

NEWS DIGEST

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Saudis, Kuwaitis urge Saddam's ouster

■ Iraq's foreign minister accused the nations of supporting the U.S.-British airstrikes.

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Iraq's foreign minister on Sunday accused Saudi Arabia and Kuwait of actively supporting U.S.-British airstrikes last month and urged Arab governments to ignore U.N. sanctions against Iraq.

Saudi Arabia's official news agency, for its part, urged Iraqis to overthrow President Saddam Hussein, saying he had killed and tortured thousands of his own people.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa echoed that unprecedented appeal, saying that Saddam is "shaming the entire Arab region through his politics." His comments were to be published Monday in The Berliner Kurier newspaper.

The Saudi and Egyptian statements — the first direct call by Arab governments for Saddam's ouster — come a few days after Iraq's president exhorted Arabs to rise up against rulers "who boast of friendship with the United States."

The exchange marks an escalation in the already

bitter feud between Iraq and Arab allies of the United States.

Iraq was encouraged by popular protests throughout the Arab world after the mid-December airstrikes, and it has been disheartened that its fellow Arab states did little to support it.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf said Kuwait and Saudi Arabia "have participated directly and effectively" in the U.S.-British attack, which targeted military and government buildings in Iraq.

Hundreds of American cruise missiles sailed through Kuwaiti air space during the bombardment, he told reporters.

Dozens of U.S. and British warplanes flew over Saudi Arabia and Kuwait during the four days of airstrikes, which came after U.N. weapons monitors said Iraq was blocking their work.

Also, U.S. and British aircraft patrolling a no-fly zone over southern Iraq operate from air bases in the two Persian Gulf states.

Sahhaf said Iraq will demand compensation from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for "all physical, material and psychological damage" inflicted as a result of the southern no-fly zone.

The United States and Britain imposed no-fly zones over southern and northern Iraq in an effort to protect Shiite Iraqis in the south and Kurds in the north from Iraqi military assault.

Sahhaf added that U.S. aircraft dropped leaflets printed in Kuwait that urged soldiers in barracks in southern Iraq not to move from their positions.

Meanwhile, in a move that could ease tensions among the bickering neighbors, an official of a Persian Gulf country said that Saudi Arabia will propose an easing of sanctions against Iraq. The move was to be made later Sunday at a meeting of foreign ministers of six Persian Gulf nations. The official spoke on condition of anonymity.

Saudi Arabia was making the proposal apparently to defuse popular opposition to the sanctions within Arab countries. The embargo has impoverished Iraq's once-thriving middle class.

Sahhaf said the minimum step should be a unilateral lifting of sanctions by Arab countries.

U.N. resolutions say the sanctions will only be lifted after U.N. weapons monitors certify that Iraq is free of weapons of mass destruction. The sanctions were imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, which triggered the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Albanian rebels urged to free captive soldiers

STARI TRG, Yugoslavia (AP) — Yugoslav armored vehicles and troops stood on alert near this northern village Sunday while international monitors tried to avert an explosion of the Kosovo crisis, urging ethnic Albanian rebels to free eight captive soldiers.

Reflecting fears that the talks' failure could prompt an all-out government offensive, NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana appealed in Brussels, Belgium, for the soldiers' release and called on both sides to show restraint.

Yugoslav Army forces pulled back their armor a half-mile Sunday, a monitors' spokesman said, in an apparent signal of cooperation with negotiations.

The rebel Kosovo Liberation Army issued a statement Sunday night saying it would release the captives only when international mediators work out an agreement that includes "our soldiers and civilians."

The rebels also said they will respect the cease-fire except when they have to protect civilians and themselves.

Yugoslav army and Serbian police forces that threatened attack if the soldiers were not released remained arrayed outside the village of Stari Trg, five miles northeast of

Kosovska Mitrovica and 30 miles from the provincial capital Pristina.

While holding fire in the north, Serb forces also did not continue a nearby retaliatory crackdown from the previous day, when they shelled several villages in the Podujevo area 12 miles east of Stari Trg, sending residents fleeing.

An ethnic Albanian teen-ager from Perane was killed in the shelling, according to spokesman Fernando del Mundo of the U.N. refugee agency.

U.S.-led diplomacy to try to bring about a political settlement on Kosovo's future has so far failed. American envoy Christopher Hill was back in Pristina on Sunday. He met with Serb, ethnic Albanian and international officials.

But Solana, while appealing to the rebels to release the soldiers, singled out the buildup of Serb forces as unwarranted. He appealed to Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw.

Also Sunday, the Kosovo Information Center said a young ethnic Albanian was killed and another was wounded when they came under fire near the southern town of Urosevac the previous day.

More than 1,000 people have been killed in clashes in the secessionist province over the past year.

Lewinsky's words will weigh heavily

WASHINGTON (AP) — When 100 senators sit in judgment of President Clinton this week, Monica Lewinsky's words will be the heart of the case against him — and the soul of his defense.

