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WORLD

Saudi Arabia restricts U.S., U from placing troops in its terri

Albright

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Saudi Arabia however, have been increasingly will not allow its territory to be used to attack Iraq, a senior Saudi official said Sunday, complicating U.S. efforts to get full cooperation from all countries in the region.

Even U.N. Security Council approval of an attack would not change the Saudi position, the Saudi official told The Associated Press, speaking on condition

'Saudi Arabia will not allow any strikes against Iraq, under any circumstances, from its soil or bases in Saudi Arabia, due to the sensitivity of the issue in the Arab and

Reticence on the part of Saudi Arabia — America's closest ally in the Persian Gulf — indicates just how hard it may be for Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to muster support for a military strike.

The United States has plenty of fighter jets and troops afloat in the Persian Gulf, but it relied heavily on Saudi and Turkish bases during the 1991 Gulf War.

These days, Turkey, too, is reluctant to allow itself to be used as a launching pad. Ankara announced Sunday it would send

Foreign Minister Ismail Cem to Baghdad to help negoed Nations and Iraq over U.N. weapons inspections.

Iraq has been sparring with U.N. inspectors and the United States over access to suspected weapons sites, and U.S. calls for military strikes have been getting louder in recent weeks. Bill Richardson, the U.S. ambassador to the United

Nations, said Sunday he has received commitments from two countries to publicly support the United States should it decide to attack Iraq. "The United States will not be alone," Richardson

said during a world forum in Davos, Switzerland. He refused to identify the countries.

The U.N. inspectors must certify Iraq has destroyed all of its weapons of mass destruction before the U.N. Security Council will lift tough economic sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded neighboring Kuwait in 1990, prompting the Gulf War.

The Security Council insists on unfettered access for its inspectors; Iraq contends access to some sites, including presidential palaces, would violate

Albright was to begin explaining the U.S. position Sunday night with talks with the emir of Kuwait, Sheik Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah. She was to consult Monday with leaders of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, then fly Tues-

The United States has more than 4,000 troops and dozens of warplanes at bases in Saudi Arabia. Saudis,

about their close ties with Washing 1996 bombing of a U.S. military ba Saudi Arabia.

Nineteen American serviceme blamed on Muslim extremists.

U.S. bases in Saudi Arabia and Turk

coalition drove Iraq out of Kuwait.

But the last U.S. missile strike a 1996 attack to punish President Sadda sending troops into a Kurdish "safeh ern Iraq — was launched from U.S. Persian Gulf.

Today, the United States has mo troops aboard two aircraft carriers, Washington and the USS Nimitz, ships in the gulf. About half of the 3

To many in the Arab world, a milit seems pointless, given that Iraqi citi struggling from the seven years of econ

There also is distrust of Washin vering support for Israel. "All Arabs, with one voice, shou

'enough,'" the Al-Ittihad daily in the Un rates said. "If Saddam abused intern Israel has done it 100 times.

Others say an attack on Iraq may b

cause of his involvement in a sex sca Iraqis suffering under seven years of sanctions should not have to pay," t

There were several calls Sunday fro

55-nation Organization of the Islam to resolve Iraq's dispute with the Unit fully, state-run Iranian radio reporte

sociated Press Television in Davos other Arab countries were seeking tion. "I am not optimistic, but I hopeful," he said.

-Oatar's Al-Rayah daily called for against Albright's visits to gulf capitals,

Russia, too, is working toward and tion, sending envoy Viktor Posuvalyu his second attempt at a negotiating

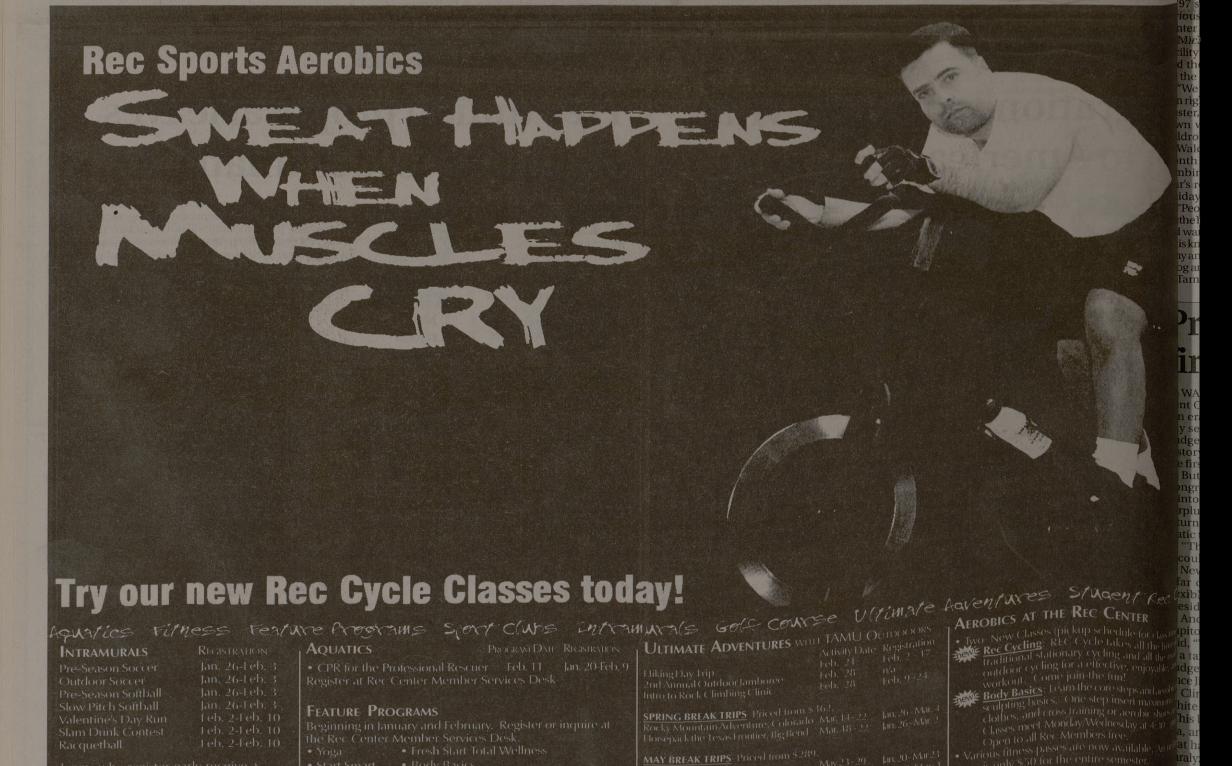
France said Sunday it will send a top ite Baghdad within 48 hours to "warn Iraq" alorki faces by not complying with U.N. weapon

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