

**SLUM FIRE**

**Death toll rises**

**CUBATAO, Brazil, Monday (AP)** — The death toll from Saturday's fire in a shantytown near Sao Paulo has risen to 81, a spokesman for the mayor's office said today.

He said the 11 additional deaths reported yesterday included three victims found in the rubble and eight who died in hospitals from burns.

Police continued to search through the debris of the gutted wooden shacks built on stilts above a marshland in Cubatao, 70 kilometres south-east of Sao Paulo.

Between 150 to 200 people were injured in the fire, and about 27 remained in hospital in critical condition, the spokesman said.

Government and company investigations have been launched, and the president of the national oil company, Petubras, Mr Shigaki Ueki, promised to compensate victims.

# Iraqi jets raid deep into Iran

**NICOSIA, Cyprus, Monday (AP)** — Iraqi warplanes bombed two cities deep inside Iran, killing 67 people and wounding more than 230 others, and fierce ground fighting continued near Iraq's strategic north-south highway, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said yesterday.

Iraq's Baghdad Radio, monitored in Nicosia, said the jets had attacked in three waves, devastating important military installations.

Iran said the bombings shook the town of Islamabad-Gharb in the western province of Bakhtaran and the village of Kuhdasht in Lurestan Province, destroying more than 50 houses and shops.

The devastated southern Iranian border city of Abadan also was shelled, starting fires which were later extinguished.

Iran said it had seized an 8-kilometre stretch of southern Iraqi territory par-

allel to the Basra-Baghdad highway after savage overnight fighting.

It said it also had attacked Iraqi positions near Al-Uzair, about 90 kilometres north of the Iraqi city of Basra and 25 kilometres west of the international border. Hundreds of Iraqi soldiers were killed and 350 others were captured in the attacks.

Iraq, on the other hand, said it had shattered the line of attacking troops in a fierce, quick battle. The enemy had been forced to retreat, leaving behind a large number of bodies, wounded soldiers and huge quantities of destroyed war equipment.

The conflicting reports could not be independently confirmed because both countries rarely permit Western journalists at the battlefield.

Unidentified Western intelligence sources quoted by London's *Observer* said Iran was poised to throw 300,000 troops into the invasion to cut off the

strategic Basra-Baghdad highway, a major arms-supply route, and deliver a knockout blow in the prolonged war.

The two countries also gave conflicting reports about the situation along the strategic highway. Iraq said it beat back two Iranian attempts to reach the highway and Iran said it repulsed five Iraqi counter-attacks along the highway.

The fighting around the highway and the oil port of Basra, Iraq's second-largest city, began on Wednesday night when Iran said it had launched a major offensive. Basra has been shelled several times, most recently on Saturday.

[The war began in 1980 in a dispute between the two countries over ownership of the Shatt al-Arab waterway.]

In **Tehran**, the Speaker of the Iranian Parliament called on Sunday for the Soviet Union to end its support for Iraq's President Hussein before it was too late.

"The USSR, which makes a claim to

good-neighbourly relations, must bear in mind that our sorrowing towns today view themselves, their mourning and all their feelings in the light of the crimes committed against them by the means of your missiles," Mr Hashemi Rafsanjani said in a speech carried later on Radio Tehran.

In **Moscow**, the Communist Party newspaper *Pravda* criticised Iran for rejecting last northern autumn's United Nations Security Council resolution asking both sides to agree to a ceasefire. It warned that dangerous manoeuvres of the US military under the pretext of the Iranian-Iraqi conflict would heighten tension in the area.

President Reagan has said the United States cannot allow Iran to carry out its threat to close the Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly 20 per cent of the non-communist world's oil trade passes. Iran has warned the United States not to intervene in the region.

**SPY CENTRE DISPUTE**

## Public-service strike called

**LONDON, Monday (Reuters)** — Britain's biggest public-service union, the right-wing, 200,000-member Civil and Public Services Association, called on its members yesterday to strike for half a day tomorrow, adding new weight to protests against the banishment of unions from an electronic spy centre.

Miners, railwaymen, truck drivers and dockers also plan walkouts tomorrow.

The Government has given the estimated 7,000 employees at the Government Communications Headquarters until Thursday to sign forms renouncing the right of union membership.

