had dealings with the former Yugoslav President, Mr. Milosevic. One of their jobs is to tail persons closely linked to the Milosevic couple.

"Following the arrest of Rade Markovic, the former chief of the secret service and a close friend of Slobodan and his wife Mira, such precautionary measures were necessary. In the past couple weeks alone, there have been serious warnings, attacks against members of the government and the secret services, which we believe came from Milosevic cronies," says Mr. Spacic.

In his villa in the Dedjine district, Mr. Milosevic lives surrounded by some 20 close bodyguards. They are strong, highly trained men, adept at body combat, equipped with the latest equipment by way of close range weapons.

During the reign of Mr. Milosevic they were allowed every liberty. They were given money, power, women. Their loyalty to Mr. Milosevic is absolute.

"Two men in particular never leave the former president's side: the chief bodyguard Senta Milenkovic and his number two, Filipovic or Fico, a name that is almost certainly false. Fico is a karate black belt and is known in the service as an excellent knife artist," says Mr. Spacic.

There are at least two other security

rings around Mr. Milosevic. But unlike the first one, they are not friendly rings. The first of these consists of secret police who have sworn loyalty to the Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Djindjic, who now controls the Interior Ministry and the intelligence services. The second is made up of men from federal army intelligence units, controlled by the federal President, Mr. Vojislav Kostounica.

These double security rings speak volumes about the growing discord within the ruling coalition and between the President and the Prime Minister. "This could create serious problems when Milosevic is arrested. Djindjic is increasingly in favour of handing Slobodan over to the International Criminal Tribunal at The Hague. Kostounica would like to try him in Serbia," affirms Mr. Spacic. Asked

INSIDE SERBIA — V

when the arrest will take place, Mr. Spacic answers: "Very soon."

Mr. Rade Markovic, former secret services chief, has begun to speak. He's very careful of course, but he's talking. His big worry is to save his men. Otherwise, he becomes a prime target himself. Other people too have decided to cooperate with the investigators. Proof against Mr. Milosevic is beginning to accumulate — on the assassination in January 2000 of the warlord and mafia boss Zejlko Rastanovic better known as Arkan; the killing of the investigative reporter Vlasco Curuvain in April 1999 and the attempt on the life of the Opposition leader, Mr. Vuk Draskovic, in which four people, including his brother-in-law died. People are talking about these and other homicides which dotted Mr. Milosevic's 13-year reign.

According to Mr. Spacic, it is at the time of Mr. Milosevic's arrest that 'the Ceausescu scenario' will be played out. The Romanian dictator and his wife Elena were killed on Christmas day 1989 after a semblance of a trial in an army barracks deep in the Moldovan countryside.

"This Ceausescu scenario has forever been Milosevic's nightmare. Let's ask ourselves what will probably happen. I think Milosevic will resist arrest. He will ask his bodyguards to defend him. Knowing his men, I know that they will not hesitate to obey him. Of course it will be a suicidal operation that will depend greatly on the attitude of those who will be sent to arrest him. But its conclusion will bring the curtain down on Milosevic and his 13-year reign. Naturally events might not occur exactly how I'm describing them, but it's very plausible," says Mr. Spacic.

And Mirjana? "She is forever at his side," he says discreetly. The arrest scenario poses several problems. Every night Slobodan and wife Mirjana protected by a cortege of armoured cars drive off to Dobanoci, an anti-nuke bunker specially built by Marshal Tito and which NATO forces tried in vain to destroy during the Kosovo war. The same three security rings operate there as well.

Mr. Spacic's assassination theory is shared by several other people. Mr. Ljubisha Ristic, Chairman of Mirjana Markovic's JUL party told *The Hindu*: "Slobodan Milosevic's life is in grave danger. I am afraid he will be killed."

Others were less willing to be named in print. But all agree that Mr. Milosevic's departure from the scene will be convenient "for everybody", including "many in the present government."

(Concluded)

THE HINDU

MAR 11 1999

Serbians weighed down by penury

By Vaiju Naravane

BELGRADE, MARCH 9. Vera is tall, blonde and beautiful. Clutching her shabby button-less coat about her throat, she scurries through Belgrade's crowded open-air market looking for bargains. Her small stringbag contains 1 kg of potatoes, two rolls of toilet paper and a couple of beefbones.

"I have to be very careful with money. We are already in the second week of March and neither my husband nor I have been paid yet. So, I am buying the absolute minimum. I need at least some vegetables and bread to make up a stew for tonight. But there is nothing for less than 20 dinars per kilo", she says, her eye slingerling longingly on shiny purple auber-

INSIDE SERBIA — IV

gines and tight flowerets of broccoli. "I suppose we will have to make do again with bread and bone stock goulash made with potatoes, onions and tomatoes", she sighs.

