

We are prepared to defend ourselves, and we will give a good account of ourselves," Defense Minister Moshe Arens said. "We are hoping we will not be involved, but if we are attacked we will respond."

Arens spoke to Israeli and foreign reporters invited to Ramat David, an air force base in northern Israel, to watch ground crews arm two U.S.-supplied F-16 fighter-bombers.

Working at top speed, the men took less than three minutes to arm each camouflage-painted jet with two Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, a dozen 550-pound bombs and extra fuel for long-range flight.

"We want the citizens to see their air force, which is today in a high state of preparedness and will give the best possible account of itself if we are attacked," Arens said when asked why the event was so heavily publicized.

The display was apparently designed to reassure the Israeli public that it is not helpless against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's threat to attack Israel in response to an U.S. strike on Iraq.

But the unusual step of inviting the foreign media to a sensitive air force facility also suggested a message to the West of Israeli readiness to defend itself.

than paying fines up to \$200. It is very important that the soldiers over there know that all segments of society are supportive of what they are doing," said U.S. Magistrate Gregory G. Hollows. Snag: The blood center might not accept the blood, since some people might lie about their medical history if there is a financial incentive in donating blood.

#### SADDAM'S RELIGION

Like many other Middle Eastern leaders, Iraq's Saddam Hussein is a Muslim more in name than in practice or conviction, said Dudley Woodberry, an Islamic scholar at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. "Saddam Hussein is actually a very secular person," said Woodberry, noting the same of Syrian President Hafez el-Asad, Jordan's King Hussein and Moammar Gadhafi. They may

Saudi Arabia's ruling family, preoccupied with the Persian Gulf crisis, has put the lid on an internal debate between liberals and conservatives over the Muslim state's social and political future, diplomats and liberals say. The al-Saud family has persuaded the liberals to wait some months before they again assert their demands for social reform, greater press freedom and wider public participation in the decision-making process.

#### JAPANESE AID LIKELY

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama is likely to tell U.S. leaders today that Tokyo would pledge additional aid for the multinational forces massed against Iraq in the Persian Gulf, Japanese government sources said Sunday. Nakayama, who arrived Sunday from Tokyo for last-minute

sources said.

#### THE WAITING GAME

For U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, it was a long wait Sunday to talk about peace with Saddam Hussein. Perez de Cuellar, 71, sat next to an ornate phone in a government guest house in Baghdad for 6 hours, 15 minutes to be called by the Iraqi president. He arrived in Baghdad on Saturday for last-gasp peace talks. The first day went smoothly, but second-day logistical snafus stalled the meeting until doubts arose at one point as to whether the two would meet at all. Perez de Cuellar finally spoke with Saddam for 3½ hours but said little afterward, noting that he was unsure if there would be war or peace.

Compiled from Post News Services

any, shows might be trouble.

The networks are a stage to the events led

Locally, Channel 8 programming for PBS's local debate on Persian C

None of the network sending its anchors to CBS' Dan Rather, in Switzerland the past few Iraq peace meeting. A York, however that net pel is in the Mideast. N allowed to go over the sure that's the wisest pl

Although the network side Iraq, it's unclear main (or be allowed to

Currently, each of the contributed two camera reporters to form the with U.S. troops.

# Heavy drizzle dampens activities as Jan. 15 gets a da

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia — It rained in the desert, Jan. 15 got a day closer and preparations for war continued, but in a strangely muted fashion.

The rain, a steady heavy drizzle that fell all day and caused street flooding reminiscent of Houston, seemed to dampen all activities here Sunday.

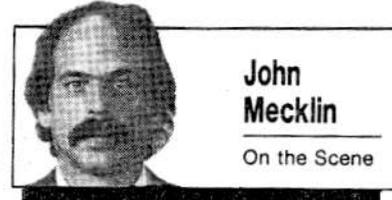
The gray desert day was genuinely depressing until dusk, when a few lightning flashes caused me to look around for planes and listen for explosions.

A main highway leading north carried relatively little military traffic. Military camps to the north were obviously under tight security, but everyone who could get there seemed to be under a tent

out of the rain. Civilian preparations for war continued, but they were lackadaisical.

Gas masks are being sold here for about \$40 at fire stations. Local newspapers reported that air raid drills were being conducted in the nearby island country of Bahrain, a sort of sin city for eastern Saudi Arabia where alcohol is allowed. Drills also were conducted in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, but so far no citywide drills have been conducted here.

The process for acquiring a gas mask seems typical of government operation in this part of Saudi Arabia. There is a great deal of paperwork and entering of information into computers. The paperwork must be presented to the authori-



John Mecklin

On the Scene

ties in precisely the right type of green hanging folder. Then there is a great deal of waiting. Then they give you your mask, a filtration canister that screws into it and a huge poster that explains its use.

Although one ordinarily would not think of it, infants must also be protected. For them, the fire station attendants provide what amounts to a large zip-lock plastic

bag, attached to a filter by a plastic hose. The bag must be inflated before use, the attendants explained.

Five firehouses in Al Khobar, the business district nearest Dhahran, are distributing the masks. The attendants at one of those stations said they had distributed only about 1,000 of the masks. Companies are also distributing the masks to their employees, but one cannot help wondering whether the 300,000 residents of this area are taking the situation seriously.

Just two days short of the deadline for use of force against Iraq, the Safeway in Al Khobar — yes, they have a Safeway here, and a Toyland and an amusement park on the beach complete with a lighted ferris wheel — had a full stock

Sunday night. People were shopping normally. There were none of the long lines and overflowing shopping carts seen in Houston during preparations for a hurricane.

