

Clinton says he's close to resolving debate on ban Republicans: Postpone decision 6 months

WASHINGTON — President Clinton said Thursday he remained committed to suspending the ban on homosexuals in the military and was "pretty close" to resolving congressional objections to his interim plan. Aides worked feverishly to mute opposition from Congress and the Pentagon.

Whatever their sexual orientation, Clinton said, "Americans who are willing to conform to requirements of conduct in the military service, in my judgment, should be able to serve in the military."

The president postponed for a second straight day an expected announcement of action.

Republicans pressed him not to take any immediate action and said they would try to stop him if he went ahead. "Take a timeout for six months," Senate Minority Leader Bob

Dole said.

Clinton said there was "an enormous amount of agreement" on ending the practice of asking military recruits about their sexual orientation. He said there was still disagreement with Congress and the military over the second part of his interim plan dealing with treatment of acknowledged homosexuals already in the service.

The president gave no indication of backing away from his ultimate goal of lifting the military's 50-year-old ban on homosexuals.

"People should be disqualified from serving in the military based on something they do, not based on who they are," Clinton said.

White House communications director George Stephanopoulos said the interim order, the first of the expected two steps, would come "rela-

tively soon," perhaps Friday. It originally had been expected to be released Wednesday.

According to White House expectations, Defense Secretary Les Aspin would draft an executive order for Clinton to sign formally lifting the ban after six months. Details would be worked out by then on how the military should put the new policy into effect.

The two-step approach is designed to give the administration time to solve potential problems with morale, recruitment, discipline and conduct.

Clinton said the Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed that recruits should no longer be asked about their sexual orientation.

He also agreed that "any sort of improper conduct should result in severeance."

Fourth quarter economic growth is nation's healthiest in 4 years

WASHINGTON — A burst of Christmastime spending propelled the nation's economy to its fastest growth in four years, the government said Thursday. But analysts warned the revival would sag without more jobs.

The economy during October-December grew at a healthy 3.8 percent annual rate, exceeding the 3.4 percent rate of the July-September quarter and the 3 percent rate most economists had predicted.

However, the best performance of George Bush's presidency came too late to convince voters he should be returned to office.

"For ex-president Bush, it's too bad the election wasn't held today," said economist Allen Sinai of the Boston Co. "It's just ironic the economy looks so good in the third and fourth quarters."

During the fourth quarter, a 4.3 percent advance in consumer spending accounted for about two-thirds of the growth. Other bright spots

included a 9.7 percent increase in spending by businesses for new equipment and buildings and a 29.1 percent leap in housing construction, the best since the end of the last recession nine years ago.

At the White House, President Clinton told reporters that economic signals had been mixed, with some favorable signs balanced by continued widespread layoffs among such corporate giants as Sears, IBM and Boeing.

"I think there is a lot of response to the efforts we are making now," Clinton said. But he added, "There is also a lot of troubling news about lost jobs. We've got a lot of work to do."

According to the Labor Department, the number of Americans filing new claims for jobless benefits rose by 2,000 to 362,000 during the week ended Jan. 16. It was the third consecutive weekly increase and brought the total to the highest level in two months.

Soldiers' conflict illustrated by nighttime murder in Somalia

MOGADISHU, Somalia — The screams were distinct — the chilling call of the fallen. A sniper's bullet in his chest, Lance Cpl. Anthony Botello was carried from harm's way clinging to the sleeve of his comrade's camouflaged shirt, his last link to life.

The manner of his death typified the dilemma of the nearly 9,000 Marines in Somalia: To show restraint while going down the lawless, dark corridors of a country where guns rule.

Botello, 21, from Wilburton, Okla., had volunteered that fateful Monday night as the point man on a patrol looking for snipers who had been firing on the Marines.

"Let's get this one done tonight. Let's come back," he told his squad leader, Cpl. Scott Richards.

As the patrol stopped for a security check before rounding a corner, Botello talked about how there was no moon out.

Rounding the corner, the 20-man patrol made a left turn onto a road that turned out to be a trail dotted with huts.

They heard a gate open. "We heard the latch lift up on the steel and we knew something

was up," recalled Cpl. Bill Lamb, the leader right behind Botello.

Lamb, who was wearing night vision goggles, saw a Somali step out.

On previous patrols when Somalis realized the people were U.S. Marines, they went right back inside.

Not this night. Lamb and the other Marines heard two Somalis cock their rifles.

"I couldn't see a weapon," Lamb said. "They're putting us out on patrols and we're more afraid of shooting people because of the press. We didn't want to shoot until we knew this person had a weapon."

Lamb knew when he saw one Somali put a rifle on his shoulder as he knelt and pointed it at Botello, 15 feet away. Lamb fired four rounds at the Somali.

A third Somali on the roof fired two green tracers. One crashed through Botello's arm, an area not protected by his flak vest, continued through his armpit and into his chest. Botello screamed three times.

"He grabbed a hold of my sleeve," said Soman. "He knew that we were there and we were bringing him out."