Vera works at an orphanage for abandoned children and earns 4,500 dinars per month, or the equivalent of 150 German marks.

With bread costing half a mark, a litre of milk at one mark and 1 kg of oranges at one and a half mark, her salary does not go far.

There is galloping inflation in Serbia and Vera complains that she can never manage to budget properly. "My husband is in the army. But in fact, he does three jobs. After he comes back home, he hangs up his uniform to become a house painter. He does

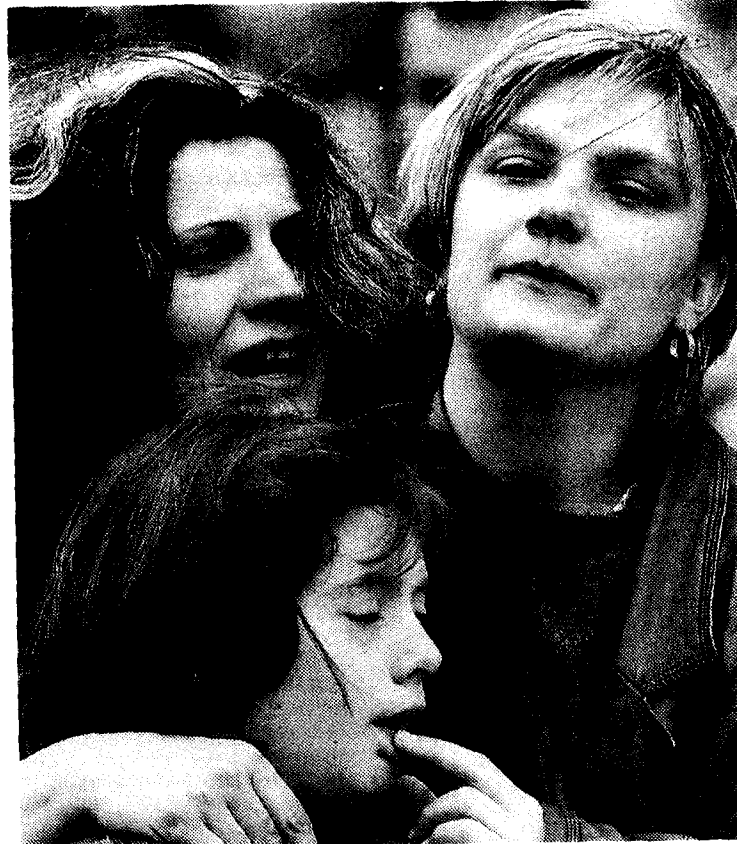
odd jobs repairing broken taps and cars because he's good at anything mechanical. Nevertheless, it's a very hard life and it's likely to become harder", says Vera.

Branka is an economic journalist with the Italian press agency ANSA. "The consumer basket costs three times what people earn. Even with incomes from three jobs (practically everyone tries to do at least two jobs) people find it difficult to survive. Sanctions have broken Yugoslavia's economy. Inflation is running at 30 per cent. Industrial production is down 40 per cent. Factories have fallen into disrepair because there are no spares. The bureaucracy is bloated. Unemployment is estimated at 50 per cent of the active population. The picture is very grim indeed.

"The new Government has its work cut out. The Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Djindjic, has got together some very competent people but it will take years to set things right. "At least for the first time we have a Government that is not telling lies to the people", she says.

It's a glorious spring day with temperatures in the mid-twenties. Years of anxiety, penury and deprivation have etched harsh lines on people's faces. The unrelenting sunlight reveals them all, leaving faces strangely exposed, almost naked.

Vera says she knows she cannot expect an economic miracle overnight. "We understand that the Government is doing its best. And that makes it easier to bear.



Macedonian women comfort each other as they cry during the funeral of the Macedonian army officer, Kirce Dimitriev, in the town of Stip recently in this file photo. Dimitriev was among the three soldiers killed in a village on the border with Kosovo, occupied by ethnic Albanian gunmen.

For a long time I was troubled by terrible dreams. I was in a tunnel that never ended.

"I could never see the light and I thought we would continue to live in a dark kingdom forever.

When I saw the houses built by the criminal Arkan or the Karic brothers who have systematically looted this country with Sloba and Mira, I would feel the bile rising into my mouth. Now all I want

is justice. I want them to pay. I want them to be tried".

Overwhelmingly, the residents of Belgrade feel Mr. Slobodan Milosevic should pay for robbing them of their dignity and livelihood. It is now no longer a question of whether the former President and his cronies will be tried but when. Most people, while preferring a trial in Serbia, are not averse to letting the international tribunal try him.

