state/nation/world

Lebanese soldiers fight with leftists in west Beirut

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Lebanese soldiers and police, coming to the aid of an ambushed convoy of Sunni Moslems, traded machine-gun and artillery fire with leftist militiamen in west Beirut yesterday in a four-hour battle that drove French peacekeepers from the area.

The army later announced it had quelled the first major flareup since government forces were deployed in Moslem west Beirut, and the state-run television quoted an official as saying the government would strike with an "iron fist" against future attacks.

Police sources and news reports said two bystanders and one Lebanese soldier were killed in the battle.

In eastern Lebanon's volatile Bekaa Valley, meanwhile, Israeli warplanes raided Syrian positions for the third time in five days and destroyed a sixth SAM-9 anti-aircraft missile battery, according to the Israeli military command in Tel Aviv.

The Israelis reiterated their demand that Syria keep the missiles out of Lebanon, and a senior official warned: "Israel will not tolerate a war of attrition, because we will not allow one to develop."

The Lebanese television station quoted the army official as saying 13 government soldiers were wounded in the battle in west Beirut, but there were no casualties among the French troops, who withdrew when the fighting started.

It was not known if any there were any militia casualties. The state radio said the leftist guerrillas belonged to an obscure group known as "Partisans of the Revolution."

The Lebanese television station said the battle flared after the militiamen fired on a group of Sunni Moslems traveling east to the Christian mountain town of Bikfaya to pay respects to President-elect Bashir Gemayel. Gemayel is the head of the Christian Phalange Party and is hated by many left-wing Moslems.

The radio said soldiers and police arrived and blasted the leftist militia positions with rocket-propelled grenades and artillery. The leftists returned machine-gun fire and witnesses said an ammunition truck exploded, setting at least two French vehicles on fire.

The French Embassy was closed for the weekend, and officials could not be reached for comment.

It was the first major flare-up since the Lebanese army began taking over positions previously held by Palestine Liberation Organization guerrillas and their Moslem leftist allies.

The leftists joined PLO guerrillas battling Israeli invaders in west Beirut and threatened to fight the Lebanese army when it began to move in to reassert government control over the ravaged capital as the Palestinians were evacuated. The attack on the Sunni Moslem convoy reflected the leftists' anger toward Gemayel and the army takeover.

"The Lebanese army will execute its security functions no matter what the difficulties and . . . we warn that we will strike with an iron fist against such disrupters," an army official was quoted as saying on the state television.

In a separate incident, Lebanese security forces intercepted a group of car thieves belonging to another leftist militia in west Beirut and one bystander was killed in the ensuing shootout, the state-run radio reported.

The 800-man contingent of French paratroopers and legionnaires was part of an international force that supervised the PLO withdrawal from Beirut.

About 800 U.S. Marines and 530 Italian sharpshooters left last week. The French government has said its own troops, who stayed on to help the army bring order to Beirut, would leave tomorrow, but the Lebanese government is seeking an extension.

The Israeli military command said in Tel Aviv that its warplanes destroyed one truck-mounted Syrian SAM-9 missile battery near Dahar el-Baida, about 20 miles east of Beirut. It has said two other raids last week destroyed five similar batteries.

AP Laserphoto

Spiraling smoke

An air tanker dumps fire retardant on flames that were out of control near the summit of Mount St. Helena in California on Saturday. An estimated 400 firefighters battled the blaze that has charred nearly 2,500 acres near the Napa Valley wine country.

45 believed dead in fiery copter crash

MANNHEIM, West Germany (AP) — Authorities said yesterday that they now believe 45 people died in the fiery crash of a U.S. Army helicopter carrying an international parachute team, but it may take days to complete the grisly task of sorting out the victims.

West German and American investigators, meanwhile, began probing the cause of Saturday's disaster, one of the worst helicopter crashes on record.

Witnesses said the big Chinook lost a rotor before it plummeted from a height of about 300 yards during the Mannheim Air Show and slammed into a nearby highway, where it exploded and burned.

"The identification (of the victims) is going to take a long time, because the bodies are all melted together in a clump," said Mannheim police spokesman Karl-Heinz Zimmerman.

At first, authorities said they thought 44 people were aboard the helicopter — five American crew members and 39 skydivers from several countries.

Mannheim chief prosecutor Frank-Peter Gletter told a news conference that officials now believe the chopper crew had only four members but a two-man television crew from the U.S. Armed Forces Network may have been on board, raising the death toll to 45.

Gletter stressed, however, that authorities still are not certain how many were on the chopper and do not know when they will be able to provide an accurate count.

Six of the victims have been identified, he said. Names were not released, but sources said they were believed to be members of the helicopter crew.

