Nowhere to hide for Azeri refugees

N THE main road south through Kubatli province, thousands of men, women and children are packed into trucks at an Azeri checkpoint waiting for permission to leave. Helicopters shuttle in and out with the wounded, while a group of wounded, while a group of women sit wailing at the road-side, tearing at their blood-stained faces with their finger-

stained faces with their fingernails in a frenzy of grief.

A new exodus of refugees is
under way towards Azerbaijan's border with Iran as Armenian forces continue ignoring
United Nations demands that
they stop their offensive. UN
officials, rejecting a death toll
of 3,000 usually quoted by news
agencies, say at least 10,000
have been killed since the fighting began in 1988.

have been killed since the fighting began in 1988.

Azerbaijan's defence ministry said yesterday that 18 villages in the province had been
captured and Kubatli town was
still resisting attack. Zengilan
province is also reported to be
under assault.

All recent Armenian seizures
are south-west of the disputed

are south-west of the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, adding to the gains in the regions of Jebrail and Fizuli

Most of the current wave of Most of the current wave of refugees were sheltering in the village of Kanliq outside Kubatli when Armenian tanks atacked on Monday morning. Faisal Zeynalev, a 37-year-old doctor, said 16 or 17 civilians had been shot dead at close range and that about 500 had been taken prisoner.

been taken prisoner.
Dr Zeynalev reached an Azeri checkpoint on foot, carrying nothing but his identity papers and a dusty anorak.

"The Armenians behaved like drunkards," he said, adding that he had to leave the bodies of his two brothers behind, killed as they were getting interventions.



Casualties of war . . . A man carries his elderly mother in the capital Baku. The UN says about 250,000 Azeris have been displaced this year

The rest of his family, including his two children, have already been evacuated and he "I heard an explosion and the three depth of the control of the contr The rest of his family, including his two children, have all ready been evacuated and he does not know where they are. Sahin Latifov, a chemistry teacher, aged 34, from Kanliq, said he had also lost contact with his wife and children. Although he had packed his bags for departure, the attack was so

Several eyewitnesses confirmed that Kanliq had been set alight, a common practice as Armenian forces create a cordon sanitaire in the villages around Nagorno-Karabakh.

Kanliq is just eight miles from the Armenian border and the strong suspicion is that this week's attack was orchestrated

not by Karabakh Armenians

not by Karabakh Armenians but by Armenia.

"From time immemorial they have wanted to create a greater Armenia," Dr Zeynalev said.

"Armenia is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States, it has a big diaspora lobby, but we have nothing."

On Tuesday local officials were given the extraordinary worder to prevent their own civilians from leaving the Kanliq area for fear that it would enare for fear that it would enared for fear t

were given the extraordinary



miles long. At one point fight-ing broke out and shots were fired as people waved their Soviet passports in his face and screamed to be allowed through. Scores of trucks resorted to crossing dirt tracks over the surrounding hills. While Azeri resistance crum-

bles, Armenian forces are now so close to Azerbaijan's border with Iran that Armenian rock-ets are travelling in an arc over the frontier highway, the escape route for refugees travel-

cape route for refugees have.
ling east.
"The road could be cut at any
moment," said Louis Rivera
from the United Nations High
Commissioner for Refugees. He added that up to 80,000 people in Kubatli and Zengilan provinces will be surrounded if the Armenians advance.

Armenians advance.

In the frontier town of Goradiz, formerly home to 10,000 people, about 100 are staying on in the hope that the Armenians of the stay of the st will not dare travel so far

south.

The surrounding countryside is littered with the carcases of livestock killed in the stampede of humans and animals escap-

of humans and animals escap-ing the fighting.

About 20 Azeri soldiers, half of them wearing training shoes, have taken over an orchard outside Goradiz and made it a

Their commander is Captain Bagir who was born in Arme-nia but forced to leave in the titfor-tat population expulsion be-tween Armenia and Azerbaijan

The captain explained a year-and-a-half of Azeri defeats by pointing out that most Muslim conscripts to the former Soviet army had only been allowed to perform menial and non-com-bat tasks.