A political analyst, Mr. Bratislava Grubacic, says "For this Government, Mr. Milosevic is now becoming almost a secondary question. The primary concerns are economic. Yugoslavia cannot do without credits from the IMF and the World Bank. Non-cooperation with the international tribunal could hold back these loans and grants. The economy is in a state of collapse and we have no time to lose. So, even the President Vojislav Kostounica, who was adamant about not extraditing Mr. Milosevic to The Hague, is beginning to change his tune. We shall see some movement, definitely before the end of March.

"Threats of civil war brandished by Mr. Milosevic's supporters are just rubbish. Those organising demonstrations outside his house are finding it difficult to get even 100 people together. Most of them are ignorant peasants and out of work factory hands from the countryside. There will be no bloodshed and no civil war. Due process will be followed. That is what is taking so long".

'Milosevic is a dead man walking'

By Vaiju Naravane

BELGRADE, MARCH 8. Senior members of Mr. Slobodan Milosevic's entourage say they fear "a Romanian style scenario" with a simulated gun battle in which the former Serbian strongman will be killed.

Noted Serbian intellectual and theatre director, Mr. Lubisa Ristic, an MP and Chairman of JUL, or the Yugoslavian Left Movement, a party started by Mr. Milosevic's wife, Ms. Mirjana Markovic, told *The Hindu* in an exclusive interview: "Mr. Milosevic's life is in grave danger. I am afraid that he will be killed. There is no proof against him. He has done nothing wrong. The colonisation of Yugoslavia is now complete and our new colonised Government will do anything to please their masters. The West wants the former President's head and they will get it."

Mr. Ristic's sentiments were echoed by several others who have been close to Mr. Milosevic. A senior member of the former secret services told *The Hindu*, "I think Mr. Milosevic's days are numbered. To use an American phrase, Mr. Milosevic is a dead man walking." But members of the Opposition discounted these fears as "totally unfounded and an attempt to create a fear psychosis amongst the people."

Mr. Dragan Petrovic a respected Belgrade journalist said: "This Government wants to play by the rule book. The new President, Mr. Kostunica has cautioned several times against any revolutionary justice. Otherwise there will be no difference between this Government and the one led by Mr. Milosevic where he ruled like an emperor. That said, there are three security rings around Mr. Milosevic. The first ring is that of

his own personal and loyal bodyguards. The second ring is of guards from the Interior Ministry — secret service or police forces. The third ring is from the army security, since the villa that Mr. Milosevic occupies belongs to the army. The federal army is controlled by Mr. Kostunica. The police and secret services are under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Djindjic. It is no secret that there are tensions between the Prime Minister and the President about how to go about arresting the former President and it will be interesting to see how the various security forces react. There could be a danger to Mr. Milosevic if his personal bodyguards resist attempts to arrest him."

The former President lives surrounded by his bodyguards in a secluded villa in Belgrade's most

INSIDE SERBIA — III

exclusive residential and diplomatic district. There is a gaggle of some 50 people outside Mr. Milosevic's villa at No. 11 Uzicka. Most of them have come from the countryside. They are mainly poor peasants, retired teachers, workers or soldiers, fervent supporters of the former President. Holding the Serbian and Yugoslav flags and carrying pictures of the former President they are an angry and hostile little group suspicious of journalists.

"You can never understand us. You are not Serbian. We like India because India supported us during the war. Look at us, do you think the Serbians are capable of killing? Do you think our President is capable of killing," shouts an angry, woman with dyed red hair. But proof that Mr. Milosevic was involved in several killings may be accumulating surely but

slowly.

The Opposition leader, Mr. Vuk Draskovic and his wife gave evidence in the investigation into an attempt on his life in 1999. Four persons, including Ms. Draskovic's brother were killed in the attack. Mr. Milosevic's former security chief Rade Markovic has been charged with plotting the killing and a senior police officer has now directly accused him of masterminding that and other killings including the murder of the notorious warlord and criminal Arkan.

Meanwhile, violence and killings in southern Serbia, peopled by an Albanian majority continue. Just hours after this correspondent left Lucane, the last Serbian checkpoint on the route to Kosovo, four Yugoslav army personnel, two soldiers and two officers were killed in a mine explosion. For the first time on Wednesday, American NATO forces fired at Albanian guerillas from the UCPMB or the new Liberation army in southern Serbia's Presevo valley. Macedonian forces too launched attacks again on Albanian rebel positions after two Macedonian soldiers were killed on Tuesday.

However, officials in Belgrade say they are optimistic about a ceasefire agreement which they hope will be signed as early as March 10 with the Albanians in southern Serbia. The Kosovars who have not given hopes for an independent Kosovo and possibly a greater Albanian State are doing their utmost to torpedo these talks. Bratsa Grubacic, the respected editor of the Belgrade daily *VIP* said: "The Yugoslav forces must show restraint in the face of these attacks. Responding with big guns will be playing into their hands. Restraint and negotiation is the only way to avoid a further explosion in the Balkans".

