

Saddam 'factor' returns before Election Day

POLITICAL RISKS could be inevitable if the United States prolongs confrontation.

By **JOHN KING**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Saddam Hussein was a big factor at the start of the last presidential campaign, and all but forgotten in the end. By provoking a military showdown with President Clinton just nine weeks before Election Day, the Iraqi leader might have a more lasting impact this time.

The bipartisan praise for Clinton's overnight cruise missile strikes against Iraqi military targets underscored the political opportunity for the president, who displayed a decisiveness Republicans frequently assert is missing from the administration's foreign policy.

"At 15 or 20 points ahead in the polls, the president doesn't need this kind of risky challenge," said Connecticut Democratic Sen. Joseph Lieberman. "He's shown some guts."

But any prolonged confrontation with Iraq carries huge political risks, the most obvious being the potential for U.S. casualties should Saddam not heed Clinton's warnings and additional strikes be ordered.

The lukewarm support voiced by Western allies gave Republicans an opening to assert that Clinton has squandered the international prestige built by Ronald Reagan and George Bush, to the point where Saddam had no reservations about ignoring Clinton's warnings.

Republican challenger Bob Dole has repeatedly stressed such a sentiment in his campaign against Clinton.

"Saddam Hussein is testing American leadership," Dole said Sunday.

On Monday, Dole went on to say Clinton had demonstrated "weak leadership" in dealing with Iraq.

But after the overnight missile strikes, Dole awoke Tuesday facing a delicate political dilemma: How to support the U.S. position in an international crisis while raising questions about Clinton's leadership.

"In matters like this, all of us think not as Republicans or Democrats, but as Americans," Dole said in a speech to the American Legion.

Nonetheless, even as Dole said he supported U.S. forces "without hesitation or reservation," Dole worked in a subtle swipe at the administration.

"I trust this is the beginning of decisive action to limit the power and arrogance of Saddam Hussein," Dole said.

When it comes to dealing with Saddam, Dole has a mixed record of his own: On Tuesday he called Saddam a butcher and a tyrant, but back in 1990, just before Iraq invaded Kuwait, Dole opposed efforts to impose economic sanctions against the Iraqi regime, even after Saddam had threatened Israel.

"There might be a chance to bring this guy around," Dole said after an April 1990 meeting with Saddam in Baghdad.

Clinton and Dole spoke by telephone before Dole's Tuesday speech, and aides to both men sought to take the politics out of the latest U.S.-Iraq standoff.

White House press secretary Mike

"In matters like this, all of us think not like Republicans or Democrats, but as Americans."

BOB DOLE
GOP presidential nominee

McCurry said Clinton had forbidden aides from discussing political implications "because that was not part of the decision-making process whatsoever."

Dole spokesman Nelson Warfield echoed the statement, saying, "I don't think it would be appropriate to do a political handicap."

But the calendar alone put the episode front and center in presidential politics.

"This close to a presidential election, a confrontation involving use of force and risk to American military personnel is almost certain to have an impact," former Secretary of State James A. Baker III said in an interview.

Baker knows firsthand the inclination of most voters to make foreign policy a secondary presidential issue in times of peace.

Baker helped President Bush assemble the international coalition against Saddam after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and Bush's approval ratings were so high after the Persian Gulf War that many big-name Democrats decided not to challenge the incumbent.

But by November 1992, only 8 percent of voters said foreign policy was the biggest factor in their choice, ac-

ording to exit polls.

In the short term, Baker predicted Clinton would benefit, "because generally speaking the American people come together behind their president in times of military conflict. The big risk is the possibility of this thing going off in uncharted directions and getting out of control."

Saddam's defiance in the aftermath of Tuesday's strikes only added to the air of uncertainty.

The White House and the Pentagon said Saddam had the next move in his latest cat-and-mouse confrontation with the United States.

"We reserve the right to take future military actions," Defense Secretary William Perry said.

Only after Saddam makes his intentions clear are the political implications likely to come into focus.

"I would say the chances are that unless something goes haywire it will not become much of a lasting political matter," former Vice President Dan Quayle said in an interview. "Having been on the other side of this, what is important right now is to give the president support and flexibility. You can't start second-guessing the president this early."

Many factors indicate rise in economy

NEW YORK (AP) — In an unusual twist Tuesday, good news for the economy didn't ruin Wall Street's day.

An index of future economic activity continued its record-setting performance in July. A separate, widely followed survey of executives who purchase supplies for industry said U.S. manufacturing growth accelerated in August for a third straight month and that the overall economy grew for a seventh month in a row.

The private reports reinforced Wall Street's hunch that Federal Reserve inflation fighters will push up rates, perhaps as early as their Sept. 24 meeting, unless the economy shows signs of slowing down.

The market's initial slump came on word in The Wall Street Journal that the Fed is considering raising interest rates one-half a percentage point unless there are clear signs this month that the economy is cooling.

The markets began recovering after the release of the purchasing managers' figures for August, one of the first major reports on last month.

