

Navy hopes to add women to front-line combat by 1997

Service's plan to help alleviate battered image

WASHINGTON — The Navy wants to put women in all its front-line combat jobs — as fighter pilots, submariners and warship crew members — within the next four years, officials say.

In a tradition-breaking plan ready for action by Defense Secretary Les Aspin, the Navy suggests allowing women to serve on six classes of combat support ships within the next several months. It would also allow them to enter training or more advanced combat jobs.

The sweeping plan is designed to repair the Navy's battered image in the wake of the Tailhook sex abuse scandal. It would also put the service in the forefront of revising attitudes toward women in the military.

The plan would also make it

difficult for the military to bar any other group — such as homosexuals — from combat jobs, as some have proposed.

"The plan is to increase the role of women in the Navy... it is something the Navy would very much like to have happen," said a senior Pentagon official knowledgeable about the plan who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Adm. Frank Kelso Jr., the Navy's top admiral, has approved the plan, the official said.

At present, women are barred from flying combat aircraft and serving on major warships, such as aircraft

carriers, destroyers or cruisers and submarines.

However, they do serve on 64 of the Navy's 453 vessels — primarily supply ships, such as oilers or submarine tenders, or repair and salvage vessels.

Allowing women in the Navy's premier combat slots means they could seek out and destroy enemies as F-18 fighter pilots, for example, or as nuclear missile launchers on Trident submarines.

Congress has passed legislation to repeal the ban on women in certain Air Force aircraft and to allow women

to fly Navy aircraft. However, the law does not require the armed services to change their policies.

Aspin has signaled that he's ready to approve placing women in some combat slots. Because of the new law, Aspin could simply sign a directive to the services, telling them to move on the issue.

"The Navy believes it must have the sign-off of the secretary before it can move forward on this," said a senior Navy officer, who also spoke on condition of anonymity.

President Clinton has yet to name a Navy secretary.

Clinton's entry into spotlight 'pretty original,' Yeltsin says

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — All eyes were on President Clinton's debut in the world spotlight — unfamiliar turf for a young president who campaigned almost exclusively on domestic issues.

Despite Clinton's lack of foreign policy experience, the first superpower summit to focus on economics instead of arms seemed a made-to-order showcase for the former Arkansas governor's strong suit — an easy command of facts and figures.

The early review from his summit partner, Boris Yeltsin: "Pretty original."

Not only was Clinton out to prove his foreign-policy prowess to Americans, but to other world leaders as well. As usual, the two-day summit in this western Canadian seaport was carefully choreographed by both sides to put the two leaders in the best light for domestic consumption in their respective countries.

They went through all the ritual steps of summitry — praising each

other, plunging into crowds, being seen about town, taking a reflective "walk in the woods" and holding a final joint news conference.

Despite the best-laid plans, though, summits can go sour.

Remember President Reagan's October 1986 summit with Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik, Iceland — nuclear arms talks broke off abruptly in a major misunderstanding between the two leaders.

This one didn't.

And even though Yeltsin remains on extremely shaky political ground in his home and Clinton faces a daunting salesmanship job on the aid package in his, both leaders left the summit having achieved most of what each wanted.

For Clinton, that meant being viewed in the eyes of Americans and U.S. allies as a serious leader in the world arena.

Both Clinton and Yeltsin "were two very impressive politicians," said the summit's host, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

Clinton, Yeltsin solidify pact as summit closes

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — President Clinton cemented a partnership with Boris Yeltsin on Sunday with a final round of summit talks and a first-installment pledge of \$1.6 billion to aid Russia's struggling economy.

The U.S. program was swollen by \$700 million for grain sales to Moscow under extraordinarily easy terms, a boon both for Russian families and the American farmers who will send their crops to Moscow.

After two days of meetings, Clinton was impressed by Yeltsin's determination to fight for democracy and economic reforms even as hardliners and nationalists try to overthrow.

"The President believes that Boris Yeltsin is a fighter, somebody who really will fight for democracy," White House communications director George Stephanopoulos said.

The summit gave Yeltsin a sizable package of aid — though far less than

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— Stephanopoulos

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Russia needs — before an April 25 referendum that will determine if Yeltsin's power and program have the support of the Russian people.

Clinton has to convince skeptical Americans that without additional aid for a democratic Russia, the United States would have to spend billions if a nationalistic, threatening regime were returned to power.

The second and final day of talks focused on national security and foreign policy issues, following intense discussions Saturday on Russia's crumbling economy.

Clinton was asked about Yeltsin's reaction to the aid package. "It's been

good," he said. Yeltsin declined to take questions.