THE HINDU

- 9 MAR 2001

'Milosevic is a dead man walking'

By Vaiju Naravane

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INSIDE SERBIA — III

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THE HINDU

- 9 MAR 2001

A Serb town with an Albanian heart

By Vajju Naravane

LUCANE (SOUTHERN SERBIA), MARCH 7. Lucane is the last Serbian checkpoint bordering the five kilometre-wide buffer zone that now separates Kosovo from Serbia. There is fine powdery snow and the wind freezes your guts.

The checkpoint is located at a strategic bend in the road leading to the Kosovo border 15 km away. Sandbags are piled high on the sides of the wreck of what was once a dry goods store. Every car and lorry is stopped and searched, identity papers carefully scrutinised. The dozen men manning the post nervously clutch the automatic guns slung around their shoulders. Albanian guerrillas from the new UCK better known as UCPMB or the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medveda and Bujanovac have been mounting ever more daring attacks against Serb forces in this rugged and mountainous region. They want the entire 250 sq. km. area to become part of an independent Kosovo.

"The Albanians have their bunkers just 67 metres away. They are now using heavy artillery, mortars, rockets and sniper fire. Lots and lots of sniper fire. The area around us is

mined and a couple of days ago we lost three policemen when their jeep was blown up," says Commandant Nenad of the special anti-terrorist police units which control this area. On the face of it, Lucane, with a population of about 4,000 looks like any other sleepy hamlet in the Serbian countryside. But as often in Serbia, appearances are deceptive. As the muezzin's call goes up from the many mosques dotting this part of southern Serbia, there is a burst of shell fire

INSIDE SERBIA -- II

accompanied by the pop-popping sounds of individual sniper guns.

The men around me swing into action, responding with shelling of their own. Dogs bark furiously, chickens scatter helter-skelter. Then, just as suddenly and furiously as it started, the rat-tat-tat dies down. Calm returns. "The Albanians are using weapons with Chinese markings. They even have

KFOR weapons. The Chinese weapons come from Albania which regularly buys from China. We do not understand how these people have managed to procure KFOR munitions

tions," says Nenad. "The Albanians have been using this buffer zone to capture and control territory which is within Serbia. KFOR soldiers do nothing to stop them. They are free to do what they like. Now with the latest Albanian atrocities, NATO has agreed to allow us to move our positions forward, to reduce the buffer zone. But we have received no order to that effect so far."

The swathe of territory which is home to some 80,000 people is predominantly Albanian. Resentment against the Serbs is high here. Presevo, one of the four main towns referred to as the "Presevo valley" and home to 20,000 persons, is dominated by mosques and minarets. The women wear scarves and the men have caps which are a cross between a beret and a Fez.

Mr. Riza Halimi is the Mayor of Presevo. He is holding talks with a special emissary of the American Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Mr. William Montgomery who refuses to give his name or to comment on the contents of their discussions. "I have absolutely no comment to make," the diplomat says hastily, slamming shut the door of his white

derway with the new Government in power in Belgrade. "Certainly there has been a change of tone and attitude. But so far, nothing has changed on the ground. We need change quickly." Meanwhile, Albanian guerrillas operating from Kosovo have continued their attacks against Macedonian forces along the triangular border separating Kosovo, Serbia and Macedonia. The NATO Secretary-General, Mr. George Robertson said NATO would help Macedonian forces control Albanian rebel activity in the areas.

THE HINDU

8 MAR 2001

Technicality may delay Milosevic's arrest

By Vajju Naravane

BELGRADE, MARCH 6. The waiting game has begun. Hundreds of journalists have converged on the Yugoslav capital in the wake of persistent rumours about the "imminent arrest" of the former Yugoslav strongman, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic.

"They are like vultures. They have flocked here on hearing the death rattle. They are just waiting to peck his eyes out," says a 45-year-old Goran, a mechanic who lost a son "defending Kosovo" and who continues to be an unconditional support-

INSIDE SERBIA -- I

er of Mr. Milosevic. "But the international community should not underestimate Milosevic. He has nothing to fear and the Government has no proof against him," Mr. Goran said. But not everyone in Belgrade has such virulent views. "Young people want the economy to fare better. We should put Milosevic behind bars for what he did to us. We should cooperate with the international tribunal so that our economic situation improves. I don't care about Milosevic. We don't have time to waste and Kostunica is wasting our time," said Radovan Lubic, a 23-year-old student and taxi

driver. There appears to be a growing crisis within the ruling Government coalition with the Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Djindjic and the Federal President, Mr. Vojislav Kostunica advocating divergent methods on how to deal with Mr. Milosevic. Pressure from the streets indicates that the Serbs are baying for blood and would like to see a few heads roll.