**BASQUE ELECTIONS**

## PNV wins controlling vote

**BILBAO, Spain, Monday (Reuters)** — The Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) of the Premier, Mr Carlos Garaikoetxea, has won a controlling vote in regional elections.

Basque government officials said yesterday that with more than 90 per cent of votes counted, computer estimates indicated the PNV would obtain 40 per

cent and 32 seats in the 75-seat Parliament against 19 for the Socialists and 11 for the separatist coalition Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity).

The result would give Mr Garaikoetxea effective control for a second term if Herri Batasuna confirmed its boycott of the autonomous Spanish regional Parliament.



Miss Katie Rabett during a modelling assignment at London's Ritz Hotel last Thursday.

**BRITAIN**

## Photos of model 'genuine'

**LONDON, Monday (AP)** — Photographer Phil Lindsay insisted last night that he had taken nude photographs of model Katie Rabett at her request about two years ago for her portfolio.

"The pictures are all genuine," he said.

Miss Rabett, whom British newspapers say is Prince Andrew's new girlfriend, said yesterday the photographs which were published in the *News of the World*, Britain's biggest-selling Sunday paper, were fakes.

A *News of the World* spokesman said he was amazed at Miss Rabett's denial.

"We have a set of 94 pictures taken from the original colour negatives... we are confident they are her," he said. "There are reels of film." The *Mail* quoted yesterday "seasoned Buckingham Palace watchers" as saying Prince Andrew's real girlfriend was Clare Park, 27, another model and daughter of a retired British Airways pilot.

Miss Park was "the first girl to be entertained alone in the Buckingham Palace apartment Prince Andrew has taken over from his brother Prince Charles," the paper said without elaboration.

**NEW ZEALAND**

## Labour leader's support down

**WELLINGTON, Monday (AAP)** — The Leader of the Labour Opposition in New Zealand, Mr David Lange, has a daunting year ahead of him if he hopes to wrest power from Sir Robert Muldoon's National Party.

Mr Lange returned from a month's overseas trip to discover that his personal rating as preferred Prime Minister had slumped to 13.5 per cent, three points lower than his November rating. During the same

period, Sir Robert strengthened his personal support by two points to 33.8 per cent.

In the 12 months since taking over leadership of the Labour Party, Mr Lange has dropped back to the popularity level held by the former leader, Sir Wallace Rowling, at the time he stepped aside in the interests of the party.

But the news was not all bad for Labour. The party picked up two points to 38.4 per cent, and is now less than two points behind the Nationals.

**WAR IN THE SAHARA**

## Polisario fights on against massive Moroccan force

From JILL JOLLIFFE, in the Sahara Desert

**I**N THE Sahara Desert a small war with large international repercussions is being fought.

Like the Australian desert, the Sahara is rich in minerals — phosphates and uranium — and when Spain decided to abandon its former colony, known as Spanish Sahara in 1975 Morocco invaded and the Saharan nomads took up arms under the newly-formed Polisario Front. Eight years later Morocco is using an estimated 100,000 troops and a massive array of aircraft and weaponry to deal with an alleged 4,000 guerrillas.

Neighbouring Mauritania was also a party to the secret agreement with Spain and Morocco to partition the territory, but withdrew from the war after a coup in 1978, making a separate peace with Polisario.

There are many similarities between the war in the Western Sahara and the war in East Timor. In the closing months of 1975, as Indonesian troops crossed the border into East Timor, Fretilin soldiers listened intently to radio bulletins telling of King Hussein of Morocco's "green march" to the borders of the Sahara. He had called on patriotic civilians to "liberate" the territory, and 350,000 answered his call. The march was a propaganda exercise, but it was accompanied by a military invasion. As the Saharans fled from the seaboard capital of Laayoun into the desert, Moroccan aircraft dropped napalm on them.

The Timor case and the Western Sahara have been presented at the UN over a similar time-span, but the Polisario has enjoyed considerably more diplomatic success, mainly because it is within the sphere of the organisation of African unity. Last year Polisario was admitted as a full member (as the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic), a move which split the OAU. The Polisario representatives declined to take their seats as a concession to avoid total rupture, but are determined to do

so at the May meeting in Guinea-Conakry.

