

Iraq accuses US of double standards

H. B. Bin
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NADIM LADKI

Baghdad, Dec. 30 (Reuters): Iraq accused the US of double standards today, contrasting the US military buildup in the Gulf with Washington's decision to use diplomacy to try to settle a nuclear arms crisis in North Korea.

Oil prices hit two-year highs after the US ordered more troops, aircraft and ships to the Gulf for a possible war against Iraq in the new year.

UN weapons inspectors scrutinised more suspect sites in Iraq, including a water treatment facility south of Baghdad and a communications centre near the Iranian border.

The *al-Thawra* official newspaper, mouthpiece of President Saddam Hussein's ruling Baath party, said it was unfair that Washington was preparing to go to war with Iraq which was cooperating with UN arms inspectors, but seeking a peaceful solution in North Korea, which had just expelled them.

Pyongyang ordered inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Friday to leave the country

and said it would reopen a reprocessing laboratory which can produce weapons-grade plutonium.

"Look how Washington deals with the two situations. How it threatens to invade Iraq which has no weapons of mass destruction... at the same time the U.S. administration is saying it wants a peaceful end to the crisis with North Korea," *al-Thawra* said.

The paper said Baghdad was cooperating fully with the UN arms experts, who had found no evidence of banned weapons.

"So why do America and Britain continue to threaten it? Is it because Iraq is an Arab country? Or because Iraq is an oil country? Or because the Zionist lobby inside the US administration wants to settle old scores?" the paper wrote.

US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld ordered thousands of troops, dozens of strike aircraft and probably two more aircraft carrier battle groups to the Gulf, starting early next month.

The deployment would at least double the 50,000 US military personnel already near Iraq. But US secretary of state

Colin Powell said President George W. Bush, facing the distraction of North Korea's nuclear brinkmanship, had taken no decision on whether to launch an attack on Iraq.

He discouraged talk of crisis or conflict with North Korea, saying Washington was ready to give diplomacy a chance.

Inspectors from the IAEA and the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) visited more sites today, checking a heavily guarded facility which produces metal moulds and tools in a Baghdad suburb, which previous inspectors listed as producing modified Scud missiles.

Iraqi officials said IAEA and UNMOVIC experts also visited a health laboratory in central Baghdad and a site in the Abu Ghreib area, while a communications group headed towards Mundharieh, northeast of Baghdad, near the Iranian border.

Powell said Washington, which has described Iraq, North Korea and Iran as members of an "axis of evil", was providing intelligence to the inspectors and expected to see results soon.

3 1 DEC 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

Iraq delivers scientists' list

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Dec. 28. — Iraq delivered a list to UN officials today naming over 500 scientists who have worked on nuclear, chemical, biological and missile programs, a UN official said.

Mr. Hiro Ueki, spokesman for the UN program in Baghdad, said Iraqi officials handed over the list to UN officials, a key demand of Security Council Resolution 1441 aimed at forcing Iraq to verify it has no weapons of mass destruction.

"Today we have received from the Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate a list of names of personnel associated with Iraq's chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic missile programs," Mr. Ueki said. "The list contains over 500 names in the chemical, biological, nuclear and missile areas," he said. The list is written in Arabic and is being translated by UN officials in Baghdad. Copies of the list

first request to interview a scientist privately on Tuesday.

Mr. Ueki tried to clear the air over a storm that erupted following yesterday's interview conducted by the UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, of an Iraqi scientist — the second such interview to have taken place.

Meanwhile, a day after Washington ordered two aircraft carriers and thousands of Marines to prepare for action in Iraq, the Baghdad government shrugged off the threat with one newspaper saying Iraqis cannot be intimidated by the beating of drums of war.

In a separate incident, UN arms inspectors visited five sites in and around Baghdad today, including a complex for making missiles and parts for a nuclear bomb. At least four UN disarmament teams began a second month of work today since returning to Iraq to hunt for prohibited arms and military programmes.

BUSH'S AGENDA FOR NEW YEAR

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28. — Vowing to place the war against terrorism and disarming Iraq at the top of his agenda for the New Year, Mr. George Bush today asserted that Washington, with the help of a broad coalition, will make it certain that terrorists will not be safe in any corner of the world and that "freeing the Iraqi people" would be top priority. "In the New Year, we will prosecute the war on terror with patience and focus and determination. With the help of a broad coalition, we will make certain that terrorists and their supporters are not safe in any cave or corner of the world," he said in his weekly radio address. The war on terror, Mr. Bush said, also requires confronting the danger of catastrophic violence posed by Iraq and its weapons of mass destruction. The stage is now set for a final and far more visible buildup of US forces in the Gulf for an attack on Iraq, with US defence secretary Mr. Donald Rumsfeld signing an order to deploy "significant" ground troops, combat aircraft and logistics support, media reports said today. — PTI

have also been sent to New York and Vienna. US officials have said they hope the privacy would prompt scientists to reveal hidden weapons programs.

Under the toughened UN inspections that resumed on 27 November, inspectors can speak privately with scientists and workers associated with Iraq's weapons and even take them abroad for interviews. Before receiving the list, UN weapons inspectors had been speaking to engineers and experts at sites they have searched, and made their

Iran & Russia sign nuclear deal, ignore Bush objections

Dubai, December 26

IGNORING STRONG objections from the United States, Russia and Iran have signed a protocol ensuring supplies to Tehran's first nuclear plant and agreeing to consider building a second reactor at the same site.

The protocol was signed in Tehran on Wednesday by Russian Nuclear Energy Minister Alexander Rumyantsev and Iranian Vice-President Gholam Agazadeh, who is also chief of the national Nuclear Energy Organization. The two sides agreed to speed up the construction of the Bushehr plant.

The document also says Russia and Iran would consider the possibility of building a second reactor at the Bushehr plant and of Russia's deliveries of nuclear fuel for the first reactor in the middle of January.

At a joint press conference, Rumyantsev and Agazadeh said they also signed a 10-year accord on Russia's fuel exports for the Bushehr nuclear power plant, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said.

The protocol is seen by diplomats as a severe setback to the United States, which has strongly urged Moscow to abandon the \$800 million project and described Iran, Iraq and North Korea as an "axis of evil".

The protocol is likely to be another headache for Washington, currently grappling with an alleged mass destruction weapons programme in Iraq

and admissions of a nuclear programme by North Korea.

Iran, Opec's second largest oil producer, has maintained that the nuclear plant is intended to meet the country's growing energy needs, a claim dismissed by the US.

Meanwhile, Iran has declared that it was tightening up security at the Bushehr nuclear plant.

The country's Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani said Iran's response to any military attack against the Bushehr nuclear power plant would be "strong and resolute".

Earlier, Rumyantsev had said in Bushehr that he was satisfied with the progress in construction work and the degree of the facility's readiness for the installation of technological equipment.

He told Itar-Tass that he was quite satisfied by the work done to prepare a storage facility for nuclear fuel, to be supplied to Iran by the middle of next year.

This warehouse fully meets the technical parameters and security requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency, he added.

The functioning of the Bushehr reactor, set up with help from West Germany, got interrupted by the 1979 Islamic revolution and is expected to resume by the end of 2003.

The US recently accused Iran of trying to build nuclear weapons. Iran has categorically denied the charges.

PTI

27 DEC 2002

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Abdi's trial begins

29/11 11-19 W. Rosen @

TEHERAN, DEC. 26. The trial of Abbas Abdi, a prominent reformist politician, involved in the hostage-taking at the U.S. embassy here in 1970, began here on Wednesday. Abdi, heads the Ayadneh Polling Institute.

His arrest in November was prompted by the release of an opinion poll indicating that two-thirds of Iranians favoured dialogue with the U.S. Though the poll was not conducted by his institute, he and his colleague were detained. He had reportedly been in solitary confinement ever since.

In the court, he was accused of selling information to institutes like the Gallup Polling Organisation, which had ties with the CIA. He was also charged with acting against the Islamic Republic by attending international seminars and a meeting in Paris in 1997 with Barry Rosen, a U.S. diplomat who was among the 52 hostages.

Mr. Abdi said in his defence that he had spent three decades working for the Islamic Republic and that the charge of acting against it was irrelevant. As for his work in polling, he said he was willing to make amends if his findings had been damaging. His remarks were reported by the Student News Agency ISNA. Mr. Abdi, an influential member of the Participation Front, a leading reformist party, has supported holding a referendum on the governing party. He also recently proposed that reformers resign from the legislature if the two key bills backed by the President, Mohammad Khatami, are rejected by the hard-line Guardian Council. — AP

27 DEC 2002

THE HINDU

Iran-India pipeline will benefit region: Khatami

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 25. The Iranian President, Seyed Mohammad Khatami, has said that Iran considered the project for the transportation of natural gas to India through Pakistan as a symbol of Pak-Iranian strategic economic ties.

Addressing businessmen from Iran and Pakistan at a luncheon hosted by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) in Lahore, Dr. Khatami said: "This pipeline may be called the pipeline of peace and friendship in the region. The implementation of this project will certainly benefit all of the people of the region."

The Iranian President's observation assumes significance as the \$4 billion project is pending for several years due to Indian reservations about the viability of the line through Pakistan, given the Indo-Pak. hostilities.

At a joint news conference with the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, here on Tuesday, Dr. Khatami had said that various security concerns of New Delhi were being addressed. "There is no problem between Iran and Pakistan to undertake the gas pipeline project but in this behalf there is a need to remove some of the security concerns of India."

He said the pipeline was an economically-viable project that would benefit the three countries. "I have discussed this issue in detail with President Musharraf, and Prime Minister Jamali and I

am happy to tell you that Pakistan and Iran are ready for this project." Dr. Khatami hoped that India too would be taken along to start the project as early as possible.

The Iranian President gave an impression that it was for Pakistan to remove the apprehensions on the feasibility the project.

Mr. Jamali said that Pakistan had already held out assurances for the security of the pipeline and maintained that his Government would continue extending cooperation to Iran over the issue.

Since the ouster of the then Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, in a military coup in October 1999 the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has repeatedly sought to assure India about the safety of the pipeline but New Delhi does not appear convinced.

Pakistan sees enormous economic benefits from the pipeline in terms of annual royalty as well as cheaper gas.

In another development, Iran and Pakistan have decided to strengthen defence ties through exchange of high-level visits. Ali Shankali, Iranian Defence Minister, called on the Pakistan Defence Minister, Rao Sikandar Iqbal, and exchanged views on defence cooperation between the two sides.

An official statement said that delegations from both sides would visit each other's country to identify areas where they could benefit from each other's experience and expertise.

26 DEC 2002

THE HINDU

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W. S. Singh
Turkey, Israel join U.S. war plan

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), DEC.25. Turkey, Israel and the U.S. appear to be finalising plans for concerted action that could become crucial for unseating the regime of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein.

Under this plan, revolving mainly around northern Iraq, the Turkish military, supported by the ethnic Kurds, is expected to play a leading role.

Two significant developments in the last few days are likely to influence the opening of a northern front against Iraq.

First, the Israel's Chief of Staff, Moshe Yalon, held detailed discussions with the Turkish army chief, Gen. Hilimi Ozkok, on Tuesday. Discussions apparently revolved around synchronising ground-based missile and air defences to ward off the perceived threat of Iraqi missies that might be used to deliver chemical warheads.

Both sides also reportedly discussed coordination of their air and naval forces. Israel, Turkey and the U.S. are set to hold "Reliant Mermaid" naval exercises in international waters off the coast of Israel soon.

Second, the chief of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Jalal Talabani, held talks in the Turkish Foreign Ministry on Tuesday. He is expected to be joined by his one time rival Masoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) on Wednesday.

Analysts pointed out that the broad elements of forging another version of "northern alliance" that could unroll under the Turkish leadership and the U.S. protection from the Kurdish highlands in the direction of the Iraqi oil cities of Mosul and Kirkuk was now under active deliberation.

Diplomatic sources said that the Turks and the Kurds, under the shadow of the U. S., might be discussing mutual assurances that would bring them together against the



The leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Jalal Talabani (right), and the Turkish Prime Minister, Abdullah Gul, at a meeting at Mr. Gul's office in Ankara on Tuesday. — AFP

present regime in Iraq.

Turkey would like the Kurds to accommodate some of its core concerns. For instance, Turkey has historically sought control over the oil cities of Mosul and Kirkuk.

In order to assert itself in northern Iraq, Turkey would also want a safe passage for its forces through Kurdish territory. Besides, Turkey is expected to demand a commitment by the United States that Kurds will not declare independence once regime change in Baghdad has been accomplished.

The Kurds, on their part would want an undertaking from Turkey that it would respect their autonomy in northern Iraq. Besides, they are likely to demand a fair share of the revenue of oil that is taken out of Mosul and Kirkuk.

Mr. Talabani's mission to Ankara has acquired some urgency because of the mil-

itary advances made by the pro-Iraq Kurdish elements on the strategic lanc route to Kirkuk. The Ansar al Islami, a group opposed to the mainstream Kurdish organisations is occupying key portions of the Halabja-Suleimaniyeh highway leading to Kirkuk. The continued occupation of this route could hasten possible Turkish military intervention in this zone in the coming days. Once a broad understanding involving Turkey, the U.S. and the Kurdish parties is reached, efforts to broaden the Turkish-Kurdish front in northern Iraq is likely to gather momentum. To achieve this, the Turkomans, another ethnic group concentrated around Mosul are likely to be wooed vigorously in the coming days.

With the participation of the Turkomans, the regime of Mr. Hussein could lose its grip not only on the Kurdish highlands in the north, but also in parts of central Iraq.

26 DEC 2002

Iraqi people are ready for martyrdom: Saddam

Baghdad: In a Christmas eve message to Iraqis, President Saddam Hussein said his nation was ready for "martyrdom" and that American claims his regime has weapons of mass destruction will be proven to be lies.

"As much as Iraq loves life, its people are ready for martyrdom in the defence of its land and air space, its scantiness and future," Saddam said during an address televised on state-run television.

"The road to deter the injustice, aggression and wickedness of the evil-minded is the road of 'jihad' (holy war) and struggle," he said. The mood, however, was different at St Rafael's Catholic church in downtown Baghdad, where about 120 people, including Iraqi Christians and American peace activists, came together for the Christmas mass.

"We're here to pray and sing for peace," said Elias Amidon, 58, a professor of envi-



S. Hussein

ronmental studies from Colorado. "The world has many diplomatic and non-violent means to solve its differences," he said.

With fears building that America will wage war on Iraq, Prof Amidon and other members of the US and British-based Iraqi peace team

have travelled to Baghdad to call for a peaceful solution to the crisis and have harsh economic sanctions imposed on Iraq since the 1991 Gulf war lifted. Deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz said that Iraq was capable of repulsing any possible military attack by the US. "The Iraqi people, who have a will of iron, are able to bring to failure any aggression by the American administration and its ally, the Zionist entity (Israel)," he said on Tuesday. Agencies

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Iraq is hiding weapons in Syria, says Ariel Sharon

Jerusalem: Israel has intel-



A. Sharon

ligence information that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein ordered chemical and biological weapons to be smuggled into Syria for hiding, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has said.

In an interview on Israel's Channel 2 television on Tuesday night, Mr Sharon said Israel as well as Americans were trying to verify this information.

Stating that Israel knew that Iraqi scientists and experts had been in Libya working on that country's programme, Mr Sharon said he did not know of other countries in which Mr Saddam may have tried to smuggle weapons for hiding.

Emphasising the dangers of Iraq's use of Palestinian terrorism against the Jewish, the Prime Minister said Israel's security services had recently captured a cell belonging to the Palestinian Liberation Front which received training in Iraq for the use of shoulder-launched Strella missiles and other anti-aircraft weapons. He said the cell had planned to carry out a big attack against Israeli civilians, possibly on a civilian aircraft.

Mr Sharon said Iraq and Palestinian Authority were coordinating their positions ahead of a possible American attack against Baghdad. He said a senior Fatah official, Zakariya Al Ara had recently visited Iraq for the purpose of this "coordination."

Stating that he believed that there would be a US war against Iraq, Mr Sharon asserted that "Israel will know how to defend itself" and that the ability of the US and Is-

rael to defend against missile attacks had improved substantially since the 1991 war.

"The public needs to be relaxed, and know that all the necessary steps have been taken and we are ready and prepared for any situation."

Allaying fears among Israeli public, the Prime Minister said it was not only Israel but the whole world that was dealing with the possibility of a war with Iraq.

Israeli defence establishment here believes that while the country is relatively well prepared for a possible missile attack by Iraq or to foil a "suicide pilot", the terrorists acting from inside the Palestinian territories are harder to defend against.

Reacting to Mr Sharon's comment of Iraq hiding chemical and biological weapons, observers said this was expected from Saddam Hussein.

Daily 'Ha'aretz' quoted Israeli security sources as saying Iraq had pumped in millions of dollars paid to the families of suicide bombers and others in Palestinian territories to foment and nurture terrorism against Israeli civilians.

The paper said the defence establishment discussed the possibility of Iraq deploying sleeper cells from the Arab Liberation Front and Palestinian Liberation Front, the two outfits affiliated to Baghdad, that would attempt to spread lethal germs in Israel.

Meanwhile, UN weapons experts pushed ahead with a busy inspections schedule in Iraq on Wednesday, visiting at least five suspect sites.

With the world's focus firmly on Iraq, the more than 100 inspectors turned down the chance for a day of rest and celebration on Christmas day to pursue a mission that could determine the prospects of war and peace. Agencies

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AN IRAQI COUNTER-OFFER

25/12

IRAQ'S OFFER TO let personnel from the Central Intelligence Agency accompany U.N. inspection teams, which have been mandated to trace and erase all elements of Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programme, raises a probing question that the U.S. administration will have to answer. If Washington agrees with the rest of the global community that the elimination of Iraq's WMD potential is the sole matter of concern (and leading figures within the administration have declared as much off and on), then it is difficult to believe that objections can be raised to the Iraqi offer. Iraq had handed over 12,000 pages of documentation, which purportedly was a comprehensive and detailed exposition of all that it had done in connection with a WMD programme, to the weapons inspectors who then passed it on to the permanent members of the Security Council. After less than a fortnight's study of these documents, the U.S. administration, speaking through the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, had pronounced that the Iraqi declaration was less than a full disclosure and had provided some evidence in support of its charge. But Washington, which claims that it possesses satellite imagery and other intelligence to prove that Baghdad still has a clandestine WMD programme, had been reluctant to pass on these inputs to the weapons inspectors till Hans Blix, Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), forcefully urged it to do so. Iraq's offer to allow CIA personnel to join the inspectors is of a similar nature as its main import is to demand that the U.S. administration put what it has on the table.

Baghdad retorted to the U.S. administration's negative assessment of its declaration by accusing Washington of twisting the material so as to present a distorted version and reiterated that it no longer had a non-conventional weapons programme. But whether the Iraqi declaration

did amount to a complete disclosure or not the important fact is that the inspection teams are making progress. Personnel from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), who have been trying to track down any element of Baghdad's nuclear weapons programme that may have survived the post-1991 efforts at eradicating it, have begun interviewing Iraqi scientists involved with that programme. UNMOVIC officials, who are mandated to uncover Baghdad's chemical and biological weapons potential and its long range missile capabilities, are soon expected to begin interviewing Iraqi scientists involved with these aspects of weaponisation as well. The U.N. is also exploring the ways and means by which these Iraqi scientists can be brought out of their country (and perhaps provided asylum) so that they can speak freely. In laying down the measures that Iraq needed to take before a ruling could be made that it was not in material breach of its obligations to the U.N., Gen. Powell had stressed on the need to have the Iraqi scientists and technicians taken outside the country.

While the U.N. teams do not have the easiest of tasks to perform, the overall indications are that the inspection work is proceeding apace. That being so it is to be hoped that the signals of battle readiness emanating from Washington are intended to keep up the pressure on Iraq and do not amount to a definitive move to make war, no matter what the inspectors say, and to fulfil objectives that are not mandated by the U.N. — such as a regime change in Baghdad. In delivering his critical assessment of the Iraqi declaration at the end of last week, Gen. Powell deliberately declined to state that a finding that Iraq was in material breach of its obligations would necessitate a recourse to arms to make it comply. He had, thereby, implicitly left Iraq with the chance to come good on its promise to the U.N. and it is to be hoped that Baghdad will be given every opportunity to cooperate.

Sectarian violence plaguing Subcontinent, says Khatami

Islamabad, December 24

AS PRESIDENT Pervez Musharraf once again raked up Gujarat violence, Iranian President Syed Muhammad Khatami on Tuesday reminded Pakistan of the sectarian strife in the country involving majority Sunni and minority Shia, saying such violence and differences were the major problems facing the region.

Khatami, who is on a three-day visit here, also asked India and Pakistan to sort out their differences in the interest of regional economic development.

Asked at a joint news conference here with Pakistan Premier Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali what Iran proposed to do to stop the communal attacks on Muslims in Gujarat, Khatami said he condemned atrocities not only against Muslims but against all human beings.

"We are against any kind of

WASH DC 25/12
brutalities and atrocities against human beings anywhere in the world especially when it happens against Muslims. No matter where they are, whether it is Palestine, India or anywhere," he said, adding in his view sectarian violence was biggest problem that faced the region.

"Major problem we are facing in our region is sectarian violence and sectarian differences. We have to face this sinister phenomenon. We should try to build a world where all people of the world can live in peace with different faiths and pursuits," he said without directly referring to large scale sectarian violence in Pakistan.

At a banquet hosted for Khatami on Monday, President Musharraf accused Indian Government of "cynically encouraging" communal riots and said "what has happened in Gujarat has finally exposed the myth of

Indian secularism". But Khatami said: "Violence has been committed in many parts world in the name of Islam. Peaceful coexistence among all nations and racial groups, not only between Muslims but also non Muslims is important... I hope we can establish a world where justice and peace can be promoted by all human beings."

Asked about the proposed India-Iran gas pipeline project to be laid through Pakistan, Khatami said there was no problem from Iran and Pakistan but India had expressed its own concerns.

"I hope in our future talks we will be able to take steps to remove some of the problems that have been raised by the Indian side. This project plays important role in the economic co-operation between Iran, India and Pakistan and is economically viable for the three countries.

PTI

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WMD / CONTINGENCY PLANS ON

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W. K. Sadi
① grom
**Baghdad offers
access to CIA**

LONDON, DEC. 23. In a surprise move to stave off the U.S.-led attack, Iraq has invited the CIA to track down the elusive weapons of mass destruction in the country amid reports that the U.N. is preparing secret contingency plans for a war that would halt all the Iraqi oil production, "seriously degrade" its electricity system and provoke civil unrest.

Amir al-Sadi, Scientific Adviser to the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, on Sunday challenged the U.S. and the British intelligence to show hard evidence that Iraq possessed any biological, chemical or nuclear weapons. "We do not even have any objections if the CIA sent somebody with the inspectors to show them the suspected sites," Gen. Sadi said in Baghdad.

The Iraqi offer of unhindered access to CIA agents came after pressure from Washington that made war early in the new year almost inevitable, *The Guardian* reported today.

After four days of diplomatic onslaught, Iraq had hit back accusing the Bush Administration of rehashing old lies. "We have told the world we are not pro-

ducing these kinds of weapons, but it seems that the world is drugged, absent or in a weak position," Mr. Hussein said.

Meanwhile, a report in the *Times* today said the internal U.N. documents predicted that the worst fighting would be in the three central governorates around Baghdad, with the Kurdish-controlled north remaining largely free of conflict. But it would take a month after the war breaks out for the U.N. humanitarian workers to plunge in work in the predominantly Shia south.

Though formally expressing the hope that war can be averted, the U.N. relief agencies are already positioning emergency supplies and updating evacuation procedures for the hundreds of foreign staff now inside Iraq. "The U.N. expects that there will be full compliance by Iraq... and that, consequently, there will be no new humanitarian crisis," one document says.

The U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, was trying to keep the preparations secret for fear of signalling to Iraq that weapons inspections were futile and a U.S.-led attack was inevitable, a report said. — PTI

Khatami taps Pak for India gas pipeline

Islamabad, December 23

IRAN'S PRESIDENT Mohammad Khatami arrived in Pakistan on Monday for a three-day visit to discuss a \$4 billion gas pipeline to India, security issues in Afghanistan and tensions surrounding Iraq.

Khatami, accompanied by ministers of defence, foreign affairs and road and transportation, was welcomed by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Jamali at the Presidential Palace in Islamabad.

Pakistan conferred its highest national award Nishan-e-Pakistan on Khatami for his "highest contribution" to Pakistan-Iran relations.

Relations between Iran and Pakistan have improved greatly since the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan a year ago. Officially Shia Iran backed the Northern Alliance against the Taliban.

Iran hardliner decries reform plans

PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD Khatami and his reformist camp will be "demolished" if they insist on two proposed bills seeking more presidential powers, a hardline cleric said on Monday.

Mohammad Reza Faker said Khatami's proposed bills sought to bring "chaos", the Government-run Persian-

language daily *Iran* reported. "Be certain that Khatami will be demolished because Islam is more powerful and God supports this revolution," Faker, of the Qom Seminary, was quoted by the paper as saying. "The President wants to impose dictatorship, albeit a decorated one."

AP, Tehran

between the sub-continent's feuding nuclear powers. Pakistan and Iran agreed last year to conduct a pre-feasibility study for a \$4 billion pipeline to India.

Terror suspects in court

A Pakistani doctor suspected of links to Osama bin Laden's al-

Gaida network made his first appearance in a special anti-terrorism court on Monday along with his brother, and both were ordered held for another three days, police said. Dr. Javed Ahmad, a naturalised American citizen, and his brother Ahmad Naveed Khawaja, a naturalised Canadian, were arrested on Thursday in a raid on their home in Lahore.

