

# NEWS DIGEST

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## Clinton: Focus on issues over trial

### President says his job takes priority over impeachment

WASHINGTON (AP) — On the eve of opening arguments in his trial, President Clinton said Wednesday he intends "to spend as little time thinking about" his impeachment as possible and focus instead on issues facing Americans.

House prosecutors made their first contact with Monica Lewinsky's lawyers, The Associated Press learned.

Two sources familiar with the situation, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a member of the House prosecution team made the contact within the previous 24 hours. They described it as an "initial inquiry."

One of the sources works in the House. Lewinsky spokeswoman Judy Smith declined to comment.

House prosecutors have made clear they would like to call Lewinsky as a witness, but the senators must give their permission first. The issue will be resolved after both sides make their opening arguments.

The prosecution team also contacted Kathleen Willey about a possible appearance as a witness.

A legal source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the conversation touched on her allegation that Clinton made an unwanted sexual advance, but mostly was about any possible intimidation to get her to change her story.

Meanwhile, Clinton's lawyers told senators in a legal brief that they had an "obligation to turn away an unwise and unwarranted" House impeachment that threatens the American democracy.

"The vote the American people rendered ... is hanging in the balance," presidential lawyers said in their trial brief, arguing that there are no legal, constitutional or factual grounds for removal of the president.

"There is strong agreement among constitutional and legal scholars and historians that the substance of the articles does not amount to impeachable offenses," the attorneys wrote.

They said the allegations "do not begin to satisfy the stringent showing required by our Founding Fathers to remove a duly elected president from office, either as a matter of fact or law."

Clinton spoke for the first time about the crisis

### Clinton under fire

since his impeachment last month: "I think the Senate has to deal with that. We filed our brief today. It makes our case. The important thing for me is to spend as little time thinking about that as possible and as much time working on the issues we are here to discuss."

"They have their job to do in the Senate and I have mine and I intend to do it," he said.

The president indicated he has no plans to address the impeachment matter in his State of the Union speech Jan. 19.

"I think the American people have heard about that quite extensively, and my understanding is that I should do their business," he said.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., suggested today that Clinton should delay his State of the Union speech "because of the awkwardness" of the timing.

A number of Republicans also have asked him to postpone the speech, but White House officials have said repeatedly it will go on as scheduled.

### World and Nation DATELINES

#### Yugoslavia

##### Hostages released

LIKOVAC (AP) — Kosovo rebels freed eight Yugoslav soldiers Wednesday after getting private incentives from international officials who were determined to head off a return to war in the troubled Serbian province.

William Walker, the U.S. head of international monitors in Kosovo announced the release — ending a five-day showdown — after a final flurry of talks with Kosovo Liberation Army leaders at the rebel stronghold of Likovac in the hills of central Kosovo.

#### Washington, D.C.

##### Iraq attacked again

The Associated Press — For the third straight day, American warplanes attacked air defense sites in northern Iraq on Wednesday, and the Clinton administration said military pressure would continue as long as Iraq kept threatening U.S. pilots.

The string of confrontations in Iraq — which began after a mid-December bombing campaign by British and American forces and has accelerated this week — is raising speculation that President Clinton might order a new bombing campaign to silence Iraq's air defenses.

#### England

##### Chilean input allowed

LONDON (AP) — The Chilean government won permission Wednesday from the House of Lords to participate in next week's hearing to determine whether Gen. Augusto Pinochet can be arrested for crimes against humanity.

Three senior Law Lords took only five minutes to decide it would be wrong to exclude the Chilean government from the new legal proceedings, scheduled to start Monday.

#### China

##### Pirates seize ship

HONG KONG (AP) — Pirates with submachine guns killed 23 sailors aboard a Panamanian-registered ship bound for China, dumped their bodies into the sea and stole a cargo of mineral ore, a newspaper reported Wednesday.

The 20,000-ton ship was en route last month from Malaysia to the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou when its crew was massacred by pirates who arrived in a stolen high-speed boat, the Oriental Daily reported.

#### Washington, D.C.

##### NSA finds Furbys risky

The Associated Press — The National Security Agency has banned Furbys from its Fort Meade premises in Maryland. In an internal message to workers, the NSA issued a warning:

"Personally owned photographic, video and audio recording equipment are prohibited items. This includes toys, such as 'Furbys,' with built-in recorders that repeat the audio with synthesized sound to mimic the original signal," the Furby Alert read, according to today's editions of The Washington Post.

