

President denies charges of adultery, misconduct

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fighting to save his presidency, President Clinton on Monday emphatically denied a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky and vouched for his right to reassure Democrats that he will surmount the scandal. "I do not have sexual relations with that woman," he said. In a dramatic 20-second statement, Clinton drew a sharp line of defense that buoyed his supporters and riveted attention on Lewinsky as she prepared to face a federal grand jury Tuesday. With his wife standing at his side,



Clinton

Clinton wagged his finger at TV cameras and said: "I've never told anybody to lie, not a single time. Never." The White House statement marked the first comments on the subject from Clinton since Lewinsky told prosecutors she was willing to testify under the protection of full immunity she had an affair with him — raising the prospect of a high-stakes showdown between the president and a former White House intern. There is no turning back now for Clinton if Lewinsky changes her story and says she had sexual relations with him. Bruce Buchanan, a political scientist at the University of Texas, said Clinton's statement "sounded pretty categorical to me. I don't see any weasel words." Lewinsky, 24, told a friend she

had an affair with Clinton but later denied the claim in an affidavit. She spent several hours Monday with her attorneys, both at her Watergate apartment and a local law office. Lewinsky's lead attorney, William Ginsburg, is trying to secure a pledge of immunity from White House prosecutor Kenneth Starr. Meanwhile, attorneys for Clinton asked a federal judge in Little Rock, Ark., to move up the trial date for Paula Jones' sex harassment lawsuit against Clinton, complaining that the media frenzy surrounding the Lewinsky case had created an "undue distraction." Clinton's legal team thinks the lawsuit could be a high-profile forum to discredit Lewinsky if she cooperates with prosecutors against the president.

U.S. cites biological weapons as reason for possible attack on Iraq

WASHINGTON (AP) — Laying the groundwork for a possible attack, the Clinton administration said Monday Iraq may be manufacturing illegal biological weapons. If the attack is ordered, "it won't be a pinprick," one Pentagon official said. Military planners prepared options Monday and administration officials briefed congressional leaders and U.S. allies. House Speaker Newt Gingrich said there should be no mistake about the "American nation's commitment" to preventing Saddam Hussein from obtaining weapons of mass destruction. Republicans are "prepared to be supportive" of measures to prevent that from happening, the Georgia Republican said.

The White House rejected any notion that President Clinton would make his decision — either to attack or hold back — in an effort to shift attention from allegations that he had sexual relations with a White House intern. "Absolutely not, absolutely not," White House spokesperson Mike McCurry said, rallying to the president's side as a leader who made independent judgments, unrelated to his personal life. "There is no effect," State Department spokesman James P. Rubin said, as Clinton sent Sandy Berger, his national security assistant, to inform leaders in Congress how he was nearing a decision to order an attack. "Our objective for some time

has been to do whatever is necessary, including not ruling out the use of force, to achieve our objective ... is to be sure that Iraq's ability to make weapons of mass destruction and missiles is steadily diminished," Rubin said. Already, Senate Republican leader Trent Lott of Mississippi has told the White House chief of staff, Erskine Bowles, he "hoped that the president would take the necessary action in Iraq no matter what other distractions might be going on," Lott said Sunday. Bowles' response, Lott said, indicated Clinton "still would try to do what was right for the country." With tensions growing, Rubin said "it cannot be ruled out that Iraq has an operational biological weapons facility."

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