He said that when Russian

troops withdrew from Azerbai-jan they damaged a lot of the military equipment they left be-hind, and he repeated the alle-gation made by every Azeri that Armenian forces are sup-norted by Bussia

that Armenian forces are sup-ported by Russia.

"We can hear the Armenians speaking perfect Russian on their radios," the captain said.

Diplomats in Baku, the capi-

fortune from the Russian Seventh Army have been fighting on the Armenian side, but that both parties have used

mercenaries.
This week the UNHCR began distributing 4,000 tents and 50,000 blankets to those displaced in the recent hostilities The organisation said about 250,000 Azeris have been displaced so far this year and about 1 million since the conflict began in 1988.

News in brief

Chinese aviation

safety slammed

Front hopes for coalition as the alternative to Saddam

Claire Pointon in Irbil reports how deserters | train to form the core of an opposition army

ROM his secret base in | my motivation has become the mountains of north-ern Iraq on a smugglers' track to Iran, a former Iraqi captain tunes in his short-wave radio for the latest

news from Iraq.
His men, almost all deserters from the Iraqi army, are training to form the core of

training to form the core of an opposition army under the flag of the Iraqi National Congress (INC), the front seeking to provide a democratic alternative to the Baghdad government.

Most of the 100 or so fighters are Shias who have fled the south. The rest are Sunnis, Christians, Turkomans and Kurds. All are fed, clothed and housed by the INC, which also pays a monthly salary of 600 dinars, twice that of a Kurdish

monthly salary of 600 dinars, twice that of a Kurdish teacher in the north. There is room for another 400 men, but funds are limited.

Commander "Mohammad Haji" escaped to the north after his father, a colonel in the Iraqi army, was executed for taking part in a plot to overthrow President Saddam Hussein in 1989.

"I have my own revenge to take on Saddam Hussein," he says. "But when I arrived there I saw there were hundreds of cases like mine. Now I raq's population is esti-

my motivation has become more general.

"These men had no goal or sense of purpose before. In the Iraqi army they were just obeying orders. They had no real enemy and they weren't motivated. Many had families in the south who were killed by the same Iraqi army." army."
INC officials estimate that

INC officials estimate that about 10,000 Iraqi Shias fled here after the post Gulf war uprisings in the south and north in 1991. Some have been housed by Islamic groups, others joined Kurdish political parties. Several bundred — many recent hundred - many recent

hundred — many recent arrivals from the south via Iran — live in INC accommodation in the town of Shaqlawa. Officials say there are six or seven arrivals a week.

"We haven't so far publicly encouraged people to join us because there is a shortage of money," says Ganim Javad, a member of the INC general assembly. "But we believe that the coalition between Shia and Kurd offers the best hope of bringing about

mated at about 17 million, at least 65 per cent of which are Shia and 25 per cent Kurds.

Mr Jawad believes the INC's media, based in the Kurdish-controlled north, play a key role. Its Congress newspaper is now smuggled across Iraqi lines, its radio station broadcasts seven hours a day, and last month a television station, boosted from Irbil into Mosul and Kirkuk, went live. He emphasises that the INC's humanitarian activities in the north are an important part of its are an important part of its message. Among its beneficiaries are

Among its beneficiaries are many who have never been involved in opposition politics. Hussein, a former nurse in the Iraqi army, fled from Diyallah after being imprisoned for complaining about a senior officer who tried to sexually abuse him.