Both East Timor and the Western Sahara were annexed by Islamic powers anxious not to have small radical neighbours which might incite domestic discontent, and both have been backed for strategic reasons by US military aid. In the Sahara case, the Americans are concerned to counter Soviet influence in Northern Africa and to protect the southern flank of the vital Strait of Gibraltar. Both Morocco and Indonesia were supplied with American Bronco OV-10 and Northrop F5 attack aircraft after the invasions began, although Morocco also has French military support.

Here the similarities end. Unlike Fretilin, Polisario have an excellent arms supply. They are fully backed by neighbouring Algeria, and to a lesser extent by Libya (which has backed off in recent months). Their arsenal includes SAM-7 ground-to-air missiles, with which they regularly shoot down F5s and Mirages. Morocco claims they have the more sophisticated SAM-6s, but Polisario denies this, although they were reluctant to display heavy weapons.

They also have a luxury Fretilin has not known since 1975 — they can escort groups of journalists into their liberated zones and so have had constant coverage in the European and American press. If anything, they are a little spoilt by the media and their propaganda has a plastic quality as a result — Polisario school children have a fixed routine for foreign delegations, and the visit to the battle-zone is rather "packaged".

This is not to denigrate the seriousness of Polisario's war. Most of those fighting are young men, teenagers when the war began, who have the blessing of their tribal elders. Their ideal is to create a nation to which their people can return (many are now in refugee camps in Algeria), resuming their traditional life as pastoral nomads, raising goats, sheep and camels, and bartering at distant markets. For centuries the nomads have lived thus in the Western Sahara, crossing its expanses at will, ignoring formal boundaries, and in many cases never registering as citizens of any country.

To the foreigner the desert often has no discernible landmarks, stretching in all directions like an endless tarmac, but the men of the desert steer by the sun and the stars and by landmarks not visible to the untrained eye.

It is this knowledge of the terrain and high mobility which has earned Polisario its reputation, but today the guerrillas face a serious obstacle — with US advice, Morocco has built an 800-kilometre long wall across the Sahara to keep Polisario out.

Using bulldozers, Moroccan soldiers erected a two-metre high sandbank to protect the zones they occupied — no more than a third of the desert after eight years of fighting. There are 100,000 troops stationed along the wall at 15-kilometre intervals, backed by US-supplied radar and sensor equipment to detect movement in the desert. Logistic support for these troops accounts for much of the equivalent of \$A2 million per day the war is reportedly costing Morocco — a sharp contrast to the average national income of \$A820 per year.

Laayoun, the capital of the Moroccan occupied zone, and Smara, 240 kilometres south-east (until January the front-line of Moroccan operations), buzz with military activity. On arrival, 10 French Mirages and five F5 aircraft stood at Laayoun airport, as well as Hercules transports and helicopters in sand-coloured camouflage. The jets take off regularly, disappearing into the desert.

Within both towns life goes on normally — the soldiers are kept apart. The Moroccan Government is investing heavily in the area, which has full employment due to the policy of pouring concrete wherever new territory is captured: massive construction programs are underway. Throughout Morocco the war is seen as a just national cause to recover a territory usurped by Spanish colonialism. The Polisario can count on little internal dissent, although they claim pamphlets distributed in recent riots in Morocco called for an end to the war.

On the other side of the wall, in Polisario-held territory, there is ample evidence of the activity of the Mirages and F5s. The desert is littered with the casings of US Air Force fragmentation bombs and the wreckage of aircraft.

At the front line at Amgala, only 5 kilometres from Moroccan positions, the wall can be seen as a ribbon stretching into the distance. Mortars fly to and fro across it in a daily exchange of fire. Polisario commander Ma Hwa Esmak Abdullah scoffed at the claim that the "electronic wall" is impregnable. Because Polisario operates on a rapidity of movement, pre-knowledge is no protection for the Moroccans, he said.

Nevertheless, the wall is a serious problem, especially as the Moroccans intend to extend it piecemeal to the Mauritanian border, dividing Polisario-held zones into two parts.

From Polisario's side of the wall the Moroccan argument can be seen to rest on force of arms rather than the economic progress Morocco displays in its occupied zones. Apart from commitments, Polisario has an irreducible argument in its favour — no genuine act of self-determination has ever been held in the Western Sahara.

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