

REGIONAL

Republicans predict war debate victory

Hatfield undecided about breaking party lines to oppose war for 'pursuit of oil'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats from the Northwest said Thursday the United States should give sanctions more time in the standoff with Iraq, while Republicans backed President Bush's warlike stance.

Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., was the only Northwest member who showed signs of breaking from party lines, as the House and Senate began debate on resolutions regarding a U.S. attack on Iraq.

Hatfield, historically anti-war, said late Thursday he was still struggling with the question of "whether it is in our national interest to initiate a military action in the Middle East."

"I still do not believe that our national interest in this conflict is anything other than the pursuit of oil," he said.

Washington Democratic Sen. Brock Adams, Reps. Jim McDermott and Jolene Unsoeld appealed for additional time for an economic blockade to force Iraqi President Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait.

tions have failed to work.

"If we back away from support of the president... (our) military threat will have become non-existent," Gorton said on the Senate floor.

"Depending on fruitless sanctions is a prescription for defeat of the United States and the United Nations," the senator said. "The cause of peace is served best and only by backing the cause of the president of the United States."

Miller said postponing military action will send a dangerous message to Hussein and the Arab world.

"The message will be, 'You've got another year to pillage and rape in Kuwait. You've got another year to threaten your neighbors,'" Miller said.

"If we wait we increase the risk of a much greater, bloodier conflict at a later date," he said.

Chandler said Defense Secretary Richard Cheney and others have convinced him that addi-

we did not want a king," Adams said.

Hatfield's offices received about 700 telephone calls from constituents on Thursday, the vast majority of them urging him to oppose military action in the Gulf, press secretary Bill Calder said.

Some 384 calls came into his Washington D.C. office and only nine asked Hatfield to support President Bush. His Portland office received 243 calls and 212 of those were opposed to war. A similar margin was recorded at Salem, Calder said.

Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., was at his divorce proceedings in Portland on Thursday and could not be reached for comment, but aides have said he is expected to back Bush's policy in the Persian Gulf.

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., said Bush has yet to make a case for an American war against Iraq.

"Until he does, we should work with the international community and let the sanctions continue to bite. We owe that much to the young men and women in Saudi Arabia whose lives are on the line," he said.

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— Jolene Unsoeld

"This is war or peace," Adams said in a Senate floor speech. "Let's not spend blood for oil."

"Why are we so eager to go to war?" McDermott asked in the House. "There is no support anywhere for this war... Thousands of Americans will die. We must admit this to ourselves at the outset."

Unsoeld said the debate, expected to stretch into the weekend, is a question of "sending America's children to kill and be killed."

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Washington Republican Sen. Slade Gorton and Reps. John Miller and Rod Chandler rallied in support of President Bush's authority to declare war on Iraq, saying economic sanc-

tional sanctions "would simply delay for six months to a year what is becoming an inevitable situation."

He predicted the House will approve by a comfortable margin Bush's request to attack Iraq if it does not withdraw from Kuwait before Tuesday.

Congressional backers of Bush offered a resolution Thursday specifically giving him authority to take the country to war against Iraq. They predicted it would pass by the weekend.

Adams helped draft the Democratic alternative, which does not rule out the eventual use of force if all other efforts are exhausted but states that the Constitution gives "all power to declare war" to Congress.

"The founding fathers clearly meant for Congress to have that power. That's not just scholarly opinion but common sense of the American people. They know that 200 years ago

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