

# Bush calls anti-war protests irrelevant

**Ron Hutcheson, Diego Ibarguen and Martin Merzer**  
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

WASHINGTON — President Bush dismissed last weekend's mass antiwar protests as well-intentioned but irrelevant — the equivalent of a marketing "focus group" — as the Defense Department ordered another 20,000 U.S. troops to the Persian Gulf region Tuesday.

About 150,000 troops already are in place for a possible attack on Iraq, but the United States and Britain decided Tuesday to confront skeptics and propose one last United Nations resolution demanding that Iraq disarm, officials of both nations said.

At the White House, Bush said "democracy is a beautiful thing" and he supported the dissenters' right to express their views. But he also said the protests wouldn't influence his decisions or those of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, his closest ally.

"You know, the size of protests is like deciding, well, I'm going to decide policy based upon a focus group," Bush said. "The role of a leader is to decide policy based upon the security — in this case, the security of the people."

At the same time, the United States and Britain continued to pursue diplomacy at the United Nations, despite Tuesday's resumption there of speeches generally critical of the U.S. position. But the diplomatic effort isn't likely to delay U.S. military plans more than a few days, "if at all," one senior administration official said on condition of anonymity.

"The administration is committed to going forward," said White House spokesman Ari Fleischer.

He said a new resolution — "simple and rather straightforward" — would be proposed to the U.N. Security Council as early as Wednesday or as late as next week. Other U.S. officials, citing British pressures,

predicted it would be offered Friday or Monday.

Bush summed up the delicate balance between diplomacy and war this way:

"War is my last choice. But the risk of doing nothing is even a worse option, as far as I'm concerned. I owe it to the American people to secure this country. I will do so."

He said a new resolution "would be useful," but he left the door open to act without one in case the effort falls short.

"We don't need a second resolution," he said. "It's clear this guy (Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein) could even care less about the first resolution."

White House officials declined to discuss the resolution's proposed wording, but Fleischer said Bush would insist on language that followed through on U.N. Resolution 1441, which the U.N. approved in November. That resolution gave

Hussein a "final opportunity" to disarm and warned of "serious consequences" if he didn't comply.

"The key thing that the president wants to have in there is that it enforces Resolution 1441, making clear that 'final' meant 'final' and 'serious consequences' meant 'serious consequences,'" Fleischer said.

In London, Blair signaled that the decision on a new resolution had been made.

"I want a second resolution if we go to military action, and I still think there is a lot of debate to go on before we get to the point of decision there in the United Nations," Blair said.

Both nations suffered a setback Friday at the U.N. Security Council, when U.N. weapons inspectors reported modest but continuing progress in Iraq, and opponents of a military attack mustered considerable support.

An open debate on Iraq unfolded at the United Nations, as about 60

countries that aren't on the 15-member Security Council expressed their views.

Such an open debate has no official effect on the council, and the meeting served largely as another forum for those who want to continue U.N. weapons inspections and slow the drive toward war.

Even Iran, which Iraq attacked with chemical weapons in the 1980s, argued that every effort should be made to avoid war.

"The prospect of another destabilizing war in our immediate vicinity is a nightmare scenario of death and destruction," Iranian Ambassador Javad Zarif said.

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# INS extends registration deadline for next round

**Jack Chang**

Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. — Male visitors to the United States from a group of Muslim countries have been allowed another month to comply with a controversial registration program or face possible deportation, the Immigration and Naturalization Service announced Tuesday.

Men over 16 from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have until March 21 to register with their local INS office, a full month after the original deadline. U.S. citizens, permanent residents, refugees and asylum applicants and recipients are excluded from the requirement.

Men over 16 from Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan and Kuwait have also received a deadline extension. Originally required to check in with the authorities by March 28, nationals from those five countries can register between Feb. 24 and April 25.

The registration requirement only applies to people who entered the United States before last October.

The Pakistani government has expressed its objections to the U.S. program requiring its nationals to register. The arrests of hundreds of Iranians complying with the program in Southern California in December triggered protests from

*"The Pakistani government did not want Pakistan to be on this list because we are an ally in the war against terrorism."*

**Raana Rahim**  
Pakistani general consul

immigrant groups.

"The Pakistani government did not want Pakistan to be on this list because we are an ally in the war against terrorism," said Raana

Rahim, Pakistani general consul in Los Angeles.

"What we also told the U.S. government is Pakistanis are contributing tremendously to the economic prosperity of the United States. It's a very good and very hard-working community that has a very low crime rate."

An INS press release said the deadline extensions were issued "in response to requests for more time from different individuals and entities."

INS spokeswoman Sharon Rumery, based in San Francisco, said she did not know what individuals and entities the press release referred to.

Advocates for immigrants and civil libertarians have condemned the registration program as a discriminatory targeting of Middle Eastern men, while INS officials have defended it as a necessary national security measure.

Previous registration deadlines affected men from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

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# Former Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun to run for president

**Dan Mihalopoulos**

Chicago Tribune (KRT)

CHICAGO — Surrounded by friends and family members waving "Ms. President" placards, former Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois officially announced her entry into the 2004 Democratic presidential race Tuesday.

"It's time to take the 'men only' sign off the White House door," Moseley-Braun said as she kicked off her campaign at the University of Chicago Law School.

The snowstorm that closed government offices in Washington

spoiled her plans to file paperwork creating a presidential exploratory committee with the Federal Election Committee. Moseley-Braun said she would formally join the otherwise all-male field of Democratic hopefuls as soon as government offices reopen.

She also plans speeches later this week in Washington, including an appearance at a meeting of the Democratic National Committee.

Moseley-Braun said her exploratory committee includes Reps. Danny Davis, D-Ill., and Bobby Rush, D-Ill.; Illinois Senate President Emil Jones, D-Chicago; Cook County Board

President John Stroger; former U.S. Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill.; and activist and writer Gloria Steinem.

Although some backers concede she is highly unlikely to emerge atop a Democratic field now numbering eight, Moseley-Braun insisted she was getting in the race to win.

"I have every hope and every expectation that this will be a successful effort," she said. "I'm running for president. I'm not running just to be another pretty face."

Still, Moseley-Braun cautioned that she was not sure she would be in the race when the presidential

caucuses and primaries begin in January. She said she would barnstorm the country before deciding by September whether to press her campaign for the Oval Office.

Moseley-Braun began testing the appeal of her anti-war message during speeches Saturday, Sunday and Monday in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina. Those states will hold the first caucuses and primaries of the 2004 campaign.

"This is just an exploratory committee," she said. "By the fall, I will have concluded, with my committee, whether an actual campaign for

the presidency is sensible."

Moseley-Braun won election as the first black woman senator in 1992 after unseating Alan Dixon in a Democratic primary upset. Her tenure in Washington lasted only one term, with Republican Peter Fitzgerald defeating her in 1998.

President Bill Clinton then appointed her U.S. ambassador to New Zealand, a post she held two years. Since returning from New Zealand in 2000, she has stayed out of politics.

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