

World hopes for peace, war looms

— A waiting world watched Baghdad and the bleak Arabian desert Wednesday — Baghdad for word on peace, the desert for news of all-out first esday. low up nex it to this y," he says. igs change

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American helicopters carted off hundreds of Iraqi prisoners after one action and Iraqi gunners zeroed in on a U.S. unit in another, killing one American and wounding seven. A key French lawmaker said the Desert Storm allies would give Iraq until late Thursday to respond to a Soviet peace proposal, or face a final offensive to drive its forces from Ku-

"Now, more than ever," said French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, "the ultimate decision rests with Saddam Hussein.

Late Wednesday, Baghdad radio said Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz would travel to Moscow "soon" with

Senate defeats

'gulf orphans'

protection plan

Senate Wednesday night defeated the so-called "gulf orphans" mea-sure that would have asked the De-fense Department to reassign single

parents and military couples with

of American servicmen and women to become ophaned," argued the sponsor, Rep. John Heinz, R-Pa., be-fore the senate rejected the measure

Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, said in

opposition that such a provision would be "grossly unwise" on the ap-

parent event of a ground assault aimed at driving Iraqi troops out of Kuwait. He said it could severely dis-

Sen. John Warner, R-Va., who ast returned from the Middle East,

with in the U.S. military had raised

the issue of giving some parents compassionate leave.

the Persian Gulf.

the reply of President Saddam and the rest of the Iraqi leadership to the Soviet plan, believed to call for an unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, coupled with vague assurances that Saddam could stay in power and the Palestinian question

eventually would be addressed.

The U.N. secretary general, Javier Perez de Cuellar, described the initiative as a "historic opportunity," and U.S. ally Italy also endorsed it. House Speaker Thomas S. Foley said that if the withdrawal is uncon-ditional, "I don't know how (President Bush) could fail to accept it."

Bush kept a public silence on the issue Wednesday, a day after describing the plan as "well short" of U.S. requirements. Although Bush did not elaborate on his objections, Republican House leader Robert H. Michel said, "We want to see condi-

Dismissing the alliance's strategy for an assault on Kuwait, Baghdad radio declared: "Their paper plans will be nothing when the ground battle starts.'

Desert Storm commander Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf said the Iraqi army, under aerial bombardment for a month, was "on the verge of collapse." Other senior U.S. offi-cers added that they still expected a

bloody fight.

"There's still a formidable force out there," one said.

British military sources said Iraqi troops were dispersing multi-rocket launchers and other artillery at the front in apparent readiness to take on the allies with chemical weapons.

Early Wednesday afternoon, a U.S. task force clashed with Iraqi forces south of the Saudi border, and the Iraqis called in artillery fire that killed one American and oners yet by U.S. forces.

command reported. It said the Iraqi fire hit an American anti-aircraft gun and two Bradley personnel car-riers, and U.S. forces destroyed five Iraqi tanks and 20 artillery pieces, and captured seven prisoners.

A short time later, the command said, U.S. Army strike helicopters attacked a complex of Iraqi desert fortifications just north of the border, destroying 15 to 30 bunkers and leading 400 to 500 stunned Iraqi infantrymen to surrender.

As darkness fell, Army Ch-47 Chinook helicopters were completing the task of ferrying the prisoners to a holding camp in northern Saudi Arabia, said command spokesman Brig. Gen. Richard Neal.

Allies criticize Soviet peace proposal

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United States and Britain have insisted in their responses to a Soviet peace rity Council resolutions adopted since Iraq invaded Kuplan that specific Iraqi concessions must accompany an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, U.N. diplomats said Wednesday.

Taqi withdrawal from Kuwait, U.N. diplomats said wait on Aug. 2.

Soviet officials have claimed their plan does assure compliance with all 12 council resolutions. Some re-

independently informed Soviet diplomats of their govindependently informed Soviet diplomats of their governments' views. Details of the Soviet plan have yet to released.

But the diplomats indicated these and other short-comings must be covered in any peace plan acceptable to the United States and Britain. They said their views

The diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, indicated that the Soviet plan:

• Lacked a firm timetable for Iraqi withdrawal from children who have been deployed to

"It is a grave danger to the well-being of our military families and their children to allow the children of the Kuwaiti government or reparations for damage there was no single joint document or list of allied con-

• Did not insist on compliance with all 12 U.N. Secu-

They said Washington and London separately con-sidered what they called shortcomings in the plan and withdrawal.

were being discussed with other members of the coalition arrayed against Iraq.

Response to the Soviet plan was being handled in

Made no mention of prisoners of war, restoration Washington and London, the diplomats said. They said

Pilots say Iraqi army poses threat

— U.S. combat pilots said Wednesday that Kuwait is already a burning, cratered battlefield, but that allied forces still face a formidable, dug-in fires.

report that the allies have destroyed ground war. a significant part of the Iraqi war

"The whole military establishment it's just fire," Seipel said.

AT AN AIRBASE IN SOUTH- is burning," said Capt. Bradley Sei-WESTERN SAUDI ARABIA (AP) pel, 34, of Virginia Beach, Va. As a — U.S. combat pilots said Wednes- weapons system officer of an F-111F fighter-bomber, Seipel directed some of the bombs that started the

F-111 pilots have been flying round-the-clock bombing missions to prepare the battlefield in Iraq and Kuwait for a ground offensive, and

"It is amazing flying up there. You look at Kuwait, that whole area,

"It's like constant explosions, constant fires," said Capt. Mike Russell, 33, of Bradenton, Fla., the pilot on Seipel's jet. "It's just awe-inspiring night after night how we ripped

The airmen with the 48th Tactical Fighter Wing (Provisional) have been concentrating on tanks, artillery and Iraqi army reserves in their nightly missions in Kuwait and Iraq.

"This is a war and we're beating them bad," Russell said.

Continued from page 1

rupt the war effort.

in Congress, said lawmakers share the administration's concern about Saddam remaining "a serious problem in the gulf for years to come.' But if Saddam agrees to an unconditional withdrawal, Foley said, Bush ould have "a very difficult choice. "I don't know how he could fail to

accept it."

He said later that the question might well be academic because

there has been no indication Saddam is prepared to withdraw uncon-ditionally, despite much discussion of a still-secret Soviet proposal on

Lt. Gen. Thomas Kelly, director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted that he and other officials had said a day earlier a ground war would be won "in short order."

"I should have said 'good order,"

going to be a snap.

One military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said "we are in the eye of Desert Storm. There is machinery is in place and we are waiting for presidential orders."

'We want to stay on course with conflict.

he said. "I don't think it's going to be our military tack and not be deany kind of pushover. ... It's not layed," said House Minority leader layed," said House Minority leader Robert Michel, the Illionis Republi-

The Iraqi president was weighing something of a lull right at the moment." He added, "It suggests the still secret but which Bush had dismissed on Tuesday as "well short of what would be required" to end the

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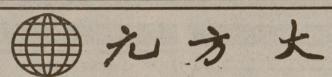
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