Page News Digest By The Associated Press Edited by Jana Pedersen

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Retired military chiefs call for patience

WASHINGTON - Two former U.S. mili-tary chiefs urged caution in the Persian Gulf on Wednesday, even as President Bush sent Secretary of State James A. Baker III to press the United Nations for formal support of a possible attack against Iraq.

"I counsel patience," said retired Adm. William Crowe, who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Reagan. "War is not neat, it's not tidy, and once you resort to

it, it's uncertain, and it's a mess Retired Air Force Gen. David C. Jones, chairman of the joint chiefs under President Carter, voiced concern with the latest troop deployment, in which Bush is sending 200,000 more to bolster the 230,000 already in the Gulf

and to add an offensive capability.

Jones said his fear "isn't that we might choose to fight, but rather that the deployment

might cause us to fight."

Baker went to New York on Wednesday to personally take charge of the U.S. effort to win

formal international support of the idea of a last-resort attack to free Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's forces, which invaded on Aug. 2.

"The question is how much pain we administer and how quickiy, and whether we do it with the embargo or the use of force," said Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., whose Armed Services Commit-

tee began its hearings Tuesday. Meanwhile, House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt broke with the administration and stepped ahead of other party leaders on the subject of military confrontation with Saddam,

announcing his opposition to the use of U.S. military force in the near future.

And Rep. Lee Hamilton, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs' Middle East Subcommittee, said he believes it is time for Bush to send an envoy to Baghdad to open talks with Saddam, with the aim of making U.S. intentions clear and exploring non-military solu-

tions to the crisis.
Sen. Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, the

former Senate Democratic leader, told Armed Services Committee colleagues he believed the world would welcome "patience rather than impetuousness" before any U.S. decision

When we view grandmothers and grandfathers who lost not one but two, three grandchildren, and they feel we took the action too hastily, I think we'll all have the time to be ' Byrd said.

sorry," Byrd said.
"The policy of patient strength is, I think, our best hope," Gephardt said, and he made clear he was opposing any congressional resolution authorizing the use of force. In so doing, he parted company with other Democratic leaders who said Bush would have a better chance of winning congressional backing for the use of force if the United Nations first endorsed this

option.
"Obviously there are going to be different opinions," White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater told reporters.

Congress for authority to launch any attack under the War Powers Act. The president maintains he already has the authority to take

On Capitol Hill, Crowe and Jones recommended that the United States give economic sanctions against Iraq a year to 18 months to work before opting for military force.

And Crowe said Bush must consider the future implications of attacking an Arab nation in the tenuous Middle East situation.

"I am persuaded that the U.S. initiating hostilities could well exacerbate many of the tensions I have cited and further polarize the Arab world," Crowe said.

Former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissiner testified, "I do not believe we can maintain 400,000 troops much beyond the spring of next year, and therefore our general position will be a decision on whether to go to war."

Greenspan says oil prices to blame for slow economy

WASHINGTON - Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said Wednesday that oil-price problems from the Persian Gulf crisis have pushed the economy into "a mean-ingful downturn," confirming private analysts' recession talk.

Appearing before the House Banking Committee, he also said the central bank can do little to cushion the effect of higher oil prices on Americans' standard of living.

Separately, the Commerce Department reported that the economy, as measured by the gross national prod-

quarter, even worse than the previously reported 1.8 percent rate.

Most private analysts believe the economy has weakened sharply since the quarter ended, an assessment Greenspan confirmed. But he carefully avoided describing the deterioration as a recession, which is defined as a contraction of six months or more

"We won't know whether it is the beginning of a recession or just some aberration in economic activity for quite a while We couldn't conuct, grew at a lackluster 1.7 percent ceivably know for certain until April annual rate in the July-September or May of next year," Greenspan said. ceivably know for certain until April

Chinese foreign minister won't support resolution

China's foreign minister said Wednesday his country will not back proposed U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing force against

Iraq, a day before foreign ministers prepared to vote on the measure.

China is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council and could veto the measure. At the United Nations, diplomats said they

didn't expect such a move and predicted the resolution would pass.

Roland Dumas, the foreign minister of France, issued a "final appeal" to Iraq to pull out of Kuwait, warning that Baghdad had six weeks to "allow reason to triumph."

President Bush has gathered support abroad for military action, but he faces trouble in Congress. A leading democrat said Wednesday he

did not support the use of force against Iraq any time soon.

There also were appeals for peace in Baghdad. Iraq's deputy foreign minister urged Bush to open talks on the Persian Gulf crisis, although

he did not offer concessions regarding Kuwait.

Secretary of State James A. Baker III has asked that foreign ministers represent their countries in the Security Council for today's

Before leaving Beijing for the United Nations on Wednesday, China's foreign minister, Qian Qichen, said his country would not back

the use-of-force resolution. It has always been the position of China to call for a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis and to avoid the use of force or the act of

war," Qian told reporters. At the United Nations, diplomats were divided over whether China would abstain, or eventually vote in favor of the resolution after wringing political concessions out of Washington.

It seems rather clear that they're not thinking of vetoing," said

British Ambassador David Hannay.

Qian was to meet with Baker late Wednesday. China wants Washington to lift economic sanctions imposed following the June 1989

military crackdown that crushed China's pro-democracy movement. Also speaking before leaving for New York, Dumas told the French Parliament Iraq had given no sign of withdrawing from Kuwait, despite earlier U.N. resolutions imposing a trade embargo, among other meas-

'I call on the Iraqi leaders to understand that this is really the final appeal being addressed to them," Dumas said. "I say with all serious-

ness: It is up to Iraq to decide its future. France has said it will vote in favor of the U.N. resolution.

Oil prices were stable early Wednesday on the New York Mercantile Exchange, with many traders waiting for the Security Council vote. Oil was down 36 cents at \$32.50 per barrel on contracts for January

Government collapse likely after protests in Bulgarian streets

SOFIA, Bulgaria - Prime Minister Andrei Lukanov's government of former Communists appeared on the verge of collapse Wednesday follow-ing angry street protests and a threat by Bulgaria's largest union to join a nationwide strike.

The official BTA news agency said an agreement was struck under which Lukanov would resign, but Lukanov called the report premature.

Asked by reporters if he would quit, Lukanov replied, "Not now." He said he did not know exactly when

he would resign. BTA had said President Zhelyu Zhelev would appoint a caretaker Cabinet headed by a premier who will be neither of the Socialist Party, nor the Union of Democratic Forces

Pressure on the 52-year-old So-cialist premier increased hourly. He has been increasingly blamed for the political paralysis and economic chaos in this Balkan country of 9 million

Krastyo Petkov, chairman of the main Confederation of Independent Trade Unions, said his organization would join a 3-day-old strike by the smaller, more radical Podkrepa union today unless the political stalemate was settled. His union had opposed

Ognyan Kromov, the Confederation's vice president, said it would start shutting down heavy industry

Kromov said the union "insists on forming a working Cabinet that would negotiations."

Podkrepa said 870,000 workers were on strike today in 91 cities

throughout Bulgaria, including 230,000 in Sofia.

Bulgaria is suffering through its worst crisis since World War II. Electricity, many foodstuffs and consumer goods are rationed or simply unavailable in many places. Even matches, candles and kerosene are in short supply in Sofia, and there is doubt about the supply of heating oil.

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