

Russia leads international push on Iraq to back down

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — With the United States pressing for support for a possible military strike, Russia, France and Islamic leaders were rushing envoys to Iraq on Monday to push for a peaceful end to the standoff over U.N. weapons inspections.

A Russian envoy spoke with President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, leading the way among Iraq's sympathizers in pushing for a diplomatic solution. France, Turkey, the Arab League, Jordan and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat all launched their own peace missions and appeals to Saddam.

Envoys from Russia, France and Turkey would stress the same message, France's Foreign Ministry said: The danger would end only if Iraq gave in to U.N. demands for full access to all suspected weapons sites.

At the United Nations, Secretary-General Kofi Annan asked the Security Council to double the amount of oil Iraq can sell under an exemption to a U.N. embargo. The United States and Britain, Iraq's leading adversaries on the council, indicated they could go along with the increase for humanitarian reasons. The step could ease tensions in the crisis.

For its part, Iraq insisted it was open to anything that would help avert attack.

"Iraq will not neglect any opportunity that will help it foil American schemes to direct a military strike against it," Foreign Minister Mo-

ammed Saeed Al-Sahhaf told an emergency session of Iraq's National Assembly.

The intercession by Iraq's allies came as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain, making Washington's case for military force to end the standoff.

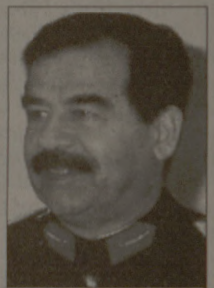
Iraq repeatedly has refused to allow U.N. inspectors into Saddam's palaces and other off-limits sites, drawing the American threats to attack.

The inspectors are trying to determine whether Iraq has destroyed its chemical and biological weapons programs, and a U.N. embargo imposed after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait is to stand until that and other conditions are met.

Iraqi U.N. Ambassador Nizar Hamdoon said Iraq would fax House Speaker Newt Gingrich an invitation to send a congressional delegation to one of Saddam's off-limits palaces.

"We want to allow them to make sure for themselves there are no prohibited items in those sites," Hamdoon said.

Britain said it would draft a U.N.



Saddam

Security Council resolution mandating that Baghdad weapons inspectors have "unrestricted access" to all sites.

The resolution could lead to military action if Iraq's sympathizers — Russia, France — among the five permanent Security Council members — he hoped Washington would on its own, but refused to believe it had the authority to think the international community has acted in unison on the past, and I think every country wants to maintain that universal principle.

Annan renewed calls for a stop blocking U.N. inspectors, stressing what was at stake.

"It is my sincere hope that diplomatic efforts to this end will succeed," he said. "Failure is a round of devastating action, which may have predictable consequences."

Russia, which broke ranks on the last U.N.-Iraq crisis, said Viktor Posuvaliyev Monday with Saddam's Iraqi officials.

The state-run Information Agency said Posuvaliyev sent a message from Russian President Boris Yeltsin aiming at "appropriate political relations to the crisis facing the U.S. administration."

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REFUNDS

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Holbert said that Rother's received the textbook request for the spring semester from professors in late October. However, he said the professors may teach different courses or decide to use more current decisions.

Lorimor said that the Texas Aggie Bookstore considers professors' requests, the class enrollment and the book condition when buying books back at the end of the semester.

"As a bookstore, we look at selling about 10 percent of class enrollment," Lorimor said. "We don't care what bookstores the books came from. We give more money for hardback books. If books are not going to be used again, then we try to give students the wholesale value of the book."

Lorimor said the bookstore loses money on books returned for wholesale price because the store must pay to mail books back to the companies.

Holbert said that returning students should try to reserve books at the end of the semester for the next semester. Holbert said that reserving books can cut students' textbook bills because the used textbooks are pulled first for reserve orders.

The MSC Bookstore had several hundred students reserve books for the spring semester, Black said. He said that more freshman tend to reserve books at the MSC Bookstore for the fall during their summer conferences.

Castro thanks Cuba for help in pope's visit

HAVANA (AP) — President Fidel Castro thanked the Cuban people in a live television address on Monday, saying they had helped make Pope John Paul II's historic visit a success.

Castro said Cuba's open reception of the pontiff's first-ever mission to the communist island nation disproved criticism of "this country as an oppressed, enslaved country."

He wore his customary green army fatigues for what was his first speech since John Paul left Cuba on Jan. 25, shucking the suit he had worn for the pope.

Castro expressed "my admiration ... my gratitude to the people for its behavior and for the success achieved in the task."

He made no immediate mention of some of the pope's blunt political messages during the five-day visit, including calls for release of its "prisoners of conscience."

The speech started at 9:30 p.m. and was still going on 1 1/2 hours later. It was unclear how long Castro planned to speak for the months he has given up to seven hours.

His remarks recounted successes of the papal visit, featured four Masses on the island, including one at the huge Plaza of the Revolution.

Castro noted that he "turned out by the tens of thousands for John Paul's Masses and other appearances."

He said that they treated the pope with respect and heeded Castro's calls to cry out the customary "the leaders of the revolution."

"This 'oppressed, enslaved country' was put at the center — for nearly a week — its mass media and with the hands of the pope, in the thousands of foreign journalists he said.

Vatican officials appealing the visit for clemency for half of several hundred prisoners, both political and common criminals.

PENALTY

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Mark Crawford, a student Episcopal chaplain, said he is against the death penalty in most cases because he regards the beginning and end of life as sacred.

"Many Christians are divided on the issue," he said. "The fact that she is a woman seems to be an issue, but is capital punishment humane for a man or a woman?"

Cavell said gender is not an issue in administering the death penalty. "People may be more sympathetic to her because she is a woman, and she goes against the stereotype," he said. "But you have to trust the jurors who made the decision that her crime justified the death penalty."

Crawford said life and life without parole sentences are more humane because the state should not determine who should be executed, and some people on death row be innocent.

"In Karla Tucker's case, crime was brutal, so life parole would probably be applicable than in other cases," he said. "Determining what sentences are warranted would be complicated."

Crawford said that Tucker was sentenced life and parole, it probably would not be granted.

"Charles Manson is still in life sentence," he said. "He's parole every time he becomes sane again."

Crawford has visited people in prisons who seem rehabilitated, but he said it is difficult to tell whether they really are.

"It appears Tucker had genuine conversion, but I don't know for sure," he said. "After what, the state still has a responsibility of protecting its citizens."

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