

# News Digest

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## Clinton strike pullback draws criticism

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a familiar outcome, President Clinton stepped back Saturday from the brink of war with Iraq after Saddam Hussein played a cheat-and-retreat game and promised again to play by the rules.

But the betting is that Saddam will turn defiant within months and interfere with U.N. weapons inspectors — as he's done about a dozen times since the Persian Gulf War. "Candidly, I think it will be a gigantic surprise if he does comply, but I hope he does," said Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa.

Once again, the question is what happens next time. Clinton said the best long-term solution is a new Iraqi government, and he pledged to intensify support for Saddam's opponents.

After coming so close to attack, the swift White House retreat raised doubts about Clinton's threats and whether Arab nations would stick out their necks again to stand with the United States against an unpredictable Iraq.

"Our Gulf allies must be just shaking their heads at the Clinton administration," said Eliot Cohen, a professor of strategic studies at Johns Hopkins University who directed a Pentagon study of the Gulf air war. "If you're Saudi Arabia or Qatar or Bahrain, you think the Americans flinched. You wouldn't say Saddam flinched. He's had another confrontation with the United States where he gets to go back to the status quo ante without having paid for it."

"This will not be the last go-round," Cohen said. "It's in Saddam's nature to keep pressing. It's in our nature, the nature of this administration, to threaten but not be sure they mean it."

David Kay, the first chief of the U.N. arms inspection team in Baghdad, said Saddam got out of this jam without making any new promises. "This is what Iraq has been obligated to do from the very beginning and has failed to do."

"Saddam played his usual game," Kay said. "He played it right to the last second. He spun out of the bull's-eye and lives to fight another day. Saddam again proves he's smarter than the Americans."

The Iraqi leader triggered the showdown in August by limiting inspectors' access to suspected weapons sites. On Oct. 31, Iraq broke off cooperation.

Saddam ended the crisis simply by promising to allow the inspectors to return, backing down even as American warplanes were in the air.

Clinton said it was "the outcome we preferred" and

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PRESIDENT CLINTON

called off the attack. "Now Iraq must live up to its obligations," he said. "Until we see complete compliance, we will remain vigilant, we will keep up the pressure, we will be ready to act."

However, it is a vigilance that carries a price. The United States spent more than \$1 billion in rushing military forces to the Gulf earlier this year, only to stand down when Saddam retreated.

The cost this time will be hundreds of millions of dollars more, plus the toll on the morale of U.S. forces and the wear and tear on equipment.

Over the last few weeks, the administration worked quietly to stitch together a coalition to isolate Saddam. It was a diplomatic victory for Clinton.

The Security Council voted 15-0 to demand that Iraq reverse course. Eight Arab nations, led by Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria, warned that Iraq alone would bear responsibility for the consequences of refusing to cooperate with arms inspectors. Even Russia, France and China muted their usual objections about striking Iraq.

"The world spoke with one voice," Clinton said. But that consensus began dissolving when Iraq came forward with a letter Saturday promising full cooperation. The United States said the Iraqi pledges were conditional and unclear and refused to accept them until Iraq made clear it was promising unconditional compliance.

"Now, we will test that," Clinton said. White House officials are highly skeptical that Saddam will keep his word.

"The balance of risk here was in favor of waiting and testing" whether Saddam was serious about cooperating, a senior administration official said. "If he is not, there is plenty of time to go forward militarily."

Clinton acknowledged that "no one can be sure" what Saddam will do.

## Iraq declares victory, calls U.S. misguided

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — After backing down over U.N. weapons inspections — and narrowly avoiding an American missile strike — Iraq in typical fashion Sunday declared itself the victor in the dispute.

Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan told state-run television that Iraq had been able "to prove to the whole world that our views are correct" and that the Americans were misguided.

"This is the foundation and the basis of our victory," he declared.

It was the first official reaction to the weekend's tumultuous events, and the rhetoric obviously was for local consumption in a country weary of U.N. sanctions and of being isolated, even from its Arab neighbors.

The newscast made no mention of President Clinton's warning Sunday that if Iraq does not abide by its promise to allow U.N. weapons teams to come back and work freely, it will suffer a military attack.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz criticized Clinton's vow that the American government is committed to replacing Saddam's regime in Iraq.

"I have to condemn strongly the statement of Mr. Clinton, the plans of his government to overthrow the government of Iraq," Aziz said in an interview on CNN. "This is a flagrant violation of the Security

Council resolutions as well as international law."

Aziz said he would not comment on whether the crisis was over because the Security Council was still debating it. "Whether this is going to end the current crisis is up to the belligerents who are saber rattling," he said, referring to U.S. and British threats to attack.

Iraq would allow the U.N. arms inspectors to do their normal work under Security Council resolutions and the understanding that Aziz signed in February with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the deputy prime minister said.