For Bushara, living with her four children in one of the dingy rooms provided for

the dingy rooms provided for families near the hotel, life in northern Iraq can only be better. Her husband was exe-cuted in Hillah, accused of being a member of the Higher Danie (John in group Change) Dawa Islamic group. She and her children were tortured for information about Shia activists.

nope of bringing about change in Iraq because the Shia and Kurdish communities together comprise the majority of Iraq." so population is esti-

US defence cuts avoid job losses

Guatemalan congress faces dissolution

Simon Tisdall in Washington

HE Clinton administra-tion yesterday unveiled its five-year plan for a ner, more mobile United States military equipped to deal swiftly with the regional challenges of the post-cold-war era. But in terms of actual sav-But in terms of actual sav-ings, the new strategy pre-sented by Les Aspin, the de-fence secretary, after a six-month review was less than sweeping and went to great pains to minimise job losses. Overall changes in future force numbers and procure-ment programmes do not differ creatly from those envisaged by

greatly from those envisaged by Mr Clinton's predecessor,

Michael Reid in Mexico City

PRESIDENT Ramiro De

Leon Carpio has taken steps to call a referendum to dissolve the Guatemalan con-gress. His announcement came

despite an agreement by a majority of legislators to begin moves to purge the more corrupt of their colleagues as the president demanded. Guate-

George Bush. In most areas, spending is redirected rather than cut.

than cut.

This is partly the result of the control exercised by Pentagon chiefs over the review and partly that of Mr Clinton's ex-

partly that of Mr Clinton's experiences in Bosnia, Somalia, and North Korea, where US power has proved ineffective. The proposals complement Mr Clinton's emerging foreign policy strategy, which emphasises diplomatic solutions in overseas troublespots backed by superior US and allied force. But they will disappoint those who took at face value Mr Clinton's campaign call for a radical overhaul of military spending.

tions against congress and the supreme court unless all the members of both resigned. If they refused he would seek to

carriers, two more than Mr carry non-nuclear weapons.
Bush wanted, to deploy US Under the plan, which must be approved by Congress, total rier to be built in Virginia is

likely to be the most expensive ship in history. A \$1 billion Seawolf nuclear submarine will be ordered from

submarine will be ordered from General Dynamics even though experts agree it will be surplus to requirements. Despite calls for a cut in overseas deployment, the administration will keep 100,000 troops in western Europe and a similar number in the Pacific.

Some large military pro-

Some large military programmes, like Lockheed's \$75 billion advanced F-22 Stealth fighter, will continue on spending. a reduced scale.

The plan includes 12 aircraft The F-22 will be modified to

be approved by Congress, total troop strength will fall to 1.4 million from 1.7 million over the next three years. The surface fleet will be reduced by about 100 ships, to 350, by the end of the century. The number of air force fighter wings will be cut to about 20, and production of F-16 jets will cease next year. Four active army divisions will go, but cuts in the marine corps will be halted.

Overall, Mr Clinton has allocated \$246 billion for defence in his 1994 budget. But according

his 1994 budget. But according to one estimate defence spending will exceed his self-imposed targets over the next five years by \$14 billion.

of Chinese domestic flights, it said: "based on the last year-and-a-half, you might be safer on the streets of Sarajevo." — AP.

Emily spares US its worst

Hurricane Emily peeled away from the US Atlantic coast yes-

Luanda denies US aid

Central African Republic yes-terday freed the former dictator

Entertainments Guide

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Congress has failed to expel one deputy accused of drug-traffick-ing and another allegedly in-volved in a stolen car racket.

they refused he would seek to call a referendum to overcome "a crisis of governability".

Mr De Leon's move coincides with a sharp slip in his poularity compared with three months ago when he took office.

Three decades of military rule ending in 1985 have left Guatemala with self-serving political parties whose congression.

maia appears to be moving claser and with sar-serving pocloser to a conflict of powers
with an uncertain outcome.

Launching a "national crusade against corruption" last
week, Mr De Leon said he up to a third of the 116 legisla-

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would lead street demonstra- I tors regularly sell their votes. I the removal of 16 of the most

the removal of 16 of the most corrupt members of congress.

Mr De Leon was reported to have privately accepted such a compromise, but said publicly he had asked the electoral authority to call a referendum on the issue. It is unclear whether he has legal backing for this.

Mr De Leon, formerly Guatemala's human rights ombudsman, has been criticised for moving too slowly on his pledge to clean up government. Although he has installed a constitutionalist officer as commander of the army, human rights groups say killings and kidnappings have continued.

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