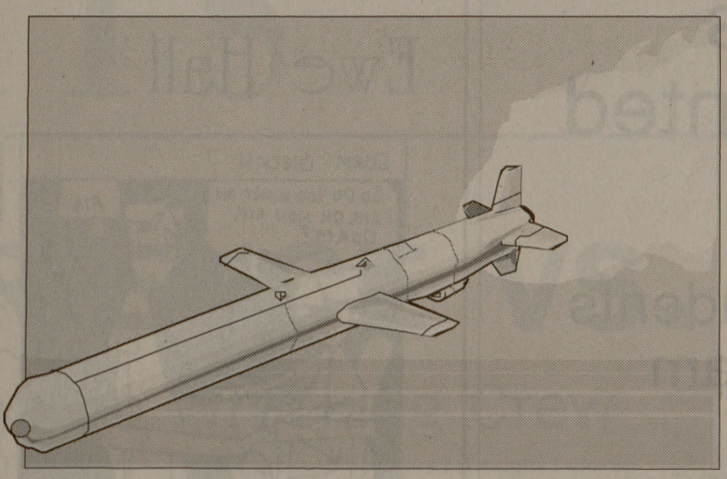


THE BATTALION  
WORLD

# IRAQI



# CONFLICT

## Texans give support

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton's decision to unleash a volley of missiles against key military targets in Iraq drew the support Tuesday of Texas Republicans and Democrats alike on Capitol Hill.

But even as they approved of the attacks against Iraqi air-defense installations, the Texans said they would be loath to see full-scale U.S. military involvement in the region marred by Kurdish fighting.

"The Kurds are divided and I do not want us to unwittingly insert ourselves into a civil conflict or a conflict between Iran and Iraq," said Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

An outspoken critic of the administration's decision last year to deploy troops to Bosnia, Hutchison expressed support for Clinton's latest military action.

But in an interview, she said she would oppose any broadening of the U.S. mission. "I think it's very important we keep our commitments but not insert ourselves into this conflict," she said.

In a speech on the Senate floor, Sen. Phil Gramm declared his support for the administration action, but also cautioned that further U.S. involvement must be limited.

"We do not have a dog in that fight," said Gramm, R-Texas. "If this becomes a conflict between Iran and Iraq, I think the president would be poorly advised in becoming involved in that conflict and I would not and could not support such an involvement."

## Hussein orders troops to down U.S. aircraft

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — A defiant Saddam Hussein vowed Tuesday to respond to U.S. missile strikes, ordering his troops to shoot down foreign aircraft and ignore the no-fly zones designed to keep his military in check.

Kurds in the north celebrated the attack launched by President Clinton, but said Saddam's forces were still pressing their offensive against Kurdish rebels.

Two American warships and a pair of B-52 bombers fired 27 cruise missiles at military targets in southern Iraq, killing five people, according to Iraqi and U.S. officials.

The attack set off air raid sirens in Baghdad and prompted Saddam to announce he would no longer honor the two no-fly zones that bar his warplanes from the skies of northern and southern Iraq.

"From now on, pay no attention to damned imaginary no-fly zones," Saddam told his armed forces. "Depend only on God, and hit hard and professionally at any flying target that belongs to the allied aggressors that penetrates the airspace of your beloved and glorious homeland."

"Fight, resist these aggressors and teach them a new, unforgettable lesson about values that their empty souls lack."

During and since the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War, Saddam has responded to punishing action by the West with dramatic threats of retaliation that were rarely carried out.

Clinton launched the strike Tuesday in response to Saddam's weekend assault on Kurdish rebels in Irbil, the main city in the Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq.

Associated Press correspondent Yalman Onaran reported from Irbil Tuesday that the city was calm, but the boom of heavy artillery could be heard to the south.

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Saddam Hussein  
Iraqi president

## Iraqi mission puts Clinton in delicate position

WASHINGTON (AP) — Saddam Hussein's big factor at the start of the last presidential campaign, all but forgotten in the end. By provoking a military showdown with President Clinton just nine weeks before Election Day, the Iraqi leader might have a lasting impact this time.

The bipartisan praise for Clinton's overnight missile strikes against Iraqi military targets underscored the political opportunity for the president, who displayed a decisiveness Republicans frequently assert is missing from the administration's foreign policy.

At 15 or 20 points ahead in the polls, the president doesn't need this kind of risky challenge," said Connecticut Democratic Sen. Joseph Lieberman. "He's shown some guts."

But any prolonged confrontation with Iraq carries huge political risks, the most obvious being the potential for U.S. casualties should Saddam not heed Clinton's warnings and additional strikes be ordered.

The lukewarm support voiced by Western allies gave Republicans an opening to assert that Clinton has squandered the international prestige built by Ronald Reagan and George Bush, to the point where Saddam had no reservations about ignoring Clinton's warnings.

That latter point is one Republican challenge," said Connecticut Democratic Sen. Joseph Lieberman. "He's shown some guts."

Senator Bob Dole has repeatedly stressed in his campaign against Clinton. "Saddam Hussein is testing American leadership," he said Sunday. On Monday, he went on to say Clinton had demonstrated "weak leadership" in dealing with Iraq.

But after the overnight missile strikes, Dole awoke Tuesday facing a delicate political dilemma: How to support the U.S. position in an international crisis while raising questions about Clinton's leadership. "In matters like this, all of us think not as Republicans or Democrats, but as Americans," Dole said in a speech to the American Legion.

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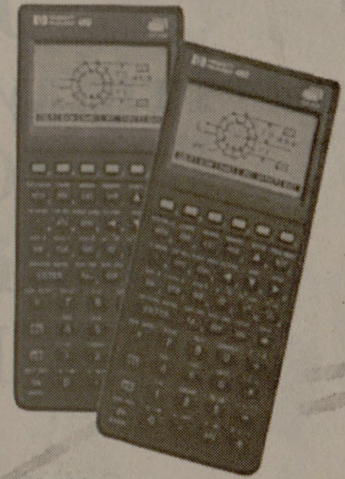
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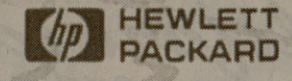
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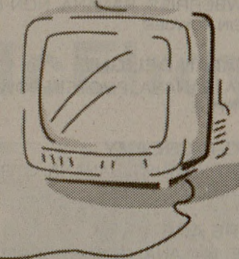
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