## Haitian president denies democracy

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — With the stroke of a pen, Haiti's president has swept aside a democracy only recently restored by a U.S. invasion and imposed one-man rule, defenders of Haiti's constitution charged Wednesday.

President Rene Preval also may have ushered in another era of instability for Haiti, a fear underscored by a brazen attack Tuesday on his sister.

Preval said late Monday that he will create a new government by decree. The next afternoon, motorcycle gunmen shot his sister and killed her driver.

The motive for the shooting was unknown, and there have been no arrests. Marie-Claude Calvin was in stable condition Wednesday after surgery for gunshot wounds.

Preval's announcement aimed to break a 17-month stalemate that has left the impoverished Caribbean nation without a budget or a functioning government. Preval's foes in parliament have spurned four successive nominees for premier since Rosny Smarth resigned in June 1997.

"Preval has staged a coup d'etat to establish a dictatorship," said Myrlande Manigat, an expert in constitutional law. "There are many kinds

of coups — not only military."

Lawmakers protested Preval's decision, but most Haitians are so disillusioned with their dysfunctional system that few rallied to the cause.

After months of squabbling, parliament lost the support of Haitians since it did not lift them out of poverty — and even earned their enmity by passing an internationally backed economic program that has put 5,000 state employees out of work.

Also, Preval can count on the loyalty of the 6,000-member police force. Preval's choice for premier — Education Minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis — will lead the National Police Commission that controls the force.

Lawmakers balked at approving Alexis as premier because he refused a demand by the Struggling People's Organization, the majority party in parliament, for six of 15 Cabinet posts.

Now, the majority party fears that Preval will politicize the police, Denis said, noting that Alexis' Cabinet will be dominated by sympathizers for former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide and that Aristide is running for president again in 2000 elections.

"Preval has implemented his plan to clear the road to the dictatorship of his mentor, Aristide," Denis said

## Clinton, Russians clash over weapons aid to Iran

WASHINGTON (AP) — Raising the ante, the Clinton administration Wednesday threatened to cut back or even eliminate Russian launches of American-made satellites as punishment for aiding Iran's missile and nuclear weapons programs.

When Russia's quota for launches is reviewed, "we will take into account very seriously progress, if any, that we have made in getting Russia to stop its entities from supporting Iran's missile program," State Department spokesman James P. Rubin said.

The administration on Tuesday imposed economic penalties on a Russian university and two scientific research institutes after concluding they had assisted Iran in developing ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons.

In response, Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov criticized the Clinton administration on Wednesday, saying, "Using force and exerting sanctions against our organizations is counterproductive for Russian-American relations, which we consider very important."

The Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement that the sanctions "can only complicate Russian-American relations."

"Any attempts to speak to us in the language of sanctions and pressure are absolutely unacceptable," the ministry said. "We intend to raise this issue ... during Secretary of State Madeleine

"Using force and exerting sanctions against our organizations is counterproductive for Russian-American relations."

YEVGENY PRIMAKOV  
Russian prime minister

Albright's upcoming visit to Moscow," set for Jan. 25-27.

White House officials said Tuesday that the administration intended to keep working with Russia to strengthen controls on exports. But on Wednesday, an irritated State Department fired back an accusation that the Kremlin turned its back on the problem.

Accusing the Russian government of ignoring information provided by the United States for months, Rubin said "any suggestion on their part of surprise or diplomatic precedent being somehow affected is simply untrue."

In all, 12 Russian corporations and institutions have been penalized for selling materials and equipment to Iran.

## Irish teen-ager creates new codes to make e-mailing 10 times faster

BLARNEY, Ireland (AP) — A 16-year-old Irish schoolgirl may have made e-mail even faster.

Sarah Flannery from Blarney, in Ireland's Cork County, is being hailed as a mathematical genius for devising a new code for sending electronic mail — and is being flooded by job offers from computer firms, the Times of London said Wednesday.

Her new code is 10 times faster than the current data protection code used for e-mails, created by three students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1977, the paper said. Flannery's code is equally secure as well.

Flannery, who unveiled the code to amazed judges at the Irish Young Scientists and Technology Exhibition

last weekend, said she is considering publishing her discovery rather than patenting it because she does not want people to have to pay to use it.

"I had to go through a lot of stuff before I finalized the theory," said Flannery, whose father, David, teaches mathematics at Cork Institute of Technology. "I reached critical points where I would get stuck for three weeks or so. I just kept thinking about it and then the whole thing slipped into place."

She will now represent Ireland in the European Union Science Contest in Greece in September.

The Times did not state whether she would accept any of the job offers or any of the numerous scholarships also offered by universities.

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