

REVENGE...CONTINUED

raeli response.

"Every country has the right to self-defense, and we certainly understand that," White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater replied when asked the administration's view of a possible Israeli retaliation.

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler was more explicit.

"We recognize and respect the right of every sovereign state to defend itself and thus have never questioned Israel's right to respond to attack," she said.

Previously, the United States has been fearful that a strong Israeli response to the continuing Scud missile bombardment of Tel Aviv and other cities could force the Arab partners in the anti-Iraq coalition to abandon the alliance.

But Israel's initial restraint against the attacks and reassurances to the United States from Egyptian and Syrian leaders that

they would not leave the coalition appear to have changed Washington's view.

"The coalition is strong in this matter," Mr. Fitzwater said. "We have fought together over several days now, and we have worked together over several months."

"I refer you to the words of [Egyptian] President [Hosni] Mubarak and the foreign and defense ministers of Syria in the last few days for their views on this matter. And we think that Israel has acted very courageously in the last few days in the way they have responded."

Following Tuesday night's Scud attack, in which three people died of heart attacks and more than 100 were wounded, Israeli leaders hardened their tone.

"We are going to respond, even if there is not a single other casualty, we're going to respond," Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens told Cable Network News yesterday.

"I think Israel's patience may be coming to an end," Mr. Shoval told ABC's Nightline Tuesday.

• Bill Gertz contributed to this report.

have nothing to do with retaining gays."

Mr. Caldwell said the decision to begin processing a gay-discharge case is left to the unit commander. Based on the situation, the unit commander can decide whether to begin discharge proceedings immediately or to wait, he said. Homosexuality "is incompatible with military service," the spokesman added.

In only one case has a gay soldier won reinstatement—openly gay Vietnam war veteran Perry Watkins, of Tacoma, Wash., whom the Army ousted after 16 years of service. From the start of his enlistment, Mr. Watkins informed the military that he was gay. The Supreme Court last year let stand an appeals court decision that the Army didn't have the right to discharge Mr. Watkins since it had repeatedly allowed him to re-enlist even though it knew he was gay.

The Watkins case, however, left the general ban intact and applied only to his specific circumstances, in which the appeals court found that the military's conduct was egregious.

Kate Dyer, an assistant to Gerry Studds, an openly gay Democratic U.S. congressman from Massachusetts, said she has looked into the recent case of Donna Lynn Jackson, a lesbian in the reserves at Fort Ord, Calif., who informed her commander that she was gay just days before her scheduled deployment. "Her commander interpreted stop-loss to apply to gay discharges," Ms. Dyer said. "He said he just didn't have time to deal with that, and they would take her with them."

When Ms. Jackson sought a promise from officials higher up that she wouldn't be discharged later, however, she was told that she would be kicked out after she returned from the Gulf, Ms. Dyer said.

After Ms. Jackson went public with her case, the military gave her an honorable discharge.

Mary Newcombe, a Lambda attorney in Los Angeles who represented Ms. Jackson, said she also has been contacted by a lesbian in the medical personnel of an Air National Guard unit also called up for duty. After telling her commander that she was gay and wanted to serve with the unit, she was told a week ago that her situation was "the lowest level of priority" for discharges under the stop-loss policy and that she would be sent to the Gulf, Ms. Newcombe said.

Miriam Ben-Shalom, one of the founders of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America, said she has been contacted by 10 reservists, mainly in the medical corps, who also have been told that they will be sent to the Persian Gulf after disclosing their homosexuality to their commanders. She said the calls included reservists in units in California, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and states on the Eastern seaboard.

The attorneys also are looking into the case of a lesbian sergeant in the reserves whose sexuality came to light a few weeks ago while stationed in Saudi Arabia. Maria Gil de Lamadrid, an attorney with the Na-

Gay GIs Told, Serve Now, Face Discharge Later

By WADE LAMBERT

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The first full-scale war to begin since the emergence of an active gay-rights movement is raising sensitive new issues for the military and for homosexuals facing service in the Persian Gulf.

Gay veterans groups and gay-rights attorneys claim the military in recent weeks has relaxed its ban on homosexuals because of the war—but still plans to throw them out after the fighting is over.

Although the Pentagon insists that no change in policy has occurred, at least 14 gay and lesbian reservists across the country were cleared by their unit commanders to serve in the Persian Gulf after stating their sexual orientation, the lawyers and gay veterans said.

But these reservists, who informed their commanders that they are gay and want to serve in the Gulf, also were told that discharge proceedings will be begun against them after they return from the war, according to the lawyers. About half of the reservists have since been sent to the Persian Gulf, the lawyers said.

If the military is, indeed, allowing gays

to serve during the war, those who return may be able to raise strong legal challenges to the military's longstanding policy of excluding them, some lawyers said.

The Pentagon bans from active duty and the reserves anyone who is homosexual. The ban applies to people who have engaged in homosexual conduct as well as to people who have homosexual desires. Although gay veterans in recent years have increasingly challenged the ban in court, it has been upheld. The military says the ban is necessary to maintain discipline and good morale among the troops, and that closeted homosexuals are more susceptible to being blackmailed.

The issue surfaced anew during the past three weeks as gay groups began receiving calls from reservists. "Commanders in general have said, 'Well, it doesn't matter, you can go anyway,'" said Sandra Lowe, an attorney with Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, a national gay-rights legal group, which has represented gays challenging the military ban. "Now that there's a war on, they're willing to let people go over."

Gay-rights attorneys say the recent laxity of some commanders in allowing homosexuals to be sent to the Gulf resulted from the military's "stop loss" policy, which allows commanders to delay the discharge of people whose services are needed. But William Caldwell, a Pentagon spokesman, said the stop-loss policy "has nothing to do with gays being in, or with putting them out of, the military. . . . Manpower needs

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