

Iraq denies 'backing down'

NICOSIA, Cyprus — Iraq denied Sunday that it bowed to an ultimatum to withdraw missiles from its south and claimed that the confrontation was created by a lame duck U.S. president with personal grudges against Baghdad.

A spokesman for Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's ruling Revolutionary Command Council suggested that Baghdad was hoping for better relations with President-elect Clinton.

The United States, France, Britain and Russia had given Baghdad until Friday night to remove anti-aircraft missiles from southern Iraq, where the allies are enforcing a "no-fly" zone to protect Shiite Muslim rebels. U.S. officials said Saturday that Iraq had "backed down" and moved the missiles.

But the Iraqi spokesman, in a statement carried by the government-run Iraqi News Agency, said the White House and Pentagon assertions were "not true."

"Our planes and our air missiles

are in the places where we decided they should be," said the spokesman, who was not identified. He accused Washington of trying "to mislead public opinion or to damage our credibility." U.S. officials in Washington had no comment Sunday on the situation.

The Iraqi spokesman said President Bush also might be seeking to "burden President-elect Clinton with his policy, which is governed by personal reasons and motivated by unjustified hatred" for Saddam's government.

State-controlled Iraqi newspapers echoed the same defiant theme.

The daily Al-Thawra said Bush was trying to turn the air-exclusion zone below the 32nd parallel into "something permanent."

The zone was declared by the United States and its allies Aug. 27. It is designed to prevent air attacks on Shiite Muslim dissidents sheltering in southern marshes since their failed rebellion against Saddam's regime.

Clinton has voiced strong support for Bush's handling of the missile standoff with Iraq. But the Iraqi spokesman said "there is a possibility for dialogue" with the new administration.

The allies delivered their ultimatum on the missiles Wednesday, after an American fighter jet shot down an Iraqi warplane that penetrated the no-fly zone on Dec. 27.

Reports from U.S. Navy officers aboard the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk in the gulf said that the missiles had been moved and that Iraqi jets had stopped violating the no-fly zone.

But fighter pilots aboard the aircraft carrier said they believed they would have to tangle with Saddam's military forces at some point.

"He just keeps chipping away at this thing and sooner or later it has to explode.

"I wonder if we are delaying the inevitable," said Lt. Cmdr. Dale Bruetting, executive officer of an F-14 Tomcat fighter squadron.

Serbs back off demands at peace talks

GENEVA — Bosnian Serbs appeared to back off formal demands for a separate state within Bosnia-Herzegovina as talks aimed at ending the ethnic war in the former Yugoslav republic resumed Sunday.

But Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Serb minority in Bosnia, insisted upon his arrival in Geneva that the republic's Muslims, Serbs and Croats remain "sovereign, constituent and equal." He also demanded that "cooperation" between his ethnic group and Serb-dominated Yugoslavia not be restricted.

Karadzic's insistence for a sepa-

rate Serb state in Bosnia has been the main obstacle at the 4-month-old Geneva peace talks. His shift possibly signaled a willingness to compromise but did not mean a breakthrough was near.

Leaders of Bosnia's Muslims, the largest ethnic group in the republic, are leery of a political settlement because they fear the Serbs will break off the territory they control and join neighboring Serbia.

More than 17,000 people have been killed and more than 1 million have lost their homes in the 9-month-old

war. Bosnian Serbs, backed by Serb-dominated Yugoslavia, rebelled when Muslims and Croats voted to make Bosnia an independent state, and they have won control of about two-thirds of its territory.

The mediators at the international talks, former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance for the United Nations and Lord Owen for the European Community, have rejected breaking up Bosnia. They have proposed a single republic split into 10 semi-autonomous provinces based largely on ethnic groups.

SPORTS WIRE

Georgia Tech ends Duke's streak

ATLANTA — Malcolm Mackey scored three clutch free throws in the final 12 seconds and No. 10 Georgia Tech survived a second-half scare to edge top-ranked Duke 80-79 on Sunday to end the Blue Devils' 23-game winning streak.

