

The Picayune

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PARTLY CLOUDY

with scattered afternoon thundershowers, southerly winds, eight-16 miles an hour is the Weather Bureau forecast. High Thursday, 84-88; low, 70-74. High Wednesday, 88; low, 73. Weather map, details, Sec. 1, Page 16.

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MEXICAN STUDENTS FIGHT TROOPS IN BLOODY BATTLE

Death Toll May Top 20; Hundreds Wounded

By PAUL FINCH

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Students battled troops and police in Mexico City Wednesday night in the bloodiest outbreak in nine weeks of struggle against the government of President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz. At least a score of persons were believed killed and hundreds wounded.

The battle cast a shadow over the approaching opening of the 1968 Olympic Games in the Mexican capital Oct. 12. Student rebels have pledged to disrupt the games.

An Associated Press photographer reported seeing "many" bodies in the Plaza of the Three Cultures, just blocks away from the downtown area, and of persons shot down in an exchange of automatic gunfire. Another Associated Press man saw at least two civilians killed and 10 wounded in front of the Foreign Ministry, apparently victims of a civilian sniper posted in an apartment building above.

All the victims had been holding their hands aloft while army troops held them at gunpoint.

MACHINE GUN FIRE

Troops in armored cars opened up with machine guns on student snipers, and gangs of youths roamed streets, shooting and throwing gasoline bombs.

An American cameraman said a motorcycle policeman was shot dead at his side. The

photographer, Carl Sorenson of Columbia Broadcasting System, said troops smashed his camera and held him prisoner for more than an hour.

The battle was the latest and probably the worst outbreak in a campaign of demonstrations, occasionally marked by violence, by students objecting to what they say is government repression.

Thousands of persons were said to have been arrested in Wednesday's disorders.

The student-army crossfire sent residents of the area and passers by screaming for cover.

The dead were reported to include soldiers, students and bystanders who had been trapped

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in the battle. Women and children were reported among the wounded.

FIGHTING TAPERS OFF

The fighting tapered off to sporadic incidents after about two hours. It broke out after student leaders, faced with a massive deployment of troops and armor, called off a scheduled protest march.

The battle area was several miles from the Olympic village, in the southern part of the city.

An estimated 400 students holed up in a preparatory school and traded shots with soldiers. One witness said an army helicopter flew over the school and

fired on the students.

The fighting caused a huge traffic jam as ambulances and police and fire vehicles tried to get through to the embattled area. Hundreds of residents fled from their buildings in the apartment district, scene of a bloody gunfight last week.

Several explosions were heard and at least three buildings and several city buses were set afire.

STUDENT SNIPERS

Reports from the scene said the shooting was touched off by students firing .22-caliber pistols from apartment windows. An army truck pulled up and soldiers moved into the building. Then armored cars moved in with machine guns blazing.

Snipers also were reported firing from windows around the Plaza of the Three Cultures, where protesters had gathered earlier for the march that was canceled. Some were in the government Social Security and Health Building near the plaza. One end of the building was in flames.

Armored cars sprayed the building with machine-gun fire again and again under the light of flares.

MARCH CALLED OFF

Earlier, rain and a heavy concentration of troops, helicopters and armored vehicles had dissuaded students from holding their march. Student leaders told a gathering of more than 5,000 persons: "We will try again at an opportune time."

Helicopters flew overhead and

thousands of troops and riot police filled side streets along the 10-block route the students had planned to march to protest military occupation of the polytechnic school.

The battle area was in the downtown section of the capital, several miles from the Olympic

village at the southern edge of the city, where final preparations were under way for the 1968 Olympic Games, which open this month.