Mr. Djindjic is prepared to go ahead but is being restrained by the President who has always opposed handing over Mr. Milosevic. The issue is also dividing the country down the line.

Journalists were given to understand last week that the former Serbian leader's arrest was just a "matter of days". But well-informed sources within the ruling 20-member coalition, the Serbian Democratic Alliance indicate that Mr. Djindjic in his hurry to book Mr. Milosevic might have "muffed it up." In Belgrade the mood is quiescent. The Justice Minister, Mr. Vladan Batic in a press conference on Monday said Mr. Milosevic could not be extradited immediately and Yugoslavia could not begin "collaborating" with the International War crimes tribunal on the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) without amendments to the country's Constitution. Such an amendment



would not be possible until elections in the Republic of Montenegro are held on April 22. He also indicated that the International War Crimes Tribunal would be seeking to indict top Albanian leaders such as Hashim Thaci for atrocities committed against the Serbs in Kosovo.

Mr. Djindjic has just returned from Washington where the Secretary of State, Mr. Colin Powell gave him what could only be described as an ultimatum: hand over Milosevic by March 31 or else the U.S. would block the release of \$100 million in devel-

opment aid from the International Monetary Fund. Mr. Djindjic had calculated that Rade Markovic, the former chief of the Serbian secret service who was arrested last Thursday would provide incriminating details about his former boss. This has not happened and the dossier against Mr. Milosevic remains inconveniently thin.

Sources in the independent news agency Beta say that Mr. Milosevic signed no papers and only gave verbal orders. At the moment, Mr. Djindjic does not have enough to put him in prison. There is also increasing pressure from the chief U.N. war crimes prosecutor, Ms. Carla del Ponte. She too has threatened to call for a reimposition of sanctions against Yugoslavia if the March 31 deadline is not met. Mr. Kostunica may find himself in an increasingly weakened position.

The situation is further complicated by spiralling skirmishes between Macedonian forces and Kosovo Albanian rebels along the frontier between Macedonia, Kosovo and southern Serbia. Ethnic Albanian rebels on Monday attacked government positions with mortars for the second time in as many days, Macedonia's Defence Ministry said. No casualties were reported after Sunday's clashes that killed three soldiers.

110-17

Violence unlimited

THERE IS a depressing sameness about events in Yugoslavia today. In a worsening political climate marked by a sharp increase in aggression and hostility, everyone has failed, perhaps even refused, to draw lessons from the years of brutality and mayhem that gripped the country for a decade — the Kosovo Albanians, the Serbs and the Montenegrins. Last week was marked by bloody attacks against Kosovo's terrified Serb population by the province's militant Albanians. Remote-controlled bombs were used to blow up a bus carrying Serbs on their way to visit family graves and a police car. In all, 15 persons died, with NATO peacekeepers seemingly incapable of preventing renewed escalation.

Serb and Yugoslav leaders have vowed to take stern action against ethnic Albanians in the Presevo valley, which forms the buffer zone between southern Serbia and Kosovo. The UCPMB or the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac has been harassing Yugoslav forces in the region. There is a sizeable number of Albanians in the valley and they would like the Presevo region to become part of an independent Albanian Kosovo.

Increased instability in the region in the months to come appears inevitable. The departure of Mr. Slobodan Milosevic and the installation of Mr. Vojislav Kostunica as Serbian President have queered the pitch for Kosovar Albanians. So long as Mr. Milosevic and his henchmen ruled Belgrade, the Kosovar Albanians, despite a growing number of attacks against the Serb community, continued to receive a degree of sympathy from the West. Mr. Milosevic's exactions and NATO's muscled intervention had led them to believe that an independent and sovereign Kosovo, albeit specifically denied by U.N. Resolution 1244, which guarantees Yugoslavia's continued territorial integrity with "substantial autonomy" for Kosovo, was within their grasp.

These hopes have now been dashed by the fact that Mr. Kostunica has become the new Balkan darling of the West. Both Greece and Russia, Belgrade's traditional allies, have called for a stronger E.U. presence in southern Serbia and

Everyone seems to have refused to draw lessons from the years of brutality and mayhem in Yugoslavia.

VAIJU NARAVANE
on the targeting of Serbs by Albanians.

condemned the violence unleashed by Kosovo's ethnic Albanians.

The just-concluded Balkan summit addressed three main issues: renewed violence in Kosovo, related clashes in southern Serbia and Montenegro's push for independence. European leaders urged Serbia and Montenegro, the remaining members of the Yugoslav federation, to reach a mutually acceptable solution and stressed the importance of "avoiding unilateral actions which may jeopardise negotiations".