Tech (9-1 overall, 2-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) blew a 15-point first half lead when Duke (10-1, 1-1) took its first and only lead of the game at 60-59 with 9:20 to go on a basket by Grant Hill, who had a career-high 29 points.

Duke, the two-time defending national champion, hadn't lost since a 72-68 defeat by Wake Forest last Feb. 23. The 23-game winning

streak equalled a school record set last season.

Tech, behind freshman Drew Barry and Martice Moore, regained the lead 62-60 on a 3-point goal by Moore and took the lead for good at 68-66 on Mackey's basket with 4:58 left.

Tech led 77-74 when Mackey, who led the Yellow Jackets with 19 points, connected on a pair of free throws with 12 seconds left. Bobby Hurley hit a jumper to get Duke within 79-76 with six seconds left before Mackey converted one of two free throws with five seconds left for an 80-76 lead.

Marty Clark hit a 3-point basket at the buzzer for the Blue Devils.

Jackson to speak to baseball owners

NEW YORK — A month after baseball owners told him they were too busy to hear him speak, the Rev. Jesse Jackson finally will get to tell them his views Tuesday on the sport's racial problems.

Jackson's speech, spurred by alleged racial remarks attributed to Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott, will be the first and primary item on the agenda during the special major league meeting at Grapevine, Texas. But there won't be any decisions about Schott, a new

commissioner or even the job description. Baseball officials said last week that the restructuring committee still hadn't made its recommendations. It was appointed in September and was told to issue its report by Nov. 1.

The search committee for a new commissioner won't be named either, executive council chairman Bud Selig said last week. On Dec. 9, Selig said the search committee would be appointed within a week.

U.S. soldiers kill three Somalis as worst clan warfare breaks out

MOGADISHU, Somalia — Gunfire crackled across Mogadishu on Sunday as U.S. soldiers came under sniper fire. U.S. Marines killed three Somalis in a shootout and dozens of Somalis were wounded in clan fighting.

It was some of the heaviest clan warfare in Mogadishu since Marines landed a month ago to secure food distribution routes to the sick and starving across Somalia.

Snipers took aim at U.S. forces in the capital in more than half a dozen attacks, including an attempted ambush in the dark outside the walls of the former U.S. Embassy compound, now the Marines' headquarters.

Alerted by a spotter on a tall building, the Marines fired first, killing three Somalis. No Americans were injured.

Rival clans battled with automatic weapons for six hours Sunday morning along the so-called Green Line

separating the forces of Gen. Mohamed Farrah Aidid from those of Ali Mahdi Mohamed, the two main warlords in Mogadishu.

The fighting occurred in a no man's land between the embassy compound and a soccer stadium being used by Marines as a jumping-off point for patrols in the more unruly northern sector of the city.

Marine spokesman Col. Fred Peck said U.S. forces took no steps to intervene.

American doctors of the International Medical Corps at Digfer Hospital said they treated several dozen Somalis for bullet wounds. Rumors swept the capital that dozens had died, but that could not be confirmed.

On a one-day visit to Somalia, seven U.S. congressmen inspected relief projects in Baidoa, a town in the so-called "famine triangle" in the country's interior. As the congressmen returned to the Mogadishu soc-

cer stadium late in the day, snipers fired a few rounds in their direction. Marines hustled the legislators, clad in camouflage fatigues, into rooms beneath the stadium. They left the area in an armored personnel carrier.

Rep. John P. Murtha, D-Pa., chairman of the House defense appropriations subcommittee, told reporters he'd like to see the United Nations take a greater role in Somalia so U.S. forces could leave sooner. Murtha has expressed concern that the United States could become mired in Somalia.

U.N. spokesman Farouk Mawlawi said leaders of 14 Somali factions agreed on Friday to hold a peace conference in Addis Ababa on March 15, but he said factions were still disputing key issues, including a cease-fire.

Faction meetings marked by loud squabbling lasted five days in the Ethiopian capital last week.

