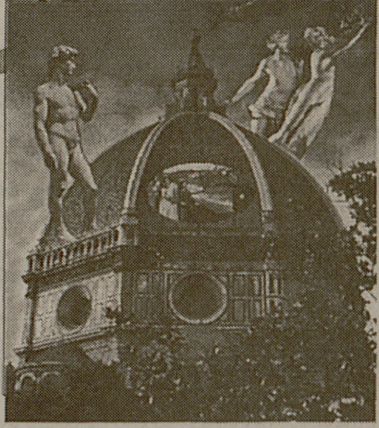


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Clinton sends troops to Kuwait

WASHINGTON (AP) — In moves designed to "keep Saddam Hussein in a box," President Clinton has dispatched 3,500 Army soldiers to Kuwait and warned the Iraqi leader of new attacks should he threaten his neighbors or U.S. forces.

The warning to Saddam will remain in effect indefinitely, the State Department said.

"It's obvious that he's always pushing the envelope," Clinton said Tuesday. "We didn't want to create a precedent that would lead him to believe he could take further action. We didn't want there to be any ambiguity at all."

After congressional leaders met with Clinton at the White House, Democratic senators said Clinton had not hesitated in sending the troops to Kuwait. Al-

though plans to send 5,000 soldiers were announced on Friday, reports emerged Monday the decision was being reviewed.

"We're doing it because the Kuwaiti government feels threatened," Defense Secretary William Perry said of the deployment. The 3,500 soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas, would join 1,200 others conducting exercises in Kuwait by the end of the week, he said.

Perry flatly rejected speculation the Kuwaiti government initially was unwilling to accept additional U.S. forces, or that the U.S.-led coalition that mounted the 1991 war against Iraq had been fractured during the past two weeks of confrontation with Saddam.

"The bottom line is, the coalition is alive and well," said Perry, who had returned early Tuesday

from two days of consultations with Gulf and European allies.

Senate Republican leader Trent Lott of Mississippi expressed satisfaction after attending the meeting with Clinton, although he termed it "somewhat belated."

He said he hoped "there will be no basis" for the troops to go into action, but added that would depend on whether Saddam threatens U.S. forces or his neighbors.

Clinton said his actions were "designed to improve the strategic position of the United States and our allies to keep Saddam Hussein in a box and limit his ability to threaten his neighbors."

Perry, asked at a Pentagon briefing what Iraqi steps actions would prompt renewed U.S. strikes, replied: "We will not tolerate any threatening actions

against our air crews." Should be taken, he pledged, "we respond very sharply."

Interviewed later on PBS *NewsHour* with Jim Lehrer, Clinton said the Iraqis also have to understand very clearly how they're situated.

"They understand very clearly what they have to do and they have to refrain from doing it and we will be watching them carefully to see that they do those," he said.

In the past, administration officials have said Iraq must rebuild air defense systems destroyed by U.S. cruise missiles, not move mobile missiles into the no-fly zones, not inate allied aircraft and not armored units into the southern zone of Iraq.

Commission says no to Perot in debate

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a decision cheered by Republicans, a nonpartisan commission recommended Tuesday that Ross Perot be denied a spot in this fall's presidential debates. An outraged Perot vowed to sue, and the Democrats continued to argue that he should share the stage.

The Commission on Presidential Debates said Perot should be excluded because he had no realistic chance of winning the White House. Its non-binding recommendations are now the subject of negotiations between the Dole and Clinton campaigns, which met for three hours Tuesday without reaching agreement.

The Clinton campaign suggested two two-hour presidential debates, with Perot to be invited to one. Republican Bob Dole wants four debates — all without Perot, and the gulf between the two camps made it appear certain that the first debate would not occur next week as proposed by the commission.

The panel said its purpose in recommending the exclusion of Perot and Reform Party running mate Pat Choate was to provide a forum for candidates "from whom the American people actually will choose the next president."

"Participation is not extended to candidates because they might prove interesting or entertaining," said the panel of five Democrats and five Republicans, which has played host to the fall debates since 1987.

Choate denounced the commission process as a "corrupt little game."

Dole's campaign, pinning its come-from-behind strategy on a boost from the debates, hailed the decision.

"They assume there was no realistic chance that anyone but myself or the president would be elected," said Dole, campaigning in Arizona. "I'm prepared. We're ready to go."

The Clinton campaign, which thinks including Perot would help its cause, called the ruling regrettable and pledged to continue to push for Perot's inclusion.

"I enjoyed having him in there in 1992," Clinton, campaigning in Michigan, said of Perot. "I'm not afraid of any debate."

The commission's non-binding recommendations in recent elections have served as the starting point for negotiations between the presidential campaigns. Negotiators for the Clinton and Dole campaigns met in private Tuesday afternoon to discuss the number, timing and format of the debates.

Last week, the Dole campaign proposed four hourlong debates between Dole and Clinton and two vice presidential forums. With Clinton scheduled to address the United Nations on Sept. 24, Dole also offered to let the first proposed debate slide from the 25th to the 26th but no further.

On Tuesday, the Clinton campaign rejected this counteroffer, according to a senior Clinton adviser.

Two presidential debates, each lasting one hour. The first, on Oct. 6, would include Clinton and the other would be a town-hall style debate with just Dole and Clinton on Oct. 13.

One two-hour debate on Oct. 9 between Vice President Al Gore and GOP vice presidential nominee Jack Kemp.

Emerging from the meeting, Dole's lead negotiator, former South Carolina Gov. Carroll Campbell, said the two sides were few days away from agreeing.

Talks were to resume Wednesday morning. Russell Verney, national coordinator of the Reform Party, rejected the commission's vote as a "very subjective decision" made by the Republicans and Democrats to protect the two-party system.

White House aides predicted that Clinton could anger voters and trigger a backlash against Dole for advocating Perot's exclusion. More than 60 percent of Americans in opinion polls say they favor his inclusion.

"Martyrdom is not what we're seeking," Choate said. "Office is what we're seeking."

Verney said the Reform Party would file by Friday in U.S. District Court in Washington against the commission and its individual members, asking them to use "objective criteria" in deciding participation in the debates. Law experts dismissed any such suit as futile.



Perot

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