

Clinton not seeking Iraqi showdown U.S. soldiers await orders to enforce Kuwait border

BY SUSANNE M. SCHAFER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States is not out to force a showdown with Iraq, President Clinton said Monday, as administration officials cooled their rhetoric over a potential clash with Saddam Hussein.

Meanwhile, 3,000 U.S. soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas, waited to see whether they would be ordered to Kuwait for a new round of desert exercises.

"We have sought no confrontation with Saddam Hussein. We never did and we don't now," the president said.

"My concern is that we limit Saddam Hussein's ability to threaten his neighbors, that we do it with the no-fly zone and, in so doing, we keep our pilots safe," Clinton said.

On Friday, Saddam said he would no longer shoot at coalition planes patrolling the two no-fly zones over Iraqi soil, which are designed to cripple Saddam's ability to mount threats against his neighbors.

Army officials said Friday that 5,000 members of the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas, had been ordered to deploy to Kuwait to take part in an ongoing exercise. By Monday, officials said they expected no more than 3,000 would be going — but insisted no final order had been issued.

"We have not gotten an execution order, and when it comes — if it comes

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PRESIDENT CLINTON

— it might even be something less" than the 3,000, said III Corps spokesman, Army Lt. Col. Randy Schoel.

Schoel said soldiers at Fort Hood were continuing with their normal routine, including practicing putting armored vehicles on a ship at Beaumont, Texas.

"It is just an exercise," Schoel insisted.

A senior military official, asked about the delay, said, "We're in a watch-and-wait mode. We're watching to see if Saddam's words match his deeds."

The delay also came as Defense Secretary William Perry was due to return early today from a spurt of consultations in the Persian Gulf and with European allies.

To the embarrassment of Pentagon and administration officials, Kuwait balked over the weekend at accepting the latest troop deployment, apparently miffed at a lack of consultation prior to its announcement late Friday.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Kuwait decided to accept more U.S. troops, but he declined to say exactly how many.

Gen. John Shalikashvili, queried at a Pentagon press conference about the situation with Iraq, insisted that the United States was not dropping its guard.

"We're not standing down," the four-star Army general said.

The situation on the ground continues to be "mixed," he said, with some forces returning to their garrisons and others acting as if they were attempting to evade detection.

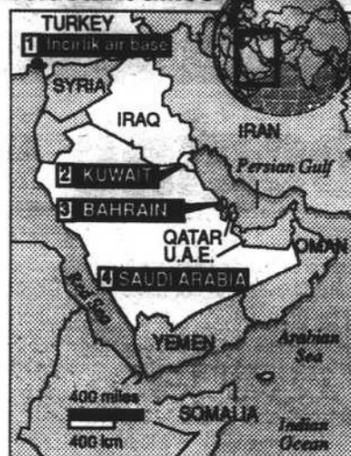
The administration's attempt to garner support from its allies also appeared to be mixed.

Perry left Turkey Monday after winning only limited backing for the American military buildup against Iraq. Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said Perry had not asked to use the southern Incirlik air base to strike at Iraqi targets.

But "even if there had been (a request), it would not have been possible for us to meet this request," she told reporters. "That would not be the correct move from the point of view of our own interests."

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns, meanwhile, challenged press reports that many of the

America's reluctant allies



1 Turkey has barred the use of its southern air base in Incirlik for the launching of air strikes against Iraq.

2 Kuwait has agreed to the deployment of additional U.S. troops to add to their 1,200-strong contingent.

3 Bahrain will allow U.S. F-16s to be based on its territory to help enforce Iraq's southern "no-fly" zone.

4 Saudi Arabia has not permitted the Americans to launch air strikes against Iraq from their territory.

AP/Wm. J. Castello

allies were opposed to U.S. military action against Iraq and that some were denying the United States use of their facilities.

On Sunday, Perry claimed one success during his visit to Bahrain. The small island-nation agreed to join Kuwait as a base for U.S. warplanes in the Persian Gulf.

Already home to a U.S. Navy base, Bahrain will allow at least 23 F-16s to be based on its territory to enforce the newly expanded no-fly zone over southern Iraq. F-117A stealth bombers had been ordered to Kuwait, while two aircraft carriers were sent into the Persian Gulf.

Too early to predict Bosnia vote

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Early election returns Monday showed the leader of the Bosnian Muslims and a Serb nationalist vying to head a three-member presidency that aims to hold Bosnia together.

The candidate who gets the most votes overall and leads the presidency could determine whether Bosnia splits apart into separate ethnic republics or hangs on as one nation.

It was far too early to predict the winner — only a fraction of the 109 electoral districts were reporting partial results for the presidency by Monday evening.

Robert Frowick, the American diplomat overseeing the elections, said final results for the presidency would not come before Tuesday.

Voters in Saturday's first post-war national elections could choose only one of the 16 candidates for the presidency. The top Muslim, Croat and Serb candidates will comprise the presidency; the top choice overall will be chairman for two years.

