

U.S. slaps sanctions on all Yugoslavia

Fighting heavy in Croatia

Reuters News Agency

BELGRADE — Fierce fighting in breakaway Croatia has spurred the United States to impose sanctions against Yugoslavia and dented prospects for the dispatch of United Nations peacekeepers.

In the heaviest fighting for several weeks, the Adriatic port of Dubrovnik and the eastern city of Osijek came under heavy attack yesterday and battles raged in other areas.

Doctors in Osijek said six people were killed there yesterday. Journalists in Dubrovnik said two people were killed and 15 wounded there.

Croatian radio said whole parts of Dubrovnik had been set on fire and historic buildings in its old walled town were damaged, but the death toll and damage reports could not be confirmed.

The Belgrade-based news agency Tanjug quoted military sources as saying one Yugoslav fighter had been killed near Dubrovnik. It said fierce battles were fought in central Croatia.

The Serbian-led federal army denied it had attacked Dubrovnik, a medieval city considered one of Europe's richest architectural treasures. It blamed Croatian forces for the fighting.

UN envoy Cyrus Vance said on the sixth day of his peace mission to Yugoslavia that he was outraged and appalled. Clearly attacking the actions of the federal army, he sent a protest letter to Yugoslavia's defence minister, General Veljko Kadijevic.

"It is very hard to tolerate that kind of reprehensible conduct," Mr. Vance told reporters after a day of talks that ended with a meeting with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

Asked if he could recommend that UN troops be sent to Yugoslavia under a plan approved recently by the Security Council, Mr. Vance told reporters earlier yesterday the fighting "makes it much harder to even consider."

He said he would continue his mission, although the two-week-old ceasefire, a key condition for deployment of peacekeepers, was not holding.

He said he would meet Mr. Milosevic again today.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said the United States would halt trading with all six Yugoslav republics under a generalized system of preferences, U.S. assistance programs and a bilateral textile agreement. European Community sanctions apply only to Serbia and its ally Montenegro.

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