China happy with Pakistan

China's top military official today expressed satisfaction over the all-round military relations and cooperation with Pakistan.

"China was satisfied with the all-round military ties with Pakistan," Chief of Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Liang Guanglie said while meeting with his Pakistani counterpart General Shahid Aziz here.

Agencies

24 DEC 2002

'Seaborne attack planned on Iraq'

PETER GRAFF
LONDON, DECEMBER 22

US leaflets urge soldiers to desert Saddam

THE US and Britain are planning a massive seaborne invasion of Iraq from the Gulf as the first stage in any ground war, a British Defence ministry source said on Saturday. "Discussions on future amphibious operations are at an advanced stage," the source said, adding that Britain would commit its elite 3 Commando Brigade of Royal Marines to the proposed invasion.

In the 1991 Gulf War, US-led forces assembled a large amphibious task force in the Gulf, but never mounted an assault by sea. Instead, infantry poured into parts of Iraq and Kuwait from Saudi Arabia by land. The British Defence Ministry source said planners were this time leaning towards an amphibious assault in the case of a war with Iraq in part because of the difficulties of protecting a large ground-based Army from chemical or biological attack.

"Would you really put 2,00,000 troops in one place and let them be targets for an attack?" the source said. The amphibious option also reduces the diplomatic and political sensitivity of moving large land forces into countries in the region which have not yet publicly given consent for their territory to be used as a launchpad for an invasion.

Other ground forces could deploy later, after amphibious forces had already opened up a front, the British source said.

WASHINGTON: Aircraft from the United States and its allies dropped leaflets over southern Iraq on Saturday advertising radio frequencies carrying appeals to Iraqi soldiers to desert President Saddam Hussein, the US Central Command said. A total of 2,40,000 leaflets were dropped referring Iraqis to frequencies on which coalition forces broadcast a series of anti-Saddam messages. It was the eighth such aerial leaflet scattering in the past three months, the command said. "Do not let Saddam tarnish the reputation of soldiers any longer," said one of the broadcasts, a full text of which was available on the Central Command Web site, www.centcom.mil. "Saddam uses the military to persecute those who don't agree with his unjust agenda," the message said. "Make the decision." — Reuters



A US army exercise in the Kuwaiti desert on Sunday.
AP/PTI photo

The US, Britain and any other allies that join them would have an easier time launching a seaborne attack this time than in 1991 because they already control the main sea lanes into Iraq and have made sure they are free from mines. Over the past year, Australian, US and British warships patrolling the Gulf to enforce UN sanctions on Iraq have moved their operations from international waters into Iraqi territory.

The allied navies now oper-

ate freely up to the mouths of the Khor Abd Allah and Shaat Al Arab estuaries, where Iraq's great rivers spill over salt marshes into the Gulf. The Shaat Al Arab gives access to Iraq's main port of Basra on the Euphrates. Three British mine-clearing ships are in the Gulf helping make sure the waterways are clear. Britain's 3 Commando Brigade would send about 3,000 men to the amphibious operation to join a much larger contingent of Americans. — Reuters

Baghdad assures UN full cooperation

REUTERS
DUBAI, DECEMBER 22

AN IRAQI Minister said on Sunday that Baghdad would fully cooperate with the UN in a last-ditch effort to avoid war, but said a US-led attack may be all but inevitable.

"We will never give the US and Britain the pretext they are looking for to (wage) their unfair war against our country," Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammed Mehdi Saleh told the English-language daily *Gulf News*. "Iraq will go to any extent to cooperate with the UN to refute claims that we have weapons of mass destruction," said Saleh, who was on a visit to the UAE.

The US has declared Iraq in "material breach" of a UN disarmament resolution for failing to declare its suspected chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programmes.

Washington and London have indicated that the prospect of a ground and air war to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in early 2003 was now increasingly likely.

"We are ready to answer any questions. If they claim there are any gaps, we are ready to help them fill the gaps," Saleh said. "We will reveal that the Americans are lying that the war they are about to launch against our country has nothing to do with weapons



A demonstration against the US in South Korea on Sunday. Reuters

of mass destruction.

"The goal is not the destruction of alleged weapons of mass destruction but a desire on the part of the American and the British governments to control Iraqi oil and impose their hegemony...on the Arab world," he added. But the minister said Iraq would resist "through all means an attack against its dignity, pride and future".

"Our people have always stood to the challenge. We liberated our land from the British after WWI. Britain lost more than 100,000 lives. Their graveyards all over Iraq still bear witness to the heroism of our people."

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Prepare for war: Blair

By Hasan Suroor

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LONDON, DEC 21. The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has warned the troops to be ready for a possible war in what is seen as the clearest indication yet that the stage is set for military intervention in Iraq.

Mr. Blair used a special Christmas message to sound the grim warning even as the U.S. President, George W. Bush, postponed a visit to Africa to concentrate on developments in Iraq, and Germany confirmed receiving a request for 2,000 troops in the new year to protect the U.S. bases there.

Mr. Blair said a war could still be averted if Iraq agreed to declare and destroy its weapons of mass destruction as demanded by the U.N. Security Council, but insisted that the "key thing at the moment is to make all the preparations necessary and to make sure...that we are able to undertake this mission if it falls to us to do so."

Justifying the British and the U.S. threats of military action to disarm Iraq, the Prime Minister said, "When we are dealing with someone like Saddam Hussein, unless you do have the capability to use force if necessary, it is very hard to make the world a more secure and more peaceful place. And, sometimes, I think the best, indeed the only way, of avoiding war is to be prepared for one if you have to have it."

However, Mr Blair made it clear that there was no intention to bypass the Security Council. "If it is, and if we discover that they (Iraq) have been refusing to cooperate fully with the U.N. inspectors, then we have always made it clear that we will go back to the Security Council, that we will be prepared to use force," he said.

Anti-war MPs, meanwhile, stepped up pressure on the Government to seek Parliament's approval before deciding on military action against Iraq.

A separate peace

Preparations are afoot but the world can still step in to prevent war on Iraq

THE next five weeks are likely to be crucial in deciding whether the Middle East is going to experience another war or not. US Secretary of State Colin Powell, known to have been moderate in approach to the Iraq crisis, was uncharacteristically forthright in saying the Iraqi declaration totally 'fails to move us in the direction of a peaceful solution.' He cited systematic omissions in the 12,000 page declarations to support his argument although no indication was given about the intelligence that the US claims to reject Iraqi protestations. It is significant that France, which has so far favoured a peaceful solution, now seems critical of the Iraqi submissions describing them as incomplete and full of inconsistencies. But there seem to be clear indications that war is neither imminent, nor inevitable.

Taha Yassin Ramadan, the Iraqi vice president, has asserted that the declaration is complete and that 'Iraq is ready to supply all the necessary specifics.' Other officials have also stated that they are willing to provide clarifications and elaborations wherever required. This is encouraging

and so is the statement of Dr Hans Blix, head of UNMOVIC (UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission) tasked to check Iraqi WMD violations in terms of UN Security Council resolution 1441, that Iraq is co-operating well with the inspectors who have visited 130 sites so far. These are all positive signs.

On the other hand, preparations for war have, in fact, been stepped up. A war of sorts is already on, with information and psychological pressures being built up by both sides. Yet the UN Security Council is likely to wait until at least January 27 when Dr Blix is expected to present his final report. Thus there is time and opportunity for the international community to try and avert a war that could only bring more misery to the people of Iraq suffering from the effects of wars during the past two decades. Colin Powell has promised to consult with US friends and allies to gain Iraqi compliance. The international community, however, should not rely only on the UN Security Council but make best use of the narrow window of opportunity that seems available at this moment.

Omissions & Problems!

Perfidy in evaluating Iraq's declaration

George W Bush's tendency to regard his own bias and prejudices over Iraq including his preoccupation with Saddam Hussein, as a substitute for world opinion continues unabated. The latest to fall victim to the high-pressure salesmanship seems to be Hans Blix, the chief weapons inspector of the UN team who is said, by the Americans to be preparing to get into line — it has been announced that his report to the Security Council on Thursday will strengthen the US position. The White House spokesman Ari Fleischer is already expressing the President's concern about *omissions* and *problems* in the Iraqi declaration and laying down the deadline as end January for a decision on peace or war. We can be assured that it will be war, if Bush is allowed to rush headlong into it as he plans to do. As regards what the omissions and problems are, we are not allowed to know except the old fallacious line that Saddam has not yet proved the negative that he has not yet made a full declaration of the weapons he had at the start of the Gulf war.

Nerves in international relations are getting frayed and the world economy, already in crisis is showing all the signs that war is inevitable. The price of gold has touched a new high, oil prices are rising, coupled with rumours that Saddam Hussein is planning a scorched earth policy, setting fire to and destroying his oil fields and will attempt to release biological and chemical weapons. Largely attended meetings billed as those of Iraqi dissidents are held, no doubt the Americans are organising them to the amusement of Saddam who knows what value to put on these gatherings intended to soak up American dollars and making noises that would be music to Bush's ears. Then an extraordinary demand has been made; that Saddam hand over or let go, Iraqi scientists to be named by the Americans, with their families who would be transported outside Iraq and encouraged to make noises about Saddam's perfidy which will, without further ceremony, be treated as sworn testimony against the Iraqi dictator. What will happen to them after they have perjured themselves as tutored and have been duly paid off is not known. There is no suggestion that the Americans will retain an interest in them after their purpose has been served — Saddam can go after them for all that Washington cares. Who in these circumstances will come forward and perform is difficult to tell, it partly depends on whether the payoff is large enough for them to make their life elsewhere in the world, assuming that any country is willing to risk a Saddam operation to get them on their land.

The British are under the impression that they exercise an influence on Bush and will prevail. One would hope so but London must understand that they are dealing with a new phenomenon in the world, a new and frightening version of the closed mind, comparable to that open-minded public performer Osama bin Laden. Bush will hear no voice but his own and his administration conveys to him that no other voice is relevant. Even the candid admission by North Korea that they are in brazen breach of agreements entered into with America, Japan and South Korea to cease and desist from going ahead with their nuclear programme in return for two nuclear power plants for civilian use. Both sides are in breach but that does not help. The problem created is urgent and fraught with grave peril but Bush cannot deal with North Korea and Saddam at the same time; he has limitations! The Security Council is being hijacked, the UN Secretary-General must wait in queue to be heard by Bush and there is no one to disperse the war clouds gathering ominously. At this point at any rate, the checks and balances in the governance of the United States do not appear to work. They must begin before it is too late.

IRAQ / AIRCRAFT CARRIERS LEAVE REGION

U.S. attack may not be imminent

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), DEC.19. In a signal that a military attack on Iraq may not be imminent, key U.S. warships have been pulled out of West Asia.

The aircraft carrier, Kitty Hawk, returned to its home port of Yokosuka in Japan last Friday. The Kitty Hawk is the only one among the U.S. Navy's 12 aircraft carriers that is permanently deployed outside the country. Analysts point out that this warship had been on standby for most of the last seven weeks for a possible attack against Iraq.

In addition, the carrier, George Washington, is routing out of the Mediterranean to its home port in Virginia in the U.S. The movement of George Washington out of Iraq's proximity would mean that the U.S. would be short of 70 to 80 planes to mount a possible attack on Iraq.

The U.S. will also be short of 400 long-range Tomahawk cruise missiles as nine smaller ships that are part of George Washington's carrier task force are also being brought back to their home base.

The U.S. defence department, however, has cautioned against reading too much into the withdrawal of the two carriers and as this would not affect combat readiness. Military analysts point out that the U.S. armed forces would feel comfortable if four to five aircraft carriers were present in the region before an attack on Iraq was launched.

But with the rotation of George Washington and Kitty Hawk, only one aircraft carrier, Abraham Lincoln, is at present within the striking distance of Iraq. This ship is also expected to return to its home base in Washington by the middle of next month.



A fighter plane in a routine sortie from the U.S. warship, USS Abraham Lincoln, which is placed at a striking distance from Iraq in this recent photo.

The U.S. navy is reported to have deployed or is in the process of deploying two carriers, Harry S. Truman and the Constellation, in the region. But additional number of carriers, possibly two, will still have to be brought in before a possible attack on Iraq is launched. Analysts point out that the process of bringing in additional carriers could take around a month to complete. In that case, it is unlikely that full-scale operations against Iraq can begin before the end of January. There are three other factors that discourage the immediate use of military force. First, the British Parliament is heading for the Christmas and New Year

break. Any declaration of war outside Parliament is highly unlikely. Indicating that war plans were yet to be finalised, Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, chief of the British Defence Staff, has said that the military was finding the lack of a clear plan frustrating.

Second, the preparations for an alternative regime to the Government of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, are yet to be completed.

Third, the U.S. is being forced to pay greater attention to North Korea, and this could, in the coming days, become a factor that could divert some of its attention from Iraq.

US nuke claim baseless, says Khatami

19/12
 W. R. Ashby
 Tehran, Dec. 18 (Reuters): President Mohammad Khatami today blasted as baseless US accusations that Iran was building two nuclear sites of a type that could be used for developing nuclear weapons, Irna news agency reported.

He was responding to remarks by US officials last week alleging that two nuclear sites in central Iran were of a type that could be used for manufacturing nuclear warheads.

Iran, labelled by Washington as part of an "axis of evil" bent on developing weapons of mass destruction, denied the accusation and said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had been told about the plants and was free to inspect them.

"America's claim is totally baseless. Our aim is not building atomic weapons," the official agency quoted Khatami as saying.

A signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Iran said last week it was determined to meet its booming electricity demand with nuclear power despite US concerns the technology could be used for military purposes.

Iran's first nuclear power plant, being built with Russian help near the southwestern port city Bushehr, is due to come on stream at the end of next year or early 2004, despite heavy US lobbying of Moscow to block construction.

Iran is studying feasibility of building a second 1,000 MW nuclear plant, IRNA said.

The Vienna-based IAEA said earlier that it was aware of Iran's nuclear power programme and planned to visit the country in February to inspect all facilities currently under construction.

Khatami said Iran's nuclear activities had always been carried out under the IAEA's supervision.

The US and Iran have been enemies since radical students seized the US embassy in Tehran shortly after Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution and held 52 hostages for 444 days.

In Vienna today, the IAEA said it would send a team to Iran

on February 25 to take a first look at the two sites.

It said its director general and a team of technical experts would visit the sites to develop a monitoring programme.

"This is an initial visit as we try to start a process of visits," IAEA spokesman Mark Gwozdecky said.

Iran's parliament approved a Bill banning the torture of prisoners after an earlier version was rejected by a hardline constitutional watchdog, parliamentarians said.

The draft law got the go-ahead from deputies as EU officials arrived in Tehran for talks on human rights issues with the government of the Islamic republic.



President Mohammad Khatami in Tehran on Wednesday. (AFP)

Iraq gets clean chit from nuke inspector

Agence France Presse

CAIRO, Dec. 18. — No proof has emerged yet that Iraq has developed a nuclear program since the previous inspection regime ended in 1998, chief nuclear inspector Mohammed ElBaradei said in an interview published today. In a related incident, the USA will declare tomorrow that Iraq has violated the UN resolution by not disclosing all its weapons of mass destruction, senior administration officials today said. Until now, however, there is "no proof concerning the development of a nuclear program in Iraq since 1998," Mr ElBaradei, who heads the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), told the Egyptian daily *Al-Ahram*.

UN arms inspections moved into their fourth week today with several teams of experts deployed across Iraq hunting for suspected arms of mass destruction, reports AFP from Baghdad.

Bush should justify attack: poll

SILICON VALLEY, Dec. 18. — More than two-thirds of Americans believe that President Bush has failed to provide enough evidence to justify a war on Iraq, according to a *Los Angeles Times* poll released today. The poll showed that although 90 per cent Americans believed that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction, about 72 per cent think Mr Bush should provide concrete evidence before trying to topple Saddam. While majority of the respondents felt that the weapons declaration Iraq sent to the UN earlier this month was not truthful, they did not agree with the president's argument that any error or omission in Iraq's arms declaration was adequate to justify war. — PTI

At least three teams from the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) drove out of their headquarters in Baghdad today morning.

One UNMOVIC biological team and a group of International Atomic Energy Agency experts were probing factories in the northern region of Mosul where they deployed yesterday, the official Iraqi News Agency said.

USA unconvinced

The Bush administration is expected to declare tomorrow that Iraq has violated the UN resolution, adds PTI from New York. At a national security meeting scheduled today, US President Mr George W Bush will consider whether to declare Iraq in "material breach" of its obligations, officials told *The New York Times*. A senior State Department non-proliferation official, Mr John S Wolf,

met Mr Hans Blix, head of the UN inspection team for chemical and biological weapons, to describe the deficiencies that US intelligence agencies say they have found in the Iraqi declaration that claims that Iraq does not possess weapons of mass destruction or long-range missiles.

Security Council gets arms declaration

A sanitised version of Iraq's 12,000-page weapons declaration to the UN was being distributed to the 10 non-permanent members of the 15-member UN Security Council, a UN source said.

The distribution began at 6:30 p.m. last night (0500 IST today) in the offices of the Control, Verification and Inspection Commission on the 31st floor of the UN headquarters building overlooking New York's East River, reports AFP. Copies of the expurgated report, sealed in unmarked envelopes about 10

cm thick, were being picked up by representatives of the 10 non-permanent members.

Iraq handed over the full document to Mr Hans Blix's UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) on 7 December and full copies were given to the five permanent members of the Security Council — UK, China, France, Russia and the USA — the world's declared nuclear powers.

The edited 3,000-page version being distributed last night was stripped of sensitive material that could be used to further a nascent nuclear programme and hence could not be entrusted to the non-permanent council members, which include Syria.

Alfonso Valdieso, the ambassador of Colombia, which chairs the council this month, said the expurgated document would be sent to the member governments after Mr Blix explains it to them tomorrow.

Iraq's material may have been legally obtained

Just for India

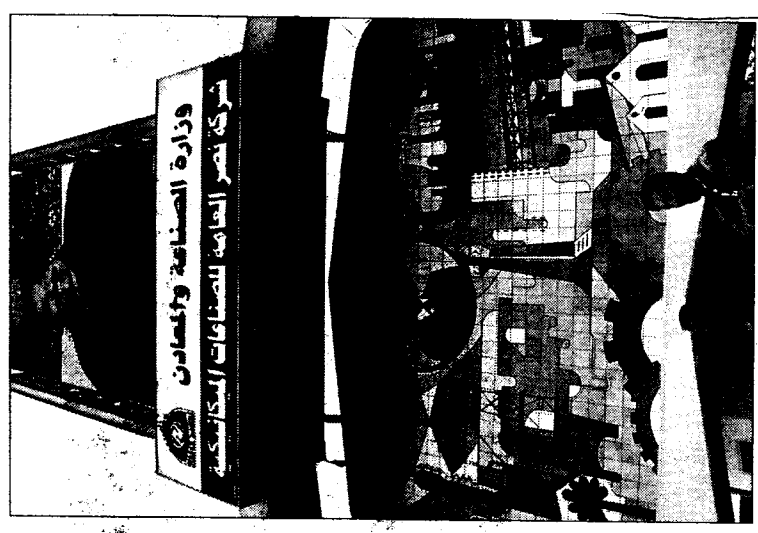
UNHQ, Dec. 18. — Iraq might have obtained legally the material that it put to use in building weapons of mass destruction from several companies in the USA, UK, France, Japan and Sweden, diplomats say.

The inference drawn from the declaration by Iraq on its status of WMD given to the UN is that Baghdad might have diverted material that it legally obtained for use other than it declared, they say.

British, Aussie troops Iraq-bound

A British task force will be heading towards Iraq within weeks, newspapers reported today, even though the government insisted that no decision had been taken on military action against President Saddam Hussein, reports AFP from London. *The Independent* daily said a deployment would be ordered even if there is no proof that Saddam's government is in material breach of the UN resolution on weapons of mass destruction.

The paper said that that more than 40,000 army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel, as well as about 100 tanks, would contribute to a US-led coalition army of more than 250,000, which could go into action as early as the end of next month.



Officials walk before a mural of Saddam at al-Taji, as they wait for UN inspectors on Wednesday. — AFP

The Daily Telegraph put the figure of at more than 20,000 troops. A large force parked on Iraq's borders would have a "coercive and persuasive" effect on Baghdad, officials told the *Independent*.

Australian government has ordered its defence forces to prepare for a possible war against Iraq, although no decision to send troops has been made, Prime Minister Mr John Howard said today, reports AP from Canberra.

Responding to a newspaper report that Australia is preparing for a possible combat in March, Howard said "naturally the defence forces are involved in some contingency arrangements; they must do that in the event that they're called upon." Mr Howard said "at a political level" no decision has been made to be involved.

"The occasion for taking that decision has not as yet arisen and I hope it doesn't arise," he said. A staunch supporter of President Bush's hard-line stance against Baghdad, Mr Howard has ruled out supporting American forces in a military strike, with or without a UN mandate.

Canberra sent 150 Special Air Service commandos to Afghanistan for more than a year and has warships and air force planes deployed in the region. Last month the government said it would bring the commandos home by Christmas, igniting speculation they were being brought back ahead of being sent to Iraq.

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BAGHDAD / LIST OF SOURCES

Iraq misused Western material, say diplomats

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19/12

UNITED NATIONS, DEC 18. Iraq might have obtained legally, the material that it put to use in building weapons of mass destruction, from several companies in the U.S., Britain, France, Japan and Sweden, diplomats say.

The inference drawn from the declaration by Iraq on its status of WMD given to the U.N. is that Baghdad might have diverted material that it legally obtained for use other than it declared, they say. Meanwhile, 10 non-permanent members of the 15-member Council were given the edited version of the more than 12,000 page declaration given by Iraq.

Diplomats said the abridged version, from which recipe for manufacturing weapons of mass destruction and the names of the companies from which Baghdad obtained materials, had been deleted, ran into some 3,500 pages.

Some other material, including annexes, would be given to them next week. The part of the declaration which related to Iraq's nuclear weapons programme and was vetted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and was delivered on compact discs.

Most of the members, who received copies yesterday, immediately sent the document, which weighed some 5 kg, to their capitals for analysis.

Dozens of suppliers, most in



Scientists analyse air, water, soil and dust samples, gathered by the U.N. arms inspectors in Iraq, in one of the laboratories of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Seibersdorf, east of Vienna, Austria, on Wednesday. — AP

Europe, the U.S. and Japan, provided the components and know-how Iraq needed to build an atomic bomb, according to Iraq's 1996 accounting of its nuclear programme.

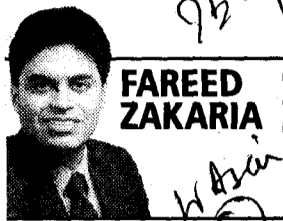
The secret declaration is virtually identical to the one submitted to the U.N. inspectors on December 7, according to UN officials.

The reports have not been made public to prevent nuclear know-how from falling into the wrong hands and also to protect the names of companies that wittingly or unwittingly sup-

plied Iraq with the means to make nuclear weapons. U.N. officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the only difference between the two reports was that the latest had a 300-page section in Arabic on civilian nuclear programmes and a slightly larger typeface that stretched it to 2,100 pages.

That foreign companies helped Iraq has long been known, and some of them have been identified before, but the Iraqi accounting adds up to the most exhaustive list so far of companies involved. — AP

Between Q and N, same difference



WHAT country in the Middle East supports a flourishing terrorist network and is steadily acquiring weapons of mass destruction? If you said Iraq, you're one letter off. It's Iran, which the State Department has long branded "the most active state sponsor of terrorism in the world."

Last week Washington produced satellite photographs to demonstrate that Iran was "actively working on a nuclear-weapons programme." Why is a state with vast oil and natural-gas reserves investing so heavily in nuclear power? (The only other oil state that said it needed nuclear reactors was... Iraq.) It would be like Saudi Arabia's building windmills.

Iran is also a vigorous exporter of Islamic fundamentalism. For two decades now Tehran has funded radical Islamic movements, scholars and centres around the world. At its worst Iran is Iraq plus Saudi Arabia, all in one country.

And yet many observers look at Iran and see it as the most hopeful place in the Middle East. They point out that it holds elections, has a reformist president, and its women have more political

money and power.

The clerics have created a network of supporters and enforcers who keep things tightly under control. There are several shadowy gangs of thugs—the largest of them a Hitler Youth-type group called the Basij—that go around terrorizing people. They operate above and beyond the law, breaking up demonstrations, even those that have been approved by local authorities. Then there is the secret police. One of the ironies of Iran today is that the mullahs came to power riding a wave of fear over the shah's dreaded Savak. But the only institution of the old regime that has been maintained, indeed fortified, has been the Savak, now called the Savama.

Despite having run the economy into the ground, there is a powerful minority in Iran that has greatly benefited from the revolution. The clerics use their oil loot to keep happy a cadre of religious leaders, corrupt bureaucrats, student revolutionaries and Army officers. These people will no suddenly mellow into liberal democrats because they watch students protesting. The mullahs must be pushed.

The strategy for reforming Iran will have to be quite different from that for Iraq. Iraq requires a hard (military) strategy, Iran a soft (political) one.

The most hopeful aspect of Iran's tragedy is that it has dimmed the allure of Islamic



Iran's democracy is a sham. Khatami is a figurehead, allowed to give high-minded speeches and do little. In some ways Iran is more closed today than it was when he was elected in 1997: over 80 reformist newspapers have been shut down in the last few years

rights than in many Arab countries. But Iran's democracy is a sham. The president, Mohammed Khatami, is a figurehead, allowed to give high-minded speeches and do little else. Almost three quarters of the way through his reign, he has accomplished virtually nothing by way of political reform. In some ways Iran is more closed today than it was when he was elected in 1997. For example, more than 80 reformist newspapers have been shut down in the last few years.

