

NEWS DIGEST

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Iraq threatens attack if jets continue patrol

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Iraq threatened Monday to attack a Turkish base for U.S. warplanes, along with other American and British bases in the region, if the jets continue patrolling Iraqi skies.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright promised swift U.S. retaliation in event of an Iraqi attack.

Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan's threat, coming in an interview with Radio Monte Carlo, monitored in Baghdad, marked the first time in years that Iraq has threatened to attack neighboring Turkey.

U.S. jets based at Incirlik, in southern Turkey, have struck almost daily at Iraqi defense sites after being targeted by Iraqi defenses while patrolling the "no-fly" zone over the north of the country.

Ramadan also repeated Iraq's threat made Sunday against other bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait from which U.S. and British jets patrol a southern "no-fly" zone. The Arab League denounced this earlier threat Monday.

"If the Turkish base continues attacking Iraq, it will certainly be (targeted) like other bases (in the Persian Gulf)," Ramadan said.

"I say if America and Britain do not retreat, they'll soon pay dearly in relation to the properties and elements they use to launch aggression on the people of Iraq," he said.

Responding to the threat, President Clinton's top foreign policy advisers on Monday warned

that if Iraq attacked the Turkish base, the United States would react sharply.

"We have made very clear that were there any attacks on our forces or on neighboring countries that our response would be swift and sure," said Albright, who is with Clinton in Mexico.

Ramadan made his remarks the same day Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz held talks with Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit in Ankara. Aziz went to Turkey to try to persuade the Turkish government to halt the overflights from Incirlik base. Ecevit, however, insisted that use of the base to patrol the zone would continue.

In Ankara, there was no immediate reaction to Ramadan's remarks.

Also Monday, U.S. warplanes attacked Iraqi defense sites in northern Iraq, the Defense Department said. The planes returned safely to Incirlik, according to the department.

The Iraqi government said in a statement that allied planes also had carried out attacks in the southern "no-fly" zone, killing five civilians and injuring another 22. The U.S. statement made no mention of strikes in the south, and the Iraqi claims could not be independently confirmed.

The United States says Iraq has violated the zones 90 times since it began challenging them in December. U.S. and British planes have retaliated by attacking more than 40 Iraqi air defense sites. Iraq says at least 32 people have been killed in these attacks.

Future presidents may feel backlash of Clinton scandal

WASHINGTON (AP) — When the next occupant settles into the Oval Office in January 2001, he or she may feel the power of the presidency subtly reduced by the distant events of The Year of Lewinsky.

Kenneth Starr's tireless investigation of President Clinton, the president's pursuit of losing legal gambits, and the House's vote to impeach all nibbled away at presidential power, constitutional scholars say.

The erosion began even earlier, with the Supreme Court's unanimous decision on May 27, 1997, that Paula Jones could bring her sexual harassment lawsuit against a sitting president. That led to the deposition in which Clinton denied ever engaging in sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky.

Some scholars view this weakening of the office as part of a natural pendulum swing away from powerful presidents who have dominated the 20th century. Others lament the whittling away of power.

"It's probably too early to know what, if any, lasting effects this tawdry episode will have on the presidency," historian Alan Brinkley of Columbia University said. "But it would be naive to think that the rancor of viciousness of this episode would leave no legacy."

For instance, the Clinton White House went to court in the heat of the expanding scandal to press a series of constitutional questions that future presidents may wish had been left alone.

Trying to block grand jury subpoenas to some of his closest advisers and bodyguards, Clinton claimed lawyer-client privilege, executive privilege and a special privilege covering Secret Service officers. He lost them all. The courts ruled the Secret Service privileges didn't exist, that the attorney-client privilege dissolved in the face of a grand jury subpoena seeking evidence of possible criminal offenses and that executive privilege could be overcome by the needs of prosecutors.

"The Clinton administration was almost reckless in its willingness to litigate each of these issues despite the remote possibility of success," said law professor Jonathan Turley, who represented four former attorneys general opposing the Secret Service privilege.

Future presidents can no longer presume that they — or the first lady — will be able to keep secret their conversations with top aides or government lawyers.

Past presidents benefited from the ambiguity in the law, trying to strike a bargain when Congress demanded testimony or documents, and storing away court challenges to be pulled out in moments of crisis.

"President Clinton virtually cleaned the pantry out and left little for the next occupant of the office," Turley said.

World and Nation DATELINES

■ France

Serb president says republic won't tolerate NATO troops

PARIS (AP) — Serbia is willing to make major compromises and grant rival ethnic Albanians broad self-rule, but it adamantly opposes having NATO troops police a Kosovo agreement, the republic's president said Monday.

For the first time since a Kosovo peace conference started Feb. 6, Milan Milutinovic indicated Serbs were willing to give up most of the demands that have stalled the talks — with the exception of NATO peacekeeping troops.

■ Mexico

Clinton praises Zedillo for drug-war cooperation

MERIDA (AP) — President Clinton offered a strong hint Monday that he will certify Mexico as a reliable ally in the difficult struggle against drugs, saying cooperation "has clearly improved" under President Ernesto Zedillo.

Despite Mexico's disappointing record on extraditions, Clinton found positive things to say about Mexico's efforts. By law, the president has to judge Mexico's performance on drugs by March 1. Mexico would be hit with economic penalties if Clinton gave it a failing grade.