Even if the former White House intern is never called to the well of the Senate to testify in person, the version of events she told a grand jury will be crucial evidence.

The 13 House managers for the case will use Lewinsky's testimony to argue that Clinton lied under oath about details of their intimate contact and schemed to keep the affair out of court proceedings.

White House lawyers will counter with Lewinsky's spontaneous declaration to the grand jury: "No one ever asked me to lie."

At the same time the White House will argue that even if true, the charges aren't grave enough to justify ejecting a president from office.

It would take 67 votes to convict the president. If all 55 Republicans want to oust him, the votes of 12 Democrats would be needed.

The evidence the senators will consider is divided into two articles of impeachment. One alleges Clinton lied in his Aug. 17 testimony to a federal grand jury, the other that he tried to obstruct Paula Jones' sexual harassment lawsuit.

Most of the perjury allegations stem from Clinton's attempts to justify for the grand jury earlier testimony in the Jones lawsuit, where he claimed he couldn't remember being alone with Lewinsky and denied having "sexual relations" with her.

"I wanted to help her get on with her life. It's just as simple as that."

PRESIDENT CLINTON

The obstruction of justice charge alleges a wide-ranging scheme to buy Lewinsky's silence, hide evidence and encourage friends and aides to echo the president's lies, often unwittingly.

In his grand jury testimony, Clinton insisted, "I was not trying to buy her silence. ... I wanted to help her get on with her life. It's just as simple as that." Lewinsky backs his account, testifying she was never offered the job in exchange for her silence.

White House lawyers argue that Clinton acted as a man trying to keep his illicit affair from his family and the public but never urged anyone to lie.

The prosecution may not be able to prove each charge, but "the more detail you layer, the more credible the story becomes and the harder it is for the president's lawyers to construct a tale of innocence," New York University Law Professor Stephen Gillers said.

Attorney Richard Ben-Veniste, an outside adviser to the White House, said the Clinton team will answer all the charges with two arguments: "They haven't proved it, and even if they have, it doesn't amount to an impeachable offense."

Derailed train cars spill diesel fuel

MILFORD (AP) — Crews were continuing to clean up as much as 80,000 gallons of spilled diesel fuel Sunday that leaked from six train cars after a derailment near the Big Blue River.

The fuel no longer posed a danger to the river after being collected in a pit, authorities said.

The leaks occurred early Saturday when 15 cars of a Burlington Northern-Santa Fe train derailed about a mile north of Milford, said Gus Melonas, a railroad spokesman. No injuries were reported.

Nine of the derailed cars were carrying about 26,000 gallons of diesel fuel each.

None of the fuel reached the river because workers were able to quickly divert most of it into a pit, Deputy Fire Marshal Ken Scurto said.

Railroad crews had recovered up to 5,000 gallons by early Sunday, Melonas said. The state Department of Environmental Quality and federal Environmental Protection Agency were monitoring the cleanup.

The cause of the derailment remained under investigation.

World and Nation DATES

■ Sierra Leone AP producer killed while covering nation's civil war

FREETOWN (AP) — An Associated Press television producer was shot and killed and an AP bureau chief was wounded Sunday when their car was hit by gunfire while covering Sierra Leone's civil war.

Myles Tierney, 34, of New York, was shot and died instantly. Bureau chief Ian Stewart, 32, suffered a head wound. AP photographer David Guttenfelder also was in the car and suffered cuts from broken glass.

■ Israel Netanyahu: Palestinians will not determine borders

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took a hard line Sunday on Palestinian statehood, telling his Cabinet that the Palestinians will not be allowed to determine Israel's borders.

A senior Palestinian official, meanwhile, insisted Palestinians would achieve an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The Palestinians have said they have the right to declare a state in May whether or not terms have been negotiated with Israel.

■ England Disreputable Lord Bristol dead of flu-like bug at 44

BURY ST. EDMUNDS (AP) — The Marquess of Bristol, who squandered millions on drugs and was jailed twice for heroin and cocaine possession, has died, said the agent for his estate, Simon Pott, on Sunday. Bristol was 44.

Lord Bristol died in his sleep and was found Sunday morning at his family's estate in eastern England near Bury St. Edmunds, Pott said.

He said Bristol had been suffering from a flu-like bug for a short time.

■ Kazakstan President of former republic looks poised for re-election

ALMATY (AP) — Despite cries of campaign violations, Kazakstan's president appeared poised to win re-election Sunday in the former Soviet republic.

A spokesman at the Central Election Commission reported that more than 85 percent of Kazakstan's 17 million people had cast their votes by the time voting ended.

Officials said preliminary results would not be known until this morning.

■ Israel Poland's president assures resolution of camp dispute

JERUSALEM (AP) — Poland's president tried to assure Israel on Sunday that a bitter dispute over a Catholic church at the site of a Nazi death camp in Poland will be solved.

During a visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, President Aleksander Kwasniewski said the Polish parliament is preparing a new law to preserve the death camps and empower authorities to intervene if anything controversial arises at the sites.

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