

# PERSIAN GULF WAR

## U.S., Iraqi troops exchange fire across Kuwaiti border

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia (AP) — A waiting world watched Baghdad and the bleak Arabian desert Wednesday — Baghdad desiring peace, the desert for news of all-out war.

On the northern battlefield, where a million men braced for the fight of their lives, probing and skirmishing intensified. American helicopters carted off hundreds of Iraqi prisoners after one action, and Iraqi gunners zeroed in on a U.S. unit in another, killing one American and wounding seven.

A key French lawmaker said the Desert Storm allies would give Iraq until late Thursday to respond to a Soviet peace proposal, or face a final offensive to drive its forces from Kuwait.

"Now, more than ever," said French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, "the ultimate decision rests with Saddam Hussein."

Late Wednesday, Baghdad radio said President Saddam was sending Foreign Minister

Tariq Aziz to Moscow "soon" with the reply of the Iraqi leadership to the Soviet plan. The proposal is believed to call for an unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, combined with vague assurances that Saddam could stay in power and the Palestinian question would eventually be addressed.

The Soviet initiative was described by the U.N. secretary general, Javier Perez de Cuellar, as a "historic opportunity," and U.S. ally Italy also endorsed it. House Speaker Thomas Foley said that if the withdrawal is unconditional, "I don't know how (President Bush) could fail to accept it."

Bush kept a public silence on the issue Wednesday, a day after describing the plan as "well short" of U.S. requirements. Although Bush did not elaborate on his objections, Republican House leader Robert Michel said, "We want to see conditions change" in Iraq — that is, Saddam ousted.

## Bombs ruining Iraqi agriculture

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — The war has denied Iraq the manpower, fuel and transport needed to harvest what had promised to be a bumper spring crop.

Food experts now say the best hope for hungry Iraqis is that Baghdad will be defeated quickly. Then, thousands of tons of emergency food could flow into the country, and farmers could receive essential supplies.

"Right now, it's pretty bleak," said John Parker, who has been monitoring the situation for the U.S. Agriculture Department.

"Food stocks are low; prices are high. Farmers who have become used to modern systems are going back to primitive ways — horse-drawn carts, sickles. They're wondering how they'll get the harvest in," he said in a telephone interview from Washington.

Iraq had been counting on

increased production to make up for some of the food lost in August when the United Nations imposed a trade embargo to force Iraq to relinquish Kuwait.

2nd Marine Division Infantry company.

Simmang said he felt bad about scaring off the Iraqis because his unit has a front-row seat for the psychological operations the allies are conducting to encourage desertions.

NEAR THE KUWAIT BORDER (AP) — Marines guarding their camp got a lesson in how close the war really is when a dozen figures appeared about 200 yards out in the darkness, their commanding officer said Wednesday.

A sentry shouted "Halt!" and the figures hit the ground. The jumpy Marines grabbed their guns and loaded. The unexpected guests jumped up and ran.

The Marines believe the were "line-walkers," or Iraqi deserters coming across the border to give themselves up, said Capt. Doug Simmang, 31, of Dallas, Texas, commanding officer of the

IN NORTHERN SAUDI ARABIA (AP) — The U.S. military is taking steps to improve communication between pilots and ground commanders to avoid more casualties by friendly fire, officials said this week.

At least 10 U.S. soldiers have been killed by allied fire since the war began Jan. 17.

On Sunday, an Apache helicopter of the 1st Infantry Division mistakenly fired a Hellfire missile at a Bradley fighting vehicle, killing two infantrymen and wounding six others.

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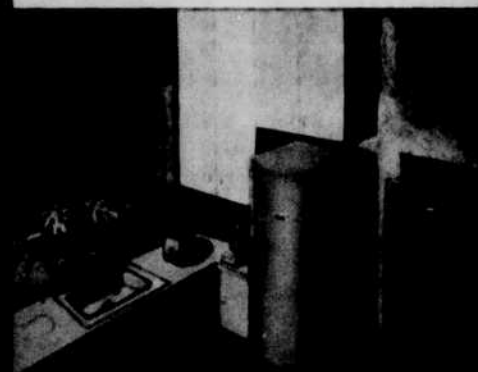
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## THE RELUCTANT SHAMAN

BY KAY CORDELL WHITAKER

**K**ay Whitaker was living a quiet life with her husband and two children in the Santa Cruz mountains near the Northern California coast when an eerie encounter with a stranger, the first of many, set into motion the series of events that were to change the course of her life and her perceptions of the natural world around her.

Inexorably drawn to a cliff above the ocean during a violent thunderstorm — wanting desperately and inexplicably to be part of the tempest, to feel it in her bones — Kay is greeted by a derelict-looking old man with long white hair who tells her, simply, that he has been waiting for her and that it is time for her "to learn the balance." Terrified, Kay flees the scene, only to be confronted again in a coffee shop by the same man, who explains that he has been sent from the Amazon Basin of Brazil to find her and teach her to be a kala keh nah seh, a "builder of webs of balance."

Thus begins Kay Whitaker's remarkable, and reluctant, apprenticeship to the strangely beguiling Domano Hetaka and his companion, the female shaman Chea. Domano and Chea explain their mission: to hand down the ancient wisdom of their people. In spite of her doubts, Kay finds herself intrigued by the mysterious couple and agrees to clandestine meetings with them — meetings that no one, including her family, can know anything about. As a mother and a wife, Kay is torn between her domestic commitments and old dreams and the powerful allure of both the Hetakas and their strong sense of purpose.

Eventually Kay begins to integrate her "real" life and her new knowledge, finding the balance and harmony she was destined to know and impart as a teacher and a storyteller in the shamanic tradition.

Kay Whitaker is a native of Eugene, Oregon and has conducted popular seminars on shamanism throughout the Northwest. She now lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.