

27 Aug 2001

Late last night, a British soldier was killed on the road from the airport to Skopje by rock-throwing teenagers. Two bombs went off in the Skopje area late last night and early this morning. No one was injured, but there was significant property damage.

Macedonian television was showing some pretty gruesome pictures of two men killed in the hotel bombing in Tetovo over the weekend. There are all kinds of conspiracy theories floating around the city related to that bombing, and the two more recent ones. Some say it's the guerrillas, some say that its organized crime taking advantage of the situation, and there's even one on that involves the Minister of the Interior somehow (I don't understand the theory, so I can't explain it). People are worried and angry and upset and it seems like they're looking for anything that sounds even remotely like an explanation.

NATO's weapons collection is underway, and apparently so far they've collected around 500 weapons, most of them ancient assault rifles. There have been reports of weapons and people captured at the Macedonia-Kosovo border (now, apparently, people are trying to smuggle the better weapons out of Macedonia, instead of in).

I'm fine. The bombings were nowhere near where I live or hang out, and happened at times when I wouldn't generally be out anyway, curfew or not. I don't live near anything important enough to be the target of a bombing. Anti-Western sentiment hasn't escalated to the level of attacks on individuals. The anti-Western sentiment there is has all been targeted at governments and major governmental agencies, not at individuals or NGOs. And we would be evacuated if it looked like it would get to that point, or if violence and instability become widespread in Skopje. Which they haven't, despite the insinuations in some international news reports. Just remember that any given news organization is looking for a story, and a balanced report often gets in the way of a good story.