

Tuesday, January 15, 1991

The Battalion

War appears imminent

Associated Press

Iraq and the United States appeared locked on a course for war Monday. Both sides insisted the other must yield a day before the deadline for Saddam Hussein to pull his troops from Kuwait or an attack.

Yemen, meanwhile, tried to keep hopes for peace alive by sending a high-level delegation to Baghdad with a new proposal.

Around the world, anti-war protesters took to the streets, and Israel called up more reservists.

Stocks and bonds tumbled and oil prices soared on world markets.

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who said he lost hope for peace after meeting with the Iraqi president on Sunday, scheduled a briefing for the Security Council on Monday night.

"We declare here and now that we are ready to sacrifice everything for the cause of Palestine," National As-

sembly speaker Saadi Mehdi Saleh said. "Palestine should be liberated and rights of Palestinians restored."

The lawmakers voted to give Saddam full authority over the gulf crisis. "It is either life with dignity or death," said one deputy, Muslim clergyman Abdulwaham al-Hitti.

President Bush called Iraq's apparent intention to keep troops in Kuwait beyond Tuesday midnight "a tremendous mistake."

Saddam said Sunday, "A last-minute initiative is up to the Americans. If they are bent on war, no one can prevent it." But Secretary of State James A. Baker III said Monday only Baghdad can avert war.

Baker, in Ottawa on the final stop of a tour of nations allied against Iraq, told reporters he was disap-

pointed by the failure of Perez de Cuellar's trip to Iraq.

He said he hoped that "as the clock ticks down to midnight Jan. 15 that there will be opportunity to resolve this crisis peacefully and politically. That opportunity now must come from Baghdad."

The international coalition against Iraq "is fully prepared politically, economically and militarily to deal with possible alternatives," Baker said.

"There is total solidarity among the coalition," he said.

Also Monday, the European Community foreign ministers met in Brussels and decided not to try another peace initiative.

Despite the U.N. deadline, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said, "There's never a deadline for peace initiatives."

Kuwaiti officials meanwhile urged the anti-Iraq alliance to stand tough and said they were willing to have their country leveled in order to save it.



de Cuellar

Only few of allied countries will join battle if United States, Iraq go to war

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Although 28 countries have contributed to the U.S.-dominated multinational force in the Persian Gulf, only a few are likely to join an offensive against Iraq if war breaks out.

The United States and Britain have clearly said they are willing to fight to force Iraqi troops out of Kuwait, including possible ground and air attacks on Iraq itself.

France, the only other Western nation with ground troops in the force, has been more ambivalent.

The most important Arab allies, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, have coordinated closely with the Americans, but have not spelled out their role in any offensive.

Even Kuwait's 7,000 troops, while ready to fight for the liberation of their homeland, are not expected to join an attack on Iraqi territory. Syria has one of the

largest contingents — 19,000 troops, including an armored division. But President Hafez Assad says they are deployed only to defend Saudi Arabia and will leave the alliance if Israel becomes involved.

Countries ranging from wealthy Germany to impoverished Niger also have contributed money and equipment to the multinational force. But few, if any, of those who have sent soldiers are expected to join any all-out offensive.

Many of them — both Western and Muslim — face strong anti-war sentiment at home.

There were large protests over the weekend across Europe, while in Pakistan even Cabinet ministers have joined a call for withdrawing the 10,000 Pakistani troops committed to Saudi Arabia.

Gulf Developments

- The White House issued a statement that military action could occur at any time after the deadline, and that Iraq was living on borrowed time.

- President Bush signed the resolution approved by Congress authorizing force against Iraq. He said the measure sends a clear message to Saddam Hussein that Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait without delay.

- United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who met in Baghdad with Hussein, said he has given up hope of peaceful resolution to the conflict in the Middle East.

- France readied a new plan for the United Nations Security Council calling for Iraqi withdrawal, a U.N. peacekeeping force and a Mideast peace conference.

American citizens face-to-face with war

Associated Press

About 500 American citizens remain in Iraq and Kuwait, staring war in the eye as zero hour approaches.

Elizabeth Girard's daughter is among them. And her son, an Air Force fighter pilot, is on alert in Saudi Arabia. Do not tell Girard the Persian Gulf crisis is only about oil.

"It's about much more than that. These are real people," she said Monday from Worcester, Mass. "This is my son, and my daughter."

The State Department estimates about 300 U.S. passport holders are in Kuwait and about 180 are in Iraq. The majority are women and their children, many of whom carry dual citizenship.

Some wives refuse to leave their husbands behind; some may be held against their will. Many have chosen

to stay in order to fight for Kuwait, and for their principles. Others have no where else to go.

"One woman had just recently buried her 4-year-old," said Mary Kondrat, who escaped to Boyne City, Mich., with her husband and four young children. "And somehow she just couldn't leave him there alone."

But if war breaks out, those who have stayed behind face death in the crossfire. Civilians in hiding must rely on homemade basement bomb shelters.

Their gas masks are rough affairs made of charcoal wrapped in cotton.

"It is so fearful, what she is going through. And her babies," said Ruth Bany of West Linn, Ore. "Why is my son-in-law not doing something to see that they'll be safe?"

Stocks fall, oil rises

Potential conflict affects economy

NEW YORK (AP) — Prices fell on Wall Street as traders braced for war in the Middle East but clung to hopes that fighting might be averted before Tuesday's deadline.

The market, eager for any good news, jumped on news ticker reports that quoted Cable News Network as saying Iraq would be willing to consider withdrawing from Kuwait.