The fundamental mistake people make about today's Iran is to assume that the reformers—who speak in tones that the West can understand—wield power. There have always been such figures. The first president of the Islamic republic was Abolhassan Bani Sadr, a Paris-educated liberal. He lasted a year. Iran is a theocracy; the reformers and moderates are window dressing. Real power rests with a tiny clerical establishment.

That power is now under serious challenge. Students are protesting in Tehran by the thousands. The middle classes have expressed their disgust with the regime by voting in every recent election for the most anti-regime candidate on the ballot. Most important, leading clerics are criticizing the regime and distancing themselves from it. A brave professor, Hashem Aghajari, has dared the regime to execute him for his "crime"—which was to advocate publicly the separation of mosque and state. But this is not an equal fight. The mullahs have all the

politics. Iranians now have a visceral disgust with clerics in power, a backlash that is more likely to produce the separation of mosque and state than scholarly writings about an Islamic reformation. Washington should make a major effort to publicize the mullahs' greed. It can obtain—from Switzerland, Luxembourg, wherever—the hard evidence that will show Iranians that their, sainted leaders are as corrupt as Africa's worst tin-pot tyrants. Iranians already suspect this, but they cannot know the extent of the damage.

Washington should also fund the satellite-television stations, many beaming out of Los Angeles, that have become manna for information-starved Iranians. Most of their programs are not particularly political, but news, entertainment, fashion—all harmless windows into the modern world—are the slow killers of a closed society. Many of these stations are struggling for lack of money. Small sums could make a big difference.

Gilles Kepel, France's leading scholar of the Middle East, was in Tehran recently. At a dinner party an Iranian woman came up to him in utter exasperation and said, "Can you believe that those peasants in Afghanistan have been liberated and we have to keep wearing this ridiculous higab (veil)?" The lady might have to wait. Unlike Afghanistan, Iran will have to liberate itself. But we can help.

(Courtesy Newsweek Inc)

7 DEC 2002

More UN inspectors pour into Iraq

Baghdad: Iraqi foreign minister



Naji Sabri

Naji Sabri has accused the United States of waging an "undeclared war" on his country as Washington continued its military build-up in the Gulf and the United Nations poured more weapons inspectors into Iraq.

Amid all the developments, Iraqi dissidents meeting in London were struggling to reach an agreement on a blueprint for a post-Saddam Iraq, amid differences on the make up of a body that would speak for the various opposition groups, after two days of talks in London.

The more than 300 delegates at the two-day conference were due to name a committee that would coordinate the disparate opposition groups and act as an "interlocutor" with world and regional powers.

Also in London was Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, on a mission to urge a peaceful solution to the Iraqi crisis. Syria, the only current Arab member of the UN security council, voted for resolution 1441, which is the basis for current UN arms inspections in Iraq.

The inspectors have started asking Iraqi industry officials for the names of scientists involved in the country's former nuclear programme, an Iraqi spokesman said.

A UN team made the inquiry on

Sunday during an inspection of the glass and ceramic company, in Ramadi, 100 km west of Baghdad, an Iraqi foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement carried by the official Iraqi news agency.

It was the first time that Baghdad or the UN have admitted that international experts are also collecting data on those involved in Iraq's former or suspected arms programmes during their daily inspections since

they resumed on November 27.

The IAEA team also "asked who were the main foreign suppliers of the company, its links to the university of Al-Anbar" in Ramadi, before inspecting the facility and carrying out a gamma ray survey of the site and the surrounding area, he added.

Meanwhile, warplanes from the US-British coalition have struck targets in southern Iraq for the second day in a row, after encountering hostile fire during one of their patrol missions, the US central command said.

It said the fighter jets used precision-guided munitions to hit an Iraqi mobile radar and cable repeater sites located near the cities of an Nasiriyah, approximately 160 kilometres southeast of Baghdad, and Basra.

In another related development, one of Japan's hi-tech Aegis destroyers left on Monday for the Indian Ocean to beef up Tokyo's logistic support for the US-led military campaign in Afghanistan, despite objections at home.

The 7,250-ton 'Kirishima' became the first Japanese warship equipped with a state-of-the-art guided missile weapons system to participate in Japan's assistance to the US forces.

The departure of the vessel came shortly after US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage visited Japan and other US allies in the region to drum up support for possible military action against Iraq. AFP

No signs of N-arms in Iraq: IAEA chief

Abu Dhabi: UN arms inspectors are making good progress in Iraq and have so far found no evidence of nuclear or chemical weapons production there, according to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) head Mohamed Elbaradei.

Mr Elbaradei warned, however, that Iraq must continue to cooperate to avert war.

"Now we are making good progress in having Iraq co-operate," Mr Elbaradei said during a lecture in Abu Dhabi on Sunday.

With the implementation of the United Nations' new disarmament resolution 1441, "the use of force no longer appears as the first option but is now regarded as the last resort. AFP

17 DEC 2002

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Acrimony at Iraqi Opposition meet in London

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, DEC. 14. Expatriate Iraqi Opposition groups, backed by Britain and America, have issued a provisional blueprint for a post-Saddam Iraq after a meeting here amid reports of continuing deep divisions among the ambitious exiled leaders.

The blueprint, described as a "set of principles" around which future discussions would take place, envisages a democratic, multi-ethnic and federal Iraq but sharp differences over details remained and observers warned of a bitter "power struggle" ahead.

The document also outlines plans for a transitional administration which would govern Iraq after the hypothetical "fall" of Saddam Hussein until an elected Government is in place as happened in Afghanistan after the collapse of the Taliban regime.

But even as the blueprint was being distributed acrimony broke out among the delegates with some groups accusing others of "hijacking" the agenda. The main target of attack was the Iraqi National Congress (INC), once the hot favourite of



The Iraqi Kurd leaders, Jalal Talabani (left), Masoud Barzani (right), and the U.S. envoy, Zaimal Khalil Zad, at the Iraqi National Congress (INC) in London on Saturday. — AFP

Washington and architect of several failed attempts in the nineties to overthrow the Saddam government. It was accused, particularly by Kurdish groups, of trying to "take over" the event by "exaggerating" its influence.

Critics of the INC leader Ahmed Chalabi called him a "Western puppet" and openly questioned his claim to "represent" the people of Iraq. They said the reason why he "sabotaged" plans for a similar meet-

ing in Brussels recently was that he feared that he would be overshadowed by parties which had greater influence in Iraq. They also pointed out that his personal influence even in Washington had declined after allegations of corruption.

There was also widespread scepticism about American aims and motives. Representatives of Kurdish communities, whose previous efforts to take on the Saddam regime collapsed for want of timely U.S.

support, alleged that Washington was simply using the Opposition groups to push its own agenda and might dump them once its purpose had been served as it did in the past.

The meeting, the largest gathering of Iraqi dissidents abroad, attracted nearly 300 delegates from six groups-INC, four Kurdish parties and the Constitutional Monarchy Movement-which hope to lead a post-Saddam Iraq. But such was the mood of acrimony that, according to reports, one delegate was overheard telling another: "Just you wait until we have democracy in Iraq and I'll throw you on jail."

The feuding groups, each pursuing their own agendas, include several retired generals who claim they still have sufficient clout in the army to mobilise it against Mr. Hussein with the U.S. support. But they are not trusted by many of the 'civilian' parties which accuse them of having been once part of Saddam's repressive regime.

Efforts by London and Washington to bring such disparate elements on a common platform as a viable alternative to the Saddam regime have had a limited success and Iraqi ob-

servers warned that the divisions were likely to deepen as prospects of real power loomed closer.

"They have had 12 years to unite on common aims. Instead they have looked to the U.S., Iran, Turkey or Syria. It is too late now to do in two months what they should have been doing since 1990," a senior Kurdish leader Mahmoud Othman said even as a scramble broke out over the constitution of a 50-member advisory panel to guide the 'transition' to a 'new' Iraq. Members of the panel are expected to play a key role in the run-up to a "regime change" in Baghdad.

Despite the hype over the meeting, seasoned Iraqi watchers were sceptical about the prospects of an Opposition united front emerging any time soon.

But an INC spokesman insisted that the groups were united. "We are united and we want to lay down in a formal framework what we have been discussing for many months — that is democratic, free Iraq, that the people of Iraq can choose the Government they want and choose who governs them," he told BBC

Iran pursuing nuclear programme: U.S.

WASHINGTON, DEC. 14. A nuclear fuel production plant and research laboratory Iran is constructing will be underground, the State Department said on Friday.

The department spokesman, Richard Boucher, said satellite imagery showed that some structures at the Natanz plant in central Iran already were being covered with earth.

"Iran' clearly intended to harden and bury that facility," Mr. Boucher said. "That facility was probably never intended by Iran to be a declared component of the peaceful (nuclear) programme." Instead, he said, "Iran has been caught constructing a secret underground site where it could produce missile material."

An Iranian Government spokesman, Abdollah Ramezanzadeh, said on Friday in Teheran that Natanz "is not under the ground."

He insisted that Iran's nuclear facilities are for peaceful purposes even as Iran cancelled a U.N. visit to Natanz and another construction site.

Mr. Boucher said reports of the secret facilities Iran is constructing "reinforce our already grave concern that Iran is seeking

technology to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons."

He said a state as rich in oil and gas as Iran would not gain economically by building costly nuclear fuel facilities. "I'd point out that Iran flares more gas (from its oil fields) annually than the equivalent energy its desired reactors would produce," Mr. Boucher said.

He urged Iran to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency and comply with its rules requiring complete disclosure of plant design information no later than 180 days before construction starts. "Iran has not accepted that obligation," Mr. Boucher said. "As a first step, that's something they should do."

Mr. Boucher said the United States would continue to work with other countries to get them to refrain from nuclear cooperation with Iran and block Teheran's covert efforts to buy or acquire sensitive nuclear equipment and expertise.

He said he did not know if the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, discussed Iran's activities in a telephone call on Friday with the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov.

Some 600 Russian specialists are working

on an \$800-million project to build a nuclear reactor in southern Iran that is supposed to go on line in the next few months.

The United States has expressed concern that the planned 1,000 mega watt reactor will help advance Iran's weapons programme.

But Russia has insisted that the nuclear plant would serve purely civilian purposes and remain under international supervision.

CNN had on Thursday cited unnamed U.S. officials as claiming that American satellites had spotted two Iranian places, one in the central city of Arak and the other in Natanz in the Isfahan province, which suggested they could be used for making nuclear weapons.

A spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry stressed that the country's nuclear energy activities were for "peaceful objectives" and denounced the U.S. claims as being aimed at diverting the world opinion from the Zionist Israeli regime's threats.

"Iran believes it has the right to carry out necessary researches for peaceful use of nuclear energy and no country can deprive it from this natural right," he said. — AP, PTI

THE HINDU

15 DEC 2002

Dossier omits chemical agents: USA

Press Trust of India

NEW YORK, Dec. 13. — US Intelligence agencies have reached a preliminary conclusion that Iraq's 12,000-page declaration of its weapons programmes fails to account for chemical and biological agents missing when inspectors left the country four years ago, US officials and UN diplomats said today.

The dossier leaves open a host of questions, like why Baghdad was seeking to buy uranium in Africa and high-technology materials that the USA and Britain said were destined for a programme to enrich uranium. The document is under review in Washington and at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

Baghdad insisted today that its inventory of banned weapons was "truthful and complete" amid reports that hawks in Washington regarded it as so "laughable" as to constitute immediate grounds for war. "Iraq's declaration on its weapons programmes is truthful and complete. (There are) no omissions in it," General Hossam Mohammed Amin, Iraq's chief liaison with UN weapons inspectors, told the official daily Al-Iraq.

The omissions pose a new challenge for the Bush administration, as it has to de-

side whether to declare that Iraq has failed to meet requirements set by UN and whether to use that failure as a justification for war. "What's remarkable is how little new there is, and how little effort was made to try to explain gaps that everyone knew were there since UNSCOM," an US official told New York Times, referring to the UN agency that conducted weapons inspections in Iraq in 1998.

A UN diplomat said: "Our preliminary assessment is that much of the declaration seems to be recycled. They are claiming they have no new weapons of mass destruction." Another US official told the Times that there were "omissions big enough to drive a tank through", like explanations on what happened to the 550 shells filled with mustard gas and 150 bombs containing biological agents which UN could not account for in the late 1990s. Work has begun on a point-by-point comparison of the document with their intelligence about Iraqi sites, focusing chiefly on omissions. Within the administration, a debate has broken out over how much intelligence information to declassify to refute Saddam's contentions.

Rumsfeld calls for patience: US defence secretary Mr



Iraqi workers stand in front of a mural painting of President Saddam Hussein as they open the main gate of the Ibn Haitham engineering facility at Al-Taji, 30 km north of Baghdad, for visiting UN arms inspectors on Friday. — AFP

Donald H Rumsfeld has rejected suggestions that the USA was eager for war with Iraq, adds AP from Qatar. US officials plan to spend

the next few weeks scrutinising the weapons declaration compiled by Iraq. Mr Rumsfeld spoke yesterday inside a partially completed

press center being built at Camp As Sayliyah, a base in Qatar that likely would be used as a command post in any conflict with Iraq.

Iraq's olive branch to UN envoy

Press Trust of India

UNHQ, Dec. 13. — In an apparent effort to show that it is implementing the Security Council resolutions, Iraq has expressed its intention to cooperate with the UN envoy who is trying to resolve Kuwait-related issues left over from the 1991 Gulf War.

In a letter to the United Nations, Baghdad said it has lifted its ban on visits by the envoy, Mr Yuli Vorontsov, and invited him to Iraq for the first time.

Secretary-General Mr Kofi Annan had appointed Mr Vorontsov in February 2000 to persuade Iraq to return the Kuwaiti property it seized during the attack and take up the cases of Kuwaitis reported missing since then. But Iraq declined to receive him, accusing him of being hostile to it.

Mr Annan refuted the charge but Mr Vorontsov could not initiate any action. Iraq's UN Ambassador Mohammed Al-Douri sent the letter on Wednesday inviting Mr Vorontsov to visit Baghdad as the guest of foreign minister Mr Naji Sabri.

From page 1

QUATTROCCHI:

evidence, he told reporters, pointing that in view of the tenor of the proceedings before the High Court, the verdict was on "expected lines". "We were not given a chance and this is what we have today," he said, describing the High Court's decision as a "summary verdict" that he found "distressing".

The Kuala Lumpur judge — who had recently observed that the Indian and Malaysian governments had jumped the gun by sending

the extradition to court before examining it carefully — however, held in his order that the Indian side had failed to establish if the crimes Quattrocchi is accused of in India were considered an offence under Malaysian law.

"In my opinion sufficient material must be placed before the court at the commencement of the extradition inquiry to show inter alia, that the fugitive criminal is an accused person," the court said, observing that the offences alleged are open to doubt. "It will not serve its purpose if a party is left guessing ...from pages and pages of

documents that have been supplied."

"If he is not an accused person then there can be no extradition proceedings against him. It would thus be a folly to go through the process of extradition inquiry only to realise at the end of it that the person whose extradition is sought is only suspected to have committed an extradition offence and is not an accused."

ANEES:

It was also possible that the release could have been part of a deal for divulging information on Al-Qaida.

This is not the first time that Anees has come close to falling in New Delhi's hands. But the end has always been similar. When he was caught in Bahrain in January 1996, UAE promptly sought his custody as they suspected his involvement in some offences. He was released by UAE within a matter of days.

Two years later, UAE

caught him on the suspicion that he had murdered Irfan Goga who went missing in November 1998. Again, he was let off ostensibly — even as a CBI team was preparing to leave to seek his extradition — because Dubai Police realised they did not have evidence to keep him behind bars. This time, it was a court which released him, in spite of an Interpol red corner alert, reportedly because police could not substantiate its suspicions of his involvement in the murder with evidence.

Incidentally, till this afternoon, the CBI director Mr PC Sharma, maintained that the UAE had not yet rejected the agency's deportation request. "We hope that a healthy trend of exchanging criminal between the two countries would continue uninterrupted," he said, adding that though a deportation request was already pending with the UAE authorities, the agency was also moving an extradition request as asked by the Interpol at Abu Dhabi.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2002

NEED FOR IMPARTIAL EVALUATION

THE THREAT OF military action against Iraq would appear to have been pushed back till scrutiny is completed of the extensive documentation submitted by Baghdad to the United Nations weapons inspectors, and judgment passed on whether this declaration constitutes a comprehensive confession of all aspects of its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programme. If Iraq has, indeed, made a full disclosure in the 12,000 pages that have been handed over, it would be possible to track down the means and the facilities by use of which nuclear, chemical and biological weapons (and the ingredients for the same) were produced. With this information on hand weapons inspectors from the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would be able to dismantle the facilities, destroy the stockpiles and set up systems to ensure that the infrastructure for a WMD programme is never recreated. If events do unfold in this manner there would no longer exist a moral justification for military action against Iraq and the requirements of the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 would have been fulfilled. However, the scrutiny of Iraq's declaration will take several weeks at the least and there is no guarantee that all those studying the documents will agree on an assessment that Baghdad has laid bare its entire record in respect of a WMD capability. Meanwhile, the U.S. administration is proceeding steadily ahead with its engineering of a coalition of Iraqi forces, that it hopes will militarily oppose and eventually replace the regime of President Saddam Hussein, and also with a build-up of its armed forces in the region. In the latest manifestation of Washington's calculated ambiguity, the U.S. Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, has laid down certain benchmarks for Iraqi behaviour that stretch and/or go beyond the ambit of Resolution 1441.

While stating that Washington was not likely to take a decision on possible military action

soon and that it would take into account the response of other Security Council members to the Iraqi declaration, Mr. Rumsfeld has nevertheless indicated that the U.S. could consider two possible developments as justifications for such action. The first of the two contingencies that Mr. Rumsfeld has referred to does find mention in the relevant U.N. resolution which could, therefore, be said to confer legitimacy on military action triggered by such a development. In drawing up plans for the dismantling of Baghdad's WMD capability, the Security Council believed that all the details could be uncovered only if Iraqi personnel, intimately connected with the programme, were allowed to leave Iraq with their families and thus be given the scope to speak freely. If they were not to be allowed to travel abroad the U.S. could make a case — though not a very sound one — that Iraq was blocking the inspections. Mr. Rumsfeld also indicated that the option of an escalated military operation could be considered if Baghdad persisted with its practice of shooting at U.S. and allied warplanes that enforce 'no-fly zones' in northern and southern Iraq. The whole process of demarcating and enforcing 'no-fly zones' rests on very dubious interpretations of past Security Council resolutions, Iraq will continue to resist this U.S.-led operation and Mr. Rumsfeld's reference to this contingency smacks of a dangerous tendency to hunt for justifications for a military strike.

Until Iraq's declaration is thoroughly scrutinised it would be difficult to say whether or not Baghdad has finally decided to come clean on its WMD programme and has thus effectively agreed to the dismantling of it. It is possible to speculate either way at the moment but the objective conditions — the unanimity with which the world has called for the dismantling of its WMD potential — ought to have convinced Iraq that it cannot obfuscate any longer. Iraq has made its choice and its disclosures should be thoroughly and impartially evaluated before judgment is passed and action taken.

14 DEC 2002

US gets uncensored copies of Iraqi declaration on arms

United Nations: US and UN experts began analysing on Tuesday Iraq's mammoth arms declaration that contains detailed information about efforts to build a nuclear bomb, research on biological warfare and what could be an embarrassing list of suppliers for its illegal weapons.

In a controversial move, the US obtained copies of the document delivered to the UN headquarters, duplicated it quickly, and then

shared them with four other permanent security council members. Britain and France received their copies in Washington on Monday while Russia and China asked for it to be flown back to New York, diplomats said.

The other 10 rotating council members will get only an edited copy, possibly in a week, with sensitive portions that could contain recipes for making dangerous weapons excised by the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (Unmovic). Its executive chairman, Hans Blix, is expected to tell council members how long this process will take. He has assigned the document to 15 experts in an analysis and assessment unit, headed by a former French military officer and chemical weapons specialist, Jean-Louis Roland.

In Washington, experts gathered at a central place and then expected to divide up sections of the nearly 12,000-page document that details Iraq's weapons efforts and items with civilian as well as military uses as required under a November 8 security council resolution. Security council members on Friday had decided everyone should receive the purged report, a move that apparently angered the United States.

After a flurry of phone calls over the weekend, all but Syria agreed to the arrangement to allow the five powers to receive the document immediately. Mexico, which had also objected, relented after secretary of state Colin Powell telephoned foreign minister Jorge Castanega.

Several council members, however, have told the US that none of the excised material should be a basis for a "material breach" — words that could allow war — because they would have no way of judging its veracity.

While the US says it can declare a material breach, the other 14 council members, including close ally Britain, say the November 8 resolution requires violations to be verified by UN arms inspection commissions.

The White House, however, was low-keyed on Monday. Reuters

Bush announces support to Iraqi opposition

Washington: As part of the efforts to herald a regime change in Iraq, US President George W. Bush on Tuesday announced assistance to six Iraqi opposition groups to help overthrow Saddam Hussein and establish democracy in Iraq.

Certifying the six opposition groups — the Assyrian Democratic Movement, the Iraqi Free Officers and Civilians Movement, the Iraqi National Front, the Iraqi National Movement, the Iraqi Turkmen Front and the Islamic Accord of Iraq — as democratic, Mr Bush has qualified them for assistance to help overthrow Saddam Hussein.

Mr Bush also ordered the defence department to furnish up to \$92 million in defence articles from the department of defence and defence services and military education and training to another set of six groups.

The group which includes the Iraqi National Accord, Iraqi National Congress, Kurdistan Democratic Party, Movement for Constitutional Monarchy, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq were being given US assistance. PTI

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 DEC 2002

U.N. team searches Saddam palace

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), DEC. 3. Testing the United Nations mandate that allows them to visit any site, international weapons inspectors searching for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, for the first time, entered one of the palaces of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, without advance notice.

The visit assumes importance as it shows that Iraq is complying with the recent U.N. Security Council resolution that allows the inspectors to carry out surprise inspections anywhere and at anytime in Iraq. On the sixth day of their probe, inspectors spent one and a half hours inside the Al-Sajoud palace on the banks of the river Tigris in west Baghdad.

The inspection team did not make any comments after concluding the visit. Access to Mr. Hussein's many presidential sites was an explosive issue in the previous round of inspections in the 1990s. The Iraqis had sought to bar the U.N. inspectors, leading to difficult negotiations between the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and Mr. Hussein. The inspectors, as a result of these talks, were allowed to visit key presidential sites with diplomatic escort and notice.

As the weapons probe gathers momentum, there are early signs that the inspectors are asking the Iraqis to do some explaining.

According to the BBC, the Iraqis have told the inspectors that they had tried to import aluminium tubes for building weapons, which is a violation of the U.N. sanctions regime imposed against Iraq after the Gulf War.

However, the Iraqis, according to the inspectors, have categorically denied the U.S. and British allegations that it was seeking these tubes as part of its nuclear weapons programme. On the contrary, it wanted these items for building multi-barrel rocket launchers. In any case, the import of the tubing never materialised.

In another indication that the inspectors might be beginning to mount pressure on



HAVING THEIR WAY: The U.N. team leader, Dimitri Perricos (centre), with Iraqi officials before the arms inspectors entered the Al-Sajoud Presidential palace in Baghdad on Tuesday. — Reuters

the Iraqis, the U.N. announced on Monday that some equipment that the inspectors

Iraq declaration on Dec. 7

BAGHDAD, DEC. 3. Iraq will hand over a written declaration of its weapons arsenal to the United Nations on Saturday, a day ahead of the December 8 deadline, a senior official told reporters today.

The declaration would be given to the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Baghdad to pass on to their headquarters, said Hosam Mohammad Amin, head of the National Monitoring Directorate. — AFP

were interested in was missing when they visited Karama complex in Baghdad on Monday. A spokesman for the U.N. team

said the Iraqis had informed them that the equipment was shifted to a new location. The Iraqi side has also reportedly said that some of the equipment may have been destroyed during U.S. air raids.

Eighteen U.S. cruise missiles had targeted the Karama General Co. complex in December 1998, soon after the first inspection team had pulled out of Iraq.

It is alleged that the facility has been a nucleus of Iraq's missile development plans.

Iraq, under a new U.N. Security Council mandate, is required to shut down any nuclear, chemical or biological weapons programmes. An earlier resolution bans Iraq from building missiles that have a range above 144 km.

As the inspections gather steam, the U.S. and Britain have heightened their coercive diplomacy.

UN inspectors search Iraqi presidential palace

Baghdad: UN arms inspectors searched one of President Saddam Hussein's large palace compounds in Baghdad on Tuesday in the biggest test of Iraqi cooperation since inspections for weapons of mass destruction resumed.

As a December 8 UN deadline for Iraq to come clean on whether it has banned weapons approaches, US President George W. Bush warned Saddam Hussein against trying to deceive the inspectors and said he was not encouraged by Baghdad's attitude.