However, the Montenegrin Government pre-empted the Balkan summit agenda by announcing the date for key elections, which could pave the

way for a further split in Yugoslavia. The poll date has been set for April 22. The current parliament's term does not expire until May 2002. The pro-independence President, Mr. Milo Djukanovic, said if his Democratic Party of Socialists won the parliamentary snap poll, he would hold a referendum on independence shortly. He said the referendum would allow the creation of a looser alliance.

Mr. Kostunica has ruled out what has been described as the "divorce and re-marriage idea" and has offered a reformed federation. Polls conducted in Montenegro show that a majority of the population favours independence. But the tiny republic of 650,000 people has very determined Serb and Albanian minorities and observers do not rule out another bloody upheaval if plans for independence go ahead. Diplomats feel that any move to change the existing Yugoslav borders would be an open invitation to trouble and could encourage breakaway movements in Kosovo, Bosnia and Macedonia.

The continuing attacks against the Serbs in Kosovo have angered the Serbs and there is pressure on Mr.

Kostunica to take a tougher line against the UCPMB guerrillas in the Presevo valley.

The new Serbian authorities have shown exceptional restraint in dealing with the Presevo valley guerrillas. They are stepping gingerly because any precipitate action might once again win them the West's disfavour. The United Nations would like to solve the Kosovo question by creating a confederation of Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro.

"But what do they mean? A confederation of three independent states, or three parts of one state," asks the journalist and Balkans historian, Mr. Tim Judah.

"The Kosovo Albanians would violently resist being incorporated into a single state. With imagination and some muscular diplomacy, a confederation of independent states might be worked out. Sometime this year Kosovo's Albanians will vote for a Parliament but no one yet knows what its powers will be. Within the next six months, Montenegrins will probably vote in a referendum on independence. If they secede, no one believes that Kosovo can form a confederation with Serbia alone."



Serbs mourn their kin killed in a recent bus blast.

THE HINDU

29 FEB 2001

25 FEB 2001

US-trained mob ousted Milosevic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, Jan. 30. — The USA had trained non-violent volunteers of the mass movement that overthrew Mr Slobodan Milosevic, it is now revealed. An article in *Peacewatch*, a publication of the Congress-funded US Institute of Peace, has revealed the USA, the lone military superpower of the world, is also accomplished in imparting training in non-violence to overthrow dictators.

The article said the youth movement Otpor (resistance) was a critical participant in the 5 October revolt that overthrew Mr Milosevic.

Mr Srdja Popovic, leader of Serbia's grassroots movement, said three months of peaceful street demonstrations in Belgrade against Mr Milosevic in 1996-97, led by the Opposition and Otpor, marked the beginning of the non-violent movement.

The demonstrations signalled to Mr Milosevic and his supporters that the people no longer feared him, said Mr Popovic. The disciplined defiance gradually became popular among the people.

Over the last two years, Mr Popovic said, the Opposition honed its understanding and use of

the non-violent action.

To its help came a retired US colonel, Robert Helvey, who trained the volunteers in non-violent principles and strategy in March and April 1999.

Helvey was hired by International Republican Institute, an NGO based in Washington DC, which had been engaged in developing political parties in Serbia.

He explained in the article that he had followed the concepts of Gene Sharp, author of *Politics of Non-violent Action*, a three-volume opus. The second volume lists 198 examples of non-violent direct action techniques.

In his training sessions, Helvey identified the source of power in a society, its strengths and weaknesses, and then asked the participants to define their objectives and develop a strategy to realise them.

Among other related techniques and issues, Helvey taught how to put an opponent in a situation where he could only lose.

After the training, the Otpor created a user's manual of "non-violent resistance" and trained some 70,000 activists who later led the movement against Mr Milosevic.

THE SUNDAY
NEWS

31 JAN 2000

TREATING EUROPE'S BALKAN SYNDROME

By ALEXANDER KONOVALOV

THE debate on the Balkan syndrome continues, assuming increasingly strident forms although, as is often the case, there is no clear understanding either of the syndrome's telling symptoms or the underlying causes.

Most of the journalists and politicians are convinced that depleted uranium munitions employed by Americans are to blame. These, they say, led to radioactive pollution of the terrain, and servicemen sent to areas hit by these munitions were exposed to radiation resulting in ailments and deaths. In no way exonerating NATO's air campaign against Yugoslavia and the use of any American ammunition there, one has to state that so far any analysis of Balkan syndrome causes appears superficial and implausible. Yet the causes need looking into. Too great is the price that has to be paid for ignorance.

Here mention should be made of the kind of uranium munitions we are referring to, the grade of uranium used, and the purposes for which it is employed. Depleted uranium U-238 is a by-product of weapons-grade uranium U-235. While the latter isotope, given a certain measure of enrichment, is used for making nuclear weapons, as a fuel at nuclear power plants and in nuclear propulsion machinery of surface and sub-surface vessels, U-238 is totally unfit for these purposes for the reason of its low radioactivity. But uranium is a heavy and dense metal. This property made Americans use it in conventional munitions to pierce more effectively armour and massive concrete structures. Depleted uranium U-238 cores are fitted to shells fired from 30 mm air guns mounted on A-10 assault planes used for direct air support of ground troops.

