

GOP leaders play down censure talks

Republicans continue push for impeachment, but will not rule out chance of lesser sanctions

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican congressional leaders brushed aside Democratic talk of censure of President Clinton Tuesday, as the House Judiciary Committee pointed toward release of the next installment of Kenneth Starr's evidence of impeachable offenses.

Censure is "not an option that holds a lot of attraction," House Majority Leader Dick Armey told reporters, adding that he had been talking to members of the GOP rank-and-file about the issue. "We believe that committing perjury and obstruction of justice, these are acts of enormous consequence," he said.

Across the Capitol, Senate Ma-

"If there's a serious effort made in Congress to that (reimbursement), we'll consider it when the time comes."

— Mike McCurry
White House spokesperson

Majority Leader Trent Lott told reporters it was "inappropriate at this time to be talking about what

might happen" to Clinton.

Neither he nor Armey closed the door on the idea of a sanction less than impeachment. Nor did White House spokesperson Mike McCurry.

Asked about calls for Clinton to reimburse some of the costs Starr has incurred — said to be some \$4.4 million investigating the Lewinsky cover-up allegations — McCurry said, "if there's a serious effort made in Congress to that, we'll consider it when the time comes."

Meanwhile, the White House moved to prevent further erosion in Clinton's political standing among Democrats. Chief of staff Erskine Bowles and a phalanx of

aides journeyed to the Capitol to join the weekly closed-door Democratic Senate caucus for a discussion of Starr's report.

Bowles later told reporters little about what was said. But he was emphatic when asked whether any senator had called for Clinton to leave office: "No."

Starr's report on the president and his affair with Monica Lewinsky, a portion of which was made public last week, cited what the prosecutors said was evidence of impeachable offenses in 11 instances, including perjury and obstruction of justice. The president has apologized for his behavior but has not admitted violating any law.

Air Force tests smaller, easier to deploy combat units

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Air Force is experimenting with "light, lean and lethal" combat units designed to deploy around the globe within 48 hours for military or humanitarian missions, which in today's world are often the same.

The Air Force this week is conducting its first test of command and control of an expeditionary force to see what it takes, technically, to run emergency fighting units at about half the size of the 2,000-troop units that went to battle during the Per-

sian Gulf War in 1991.

Some 80 aircraft and rooms of computer technicians and commanders will run the experiment at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia and Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, including live flying and simulations. Under the scenario, fighting forces would go into the field with lightweight laptop computers, satellite dishes and printers instead of pallets loaded with command equipment and with hundreds of controllers to run it.

Gen. John Jumper, the Air Force commander in Europe, said the expeditionary forces would be "small, but lethal" and would go into hot spots at the request of allies to try to prevent wars or humanitarian crises from developing.

"It's at the front end, the deterrent end, of the shooting war where you are desperately trying to put enough of the deterrent force out there to influence the bad guy's decision not to act,"

Jumper told a defense writers' group Tuesday. He said such a quick-acting show of force also would demonstrate U.S. resolve to help its friends.

In a scenario like Rwanda, Jumper said, the goal would be "stopping the killing and saving people" by sending in an emergency Air Force expeditionary unit. "In the humanitarian sense ... you may have to insert forces to stop something worse from happening."

Russian leaders introduce new economic plans

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's new government showed some of its cards Tuesday, proposing to print money to pay back wages and impose some Soviet-style controls over the market — but also making key appointments to enhance its reform credentials.

The head of the centrist Our Home Is Russia faction, Alexander Shokhin, was named deputy prime minister in charge of financial issues — a daunting job as Russia tries to pull itself out of its economic morass. He said he expected another member of his faction to be named to a Cabinet post later.

Russian liberals and media have been making doomsday predictions that the new government, under Prime Minister Evgeny Primakov, will represent a retreat back to Soviet-era economic policies.

Primakov, who conferred with President Boris Yeltsin on new cabinet appointments on Tuesday, insists he is only trying to create a team that represents all the major political and economic factions, including the Communist Party.

Aside from a few preliminary measures, Primakov has not announced any economic program and appears to be seeking political consensus rather than quick economic action. He has asked to be given up to a year before his policies were assessed.

There have been indications that the government intends to play a stronger role in the economy.

Central Bank chairman Viktor Gerashchenko called Tuesday for a return to the Soviet-era practice of requiring exporters to turn in all of their hard currency earnings to the government, in exchange for rubles at a state-determined rate.

The measure "is long overdue," Gerashchenko said. "That should have been done last year."

New First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov — a Communist Party member who nevertheless has shown himself willing to work in a reform-oriented government — has also advocated the measure.

No one in the government has called for reviving Soviet-era fundamentals such as fully nationalized industry, price controls or ending the free flow of capital and the ruble's convertibility.

Yeltsin assured French President Jacques Chirac during a telephone conversation Tuesday that Russia will not deviate from the course of economic reforms," Yeltsin's press service said.



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