

U.S. works to revive Turkish aid for war

Bob Kemper
Chicago Tribune (KRT)

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration scrambled Monday to revive a plan to base up to 62,000 military personnel on Turkish soil in preparation for a war in Iraq, and officials warned Turkey that it could lose billions of dollars in U.S. economic aid if it didn't cooperate.

The Turkish parliament over the weekend rejected, by three votes, a request to allow U.S. troops access for a northern invasion of Iraq. It was a diplomatic and military setback for the Bush administration and, if not resolved quickly, could mean that Turkey, a U.S. ally, accomplished with a single vote what France, Germany, Russia and other nations have so far failed to achieve in months of negotiation: a delay of the expected war.

Turkish officials may ask parliament to reconsider the issue this week, but U.S. officials would say only that they remain in negotiations with Turkey after the surprise rejection.

"Turkey is reviewing its options and the United States is doing the same," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said. "It's unclear, as well, what the ultimate outcome will be."

Even while insisting that Pentagon planners have a so-called Plan B, an alternative to launching an attack from Turkey, U.S. officials also were threatening to deny economic aid to Turkey if it refuses to cooperate.

The U.S. had offered Turkey up to \$15 billion in economic grants and loans in exchange for allowing the bases. The money was intended to soften the blow that Turkey's ailing

economy likely would suffer if war breaks out in neighboring Iraq.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher made clear that Turkey would forfeit most, if not all, of the aid if it does not allow the bases.

"The aid package was predicated on the cost of involvement, the economic consequences, the direct costs of deployments and support," Boucher said. "If that involvement or if that kind of effort doesn't occur, then the costs won't be incurred."

The Turkish stock market, reacting to the prospect of losing the economic aid, dropped by more than 12 percent Monday. The Turkish lira dropped by close to 5 percent.

Turkey's refusal to allow the bases could delay a war in Iraq for several weeks — possibly until late March

or early April at the soonest — unless U.S. and Turkish officials can negotiate a compromise quickly, U.S. officials said.

U.S. military planners were counting on using Turkish bases to execute a northern invasion of Iraq using the 4th Infantry Division from Ft. Hood, Texas. In concert with a more heavily armored invasion force from the south, the troops deploying from Turkey were intended to divide the Iraqi army and move immediately to protect the northern oil fields from Iraqi sabotage.

Fleischer, however, said that "other approaches are available."

Bulgaria, for instance, could be used as a staging ground for air operations during a war, a role Turkey played prominently in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. On Monday, two U.S. refueling tankers and a cargo

plane landed at an air base in the Bulgarian Black Sea port city of Bourgas, according to Reuters.

Boucher said the United States has "left the politics of this in the hands of the Turkish government." He declined to predict whether the Turkish parliament would take up another resolution authorizing the bases or say whether an alternative to such an action existed.

Turkish Prime Minister Abdullah Gul would not say whether a second resolution would be introduced, telling reporters in Turkey, "We are analyzing the situation and we will see what happens in the next few days."

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Carnival spinning



Kevin G. Hall (KRT)

Bainas in the Salgueiro samba school, with their arching long dresses, spin down the nearly half-mile parade route during Sunday night's opening of Carnival competition in Rio. Bainas, who dance and spin for 80 minutes, are one of the categories in which the samba schools are judged. Carnival runs through Tuesday.

China set for most expansive leadership overhaul in a decade

Michael Dorgan
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

BEIJING — The most sweeping political changes in China in more than a decade will get under way this week as the nation's legislature convenes to approve new top officials.

The new generation is expected to gradually introduce modest political reforms while guarding the Communist Party's dominant role.

Few surprises are expected from the two-week-long 10th National People's Congress, which convenes Wednesday. The Congress deputies will approve top officials — including a new president — that the Communist Party already has selected. They also will sign off on an ambitious restructuring of the central government.

It's likely to remain highly unclear who really wields power in China and how much actually will change.

"We will see a lot of old faces with new positions," said Wu Guoguang, a former government adviser who's

now at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. "But there may be some new faces, too."

The familiar face destined to take the government's top job is Vice President Hu Jintao. The 60-year-old career politician will replace Jiang Zemin as president after succeeding him last November as general secretary of the Communist Party, China's most powerful position.

Those twin crowns will make Hu the so-called core of the fourth generation of post-revolutionary leaders. Hu is a familiar face on the news but has spoken so seldom in public that he is a mystery even to the Chinese.

The 76-year-old Jiang, who has held power since 1989, is expected to retain China's third crown, the chairmanship of the Central Military Commission.

That will leave him as commander-in-chief of the military forces, which will provide him with considerable clout. He also is expected to

exert influence behind the scenes through the numerous supporters he installed in key party positions.

Hu has given few clues about what changes he would like to make, if any. But with Jiang on watch against any abrupt shifts in direction, the new generation of leaders is expected to stay the course, deepening the economic reforms of the past 20 years and speeding China's integration with the global economy.

Assisting Hu in that effort will be Vice Premier Wen Jiabao, who is expected to succeed Zhu Rongji as premier, and Wu Bangguo, who is expected to replace Li Peng as head of the parliament.

"The party has no intention of giving up its monopoly on political power," said Joseph Cheng, chairman of the political science department at the City University of Hong Kong.

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Court hears case of forced drugging of ill defendant

Stephen Henderson
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

WASHINGTON — Ranting and delusional, Dr. Charles Sell once shouted racial epithets in a courtroom and spat in a judge's face.

No one doubts the St. Louis-area dentist suffers from a serious mental illness.

In arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday, government attorneys argued that he should be forcibly drugged to control his disorder, so he can be competent to stand trial on Medicaid fraud charges first filed in 1997.

Sell's lawyers said he has a fundamental right to forgo anti-psychotic medication that would "permanently alter" his state of mind, and that the government's charges aren't a compelling enough interest to override that right.

"Dr. Sell has experience with these drugs, and he does not want them," said Barry A. Short, who is representing Sell. "He must be allowed to make that choice."

If the high court sides with the government, it could open the door to other forms of mandated medication — such as federally ordered vaccinations or school-required drugs for hyperactive children. The case also has some death-penalty implications. More than 300 of the nation's approximately 3,700 Death Row inmates suffer from mental disorders, according to the National Mental Health Association.

The justices appeared split over the question of whose rights should take precedence.

Justice Anthony M. Kennedy won-

dered aloud several times why the government thinks it has a right to force medication on a prisoner. Kennedy said he had "real problems" with that possibility.

But Justice Antonin Scalia worried that if Sell could not be drugged, then he could not be tried and justice could not be served.

"What are we supposed to do?" Scalia asked.

The justices also have asked both sides to file briefs exploring whether the court should be addressing this issue now, before Sell goes on trial, or whether it is something to be taken up later, on appeal.

Sell's lawyers argued Monday that the court needed to intervene now, and that a later appeal would be pointless because Sell would already have been drugged. The court could not undo that outcome, Sell's lawyers said.

Sell was arrested in 1997 for Medicaid and insurance fraud. While out on bond, he was re-arrested for allegedly trying to intimidate a witness, and prosecutors later charged that he tried to have the FBI agent in his case and the witness killed. The next time he came to court, he screamed racial epithets and spat at the judge.

A 1999 mental evaluation found that Sell suffered from a mental illness that subjects him to irrational beliefs that people are out to get him. He was declared incompetent to stand trial, and prosecutors recommended that he be administered anti-psychotic drugs.

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