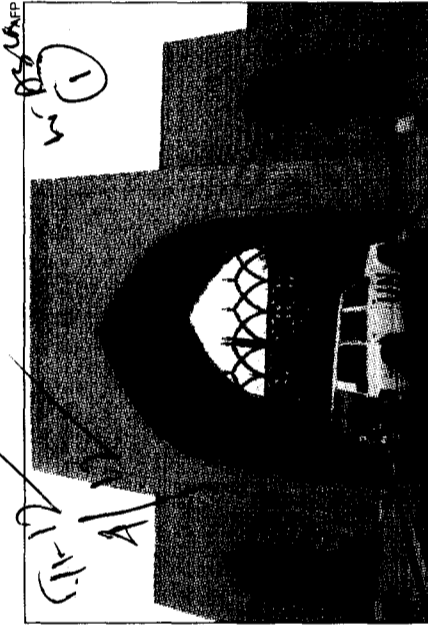
Teams of inspectors entered Al-Sofoud palace, one of several presidential compounds across Iraq, in central Baghdad. One team, in six white UN cars, drove up to the palace gate shortly before 9 a.m. (0600 GMT) accompanied by Iraqi monitoring officials in a separate vehicle.

The convoy was held up for a few minutes before guards opened the gates and let them onto a road lined with palm trees and leading to a large compound. Other inspectors entered from another gate.

A witness said guards at the entrance were surprised by the UN convoy's arrival and at first refused to open the gate. Some inspectors left their cars and demanded they be let in.

"Open the gate, we want to come in," an inspector told the guards. "We can't, we are waiting for orders", one guard replied. The inspector protested and a few minutes later the gates were opened.

According to UN Security Council guidelines, access to sites should be immediate and unfettered. The inspectors left



A UN vehicle carrying arms inspectors waits outside the presidential palace in Baghdad on Tuesday. The inspectors visited the sensitive site for the first time since they resumed work last week.

the U.N. experts returned to Baghdad last month armed with a tough Security Council resolution giving Iraq a last chance to disarm or face a possible war led by the United States.

Meanwhile, speaking at the Pentagon on Monday, President George Bush said

Iraq must supply a "credible and complete list of its nuclear, biological and chemical weapons by Sunday" — the December 8 deadline set by the UN security council.

"Any act of delay, deception or defiance will prove that President Saddam Hussein has not adopted the path of compliance and has rejected the path of peace," Mr Bush told military leaders.

"So far the steps are not encouraging," Mr Bush said. He noted that Iraq recently had fired on US and British planes enforcing the "no-fly" zones in the country and Baghdad had sent letters to the United Nations that he described as "filled with protests and falsehoods".

In the latest encounter, US and British warplanes attacked targets in the northern "no-fly" zone on Monday in the second raid in two days against Iraqi air defences.

In his most detailed comments on Iraq since the weapons inspections began

last week, Mr Bush made it clear that Baghdad must come clean by Sunday.

"That declaration must be credible and complete, or the Iraqi dictator will have demonstrated to the world once again that he has chosen not to change his behaviour," Mr Bush said.

Iraqi foreign minister Naji Sabri said in an interview in an Iraqi weekly published on Tuesday, the United States was trying to blackmail the inspectors by casting doubts over their work.

"The language of disdain used by American officials over the resumption of arms inspections aims at blackmailing the work of the inspectors," Mr Sabri told *Al-Rafidain*. "Iraq will extend all facilities necessary to enable inspectors do their job properly," he added.

An official Iraqi daily dismissed on Tuesday as lies US charges that Baghdad had weapons of mass destruction. REUTERS

THREAT TO IRAQ-I

The American Strategy On Oil

By DIPAK BASU

51-8 1111
Invasion of Iraq by the Anglo-American forces is becoming a reality now. Although the international community is against it, the USA is not listening. Questions can be raised as to why there is so much urgency to take on Iraq when the much more important issue of international terrorism is still unsolved. When Taliban and bin Laden groups are thriving in Pakistan and in countries sympathetic to their cause, what is the reason to attack Iraq. The rationale can be found if we look at the international petroleum market and the possible effect of the invasion of Iraq may have on that market.

The international market for oil (petroleum and its by-products) had undergone a dramatic change in 1974 after the Arab-Israel war. To teach a lesson to the Western countries, the Arab oil producing nations had increased the price of crude petroleum by some 400 per cent in 1974.

Changed equation

Other non-Arab countries had joined in the sudden upsurge of wealth that had started flowing from the oil consuming countries to the oil producers. The effects were felt in India, too, which was forced to pay almost 75 per cent of its export earnings to finance essential imports of oil. Developing countries have suffered the most. The development efforts in Africa were stopped owing to lack of support from Western nations which went into recession and inflation simultaneously.

Very soon the vast earning of the oil producers started flowing back to the banking system of the West and from there to the Latin American countries. That was the decade of cooperation between the West and the Middle Eastern oil producing countries, which has not ended with the Islamic revolution in Iran. Iraq, normally a pro-Soviet country, suddenly became an agent of the Western power and invaded Iran. That attack was financed by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other conservative Arab nations and was equipped by the Western power.

Saudi Arabia at the same time was financing anti-socialist terro-

rists in Nicaragua and Afghanistan. However, the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq has changed the equation suddenly. One of the reasons for that invasion was that both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait since 1985 have tried to keep the price of crude petroleum low by

producing countries and will also harm India, China, and France.

The policy of the current US administration is to have a low price for oil in the international market, which will remove the fear of inflation in the developed countries. The last two inflations in the



producing more, which has harmed the export revenue of Iraq but has helped the economies of developed world significantly to revive from the recession.

Devastating consequences

The possible effects of the invasion on Iraq on the future price of oil can have some important implications. The US plan does not mean only to disarm Iraq but to have complete change of the regime, destroy the entire apparatus of the ruling Bath Party of Iraq, install an occupation government, as it had in Japan from 1945 to 1951. General Tommy Lee, the current commander of the US forces in the Middle East, just like General MacArthur in Japan in 1945, will be the head of the occupation government in Iraq to make sure that a pro-western government can survive in Iraq in future. The United States will also take over the oil fields in Iraq, which will be managed by the Anglo-American oil companies.

The international oil market will be affected very seriously as a result. These would have devastating consequences for Saudi Arabia, Russia, and other major oil

Western countries, that took place during the 70's and 80's, are the result of the two rounds of major upsurge in the international price of crude petroleum by Opec in 1974 and 1979. As a result there were serious recessions of the economies and the resultant high unemployment and reduction in the standard of living in the developed world.

The international oil price went down significantly since 1985 due to the lack of demand and over-production by oil producers. The oil price came down from the height it had achieved during the Gulf war crisis of 1990-91 due to increased production by some countries like Saudi Arabia, when Iraq was not allowed to export oil. The collapse of the oil price in 1996 took place when Iraq was allowed to export oil for essential imports of food. Since 1999, the oil price has gone up when Iraq has expelled the UN weapons inspectors and refused to swap food for oil.

The removal of Saddam Hussein government and installation of an American occupation government will increase the production of oil in Iraq by taking away UN

sanctions and taking Iraq out of the Organisation of the Petroleum Producing countries, which was instrumental in maintaining a relatively high price of oil in the international market through quotas of productions for each member country.

'Learned a lesson'

Britain, Norway and Mexico are not members of Opec, thus blunting the effectiveness of that cartel. Russia, however, is not a member collaborate with Opec having gained significantly from high oil prices. According to Asia Times of Hong Kong and Pravda of Moscow, the US administration wants the price of oil to drop to \$13 per barrel.

The US is encouraging Nigeria to leave Opec to produce more oil. It is asking Russian companies, who want to be listed in the New York Stock Exchange, to increase their production. The US now has permanent military bases in Central Asia and is influencing Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan to increase their oil production. In Venezuela recently, a coup was organised against the elected government of President Chavez who has refused to produce oil beyond the quota set by Opec. President Bush said after the failure of that coup, "Chavez has learned a lesson". The implication is very clear. The invasion of Iraq, which has the second largest oil reserve in the world, will remove all constraints on production and, as a result, the international price of oil may very well drop far below the target level desired by the US.

The consequences for Saudi Arabia and other Gulf oil producers will be devastating as they depend for 90 to 95 per cent of their national income on oil exports alone. Saudi Arabia has financed the war against Iran and the socialist governments of Afghanistan. It has financed US-led terrorism against the countries in Central America and South East Asia. Taliban, which was blessed by Robin Rafael, special assistant of President Clinton in 1995, was financed by Saudi Arabia. However, the equation has changed since bin Laden attacked the American Embassy in Nairobi in 1998 and particularly after 11 September last year.

(To be concluded)

The author belongs to the faculty of Economics, Nagasaki University, Japan.

Baghdad's Account

The 11,800-page document detailing all of Iraq's chemical, biological, industrial and research and development activities could seem like a practical joke on the UN Security Council. But this exercise was necessary because of the demand that Baghdad should provide a complete and accurate account of its stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. Since Baghdad asserts that it has none, the only way of demonstrating this is to list all its activities and challenge the inspectors to verify and disprove them. This way, Iraq has lobbed the ball into the court of the UN inspection team. The US and the UK claim that they have irrefutable proof that Baghdad possesses weapons of mass destruction. Now it is for them to place their intelligence at the disposal of the UN inspection team and seek its verification. In such a case, the UN inspection team's task will be converted to one of examining the veracity of the conclusions reached in these intelligence reports. A likely argument will be that it is not difficult to hide limited quantities of weapons of mass destruction. Besides there are also some unsettled issues from 1998 when the inspectors were pulled out just ahead of the US bombing regarding 360 tonnes of chemical warfare agents, 3,000 tonnes of precursor chemicals and 30,000 munitions for the delivery of chemical and biological agents.

The onerous responsibility of sorting out all these complex issues and presenting a finding to the Security Council now vests with Hans Blix and his team of inspectors. The authority accorded to the UN inspection team to take Iraqi scientists and their families out of the country to interview them will help the team arrive at a finding. At the end of it all, however, it is unlikely there will be a clear conclusion on Baghdad's possession of weapons of mass destruction. At best, the findings can provide some confirmation or refutation of the intelligence provided by the US and UK and about the quantities of materials unaccounted for by Iraq within a certain range. The Security Council will have to decide on a further course of action based on that finding. Whether this will be acceptable to Washington is too early to tell. However, Saddam Hussein has presented the UN inspection team and the Security Council with a tricky challenge which they will find difficult to tackle within the timeframe set in resolution 1441.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 0 DEC 2002

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10,000 join student protests in Teheran

TEHERAN, DEC. 9. More than 10,000 people gathered outside Teheran University on Sunday, defying baton-wielding police in a show of support for reformist students on the campus and a sign of a wider dissatisfaction with the regime.

This was by far the largest coming together of ordinary people in Teheran since student protests began a month ago, although in these difficult times it had to be a demonstration pretending not to demonstrate as regular green-uniformed police kept people moving along the pavements.

It was the first time students have received such a display of public support, and a sign of a more general disillusionment with the authorities.

On campus, about 1,000 reformist students called for the President, Mohammad Khatami, to resign and continued their demand for a referendum on an unspecified question of greater democracy.

Stones were thrown, smashing the windows of buses brought up alongside the university fence to block students from the crowd on the main road.

Since early November, students have been protesting about the case of Hashem Aghajari, a professor at Modarres University in Teheran and prominent reformist, who was sentenced to death for saying people should not blindly follow religious leaders.

Tension has been high since the Basij, Iran's vigilante defenders of the revolution, organised counter rallies and occasionally clashed with students over the past two weeks.

As a result of this tension, Mr. Khatami, while denouncing Mr. Aghajari's verdict as "inappropriate", declined to address the students as he usually does on Students' Day.

The crowd on the streets was made up of a wide cross-section of ordinary Teheranis. One woman wearing the traditional black chador said: "I am basically a religious person, that is why I am wearing the chador; but I feel the same as these women around me wearing manteaus (calf length coats). These people use the cover of religion to lie!"

One of the several middle-age, middle-



DEMANDING CHANGE: Demanding 'referendum', Iranian students flash the victory sign to police as they hold photos of Hashem Aghajari (right), who has been sentenced to death for insulting Islam, and Mohammad Mosaddeq, Iran's national popular Prime Minister in 1950, during "The anti-dictatorship gathering of students" at Teheran University, Teheran, on Saturday. — AP

class women with her continued: "We don't have free speech and we don't have freedom — I have come here to support the students for my children's future."

Among the crowd were many plain-clothes security agents who bundled dozens of people into police cars and videotaped faces in the crowd. At one point, a security agent was surrounded by a catcalling crowd and defended himself with a can of pepper spray.

As he hurried down the street followed by jeers, the crowd began to chant, "Thank you, police!" to the regular police who stood by and did not overtly harass people. The police smiled back; one of them helped an injured old man out of the fray.

Throughout the afternoon, men and women, beaten with truncheons could be seen limping away, supported by friends. One old woman wearing a chador said she had tried to help a man who had been bea-

ten and been doused with pepper spray as a result.

"I had a son in the war," she said, "he is disabled now. These fascists should be ashamed of themselves! They cannot win with force!"

In Revolution Square, a block away from the university, a crowd of police stood under a bronze monument of Ayatollah Khomeini with his hand outstretched as if to the future.

Three hundred soldiers stood by in riot gear. One woman stood on the side of the street crying and shouting at them, "Do you think I am a child that you should beat me?"

Teheran University has 50,000 students and most of those interviewed said they had gone to their classes as usual and had not been involved in the political activities during the day. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2002

Iraqi weapons list to be kept secret: Hans Blix

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, DEC. 7. The United Nations chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, has said that all sensitive material on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons given to the world body by Iraq would be kept secret, even from the United States and other permanent members of the Security Council.

"All the Governments are aware that they should not have access to anything that everyone else does not have access to", Mr. Blix told the media after a closed door session with the Security Council in New York on Friday.

The United Nations is getting ready for the Iraqi handover of its weapons and programmes "list" which, accord-

ing to the top envoy of Baghdad to the world body, is set for 8 p.m. on Saturday in New York.

Indications are that the "list" will be in Arabic and English and could run up to 10,000 pages.

Mr. Blix has argued that some of the material that the Iraqis turn over will require translation before an initial assessment is made on the sensitivity of the documents; and that the Security Council would be briefed "early next week" on the details of the report.

According to Colombia's Ambassador to the U.N., who is currently the President of the Security Council, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the Vienna-based

International Atomic Energy Agency, will be reviewing the documents turned over to the United Nations by Iraq.

If the opinion of Mr. Blix and others is that some of the portions of the Iraqi declaration should be kept secret, it is out of a conviction that the "list" may contain "recipes" for weapons of mass destruction and other information.

The Iraqi envoy to the U.N., Mohammed al-Douri, has said that the declaration will contain a "huge amount of information" and some of this will not be made public.

Part of the interest in New York and Washington is how serious the regime of Saddam Hussein is going to be in meeting its deadline of December 8.

More than the time factor, it has to

do with the seriousness of the "list", for the Bush administration has made it plain that it really has no patience this time around.

The U.N. Resolution 1441 has demanded that Baghdad come out with a "full and complete" disclosure of its various arsenals.

Mr. Blix also took the opportunity on Friday to call on nations to share intelligence on Iraq's programmes.

The United States, for instance, has long argued that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction.

"If the Americans have this evidence, they have to tell the inspectors in Iraq to go find this evidence", Mr. Blix said.

The senior U.N. official brushed

aside pressure from the Bush administration for the weapons inspectors to be more "muscular" in going about the process.

In particular, Washington is convinced that one of the ways to come to grips with the problem in Iraq is to have defections of Iraqi scientists; and one way this could be achieved is by the inspection team insisting on "interviews" outside of Iraq.

At that point, the United States would be able to persuade defections by the scientists under the witness protection programme.

"We are not going to abduct anybody; and we're not serving as a defecation agency", was the response of Mr. Blix.

8 DEC 2002

THE HINDU

Iraq hands over declaration

BAGHDAD, DEC. 7. The Iraqi Government, denying it had weapons of mass destruction, delivered to the United Nations on Saturday its long-awaited declaration detailing its nuclear, chemical and biological programmes.

Iraqi Government vehicles bearing half-a-dozen boxes and bags holding the arms documents entered the U.N. compound on Baghdad's outskirts about 8 p.m. local time, and officials unloaded the material to hand over at a private meeting with U.N. officials inside.

The filing of the more than 12,000 pages of technical detail, required by this weekend under a U.N. resolution, now shifts the Iraq crisis into a new stage, as Washington and Baghdad move step by step toward a crossroads between war and peace.

The declaration "will answer all the questions which have been addressed during the last months and years", Hossam Mohammed Amin, the official who oversaw the declaration's preparation, said earlier in the day. He also said it would name companies and countries that helped Iraq develop weapons of mass destruction in the past, information that could help in prosecutions under other nations' export-control laws.

"I reiterate here Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction," Lt. Gen. Amin told presspersons. "I think if the United States has the minimum level of fairness and braveness, it should accept the report and say this is the truth."

The huge declaration was to be flown out on Sunday on a U.N. plane, to reach the U.N. headquarters in New York and

the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna.

Iraqi officials displayed the documents on Saturday to the international media, including bound copies of volumes devoted separately to nuclear, chemical, biological and missile activities, titled 'Currently Accurate, Full and Complete Declarations'. The mass of paper, in red and blue covers, was accompanied by computer disks, presumably with added information.

The thick reports on past weapons programs and industrial activity will take U.N. experts weeks to analyse and U.N. inspectors months to verify inside Iraq. And U.N. officials said

weeding out data that might help others produce chemical, biological or nuclear weapons would delay handover of material to the Security Council's 15 member nations.

For all the expectation surrounding it, the document was an anti-climax, since it was known that Baghdad would declare it had no chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. — AP

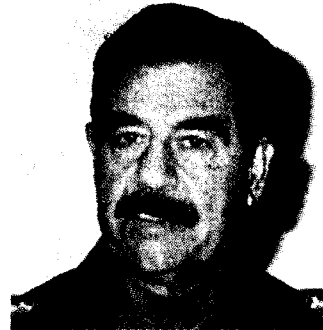
AFP reports from Washington:

In a radio address before Iraq delivered the list to the U.N., the U.S. President, George Bush, warned that the declaration must hold up to U.S. scrutiny if Baghdad to avoid a military attack.

Sorry, Saddam tells Kuwaitis

BAGHDAD, DEC. 7. The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, on Saturday apologised to the Kuwaiti people for his country's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, saying he was not apologising out of weakness but a desire to set the record straight.

In a speech read on national television by the Iraqi Information Minister, Mr. Hussein outlined the events that led to the invasion and said: "We apologise to God about any act that has angered him in the past and that was held against us, and we apologise to you (the Kuwaitis) on the same basis." He said that in 1989, he had tried to reach a peaceful settlement of Iraq's dispute with Kuwait, but that the neighbouring Gulf country's officials were not interested in negotiating. At that time, he



said, American troops were carrying out manoeuvres with Kuwaiti forces, which was a threat to Iraq.

He maintained that Iraq was the victim of a conspiracy by Kuwaiti officials who were siphoning off oil along the two countries' borders that actually belonged to Iraq. — AP

Blix's promise: Page 14

8 DEC 2002

IRAQ / U.N. TEAM EXPANDED

Pace of probe to pick up

W. Bin

BAGHDAD, DEC. 8. Reinforcements who flew into Baghdad on Sunday more than doubled the U.N. inspections team and will accelerate the pace of the probe into Iraq's possible nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs.

A U.N. spokesman, Hiro Ueki, said the group comprised 21 nuclear inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency and four specialists from the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

Mr. Ueki, who arrived with the inspectors from the U.N. rear base in Cyprus, added that 20 to 30 more inspectors, most of them from UNMOVIC, were scheduled to arrive on Tuesday.

Earlier on Sunday at the Baghdad airport, the first of eight helicopters destined for the U.N. operation was being assembled after being flown in as cargo on Saturday. The helicopters will enable the arms monitors to range farther afield on their surprise inspections.

The search began late last month when the first two dozen inspectors returned after a four-year break in the U.N. arms monitoring regime. In the 1990s, under post-Gulf War U.N. resolutions, inspectors destroyed large amounts of Iraqi chemical and biological weapons, and dismantled Iraq's pro-

gramme to try to build nuclear bombs.

In one of the daily inspections on Sunday, a nuclear team paid an unannounced visit to the State Company for Geological Survey and Mining here in the capital, spending about two hours in the two-building complex, which in the past was involved in uranium processes that could help prepare fuel for nuclear bombs.

The company's chief geologist, Moussa Jaafar al-Attayah, called it "an ordinary visit," similar to 10 U.N. inspections of the site in the 1990s. Asked whether he found the inspection humiliating, as some have suggested, Mr. al-Attayah said: "You are right. This is not a welcome visit."

Another team, including chemical specialists, visited a pesticide plant outside Falluja, 50 km west of Baghdad. Pesticide-making equipment and components can be used to produce chemical weapons.

By the end of December some 80 to 100 U.N. experts will be making daily inspections in Iraq, U.N. officials say. So far, the U.N. teams have largely revisited sites inspected by their predecessors in the 1990s to ensure that equipment is where it should be and is producing non-proscribed items. — AP

*HD 19
9/12*

Still focused on Iraq?

5/18 Bush seems to want war regardless 6/12

The inspectors looking for weapons of mass destruction in Saddam Hussein's Iraq have begun their work and they have paid a surprise visit to one of the 19 palace complexes dotted around the country, one of them has as many as 90 buildings in a single compound. By all accounts they have found nothing that was not supposed to be there. It is ~~early~~ days yet, but some reports suggest that inspectors are saying *sotto voce* that a few items, which were there earlier are missing. It is difficult to follow the reasoning. If these allegedly missing items are targeted, then the simple answer is that they should have been taken out the last time, when in fact they were discovered. If they are not suspect then the inspectors need to be told that it is none of their business. Nor is comment relevant about Saddam's lifestyle. It is weapons of a certain type that are targeted, not Saddam's preferences as regards palaces. It may be said that so many palatial compounds for a poor country like Iraq is an anachronism but that is for the Iraqi people to judge, not for inspectors and even less for those who expect positive discoveries from their labour, to pontificate. Iraq has also announced that the required declaration of weapons will be furnished a day in advance of the deadline. This must surprise and indeed disappoint Bush who is itching to go.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan declares himself well pleased with the way the inspections have gone so far and with Iraqi cooperation. He understands his responsibilities to the Security Council, to the latest resolution on Iraq and to the United Nations and it can be assumed that he would not make such a comment lightly. But George Bush is not consoled. He has gone ahead and signed approval of a budget of \$200 billion for the war on Iraq which to his intellect is only postponed and he continues to threaten Saddam with dire consequences instead of like the Secretary-General, welcoming the current hopeful signs. He also continues to build up his arsenal for a war that the rest of the world, except perhaps Tony Blair, fervently prays will never happen; even as his bully-boys and bully girl in Washington monotonously repeat the threats.

Bush is not as stupid as he sounds and behaves. He understands that the current hysteria he has generated in America keeps him at the head of the popularity charts even as it enabled him to wrest control of Congress from the Democrats and was hailed as one of the few Presidents in history to do so. He does not look beyond to the economy and to the other social consequences of altering the whole way of life of the American people because that is too difficult. Howling threats and rattling sabres just as often as he can get in front of a microphone is all he will do until the reckoning in money, material and above all in social costs, in shattered beliefs in the rule of law, in the worth of human life and human personality and liberal values for which America has sacrificed and worked, is forced upon this misguided and dangerous man.

Bush is driving convinced opponents of Islamic fundamentalism to look upon another attack on American interests, now that Osama bin Laden is confirmed to be alive as we have always said, as the only circumstance that will stop Bush in his tracks. American public opinion, once freed of hysteria, is bound to assert itself. It is a thousand pities that it is taking so long.

Saddam gives UN team chance to refute American charges

Baghdad, December 5

PRESIDENT SADDAM Hussein said Thursday he was ready to give UN weapons inspectors a chance to disprove American allegations that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction.

But Washington, which has threatened to go to war unless Iraq can prove it has renounced biological, chemical and nuclear arms programs, insisted it had intelligence information to back its contention.

No inspections were taking place Thursday or Friday because of the Id, but all eyes were on Sunday's deadline for Iraq to come clean about its programs.

Iraq insists that, since it has no such programs, it will merely be listing "dual use technology" that has peaceful as well as military applications.

"Some might claim we didn't give them (the inspectors) the proper chance to disprove the American allegations that Iraq produced weapons of mass destruction during the period of the inspectors' absence," Saddam said in remarks broadcast on Iraqi television, his first comment on the inspections since they resumed last week.

"For that reason we shall provide them with such a chance, after which, if the weaklings remain weak and the cowardly remain cowards, then we shall take the stand that befits our people, principles and mission," he told the Iraqi leadership.

The inspectors have reported nothing but cooperation from Iraq in their visits to 20 suspect sites since November 27.

So far, they have found nothing untoward, although many

of the samples they have taken have yet to be tested.

Preparations for war

In the latest indication of United States preparations for war, Wolfowitz went to Nato headquarters to propose a support role for the alliance in the event of a war, possibly including providing forces and post-conflict peacekeeping.

The New York Times said the Pentagon planned to mobilise thousands of National Guard and Reserve troops to fill military jobs in the event of a conflict. The aircraft carrier Harry S Truman and its battle group were due to depart on Thursday with warplanes and missiles that could be part of an opening salvo in any US-led attack.

Reuters

IRAQ / SUSPECTED SITE'S CHIEF 'TIPPED OFF'

Doubts over nature of visits

BAGHDAD, DEC. 1. Serious doubts crept up over the surprise nature of new arms inspections in Iraq when a U.N. spokesman admitted the head of a suspected weapons site had been given advanced-warning of the visit by the U.N. experts to his facility.

"He was informed the day before (Friday) that the team was coming to remove an air sampler and install a new one," Hiro Ueki told AFP by phone shortly after denying at a press briefing that the U.N. had tipped off the Iraqis.

