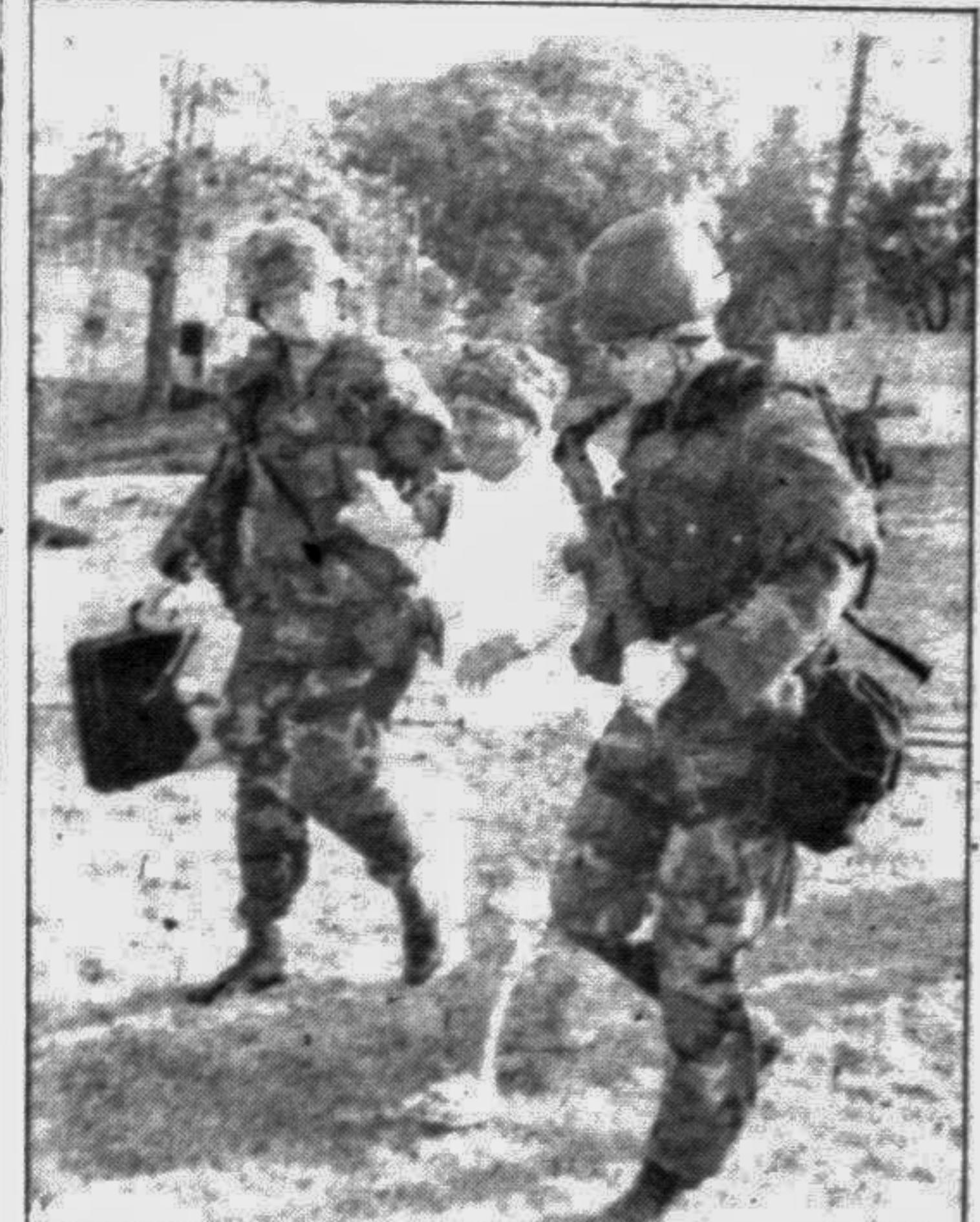


## International

Forces storm mosque in Srinagar

## 8 Afghan fighters killed in Kashmir gunbattle



A woman is helped by two US airborne infantry towards a helicopter to be evacuated from the US embassy compound in Monrovia on Sunday. Thousands of Liberians are camped in the relative security of a US housing compound close to the embassy.

— AFP/UNB photo

The police here denied the allegation.

AP says, Indian police and separatist guerrillas fought a pitched battle Sunday in a village in the northern state of Jammu-Kashmir and at least 10 rebels were killed in the fighting, police said.