■ United Kingdom

Protestants, Sinn Fein battle over disarmament

BELFAST (AP) — Protestants heaped scorn on Sinn Fein leaders during a debate Monday that illustrated a peace process strained by approaching deadlines and the question of when — if ever — the IRA will start disarming.

The Belfast Assembly was discussing plans that would create a joint Protestant-Catholic government for Northern Ireland when one spectator, a relative of an Irish Republican Army victim, yelled, "Hand in your guns, you murderer!"

■ Eritrea

Eritreans celebrate crash in African border war

ASSAB (AP) — Eritrean soldiers danced around the wreckage of an Ethiopian helicopter Monday, celebrating a small, symbolic victory in the Horn of Africa border war.

Fighting for disputed territory along the 620-mile border that divides Eritrea and Ethiopia first erupted last May. More than 1,000 people were killed before fighting waned in mid-June, following the implementation of a U.S.-brokered moratorium on air strikes.

■ Georgia

Nixon domestic adviser dies of natural causes

ATLANTA (AP) — John D. Ehrlichman, President Nixon's domestic affairs adviser who was disgraced and imprisoned for his role in the Watergate cover-up that ultimately led to Nixon's resignation, has died. He was 73.

Ehrlichman died Sunday of natural causes at his home in Atlanta. He had suffered from diabetes, his son, Tom, said Monday.

Ehrlichman was part of a kind of palace guard that shielded the reclusive Nixon from unwelcome encounters.

Health club ad campaign draws ire

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — More than 30 overweight people chanted "Eat me!" while performing aerobics on the sidewalk in front of a health club to protest a new ad campaign they say demoralizes fat people.

The "fat advocates" banded together to protest a 24 Hour Fitness billboard campaign that depicts a hungry space alien and reads "When they come, they will eat the fat ones first."

Company officials say they didn't intend to offend anyone. "Sometimes humor helps make things easier, and can even be motivational," 24 Hour Fitness officials said in a release.

But the protesters said they saw little humor in the ad.

"It's really hard for fat people to get into the gym anyway. To alienate them before they even walk in the door is cruel," said Rebekah Bridges,

who handed out lollipops to passersby.

Some waved handwritten signs that read "Bite My Fat, Alien Butt," "Fat and Fit" and "Honk If You're Fat," which received loud support from traffic on the busy downtown street.

Marilyn Wann organized the event and is the author of "Fat! So?" a book that seeks strip away the common cultural notion that fat is bad. Wann said she'd like to see the company retract the ads and work with advocates to fill out its membership.

But Heather Mulhall, who left the gym on her mountain bike, said the ad was simply "catty or joking." She said the club has many plus-sized members — and some are in better shape than her.

"I will get on the treadmill next to people who weigh a little bit more, and they can go twice as long as I can," she said.

Scholarship winners out of luck, money as company admits funding doesn't exist

HOUSTON (AP) — They were, without a doubt, the best and brightest high school seniors in the country: straight-A students, National Merit Scholars, class valedictorians.

The students, one from every state in the nation and the District of Columbia, each had won a \$10,000-a-year college scholarship, renewable for four years, from Houston-based AdamsVision USA.

There was just one problem. AdamsVision now admits there is no money and never was.

Now the students are scrambling for financial assistance while their parents are searching for answers and, in some cases, lawyers.

"I was always so trusting. It never even entered my mind that something like this could happen," said scholarship recipient Amber March, who studies at Eckerd College in Florida. "I'd like to believe it was just an unfortunate mistake, but I kind of think I've been had."

AdamsVision founder Val Adams insists he still is trying to scrape up money to honor the scholarships, but John Boone, a prosecutor with the Harris County district attorney's office, doesn't think the

"It never entered my mind that something like this could happen."

AMBER MARCH scholarship recipient

students should hold their breath.

Boone described Adams as a habitual criminal, convicted of theft for writing bogus checks on six different occasions. Adams remains on probation for a 1993 case.

In fall 1997, Adams sent applications for its award to every high school in the country. An attached letter promised the awards would be presented to the winners by the governor of their state.

On Jan. 8, 1998, letters were sent to 51 students announcing they had won. But elation turned to confusion a few months later when AdamsVision sent another letter saying funding for the scholarships wasn't yet complete.

The letter stated AdamsVision was negotiating with "two major corporations" regarding sponsorship of the awards presentation and that although funding was incomplete, it remained "absolutely confident we will receive corporate sponsorship."

At that point, however, many students already had accepted early placement with universities. Some had lost out on other scholarships after winning one so large.

"You put one down for \$10,000 for four years and you don't get anything else," said Larry Peters of Little Rock, Ark., whose daughter, Jessica, was passed over for another hefty scholarship after winning the AdamsVision award.

Then came the final blow. Last month, Adams sent a short letter to each university stating simply that AdamsVision "will not be financially capable of honoring the Scholarship Award at this time."

In the meantime, 51 students have learned a painful lesson about trust.

"I feel very cheated and very angry," said Cassy Marshall of Rhinelander, Wis. "I try not to let it affect me, but it's something I can't shake."

Daily Nebraskan

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