

Clinton censures treaty failure

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton accused Senate Republicans of recklessness and irresponsibility Thursday for defeating the nuclear test ban treaty and warned, "You'll see a lot of testing" by Russia, China, India and Pakistan if the United States abandons the landmark agreement.

Clinton pledged the United States would refrain from testing — as it has since 1992 — despite the treaty's rejection. "It still binds us" unless the president says otherwise, Clinton said.

With Texas Gov. George W. Bush and other Republican presidential hopefuls opposed to the treaty, Clinton acknowledged that a future president might disavow the ban. "Then all bets are off," Clinton said. "You'll see a lot of testing and they'll bail" on the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, another major arms accord.

The president's words reflected deep White House bitterness over the treaty vote and the undiminished animosity between Clinton and congressional Republicans after the impeachment battle and fights over gun control, tax cuts and other issues.

Clinton, at a news conference a day after the test ban treaty failed on a 51-48 Senate vote, said Republicans have fallen into "a new isolationism" and had voted on the basis of partisan politics.

In blistering language, he also said Republicans were endangering America's economic prosperity by "lurching from one unworkable idea to the next" in spending proposals and budget cuts.

Republicans quickly answered Clinton's charges. "It was not about politics," Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., said of the treaty vote. "It was about the substance of the treaty and that's all it was. No senator, no senator, was pressured to vote anyway but his or her conscience based on the substance of the treaty."

As Clinton denounced the Senate's treaty vote, other Democrats pledged to make it a political issue for 2000. Gore, in his first television ad of the 2000 presidential race, said he would send the treaty back to the Senate for ratification if he wins.

Striding into the East Room, Clinton took a combative tone in his

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PRESIDENT CLINTON

opening remark. "In recent days, members of the congressional majority have displayed a reckless partisanship. It threatens America's economic well-being and now our national security."

"Yesterday, hard-line Republicans irresponsibly forced a vote against the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty," Clinton said. "This was partisan politics of the worst kind, because it was so blatant and because of the risks it poses to the safety of the American people and the world."

The president defended himself against criticism that he had waged a weak, eleventh-hour campaign for the treaty. He said he had spoken at least 30 times about it but "we had no earthly idea" that it was going to be brought up

hurriedly for a Senate vote. "There was simply no time to put it together," Clinton said.

"We will not — we will not — abandon the commitments inherent in the treaty and resume testing ourselves," the president said.

More generally, Clinton complained that the treaty's defeat was another step in the United States' retreat from a global leadership role.

"We are in a battle with the new isolationists and the Republican Party," Clinton said. He said the United States has failed to pay its U.N. dues or meet financial obligations under Middle East peace agreements and an accord with Russia to help dismantle the former Soviet nuclear arsenal.

Downpour hits Cuba as hurricane passes

HAVANA (AP) — Hurricane Irene dumped rain across western Cuba on Thursday, forcing at least 130,000 people to evacuate. Ranchers moved cattle to higher ground, schools and businesses closed and workers sealed warehouses storing Cuba's famous tobacco leaves.

In the western province of Pinar del Rio, President Fidel Castro met with civil defense officials about the storm, which also battered Miami with rain that triggered a rash of traffic accidents during Thursday morning rush hour.

"This is not the first time a hurricane has passed over Havana," Castro told reporters Thursday evening as the storm's center passed overhead. Castro was headed into the Havana mayor's office for a briefing on damage.

When the eye of the storm passed, wind and rain subsided briefly, allowing Havana residents to venture outside and check on damage to buildings. Many rushed

home from work before the other side of the hurricane arrived and skies grew dark again.

A hurricane warning was issued for the Florida Keys, as well as a stretch of Florida coastline from Florida City to Boca Grande, about 85 miles south of Tampa. Areas north of Boca Grande and between Florida City and Jupiter Inlet, on the east coast of the peninsula, were put under a hurricane watch.

At 5 p.m. EDT, Irene was centered about 65 miles southwest of Havana and was moving north-northwest at 7 mph.

Irene — which had sustained winds of 75 mph — was expected to hit the Florida coast Sunday north of Tampa with winds near 95 mph. Forecasters predicted a potential 13-foot storm surge in Tampa Bay and up to 20 inches of rain.

There were no immediate reports of damage or injury in Cuba or Florida. In Havana, there were scattered reports of damage to buildings in Old Havana.

State of emergency issued in Pakistan

Constitutional rule suspended by Pakistan's military chief

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Pakistan's military chief declared himself the country's leader Friday (Thursday CST), defying pressure to restore democratic rule after the army toppled the civilian government.

