

Osama considering retaliation



call from Afghanistan. The spokesman said the US air strikes had been failures, the editor told the news agency. "Osama bin Laden is unhurt and the American attack failed to accomplish its aim in eliminating him," the spokesman said.

Atwan also quoted bin Laden's spokesman as saying that the air strikes killed six aides of the billionaire fundamentalist — three Yemenis, two Egyptians and one Saudi.

Bin Laden is believed to be still in Afghanistan "under the protection of Taliban" militia.

The United States said Friday it did not know bin Laden's whereabouts.

President Bill Clinton on Thursday named bin Laden as the mastermind behind the embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam on August 7.

Clinton also blamed the bin Laden network for the deaths of Belgian, Pakistani and US peacekeepers in Somalia, a plot to assassinate the President of Egypt, a bombing of the Egyptian Embassy in Pakistan and the murders of German tourists in Egypt.

The President also said that the group planned to bomb US Boeing 747 aircraft.

LONDON, Aug 22: Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, Washington's main suspect in the bombing of US embassies, is considering retaliation after US air strikes against Afghanistan and Sudan, a London-based Arab newspaper said Friday, reports AFP.

"We will answer Bill Clinton in deeds not words, the battle has not started yet," Al-Quds Al-Arabi editor Abdel-Bari Atwan cited a spokesman for bin Laden as saying in a telephone

US warns of more military strikes against terrorists

WASHINGTON, Aug 22: The United States warned Friday it could launch more military strikes in a "sustained" campaign against terrorists following missile attacks on targets in Sudan and Afghanistan, reports AFP.

Defence Secretary William Cohen said new strikes were "a possibility" and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright spoke of a long-term struggle in "the war of the future."

"We have contingency plans that we are developing, there may be more (strikes) in the future," Cohen said after briefing members of Congress with Albright and General Hugh Shelton, Chairman of the joint chiefs of staff.

Sudanese Foreign Minister Osman Ismail immediately warned that any new strike against Sudan would bring swift retaliation.

"The United States should rest assured that it will not escape justice from the Sudanese people, the Arab and African peoples, and the international community if it repeats this action again," Ismail told journalists in Baghdad.

Albright said the United States was engaged in a long-term struggle.

war of the future, and I think we have to understand the importance of having a sustained operation here," she said.

Emerging from their briefing, members of Congress described an escalation of the US campaign against terrorism.

"We are in an escalating period," said senator Gordon Smith, a Republican from Oregon. "We should not be panicked but we should be prepared for a new kind of warfare."

Senator Charles Robb, a Democrat from Virginia, said the US attacks were "a new ball game, a welcome new ball game."

The missile strikes Thursday inflicted major damage on suspected terrorist training bases in Afghanistan run by Saudi extremist Osama bin Laden, a senior White House official said.

They also "functionally destroyed" a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan suspected of aiding the manufacture of chemical weapons, said national security adviser Sandy Berger.

"I am absolutely certain that had we not done this we would have been the victim of attacks in the not-so-distant future," Berger said after a one-hour meeting with President Bill

Clinton and his foreign policy advisers. Clinton returned to his family vacation in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts late Friday which he had interrupted Thursday to return to the capital.

In New York, Sudan filed a formal complaint with the UN Security Council and called for an emergency council meeting.

Sudan's UN Ambassador Mohammed Erwa handed the protest to council president Danilo Turk and diplomats with other council members on whether to call a meeting.

UN chief Kofi Annan was "concerned" by the missile attacks, the UN said Thursday, adding that he condemned terrorism in all its forms.

Many in the Muslim world, along with Russia and India, criticised the launch of at least 75 cruise missiles at facilities linked to bin Laden, a Saudi multimillionaire. US officials believe masterminded twin bombings August 7 at US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Fears of retaliation for the missile strikes were "very high," according to a senior US official amid Muslim threats of a Jihad, or holy war, against the United States.

The State Department issued a worldwide warning to Americans to "exercise much greater caution than usual" while security was stepped up for the 7,000 US troops serving in Bosnia with the NATO-led stabilization force.

