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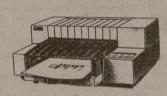
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Bush says release of hostages may depend on Iran's orders

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush said Tuesday he could not claim American hostages in Lebanon were any closer to freedom despite an intense diplomatic effort, but that there was "a good likelihood" they could come home if Iran wanted them released.

could come home if Iran wanted them released.

Renewing his appeal for assistance from the new leaders in Tehran, Bush said, "We don't have to be hostile with Iran for the rest of our lives. We've had a good relationship with them in the past" before breaking off relations a decade ago.

Iran, accused by the United States of sponsoring terrorism, is the major bankroller of Hezbollah, the radical group thought to be an umbrella for various factions of the hostage-holders.

group thought to be an umbrella for various factions of the hostage-holders.

"I think that if Iran wanted those hostages to come out of there, there would be a good likelihood that that would happen — perhaps not with certainty but a good likelihood," the president said.

He said that there were limits on possible military action to free the hostages, that he did not want to see innocent people killed and would have to weigh the risks to U.S. forces that would be involved.

"But if I could find a way to take those hostages, get

"But if I could find a way to take those hostages, get them and bring them out, and that required using the military force of the United States, make no mistake

about it - I would do it in an instant," the presion 8

"At some point we have to stand up for our in

even if it means military, yet I'm not threatening tary action," he said.

Bush discussed the hostage situation in a half-news conference on the eve of his departure in three-week vacation at his seaside compound at he

bunkport, Maine.

He promised that after his Labor Day ret
Washington, he would unveil a new anti-drug pr
that is "balanced, decisive, effective and achievable"

Bush said the program would require more few spending but not higher taxes, adding that the may would be diverted from other programs.

On other matters, the president:

Refused to rule out the possibility of abdumpman and leader Manuel Antonio Noriega to set trial in the United States on drug-trafficking charge have an obligation to try to bring people to jump Bush said.

Pronounced himself "very comfortable" with get director Richard Darman's comment that the

eral Reserve was keeping interest rates too hightomit sustained growth.

Lawsuit

(Continued from page 1)

ka's response to the spill, the lawsuit

says.
"We feel that Alyeska as a corporation was merely a sham, a corporate shell if you will, behind which these partners have been hiding for the last 12 or 15 years," LeResche

The lawsuit also charges that the oil companies misrepresented their ability to contain and clean up oil spills, violated federal marine pilotage laws and inflicted "severe emotional distress on Alaska residents."

Exxon officials in Anchorage did not immediately return a phone call for comment.

The lawsuit seeks monetary damages for destruction of the environment and harm to the region's fish-

eries-based economy. "The state recognizes that more than 1,000 square miles of its lands, waters and resources in or near Prince William Sound, the Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak Island suffered every supersulation of the state of the st fered severe environmental damage, including the devastation of beaches and coastal waters, the death or injury of thousands of animals, the

curtailment of important commer-

cial fisheries, and the impairment recreational opportunities," as news release said.

The lawsuit also seeks pundamages, its cleanup costs, its cof studying and monitoring the and a negligence fine under a law of up to \$100 million. The also asks for an injunction to ense Exxon and Alyeska continue acleanup until the environmentists.

The state blamed "arrogant a complacent people at the top less of Exxon Shipping Co." in a rept to the National Transporting Safety Board.

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