"Iraq does not accept any further conditions," he added, but the resolution and agreement with Annan appeared to cover Clinton's demands for complete access for the inspectors and full Iraqi cooperation with them.

The United States and Britain began building up their forces after Iraq suspended cooperation last month with the U.N. Special Commission, which is charged with overseeing the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Doubts about Iraq's unconditional commitment to inspections arose, however, when Aziz told CNN on Sunday that "Iraq is only committed to the contents of the letter" he sent to Annan on Saturday.

## Riots set Indonesia ablaze

### 16 dead as protesters demand ouster of Habibie

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Mobs set buildings on fire, looted shops and attacked police Saturday, while 20,000 protesters escalated their pro-democracy campaign in Indonesia's capital.

At least 16 people died over the weekend when the military opened fire on students who repeatedly tried to march to the parliament.

Hundreds more were injured in the worst violence in Jakarta since riots that led to the ouster of former President Suharto in May. The riots battered the world's fourth-most populous nation, which was hit hard by Asia's financial meltdown and still is fighting its worst economic crisis in decades.

On Sunday, troops and armored personnel carriers guarded the presidential palace and other key sites. There

were no fresh reports of mob rioting, and shopkeepers swept up broken glass from smashed windows.

With inflation and unemployment soaring, protesters have demanded the ouster of Suharto's successor and former protege, President B.J. Habibie. Ignoring demands that he quit, Habibie appeared on national television to urge calm.

He accused protesters of wanting to overthrow his 6-month-old government and "endanger the unity of the nation and the people."

Suharto, who now lives as a virtual recluse in Jakarta, criticized Habibie, saying the government should apologize for the students' deaths and listen to protesters' demands.

"I resigned from my position to avoid bloodshed. Why does the govern-

ment now cause bloodshed?" Suharto's half-brother, Probosutedjo, quoted him as saying.

In some parts of the capital, riot police fired warning shots and tear gas into crowds.

Military helicopters swooped above the chaos and armored personnel carriers were deployed. Black smoke towered over a shopping area near one luxury hotel only a few hundred yards from the heavily guarded state palace.

At an emergency Cabinet meeting there, Habibie ordered his military chief, Gen. Wiranto, to restore order — even though critics hold him responsible for the student deaths.

Despite the carnage and damage of the past few days, Habibie has said he will press ahead with reforms passed by the People's Consultative Assembly.

## Bowles joins Prince Charles at his 50th birthday party

LONDON (AP) — Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles danced the night away to celebrate his 50th birthday, and although his mother may have disapproved, Britain's tabloid newspapers on Sunday hailed his longtime love as — well, almost a queen.

"Camilla: Queen for the Night," declared the Sunday Mirror. Britain's biggest-selling tabloid, News of the World, carried its report about Saturday night's bash under the headline "The Look of Love."

For Parker Bowles, 51, who the late Princess Diana had blamed for the breakup of her marriage to Charles, it was a public relations breakthrough. In the past, the British press has often lambasted her as a mistress whom the heir to the throne can never marry.

Though an opinion poll published

Saturday said that most Britons believe Charles would be either a "very good" or "fairly good" king, 46 percent said he should marry Parker Bowles.

In the telephone poll of about 1,200 people, published in the Daily Telegraph, 61 percent of respondents said they consider Charles a "well-intentioned but troubled man who seems to be looking for a role."

On Friday night, Queen Elizabeth, also known for disapproving of Parker Bowles, held a glittering birthday party at Buckingham Palace, where she toasted her son's "vision, compassion and leadership."

"Charles, tonight's party is a tribute to all that you have achieved," said the queen, who broke tradition by publicly addressing her son by his first name.

## Mexico applauded for storm aid

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — The United States has been upstaged by its southern neighbor in the eyes of Hondurans digging out from the storm that killed an estimated 10,000 people across Central America.

While Mexico's swift response to the disaster has been lauded, the large but slow aid package offered by the U.S. government is seen as little more than the duty of the world's richest country.

Last week, President Clinton called for a global relief effort for Central America and gave orders boosting U.S. emergency aid to \$70

million. Then, Tipper Gore, the wife of Vice President Al Gore, announced an additional \$10 million.

No other country has given more, but Honduras was not impressed.

"Of course we expect more from the United States. We have a right to. Every Honduran would expect in a crisis to count on Washington," said Moises Starkman Pinel, the minister of international cooperation.

Mexico, meanwhile, was quicker off the block. Within days after Mitch hit two weeks ago, Mexicans sent helicopters, cargo planes, ships, rescue teams and a convoy of tractors and other heavy machines.

# Daily Nebraskan

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Ask for the appropriate section editor at (402) 472-2588  
or e-mail dn@unl.edu.

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