Preliminary results released Monday show Bosnia's President Alija Izetbegovic as the top choice of Muslims, who dominate Bosnia's Croat-Muslim federation. Ahead in the Serb half of Bosnia was nationalist Momcilo Krajisnik.

If Izetbegovic wins, he is expected to press for a unified Bosnia, while Krajisnik favors having Serb areas of Bosnia join Serbia.

Most Bosnian Croats were voting for the main Croat candidate, Kresimir Zubak. With Croats outnumbered by Serbs and Muslims, their candidate was sure to come in third.

Though presidency decisions are supposed to be mutual, the chairman will be considered first among equals and therefore have a greater voice than his other two colleagues.

The chief election monitor for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which staged the elections, said Monday that Bosnia's future was on the line.

"Whether the election leads to integration or disintegration will only become clear as immediate events unfold," Eduard Van Thijn said in a report on the elections.

Report criticizes Pentagon in Saudi attack

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon and a key field commander must share blame for placing U.S. troops at risk in an urban apartment complex in Saudi Arabia that was hit by a terrorist attack, a study of the bombing said.

The Pentagon failed to provide guidance or standards on protecting U.S. forces, said a task force report on the June 25 attack that killed 19 U.S. airmen. The panel, headed by retired Army Gen. Wayne Downing, said troops such as those stationed in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, have relied on

inadequate State Department security guidelines.

The report said thousands of U.S. servicemen living in the apartment complex were vulnerable to a truck bomb attack outside a narrow perimeter.

President Clinton praised the report as "unvarnished, blunt, straightforward."

"We know we're living in a world in which terrorism is a bigger problem, in which Americans may be the target of terrorists, particularly Americans in

uniform," he said. "As we know more about what we can do to protect them, we intend to do everything we can. We're going to aggressively implement the Downing report."

The report also focused on lapses by Air Force Brig. Gen. Terry J. (Terry) Schwalier, the commander of the 4404th Wing in Southwest Asia. It said he failed to heed clear warnings of terrorist attacks on Khobar towers, the apartment complex where some 2,000 of the 5,000 U.S. personnel stationed in Saudi Arabia lived.

Dole criticizes as Clinton gains endorsement

VILLANOVA, Pa. (AP) — With his rival grabbing a coveted police endorsement, Bob Dole proposed a new crime-fighting package today and leveled a scathing personal attack.

"President Clinton has opened the crime pipeline up again," he said.

In a hot and crowded Villanova University field house, Dole said of the president's crime record, "He talks like Dirty Harry but acts like Barney Fife."

The president sought to overshadow Dole by picking up an endorsement from the nation's largest police union — the 270,000-member National Fraternal Order of Police.

"I am profoundly honored that they have decided to stand by me for four more years," Clinton said before a backdrop of uniformed officers in Cincinnati.

Before leaving for Ohio, Clinton handed out federal figures showing an increase in gang prosecutions and a drop in violence during his term.

In an Oval Office briefing with Attorney General Janet Reno, Clinton said the report on an anti-crime initiative begun in 1994 was "further evi-

dence that our efforts are actually working."

In a day of dueling photo-ops, Clinton shared the stage with police in dark uniforms while Dole surrounded himself with 13 Republican governors in dark suits.

Dole promised to cut teen drug use in half, double federal prison spending, require work from prison inmates and try violent juveniles as adults.

He also pledged to use the White House spotlight to teach America's young people that drugs and crime are wrong.

"I will use the bully pulpit of the presidency to say to young people, 'Drugs are deadly,'" Dole said. "Teen-agers who have been deceived into believing that drugs are something you experiment with will hear a different message from Bob Dole."

The remark was implicit criticism of Clinton's efforts; a Dole ad that has been taped but not yet aired reminds voters that Clinton once joked during

"*Rank-and-file police officers have never had a better friend in the White House than Bill Clinton.*"

GIL GALLEGOS
NFOP president

an MTV interview about drug use.

"Thanks to the liberal wink-and-nod policies of this administration, drug use among teen-agers has not just started up again but is skyrocketing upward," Dole said. "When I'm president, I don't intend to wink at drugs."

It was the beginning of what the Dole campaign promises will be an aggressive focus on drugs and crime to erode Clinton's double-digit lead in national polls.

The police organization's national president, Gil Gallegos, lauded Clinton's record in a statement released to The Associated Press in advance of

today's announcement.

"Rank-and-file police officers have never had a better friend in the White House than Bill Clinton," Gallegos said. "Our communities, our kids and our police officers are a lot better off today because of the leadership of President Clinton."

Interviewed this morning on NBC's "Today" show, Gallegos dismissed Dole's criticism of Clinton.

"American society bears the blame" for rising teen-age drug use, Gallegos said. "I don't think you can blame any one segment of society."

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