While the local populace seems to be taking the approach of war in stride, the press continues to wrangle with the "pool" system of coverage dictated by the military. As it now stands, eight pools of reporters, about 80 in all, will be sent to cover combat, if it comes. The other hundreds of journalists will wait here in Dhahran and use reports sent back by the pool, after the reports are screened by the military.

Because of its capacity for censorship, its arbitrariness and the se-

crecy create most feeling, flict b have ence sion o domin ists w want t At Army knowl neede get ap the sc be eli ready to kno when

...up to \$200. "It's not that the soldiers now that all segments are supportive of what they're doing," said U.S. Secretary G. Hollows. "A good center might not be good, since some people lie about their intentions if there is a financial incentive to donating blood."

**RELIGION**  
Other Middle Eastern leaders like Saddam Hussein is not in name than in conviction, said Dudley R. Kessler, an Islamic scholar at the Islamic Seminary in New York. "Saddam Hussein is a very secular person," he said, noting the same about President Hafez el-Asad, Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. They may

**SAUDIS POSTPONE DEBATE**  
Saudi Arabia's ruling family, preoccupied with the Persian Gulf crisis, has put the lid on an internal debate between liberals and conservatives over the Muslim state's social and political future, diplomats and liberals say. The al-Saud family has persuaded the liberals to wait some months before they again assert their demands for social reform, greater press freedom and wider public participation in the decision-making process.

**JAPANESE AID LIKELY**  
Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama is likely to tell U.S. leaders today that Tokyo would pledge additional aid for the multinational forces massed against Iraq in the Persian Gulf, Japanese government sources said Sunday. Nakayama, who arrived Sunday from Tokyo for last-minute

...Washing... made such a request, sources said.

**THE WAITING GAME**  
For U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, it was a long wait Sunday to talk about peace with Saddam Hussein. Perez de Cuellar, 71, sat next to an ornate phone in a government guest house in Baghdad for 6 hours, 15 minutes to be called by the Iraqi president. He arrived in Baghdad on Saturday for last-gasp peace talks. The first day went smoothly, but second-day logistical snafus stalled the meeting until doubts arose at one point as to whether the two would meet at all. Perez de Cuellar finally spoke with Saddam for 3½ hours but said little afterward, noting that he was unsure if there would be war or peace.

Compiled from Post News Services

...I doubt you'll see anything for a few days, even a week," he told TV critics. Trying to decide what, if any, shows might be appropriate in the midst of war reportage was troublesome, he admitted.

The networks are already giving full or partial coverage to the events leading up to the Jan. 15 deadline.

Locally, Channel 8 has interrupted much of its programming for PBS's live coverage of the Congressional debate on Persian Gulf actions.

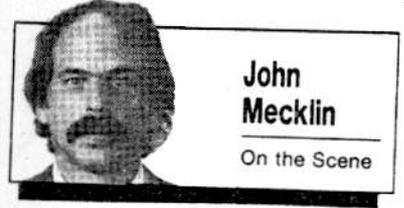
None of the networks has announced plans about sending its anchors to the Mideast in the event of war. CBS' Dan Rather, in Baghdad last week, has been in Switzerland the past few days, covering the failed U.S.-Iraq peace meeting. ABC's Peter Jennings is in New York, however that network's *Nightline* host Ted Koppel is in the Mideast. NBC's Tom Brokaw "would be allowed to go over there (the Mideast), but I'm not sure that's the wisest place," said Gartner.

Although the networks currently have reporters inside Iraq, it's unclear whether they'll attempt to remain (or be allowed to) if war breaks out.

Currently, each of the four main news outfits has contributed two camera crews, two producers and two reporters to form the TV "pools" which will travel with U.S. troops.

91 PAGE A-4

# News activities as Jan. 15 gets a day closer



**John Mecklin**  
On the Scene

ties in precisely the right type of green hanging folder. Then there is a great deal of waiting. Then they give you your mask, a filtration canister that screws into it and a huge poster that explains its use. Although one ordinarily would not think of it, infants must also be protected. For them, the fire station attendants provide what amounts to a large zip-lock plastic

bag, attached to a filter by a plastic hose. The bag must be inflated before use, the attendants explained. Five firehouses in Al Khobar, the business district nearest Dhahran, are distributing the masks. The attendants at one of those stations said they had distributed only about 1,000 of the masks. Companies are also distributing the masks to their employees, but one cannot help wondering whether the 300,000 residents of this area are taking the situation seriously. Just two days short of the deadline for use of force against Iraq, the Safeway in Al Khobar — yes, they have a Safeway here, and a Toyland and an amusement park on the beach complete with a lighted ferris wheel — had a full stock

Sunday night. People were shopping normally. There were none of the long lines and overflowing shopping carts seen in Houston during preparations for a hurricane. While the local populace seems to be taking the approach of war in stride, the press continues to wrangle with the "pool" system of coverage dictated by the military. As it now stands, eight pools of reporters, about 80 in all, will be sent to cover combat, if it comes. The other hundreds of journalists will wait here in Dhahran and use reports sent back by the pool, after the reports are screened by the military.

Because of its capacity for censorship, its arbitrariness and the se-

crecy with which it originally was created, the pool system was almost tailor-made to cause hard feelings. There is a fairly open conflict between the news media who have maintained a constant presence here since the August invasion of Kuwait, and who therefore dominate the pool, and the journalists who arrived here recently and want to cover the war directly. At a meeting Sunday night, an Army public affairs officer acknowledged that more pools are needed, and he said he is trying to get approval for them. A behind the scenes struggle over who will be eligible for those pools is already under way. There is no way to know how it will turn out or when war might come.