A big chunk of the U.S. aid program, \$215 million, was earmarked for dismantling Russian nuclear submarines, bombers and missiles and other nuclear safety programs.

Aside from food sales, other components included a \$6 million demonstration program to build housing for military officers returning from the Baltics and Eastern Europe, a \$50 million enterprise fund to provide seed money for Russian entrepreneurs and \$60 million to support the sale of government enterprises to private ownership.

Bosnians pray for peace as airlifts resume

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — About 1,500 worshippers risked sniper fire and filled Sacred Heart Cathedral to hear an appeal for peace on Palm Sunday as the U.N. airlift resumed after a 16-day suspension.



Another aid mission finally reached the embattled Muslim enclave of Srebrenica to deliver 85 tons of food and medicine. But town officials blocked the planned evacuation of wounded people and other refugees, saying it would further Serb plans to clear the area of Muslims, a U.N. official said.

Let those who are destroying, burning and killing come back to the true path.

--Puljic archbishop

An international air operation dropped 45 tons of food and nearly 1 ton of medicine overnight in the Srebrenica area.

The developments came a day after Bosnian Serb leaders rejected an international plan for ending the year-old ethnic war. At U.N. headquarters, diplomats said the Security Council this week would impose stiffer sanctions

on Serb-dominated Yugoslavia for supporting the rebels in Bosnia.

Scattered violence was reported Sunday, but there was no immediate word of casualties. Saturday, Bosnian news media said at least 23 people died in Serb attacks around the country, a claim U.N. observers said they could not confirm.

25 years later, King's dream revered

Twenty-five years after the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s words were silenced by an assassin's bullet, civil rights leaders reminded a racially charged nation Sunday that King dreamed of a land where children will not be judged by the color of their skin.

In the past year, tensions have erupted into violence in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, San Francisco, Seattle, Atlanta and New York.

"It seems sometimes that we take two steps forward and three back," said Elisa Gilham, 63, a trustee at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, where King was a co-pastor.

King was shot April 4, 1968, at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tenn., where he was staying while in town to organize a sanitation workers' strike.

James Earl Ray is serving a 99-year prison sentence for the killing.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, who was with King at the Lorraine, urged congregants at the All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, Calif., on Sunday, to "not just be spectators and witnesses to violence, but find a way to do something about it."

Ten miles away in Los Angeles, a federal trial is under way in the beating of black motorist Rodney King. When four white officers were acquitted of similar charges after a state trial last year the deadly Los Angeles riots followed.

Also on the Los Angeles court docket this month is the trial of three black men accused of beating white trucker Reginald Denny during the

riots.

At the National Civil Rights Museum, built at the site of the Lorraine Motel, people stopped on their way to an afternoon concert at the Mason Temple, where King gave his last speech.

"The soul of our people died when he died," said Tony Jackson, 19, of Atlanta. "The fight continued but not with the same spirit. I don't know if we'll ever be able to capture it again."

On Aug. 28, 1963, King told marchers in Washington, D.C., of his hopes for the future.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," he said.

WORLD WIRE

Gulf War crimes common, report says

SANTACRUZ, Calif. — Three days after Kuwait was liberated, a man believed to be a resistance fighter came to Naimat Farhat's home. What the war hadn't done, he would.

At gunpoint, Ms. Farhat's brother was forced to hogtie their father and, in turn, she was ordered to tie up her brother. The man then beat, raped and shot her. He then shot to death both men.

Ms. Farhat, 33, wants others to know what happened March 2, 1991, three days after President Bush declared Kuwait liberated and suspended offensive operations

against Iraq.

Human rights groups have criticized Kuwait for allowing armed forces, many apparently connected to the Kuwaiti resistance and security groups, to carry out hundreds of reprisals after the Persian Gulf War.

On Monday, the New York-based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights is scheduled to issue a 56-page report on a fact-finding trip to Kuwait. In a draft obtained by The Associated Press, the Farhat case is cited as an example of atrocities committed by Kuwaiti security forces under martial law.

Powell visits Somalia to boost morale

MOGADISHU, Somalia — The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff arrived Sunday to assess the U.S.-led humanitarian mission and seek to boost morale among the more than 12,000 American troops in Somalia.

The Pentagon is scheduled to turn over control of the mission to the United Nations May 1, but clan fighting and other unrest could delay

the transfer.

Meanwhile, at least one aid agency pulled out of the troubled southern port of Kismayu, the site of fighting between backers of Mohamed Said Hirsi, known as Gen. Morgan, and supporters of Col. Omar Jess.

The Red Cross suspended its operations in the city of 160,000 after four grenades were thrown into its compound.

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