

Hostage release promise still unfulfilled

By The Associated Press

U.S. officials rushed to Jordan's border with Iraq on Wednesday to greet Americans fleeing from Iraq, but there was no sign that Saddam Hussein had carried out his pledge to free Western women and children.

No members of that hostage group were aboard the two Iraqi Airways flights that arrived in Amman, Jordan, from Baghdad on Wednesday.

And although U.S. Ambassador Roger Harrison hurried to the border post of Ruweishid northeast of Amman to help greet Americans, none showed up.

"I have no evidence... indicating that people have been allowed to leave," White House spokesman Roman Popadiuk told reporters in Washington.

On Tuesday, the State Department said Iraq took nine more Americans into custody in Iraq and Kuwait, bringing to 70 the number who have been rounded up and apparently moved to military installations to prevent a U.S. attack.

Nevertheless, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said on Wednesday that if Saddam carries

out his promise to free the Western women and children, it will be "a significant step in the right direction."

Cable News Network quoted unidentified Iraqi officials as saying an Iraqi Airways plane filled with Westerners will leave Baghdad for Amman today.

As the West waited to see what would happen to its hostages, a White House official confirmed that the Bush administration received a secret Iraqi offer to free all captives and withdraw from Kuwait if certain conditions were met.

The conditions were that the international trade embargo against Iraq be lifted and Baghdad be granted access to the Persian Gulf and sole control of an oil field that dips into Kuwait, according to Newsday, which broke the story.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the offer was rejected. Iraq's official news agency said no such proposal was made.

Iraq's U.S. ambassador, Mohamed Al-Mashat, officially notified the State Department of Saddam's decree that all women and children of foreign

nationals would be allowed out of Iraq beginning Wednesday.

Al-Mashat told reporters the Americans would be allowed to leave through Jordan or Turkey, but he gave no timetable for their departure.

Al-Mashat also said that once Washington assures Baghdad that the U.S.-led multinational force massing in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf will not attack Iraq, "then we are going to let even men out."

But it was not clear if al-Mashat's impromptu remarks represented a policy change by the Iraqi government.

Saddam previously offered to free all 21,000 Western hostages in Iraq and Kuwait if Washington withdrew its forces from the gulf and guaranteed the lifting of trade sanctions against Iraq. The United States rejected the offer.

The international trade embargo, designed to force Iraq to end its occupation of Kuwait, got an important boost from OPEC and Japan on Wednesday.

OPEC oil ministers approved a plan allowing Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and other member countries to

Saddam may offer compromise

AMMAN, Jordan - President Saddam Hussein of Iraq is expected to declare federated self-rule for Kuwait in a bid to ease the gulf crisis and allow the United States to withdraw in partial victory, senior Arab military officials said Wednesday.

The idea, already floated to the Soviet Union and the United States, the sources said, may figure in talks today between Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in Amman.

The officials, who spoke on the understanding that neither they nor their countries be identified, said

Saddam was likely to announce the move before the end of September.

Under a plan being considered, they said, Kuwait might have autonomy -- perhaps with a bloc of parliament seats and positions in the Iraqi National Cabinet. Saddam would accept a timetable and conditions to protect U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf, the sources said.

Such a plan would have little appeal to the Kuwaiti government now in exile in Saudi Arabia. Saddam's centralized government is not likely to allow much political or economic leeway.

pump more oil and help hold down crude prices. One OPEC minister predicted the agreement could replace 3 million of the 4 million barrels of oil the day that disappeared from the world market because of the embargoes on Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil.

Iran refused to back the OPEC deal, and Iraq and Libya did not show

up for the meeting of the 13-nation Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

After days of discussion, Japan announced it will supply money, medics and transportation to the multinational forces being deployed to prevent an Iraqi attack on Saudi Arabia.

Mohawks help dismantle barricades

MONTREAL - Masked Mohawks on Wednesday helped soldiers tear down barricades set up seven weeks ago near the Mercier Bridge, avoiding a bloody confrontation.

But other Mohawks said the original dispute remains unsettled and barricades at nearby Oka will remain.

After a meeting in front of one barricade leading to the community of Chateaugay and the Kahna-

wake reserve, army officers and unarmed members of the Mohawks' Warriors Society began bringing the Mercier Bridge barrier down with heavy equipment.

The two sides then began dismantling another barricade near Chateaugay on a highway blocked since July 11, when Mohawks at Oka fought a gun battle with provincial police in a dispute over land the community of Oka had earmarked as a golf course. The

Indians said it was ancestral land.