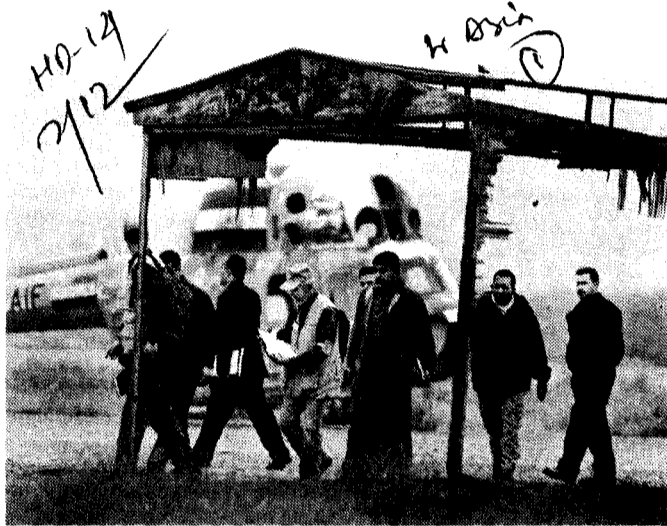
"That is all (there is) to it," the spokesman added in an apparent bid to quash a possible controversy about whether U.N. inspections of suspected weapons sites which resumed on November 27 were really on no-notice basis.

Reporters had pressed Mr. Ueki earlier about remarks by an Iraqi official, Hussein Hammudeh, who told journalists he had prior notice of a visit to his facility by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts.

Mr. Ueki had told the press briefing that "the inspectors arrive unannounced" and that the U.N. does "not notify Iraqis" of planned visits.

But he added that it was not surprising if officials at specific sites expected visits since such sites had been marked for inspection by the former U.N. experts who pulled out of the country in 1998 ahead of U.S. and British air strikes on Iraq.

Later to explain his apparent flip-flop, Mr. Ueki issued a statement elaborating on what he told AFP. He defended the advance notice given to Iraq as



The U.N. disarmament experts visit an Agriculture Ministry compound in Khan Bani Saad, some 25 km south-east of Baghdad, on Sunday. — AFP

purely a matter of logistics, but added the U.N. had also given prior notice to a second inspection site.

Air field inspected

Meanwhile at Khan Bani Sa'ad, the monitors inspected an idle air field north of Baghdad where Iraq once tested devices that can spray deadly microbes.

The current inspectors' predecessors in the 1990s learned that the Iraqis — apparently from this airfield at Khan Bani Sa'ad, 30 km northeast of Baghdad — successfully tested the so-called Zubaiddy device, using it to disperse toxic bacteria from a helicopter.

More than a dozen helicopters, stripped of their motors, sat on the disused tarmac on Sunday as U.N. inspectors

checked the grounds, journalists observed from beyond a distant fence.

The inspectors, who also are hunting for signs of chemical and biological agents, seemed interested in holding tanks that could have been used for aviation fuel.

As usual, the U.N. teams said nothing publicly about the day's mission.

It was the fourth day of renewed inspections, after a four-year break, under a U.N. Security Council mandate for Iraq to finally give up any remaining weapons of mass destruction or face "serious consequences." The United States supported the new U.N. inspections, but threatens war to disarm Iraq and says it will act alone if it believes that is necessary. — AP

2 DEC 2002

THE HINDU

UN arms inspectors swoop on Iraqi military complex

Baghdad: United Nations arms experts swooped on a military industrial complex in Baghdad and a distillery to the northeast on Monday, the fifth day of inspections for alleged Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

A team of inspectors entered unhindered the Karamah (Dignity) compound run by Iraq's Military Industrialisation Commission in the Wazireyah industrial district of the capital. Another team spent a little over an hour at a private distillery that produces alcoholic beverages and nearby abandoned buildings, 30 km northeast of Baghdad. It was not immediately clear why the experts went there.

The inspectors barred any movement from or to the Karamah complex, located a few km from their headquarters at the former Canal Hotel on the outskirts of Baghdad. An Iraqi engineer, who was stopped from entering, said the site had no workshops. He said work inside focused on engineering designs.

The compound appeared to be well protected, with a high fence around it. A large placard at the main entrance showed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein with the slogan: "The eagle remains free."

On their way to the complex, the inspectors lost their way to the site. They stopped in the middle of a road and asked Iraqi officials accompanying them in a separate vehicle to lead the convoy to the complex a few hundred metres away.

The inspectors give no advance notice of the sites they want to visit. Stressing that their mission was still in its early days, the inspectors say they have found no evidence yet of banned weapons programmes and encountered no obstruction from Iraqi authorities, seemingly eager to avoid any clash that might hasten war.

An official Iraqi newspaper said inspections, if carried out honestly, would reveal what it called "the lies" of the United States which accuses Iraq of developing weapons of mass destruction in violation of Security Council resolutions.

"If the inspection teams continued to carry out their work honestly, objectively and professionally, the results would prove the honesty of Iraq by proving it is free of weapons of mass destruction," *Al-Jumhuriya* daily said. Reuters

Monitors visit vaccine factory

al-Dawrah 10-14 29/11
AL-DAWRAH (IRAQ), NOV 28. International arms inspectors revisited one of the "hot zones" of Iraq's biological weapons programme today, peering into holding tanks, canvassing the ground and outbuildings to check whether military research had resumed.

The al-Dawrah plant, ostensibly used for making animal vaccines, produced deadly toxins in the 1980s, earlier U.N. inspections determined. British intelligence says it was also suspected of developing anthrax.

The U.N. experts again had no immediate comment on what they found on the second day of renewed inspections to determine whether Baghdad remains committed to chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. Iraq maintains it no longer has programmes for weapons of mass destruction.

The outcome of these inspections could help determine whether the U.N. Security Council eventually authorises military action to disarm Iraq.

At least six biological inspectors, whose destination was to be kept confidential, had sped to this town on Baghdad's southern outskirts in a careening convoy of U.N. vehicles pursued by dozens of international journalists. The press could observe some of the visits from beyond the barbed-wire-topped fence of the Foot and Mouth Disease Vaccine Production Laboratory.

Steel doors were opened in small, concrete-block outbuildings for today's inspection. The clipboard-bearing specialists appeared to check off items as they looked over tanks, pipes and other fixtures.

"We're growing cucumber and eggplant," workers in a garden corner of the compound told reporters. — AP



A U.N. arms expert inspects a former vaccines production laboratory in al-Dora, an agricultural area, 30 km southwest of Baghdad, on Thursday. — AFP

THE HINDU

29 NOV 2002

'Iraq admits to chemical stockpile'

Richard Beeston
The Times, London

LONDON, Nov. 28. — Iraq has given its first warning to the West that it does possess weapons of mass destruction and that Mr Saddam Hussein would be prepared to use them if his regime was threatened.

The remarks were a complete contradiction of the official Iraqi position. Baghdad has repeatedly insisted that it no longer has any chemical, biological or nuclear weapons nor any medium-range missiles.

Speaking in an interview with *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, a London-based Arabic newspaper, an unnamed senior Iraqi official said his country used chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq war and would use them again if necessary. "When the regime was under intense

28/11
attack in the Fab Peninsula and began to be under threat, it did not hesitate to use all the weapons of mass destruction in its possession," the official told the newspaper. "Similarly, when the people of Halabja, or some of them, became guides for the Iranian forces that tried to break the northeast front, the regime did not hesitate to use chemical weapons. Do not expect us to stand idly by in the face of any aggression that seeks to destroy and banish us not only from the regime but also from life."

The paper yesterday declined to name the source, who also gave details about preparations underway by the Iraqi military to defend itself in the event of war.

British officials said the interview appeared to confirm their suspicions that Iraq is concealing tonnes of

chemical and biological weapons, about 20 Scud missiles and a secret nuclear programme.

"I am not surprised by these threats," a British official said. "As we stated in our dossier earlier this year, there is strong evidence that Iraq is hiding chemical and biological weapons."

British sources said yesterday (Wednesday) that the newspaper interview appeared to confirm their strong suspicions that Iraq is concealing tonnes of chemical and biological weapons, about 20 Scud missiles and a secret nuclear programme.

"I am not surprised by these threats," a British official said. "As we stated in our dossier earlier this year, there is strong evidence that Iraq is hiding chemical and biological weapons."

THE STATESMAN

29 NOV 2002

Inspectors begin hunt for Iraq arsenal

HASSAN HAFIDH

Baghdad, Nov. 27 (Reuters): United Nations weapons inspectors drove out of Baghdad today on their first missions for four years to search for banned Iraqi weapons.

Armed with a new UN mandate and the implicit threat of a US invasion if President Saddam Hussein fails to cooperate, inspectors tailed by hordes of journalists in long convoys of cars raced out to two industrial sites outside the capital.

There was no immediate word from them on their visits. The head of the military-guarded al-Tahadi (Challenge) plant, 20 km from the city, said there were no problems: "They had questions and we replied to all of

them," he told reporters.

The complex maintains water pumps and machinery, he said.

Inspectors pulled out in 1998 after seven years checking Iraq had disarmed after the Gulf War. They complained of a lack of access and said they believed evidence of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and missiles was being cleared out of suspect plants while inspectors argued with guards on the gates.

This time, under Security Council resolution 1441, they will brook no such prevarication, even at sprawling "presidential" compounds that Saddam previously demanded should be off-limits.

"I think everybody feels excited and anxious to get going

and very determined to start this systematic inspection," said Melissa Fleming, a spokeswoman for the teams from the UN monitoring body and the International Atomic Energy Agency. There was little delay today when the inspectors, in eight white UN jeeps, arrived at the Tahadi plant.

Guards kept reporters in about 50 cars outside, where a portrait of the president stood with the slogan: "God Preserve Iraq and Saddam".

Modest beginning

Today's missions seemed low-key. The first lasted three hours. The second, to the Saddam plant in Anbar province, 140 km to the northwest went on into the afternoon. Some of the 17 experts al-

ready in Iraq were to brief reporters at their headquarters in Baghdad's old Canal Hotel at 6 pm (1500 GMT). Former chief weapons inspector Richard Butler said they had begun "modestly" and may simply have been checking data from previous monitoring.

He told CNN from Sydney the real test would come when they turned up unannounced at more sensitive sites.

UN secretary general Kofi Annan reminded Iraqis they faced serious consequences if they do not cooperate.

"I don't think war is inevitable," Annan told Europe 1 radio on a visit to Paris. "But if... Iraq continues to create problems and the inspectors feel they cannot do their job, then the Se-

curity Council will look at what to do." Though Annan said that inspections could take a year to complete, potential crises could come much sooner, though not, it seems likely, without dividing international opinion.

The November 8 resolution gives Iraq until December 8 to make a full declaration of its arsenal. State-controlled media repeated today Baghdad's denial that any exists.

Air raid sirens sounded over Baghdad this morning, followed by the all-clear some 10 minutes later. An Iraqi civil defence official said Western planes flew over the capital. But the US and Britain, whose air forces patrol "no-fly" zones to the north and south, denied approaching the city.



UN arms inspectors on their way to a heavily-guarded weapons site near Baghdad. (AFP)

28 NOV 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

IRAQ / U.N. TEAM SET TO BEGIN INSPECTIONS

Strategy under wraps

11/27/98
H9-14
27/11
BAGHDAD (IRAQ), NOV. 26. The new United Nations inspection teams are ready to chase down any mobile biological weapons laboratories, detect underground weapons sites with radar and investigate the "aluminium tubes" Washington says might help Iraq build a nuclear bomb, team leaders said on Tuesday.

The U.N. experts have clear — if secret — game plans for the months of inspections ahead, they said. "We are fully conscious of the responsibility we have on our shoulders," said Jacques Baute of the U.N. nuclear agency.

A working group of 17 inspectors landed in Baghdad on Monday, the first of some 100 who will be operating in Iraq at any one time by year-end.

They are here under a U.N. Security Council mandate to resume inspections, broken off in 1998, to ensure that Iraq — as it claims — has no stocks or programmes to build nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. A U.S. strike on Iraq may hinge on the crucial new round of inspections, which begins on Wednesday.

The Security Council has

warned of "serious consequences" for Iraq if the Baghdad Government is found in major violation of the U.N. disarmament demands. The U.S. President, George W. Bush, has threatened military action against Iraq in that case, with or without U.N. sanction.

On Wednesday, the U.N. teams are likely to visit an unidentified Iraqi site previously inspected in the 1990s. The inspectors later will branch out to new or rebuilt sites — for example, suspected storage places for chemical weapons U.S. intelligence alleges are still held by Iraq.

Mr. Baute of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, and Demetrius Perricos, of the New York-based U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, met mediapersons on the eve of their first field mission to discuss the technical side of the inspections.

Mr. Perricos was asked whether the arms monitors would be looking for suspected truck-borne biological weapons laboratories. "We have some plans," he said. A recent U.S. intelligence report said an Iraqi

document indicated the Baghdad Government "was interested in developing mobile fermentation units" for biological weapons.

This is "not something we find incredible," said Mr. Perricos. He noted that inspectors have the right to stop suspect vehicles on Iraqi roads, but he would not discuss their plans further. As for possible buried storage or production sites, "we have a strategy for underground facilities" using ground-penetrating radar, he said.

The U.S. Government has raised an alarm over what it says are efforts by the Iraqi Government to import a certain kind of aluminium tubes that might be usable for gas centrifuges, equipment that can "enrich" uranium to the level of bomb-grade material. The U.N. nuclear agency has said it is seeking more information from Washington on the tubes, which could also be used for non-nuclear purposes. Mr. Baute said his nuclear team would look into the reported tubes deal "for us to have a clear understanding what the intention was in this area." — AP

27 NOV 2002

THE HINDU

Inspectors land on mission Iraq

HASSAN HAFIDH

Baghdad, Nov. 25 (Reuters): United Nations weapons inspectors landed in Iraq today to begin a crucial mission which could tip the balance between peace and war in West Asia.

A group of 17 inspectors, assigned to resume work in Iraq after a four-year hiatus, arrived in Baghdad at around 1355 GMT aboard a chartered cargo plane emblazoned with the UN insignia.

An advance team of UN logistics experts has been in Iraq since last week, preparing the ground for a resumption of inspections scheduled for November 27. The Iraqi leadership denies there are any chemical, biological or nuclear weapons in the country.

Iraq is obliged by a toughly worded Security Council resolution to permit unfettered access to the inspections team.

Resolution 1441 obliges Baghdad to allow the inspectors to peer into every corner of the

country. The inspectors must give their first report to the UN Security Council by January 27.

Yesterday, Iraqi authorities made public an angry letter to the UN over the resolution's terms. In the first detailed response since Iraq accepted the resolution on November 13, Iraqi foreign minister Naji Sabri gave an item by item reply.

"The real motive was to create pretexts to attack Iraq under an international cover," Sabri wrote in the letter.

Baghdad agreed to produce a full account of its weapons programme by a December 8 deadline and said UN inspectors would be given free access to all sites across the country.

"We know where we want to go," Melissa Fleming, a spokeswoman for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is part of the inspection effort with the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, said before the white C-130 Hercules aircraft left Larnaca airport in Cyprus

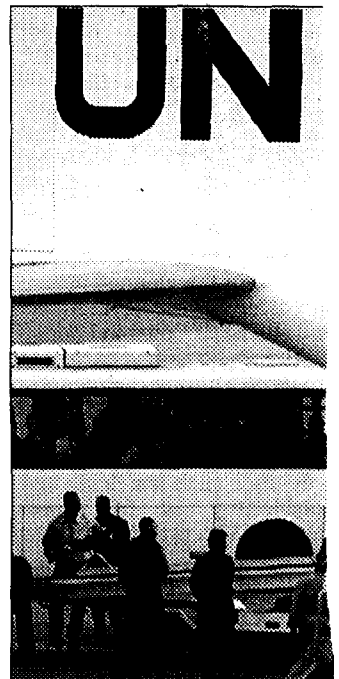
bound for Baghdad.

Oil prices climbed today as the arms inspectors geared up for a mission that could deliver peace or war in Iraq.

North Sea benchmark Brent crude stood 29 cents up at \$25.50 a barrel shortly before the inspectors left Cyprus, while US light crude rose 25 cents to \$27.01 a barrel. Prices eased back slightly later in the day.

Oil traders fear war in West Asia may disrupt crucial flows of crude oil from the region, which pumps a quarter of global supplies. Sabri's angry comments worried traders further.

"Iraq seems to think that a war is inevitable," said Christopher Bellew, a broker at Prudential-Bache International in London. In Cairo today, IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei said: "If we can give a positive report, the inspections will be an alternative to war, not a precursor to war." He added, after a meeting with Arab League secretary-general Amr Moussa: "The real test will be when the inspections start."



UN inspectors arrive in Baghdad aboard a UN plane from Larnaca, Cyprus. (AFP)

26 NOV 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

PARISA HAFEZI

Iran hawks rally against students

Tehran, Nov. 19 (Reuters) — Some 3,000 members of an Iranian hardline militia demonstrated today against pro-reform students who have staged strikes and sit-ins for more than a week for freedom of speech in the Islamic Republic.

The protest by the men and black chador-clad women of the Basij militia at Tehran University came as police tried to lock out thousands of reformist students from another campus in the capital and prevent them from holding a rally.

"We are ready, we don't have tolerance any more," said one Basij leader addressing the Tehran University meeting.

The pro-reform student protests, the biggest in Iran for three years, have heightened political tension at a time when moderate President Mohammad Khatami is gearing up to take on

powerful conservatives who have frustrated his reform efforts.

Hundreds of hardliners clashed with reformist students yesterday in the first serious violence to erupt in 11 days of protests sparked by the death sentence on history lecturer Hashem Aghajari for questioning clerical rule.

Reformists accuse conservatives of trying to trigger clashes as a pretext for a crackdown and the arrest of top reformers. Hardliners say the students have insulted supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's most powerful figure.

"Our red lines are the leader

and the leadership. We will not remain silent. Passing those red lines has a heavy price," the Tehran University speaker said.

"Long live Khamenei," the militia forces responded.

The hardline reaction came as some reformist student leaders were claiming victory after Khamenei stepped in to order a judicial review of the case.

But he also warned the reformist government and parliament to make up with the hardline judiciary or face "popular intervention", commonly seen as referring to the Basij militia, a volunteer force answerable to the leader.

Basijis gathered at Tehran University, the scene of a large pro-reform student protest last week, echoed Khamenei's words.

"If the three powers are not able to solve the problem, I will use popular force," they chanted.

Meanwhile across town, police locked some 2,000 pro-reform students out of another university for around two hours until the weight of numbers gathering on the streets outside obliged security forces to let them in.

In parliament, dominated by Khatami's allies, speaker after speaker spoke out against an assault on a reformist deputy by a hardline gang at the airport in the southern city of Ahvaz.

THE TELEGRAPH

20 NOV 2002

Blix offers Iraq a 'new opportunity'

Agence France Press

BAGHDAD, Nov. 18. — Chief UN weapons inspector Mr Hans Blix arrived in Baghdad today to re-launch the process of disarming President Mr Saddam Hussein's regime, saying he would offer Iraq "a new opportunity".

"The situation is tense at the moment but this is a new opportunity," Mr Blix told reporters at Saddam International airport.

"We are here to provide an inspection that is credible, inspection that is in the interest of Iraq and the interest of the world," he said after arriving at the head of an advance party of two dozen experts.

Mr Blix, who heads the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and Mohamed ElBaradei, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency were to meet senior Iraqi officials and lay the groundwork for the start of inspections set for 27 November.

"What we are coming with offers an opportunity and we hope we can take that opportunity together," Mr Blix said after being greeted by his Iraqi counterpart, Brigadier Hossam Amin, director of the National Monitoring Directorate.

"We are here to do a job and we will do that professionally and I hope completely," Mr Blix said. Asked what level of cooperation he expected from Iraq, Mr Blix answered: "Full".

Mr ElBaradei said: "We hope to be able to do our work with maximum credibility and objectivity to be able to get positive results."

"The success of our mission depends on the full cooperation of Iraq and full transparency on its behalf," he added.

Blix unsure of meeting Saddam: Mr Blix said today he was unsure if he would meet Mr Hussein during his stay in Baghdad. "I don't know," he said when asked if he planned to see the Iraqi strongman. "I am meeting the government, we have not set a detailed programme," Mr Blix said as he entered Baghdad's Rashid hotel.

The 76-year-old Swede had to walk over the portrait of ex-President Mr George Bush, father of the current US President, as he entered the hotel.

Results not before six months: Conclusions can not be drawn from UN arms inspections in Iraq before six months, the IAEA chief said today.

"Getting the results of (inspection missions) requires six months to a year," Mr ElBaradei told Qatar-based Al-Jazeera TV before leaving Larnaca, Cyprus, en route to Baghdad with Mr Blix.

Mr ElBaradei called on the international community to "be patient" until results of the inspections missions come out. He said that a first batch of inspections will launch on 27 November the inspection missions which will eventually include about 100 experts.

An initial report will be presented to the Security Council in January, in line with UN Resolution 1441 which demands Baghdad's full cooperation and the declaration of any weapons of mass destruction.

Disarmament 'absolutely certain': British foreign secretary Mr Jack Straw today said it was "absolutely certain" that Iraq would be disarmed of weapons of mass destruction.

"The ball is in Saddam Hussein's court," Mr Straw told reporters at a meeting of European Union foreign ministers in Brussels.

"It's up to him now whether he is disarmed peacefully or by other means, but one thing I'm absolutely certain of: Saddam Hussein will be disarmed of his weapons of mass destruction," he said.

Nobody could trust the Iraqi leader, he added.

Iraqi defence systems bombed: Allied warplanes bombed Iraqi defence systems in the northern no-fly zone over Iraq today after being fired upon during routine patrols north-east of Mosul, the US military said, AP adds from Washington.

The planes used precision-guided weapons to target Iraqi air defence systems, the Stuttgart, Germany-based US European Command said. There was no further information on the targeted sites.

A statement on the command's Inter-Net site said the Iraqi forces fired anti-aircraft weapons at the planes.



Mr Hans Blix (R) and Mohamed ElBaradei arrive at a hotel in Baghdad on Monday. — AFP

India to evacuate citizens from Gulf

NEW YORK, Nov. 18. — India has said it would "swiftly" evacuate Indians from the Gulf in the event of a US-led war with Iraq if Baghdad failed to comply with the UN resolution asking it to disarm weapons of mass destruction.

India would definitely be affected if the USA attacked Iraq as a lot of Indians work in West Asia and send money to the country. So far as oil is concerned, the entire world would be affected and India is no exception, minister of state for external affairs Mr Digvijay Singh told reporters yesterday.

Asked if, he didn't see any need at present to evacuate Indians from the region, he said "there is no war as yet." — PTI

A delicate task at hand for inspectors

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), NOV. 18. U.N. inspectors who have arrived in Iraq to scrutinise sites producing weapons of mass destruction are expected to focus their attention on around a hundred of them. These include a suspected missile launch facility at Al-Rafah, as well as a chorine production plant at Falluja, outside Baghdad, where precursors for chemical weapons were reportedly produced in the past.

The Al-Furat facility, which is a former nuclear power plant, is also likely to fall under the strict scrutiny of the inspectors. Aware of the sensitivity of their mission, the inspectors are grappling with several difficult questions. For instance, what should be the criteria for judging whether a possible hindrance to inspections would construe a "a material breach" of Iraq's commitments to inspections as spelt out by a recent U.N. Security Council resolution? U.N. observers point out that the inspectors were not inclined to jump to the conclusion of Iraqi non-cooperation that could lead to war, as it was likely that some obstacles during inspections may crop up inadvertently. But inspectors could report negatively if it was established that Iraqi authorities were deliberately attempting to derail the probe. They also have the delicate task at hand of interviewing individuals supposedly connected to the programme for developing mass destruction weapons. While the inspectors have the mandate to interview these personnel outside Iraq, this could, nevertheless, become a source of friction with Baghdad, which has repeatedly stressed that the international community must respect its sovereignty. Iraq has also pointed out and resented



TESTING TIMES: The United Nation's Chief Weapons Inspector, Hans Blix (right), and Mohammed ElBaradel, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, arrive in Baghdad on Monday. — AP

the possibility of undercover intelligence operatives being included in the inspection team. *Al-Thawra*, the mouthpiece of the ruling Baath Party, in a front-page editorial on Monday said that the earlier U.N. inspection regime had been "an American organisation to spy on Iraq," and that it hoped the new team would not fall into that trap. Aware of the Iraqi concerns, the chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, addressed this issue at a press conference. "I can never guarantee that everyone will be 100 per cent in my service," he said. "But if we find anyone doing anything else, it's bye-bye."

Despite its reservations, the Iraqis have welcomed the resumption of inspections. "We have given instructions to all responsible people and many government areas to respond immediately to any request to enter their sites and inspect them," the Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, told the London Weekend Television on Sunday.

Baghdad to cooperate

AFP, AP report from Cairo:

Iraq will cooperate fully with the U.N. arms inspectors and deny the U.S. any excuse to launch military action, the Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations said on Monday.

"Iraq welcomes the return of inspectors and will cooperate with them by every means possible," Mohammed Aldouri said in an interview, quoted by Egypt's state news agency MENA. Baghdad "will do everything possible not to give the United States a pretext to strike", he said, contacted by telephone from New York.

But Mr. Aldouri said he was still convinced the U.S. would launch a military operation against Iraq and called for the Arab world "to adopt a firm stand in defence of its rights."