U.S. Army spokeswoman Sgt. Linda Lee said an Armed Forces Network crew was scheduled to cover the skydiving flight, but the Army is not absolutely certain they boarded the craft. A network spokesman in Frankfurt would not comment.

A witness said the Chinook hit a traffic divider when it crashed, scattering debris across the four lanes of the normally crowded Mannheim-Heidelberg autobahn. Only two cars were damaged.

Study: Soviet trade surplus to decline

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Soviet Union's $4-billion trade surplus with Western industrialized countries may deteriorate to a $7-billion deficit by 1985, according to a study prepared for the congressional Joint Economic Committee.

The report issued yesterday also forecast that by 1985 the volume of U.S.-Soviet trade could reach at least $5.2 billion — compared to only $2.9 billion last year — with this country reaping a trade surplus with Moscow of more than $3 billion.

"The position of Eastern countries appears to be growing weaker in trade with the West, and the position of the United States stronger," Rep. Henry S. Reuss, D-Wis., chairman of the economic panel, said in releasing the study.

He noted that "seven smaller countries — Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, North Korea and Romania — heavily dependent on Soviet economic success, are projected to have collective trade deficits with the West of an additional $2 billion in 1985."

The study, "East-West Trade: the Prospects to 1985," was prepared for the congressional panel by a team of specialists headed by Alan Lenz, director of the Office of Trade Investments Analysis at the Commerce Department's International Trade Administration.

Contrasted with the Soviet Union, the report said, China's trade position with the West is expected to improve in coming years.

Peking had a trade deficit with the United States of $1.7 billion in 1981, but that may be trimmed to between $100 million and $200 million by 1985. During the same period, China's net trade surplus with Western industrialized countries overall is projected to grow to as much as $4.7 billion, up from last year's $3.8 billion, the study said.

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state news briefs

Dog food and the Wall Street Journal

VALLEY FORGE, Pa. (AP) — Despite being more than $500,000 in debt and facing personal bankruptcy, builder John C.T. Alexander threw a party.

It was a "bankruptcy party" and more than half the 40 guests who showed up Saturday night were unemployed.

Guests ate their dinners out of dog-food cans on tables covered with old copies of the Wall Street Journal.

Alexander's wife, Barbara, 45, now the family bread-winner, came dressed as a loaf of bread.

Alexander said he held the party to boost the morale of his jobless friends, who used to earn $50,000 to $100,000 a year.

"Being unemployed is something you carry around with you," he said. "You're depressed. You feel you goofed. You feel you're letting down your spouse. It's important to know you're not the only person in the same boat."

Alexander, 48, was a senior vice president of a bank when he decided to strike out on his own eight years ago to build houses.

He said he and his wife decided to hold the party after an accountant friend was laid off.

House to vote on drunken driving bill

HARRISBURG (AP) — The House will try to vote this month on a bill that would impose mandatory jail terms on drunken drivers, Majority Leader Samuel Hayes said.

"It is a big issue among the members," Hayes said, adding that he expects the Judiciary Committee to vote on the legislation this week.

A governor's task force proposed the legislation, which has been the subject of hearings around the state.

The bill gained widespread support during testimony, although some judges questioned provisions that call for mandatory sentences and allow the use of portable breathalyzers by police.

The legislation would:

- Set minimum jail terms of 48 hours for the first offense, 30 days for a second offense, 90 days for a third offense and at least one year for subsequent offenses.
- Create a new offense: homicide by vehicle while driving under the influence. It would carry a mandatory three-year jail term and a maximum fine of $15,000.
- Double the license suspension time from six months to one year for first-time offenders and impose a one-year suspension on anyone who refuses to submit to alcohol testing.
- Require that the only evidence needed for drunken driving convict be a blood-alcohol level of .10 percent.

nation news briefs

Elephant steps out with new shoes

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Kubwa the elephant is no longer footloose but she's the fanciest-looking pachyderm around, sporting a snappy pair of dark brown, high-top orthopedic shoes.

Much to its dismay, the Indianapolis Zoo discovered eight months ago that Kubwa's hind ankles were too wobbly, so officials looked for a podiatrist to tighten them up.

They found Don Menchhofer, president of a company that makes cinches for horses.

"Kubwa is 6 years old, but she weighs something like 2,000 pounds, so her ankles aren't supporting her weight properly," Menchhofer said. "She sort of looks like a little kid put on ice skates the first time. The ankles tend to lean inside."

Menchhofer came up with orthopedic shoes made of dark brown canvas mesh and tan metal straps covered with brown padding.

They fasten onto the hind legs with buckles and weigh 25 pounds each.

