

U.N. inspector disputes Bush claims



WASHINGTON (AP) — The former head of United Nations nuclear inspections in Iraq, on Tuesday disputed President Bush's statement that no U.S. technology was used in that country's atomic development program.

David A. Kay led three nuclear inspections in Iraq after the Persian Gulf War. He was quoted by the Center for Security Policy, a conservative research group, saying that "U.S.-manufactured equipment and nuclear technology were found as components of Iraq's nuclear program."

As an example, Kay cited electron-beam welding machines made in the United

States, which the U.N. inspectors discovered at Iraqi nuclear development sites, the research group said in a news release.

Bush made the statement in Monday night's presidential debate, in response to charges by Bill Clinton and Ross Perot that his administration had coddled Saddam Hussein before the Gulf War.

"The nuclear capability has been searched by the United Nations, and there hasn't been one single scintilla of evidence that there's any U.S. technology involved in it," the president said.

"And what you're seeing on all this 'Iraq-gate' is a bunch of people who were wrong on the

'U.S.-manufactured equipment and technology were found as components of Iraq's nuclear program.'

— David Kay, former head U.N. nuclear inspector

war trying to cover their necks and try to do a little revisionism. And I cannot let that stand, because it isn't true."

Democrats in Congress have blasted the administration for months for what they say was a dangerous policy of support for Saddam before the Gulf War.

U.S. aid to Iraq included sales of advanced technology. Under Presidents Reagan and Bush, the Commerce Department gave U.S. companies permission to sell Iraq some \$1.5 billion in technology with potential military uses from 1985 until Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

After the Gulf War, U.N. inspectors in Iraq discovered an electron-beam welder that they were certain had been used in Saddam's nuclear weapons program.

Nuke plant shut down a mystery

SENECA, S.C. (AP) — A reactor at the Oconee Nuclear Station shut down automatically when it lost some backup power. Utility officials didn't know the cause Tuesday.

"There was no danger to the public. No release of radiation or injuries to personnel occurred," said Jim Hampton, Oconee site vice president.

A six-member team from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission was at the power plant Tuesday for a special inspection.

The plant, owned by Duke Power Co., declared an unusual event, the lowest of four classifications under NRC rules, late Monday and ended it five hours later when power was restored.

The plant's Unit 2 reactor shut down when an unknown problem in the plant's electric switchyard tripped circuit breakers and cut off the reactor's outside power, the utility said. Such outside power generates the reactor when it doesn't generate enough to run itself.

Other backup power was available, the NRC said, and Hampton said plant safety systems functioned normally.

Duke Power spokeswoman Susie Adams said the power outage that caused Unit 2 to shut down lasted about 30 seconds.

Perot's Iraq charges refuted by State Department

WASHINGTON (AP) — The State Department waded into the political debate over Iraq on Tuesday with a point-by-point rejection of assertions by Ross Perot about Bush administration dealings with Saddam Hussein shortly before his troops invaded Kuwait.

Spokesman Richard Boucher said the United States had "never and I repeat never" told or suggested to Saddam that he could take the northern portion of Kuwait with impunity — as Perot charged.

Acting Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger also released a letter to *The New York Times* in which he defended the administration's actions and said the newspaper's editorial board and columnists were distorting facts about U.S. policy prior to the Persian Gulf War.

"There was nothing secret or covert about U.S. policy toward Iraq," Eagleburger wrote.

"Our goal, simply stated, was to seek to moderate Iraqi behavior with a mix of limited incentives and strong disincentives."

Traditionally, the State Department keeps its distance during political campaigns. Boucher said Eagleburger had acted on his own in tackling the assertions Perot made Monday night during the debate with President Bush and Gov. Bill Clinton, though Eagleburger had telephoned Brent Scowcroft, the president's national security adviser, "to tell him what we intended to say."

"We want to have the record straight," Boucher said.

Scowcroft disputed Perot's assertions as well. He called them "a shot from the hip, obviously."

Telephone calls seeking comment from Perot were referred to spokeswoman Sharon Holman, who did not immediately respond.

Perot, in a wide-ranging attack on U.S.

policy toward Iraq, charged in the debate that April C. Glaspie, then the U.S. ambassador in Baghdad, had told Saddam "in effect" that Iraq could "take the northern part of Kuwait."

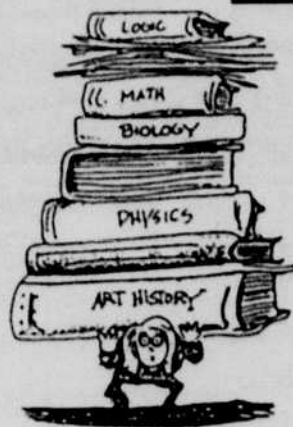
Perot said he believed Ms. Glaspie received instructions from Washington to make such a statement and that the text of the message had been withheld from Senate committees and the public.

Boucher said Ms. Glaspie's meeting July 25, 1990, with Saddam, a week before the invasion of Kuwait, was held on short notice and no instructions had been provided to her for the talk. Scowcroft said the same.

"The United States has never, and I repeat never, told or in any way indicated to Saddam Hussein that Iraq could take the northern part of Kuwait. Nowhere in any document is there the statement or even the suggestion," the spokesman said.

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