In addition, the U.S. missile raid on Iraqi military targets and further delays in allowing Iraq to return to world oil markets boosted oil stocks, leading a rebound in blue-chip issues.

The Index of Leading Economic Indicators rose 0.2 percent to 103.1 in July, the Conference Board reported. The National Association of Purchasing Management's index rose to 52.6 percent in August.

The leading index is designed to forecast economic activity six to nine months in advance. However, it is seen by economists as most useful in forecasting the economy's direction rather than its pace.

Three months movement in the same direction is generally seen to signal a trend.

The purchasing managers group said growth in manufacturing was fueled by strength in factory production, new orders and new export orders. The survey also calmed some inflation fears, reporting that prices paid by factories for raw materials fell for a third month in a row.

Two weeks ago, the Federal Reserve decided to leave interest rates unchanged, apparently unable to find persuasive evidence the economy was growing so strongly that it threatened higher inflation.

East Coast prepares for hurricane

MIAMI (AP) — Hurricane Fran gained strength and took aim for the southeastern coast Tuesday on a path that could bring the storm ashore later this week.

The U.S. Navy sent ships to sea for safety as Fran's sustained winds grew from 85 mph to 105 mph in a few hours east of the Bahamas.

Following on the heels of Hurricane Edouard, which unraveled off the Eastern Seaboard over the Labor Day holiday, Fran was expected to take a turn to the northwest by Thursday.

"This changes every time we make a forecast," said Max Mayfield, a specialist with the National Hurricane Center. "The big question is how far to the north it will go and when it will make the turn. Right now, the biggest threat is from North Florida to the Carolinas."

Mayfield said conditions were simi-

lar to those that affected Hurricane Bertha, which killed nine in July. Bertha came ashore in North Carolina with sustained winds of 75 mph, causing millions of dollars in damage to homes, crops and infrastructure.

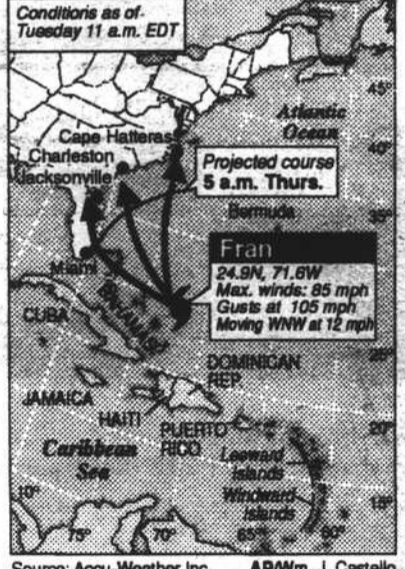
Fran was about 285 miles east of Nassau, Bahamas Tuesday afternoon, and moving west-northwest at 13 mph. A hurricane warning was in effect for the northwest Bahamas, which includes Nassau and Freeport.

Charles King, administrator of San Salvador island in the Bahamas, said winds were near tropical storm force Tuesday afternoon.

"Apart from that, things are pretty much the same," he said. "We feel as though it will be a minimal hurricane, but we are watching and listening to the reports. We are ready to take the necessary precautions."

The Navy wasn't waiting. In Jack-

sonville, Fla., 14 ships from Mayport Naval Station headed for the open sea.



Source: Accu-Weather Inc. AP/Wm. J. Castello

Attention event directors

The Daily Nebraskan's weekly events calendar will be published beginning on Monday, Sept. 9.

The deadline for submitting entries for publication is 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 8.

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Sergeant reinstated after slap

STILLWATER, Okla. (AP) — A police sergeant who was demoted to patrolman for slapping the boy he said he caught having sex with his teen-age daughter will get his old job back with back pay and benefits.

John Jerkins will return Wednesday to the rank of sergeant in the police department's criminal investigations division, where he had worked until he was demoted in April, City Attorney Mary Ann Karns announced today.

She said an arbitrator will determine whether Jerkins should be punished for striking the boy.

Jerkins had lost \$705 per month in pay, plus \$350 per month in pension benefits since the demotion. He was assigned duties such as stuffing envelopes and reading reports.

Ms. Karns said Jerkins' testimony at a hearing led the city to agree to restore his rank with back pay and benefits.

"Although he was agreeable to the reinstatement, other items of concern by both parties prevented a full settlement from being reached," Karns said.

In the request to an arbitrator, the city will seek one week's suspension without pay. Moore will ask for Jerkins to be exonerated and for all references to the discipline to be removed from his personnel file.

Karns said the arbitrator's decision probably would not come until mid-October.

City officials said Jerkins was demoted to patrolman because he insisted it was legal to use force to discipline someone else's child and said he would tell others that they could do so.

Police Chief Norman McNickle said courts have changed the way the law can be interpreted and that adults can use reasonable physical punishment with their own children. Parents can also give other adults permission to discipline their children with force, like spanking.

Jerkins' lawyer, Jim Moore, has said it was clear from the panel that recommended the demotion that Jerkins also was being punished for striking the boy.