The

fighting

started when policemen reached Krandi village to raid a suspected rebel hideout. Police surrounded a building and asked the guerrillas inside to surrender, but their call was answered by a half of bullets, a police official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Four

policemen were injured in the fighting, he said.

The fighting occurred as the state prepared for its first parliamentary election in nine years.

Previous attempts to hold elections have been put off for fear of widespread violence by rebels who have vowed to block voting.

SRINAGAR, Apr 15: Indian troops shot dead 10 Muslim guerrillas including eight Afghan fighters on Sunday in a gunbattle which erupted in the militant stronghold of Doda in Kashmir, police said, reports AFP.

Leila was seeking to return for a scheduled meeting next week of the PLO parliament, the Palestine National Council (PNC), called to debate Yasser Arafat's commitment to remove anti-Israel clauses from the PLO Charter.

Israeli officials said the formal reason for refusing to let Leila cross the Allenby Bridge into Israel was that she had failed to submit a formal application for entry 10 days prior to her arrival.

## UN probe into mass graves in Bosnia ends

KARAKAJ, Bosnia, Apr 15: UN war crimes investigators on Saturday wrapped up a two-week probe into alleged mass graves in eastern Bosnia by studying a suspected massacre site, reports AFP.

They went to an earthen dam near here and picked up fragments of human bone and tattered remnants of cloth lying on the stony surface among dozens of spent bullet cartridges.

According to accounts from two survivors, scores of men were taken to the site in groups, stripped to the waist and with their hands tied, then lined up and executed by Bosnian Serbs.

The two said they escaped playing dead and hiding in a drainage ditch as the Serb soldiers went to get more prisoners.

## US, Japan announce closure of 6 more bases in Okinawa

TOKYO, Apr 15: Japan and the United States announced today the closure of six more US military facilities on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa, reducing the amount of land occupied by American forces there by a fifth, reports Reuters.

Opinion polls are predicting a hung parliament after the voting that begins on April 27.

They indicate that the Congress Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party said in an interview to Press Trust of India news agency.

We have alliances and there are other parties also who are keen to extend their support in the post-election scenario.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee of the Bharatiya Janata Party

said in an interview to Press

Trust of India news agency.

Clinton begins tour to 3 countries: President Bill Clinton left the United States on Sunday night for a one week trip that will take him to South Korea, Japan and Russia. Reuter reports from Washington.

Clinton arrives on Tuesday in Cheju-Do, South Korea, where he meets President Kim Young-sam before leaving the same day for Tokyo.

6 Maoist rebels killed in Bihar: Six

Maoist guerrillas were killed and six policemen injured in a fierce shootout in the Indian state of Bihar, the United News of India (UNI) reported yesterday. Reuter reports from New Delhi.

Eleven other guerrillas were arrested after the three-hour fighting Sunday in the eastern state's Palamau district, the news agency said.

16 killed in Indonesia shooting: Sixteen people, including Indonesian soldiers, were killed yesterday during a shooting incident at Timika airport in Indonesia's remote Irian Jaya province, business sources close to the airport said. Reuter reports from Jakarta.

The count as of now is 16 dead, including five civilians. The rest were soldiers, including some officers, one source, in contact with the airport and local hospitals, told Reuters in Jakarta.

1 m Chinese couples divorced in '95: More than one million couples divorced in China in 1995, breaking the one million mark for the first time, the official Xinhua news agency said. Reuter reports from Beijing.

A record 1,055,000 couples in China divorced last year, 74,000 more than in 1994. Xinhua said late on Sunday, citing the latest statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Nearly two-thirds of divorcing couples resorted to court hearings in 1995, it said.

Hutus kill 50 Tutsis in Burundi: More than 50 people, mostly Tutsis, were killed in recent attacks by rebel Hutus in southern and central Burundi, radio reports said yesterday. AFP says from Bujumbura.

Military sources said a battalion commander was among the dead in clashes Sunday at Bujirazai in the central Gitega region.

They said the same rebel group killed about 50 people Thursday and Friday in fighting at Gitanga and Buraza in southern Burundi.

40 Thais die during new yr holiday: Thai police said 40 people were killed during the traditional new year holiday weekend, most of them in traffic accidents, and urged people driving back to Bangkok yesterday to take special care. Reuter reports from Bangkok.

The traditional new year is Thailand's main holiday of the year and hundreds of thousands of people left the capital late last week to visit their families in the provinces.

Looting continues unabated in Liberia

MONROVIA, Apr 15: Armed

looters in stolen cars roamed

the streets of the Liberian capital of Monrovia after a truce halted a week of fighting in the city centre, reports Reuter.