The Dow Jones industrial average, which had been down more than 54 points during the afternoon, recovered to close 17.58 lower at 2,483.91 after word of the CNN report.

The report was attributed to an unidentified Iraqi official who was quoted as saying his country did not want to operate under the pressure of the Tuesday deadline for a withdrawal set by the United Nations Security Council.

Oil prices jumped more than three dollars per barrel, as the imminent deadline for Iraq to relinquish Kuwait sent a shiver of war fears through that market.

Home heating oil and unleaded

gasoline also posted huge price increases at the New York Mercantile Exchange, with a last-minute peaceful solution to the Persian Gulf crisis appearing all but impossible.

"We're moving here on war nerves," said Bob Baker, an analyst with Prudential-Bache Securities Inc. Iraq has been told to retreat from Kuwait by midnight Tuesday or face forcible eviction, but Iraqi President Saddam Hussein said he is ready to fight.

Light sweet crude oil for delivery in February had opened about four dollars per barrel higher in New York, but it eased back to close at \$30.78 per barrel, up \$3.49 for the day. At its peak, moments after the market opened, oil was at \$32 per barrel, up \$4.71 over Friday's close, but it moved steadily lower throughout the day.

"It never exactly went in the toilet," said Ed Kevelson, an oil trader at Dean Witter Reynolds Inc. "It just didn't explode like some people thought."

Facts about Iraq

THE LAND

Capital: Baghdad.
Area: 167,924 square miles. Slightly larger than California.

Topography: Mostly an alluvial plain, including the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, descending from northern mountains to southern desert. The Persian Gulf region is marshland.

PEOPLE

Population: 18,782,000 (1990 estimate).

Ethnic groups: Arabs 75 percent, Kurds 15 percent, other (including Turks, Assyrians) 10 percent.

Language: Arabic (official), Kurdish.

Religion: Moslem 95 percent (Shiites 60 percent, Sunnis 35 percent), Christian 5 percent.

ECONOMY

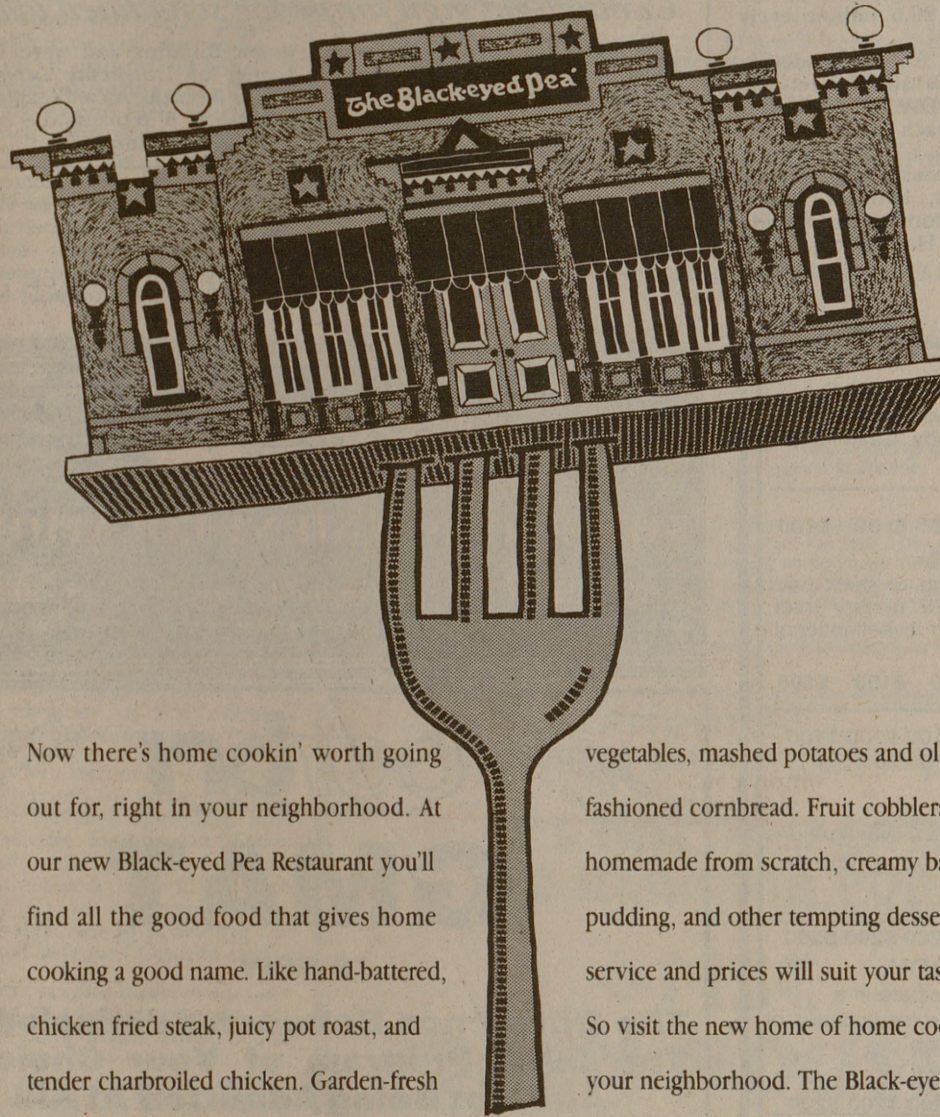
Industry: Oil, petrochemicals, textiles, cement.
Agriculture: Grains, rice, dates, cotton.

GOVERNMENT

Type: Ruling Council.
Head of State: President Saddam Hussein. Saddam came to power July 19, 1979.

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