These aircraft are called "tank hunters". Similar cores are also incorporated in warheads of tactical air-to-surface missiles and some other types of conventional ammunition, the aim being the same -- to add to their armour and concrete piercing ability. As a matter of fact, depleted uranium is also used as a shielding material. Depleted uranium plates are sandwiched in between steel plating of M1A1 Abrams tanks to reinforce armour protection.

QUESTIONS

In all cases, depleted uranium cores and plates are covered with a steel layer and are not supposed to leak any harmful radiation outside. All doubts and uncertainties, however, begin when these shells and rockets are fired. When a uranium-cored shell hits a tank, for example, the tremendous kinetic energy of the heavy uranium core translated into heat, with up to 70 per cent of the core evaporating and releasing a cloud of uranium oxides and minutest particles of metallic uranium. For a certain period of time the cloud hovers in the air and may be inhaled by human beings. This is not salutary for health, no doubt. Heavy metals are notoriously hard to remove from the body and, by accumulating, they can cause all sorts of diseases, including cancer. Besides, uranium oxides are toxic but what they target in the first place are kidneys and liver, not the bone marrow.

Attempts to provide a simple and uncomplicated explanation to the Balkan syndrome give rise to a series of questions. NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo, lasted 78 days. And at that time no foreign ground troops were stationed in Kosovo. But there were locals and units of the Yugoslav army. It stands to reason that they, of all people, should have been exposed to the dangerous dust and toxic uranium oxides or to small doses of radiation. During the

78 days of their campaign the Americans used 31,000 munitions with depleted uranium cores. But this was not the first time such ammunition was used on a massive scale.

In 1994-95, NATO used in Bosnia 10,000 such shells and rockets weighing a total of nine tons. Even more impressive was the consumption of depleted uranium munitions during Desert Storm Operation in 1991. The amount used at that time against Saddam Hussein's troops was 783,000 munitions with uranium cores, or roughly 300 tons. Now the Iraqis have joined the general chorus of concerned Europeans, saying that the leukemia incidence rate in their country has shot up. But why were they silent all these past 10 years? A study of the real situation in Iraq could shed much light on many things. We have here the longest period since the use of such weapons and the most massive application.

NOT SIMPLE

Finally, uranium-cored shells are not a technological novelty, to put it mildly. They have been long organic in US armed forces and so have been regularly used in firing practice on test ranges. Are there any signs of the Balkan syndrome among personnel of these bases who have been long exposed to the same factors as servicemen in the Balkans? Maybe the reason for the Balkan syndrome is not so much what was fired by NATO troops as the targets they hit. Among these were oil refineries and large chemical plants, which could prove far more dangerous to health than the use of uranium cores in shells. Generally speaking, there is as yet no satisfactory reply as to what causes the Balkan syndrome. An attempt to explain away things by nothing else than the use of armour-piercing shells with depleted uranium cores appears too simple to be all the truth. So a search is a must on the understanding that it will take time, competent specialists and considerable funds.

What then can be recommended to cure Europe of the Balkan syndrome? First, it is necessary to establish the sequence of causes and factors that led to the diseases and deaths of a large number of servicemen from different countries. Rather, one will have to deal with a complex array of differing causes. It is in place to recall here a story by the great Polish sci fi writer Stanislaw Lem. The setting of the story is in a technologically advanced civilisation of the distant future. The main character -- a detective -- is investigating a series of enigmatic suicides. All the suicides were men in the prime of life, successful in career and personal relations, and all of them, without seeming motives, ended their lives by throwing themselves out of their offices. A painstaking analysis helps the detective to solve the riddle. All the victims were getting bald and used the same type of lotion to stimulate hair growth. Additionally, before going to bed, they took the same kind of tranquilliser. As it appeared, each of the drugs, taken separately, was absolutely innocuous, but their combination produced an appalling psychotropic effect -- a compulsive desire to fling oneself out of the window. Similarly with the Balkan syndrome, there is unlikely to be a simple one-factor explanation. Secondly, the Balkan syndrome has been a reminder that most of Europe is a technologically advanced civilisation where any forceful intervention is fraught with man-made disasters with unpredictable consequences. All in all, Europe is not the place where one can bomb and reduce to ruins a little country with impunity for several months, purposely demolishing its industry and expecting that there will be no ecological aftermath. In Yugoslavia we have it.

The author is president of the Institute for Strategic Assessment, Moscow.