Meanwhile, in Baghdad, the *Al-Thawra* said the U.N. inspectors must respect Iraq's "dignity and security" as they carry out their disarmament work. It also reminded them not to forget the "excesses" committed by their predecessors who left Baghdad four years ago on the eve of four days of U.S.-British air strikes over Iraq's alleged obstruction of their work.

Iranian leader orders review of death sentence

TEHERAN, NOV. 17. Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has ordered a review of the death sentence against a dissident academic in an apparent bid to defuse Iran's biggest student protests for three years, a newspaper said today.

The hardline *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* said Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's most powerful figure, had ordered the courts to review the sentence against Hashem Aghajari, condemned to hang ten days ago for questioning clerical rule.

"Based on the request of hundreds of university professors, the leader ordered the judiciary to carefully review this case," the newspaper quoted an informed source as saying. "An appeals court has been authorised to carefully review Aghajari's case."

The newspaper, seen as being close to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said the death sentence would most likely be overturned on appeal.

The sentence drew widespread indignation from Iran's embattled reformers allied to the Iranian President, Mohammad Khatami, and sparked six days of protests by thousands of university students in the capital Teheran and across the country. Meanwhile, Iranian student leaders today said they were ready to call off the protests in Iran following the news that a death sentence was to be reviewed.— Reuters

THE HINDU

18 NOV 2002

Iran hawks demand death for dissident

Tehran, Nov. 15 (Reuters): Some 1,000 Iranian hardliners demonstrated today to demand the death sentence for a dissident academic in a backlash against the biggest student pro-reform protests in the Islamic Republic for three years.

Thousands of students held five days of protests this week to condemn the death sentence on Hashem Aghajari for blasphemy, galvanising President Mohammad Khatami's flagging reform movement in its struggle to rein in conservative power.

"Iran's Salman Rushdie should be executed," the hardliners chanted in a reference to the British author condemned to death by Iran's former leader, the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, for his book *The Satanic Verses*. "Aghajari should be hanged," the male worshippers shouted as they emerged from Friday prayers at Tehran University.

It was the first large show of opposition to the pro-reform protests since they began last week. The campus demonstrations have remained almost entirely peaceful with police keeping students and smaller groups of hardliners apart.

A member of the conservative-dominated Expediency Council arbitration body said Iran's Western enemies were trying to sow discord in the country, branded part of an "axis of evil" by US President George W. Bush.

"The enemies might have been discouraged from launching a military assault on us, but they are not discouraged from trying to topple the system from inside," Qorbanali Dorri Najafabadi told worshippers today.

"The honourable Iranian nation, officials and pillars of the system should disappoint the enemy, so the enemy sees everyone in Islamic Iran is united," he said. University lecturer Aghajari angered conservatives by questioning the right of clerics to rule Iran. He then refused to appeal his death sentence. The case comes as Khatami is set on a collision course with conservatives over two Bills before parliament aiming to curb their control of the judiciary and power to vet election candidates.



Iranian conservative women at a demonstration in Tehran on Thursday. (AFP)

THE TELEGRAPH

16 NOV 2002

700 sites to be checked in Iraq

Associated Press

PARIS, Nov. 15. — Weapons inspectors have identified 700 sites to check in Iraq and could consider an entry delay of even half an hour as a serious violation, the chief UN weapons inspector Mr Hans Blix said today.

Mr Blix told *Le Monde* newspaper that weapons inspectors would try to keep the location of the sites secret and provide no advance notice to Baghdad.

"You can't hide a large

weapon or machine in a half hour, but you could hide documents or biology test tubes," he said. "I would say that even a delay of half an hour could be serious." If an inspection is delayed or blocked in any way, it will be reported to the Security Council, Mr Blix said.

"It's not for us to decide if there has been a 'material breach,' it's for the council," Mr Blix said. "We will say: 'Here, there was an obstacle. There, an interference in our activities.' The council will judge." Iraq

informed the United Nations on Wednesday that it had accepted the latest UN resolution and would allow international inspectors to resume the search for weapons of mass destruction, which was suspended in 1998.

"To this day, we do not have solid proof that they possess arms of mass destruction," Mr Blix said. "But several elements lead us to believe we cannot exclude they have Scud missiles, anthrax and other things."

1 6 NOV 2002

THE STATESMAN

Iraq: threat of war not over

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

10-19 16711 W. Hussein ①

UNITED NATIONS, NOV. 15. While there is general relief that Iraq has accepted the terms of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441, diplomats here are not fully convinced that the threat of war is over. For that matter there is no consensus at the world body that things are going to be smooth from now on until the third week of February when the Chief Weapons Inspector, Hans Blix will have to report back to the Council.

In fact some believe that the first challenge of sorts could come by December 8 or earlier when Iraq will have give a roster of its weapons programmes as mandated by Resolution 1441. The regime of Saddam Hussein, some argue, has put itself in a corner by insisting all along — even as late as November 13 in its acceptance letter — that it has no weapons of mass destruction. If Iraq has no weapons (or programmes) of mass destruction, then where is the question of giving a 'list' by December 8? Iraq, one view goes, will try to get out of the tight spot it finds itself by giving the weapons inspectors its version of what had taken place four years ago when the last of the inspectors left Baghdad.

The status report of 1998 would be tempered by the argument that there had actually been no movement in the programmes over the years. Whether Mr. Blix and his team go along with this is

one side to the story; and whether the Bush administration will tend to play along is a totally different ball game. The other perception is that in trying to give the impression of being cooperative, Mr. Hussein might actually give the weapons inspections team a roster of chemical and biological materials.

The regime then will make the argument that these materials are actually intended for either pharmaceutical or civilian scientific purposes. Another area where diplomats are watching with a great deal of apprehension is at what point the weapons inspections team will draw the line and fault Baghdad for not going along with the obligations of Resolution 1441. It will be a very serious thing if Mr. Blix reports back to the Security Council of Iraqi non-compliance, for Washington has made it known that with or without the backing of the world body, it is ready to pursue all options — read going to war.

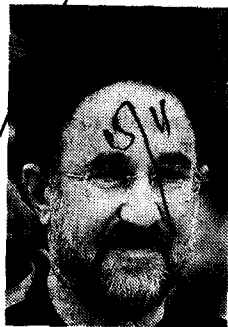
In demanding a tough and stringent inspections regime from the Security Council, Mr. Blix has also said two things in the last few weeks: first, he did not wish to have the Council breathe down on inspections team every step of the way; and secondly, he will not be running to the Security Council with every minor problem he encounters in Iraq. Mr. Blix has made it known that for him to approach the world body prior to his final report in February 2003 it would have to be for a serious or grave infraction.

1 6 NOV 2002

ONE HINDU

Khatami criticises sentence

TEHERAN: The Iranian President, Mohammad Khatami, strongly criticised on Wednesday the death sentence imposed on a history professor, as thousands of students



demonstrated against the verdict and Iran's clerics. The professor, Hashem Aghajari, was prosecuted over a speech he gave in the western city of Hamedan in June saying that each new generation should be able to interpret the Islamic faith on its own. He also criticised the clerical establishment for considering the existing interpretations as sacred. Mr. Aghajari was convicted of insulting Islam's 7th century Prophet Muhammad and for questioning the clergy's interpretation of Islam. Last

week, he was told he had been sentenced to death. He is currently in detention in Hamedan. In the biggest of three straight days of protest, about 5,000 students demonstrated on Wednesday in support of Aghajari at Tehran's Amir Kabir and the Science and Technology universities. — AP

Poking fun at Nazis

FRANKFURT (GERMANY): A film comedy poking fun at Adolf Hitler's regime that has raised the question of whether Germans are allowed to laugh at the Nazis will air on nationwide television next week, a TV station said on Wednesday. The public broadcaster SWR, which made the film, has defended "Goebbels und Geduldig" as an attempt to maintain public discussion about the Nazi Holocaust. The film has so far been shown only at festivals outside Germany. The farce is about Harry Geduldig, a

Jew who looks and sounds like Josef Goebbels. When the Nazi propaganda minister comes to visit Geduldig in a concentration camp, the two switch places. What follows is the story of Geduldig's experiences moving in Government circles with high-ranking Nazis. When the film was being made two years ago, it provoked debate about whether Germans should laugh at the Nazi past. An opinion poll at the time showed that most of them reject that idea. "Goebbels und Geduldig" is to air on public ARD television next Wednesday, SWR said in a statement. — AP

THE HINDU

1 5 NOV 2002

INSPECTION TO BEGIN ON 3 DEC

Australian to head first arms team

HAB 11 SF 3

Agence France Presse

SYDNEY, Nov. 14. — An Australian defence official will lead the first team of UN weapons inspectors sent to Iraq following Baghdad's decision to accept UN disarmament resolution 1441, officials announced today.

Defence minister Mr Robert Hill and foreign minister Mr Alexander Downer said Mr Bill Jolley would serve as chief weapons inspector with the team due in Iraq on 25 November.

Mr Jolley, who has been working with the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission in New York, will lead the inspectors for a one-month stint beginning 3 December.

Several other Australian defence personnel are likely to join the first inspections team at a later date, they said.

The arrangement came after the United Nations said late yesterday that Iraq

had agreed to cooperate with the new resolution demanding unfettered access to the country for inspectors hunting for nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

The UN said UNMOVIC chairman Mr Hans Blix and an advance team of experts would fly to Iraq next week to prepare the way for the first inspections team.

"Mr Saddam Hussein accepted resolution 1441 only with an assertion that Iraq does not possess weapons of mass destruction. This is not the case to the best of our knowledge," Mr Hill said. "Robust inspections will enable this issue to be tested."

Arabs elated, UN cautious

Iraq's decision to accept the UN Security Council resolution and allow weapons inspectors into the country was welcomed by Arab diplomats but greeted with cautious optimism by UN officials and with scepticism by the USA, adds PTI from UNHQ.

Agent drags Jackson to court



In court on Thursday.—AFP

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 14. — The beleaguered King of Pop Michael Jackson took on a new starring role in a courtroom, to defend himself against a \$21.2 million fraud and breach of contract lawsuit. Jackson yesterday gave evidence in a trial brought by his longtime concert promoter Marcel Avram, who is suing him for allegedly illegally cancelling two Millennium concerts he had signed up to play. Jackson received a celebrity welcome as he arrived at a courtroom near the California city of Santa Barbara in a black and silver limousine preceded by a police escort. Wearing a red jacket, Jackson waved as scores of fans brandishing "Free Michael" placards cheered him as he stepped from his stretched van surrounded by bodyguards. But inside the courtroom, Jackson spoke softly, answering only "yes" or "no" to questions after he was called as a hostile witness in the trial. — AFP

'READY TO RECEIVE WEAPONS INSPECTORS'

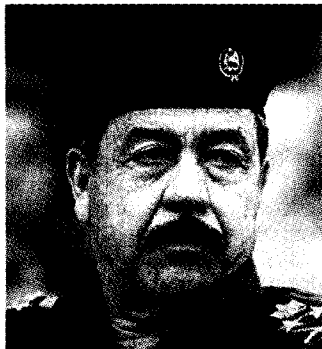
14 | 11 | 10-1
Iraq accepts U.N. resolution

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 13. Iraq said today that it was accepting the tough new United Nations Security Council Resolution on weapons inspections. A formal communication was made to the United Nations this morning by the country's top envoy to the U.N. (Immediately, the White House cautiously welcomed Baghdad's announcement, AFP reported.)

"The letter says that Iraq will deal with the Security Council Resolution 1441, despite its bad contents," the Iraqi envoy to the U.N., Mohammad Al-Douri, said. "We are prepared to receive the inspectors within the assigned timetable. We are eager to see them perform their duties in accordance with international law as soon as possible."

The weapons inspectors team will be headed by the chief inspector, Hans Blix, who will be leaving for Baghdad shortly with a technical and communications team. The full team is expected to be on the ground by the end of the



The Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein... relents at last

month. The Blix team will be in charge of biological and chemical weapon inspections and the International Atomic Energy Agency will take care of nuclear inspections.

Iraq and the Arab League have demanded that Arab inspectors be part of the team. In fact, it is said that the past inspection team had Arab representation and that this was not a problem this time round.

Mr. Blix has made it known that while he was for a tough inspections regime, he did not want the Security Council to

micro-manage every part of his work in Iraq. He will report to the Council any infractions on the part of Iraq or if the regime there refuses or goes back on its obligations.

AP reports from the U.N.:

Mr. Al-Douri delivered the letter to the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan's office. Mr. Annan was in the Washington area to give a speech and meet the U.S. President, George Bush, who has repeatedly threatened Iraq with a U.S.-led war if it fails to comply with inspectors.

In the letter, Iraq reiterated that it had no weapons of mass destruction. "We explained in the letter the whole Iraqi position saying that Iraq... has not and will not have any mass destruction weapons, so we are not worried about the inspectors when they will be back," Mr. Al-Douri said.

AFP reports from London:

Oil prices fell sharply after Iraq accepted the U.N. resolution, with the Brent North Sea crude oil for December delivery falling 53 cents a barrel to \$23.19.

14 NOV 2002

THE HINDU

Iraq House rejects UN resolution

Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Nov. 12. — Iraq's parliament today unanimously recommended rejection of a United Nations resolution strengthening the mandate of international arms inspectors, but said the final decision would be left to the country's top leadership.

Earlier in the day, President Saddam Hussein's son told Iraqi legislators that Baghdad should accept a UN resolution strengthening the mandate of international arms inspectors, but should require the inspection teams include Arabs, today.

"We have to agree to the UN Security Council resolution with limits on certain points, but not, we say, conditions," Mr. Uday Saddam Hussein said in a letter distributed to parliament as it reconvened today to consider the issue before making a recommendation to the President.

In the opening of the parliamentary session yesterday night, members had criticised the UN resolution.

"There should not be approval of the resolution without an Arab umbrella or, if this is not possible, then under

the so-called Arab League and there should be Arab experts or technicians and monitors (on the inspection teams) who are familiar with the nuclear, chemical and biological side," the President's son said in his letter, which also was distributed to reporters in Baghdad by the information ministry.

He, however, said acceptance would not be surrender. "We have to know our enemy and that the UN resolution does not mean stopping him from committing military action. We also have to take precautions and measures and here we have to ask the Arab countries to immediately cut oil supplies to those countries that launch a military strike or aggression on Iraq and to any country that allows foreign war planes to use their airports or offer logistic support for them for refuelling..."

Bush vows to 'liberate' Iraq

President George W Bush yesterday used the American public holiday that honours US servicemen who died liberating foreign nations to pledge the liberation of Iraq and the disarming of President Saddam Hussein, adds The Times, London from Washington.

In two speeches marking Veterans' Day, the American equivalent of Remembrance Sunday, Mr Bush declared: "American soldiers are liberators... Should military action become necessary against Iraq, I will commit the full force and might of the US military. And we will



Iraqi deputies read a document distributed by Mr Saddam Hussein's son in parliament. In Baghdad on Tuesday. — AFP

prevail."

Speaking to veterans at the White House, and later at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, the US President spelt out his presidency's top priorities: confronting Mr Hussein's regime and winning the war on terror.

Iran protests swell

11/13
Tehran, Nov. 12 (Reuters): Thousands of Iranian students ignored official warnings and demonstrated for the fourth day running today against a dissident's death sentence and to demand freedom of speech and political reform.

Some 5,000 students gathered at Tehran University, once the hotbed of revolutionary fervour that overthrew the Shah two decades ago, in support of academic Hashem Aghajari, sentenced to hang for questioning clerical rule in the Islamic Republic. "The execution of Aghajari is the execution of the university," demonstrators chanted. "Political prisoners should be freed."

The momentum of protests appeared to be growing, with bigger crowds in Tehran each

11/13
day and demonstrations spreading to the provincial cities of Tabriz, Isfahan, Urumiyeh and Hamedan.

The protests come amid rising political tension in the country of 65 million people as moderate President Mohammad Khatami tries to assert his authority over conservative rivals who control the judiciary, armed forces and broadcast media.

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's most powerful figure and commander of the armed forces, issued a veiled warning late yesterday to parliament, the government and judiciary to settle their differences.

"The day the three branches are unable or unwilling to settle major problems, the (supreme) leadership will use the popular forces to intervene," he said.



A student holds a picture of dissident Hashem Aghajari during a protest rally in Tehran. (AP/PTI)

1 3 NOV 2002

Aghajari, a reformist scholar, at the Teheran University on Sunday. — AP

IRAN / MOVE TO REIN IN JUDICIARY

New law boosts Khatami powers

TEHERAN, NOV. 10. Iran's reformist-dominated Parliament on Sunday approved the outlines of a Bill to boost the President, Mohammad Khatami's powers by giving him the right to suspend rulings by the judiciary, a conservative bastion that has blocked his reform programme so far.

At the end of a debate carried live on state radio, deputies overwhelmingly approved steps that will empower Mr. Khatami to suspend decisions by the hardline judiciary or any other institution as well as any "violation of the Constitution".

It was approved four days after the adoption of a first Bill that would stop a conservative-controlled oversight watchdog using a power that has resulted in hundreds of reformers being disqualified from standing for public office.

However, both are certain to be shot down by the same body, the Guardians Council, which rules if legislation complies with the Constitution and Islamic Sharia law, provoking a new crisis between the reformist and conservative camps.

Meanwhile, the Speaker of Parliament, Mehdi Karubi, said on Sunday that an outspoken critic of the clergy, Hashem Aghajari, who was sentenced to death last week, would be freed soon as the case had been "settled". "I say to his family that

(the execution) will not take place and even that with the help of God he will soon return to his family," Mr. Karubi told Parliament in a speech broadcast on state radio.

He did not make it clear whether he was speaking from personal conviction or some deal had been done to release the reformist academic and writer. "The affair is settled and with the help of God it will soon be over," he added, calling on Mr. Aghajari to keep calm amid growing political tension in Iran.

"As a cleric and spokesman for many religious dignitaries whom I have contacted, I express my disgust at this shameful verdict," Mr. Karubi said to acclamation from the reform majority Parliament.

He claimed that the sentencing of Mr. Aghajari on Wednesday by a court in Hamedan, western Iran, was "the decision of a single judge."

"Almost every judge, the judicial authorities and religious leaders are against this verdict," Mr. Karubi added, saying it had harmed the image of Islam and the Shiite clergy.

The 45-year-old Aghajari, who teaches history at Teheran University and was arrested on Aug. 8, was sentenced to death for insulting Islam after he called in a speech for a reform of Shiism and advised the faithful not to follow the clergy blindly. — AFP

THE HINDU

1 1 NOV 2002

WEST ASIA TURMOIL-I

Barometer Of The World's Political Climate

By GURMEET KANWAL

51-8 11/11
During the Cold War, developments in the West Asian countries used to mirror the state of relations between the two erstwhile superpowers as both the protagonists had an overwhelming strategic stake in the area. Though the Cold War has ended, not much has changed in West Asia. Israel is still in occupation of the Golan Heights; Palestinian and Hizbollah terrorism continues unabated; Israel's military siege of Yasser Arafat's headquarters at Rammallah makes daily headlines; talk of another US-led war against Iraq has reached a feverish pitch; the writ of the United Nations-mandated government in Afghanistan runs mainly in Kabul, elsewhere it has succeeded in establishing only a tenuous hold; and, Iran is yet to rejoin the international mainstream.

Chaotic world

Stretching from the Indian subcontinent in the east to the Horn of Africa in the west, West Asia has often been called the "Arc of Crisis". The popular image of West Asian instability is that of a chaotic world. The region appears to resemble the Hobbesian state of nature, characterised by a condition of all against all and perpetual anarchy. The West Asian states are confronted with several challenges to their security, most of them of their own making. Many of them are perpetually locked in internecine quarrels against each other due to religious, ethnic or historical rivalries and inherited colonial legacies such as boundary disputes.

For several decades, the independence of several West Asian states was threatened by external interventions and their integrity by separatist movements abetted by the erstwhile superpowers and neighbouring countries of opposing ideologies. Current threats to the political stability of West Asian countries flow from imbalances in internal power bases, rural and urban poverty, lack

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of democratic values, weak institutional infrastructures and extensive militarisation. These multiple macro-political and micro-social variables provide the matrix against which the West Asian conflicts and crises must be considered.

For almost half a century after the Second World War, West Asia was the unhappy battleground of the superpowers. The weak West Asian nations were used as pawns by the two superpowers in the power game to establish their hegemony and influence in an area of immense strategic significance to both. In both geo-political and economic terms, West Asia has been and continues to be one of the most strategically important areas of the world. Almost half of the world's shipping passes through the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal, making the area vitally important to the Western world for trade and commerce.

Nearly 35 per cent of the oil consumed by the Western world originates from Arabian oilfields. The continued guaranteed availability of Middle East oil is crucial for Western industry and defence. Successive American Presidents and secretaries of state have gone on record to say that the West is prepared to physically seize the oil wells of West Asia if supplies are threatened, or as a retaliatory measure, in response to the future Arab use of oil as a political weapon.

Launch pad

The geographical location of West Asia, in close vicinity to vital areas of military power already deployed or readily deployable by the world's major powers makes West Asia a prized launch pad for future operations. Both the erstwhile superpowers had developed dia-

metrically opposing interests in the arc of crisis. The United States and the Soviet Union were both equally motivated, in one case by the paramount need to control strategic locations and strategic raw materials in West Asia and, in the other, to deny these to the adversary. While the US was anxious to ensure the free flow of oil to keep Western industry afloat, the USSR was extremely concerned about the growing threat to its southern flank, through the backdoor of its soft underbelly.



The US response to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was predicated on the ostensible assumption of a subsequent Soviet thrust to the warm waters of the Gulf region in order to gain control of such choke points as the Strait of Hormuz leading to the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Bab-al-Mandab, linking the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, so that the Soviets could not disrupt oil supplies to the West in the event of a major crisis.

During the last two decades of the Cold War, it had been a cardinal point of both Soviet and US policy to wage their struggle for influence and gain in West Asia by proxy. Neither of the two wished to become directly and personally engaged in confrontation and conflict. However, with the rapid escalation in force levels and the acquisition of new sea and land-bases by both sides, the prospects of a direct Soviet-American confrontation, grew more and more dangerous in the late 1980s. The Soviet Union had acquired base facilities at Socotra (in South Yemen, off the Horn of Africa), Massava (in Ethiopia, on the Red Sea, facing Saudi Arabia and Yemen) and the Dahlak Archipelago (off the Eritrean coast of Ethiopia). The Russian naval capability in the area had gone up to

20 to 25 warships. At that time, this strength could be easily reinforced by a formidable land-based capability from Afghanistan and the Soviet borders with Iran.

The United States, under the Reagan administration, enhanced its land-based and sea-based capabilities in the region to meet the growing Soviet threat. The US carrier task force of the central command included about 30 to 40 naval ships and 15 to 20 ships with pre-positioned equipment and warlike stores off Diego Garcia. The US base in Diego Garcia, leased from the British, was expanded to facilitate the operation of long-range strategic bomber aircraft including B-52s. In a marriage of convenience with Egypt, the US acquired base facilities for its rapid deployment force in Ras Banas, Qena and Cairo West.

Threat perceptions

The West Asian nations and the littoral states of the Indian Ocean did not necessarily share these mutual threat perceptions of the two superpowers. However, they were united in their opposition to the ever-increasing superpower force levels and the consequent escalation in tensions in the area. They viewed the proposed US and Soviet interventionist policies in the Gulf region with grave concern and alarm as a sort of pincer movement against their territorial integrity, political independence and natural resources.

Today, West Asia is still a house divided, an Islamic world divided against itself despite the strongest possible motive for unity — a shared hostility towards Zionism. The long-standing Arab and Palestinian opposition to the existence of Israel as a nation-state and senseless terrorism directed against the Jews, have led Israel to pursue a belligerent foreign and national security policy that is not in the least conducive to peace in the region. Israel's determination to annex and colonise the whole of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights in Syria, was totally unacceptable to the Arabs and the Muslim world.

(To be concluded)

Khatami armour against hardliners

PARISA HAFEZI

Tehran, Nov. 10 (Reuters): Iran's parliament today approved a draft bill to allow President Mohammad Khatami curb the power of the hardline judiciary, part of a bid to assert his authority over conservative rivals.

Khatami is locked in an apparent collision course with his hardline rivals with legislation that directly challenges their powers which they have used to block successive stabs at reform. "Khatami presented the bill in order to stop constitutional violations," Vice-President Mohammad Ali Abtahi told parliament.

Elected in 1997 and re-elected in 2001 with landslide wins, Khatami has found his efforts to promote democracy blocked by conservatives who control the judiciary, armed forces and broadcast media.

He has introduced two bills to parliament aimed at limiting the power of the judiciary and curbing the Guardian Council's veto power over election candidates.

A large majority of deputies in the reformist-dominated parliament today backed the outlines of the bill which would give Khatami the power to recommend the sacking of officials who violate the constitution.

Another bill passed last week limits the conservative Guardian Council's power to veto election candidates. The bills have to go through another reading in parliament.

But once passed, they, like all legislation, require the approval of the 12-man Guardian Council. Analysts say it is most unlikely the conservatives would agree to limit their own power.

The council has used its power to veto more than 50 bills in the past two years after judging them incompatible with Islamic law and the constitution, thus effectively blocking most of parliament's reform efforts.

Khatami's conservative rivals said the constitutional powers bill would give too much authority to the head of executive and accused Khatami of seeking dictatorial powers.

Abtahi rejected the charges. "The only element in the system that is chosen by the people's direct vote and is supervised by different organisations cannot become a dictator," he said.

Analysts say the recent arrest of a number of reformists, the death sentence against one and the closure of polling centres shows hardliners are in no mood to compromise over reform. "The recent crackdown on the reformist camp shows they won't give the bills any chance," said one who declined to be named.