Fighter planes could be heard scrambling overhead within minutes after Gen. Pervez Musharraf issued an order for a state of emergency, dissolving parliament and suspending the constitution.

Since troops ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Tuesday and reportedly jailed his top supporters, Musharraf has been holed up in talks with leading politicians, including the president.

A spokesman for President Rafiq Tarar said Thursday that the general wanted to restore civilian rule.

However, soldiers then moved into parliament, which had reopened only hours before and was scheduled to

meet today for the first time since the military takeover.

The troops went down the corridors, clearing out staffers and the few legislators who had shown up, then locked the gates. "They just told us to leave," without explanation, said one worker who refused to give his name.

The proclamation of the state of emergency, issued on the state-run news service before dawn Friday (Thursday CST), dismissed all cabinet ministers and the Senate chairman, as well as the governors of Pakistan's four provinces and their ministers.

The president, however, keeps his post, which is mostly symbolic. Fundamental rights remain in place, even though the constitution is suspended, the declaration said. Courts will still function, though the announcement made clear they could not dispute Musharraf's position as chief executive or the state of emergency.

The military ruled Pakistan for 25 years of its 52-year existence, but it handed over power to a democratically elected government in 1985.

District attorney says Ramsey case not closed

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — District Attorney Alex Hunter acknowledged Thursday that "mistakes were made" in the JonBenet Ramsey slaying investigation but fiercely defended his office and said he was by no means done searching for the 6-year-old beauty queen's killer.

He also said the girl's parents, John and Patsy Ramsey, "have not been eliminated from the investigation." Police Chief Mark Beckner said the Ramseys remain "under an umbrella of suspicion."

Hunter faced a barrage of criticism after announcing Wednesday that a 13-month grand jury investigation into the slaying did not find enough evidence to charge anyone.

"If I had to do it again, I might do it a bit differently," he said at a news con-

ference Thursday. "I thought I might smoke the killer out, and I didn't."

Hunter refused to discuss the grand jury's investigation, including why JonBenet's parents were not called to testify. But he said, "The case is stronger as a result of the work of the grand jury."

"I have an aching heart about where we are with this case, but by no means do I or any of the men who you see at this table feel a sense of failure," Hunter said, flanked by prosecutors who have been consulting on the case.

"We will continue to follow the evidence in this case as long as there is work to be done. We find no reason to give up heart, we find no reason to quit, and we plan to continue with diligence the effort we believe has been under way since the beginning of this case."

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World and Nation Datelines

Yugoslavia Secretary General urges Albanians to rebuild lives

PRISTINA (AP) — Dashing ethnic Albanian hopes of quick independence, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Thursday that as long as Kosovo was under U.N. administration, it would remain part of Yugoslavia.

At the end of his first visit, Annan urged Kosovo's hostile ethnic groups to rebuild homes, lives and the ability to coexist.

His tour included meetings with Serb and Albanian community leaders, as well as with key NATO and international officials.

Annan spoke after stopping in the residential suburb of Pec, a western Kosovo city destroyed during the 18-month Serb crackdown that ended after NATO troops entered the province.

Iowa Elizabeth Dole presents World Food Prize in Iowa

DES MOINES (AP) — Elizabeth Dole avoided traditional political venues while campaigning in Iowa on Thursday as she helped present the World Food Prize.

Recalling her experiences as Transportation Secretary and director of the American Red Cross, she urged a focus on seemingly mundane topics such as food distribution, far less flashy than scientific breakthroughs that can revolutionize food production.

"Those involved in famine and disaster relief know only too well the hardships imposed by the lack of transportation and communications systems," said Dole, who is seeking the Republican presidential nomination.

The World Food Prize is given annually to mark the greatest achievements in finding ways to feed a fast-growing world. This year's award went to a British scientist who developed a vaccine against a deadly livestock disease.

Washington President, Republicans haggle over budget

WASHINGTON (AP) — A week from a budget deadline, President Clinton accused Republicans on Thursday of resorting to "reckless partisanship, to gimmicks and gamesmanship," and said GOP plans for across-the-board spending cuts would be too drastic.

Responded Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss.: "If the choice comes down to protecting Social Security or cutting across the board just a little nick off of every program, I believe the American people would support that."

Fourteen days into fiscal 2000, the partisan crossfire spotlighted the rising stakes as the White House and lawmakers focus on the remaining, most politically complex spending bills.

So far, five of the 13 fiscal 2000 bills have been signed into law, and five of the remaining ones face veto threats.