

# World & Nation 7

Friday, April 26, 1991

The Battalion

## Saddam starts to rebuild Iraq

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP)—Saddam Hussein appears to have neutralized Iraq's Kurdish rebels in his drive to cling to power in the post-Gulf War turbulence that has swept his nation.

But the country's majority Shiite Muslims, alienated by Saddam's ruthless suppression of their own ill-fated revolt, remain a threat he cannot afford to ignore.

A tentative agreement to give the Kurds the autonomy for which they have struggled for decades has given Saddam breathing space as he tries to hold his ravaged country together with himself at its head.

Yet big problems remain, apart from the festering hostility of the Shiites who make up 55 percent of Iraq's 17 million people.

Saddam will have to contend with growing demands for political reforms, the awesome task of rebuilding Iraq and its shattered economy, overcoming a humiliating peace treaty with the U.S.-led coalition that liberated Kuwait and preventing the despair of many Iraqis from degenerating into hostility.

The televised hugs and kisses exchanged by Saddam and the Kurdish chieftains Wednesday in Baghdad cannot mask the

deep hatred and distrust between them.

Saddam has a history of making agreements when he's in a jam and tearing them up when he's in a position of strength. And not just with the Kurds.

In 1975, when he was vice president and wielded the real power in Iraq, he was forced to sign an agreement with Iran to get the Tehran government to stop backing the Kurds against him.

In return, he had to agree to share sovereignty of the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, formed by the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers and Iraq's main out-

let to the Persian Gulf.

It was a humiliation he never forgot. Five years later, he went on state television and physically tore up that agreement.

Five days after that, his armored divisions invaded Iran, setting off a war that lasted eight years and killed more than a half-million people before it ended in stalemate.

By all accounts, many Kurds are deeply uneasy about Wednesday's tentative agreement in Baghdad, which grants the Kurds more autonomy than they've had before.

## Dignitaries honor Tower at service

WASHINGTON (AP)—John Tower was remembered Thursday at Arlington National Cemetery as a man with a "sharp mind and elbows to match," and as a patriot with a penchant for British suits and cigarettes.

Shiny limousines with their quivering telephone antennas brought a procession of dignitaries to the cemetery's amphitheater for the me-



Tower

morial service, punctuated by the rumbling of jets and finished with four F-14s flashing across the cloudless sky.

Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, who got the job the Senate refused to give to Tower, came to the service. So did Sen. Sam Nunn, the Georgia Democrat and Senate Armed Services Committee chairman who led the battle to deny Tower his grandest ambition.

There were Cabinet secretaries, Texans, and Tower's two daughters, sister, and first wife, Lou.

"We gather today at this final resting place of American heroes

to honor another worthy of that title," said Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole in recalling the man who rose from enlisted sailor to chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, from west Texas teacher to arms negotiator.

When he died three weeks ago in a commuter airplane crash in Georgia, Tower was also a published author on his way to Sea Island, Ga., to promote his bitter memoirs. His daughter Marian, 35, who worked with her father and was accompanying him on the trip, also died.

"He had a sharp mind and el-

bows to match," Sen. William S. Cohen, R-Maine, recalled. "He crunched more than a few toes with his cowboy boots. But inside that tough exterior, you could find the warmth and the kindness of a good father and a true friend and more than a touch of melancholy and sadness as well."

British Ambassador Sir Antony Acland remembered Tower's taste for things British, from Savile Row suits and Jermyn Street shirts to a special brand of English cigarettes. He called him a "stalwart friend" to his country.

## Soviets join U.S. in Mideast talks

JERUSALEM (AP)—The Soviet Union agreed Thursday to join the United States in sponsoring peace talks between Israel and the Arabs.

But the outlook for such a conference remained uncertain. After more than a week of shuttle diplomacy, Secretary of State James A. Baker III has gained agreement neither on the format for negotiations or on which Palestinian Arabs would attend.

Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander A. Bessmertnykh speaking at a news conference in Kislovodsk, the Soviet retreat where he and Baker had been meeting, said:

"We intend to act as sponsors of that conference, and the fact that there are two major powers — great powers — that help in getting that process under way would make it possible for that process to move at a faster pace."

For his part, Baker said a Mideast peace conference would not "be a successful undertaking — in fact, it will not even take place — unless the real parties to the conflict have a true desire for peace."

It was not immediately clear whether the arrangement was acceptable to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Min-

ister David Levy.

Baker flew from Kislovodsk, in the Central Caucasus, to Israel to get an answer Friday from Shamir and Levy on whether they would also accept a role for the United Nations and ease the restrictions they want to place on who would speak for the Palestinians.

"My honest feeling remains that there is a genuine desire on the part of the parties for peace," Baker said before leaving for Israel. "My honest feeling is that there is a better chance now than has been the case for quite some time in the past."

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