US allies defended the strikes and warned their nationals to avoid Afghanistan and Sudan.

Caution alerts went out after two UN workers in the Afghan capital were wounded by gunmen Friday while travelling with a group of other officials in a mini-bus.

Britain, the United States' closest military partner, "urgently" revised travel advice to tell its citizens to avoid Sudan, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

France urged French relief groups to leave Afghanistan while the German air force cancelled humanitarian aid flights to Sudan.

Joining much of the Muslim world, however, Russian President Boris Yeltsin condemned the missile strike.

Religious activists burned US flags and torched effigies of Clinton in demonstrations across Pakistan.



A demonstrator wearing a mask in the likeness of President Clinton hoists a bomb over his head during a protest Friday in Boston. Chanting cries for peace, more than 70 demonstrators gathered in front of the federal building on City Hall Plaza Friday to protest the US missile attacks on suspected terrorist sites in Sudan and Afghanistan. — AP/UNB photo

Hardline Taliban say US attack not against Osama, it is against Islam

ISLAMABAD, Aug 22: The hardline Taliban today intensified its attack against the United States saying Washington missile strikes were not against a Saudi dissident but proof of enmity against Islam and the Muslim world, reports AFP.

The Taliban's foreign ministry said in a statement broadcast on Radio Shariat early today that the US strikes again alleged terrorist camps in Afghanistan were not against exiled Saudi billionaire Osama Bin Laden.

"The American attack is not against Osama it is a pretext to show their enmity against Islam and the Muslim world," it said in a statement broadcast by Radio Shariat.

The Taliban reiterated its pledge never to hand over bin Laden, who has been living in exile in Afghanistan.

It also denied US accusations the shadowy Islamic extremist masterminded the bombings on US embassies in Africa.

Before the attack Osama has been transferred to a safer place and no force and no attempt can force Afghanistan to hand him

over to the American government, the Taliban said.

Osama is a guest of the Afghan people who has assured that he will not act from the territory of Afghanistan against any country, it said.

"He is not believed to be involved in the Nigeria and Kenya bombings, the Taliban statement added.

"Therefore the American aggression against Afghan territory has no justification."

"This is a unilateral decision by that country (United States) which will not prevent the anti-US feelings of the Afghan nation."

The Taliban also reiterated their pledge to protect shadowy Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden whom Washington accused of masterminding the bombings against US embassies in Nigeria and Kenya which killed 257 people including 12 Americans earlier this month.

"The American attack is not against Osama. It is a pretext to show their enmity against Islam and the Muslim world," it said in the same broadcast.

US missile attack UNSC to discuss Sudan's complaint tomorrow

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 22: The UN Security Council will discuss on Monday a Sudanese protest against a US cruise missile strike on a pharmaceutical plant, the council presidency said Friday, reports AFP.

Samuel Zbogor, Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovenia, whose country currently holds the Council presidency, said "there was a consensus among the 14 other members that the Sudanese letter is best raised on Monday" in informal discussions.

He said that the Sudanese letter from Bishop Gobrial Rorie, State Minister at the Foreign Ministry, was still being translated from Arabic into English.

As a result it was not known whether the 15-member council would decide Monday whether to agree to Sudan's request for a fact-finding mission to verify US claims that the plant manufactured a precursor chemical for VX nerve gas, he said.

Sudan filed a formal complaint Friday with the UN Security Council over the US missile attack.

Another report adds from Cairo: The Arab League Ministerial council will hold an emergency meeting at Sudan's request to discuss the US strike, a League official told reporters Friday.

The permanent-delegate level meeting of the League's 22 members will focus on "the US military action against Sudan and should announce Arab support for this country," the League's Assistant Secretary General, Ahmad Ben Helli, said.

The League condemned the US attack Friday on the pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum, which Washington said was used to produce chemical weapons for terrorist use.

OAU concerned

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, Aug 22: The Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity expressed "deep concern" Friday over the US missile attack against Sudan — one of its 52 member states — and over the implications of the attack, reports AP.