Earlier Wednesday, four trucks, two front-end loaders on flatbed trucks, and two armored personnel carriers had moved toward the Mohawk barricades near the bridge. Reports circulated that the government issued an ultimatum to Indian negotiators to settle or face army guns.

There were no immediate talks between the army and the Mohawks near Oka.

Court tests constitutionality of military death sentence

WASHINGTON - Defense lawyers in the racially tinged case of a Marine facing the first military execution in 29 years argued Wednesday that sections of the military death penalty are unconstitutional.

Murder defendants in military trials don't have the same protections as civilians in state courts, attorneys for Lance Cpl. Ronnie Curtis told the U.S. Court of Military Appeals.

The court appointed lawyers, Lt. Cmdr. John B. Holt and civilian Robert Morin, also argued that President Reagan abused his executive privilege in 1984 by signing an order outlining whom the military may sentence to death.

"Congress has not decided. Con-

gress has not delegated this power to the president," Holt told three civilian judges of the military appeals court.

Curtis, who is black, contends racial taunts drove him to fatally stab Lt. James Lotz, a Scranton, Pa., native who was his section officer, and then stab Lotz's Joan wife and sexually abuse her as she lay dying in her home at Camp Lejeune, N.C., on April 13, 1987.

Curtis, who confessed to a state trooper and to investigators, was sentenced to death after being convicted in a military trial. He is being held at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and could take his case to the U.S. Supreme Court if he loses his appeals.

Women's sports coverage unfair

NEW YORK - Women athletes don't get their fair share of television time and the coverage of them is sexist, according to a study released Wednesday by the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles.

The study found that only 5 percent of television sports news on a sample station was devoted to women athletes, that females frequently were called "girls" instead of "women" and that men's telecasts use more high-tech equipment and statistics.

"The current practice tends to trivialize women athletes," said Anita DeFrantz, the foundation's president. "There are non-economic solutions."

The study examined coverage of the 1989 U.S. Open tennis championship and the 1989 NCAA men's and women's basketball Final Fours on CBS as well as six weeks of local

sportscasts on KNBC-TV of Los Angeles.

DeFrantz said women appear on sports telecasts "as comic relief or a sex symbol," many times appearing only in shots of spectators.

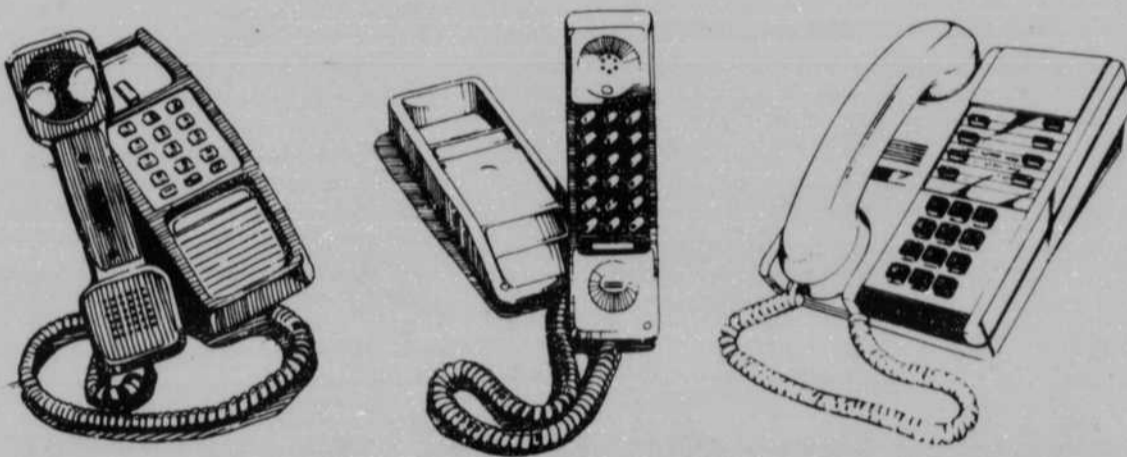
The survey said that while the men's Final Four used 18 replays per game, women's games used only 12.7. Men's games used 24.3 graphics per game while women's games used 9.3.

The study said that in tennis commentary, women were referred to by only their first names 52.7 percent of the time compared to 7.8 percent for men.

CBS pointed out that Bob Stenner, its Super Bowl producer, directed the women's Final Four. And ESPN said that when it televised women's basketball games, it used the same amount of equipment that it used for men's games.

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