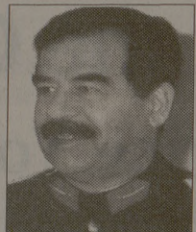


Ft. Hood to send 3,000 ground troops to Persian Gulf

AL-JABER AIR BASE, Kuwait (AP) — The Pentagon is sending up to 3,000 U.S. ground troops to the Persian Gulf region "to discourage any creative thinking" by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.



Saddam

At the same time, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright ruled out any massive military invasion of Iraq. "The administration does not agree with those who suggest we should deploy hundreds of thousands of American troops to engage militarily in a ground war in Iraq," Albright said in a speech in Washington.

The latest deployment of U.S. ground forces was disclosed by a senior military official traveling in the region with Defense Secretary William Cohen.

He said up to 3,000 troops from Fort Hood, Texas, will be sent to Kuwait over the next 10 days or so to help defend Iraq's southern neighbor.

"The purpose is to ensure the security of Kuwait," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "It's to discourage creative thinking on (Saddam Hussein's) part."

Although Cohen had not formally signed the deployment order, a Pentagon official said Monday "the forces have been requested and that request is being considered and processed."

They will join 1,500 Army troops who have

been using M1-A1 tanks, armored Bradley troop carriers and other vehicles during a scheduled exercise in the desert emirate.

The armored vehicles were stored in Kuwait after the 1991 Persian Gulf War and have been used repeatedly by U.S. troops in training exercises.

Cohen flew about 50 miles outside Kuwait City on Monday to visit the this desert air base, which is surrounded by the broken and bombed-out remains of concrete bunkers hit by U.S. strike aircraft in 1991 after the Iraqi invasion.

"You are the best and the brightest America has to offer," Cohen told the crowd of mostly U.S. Air Force men and women. "You are great warriors and diplomats."

Walking through the crowd, the former

senator from Maine told the young men and women, "It's important to look at your faces

"You are the best and the brightest America has to offer."

William Cohen
U.S. Defense Secretary

so when I sign a deployment order I take into account those faces." The defense secretary

spent nearly an hour handing out

medallions posing for photos. "We're locked and loaded," he said.

Cohen, a deputy commander with the Ohio National Guard, turned out to hear Cohen.

Buck Buckingham, an Air Force unit from the Colorado National Guard, said he would be disappointed if action was ordered after he

"Not that we want war," Buckingham, whose jet is armed with infrared missiles designed to track and armored vehicles.

"We're trained to protect our

Aid arrives for quake victims

RUSTAQ, Afghanistan (AP) — The first desperately needed aid trickled in Monday for earthquake victims in Afghanistan's mountains — on trucks where roads were passable, on donkeys where snow and ice were too deep.

Survivors slowly walked out, with

stories of whole families lost.

Frozen bodies were strewn across devastated towns and villages, many still unburied after Wednesday's 6.1-magnitude quake crumbled hillside homes of mud and brick or buried them under landslides.

Rescue workers say as many as 5,000 died in the quake and a series of ruinous aftershocks.

One girl wept as she tried to re-

count how her entire family of seven was crushed under the rubble of their home in the northeastern village of Khojah Khirat.

"It's so painful, so painful," 7-year-old Bahrish whispered, her eyes brimming with tears.

"I don't know if I have any relatives left."

The patients lay in darkness on the building's dirt floor — the clinic's power had gone out.

13 dead following El Nino fed floods

TIJUANA, Mexico (AP) — Soldiers and rescue workers scraped away mud and debris Monday after El Nino-fed floodwaters roared through a border shantytown, killing 13 people and forcing hundreds to flee their homes.

Three teen-age girls were killed after fast-flowing mud swallowed their family's car at the foot of the eastern

shantytown of Mexico Lindo, or Beautiful Mexico. Swirling floodwaters dragged an 18-year-old girl from her house to her death.

Some 500 people took refuge at shelters because their neighborhoods were buried in mud, water and debris.

North of the border, Californians took advantage of a break from the storms that have battered the West Coast for a week. They cleared roads, cleaned catch basins and drains and rebuilt sandbag barri-

cades. Sunshine bled through

California, which saw rain in some areas.

Forecasters said the rain was expected to blow north Monday night, with the bad weather hitting Washington state.

But California was drying up. Seven-foot waves with a six-foot-high tide

Clemente beach homes 100 feet of sand at

SUMMER JOB!

Applications are now being accepted for the College Station Summer Day Camp

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- You must have a 2.0 cumulative GPR at Texas A&M University.
- You must be in good standing with the University, including no registration or transcript blocks for past due fees, loans, parking tickets, returned checks, etc.

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- If your application is approved, you must return and pay in full by cash, check, money order, or your personal Discover, Visa or MasterCard (with your name imprinted) no later than Friday, February 13, 1998 between the hours of 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

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