WORLD WIRE

At least 59 people put to death in China

BEIJING — At least 59 people have been executed, many accused of robbery on China's railroads and highways, in a clear warning against crime during the New Year vacation season, official media reported Sunday.

Six people were put to death in Shanghai for a string of train robberies that began in 1988.

Another six were executed in the southern city of Huizhou for

highway robbery in the prosperous Pearl River Delta, the Canton newspaper Yangcheng Evening News reported Saturday.

The newspaper said 45 people were executed in Canton on Saturday for theft, murder and robbery.

Executions, which are carried out by a single gunshot to the back of the head, are common in China, but it is unusual to have so many reported at one time.

Deficit projections cast doubt on tax cut

WASHINGTON — President-elect Clinton's promise of a middle-class tax cut may be postponed because of the larger-than-expected deficit and worries about the strength of the economic recovery, congressional leaders said Sunday.

"I'm not sure in the light of the present circumstances, that (a tax cut) shouldn't be rethought," said House Speaker Tom Foley, D-Wash., who has favored such a cut

in the past.

Clinton and his economic advisers are wrestling with how to handle last week's news from the Bush administration that this year's deficit may hit a record \$327 billion — as much as \$60 billion larger than had been believed.

Sunday's comments by leading Democrats appeared to pave the way for Clinton to back away from one of his central campaign promises.

Officers warn helpers of AIDS victim

OMAHA — The Douglas County sheriff's office encouraged people who stopped at a car accident to help an injured man later identified as having AIDS to contact a doctor or the county Health Department.

A health department official said Sunday that he had received no calls regarding the Friday accident, and that the danger of getting infected was almost nonexistent.

It is unknown how many people were at the accident scene before authorities arrived, a sergeant said.

The man, Jeffrey P. Johnson, was in critical condition Sunday at

the University of Nebraska Medical Center after he was driving a car that collided with a van, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Johnson, who family members say is in the advanced stages of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, broke his neck and suffered severe head injuries in the crash.

Four people who stopped to help the accident victims were notified Friday night that they might have been exposed to HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, the sheriff's office said. The office had their names because they gave statements following the accident.

North Dakotan anxious about college, future one year after farm accident

BISMARCK, N.D. — In his dreams, John Thompson's arms still work, and he enjoys simple things like opening doors for himself and writing letters.

And sometimes, he wakes from his dreams and, for a moment, forgets that he has only limited use of his reattached arms.

"I've gotten up some mornings and gone to grab for something and say, 'Oh, wait. I can't do that anymore,'" Thompson says with a slight laugh. "It's kind of strange still."

A year ago Monday, Thompson, then 18, lost both arms below the shoulder when they got snarled in a piece of farm equipment.

Alone on his family's farm near Hurdsville, in central North Dakota, he staggered 400 feet to his house,

used his mouth to open doors and punched out a call for help with a pencil clenched in his teeth.

Later that day, doctors reattached both arms during an eight-hour operation.

Since then, he has had several operations and hundreds of hours of physical therapy and has regained mobility in his elbows and wrists and has some movement and feeling in his fingers.

Doctors have been amazed at his recovery, but Thompson says it hasn't been easy.

But despite his progress and his optimism, Mrs. Karen Thompson said her son still has problems.

"I think he is still struggling with the whole aspect, the whole realiza-

tion that he did lose use of his arms," she said.

Thompson said he thinks often about where he might be now, or what he would be doing if the accident never happened.

"I guess some good things have come out of this," he said.

He's now working to become a professional singer.

He studies voice at the University of Mary in Bismarck on a scholarship he received after the accident, and a Minneapolis recording studio has offered to cut a demonstration record for him.

"People have told me they wish they were me because I have lots of money and everybody knows me," he said. "If you want to live like this for a while, I'd gladly trade places with you."

Daily Nebraskan advertisement with contact information for Editor Chris Hoptensperger, Managing Editor Alan Phelps, and other staff members. Includes address and phone numbers for the newspaper's office in Lincoln, NE.