As night fell on Sunday, militias threw up roadblocks around the territory they controlled. Shooting and shelling died down after the truce was declared on Friday night but looting continued unabated.

A political stand-off centred on the Barclay Training Centre Barracks, where Krahn gunmen were holding hundreds of people, including 50 Liberians and 22 soldiers from the West African ECOMOG peacekeeping force, as hostages.

The fighting erupted after the transitional government tried to arrest Krahn militia leader Roosevelt Johnson, whom it sacked from the cabinet last month, on murder charges.

The Monrovia battles

derailed the most comprehen-

sive accord yet reached to try to end six years of civil war in Liberia, a West African state founded in 1847 by freed American slaves.

Most international aid agencies evacuated their terrified foreign workers as the warfare and looting widened.

Johnson said he would agree to a truce if militias withdrew from around the barracks. ECOMOG troops deployed throughout the city and mediators re-examined arrangements for the transitional government which dismissed him.

Charles Taylor, leader of the biggest militia and a vice-president on the ruling Council of State, said Johnson should surrender as the government would not negotiate with him.

Taylor said he and other militia leaders would pull their forces off the streets once ECOMOG peacekeepers were deployed around the barracks.

Chechens down Russian chopper, kill 4 troops

WASHINGTON, Apr 15: President Clinton travelled to Japan three years ago as a tough-talking trade warrior. He returns to Asia this week in a markedly different role: America's reassuring commander-in-chief, reports AP.

Security problems — not trade disputes — lead the president's agenda on his week-long round-the-world journey.

Departing Washington late Sunday, he will stop briefly in South Korea before a three-day state visit to Japan. Then he will fly to Russia for a summit dealing with threats to nuclear safety.

The president will confront some of the oldest and newest challenges to the security of our nation, from the last

unresolved problem of the Cold War — stability on the Korean peninsula — to one of the most urgent new threats we face — nuclear smuggling.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher said.

It is a trip designed to fill an election-year scrapbook with photos of Bill Clinton being president, showing off his leadership skills.

Many analysts say Clinton has improved his foreign policy performance after a shaky start in the first two years of his presidency. Even now, however, his foreign policy approval rating is weaker than his overall ratings.

Battling for re-election, Clinton has to share the foreign policy limelight with Sen-

Taiwan.

"Americans will see him representing the United States in important parts of the world," said Brookings Institution political scientist Thomas Mann. "It's more a matter of them feeling more comfortable with him as a foreign policy president as opposed to any specific diplomatic achievement."

Clinton's failure to serve in Vietnam created doubts about his leadership. Dole, on the other hand, would come to the job with a resume noting that he was grievously wounded as a US soldier in Italy exactly 51 years ago Sunday.

Highlighting the security thrust of Clinton's trip, Christopher said the president already has made strong headway on trade and opening markets in Japan.

Battling for re-election, Clinton has to share the foreign policy limelight with Sen-

ate Majority Leader Bob Dole, his Republican rival.

Dole has years of experience in this area as well as his war record," Mann said. "Americans feel comfortable with Dole as a foreign policy leader, perhaps more so than with Clinton."

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to local landowners, meeting a key demand of Okinawans angry about the US military presence.

Even so, the current authorisation level of US troops in Japan is to remain at 47,000.

On trade, despite upbeat statements from the White House, the United States still has a 59 billion dollar deficit with Tokyo. But unlike his aggressive stand of the last three years, Clinton is soft-pedalling the problem now.

These are still contentious issues but they're going to be downplayed during the president's trip," said Larry Chimerine, chief economist of the Economic Strategy Institute, a Washington think tank specialising in trade.

Truth Commission holds public hearings in SA

EAST LONDON, South Africa, Apr 15: Dirty secrets from three decades of race war are likely to come tumbling out today when South Africa's "Truth Commission" holds its first public hearings into apartheid's human rights abuses.

The hearings, chaired by Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, will go ahead despite a last-minute attempt to block testimony that Tutu and his deputy, Alex Boraine, told reporters that lawyers representing "likely perpetrators" had asked them to postpone testimony by some of the 28 witnesses due to appear over four days in the eastern cape port of East London.

Japan's Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda (R) and US Ambassador in Japan, Walter Mondale (C) exchange documents yesterday on the agreement to reduce the heavy concentration of US bases in Okinawa. The US Secretary of Defense William Perry (L) is in Tokyo until today on a two day visit to discuss the future of the US military in Okinawa.

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