Book examines most secret spy group

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government's largest and most secret spy operation is not the CIA, but the National Security Agency, which performs its intelligence work with "Star Wars" electronics rather than the cloak and dagger.

The NSA, scrutinized in greater detail than ever before in a newly published book "The Puzzle Palace," controls a vast array of intelligence-gathering wizardry: from spy satellites over the Soviet Union to giant receiving dishes that can eavesdrop on overseas cable traffic and telephone calls.

Its computers are measured by the acre and the classified documents it produces daily are weighed by the ton. Its charter is to protect U.S. government secret communications from interception while picking off and decoding the messages of other nations.

NSA's job is considered so sensitive that 30 years after its creation in 1952, President Harry S. Truman's memorandum authorizing its birth remains a closely guarded government secret. Until 1957, the government did not even publicly acknowledge NSA's existence.

But in "The Puzzle Palace," author James Bamford, a 35-year-old lawyer living in Natick, Mass., strips away at least the outer layer of NSA's secrecy.

world news briefs

34 killed when Indian bus hits train

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — A bus carrying arrested religious activists to jail smashed into a train Saturday night in Punjab, northern India, killing 34 people in the bus and wounding 22 others, the United News of India said yesterday.

The dead included 31 arrested demonstrators, two policemen and the conductor of the bus, the news agency said. They were en route to a distant jail following the arrests at a demonstration by Sikh activists outside the Golden Temple, the holiest temple of the Sikh religion, at Amritsar, 240 miles northwest of New Delhi.

Officials at Taran Taran, 21 miles south of Amritsar, said the bus smashed into the side of a local passenger train, and was dragged down the tracks.

Punjab state chief minister Darbara Singh said the accident was caused by a guard's failure to close a manually-operated railway crossing.

Arrest made in Miss Seoul abduction

LITTLETON, Colo. (AP) — A 25-year-old man from South Korea was held without bond yesterday for allegedly abducting the reigning Miss Seoul and forcing her to accompany him to the United States, authorities said.

Sang Don Kang, of Seoul, was arrested Saturday at a hotel in Englewood after Soon Bok Lee, 28, contacted friends who in turn called police, officials said. Arraignment was scheduled for today.

Sgt. Ron Beatty of the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Department said Soon was abducted in front of several witnesses in Seoul and was forced to accompany Sang to the United States on Aug. 17. They traveled to several U.S. cities, he said, including Los Angeles, New York, Cleveland and Cincinnati.

Soon was unable to to break free until Saturday because she cannot speak English and because she was threatened and physically abused, Beatty said.

13 Japanese killed by Typhoon Judy

TOKYO (AP) — Typhoon Judy roared through central Japan yesterday, cutting a destructive swath with waist-high flooding, landslides and 79 mph winds that left scores of people dead or injured, thousands homeless and transportation paralyzed.

Authorities reported at least 13 deaths and 86 injuries. Fifteen people were missing and feared swept up in the swirling floodwaters. Downtown Tokyo was severely stricken.

The National Police Agency said more than 60,000 homes were flooded in 21 states across central Japan. Three boats sank and at least 34 bridges were washed out, it said.

Air, rail and road traffic came to a near standstill. Officials said more than 50,000 policemen and soldiers were mobilized for rescue work.

In downtown Tokyo, the Kanda River overflowed late yesterday, flooding more than 2,000 homes.

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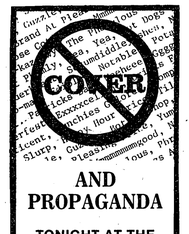

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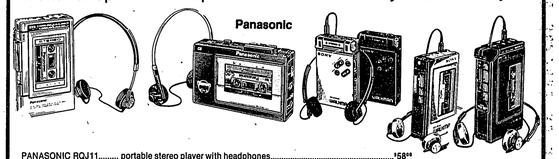

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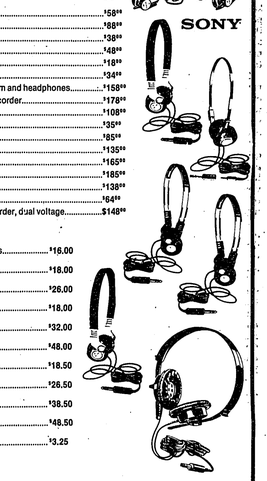

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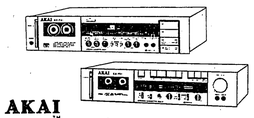

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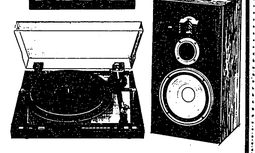

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