Negotiators working on cease-fire in Chechnya

WORLD

GROZNY, Russia (AP) — Russian and Chechen negotiators took a step Tuesday toward a cease-fire in breakaway Chechnya, where the bloody 5-week-old war raged on. But many on both sides were skeptical any agreement would hold.

In the streets of Grozny, Chechen fighters scornfully dismissed Russian overtures toward peace, saying they were merely a ruse to fool world opinion while Moscow prepares new offensives.

A cease-fire last week broke down after only several hours.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin met Tuesday with two envoys from Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev in Moscow, a day after making a televised appeal for peace. The Chechens said both sides agreed to stop using heavy artillery by Wednesday evening as a first step toward a full cease-fire.

"We think there's an agreement in principle from both sides," said Usman Imayev, Dudayev's prosecutor general.

But the Russian government continued its tough rhetoric against Dudayev, saying the meeting was brief, at the Chechen side's request, and was a "last chance" for cooperation, according to a statement carried by Russian news agencies.

"Only a step has been made toward cease-fire," Russian government spokesman Valentin Rumyantsev said.

Russian fighter jets kept up attacks Tuesday on targets throughout Grozny, and Russian forces destroyed a bridge between Chechnya and its eastern neighbor, Dagestan, cutting off a main rail and road link. Rebel forces appeared to have recaptured the railway station in a machine-gun battle.

Russian news reports Tuesday said the army's losses in the battle for Grozny were much higher than had been admitted, with up to 1,200 dead.

Imayev, the Chechen envoy, said he would head immediately to Grozny to brief Dudayev. He said dates and exact terms of a cease-fire still had to be agreed on.

It was not clear whether Dudayev, who has been in hiding, could agree on terms with the Kremlin.

Many rebel fighters in Grozny, the Chechen capital, reacted to Chernomyrdin's peace overtures with obscene oaths, spitting on the ground.

"Chernomyrdin is saying this just to impress the international community, but at the same time the Russian army has been ordered to seize the city," said Vakha Aigumov, a Chechen officer.

"We would agree to peace," said another fighter, Al Ahim. "But our condition is full independence for Chechnya."

President Boris Yeltsin's chief of staff, Sergei Filatov, also cast doubt on negotiations, telling the ITAR-Tass news agency he doesn't believe Dudayev's envoys can control the situation in Chechnya.

Thousands of people are believed to have been killed since Moscow sent troops into the mainly Muslim republic in the Caucasus Mountains on Dec. 11.

Russian military officials have said fewer than 400 Russian soldiers have died, but the Interfax news agency said Tuesday that corpses of some 1,160 Russian soldiers had passed through Mozdok. The agency said its figure came from confidential sources.

Cold blasts of snow whipped through Grozny on Tuesday, and a heavy mist hung over the smoking city.

One fighter jet sent a missile toward the only people on an empty downtown street — three Associated Press staffers, who were knocked down by the blast. The rocket missed them by 30 yards.

Despite being outgunned and outmanned, the Chechens have held on to Grozny's presidential palace and some other areas despite several days of heavy rocket and artillery bombardment.

Chechen fighters vow that if the city falls, they will wage guerrilla war from the nearby mountains.

Bosnia wants peacekeeping troops out

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Croatia has already decided to kick out its U.N. troops. Now Bosnia is threatening to give 450 of its peacekeepers the boot if they don't open an airfield within two weeks.

The United Nations has been trying for a year to persuade Serbs to allow U.N. aid flights into the airfield outside Tuzla, 90 miles northeast of Sarajevo. After the Bosnian capital, the city is the largest held by the Muslim-led government — and like Sarajevo, it is surrounded by Serbs.

The United Nations angered the government last week when it allowed Serbs to station an officer at the airfield as a guarantee against its military use. Still Serbs have refused to allow the aid flights.

The Bosnian army retaliated by blockading the 450 U.N. troops at the airport, as well as nearly 600 other peacekeepers around Tuzla.

Now the government has gone one step further, taking a cue from neighboring Croatia who last week asked the United Nations to pull out its 12,000 peacekeepers.

A letter sent Monday to U.N. officials gives them until Feb. 1 to open the airport or withdraw the mostly Norwegian troops there, U.N. spokesman Paul Risley said.

The letter was signed by Bosnia's U.N. liaison, Hasan Muratovic, who called it an "ultimatum" in an interview Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the U.N. commander in Tuzla, Gen. Gunnar Ridderstad, said the blockade was making life harder on his troops. He said soldiers were eating less and doing with less heat to stretch reserves and could not call out because telephone lines had been cut.