Diplomats in Washington await instructions Sudan invites US to inspect alleged chemical arms plant

BAGHDAD, Aug 22: Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail asked the United States on Friday to send a fact-finding committee to inspect the alleged chemical weapons factory in Khartoum, reports AP.

The foreign minister spoke to reporters after arriving in Baghdad a day after US missiles devastated a factory in the Sudanese capital. The United States said the plant produced the ingredients of chemical weapons. Sudan said it produced pharmaceutical products.

"We, as Sudanese, are ready to receive a specialised committee from the American administration to come and freely investigate whether this factory has anything to do with chemical (weapons)," Ismail said.

Such a committee could also check whether the factory was owned by Osama Bin Laden, the Afghanistan-based extremist whom the Americans have blamed for the bombings of its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on Aug 7, the foreign minister said.

If the Americans proved the factory was producing chemical agents, "We will accept the attempt (attack)," Ismail added.

The foreign minister said Sudan was also inviting the UN Security Council to send a committee to investigate the plant.

Ismail, who is making a three-day visit to Iraq, crossed into the country from Jordan. UN sanctions imposed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 ban flights to and from Iraq.

Meanwhile, Sudanese diplomats in Washington said Friday they were waiting for instructions from their government amid reports they were called home in the aftermath of the US missile strike.

Ambassador Mahdi Ibrahim Mohammed already was out of the country a spokesman for the embassy said.

"We've heard the media reports we're being called home but there is no confirmed decision," said Eltayeb Ali Ahmed, the embassy's press spokesman. "We are awaiting instructions from Khartoum."

Government offices in the Sudanese capital normally are closed on Friday.

There was no stepped up security at the three-story embassy building in northwest Washington, and Ahmed said none had been requested.

"We don't feel there is any need," Ahmed said. "Our door is open and our purpose is to improve communications between the two governments."

He contrasted this with the "strange situation" in Khartoum where US diplomats accredited to the government reside in Nairobi, Kenya and make periodic visits to Sudan, which is on a US list of countries whose governments allegedly sponsor terrorism.

The No 2 official on the five-person embassy staff, Mirghani Mohammed Salih, told a news conference earlier in the day that the plant hit by US missiles manufactured medicines, including anti-malaria drugs, and was privately owned.

Security tightened, most Americans support US can claim partial success from missile attack

WASHINGTON, Aug 22: The United States could claim only partial success from the cruise missile strikes at suspected terrorist strongholds in Sudan and Afghanistan, Clinton administration officials warned of retaliation against Americans at home and abroad, reports AP.

In Sudan, a purported chemical weapons plant was flattened. But the CIA and Pentagon were unsure if the strike in Afghanistan smashed a meeting of terrorist leaders as hoped. Cloud cover prevented spy satellites from assessing structural damage to the so-called terrorist university.

President Bill Clinton spent Friday calling world leaders before returning to his family vacation at Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. The White House reported winning support from several allies, but Russian President Boris Yeltsin condemned the US action.

The administration said terrorist should expect more of the same.

Lawmakers generally praised the strikes, and Republican suggestions that Clinton was seeking to distract attention from the Monica Lewinsky controversy were more muted.

"It was a very measured response," said Sen Rod Grams. As to the timing of the strike, he said, "It just shows the damage that has been done to the office of the president of the United States that these questions are being talked about."

Berger said intelligence indicated some damage to the six sites that make up the Zawar Kill Al-Badr camp in Afghanistan, suspected Sunni Muslim terrorist stronghold. Spy satellite photographs showed "the attacks have significantly disrupted the capability to use these camps as terrorist training facilities," Berger said.

Another report adds: Military brass, tourists and commuters all found Washington battered down a bit tighter than usual Friday, as the govern-

ment increased security around buildings, monuments and subway stations that could be targets for terrorists.

The additional precautions, which included extra police, closer inspections of identification and packages and new barriers at some building entrances, are attempts to deter any retaliation against Americans for US air attacks Thursday on what the White House calls terrorist sites in Afghanistan and Sudan.

