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Turkey rejects U.S. troop proposal

Baghdad starts destroying banned missiles

ANKARA, Turkey (CNN) --Turkey's parliament failed to pass a proposal Saturday to allow more than 60,000 U.S. troops to operate from Turkish bases and ports in the event of a war with Iraq.

The parliament adjourned after an initial vote showed 264 lawmakers favoring the measure -- three fewer than needed for passage -- 250 opposing and 19 abstaining.

After the proposal failed to gain a majority vote, Turkish Prime Minister Abdullah Gul declared it had been "rejected." The 267 votes sought represents half of the 533 lawmakers who voted, plus one.

The parliament is to reconvene Tuesday, but the fate of the contentious measure is uncertain.

The proposal has little popular support in Turkey. Hundreds of thousands of protesters rallied Saturday in downtown Ankara. Public opinion polls show more than 90 percent of Turks oppose a U.S.-led war against Iraq.

The United States has offered \$6 billion in economic aid to offset fears that war could devastate Turkey's economy. Refusal to participate could have severely limited Turkey's role during a war and in a post-war Iraq.

U.S. troop ships are waiting offshore and out of sight of the Turkish port of Iskenderun. U.S. officials have said they were confident Turkey would be the point of origin for a northern front in a war with Iraq. ([Full story](#))

Meanwhile, Iraq destroyed four of its Al Samoud 2 missiles Saturday, a top U.N. weapons official said, meeting a U.N.-imposed deadline to begin dismantling the weapons.

The Iraqis had to bring in heavy equipment to crush the missiles, said Demetrius Perricos, deputy to chief U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix. He told reporters destroying all of the estimated 100 to 120 missiles could take several weeks.

But Perricos also said the Iraqis need to move more quickly to destroy the weapons in order to comply with U.N. Resolution 1441.

"They have to accelerate the activities that they are doing," Perricos told reporters. He added, "We cannot oblige the Iraqi side to have the tempo that we would like. It is up to them." ([Full story](#))

Arab leaders declare opposition to war

The leaders of the Arab League issued a declaration Saturday opposing war in Iraq and calling on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to fully comply with U.N. resolutions.

The declaration also asked the United Nations to guarantee Iraq's sovereignty.

The league summit, designed to bring a show of unity from the Arab nations on the Iraqi crisis, nearly broke into chaos earlier Saturday when Libya's president blamed the Middle East's problems on the presence of U.S. troops in the region -- and then blamed their presence on Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and others for involving the Western power in the Gulf War 12 years ago.

Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi's remarks -- and the response from Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Abdullah -- prompted the crown prince and the Iraqi and Syrian delegations to walk out of the Arab League summit as Libya's foreign minister ran after them to explain that Gadhafi had meant no harm.

Earlier, the United Arab Emirates submitted a proposal Saturday calling on Saddam to surrender power, paving the way for the United Nations and the Arab League to temporarily administer Iraq. ([Text of proposal](#))([Full story](#))

-- CNN chief international correspondent Christiane Amanpour contributed to this report. For latest developments, see CNN.com's [Iraq Tracker](#).

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