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Cheney says troop buildup not signal for U.S. attack

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon is laying plans to send as many as 100,000 more troops to Saudi Arabia, but the expanded buildup does not signal a U.S. intent to attack Iraq, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said Thursday.

CIA Director William Webster, meanwhile, suggested a growing U.S. reluctance to let Iraqi President Saddam Hussein survive the current crisis in power, even if he withdraws from Kuwait.

Webster said the Persian Gulf region will not be secure unless Saddam is removed from power or he is "disassociated" from his chemical weapons and reported efforts to acquire nuclear arms.

On Capitol Hill, there was concern over the administration's course and worry that once Congress leaves town, Bush might feel less constrained to follow a peaceful path.

"I am not convinced that this ad-

ministration will do everything in its power to avoid war," said Sen. Robert Kerrey, D-Neb., expressing the same sentiments as many of his colleagues who have supported the gulf deployment.

Kerrey, a Vietnam veteran and Medal of Honor winner, said "If ever there was an avoidable war, it is this one."

The Pentagon's disclosure earlier this week that it was considering adding troops to Operation Desert Shield, beyond the 240,000 already there or en route, raised questions about whether the deployment was being tailored for an offensive.

Cheney, speaking in a series of interviews with the television networks ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN, said the Bush administration had not set an upper limit on troop deployments to Saudi Arabia. He said he wanted to have enough forces there "to deal with any contingency."

The defense secretary said his orders from Bush were to use American forces to deter Saddam from invading Saudi Arabia, to prepare to defend the Saudi kingdom in the event of an attack and to enforce the U.N. sanctions against Iraq.

"We want to have the capability for the president to make the decision to use other options should that become necessary in response to a provocation, for example," Cheney said. He was referring to a possible U.S. offensive action.

At another point, he said, "For a number of reasons I would expect continuing flow of forces to the gulf in the period ahead."

Cheney did not provide details of the additional U.S. deployment planned. When asked by an interviewer whether as many as 100,000 more troops might be sent, Cheney said: "It's conceivable that we'll end up with that big an increase."

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Yale team develops Lyme vaccine in lab

WASHINGTON (AP) — Yale University efforts with lab mice could lead to a vaccine against Lyme disease in humans, and perhaps against syphilis as well, researchers say.

In a study to be published today in the journal Science, a Yale team reported that a Lyme disease vaccine for mice was made with a gene-engineering technique that could be applied to other diseases, such as syphilis, that are caused by a type of bacteria called spirochetes.

"It's very likely that we'll be able to get a good vaccine for humans from this technique," Richard A. Flavell, leader of the Yale team, said. "If it works on this disease, then it may be used to develop vaccines against other diseases with spirochetes, such as syphilis."

A Harvard researcher, however, said the success of a Lyme disease vaccine, even for mice, cannot be proven until the immu-

nity is tested against disease in the way it is naturally spread — through a tick bite.

David H. Persing of the Harvard School of Public Health said the saliva of Lyme disease-infected ticks also contains substances that depress some immune functions. A vaccine would be proven, he said, only when it is shown to give protection against the effects of these substances also.

Lyme disease was first identified in 1975 and named for the Connecticut town where a Yale study was conducted. The disease is spread by a small deer tick that passes along the spirochete when it sucks blood from a victim.

The disease can cause heart problems, arthritis-like joint pain, skin rash and even brain disorders. Identified early, Lyme disease can be successfully treated with antibiotics.

Flavell said it will take five to eight years before the vaccine can be tried on humans.

Tax on rich to increase 6.3 percent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Consumers would pay more for gasoline, cigarettes and beer under the deficit-reduction plan nearing completion in Congress. But the wealthiest Americans would face income tax increases averaging 6.3 percent as well.

As many as 4 million slightly less well-to-do couples and individuals — including most members of Congress — could get a tax cut because the top rate on their earnings, now 33 percent, would drop to 31 percent.

They also would get the bill's only tax break for capital gains. It is nothing like President Bush's proposed deep cut in taxes on capital gains which are profits from investments. But it would prevent anyone from paying a capital-gains rate higher than 28 percent.

The 600,000 richest taxpayers would see their top tax rate rise from 28 percent to 31 percent. Even those with incomes just slightly above the \$100,000 mark could lose a portion of their itemized deductions and part of the tax saving arising from their personal exemptions.

The bill would raise taxes by about \$150 billion over the next five years. But for most people below \$50,000 in income, the only increase would be in consumer taxes.

Those with incomes under \$20,000 would, on average, get a tax cut because of a higher earned-income credit, which helps poor working families with children.

Baptist church diverts donations to missions

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A 2,200-member Southern Baptist church is diverting most of its national donations — about \$88,000 — from the conservative-dominated Southern Baptist Convention to a new fund set up by moderates.

Woodmont Baptist Church, located only about 10 miles from the SBC worldwide headquarters, will reroute the donations to the new Baptist Cooperative Missions Program in Atlanta.

Baptist moderates opened the fund in August despite warnings from conservative leaders that it could threaten to split the country's largest Protestant denomination.

Baptist churches traditionally have donated money to the SBC's Cooperative Program, which has a budget of about \$140 million this year and provides funds to 20 SBC

agencies, including six seminaries.

Woodmont voted to give 69 percent of its donations to the new program and 31 percent to the traditional one.

"That is the way Baptists ought to operate," said the Rev. Bill Sherman, pastor at Woodmont. "This way there is a place for all Baptists, but those in control now don't see it that way."

John Bryant, chairman of the church's 45 active deacons, said the decision is not part of a move to divide the SBC, which has 14.9 million members.

"We view this as a means of staying in the SBC. We'd like to see the convention become unified and move forward," Bryant said Wednesday.

"I don't believe Woodmont is beating the drum to split the convention."

Most with incomes between \$20,000 and \$200,000 would face tax increases in the neighborhood of 2 percent although the bite on those between \$50,000 and \$75,000 would be slightly less — 1.5 percent.

The most striking difference between this bill and those of the last decade is the disproportionately larger burden the new plan would impose on those with higher incomes. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimated the share of federal taxes paid by people with incomes over \$200,000 would rise from 15.4 percent to 16.1 percent.

The bill would raise the 9-cent-a-gallon gasoline tax and the 15-cent diesel tax by 5 cents each.

The tax on cigarettes, now 33 cents a pack, would rise to 20 cents on Jan. 1.