No injuries or damage were reported at any of the protests, which were mostly subdued gatherings.

Twenty-five people gathered in front of the Federal Building in Hartford, Connecticut, chanting "USA-CIA out of the Middle East." The lunchtime demonstration attracted no crowds.

One of the protest organizers, professor Sadu Nanjundiah of Central Connecticut State University, said the raids were "nothing more than terrorism on our part."

'3 suspects held in Kenya confess to links with Osama bin Laden'

NAIROBI, Aug 22: Three men being held by Kenyan authorities in connection with the US embassy bombing have confessed to links with renegade Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden, a Nairobi newspaper reported Saturday, reports AP.

The report in the Daily Nation newspaper also publicly identified two of the suspects for the first time: a Yemeni named Khalid Salim and a Lebanese man named Abdallah Nacha. US and Kenyan officials had already identified a third man in custody, Mohammed Sadiq Odeh.

Neither Kenyan police nor American FBI officials would comment on the newspaper report, which said the three were the same men who had been seen filming the American embassy in Nairobi days before the Aug 7 blast.

The newspaper printed what it said was a photograph of the Yemeni man, Salim, smiling with his hands raised and clasped, and said he had been identified by three witnesses as the man who threw a grenade at embassy guards just before the massive explosion.

The report did not say how it obtained the photo or when it was taken.

The three told police they had planned the bombing while pretending to be fish merchants, based in the Indian Ocean port city of Mombasa and financed by bin Laden, according to the report.

Suu Kyi's health improving as standoff on

YANGON, Aug 22: Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's health was improving as she entered the 11th day Saturday of her standoff with Myanmar's military government over her right to travel freely, her colleagues said, reports AP.

Myanmar, also known as Burma, remained quiet following an announcement Friday by Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy, that it would convene the parliament elected in 1990 in the near future.

Analysts in Yangon expect the military government will respond with arrests of elected lawmakers before the NLD can hold a parliament session.

So far, the military has not responded publicly to the NLD's call. However, past attempts by the NLD to bring its party's lawmakers together for a meeting were met with mass arrests.

Clinton gave Lewinsky 'going-away' gifts?

WASHINGTON, Aug 22: Last Dec 28, when Monica Lewinsky was a potential witness in a sexual harassment lawsuit against President Bill Clinton, the pair met privately at the White House and he gave her an Alaskan stone carving and other gifts, sources familiar with Clinton's grand jury testimony said, reports AP.

The gift-giving is the first detail to emerge about the last known visit between the two, a 15-to-20-minute get-together that is a key element of prosecutor Kenneth Starr's investigation of obstruction of justice.

The sources, who spoke only on condition of anonymity, said the president told grand jurors he gave Lewinsky a throw rug or blanket, a decorative pin and the stone carving.

Prosecutors believe he gave her three additional gifts in the Sunday morning meeting, a point not disputed by the president — a box of chocolates, joke sunglasses and a bag from the Black Dog store on Martha's Vineyard, where the Clintons have vacationed for three years.

The president testified the items were going-away presents, the sources said. Lewinsky was planning to go to New York to take a job that presidential friend Vernon Jordan was trying to secure.

Starr is investigating whether Clinton told Lewinsky to return numerous gifts he gave her over the course of their affair, instructions that prosecutors believe could be obstruction of justice in the Paula Jones lawsuit. If Lewinsky had kept the gifts and Jones' lawyers had found out about them, she would have had to turn them over as evidence.

Clinton's lawyers are arguing that his late-December gift-giving shows he was not concerned about whether Lewinsky had presents from him or not. His defenders also point out that Clinton gave similar gifts to many aides and friends and "didn't consider them a big deal."

Yet the gifts, coming three weeks after her name appeared on a list of potential witnesses in the Jones lawsuit, also could be read as part of an attempt to keep Lewinsky quiet. At the time, Jordan was helping her find a job and had arranged a lawyer to represent her in the Jones case.

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Fresh landslides hamper rescue work in India

LUCKNOW, Aug 22: Rescue workers ran for cover from boulders hurtling down on a remote Himalayan village Saturday, where 202 people were already feared killed in an earlier landslide, reports AP.