1110 The Balkan Syndrome 1111

The after-effects of the bombing of Yugoslavia by US forces in March-June 1999 are now being felt. Chief among these is the linkage between the use of depleted-uranium ammunition and deaths due to leukaemia among peace-keeping personnel posted in Kosovo. The fall-out of the warheads tipped with radioactive material has caused alarm in several European countries. The UN environment programme has found evidence of residual radioactivity in eight of the 11 sites where depleted-uranium ammunition was used. Political leaders of Italy, Portugal, Holland and Belgium have taken up the issue with the secretary-general of NATO under whose aegis the US air force had carried out the bombing operations. Even the British have been compelled to take note of the issue. Predictably, the first reaction of NATO has been to deny any link between the use of such ammunition and the outbreak of what is called the Balkan war syndrome. This is not surprising. It took years before the US and British servicemen who suffered from the Gulf war syndrome could convince the authorities to accept its reality. The affected US servicemen have won a class action suit in US courts and obtained compensation. Then as now, depleted-uranium ammunition was suspected to be one of the causes. Because of the metal's high density and its quality to ignite readily at high temperatures, depleted-uranium is used in the casing cone of the warhead to give it increased penetrability into steel armour and concrete bunkers.

The present controversy recalls the extensive use of Agent Orange, the defoliant chemical, in Vietnam. While the chemical's release did not generally result in immediate fatalities, its effect was long lasting. Agent Orange led to large-scale birth defects in succeeding generations and increased cancer deaths both among US soldiers exposed to it and the Vietnamese who were living in the areas sprayed with the defoliant. In that case, too, the affected US soldiers went to court and, through a class action suit, succeeded in getting compensation. But the Vietnamese victims, running into hundreds of thousands, have been ignored. The bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 caused extensive ecological damage as chemical plants and oil refineries were targeted; as a result the river Danube became highly polluted. While European countries have raised the issue of their Kosovo-returned soldiers dying of leukaemia, there has not been similar concern about the people of Yugoslavia who have been subjected to strikes by 31,000 depleted-uranium shells. Apart from residual radioactivity, such shelling also caused extensive environmental damage with long-term effects on the health of the population. In western countries, public opinion has been moulded to react strongly against war crimes and human rights violations. However, it has not been sensitised adequately to the consequences of such wars; lasting environmental damage and lingering deaths as in the case of Vietnam or Yugoslavia. This is of a piece with the double standards of the international community which, rightly, prohibits the use of anti-personnel landmines but has legitimised nuclear weapons. And which has remained unmoved by sanctions against Iraq which have caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of children for want of access to life-saving medicines. //

THE TIMES OF INDIA

11 JAN 2001

UN confirms radioactive uranium in Kosovo

■ But only when six Italian soldiers deployed in Yugoslavia during NATO bombings were reported dead due to leukemia

REUTERS

UNITED NATIONS, JAN 6

The United Nations announced on Thursday it had found evidence of radioactivity at eight of 11 sites tested in Kosovo after they were struck by NATO ammunition with depleted uranium during 1999 bombings.

The discovery of radioactivity at the sites was a preliminary finding of testing still under way at laboratories in Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Britain and Austria by the UN Environmental Program (UNEP), a UN spokesman said on Friday.

"The final results will only be known when the UNEP report is published in 2001, but there is enough preliminary evidence to call for precautions when dealing

with used depleted uranium or with sites where such ammunition might be present," spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

NATO has come under increasing pressure from several European governments over claims that depleted uranium used in NATO weapons had caused death or illness among Balkan peacekeepers, a condition dubbed "Balkans Syndrome".

The condition came under the spotlight after reports that six Italian soldiers who served in the former Yugoslavia had developed leukemia and died after exposure to spent ammunition. Germany's TAZ daily reported in Berlin on Friday that the UNEP tests had found that the eight sites were in part "considerably contaminated."

Uranium dust as well as unex-



STOP YOU, LEUKEMIA: An Italian soldier in his base in the Kosovo town of Pec on Friday. The United Nations has found evidence that the alleged *Balkans syndrome* that claimed six Italian peacekeepers died after being exposed to depleted uranium — REUTERS

ploded munitions had been discovered, the paper said in an advance release of a story due for publication on Saturday. The paper said it had obtained a copy of an interim UNEP report dated Dec 29, 2000.

A UN report in May had warned that much of Kosovo's water could be so contaminated as to be unfit to drink, and that a clean-up of the province could cost billions of dollars. It warned UN staff not to approach any target that might have been hit by a depleted uranium weapon.

US attack jets fired some 31,000 rounds of depleted uranium ammunition against Serbian targets during NATO's 1999 campaign to drive the Yugoslav army out of Kosovo. Some 10,000 rounds were also fired in neighboring Bosnia in 1994-5.