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The sequence of events was as tragic as it was frustratingly predictable. Once again, Bosnian Serb fighters, in open defiance of a UN-imposed ban on the use of heavy weapons in and around the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, took aim at civilian neighborhoods of the city, killing and wounding scores of innocent people. Once again, NATO warplanes responded by bombing selected Bosnian Serb military targets, in the vain hope that such action would pressure the Serbs into suing for peace. And once again, the Serbs retaliated by doing exactly what they had warned they would do--seizing UN peacekeeping troops at gunpoint and using them as human shields to ward off further air strikes. By week's end, two French peacekeepers were dead and hundreds of others--including an unarmed Canadian Forces captain, Patrick Rechner, 32, of Calgary--were being held hostage by a Serbian leadership whose steely resolve had again left the international community appearing powerless and humiliated.

In recent weeks, ignoring the UN ban on heavy artillery within 20 km of Sarajevo, Serb rebels have seized a total of about 200 weapons from UN collection sites near the city. Early Saturday morning, Serb units masquerading as French soldiers, and driving a stolen French armored personnel vehicle, took control of Sarajevo's strategic Vrbanja bridge without a fight.

Newly elected President Jacques Chirac, meanwhile, called an emergency meeting of NATO ambassadors in Brussels at which he urged the alliance to give UN troops ``the necessary means'' to carry out their task. Pointedly, Chirac blamed the two French fatalities on ``the ambiguity that surrounds the peacekeepers' mandate, the unsuitability of their means and the international community's lack of determination.'' Harsh words, but few if any of the 850 Canadian troops now serving in Bosnia would likely disagree.

-Frustrations and tempers rising from nations, as they are fed up with the rules and mandates set up by the UN for its troops