Serb battles with Croatia extend; UN might remove peacekeepers

ZADAR, Croatia — Serb-Croat clashes spread to a new front along the Adriatic on Thursday and Croatia's army made gains in its quest to retake territory, capturing a dam in Serb-held territory.

Fighting also raged in Bosnia, and this week's battles marked the first time that bloodshed was occurring simultaneously in two former Yugoslav republics.

The gravity of the deteriorating situation prompted the United Nations to consider withdrawing its peacekeepers in Croatia.

France sent an eight-ship naval task force steaming toward the Adriatic on a "mission of protection." Ten of its peacekeepers who were trapped in Serb-Croat crossfire were evacuated to safety by a U.N. convoy Thursday, but France still has 2,500 peacekeepers in Croatia.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali said the military offensive begun by the Croats last week "has placed the entire peace process in the region in jeopardy." He hinted Wednesday that the 16,000 U.N. peacekeepers and related forces might be withdrawn from Croatia.

On Thursday, 80 Kenyan peacekeepers were forced to abandon a

U.N.-controlled hydroelectric dam on a new battlefield 40 miles southeast of any previous fighting. The Croatian army is trying to regain territory Serbs refused to cede in accordance with the U.N.-brokered truce that ended a six-month civil war in Croatia one year ago.

The reasons behind the timing of its offensive remains unclear. Croatian President Franjo Tudjman is under domestic pressure to win back lost territory, and his party faces parliamentary elections on Feb. 7.

The U.N. Security Council has threatened sanctions unless the Croats withdraw to their old positions. Tudjman has refused to order a pull-back unless Serb militias in the region are disarmed.

There was no sign Thursday that either side would compromise.

The surge in fighting threatens to make a shambles of peace talks on Bosnia, taking place in Geneva under U.N. and European Community auspices. Conference spokesman Fred Eckhard said Thursday there had been no progress because of the latest clashes.

The multitude of clashes and the prospect of a U.N. pullout could unleash much more fighting across the Balkans.



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UPC sees bigger fund cut than originally expected

By Matt Woody Staff Reporter

The budget for the University Program Council for 1993-94 was cut by 5 percent from its 1992-93 budget at a CFA meeting Thursday night.

UPC President Gary Doyle called the Committee for Fees Allocation's decision "unbelievable." The committee allocated \$176,900 for UPC's budget, \$5,500 less than Doyle's request.

"It's kind of amazing," he said. "The one student organization that asks for a decrease, trying to keep student fees down, is the one that gets cut."

UPC's budget for last year was \$186,117, nearly \$4,000 more than the requested budget.

The committee trimmed Doyle's budgets for three of the four UPC subcommittees.

Due to participation by only 25 UNL students last year, funding for the Nebraska Model United Nations program was eliminated.

Student-supported funding was also eliminated for COLAGE, the Committee Offering Lesbian and Gay

Events. Committee members said none of the group's funds for 1992-93 had been used.

Talks about UPC's budget were part of a larger process of determining the Fund A budget, which is comprised of UPC, ASUN, and the Daily Nebraskan. CFA approved budgets for the other two groups last week.

But before approving the composite budget for Fund A, the committee revised the Daily Nebraskan's budget, negating the 5 percent increase that was granted last week.

Members voted 7-2 to cut the newspaper's subsidy. CFA Chair Shane Tucker supported the action, saying he wanted more evidence supporting the Daily Nebraskan's projected cost increases.

Once the committee gets what it wants, Tucker said he would have no problem repealing the cut.

Before adjourning, members voted to approve \$359,991 for Fund A for the 1993-94 fiscal year, a 2.4 percent decrease from 1992-93.

This lowers student fees to approximately \$7.70 per student per semester, a decrease of 19 cents.

WORLD WIRE

Iraq praises Russia's criticism of air strikes

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Official news media on Thursday praised Russia for its criticism of U.S. air strikes against Iraq.

"The Russian stand represents the beginning of a new era in world politics," the army newspaper Al-Qadissiya said in a commentary.

The newspaper applauded a statement Wednesday by Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoi that Russia was ready to use its veto

power in the U.N. Security Council to halt "ill-conceived" American attacks on Iraq.

The Iraqi media has highlighted Russian criticism to show the United States acted without broad international support.

On Wednesday the ruling Baath Party newspaper, Al-Thawra, said "the new Russian stand represents one of the achievements of the Iraqi peace initiative."

LA residents to zoom by subway

LOS ANGELES — After decades of dependence on smog-belching automobiles, the city where cars are king of the road ushers in a new era in transportation Saturday: its first modern subway.

City officials call the Metro Red Line the backbone of a regional rail network that, when completed in 2010, will carry as many as 500,000 passengers a day across Southern California.

The first leg of the Red Line will connect the downtown Union Sta-

tion with MacArthur Park in the city's Wilshire District. Two stainless-steel rail cars traveling at 70 mph will make the 4.4-mile trip in seven minutes.

There will be no turnstiles or ticket takers.

Tickets for the \$1.10 fare can be purchased at subway stations from ATM-like machines with talking video screens. Riders are on their honor when they get on the subway cars because no one will collect tickets.