

Reagan ending U.S. convoys in the Persian Gulf

NEW YORK — President Reagan decided Monday to end U.S. convoys of American-flagged ships in the Persian Gulf but will keep U.S. forces in the gulf to aid threatened ships, the White House announced.

Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater told reporters that Reagan acted "after reviewing the current cease-fire . . . which has been in effect since Aug. 20, and consulting with allies and friends in the region."

There have been no attacks on gulf shipping since the cease-fire began. Fitzwater said the president made

the decision in Washington before leaving for New York, where he was to discuss the change with heads of state from the region.

Reagan, after a farewell speech to the U.N. General Assembly, had meetings set with Sheik Jamir Ahmed Sabah, the ruling emir of Kuwait, and with leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which is headed by Saudi Arabia.

The president's meeting with the sheik is the first since Sabah came to power in 1976.

The convoy operation, begun 14

months ago, involved a precise Navy formation used to protect against potential Iranian attacks. Kuwaiti tankers re-registered under the U.S. flag.

"The modification entails a change from a 'tight escort' procedure to an 'accompany' regime," Fitzwater said on Air Force One as Reagan flew to New York.

"In an 'accompany' regime, U.S. forces will be positioned such that they can take appropriate action if American-flagged ships are directly threatened."

There have been no attacks on gulf shipping since the cease-fire went into effect.

The spokesman said that even with the change, the United States "intends to maintain in the gulf the forces required to protect U.S.-flagged shipping and support our national objectives. These changes in no way alter our commitment to freedom of navigation in the gulf."

The spokesman said the move is "the first step in the change of our presence. We will continue to review our presence in the gulf and will make

changes as the threat diminishes." For now, he said, the Navy will not reduce its presence in the gulf.

The United States has 26 ships in its Joint Task Force Middle East, including 17 in the Persian Gulf. As of Sept. 16, the Navy had conducted 85 convoy operations since the escorts began.

When asked whether the move could lead to normalization of relations with Iran, Fitzwater said, "We've always said we're willing to talk to authorized Iranian officials."

Reagan gives farewell speech to U.N.

UNITED NATIONS — President Reagan told the United Nations in a farewell speech Monday that this was "a moment of hope" for peace in the world and that a new U.S.-Soviet treaty to sharply reduce nuclear arms may be concluded next year.

He called for an international war on drug traffickers, terrorism and hostage-taking, and vowed to maintain U.S. support for an armed insurgency against the leftist government of Nicaragua.

He said the Sandinistas were pursuing "the oldest, most corrupt vice of all — man's age-old will to power, his lust to control the lives and steal the freedoms of others."

But with his presidency nearing an end, Reagan struck a mostly philosophical stance as he told the 43rd General Assembly session of 159 nations that civil wars and foreign occupations were giving way around the world.

Reagan said the trend was spurred by "a new era in Soviet-American relations" marked by the continuing withdrawal of the Red Army from Afghanistan and a treaty last year to abolish intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

He said U.S. and Soviet negotiators were making steady progress on another accord to sharply reduce long-range bombers, missiles and submarines. While completion of the pact this year was "highly doubtful," Reagan said, "I can tell you a year from now (it) is a possibility, more than a possibility."

On the conventional front, Reagan said East-West talks to reduce non-nuclear forces, tanks and other mobile weapons in Europe "will begin soon."

The United States had demanded a Soviet commitment to give equal attention to human rights. Reagan met

last week in Washington with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze.

Afterward, U.S. officials said the Soviets had promised to release 27 additional political prisoners, to make changes in their emigration procedures and to undertake other reforms. Reagan's statement indicated the human rights obstacle had been removed.

From Angola to Cambodia, and in the Persian Gulf, where U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar is trying to formalize a cease-fire to end the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq, prospects for peace are bright, Reagan said.

In his speech, Reagan said, "I stand at this podium, then, in a moment of hope — hope not just for the peoples of the United States or the Soviet Union, but for all the peoples of the world."

City officials cut weeds, pick up trash for debate

OMAHA — City officials are urging residents to cut their weeds and spruce up their flower boxes to Omaha can make the 1991 U.S. National Media Spotlight City. The award is next week's prize for the best city.

Kevin Collison, Mayor of Omaha, said the city is looking for a clean, safe, and beautiful city. He said the city is looking for a clean, safe, and beautiful city.

"We want a city that is clean, safe, and beautiful. We want a city that is clean, safe, and beautiful. We want a city that is clean, safe, and beautiful."

The Nebraska Roads Department is being asked to pick up trash along Interstate 80 and Public Works officials will be told to "make sure the city is clean and stays clean," he said.

"We'll urge downtown building owners to keep their lights on at night to make sure the skyline looks impressive. And the Central Park Mall will be cleaned and spruced up," Collison said.

The Central Park Mall is a winding greenbelt park with walking paths and a lake. It is one of the city's most beautiful spots.

Collison said each company in the city has been asked to submit three or four ideas for news stories.

"We asked them if they could get a story covered, what would it be," he said.

Gunman fires on pupils

GREENWOOD, S.C. — A gunman entered an elementary school today and opened fire with a pistol, killing one pupil, authorities said.

Ten injured people were taken to Self Memorial Hospital in Greenwood, said a spokeswoman at the hospital. The gunman was apprehended and now is in custody, authorities at the scene said.

"We have 10 patients that have been brought in through the emergency room, two teachers and eight children," said spokeswoman Rosemary Mountz.

Greenwood Police Chief James Coursey told The (Greenwood) Index-Journal that officers have a suspect in custody and that one person was killed.

The suspect's name was not available. Children reportedly ran from the

Oakland Elementary School into adjacent woods when the man opened fire, the newspaper reported.

Janitor Thad Barr, a witness to part of the shooting, said he wasn't sure where it started, but the man was in the lunchroom shooting then went down the hall shooting into classrooms.

Physical education aide Phillip Browning said after the suspect quit shooting, he threw the pistol down and walked out of the building as if nothing were wrong.

Browning said he held the suspect until police arrived. He described the man as a hefty white male in his mid-20s. "He remained calm and offered no resistance," Browning said.

Greenwood is a town of about 22,000 in western South Carolina, some 50 miles north of Augusta, Ga.

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