

Expected losses concern candidates

CONCORD, N.H. — The campaigns of Democrat Michael Dukakis and Republican George Bush are concerned that their front-running status in New Hampshire could be affected by expected losses in the Iowa caucuses today.

With only eight days separating the Iowa precinct caucuses and the first-in-the-nation presidential primary on Feb. 16, the New Hampshire front-runners have the most to lose.

Neither Bush nor Dukakis is heading the pack in Iowa. Senate GOP Leader Bob Dole of Kansas leads Bush in the Iowa polls, while Dukakis of Massachusetts is locked in a tight Democratic race in the Iowa samplings with Rep. Richard Gephardt of Missouri and Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois.

Both the Dukakis and Bush campaigns readily admit they may lose Monday night.

"There is no question we're going to lose Iowa," said Ron Kaufman, Northeast coordinator for Bush.

"It's pretty clear we're not going to win in Iowa," said Charles Baker, Dukakis' New Hampshire director.

Polls have consistently put Bush and Dukakis substantially ahead of their rivals in New Hampshire, and both candidates have major organizations on the ground in the state to match. But with the feared impact of Iowa, neither has been taking anything for granted in New Hampshire.

Two Democrats, Gephardt and former Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt, have mounted efficient, energetic operation. And a third Democrat, former Colorado Sen. Gary Hart, has

a residual store of good will here.

In 1984, Hart stunned Democratic front-runner Walter Mondale in New Hampshire, riding a wave of media attention from a better-than-expected showing in Iowa.

The polls in New Hampshire this year also give campaigns pause. The leading candidate in each party has not changed, but the rankings of the rest of the field have varied from poll to poll, day to day.

And there is at least some evidence that the voters could shift dramatically in the next eight days.

"I'm a little surprised that this late in the process some polls are suggesting as high as one-third uncommitted" in the Democratic race, said state Democratic Party chairman Joe Grandmaison.

Arafat orders hostage release

SIDON, Lebanon — PLO guerrillas Sunday surrounded a house holding two kidnapped Scandinavian United Nations employees and their abductors, and PLO chief Yasser Arafat ordered the hostages freed.

The Palestine Liberation Organization's Sidon commander, Anwar Madi, who issued the order in this southern Lebanese port city, said his guerrillas might use force to release the two captives.

"We shall try to gain their freedom with peaceful means. But if this proves ineffective, we shall resort to other means," Madi told reporters, "we expect they will be free in 48 hours."

Sources close to Madi said the two captives — United Nations Relief and Works Agency employees Jan Stening, 44, of Sweden, and William Jorgensen, 58, of Norway — were

being held in a deserted house that had been encircled by PLO guerrillas near Sidon's Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp.

"We have clear orders from Arafat to storm the hideout if the captors fail to free the two captives peacefully," said one source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Stening and Jorgensen were traveling in an UNRWA car from their base in the southern Lebanese port of Tyre to Beirut on Friday when they were intercepted and kidnapped by masked gunman on Sidon's southern outskirts.

They were the first Scandinavians to be abducted in Lebanon. An UNRWA communique released Saturday said it had been established that the captors were Palestinians "acting individually without a political motive."

In Brief

Department gives OK to private Contra efforts

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department says private supporters of the Nicaraguan Contras can legally raise funds for the rebels.

The Contras' backers will have to step gingerly, though, if they want to avoid past mistakes that have led to criminal charges or made them — both wittingly and unwittingly — part of the Iran-Contra affair.

For instance, U.S. law would prohibit the private backers from shipping arms now in the United States to the Contras without State Department approval.

And the department would have to agree before U.S.-made arms could be sent from other countries to the rebels.

Other laws prohibit the launching of private military operations from U.S. soil and require registration of anyone operating as an agent of a foreign entity.

Internal Revenue Service rules say that tax-exempt charitable organizations must raise money for food, clothing and shelter — not for weapons.

Private Contra backers said last week they would try anew to raise money for the rebels because of the House's rejection of \$36.2 million in aid.

Three Palestinians killed in occupied territories

JERUSALEM — Israeli troops shot and killed three Palestinians on Sunday and hospital officials said at least 25 other were wounded. Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek declared that "coexistence between Jews and Arabs has collapsed."

Widespread demonstrations rocked the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in one of the worst days of bloodshed since the protests began Dec. 8. Jerusalem also suffered as Arab activists cut a water main, leaving several neighborhoods dry.

Two other Arabs — a 15-year-old boy hit in the head by a soldier Saturday and a 10-year-old boy struck by a bullet last week — died of injuries suffered earlier and dozens more were hospitalized after they were beaten and teargassed by Israeli troops.

Nebraska lacks money to fund land conservation

More than 1 million acres of Nebraska farmland will need terraces and other soil-saving improvements by 1995 to meet current farm laws, but officials say only about half the government money needed is available.

And the state's 60,816 farmers and land owners are receiving blunt reminders from the federal government that they can be penalized financially if improvements aren't made.

"It has been determined that you have highly erodible land," letters to farmers announce before warning that landowners have until 1990 to plan improvements that the Soil Conservation Service will approve.

Daily Nebraskan

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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448, weekdays during academic year (except holidays), weekly during the summer session.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Don Johnson, 472-3611. Subscription price is \$35 for one year.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, NE.

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