In the Bihac enclave of northwest Bosnia, fighting continued Tuesday between government forces and Serbs from Bosnia and neighboring Croatia, backed by renegade Muslim fighters.

Chris Gunness, a U.N. spokesman in Zagreb, said more than 21 artillery and mortar shells fell west and south of Bihac, a U.N.-declared safe haven. Farther north, about 90 artillery shells fell east and southeast of Velika Kladusa.

The heaviest fighting was concentrated west of Bihac, where government troops trying to oust Croatian Serbs regained 3.6 miles of territory over the weekend.

Around Sarajevo, there were fresh promises from Serb and government troops to cooperate during a four-month truce that began Jan. 1. The government withdrew its remaining troops from a demilitarized zone on Mount Igman, a strategic height southwest of Sarajevo, said U.N. spokesman Lt. Col. Gary Coward.

Bosnian Serbs gave permission for several U.N. convoys to enter besieged Muslim enclaves in eastern Bosnia, and let a U.N. humanitarian aid convoy reach civilians in Bihac.

But a civilian route out of Sarajevo remained closed.

An estimated 200,000 people have died or disappeared since Bosnia's war began in April 1992, when Serbs rebelled against the republic's decision to secede from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

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MEETINGS

Circle K will meet tonight at 6 in EMU Century Room F.

EMU Board Food Service Committee will meet today at 3:30 p.m. in the EMU Board Room. For more information, call 346-3720.

EMU Board House Committee will meet today at 4:30 p.m. in the EMU Board Room. For more information, call 346-3720.

RELIGION

Newman Center invites you to worship, fellowship, mass and a social tonight at 9 at the Newman Center, 1850 Emerald St. For more information, call 346-4468.

MISCELLANEOUS

Department of Germanic Languages and Literature will have a German "Stammtisch" conversation at all levels tonight at 8 at Track Town Pizza,1809 Franklin Blvd. For more information, call 346-4059.

Returning Students Association will have a networking social for non-traditional students today at 4 p.m. in EMU Room 27. For more information, call 346-4305.

Academic Advising and Student Services will conduct a workshop on how to apply to law schools today at 3:30 p.m. in Room 164 Oregon Hall. For more information, call 346-3211.

Office of Dean of Students will offer a Student Orientation Staff interest session tonight and tomorrow at 6:30 in EMU Cedar Rooms A and B. For more information, call 346-1159.

ASUO Women's Center will have volunteer orientation for winter term today at 4:30 p.m. in EMU Century Room B. For more information, call 346-4095.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Alliance will offer a gay and bisexual men's drop-in group tonight at 6 at the Koinonia Center, 1414 Kincaid St. For more information, call 346-3360.

Educational Opportunities Program invites members to a financial aid workshop today at 3 p.m. in the EMU Multicultural Center. For more information, call 346-3232.

Committee for World Peace will meet tonight at 6 in the EMU Ben Linder Room. For more information, call 344-8586.

Alpha Phi Omega will meet tonight at 7:30 in EMU Cedar Rooms C and D. For more information, call 342-6195.

Career Center will have a table for College Pro Painters today at 10 a.m. in EMU Century Room F and for the U.S. Marines today at 10 a.m. in the EMU. For more information, call 346-3235.

Career Center will have an office orientation today at 4 p.m. in Room 221 Hendricks. Sign-ups will be in Room 244 Hendricks. For more information, call 346-3235.

Career Center will have a resume and cover letter writing workshop today at 2 p.m. in Room 221 Hendricks. Sign-ups will be in Room 244 Hendricks. For more information, call 346-3235.

Cars damaged on tunnel train

LONDON (AP) — The Channel Tunnel has run into a new hurdle, or at least some cars trying to use it have.

About 100 cars were damaged— 25 seriously —while driving onto the train for the 32-mile trip under the English Channel.

Eurotunnel, which operates the tunnel, says the undersides of low-slung models such as Ferraris and Lotuses have scraped against metal barriers while being loaded.

Before opening for business, Eurotunnel conducted tests using cars carrying five adults and a huge load of beer, which is what typical passengers were expected to bring back from France, where alcohol taxes are much lower than in England.

But Eurotunnel had apparently not counted on some cars having a ground clearance of less than 4 inches, the level at which they can have problems.

Savage Professorship Nominations

The campus community is invited to contribute names of candidates for the Savage Professorship in International Relations and Peace. We are looking to identify and select a scholar on the peacemaking process of the Arab-Israeli conflict to fill the 1995-96 position. The professorship is designed to "enhance the educational offerings of the University in the fields of the humanities and social sciences, focusing particularly on the study of international relations, peace and the United Nations."

Please send suggestions to:
David A. Frank
Savage Committee co-chair
Robert D. Clark Honors College
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