Khatami's allies said hardliners were trying to intimidate reformists, especially the President, to withdraw the bills.

"The jailings and heavy sentences against outspoken reformists are to put pressure on Khatami to take back his bills," said MP Rajabali Mazroui.

The death sentence last week against leading reformist Hashem Aghajari for blasphemy after he questioned the clergy's right to rule the Islamic Republic has led to an outcry from reformists and protests from students.

11 NOV 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

U.N. passes tough resolution on Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, NOV. 8. The United Nations Security Council unanimously approved a tough new Iraq resolution on Friday, aimed at forcing Saddam Hussein to disarm or face "serious consequences" that would almost mean war. *W. K. M. (D)*

The vote came after eight weeks of tumultuous negotiations and the surprise support from all the 15 Council members was a clear victory to the U.S., which drafted the resolution together with Britain.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush, immediately went to the White House Rose Garden to warn Saddam Hussein to

comply at once. "His cooperation must be prompt and unconditional or he will face severest consequences," Mr. Bush said. *NO-1 9/11*

"Iraq will certainly study the resolution and decide whether we can accept it or not," the Iraqi Ambassador, Mohammed Al-Douri, said adding he was surprised by Syria's support for the resolution.

Under the resolution, weapons inspectors will have "unconditional and unrestricted access" to all sites, including eight Presidential compounds where surprise inspections have been barred. While the U.S.

made some major concessions to critics, the final draft still meets the Bush administration's key demands such as toughening U.N. weapons inspections and leaving the U.S. free to take military action against Iraq if the inspectors say Baghdad is not complying.

At the same time, it gives Saddam Hussein "a final opportunity" to cooperate with the weapons inspectors, holds out the possibility of lifting the 12-year-old sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and reaffirms the country's sovereignty. — AP

See also Page 14

9 NOV 2002

THE HINDU

Court sentences Khatami's ally to death

JON HEMMING

Tehran, Nov. 7 (Reuters): An Iranian court has sentenced an academic and close ally of President Mohammad Khatami to death for blasphemy after he questioned the right of the clergy to rule the Islamic Republic, his lawyer said today.

The verdict against Hashem Aghajari, who lost a leg in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq conflict, is likely to send shock waves through Iran's reformist movement, many of whom have defended his right to free speech.

"The verdict was handed to

his family yesterday," lawyer Saleh Nikbakht said.

The decision came as the pro-reform Khatami is locked in a fierce struggle to break the stranglehold on power of hard-line rivals who control key institutions such as the judiciary, armed forces and mostly non-elected supervisory bodies.

Dozens of outspoken journalists and intellectuals have been jailed in the last three years in a conservative crackdown.

"This sentence is designed to intimidate reformists," pro-reform MP Ali Shakourirad said. "It is unacceptable, it is incom-

patible with the law, with Sharia and logic."

Following a closed trial without jury in the western city of Hamedan, Aghajari was sentenced to 74 lashes, eight years in jail and then execution.

His lawyer said he expected Supreme Court judges to throw out the sentence on appeal.

Aghajari, a 45-year-old history lecturer, angered conservative clerics by delivering a speech on "Islamic Protestantism" in which he compared the earthly powers enjoyed by Iran's clerical rulers with medieval Catholic Popes.

Particularly galling for the clerical establishment was his questioning of the Shia practice of emulating senior clerics qualified to interpret the Koran.

"Are people monkeys to emulate someone else?" newspapers quoted Aghajari as saying.

Aghajari told the Emrooz news website (www.emrooz.org) before his sentence: "They may put me in jail or assassinate me but they would achieve nothing from this. Those who will be hurt are the clerical establishment they claim to be backing."

Political tension is rising in Iran as Khatami gears up for a di-

rect challenge to mostly unelected hardliners in powerful positions within the state who have blocked his efforts to revamp the Islamic Republic for the last five years.

The President has introduced two bills to parliament aimed at limiting the power of the judiciary and curbing the right of a conservative body to vet election candidates.

Leading Khatami allies warn that conservatives may be planning to round up hundreds of reform activists following the arrest of dissident journalist Abbas Abdi last week.

"Abbas Abdi's arrest has intensified rumours that hardliners plan to arrest hundreds of reformists," newspapers quoted the President's younger brother, Mohammad Reza Khatami, as saying. Others said hardliners were only waiting for a pretext, such as a possible US attack on neighbouring Iraq, to launch a massive crackdown.

"They are clearly looking for a chance to proclaim a state of emergency, which would provide them with a chance to arrest reformists, mainly parliamentarians, en masse," parliamentarian Reza Yousefian said.



Hashem Aghajari

New UN resolution on Iraq needs clarifications: France

Agence France Presse

PARIS, Nov. 7. — Agreement is close on the new US draft of a UN Security Council resolution on Iraq but some clarifications are still needed, French foreign minister Mr Dominique de Villepin said today.

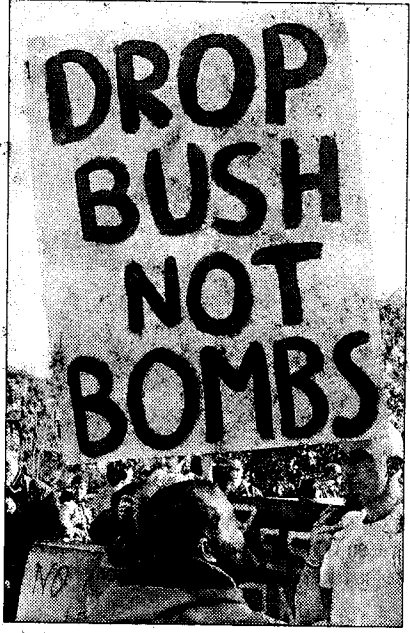
“We continue to ask for clarifications, notably on clauses automatically authorising the use of force,” the foreign minister told *Europe 1* radio.

“We believe this text can still be improved. We want things to be as clear as possible. (But) I believe the text today is very close to the right balance,” he said.

The new draft — which the US hopes to present for a vote at the UN Security Council on Friday — gives Iraq a final opportunity to scrap its weapons of mass destruction or face consequences.

After weeks of wrangling, Washington has amended the text in response to demands from France and Russia that it should not give the US an automatic right to launch military action if Iraq fails to comply.

“The ball is now in Iraq’s court ... (Iraqi President) Mr Saddam Hussein will have seven days to accept the resolution and after that he has 30 days in which to make a report (on his weap-



Italian anti-war protestors in front of a US military base near Pisa on Thursday. — AFP (ons of mass destruction),” Mr de Villepin said, citing the timetable included in the draft resolution.

US draft bound to fail
A US draft resolution before the United Nations aims at paving the way for a war on Iraq and is “bound to fail,” a leading

Baghdad daily said today, calling on Russia and France to oppose it.

“The American draft is full of hatred and concealed aggression, it says what we should do and what we should give, and, in any case, threatens the use of force,” said *Babel*, run by President Mr Saddam Hussein’s eldest son, Uday.

“The smell from the contents of the draft says that whatever we have given and whatever we will give” in terms of disarmament, “the result will remain the same, an aggression,” the tabloid said.

“A preliminary examination of this draft shows that it is bound to fail, that it is an aggressive draft, its primary objective is to cancel out our efforts, our cooperation and our suffering at their hands over the past 11 years.

“We have great confidence that the just members of the UN Security Council, such as Russia and France, will play their essential role to prevent the Americans and the British from using the international organisation as a tool to achieve their aggressive goals,” said *Babel*.

Meanwhile, chief UN arms inspector to Iraq Mr Hans Blix said he intends to lead an advance team to Baghdad “a week to 10 days after the adoption of the resolution.”

8 NOV 2002

THE STATESMAN

IRAQ / VOTE LIKELY NEXT WEEK

Russian stand sparks optimism on fresh draft

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 2. The United Nations Security Council is expecting a fresh and revised draft from the United States early next week so that the resolution on Iraq could be readied for a formal vote. The vote is now expected towards the end of next week.

The optimism on a new resolution reaching the Council's chambers stems from a comment of Russia that the positions of the five Permanent Members are getting closer even if there remained "considerable differences".

At the world body in New York, the United Nations' Chief Weapons Inspector, Hans Blix, briefed the 10 elected members of the Security Council on his recent visit to Washington and his meeting with the President, George W Bush. He had a separate meeting with the Iraqi Ambassador.

The Iraqi top envoy to the U.N. was critical of the world body being 'used' as a tool for the U.S. and expressed scepticism of the real motive of the American President.

"He (Mr. Blix) told me the most important thing is the United States chose the path of the United Nations to resolve the problem...I hope that what they said is the truth, that the United Nations is the best way...We cannot trust them," said the envoy, Mohammad Al Douri.

The impression at the U.N. is that the Bush administration is willing to make some changes to the substantive aspects of the weapons inspections and the obligations of Iraq. For instance, the U.S. is now said to be willing to give a 50-day deadline to Iraq to divulge its industry related chemicals as opposed to a original 30-day time frame. But Washington has

made it known that it will not budge from the 30-day deadline for Iraq to divulge its weapons of mass destruction programmes.

If the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, is feverishly working the telephone lines to speak to his counterparts in France and Russia, it is not without good reason.

The two countries are still worried about the language in the draft that refers to Iraq being in 'material breach' and in warning the Saddam Hussein regime of "serious consequences" for balking at the weapons inspections programmes.

Apparently, in a bid to win over Russia and France, as also other sceptics in the 15-member Council, Washington is proposing several 'firewall' formulas that will mandate the U.S. to wait until the Chief Weapons Inspector to report to the Council that he sees either serious violations or his team running into problems in Iraq. France is in favour of the Security Council determining which one of the Iraqi violations is serious enough to be classified as a "material breach"; and Russia is still hanging tough on the stipulation that it is the U.N., not the U.S., that has to formally authorise the use of force against Iraq.

Meanwhile, at the campaign trail, Mr. Bush argued that the U.N. risked being nothing more than a "debating society" if it did not get tough with Iraq; and highlighted the implication of the links of Mr. Saddam Hussein with the Al-Qaeda. "We know he's got ties with Al-Qaeda. A nightmare scenario, of course, is that he becomes the arsenal for a terrorist network and they could attack America and they'd leave no fingerprints behind", Mr. Bush said at a rally in New Hampshire.

3 NOV 2002

THE HINDU

US, France come closer on Iraqi resolution

New York: The US and France are nearing a compromise on Iraq under which the Bush administration would promise to consult the UN security council if Iraq obstructs weapons inspectors but would be free to take military action even if the council fails to authorise it.

UN diplomats said they expect the resolution to be brought to the council either Friday or after the US congressional polls on Tuesday.

"We essentially believe we have accommodated those who wanted to decide" whether or not military action is needed if Iraq violates the inspection regime, US Secretary of State Colin Pow-

ell was quoted in European newspapers as saying, "They have now the opportunity to decide or not to decide it, to pass a second resolution or offer a second resolution or not, and we will be part of that debate," *The New York Times* quoted him as saying.

The secretary said in the so-called second stage, "We will prefer to see the UN act in a multilateral way".

But under the proposed compromise, US officials said it had been made clear that the US would reserve the right to lead a military action against Iraq if it continued to block inspections, even if the security council did not give its approval. PTI

THE TRIBUNE OF INDIA

2 1 2002

Anglo-American Iraq strategy likely to UNravel

James Bone and Chris Ayres/
The Times, London

NEW YORK, MEXICO, Oct. 28. — The six-week effort by Britain and the USA to secure a tough UN resolution on Iraq is in danger of collapse because of continued opposition to their threats of military action. With US officials pushing for a decision by the end of the week, the two powers are struggling to enlist the nine votes needed to push their strongly worded draft resolution through the 15-nation Security Council.

Both France and Russia have circulated rival proposals omitting "trigger language" for the use of force. Seeing strength in numbers, Paris and Moscow hope to draw away enough votes from the US-British draft that they will not have to confront the world's sole superpower directly by exercising their veto.

Britain and the USA have formally tabled their text in the Security Council to ensure that it comes to a vote first, but France threatened at the weekend to submit its draft for a vote as well if it did not win further concessions. "We are going to try to work with the Americans on the basis of the text they have proposed," Mr Dominique de Villepin, the French Foreign Minister, said on Saturday. "If we don't manage that, then we will obviously officially propose our own text."

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Diplomats say Britain and the USA can only count on the support of Bulgaria, Colombia, Norway and Singapore for its latest proposal. Russia, China, France and Syria do not support the current US-British text. The swing votes are Cameroon, Ireland, Guinea, Mauritius and Mexico.

Diplomats say Britain and the USA can only count on the support of Bulgaria, Colombia, Norway and Singapore for its latest proposal

President Bush, attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation summit in Mexico, apparently failed to convince President Vicente Fox of Mexico to use his UN vote to back military action.

Glowering at the cameras, Mr Bush repeated: "If the UN won't act, if Saddam Hussein won't disarm, we will lead a coalition to disarm him."

President Bush also missed a crucial opportunity to lobby President Putin in person because the Russian leader was forced to cancel his trip to the summit to deal with the hostage crisis in Moscow. Gen Colin Powell, the US Secretary of State, conceded that the push for a new resolution might fail. "I don't want to say that we're near a solution because it may evade us," he said.

Security Council members are also split over US-British proposals to toughen the UN weapons inspectors' mandate with new powers such as the right to declare no-fly and no-drive zones or to take scientists' families out of the country.

U.S.-Iran tussle casts shadow over Bahrain poll

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), OCT. 24. In a region ruled mostly by dictators and theocrats, the tiny Persian Gulf nation of Bahrain went to parliamentary polls today, braving threats by conservatives to checkmate the Kingdom's possible transition towards real democracy.

Bahrainis voted for 174 candidates, eight of them women, while three candidates have already been elected unopposed to the 40-member lower house of Parliament. Bahrain's King, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, who heads a Shoura Council, will personally appoint a chamber of another 40 members after the elections, which will also have legislative powers. In a country with a majority Shia population but Sunni rulers, political parties have been formally barred from contesting. But many candidates in the fray do owe allegiance to "societies", which can be ideology based, such as the Leftist National Democratic Action Association or represent specific ethnic groups.

Thursday's elections, which took place after a gap of nearly three decades, however, witnessed a moderate turnout, though official polling figures are expected to be announced

only later tonight. Analysts attributed the modest showing by the electorate to the poll boycott call issued by four Shia organisations, including the influential Wefaq group. Shia groups have rejected participation to protest against the King's decision to usher in democratisation in Bahrain in dribs, by appointing an unelected upper chamber of Parliament.

While the kingdom's attempt to withhold Bahrain's immediate transition to a full-fledged democracy may have been a factor in the boycott call, analysts point out that it could also reflect a larger geopolitical rivalry between Iran and the United States that has come to the fore during elections.

Observers point out that Iran exercises considerable influence over the Shia groups while Bahrain's rulers have been known to be close to the U.S. and Britain. Bahrain is home to the U.S. Fifth Fleet as well as the regional headquarters for the U.S. Marines. It is bound to play a key role, in a likely U.S.-led campaign against Iraq.

Bahrain's elections, therefore, have repercussions beyond domestic politics, as the U.S., Iran and the rest of the region have high stakes in it. For

Bahrain's rulers, elections are an investment for ensuring the country's long-term stability and prosperity. Despite short-term turbulence, Bahrain's leadership believes that a democratic Bahrain under a constitutional monarchy has a better chance of cranking up its mainly non-oil economy in a politically stable atmosphere.

Without significant oil reserves, Bahrain is looking for foreign investments in international banking, tourism, shipbuilding and petroleum refining. It also aspires to become a major international trade transit hub by expanding its ports and developing new ones.

Jolted by terrorism, which it feels breeds in the region's conservative heartland, the United States, on its part, views Bahrain's experiment with constitutional monarchy as a model for the rest of the oil-rich Persian Gulf States to emulate. Not surprisingly, the U.S. National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, favouring open societies, has already said that other countries in the region should take the lead from Bahrain's elections.

The U.S. also feels that a democratic and stable Bahrain, where it has already established its military bases, will also better serve its national security interests in the region in the future.

On the contrary, the boycott call by the Shia groups is, in part, a demonstration of Iran's ability to assert itself as a regional player, whom the U.S. cannot ignore.

In a show of strength, the Shia organisations on Tuesday mobilised around 75,000 people in a pre-poll protest. Significantly, the demonstration took place a short distance away from the U.S. Fifth Fleet base, signalling the capacity of the Shia groups to affect U.S. deployments in Bahrain's military bases.

Observers point out that Iran, which fears that it could be targeted by the U.S. after Iraq, may leverage its influence on the streets of Bahrain to draw wider concessions from Washington in the coming days.



TAKING THE LEAD: Women queue up to vote at a polling station in Riffa, 15 km from Manama, on Thursday. — AFP

INDOL

2 5 OCT 2002

IRAQ: A LOST DEBATE

It Is All About America's Grand Strategy

By HARSH V PANT

5r8 23/10
The coming war with Iraq is probably a topic that's engaging the US and the international community at large in a debate of a magnitude not witnessed since the Gulf War in 1991. What has been extremely impressive in the current debate is the ability of President George W Bush to mould the domestic and international debate to his liking. Whether this is a carefully constructed strategy to talk tough so as to be able to get a compromise or a divided administration trying to put together policies at random to see what works, the end-result is that the Bush Administration has been able to get its way on most issues so far.

First, Bush scared the rest of the world into thinking that he was going to war. As a result he is likely to get a stronger inspections regime from an energised United Nations that few thought possible a few months back. And now he has obtained a powerful resolution from the US Congress that gives him extraordinary flexibility in deciding how and when to confront Iraq, even before he has faced a direct military threat.

Bringing policy coherence

Gradually, but steadily, he also seems to be getting support from the major powers at the UN. Both France and Russia are veering around to supporting a tough UN resolution, granting automatic approval for military action if Iraq fails to comply with a new inspections programme. But the debate lingers on.

The US haste in taking on Saddam Hussein is being questioned. "Why now?" is a question that is being repeated ad nauseam. It is being argued that by invading Iraq the US would get diverted from its primary goal of confronting and destroying Al-Qaeda. The risks of attacking Iraq and the possible

nightmare scenarios, where weapons of mass destruction are used by Iraq and Israel, are being recounted. The rise of anger and hatred against the US, which is exactly what the US should be working against, is being seen as a result of this operation.

But as has become clear in the last couple of days, the critics have lost the debate. And this is because they have been asking wrong questions. Their questions

in the form of international terrorism. It is interesting to note how the war on terrorism has been used by the US to take on hostile regimes and expand its military presence around the world. The most important addition has been Iraq.

Behind the blizzard of claims and counter-claims of the last two months — about whether Iraq is violating the UN sanctions; about whether Iraq still possesses



have been of a tactical nature whereas the real issue here is the US grand strategy in the post-Cold War phase. For the US, the international system has been in a flux since the collapse of the Soviet Union. With no real enemy in sight, US foreign policy was stumbling from Bosnia to Somalia to Kosovo to Haiti. The events of 11 September, 2001, however, brought this transition to an end and gave the US foreign policy a coherence it so badly desired.

Unfolding doctrine

The main purpose of American foreign policy was to confront an enemy, and a worthy successor to the Soviet Union finally emerged

weapons of mass destruction; about whether America should "go-it-alone" or build an international coalition — a more important and subtler process is at work. It is to clearly define the character of American power and its proper role in the world. This has even led to the US propounding a new doctrine for the world, a doctrine that may well define the next century of global politics. And that's the Bush doctrine — first-strike war to achieve peace. Like the Monroe doctrine and the Truman doctrine of the yesteryears, this doctrine also provides the US with a grand plan for the world.

Then came the National Security Strategy of the Administra-

tion, sending perhaps the strongest signal till date since the end of the Cold War that American wants to carve out an even more ambitious role for itself in the world. It declared that the US forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the United States.

And make no mistake, the US has already started working towards this end. It started with the war against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Then it expanded to include countries as diverse as Philippines, Georgia and Yemen where the US military has gone ostensibly to lend support to local efforts at counterinsurgency.

Overarching vision

And now it's the turn of the Persian Gulf where the US desires to put in place a new socio-political framework, serving its interests in the region better. Iraq is only a starting point. The US is now even ready to invade and occupy Iraq so long as democracy does not take root in the country, much like it did in Japan and Germany after the second World War. So much for an administration that came to office with a particular disdain for "nation-building".

This is a vision of great sweep and imagination, almost evangelical in its underpinnings. But for better or for worse, this is what the current debate is all about. It is not about Iraq or Saddam Hussein. It is not about the UN weapons inspection regime. It is not about weapons of mass destruction either. It is about America's grand strategy, about its role in world politics. And in this debate those who focus on "small" issues like Iraq are bound to lose and have, in fact, already lost. And this should be kept in mind by India as it tries to come to terms with this new debate on Iraq and should frame its response accordingly.

The author is a research scholar in the Department of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana.

Diplomacy to disarm Saddam: Bush

US gives Iraq 'one more chance' to disarm peacefully

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 22

AMERICAN President George W. Bush has said that US is trying diplomacy 'one more time' to disarm Iraq. President Saddam Hussein 'peacefully' and suggested that if the Iraqi leader complied with every United Nations mandate it would 'signal the regime has changed.'

The *New York Times* reported today that Bush was not backing away from his past insistence that Hussein must leave office. His spokesman said yesterday that he could not imagine a situation in which the Iraqi leader, after 11 years of defiance, would suddenly comply with the United Nations. The President himself said yesterday, in an appearance with Lord Robertson, the Secretary General of NATO, that 'the stated policy of the United States is regime change.'

For the first time yesterday, Bush talked publicly about the difference between the challenge posed by Iraq and by North Korea

which told American officials two weeks ago that it had restarted a clandestine nuclear weapons programme using highly enriched uranium.

Bush said he saw no contradiction in threatening military action against Iraq, while relying on diplomacy to solve the new crisis in the Korean peninsula. "Saddam Hussein is unique in this sense," Bush said.

"He has thumbed his nose at the world for 11 years," he said, adding later, "and for 11 years he said, no, I refuse to disarm."

The remarks seemed to leave open the possibility of negotiations with North Korea, a path that Bush had rejected outright in the case of Iraq and that some hardliners in the administration argue would be a big mistake with Pyongyang as well.



"We've tried diplomacy," Bush said when asked about the issue yesterday. "We're trying it one more time. I believe the free world, if we make up our mind to, can disarm this man peacefully."

At the same time he said, "the

stated policy of our government, the previous administration and this administration, is regime change because we don't believe he is going to change."

The US presented a slightly revised draft resolution to the security council yesterday that moderated some requirements for weapons inspections in Iraq but still threatened unspecified consequences if Hussein refused to disarm.

One of Hussein's top advisers said in an interview with the *New York Times* that secret weapons programs were not the Bush administration's real objective in threatening war, but rather 'oil

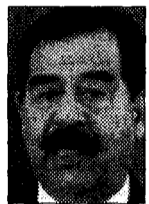
and Israel,' citing the United States' failure to threaten tough action against North Korea since it admitted last week to restarting its nuclear arms program.

Bush's spokesman, Ari Fleischer, told reporters that the new United Nations resolution was now "moving forward nicely," and that, if passed, it would give Bush all the authority he believes he would need to act militarily if Mr. Hussein failed to comply.

Fleischer also dismissed the release of Iraqi prisoners over the weekend as providing any indication that Hussein was moderating his rule.

US may not seek Saddam's ouster if he eliminates arms

Washington: Secretary of state Colin Powell, who has spoken of a "regime change" in Iraq for at least 18 months, said on Monday the US might



S. Hussein

not seek to remove Saddam Hussein if he abandoned his weapons of mass destruction.

It was the latest in a series of recent comments by Mr Powell that seemed to back away from the goal of deposing the Iraqi President, which remains Bush administration policy.

"We think the Iraqi people would be a lot better off with a different leader, a different regime," Mr Powell said. "But the principal offence here is weapons of mass destruction, and that's what this (UN) resolution is working on. The major issue before us is disarmament."

He said on NBC's "Meet the press" that he expects the UN security council to enact a resolution setting strong guidelines for inspection teams to be sent back into Iraq.

But, he added, "The issue right now is not even how tough an inspection regime is or isn't. The question is: Will Saddam and the Iraqi regime cooperate—really, really cooperate—and let the inspectors do their job?"

"All we are interested in is getting rid of those weapons of mass destruction."

Condoleezza Rice, President George W Bush's national security adviser, said the administration expected

to have a resolution ready this week for security council members to consider.

"The goal here is to disarm Saddam Hussein. And in order to do that, we are going to have to test his willingness to cooperate this time around," she said on CNN.

"If he is not willing to disarm, then the world is going to have to disarm him."

Having failed to garner support in the UN security council for the use of military force and toughening of inspection regime against Iraq, the US is now pressing for aggressive, quick and effective inspection so that President Saddam Hussein's "intention" become clear within weeks.

"The reason is that the window for taking military action is very small and very near. Any military action would need to start between December and February as heat and sandstorm later would make it difficult to wage a war," diplomats said.

Top US officials said they expected to move the resolution toughening sanctions in the council early this week.

Once it is introduced, it would take a few days before it comes up for vote if other members have reservations. But if Washington is able to get support from other members, it could be put on a fast track.

Most of the council members agree on toughening of inspection regime but are wary of the language which would allow the US to interpret that it has the authority to take military action if it perceives and inspectors complain that they are being obstructed. Agencies

World ire softens USA on Iraq

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

UNHQ, Oct. 19. — Faced with global opposition to explicit authorisation of use of military force against Baghdad, the USA has agreed to modify its resolution before the UN Security Council in this regard.