Hopes faded of finding more survivors in the mountain village of Malpa, buried under mounds of rocks and mud.

No one was reported injured Saturday from the latest of nearly a dozen landslides that have rumbled down the mountains of northern India this season, lashed by heavy monsoon rains for three weeks. The total number of dead reached 239.

The rain stopped Friday, but dense fog blocked a helicopter rescue of 18 survivors from Malpa, 300 kilometres (185 miles) east of New Delhi, said Ashok Kumar, the Uttar Pradesh state relief commissioner.

Rescuers have found 32 bodies so far. The survivors, most of them injured by falling rocks and mud, are being treated by two doctors attached to paramilitary forces in the village.

Clinton spends extraordinary week doing battle on two fronts

WASHINGTON, Aug 22: Bill Clinton was back on vacation with his family Saturday after an extraordinary week doing battle on two fronts — the sex scandal that has dogged his presidency for seven months, and international terrorism half a world away, report AFP.

Clinton seemed to hit bottom Monday, when in the most embarrassing moment of his presidency he testified for more than five hours about his sex life before the grand jury of independent prosecutor Kenneth Starr.

That save evening, in a nationally televised address, he confessed to "a relationship that was not appropriate" with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

But far from turning the page on the affair, most analysts and even his own advisors judged the speech a failure because Clinton turned from contribution to defiance directed at Starr's probe.

On Tuesday the president and his family left for Martha's Vineyard, an upscale island re-

sort off Massachusetts, but not before Clinton had privately spoken with his aides and congressional leaders in an effort to explain his conduct in the affair to them.

But many democrats did not hesitate to express their own disappointment and anger publicly. Those facing reelection this fall are especially worried.

White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles has even offered to counsel staffers troubled by Clinton's "deceit" on the Lewinsky affair, according to The Wall Street Journal.

While the sex-and-perjury drama was unfolding, the president was thick in preparations for the missile strike against targets in Sudan and Afghanistan.

Before leaving Washington Tuesday, the president was briefed by National Security Advisor Sandy Berger on preparations for the strikes which had been in the planning stage since the previous Friday.

On Thursday, far from the TV cameras, Clinton celebrated his 52nd birthday among family and a small group of friends.

He continued to work the telephones, keeping up on the secret plans for the strikes in response to the August 7 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Berger spoke with several congressional leaders to warn them of the imminent attacks.

Meanwhile, the Lewinsky affair continued to grab headlines. Independent prosecutor Starr summoned the former intern to his grand jury a second time.

On Thursday, at 3 am (0700 GMT), Berger called the president to receive the green light for the missile strikes. At 1:30 PM, the first cruise missiles were launched from American ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Oman.

Shortly afterwards, Clinton stepped out of his retreat to make a brief statement before startled reporters, then left for Washington to address the nation for the second time in four days.

Lewinsky's second grand jury appearance Thursday, which lasted close to four hours, was suddenly swept off the front pages.

Day television specials consecrated to the seamy sex scandal and all its lurid details were hastily withdrawn, and replaced by special reports bearing titles like America strikes back, and "Target: Terror."

Friday, a poll showed that 80 per cent of Americans approved of Clinton's move, and 64 per cent believed he was motivated by the fight against terrorism, and not by the desire to divert attention from the Lewinsky scandal.

Most major American newspapers also support the US attacks, though not without a measure of scepticism.

"In the surreal and cinematic atmosphere that suffused Washington all week," wrote The New York Times, some critics refused to believe the national interest was at stake, and accused Clinton of using cruise missiles to blast the Lewinsky affair off the radar screen.



An honour guard, left, and a gathering of media look at the largest piece of the hull of the legendary ship Titanic ever to reach the surface, following its arrival in Boston Friday aboard the French recovery ship Abeille Supporter. The 20-ton, 26-foot by 20-foot section, which was recovered last week in the North Atlantic by RMS Titanic Inc will be placed on display at the Titanic exhibit currently visiting Boston. — AP/UNB photo