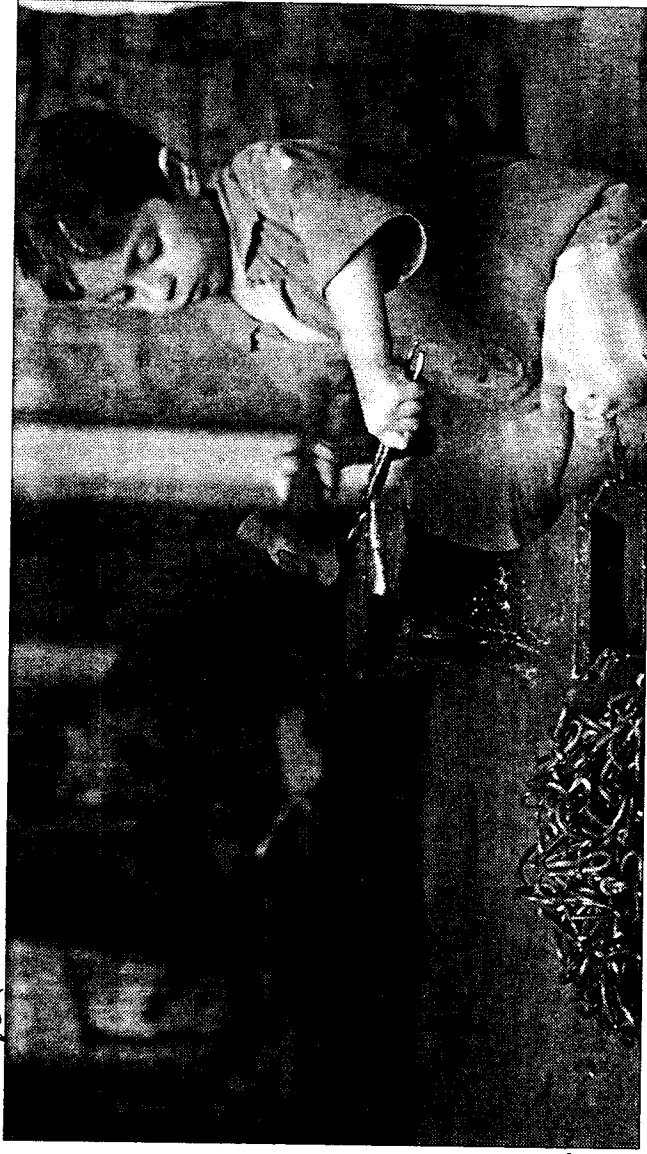
The new resolution, as drafted now, would delay any military action against Baghdad at least till after the weapons inspectors go in and start inspections in Iraq.

The new proposal would call on weapon inspectors to report "any failure by Iraq to comply with disarmament. Should a failure be reported, the Security Council would convene immediately "to consider the situation and the need for full compliance with all relevant Council resolutions in order to restore international peace and security".

The Security Council has been deeply divided over US insistence of unilateral military action against Iraq if it did not comply with the Security Council resolution on dismantling of its weapons of mass destruction. The advance team of inspectors would be in Iraq within two weeks of the Council resolution but it would take time to have inspectors working in full strength. If inspectors report obstruction, the Council, under the draft, would meet immediately and decide on the next course of action. And if it decides to authorise military action, it would have to adopt a second resolution.

But even if it fails to adopt the

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IS THIS WHAT YOU WANTED, UNCLE SAM? US sanctions have compelled even four-year-old Ahmad to work in a foundry. In Baghdad on Saturday. — AFP

second resolution, US diplomats say, President George W Bush could take military action as he has the authorisation of the Congress. Also, the draft being considered would provide enough legal cover for the military action, they contend. The US draft says that Iraq is already in "material breach" of the existing Council resolution. The word "material breach" and "serious consequences" could be used by the USA to mean that it has the authorisation to strike Iraq.

Diplomats said should chief inspector Mr Hans Blix report

that the inspectors are not getting full cooperation, the USA could take military action irrespective of the language of the first resolution and adoption of the second as being demanded by France.

France and USA have reported progress on the new Iraq resolution but diplomats still needed to iron out differences over wording with Paris insisting there must be no trigger for an attack on Iraq.

Paris has welcomed the new elements but wants to see the end-tire resolution before deciding whether to support it in the Security Council where it along with the USA, Russia, China and France, has veto power. France had strongly opposed the American proposal that a member state could use "all necessary means" against Iraq if it obstructs inspectors and is perceived to in non-compliance with the resolution. It wants the Council to consider the situation afresh if the inspectors report non-cooperation by Iraq and adopt a second resolution to authorise the use of force. To win support, USA has dropped its provisions which

The babble of Babel

BAGHDAD, Oct. 19. — An influential Iraqi newspaper called on Americans today to "muzzle" their president, comparing Mr Bush to a "raging bull" who threatens world peace and security.

"This stupid President Bush has revealed the real face of bloody US imperialism, which had been hiding behind spurious slogans about democracy and prosperity," wrote *Babel*, which is run by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's elder son and heir apparent Uday. "The American people must help muzzle Bush, the raging bull, who threatens world peace and security and is driving America to the brink of the abyss," it said. — AFP

would have allowed the permanent members to send their representatives with the inspectors and a military force to protect them. Mr Blix, during a Council briefing, too had opposed those provisions, arguing it would appear to erode the independence of inspectors.

Finding opposition, Washington agreed to drop them. In Cairo, US envoy to West Asia Mr William Burns said today that a compromise UN resolution on Iraq currently being drafted must require Baghdad's full compliance in disarmament.

Chief of Baghdad

The outcome of the Iraqi referendum was a fait accompli. Saddam Hussein managed a full 100 per cent of the vote, causing one commentator to remark it was a wonder he didn't get 101 per cent. Irrational numbers aside, the referendum is a gauntlet flung straight at the feet of president George W Bush. "Bush, Bush, listen, we love our great leader, president Saddam Hussein", crowds chanted as the Iraqi leader won himself another seven years in office. Mr Hussein's message to Washington is loud and clear — if you want to take me out, you will have to contend with at least 12 million Iraqis. America, in particular the Bush dynasty, can take credit for the Iraqi leader's popularity among his people. Thanks to Washington's unrelenting hostility towards Baghdad, ordinary Iraqis have rallied around their leader overlooking his very many shortcomings. In the light of the referendum, Mr Bush would be ill-advised to begin any military action against Baghdad. With nothing much left to lose, millions of Iraqis have vowed to lay down their lives to protect Mr Hussein. With Iraq having moved its army into cities, civilian casualties could be enormous.

The resentment at Washington's unilateralism is growing in the Arab world and elsewhere, and can only increase the vulnerability of both America and Americans to various forms of terrorism. The Bali blast is proof that the hydra-headed monster of terrorism is posing challenges which cannot be countered by military means alone. In focusing on the Iraqi dictator, Washington is overlooking the disturbing developments that have taken place in Pakistan and which will have a direct bearing on its war against terrorism. After Washington's regime change in Afghanistan, it is no secret that Al-Qaida and the Taliban have regrouped in Pakistan propelling the rise of fundamentalist parties which now control two crucial frontier provinces. General Musharraf, Washington's poster boy for democratic good conduct, appears to have no qualms about cosyng up to fundamentalist parties who are openly anti-America. Not so long ago, when the general held his referendum, universally condemned as rigged, Washington appeared to have no problems in accepting the verdict. The people of Iraq have voted with their feet for Mr Hussein. What prevents Mr Bush from applying the same yardstick to Baghdad as he did to Islamabad? Clearly, a case of double standards. But then, the world should be used to Washington's whimsies by now.

9 7 OCT 2002

Iraq declares 100% vote for Saddam

BAGHDAD, OCT. 16.

Iraq declared its President, Saddam Hussein, winner of 100 per cent of the votes in a State-orchestrated referendum perpetuating his two-decade reign, and automatic gunfire crackled on Baghdad's streets in celebration.

Mr. Hussein's regime said the vote, widely dismissed outside Iraq, showed Iraq's people standing with their leader against any U.S. attack, and said Iraqis were ready for one.

"If there is aggression, the Americans will face these people who said 'yes' to Saddam Hussein," Izzat Ibrahim, Vice-Chairman of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council and Mr. Hussein's right-hand man, told reporters at Parliament.

Bursts of gunfire exploded in downtown Baghdad as he spoke, as Mr. Hussein's supporters fired in the air and danced on street corners.

"If the U.S. administration makes a mistake and attacks Iraq, we will fight them," Mr. Ibrahim said. "If they come, we will fight them in every village, and every house. Every house will be a front, and every Iraqi will have a role in the war.



ONE-MAN SHOW?: Iraqis, holding portraits of the President, Saddam Hussein, celebrate after Mr. Hussein's victory in Baghdad on Wednesday. — AP

"All Iraqis are armed now and by God's will we will triumph."

The vote was rejected by the Iraqi opposition in exile, by the United States, and others outside Iraq. Many in yesterday's referendum cast multiple ballots representing votes of entire families, stuffing fistfuls of votes into boxes at a time.

The White House had dismissed the one-man race in advance. "Obviously, it's not a very serious day, not a very serious vote and nobody places any credibility on it," said the Press Secretary, Ari Fleischer, in Washington yesterday. — AP

17 OCT 2002

THE HINDU

WEAPONS INSPECTION / REFERENDUM BOLSTERS SADDAM

From
14/10/02

Iraq, U.S. drift further apart

1610 10-14

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), OCT. 15. Iraq and the United States appeared to be drifting further apart with the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, demonstrating through a State-wide referendum that he continued to enjoy overwhelming public support in the face of threats from Washington and some of its allies.

Iraqis today turned out in strength to cast their votes at 2,000 polling stations in a presidential referendum, which Mr. Hussein is certain to win. Mr. Hussein won 99.96 per cent of the vote in a first referendum in 1995 and there is speculation that he might get a 100 per cent "yes" vote on Wednesday when results are declared.

"Iraq's unified voice declaring...yes, yes to the leader Saddam Hussein defangs small Bush and officials of his evil administration," *Al-Jumhuriya* state newspaper said in an editorial. The Iraqi President, as a result of the referendum in



An Iraqi woman takes blood from her arm to mark "yes" on her voting slip in a referendum to extend the President, Saddam Hussein's rule by another seven years, at a polling station in Baghdad's neighbourhood on Tuesday. — AFP

which around 12 million citizens can participate will be entitled to extend his 23-year-rule by another seven years. Supporters of President Hussein vowed to support him to death, with some describing him as the "pride" of Iraq.

"This is Iraq, and this is the people of Iraq," Mr. Hussein's top ranking official, Izzat Ibrahim, said in Baghdad. "How will America fight this great people? How much will America lose and for what reason?" Mr. Ibrahim pointed out that the Bush

administration was misleading the Iraqi people. Iraqi leaders on Monday made it clear that the referendum would symbolise the defiance of the Iraqi nation to the United States. "The political and international circumstances and the American and Zionist threats (against Iraq) have given the referendum a new meaning," the Information Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, said.

But while there were celebrations on the streets of Baghdad on Tuesday, there was no easing of the stand-off between Iraq and the United States. There was, for instance, a further hardening of differences on the re-entry of weapons inspectors into Iraq. Baghdad has so far rejected the U.N.'s request seeking protection for weapons inspectors entering northern and southern Iraq. The U.S. and Britain, in bid to protect ethnic Kurds in northern Iraq and the Shias in the south, have denied permission for Iraqi planes in these "No fly zones."

16 OCT 2002

THE HINDU

Fearing coup, Saddam orders security revamp

London: Saddam Hussein has conducted a startling shake-up of his senior security officials, apparently because he feared that some of those closest to him might be plotting his downfall.



Saddam

There were sweeping changes since the Gulf war in 1991. In the past month alone, three important commands have changed — those of air defence, military intelligence and the special security office, responsible for the security of Mr Saddam and his extended family.

Just as striking is the fact that most of those being moved are Saddam's relatives or come from his home town of Tikrit.

So numerous are Tikritis in the Iraqi government that Saddam asked them years ago to stop using their last names in order to disguise their origins.

The fact that he appears to be suspicious of Tikritis shows how paranoid he has become about the possibility of being betrayed to the Americans in the build-up to a possible war aimed at ousting him.

On Monday it was disclosed that hundreds of US army and marine planners had been ordered to Kuwait, where they could co-ordinate any thrust into Iraq by land forces. The Pentagon is expected to start vaccinating up to 500,000 troops against smallpox in case

Iraq responds to any attack with biological weapons.

Hopes of a breakthrough in the form of a UN Security Council resolution opening the way for inspectors to return to Iraq with unfettered access to weapons sites received a setback when Saddam's regime ignored requests to confirm its agreement to detailed proposals.

Chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix, agreed with the Americans that inspections should not resume until a tough new resolution had set terms with which the Iraqis agreed.

Amid growing fears of war, Saddam has begun spending less and less time in Baghdad, according to the opposition Iraqi National Congress. This could complicate any attempt to remove the president, simply because of the difficulty of finding him, already a daunting task because he uses doubles to disguise his movements.

The only person Saddam appears to trust entirely is his younger son, Qusay, who has taken on more and more weighty tasks for his father. He is now supervising the special security office. Since being elected to Iraq's ruling Revolutionary Command Council, Qusay has also taken more responsibility for the military forces of Iraq. Uday, the elder son, has to make an appointment to see his father and concentrates mostly on business. The Sunday Times

6 OCT 2002

'The Americans wouldn't dare to shoot us down'

Ian Cobain, The Times, London

BASRA, Oct. 14. — As our creaking 727 climbed above the desert, leaving Saddam International Airport far below, the voice of Captain Laith Md Ali crackled over the tannoy.

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to Iraqi Airways Flight Zero Zero One," he said in both Arabic and English. "In about four minutes we will reach our cruising altitude of 23,000ft. Our journey to Basra will take about an hour. Please keep your seat backs upright and your belts fastened. I hope you have a pleasant flight."

A few minutes later, as the hostess in a crisp green uniform started to serve soft drinks to the first-class passengers, a second voice could be heard from Captain Ali's cockpit, this time on the radio.

"You are entering a free missile zone," said the voice of a young American male with the slightly languid tones of the Deep South. "Your flight is prohibited by the United Nations. You enter this zone at your own risk."

Captain Ali and his co-pilot remained silent, but the first-class passengers - two fidgety East European businessmen and a mustachioed Iraqi army major - craned their necks to peer at the vapour trails of two US or British fighters that were shadowing the ageing airliner at around 40,000ft. Flight Zero Zero One had just crossed the 33rd Parallel, the line across the map of Iraq that signals the start of the no-fly zone, a sector established ten years ago in an attempt to prevent President Saddam Hussein from waging war against his Shia Muslim opponents. A second no-fly zone was established above the 36th Parallel to



LONG LIVE SADDAM! Iraqi schoolgirls chant slogans for President Saddam Hussein in their school transformed into a polling centre in Baghdad on Monday. — AFP

protect the Kurds in the North. The warplanes flying overhead could, in theory, have shot us out of the sky at any moment.

"They call us every time we cross into the zone, but we never reply," Captain Ali said. "Sometimes a couple of F-14s or F-16s will come and fly alongside us ... but we just keep on flying. I'm sure they wouldn't dare shoot us down." Captain Ali, who learnt to fly Boe-

ings while living in Seattle, said that the voices were always American.

Sometimes they were from the fighter pilots, other times from an Awacs early warning aircraft. They contact his aircraft using the internationally recognised emergency frequency. "Occasionally the American pilots talking to us are women," he said, "but I don't talk to them either."

Saddam's sons may take over

Press Trust of India

NEW YORK, Oct. 14. — If Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is killed or somehow cut off from his command centre, power would most likely pass to his sons, Uday or Qusay, who could be worse than the father, a media report said today. Uday, 38, is known to be the reckless, violent, oversexed heir apparent while Qusay, 36, is calmer, colder and ultimately more dangerous, it said.

A cornered Uday would not hesitate to lash out with chemical and biological weapons. But Qusay is the danger-man as he actually controls the weapons and could find a way to use them against US forces or the American people, Newsweek reported.

Qusay is "in the shadows," a senior US administration official, who has access to CIA files on Saddam's sons, said. "We don't know much." But US intelligence believes Qusay is Saddam Hussein's true heir apparent, for the simple reason that he controls the security that keeps his father in power and alive, he added.

Several Iraqi exiles recounted stories about the cruelty of Uday and Qusay, which Newsweek said were almost too grotesque to be true. Some are probably exaggerated, but not by much, the administration official said.

"They really like to see blood; they like to see people tortured. The difference is that Qusay does everything quietly; he has never been in the open like Uday," said a former colonel in the President's security service.

President Bush orders troops to Kuwait

Tim Reid, The Times, London

WASHINGTON, Oct. 14. — The Bush Administration stepped up its preparations for war against Iraq yesterday by ordering the deployment of key US Army and Marine Corps battle staff and ground troops to Kuwait.

The move, the first non-routine dispatch of conventional troops to the Gulf in recent months, came as defence secretary Mr Donald Rumsfeld prepared to order smallpox vaccinations for up to 500,000 troops.

The deployment of the battle staffs of the Army's V Corps, with headquarters in Hei-

delberg, Germany, and the Marine Corps' 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, based at Camp Pendleton, California, largely completes the command structure that would manage an Iraqi invasion.

Several thousand US troops are already in Kuwait and the army has a command element in the country overseeing operations in Afghanistan.

However, the V Corps staff, whose combat units are specifically trained for fighting in the Middle East, and those of the Marine group will focus on Iraq, Pentagon officials said.

More than 600 battle staff from US Cen-

tral Command, which would have overall responsibility for an Iraqi invasion, are to move to a newly built airbase in Qatar next month from their headquarters in Tampa, Florida. The move is described as a pre-arranged "exercise", but there is little doubt that the officers, including General Tommy Franks, who would be in charge of any military campaign, will remain in Qatar in anticipation of war. Already General Franks has his naval command staff in Bahrain, headquarters for the US 5th Fleet.

The Air Force, which has been enforcing "no-fly" zones over northern and southern

Iraq since the end of the Gulf War, has a command centre at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia.

One of the worries about building up forces in the vicinity of Iraq is that President Saddam Hussein could launch a preemptive strike with chemical or biological weapons. This has persuaded Mr Rumsfeld to decide that smallpox vaccinations should be started as early as next month. Barring objections from President Bush, Pentagon officials say, troops will begin to receive smallpox shots as soon as the vaccine is licensed in the middle of November.

Iraq seeks to rally support

By Atul Aneja ^{14/10}

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), OCT. 13. By arming the United States President, George W. Bush, with a mandate for a possible use of force against Iraq, the Congress has raised tensions in the region and has pushed Baghdad into a fresh effort gather public support at home and in its Arab neighbourhood.

Recognising that the decision in the U.S. Congress was a benchmark in the U.S.-Iraq stand-off, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, while on a visit to Lebanon at the weekend, said Baghdad, after this development, was now prepared for a possible military action. Mr. Aziz reiterated that U.S. objectives in Iraq were part of a larger geopolitical design in the region. Mr. Bush, with a view to establish control over the region's oil reserves, wanted "complete hegemony over the region", he observed.

Apprehending that the military threat from the U.S. had now heightened, the Iraqi regime on Saturday took a major step to rally public support behind it. Around 500 Iraqi Muslim clerics and scholars belonging to Iraq's Popular Islamic Conference issued a *fatwa* calling on Muslims to launch a holy war to "burn the earth under the feet" of the United States if it attacked Iraq.

Keen to the gather support on the Arab street, Iraq also voiced strong anti-Israel sentiments. The Iraqi Parliament that met on Saturday criticised the advocacy by the U.S. Congress to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Arabs see Jerusalem, which is holy to Christians, Muslims and Jews, as the future capital of the state of Palestine.

Analysts point out that Iraq, with the intention of rallying

support in the Islamic countries, wishes to be seen as a vigorous advocate of the Palestinian cause. Observers point out that Iraq's efforts to galvanise popular support in the region are well-timed and can make some headway. Arab attention, thanks to the widely popular satellite television channels such as Qatar's *Al Jazeera*, is, apart from the U.S.-Iraq stand-off, riveted to two other major issues. This could go to Iraq's advantage.

First, Arab support for the Palestinian cause has become increasingly emotive on account of the disproportionate use of force by U.S.-backed Israel that has included air raids on civilian targets to counter extremist violence.

A more pronounced espousal of Palestinian cause by Iraq at this time, when emotions are running high, can, therefore, carry a greater mass appeal in the region than at anytime in the recent past.

Second, the recent suspected terrorist attacks, possibly by Al-Qaeda cadres on the French oil

tanker Limburg, Yemen, and the targeting of U.S. Marines in Kuwait on Tuesday have become a major point of debate and which could also go in Iraq's favour.

Analysts point out that the attack on the Marines symbolises the growing opposition among a section of the Arab population to the presence of U.S. troops in the region. Part of this opposition comes from the radicalised section of the Kuwaiti population.

Arabs in the Persian Gulf States, including Kuwait are, unlike the U.S., also less inclined to attribute all extremist violence to Al-Qaeda. For instance, while the official view in Kuwait is that the two young men involved in the attack on the Marines were part of a 26-member cell with Al-Qaeda links, there is a strong counter-view. Relatives of one of the assailants say that the two youths were not terrorists but carried out the attack in retaliation for the recommendation of the U.S. Congress to declare Jerusalem as Israel's capital.



PEACE MARCH: Nearly 30,000 people gather in front of the State Library in Melbourne, Australia, on Sunday to protest Canberra's support to U.S. for a possible war with Iraq. — AP

THE HINDU

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IRAN / FEARS OF ATTACK

U.S. move will fuel extremism: Teheran

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, OCT.10. Apprehending that the United States could target it after dealing with Iraq, Iran has said that it would counter any move to undermine its territorial integrity or national interests.

The Iranian President, Mohammad Khatami, said during talks with the visiting British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, that Iranian people, faced with any threat, would not hesitate to rise in the defence of their national interests and territorial integrity. Mr. Khatami's remarks assume importance as Mr. Straw is expected to brief the U.S. authorities in detail about his visit to Iran.

Mr. Straw had similarly consulted Iran prior to the U.S.-led military campaign in Afghanistan. Iran, analysts point out, could be a U.S. target in the future on account of its alleged pursuit of nuclear weapons, its hostility towards Israel and support for the militant Hezbollah group in Lebanon that opposes Tel Aviv.

Like Turkey, France, Britain and Russia, Iran does not want that the United Nations, under pressure from the United States, to sanction the forcible removal of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein. Mr. Khatami pointed out that, "unseating governments by force would set a dangerous precedent in the world".

The Iranian establishment is of the view that any endorsement of regime change in Iraq can be self-destructive as it could encourage the United States to take similar steps against Teheran.

Iran was opposed to any unilateral action against Iraq but

was likely to endorse the use of force against it, provided this decision was taken collectively by the U.N. Security Council. Iranian officials have recently said that they oppose a war with Iraq as it could destabilise the region, but, would, nevertheless, accept any collective U.N. Security Council decision on Baghdad as a fact.

Mr. Khatami pointed out that the U.S. had a history of taking unilateral decisions in the region that momentarily suited its own interests.

He accused the West of arming Mr. Hussein with chemical weapons which were used against Iran during the Iran-Iraq conflict as well as on the Iraqi people themselves. He also questioned Washington's assertion that Iraqis may use such weapons against Americans.

Accusing the U.S. of "arrogance and haste", Mr. Khatami warned Mr. Straw that Washington's "political conduct can only result in the strengthening of extremist movements' activities in the Islamic world".

Britain and Iran, as a fall-out of Mr. Straw's visit, are now expected to intensify their consultations on Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Straw stressed that Iraq was a threat to its neighbouring countries and said all U.N. Security Council Resolutions on Iraq must be enforced.

Mr. Khatami, on his part, made two additional points. First, he expressed his country's complete rejection of the moves in the U.S. to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Second, he pointed out that the U.S. had deliberately escalated the Iraqi crisis, in order to divert international attention from Israeli oppression of the Palestinian people.

U.S., Iraq and the U.N.

HD-10 11/10 By Chinmaya R. Gharekhan

Saddam Hussein miscalculated in 1990. If the present President Bush makes his own calculations and decides on an invasion, he will surely have to be prepared for the consequences.

IRAQ INVADED Kuwait on August 2, 1990, and declared it Iraq's 19th province. The invasion took place in the early hours of August 2, corresponding to the evening of August 1 in New York. Very few at the United Nations were aware of the dramatic developments, including the able ambassador of the victim nation who was dining at the time with friends at the elegant Russian Tea Room. The American Ambassador tracked him down there, gave him the bad news and invited him to his suite at the Waldorf Astoria to discuss what action should be taken at the U.N. Late that night, the Security Council adopted Resolution 660, the first of dozens on the Iraq-Kuwait question it adopted in the following months. It condemned Iraq's aggression and demanded immediate withdrawal from Kuwait. Fourteen members voted in favour, with Yemen not participating. Even Yemen did not vote against.

As of August 2, Iraq was not an enemy of the United States. If anything, the U.S. had sought to help Iraq in some ways in its war against Iran. The U.S. Ambassador in Baghdad at the time had met Saddam Hussein only a few days earlier and had certainly not said anything by way of warning against what the Iraqi President was planning to do. Some observers even suggested, perhaps a little unfairly, that Mr. Hussein was justified in interpreting the Ambassador's remarks as a tacit green signal for his plans.

The American antipathy to Mr. Hussein since then is not difficult to understand. First, unlike Iraq, which had taken the lead in breaking the military pact named after its capital, Kuwait was a dependable ally. Second, what Iraq had done was clearly unjustifiable and needed to be undone. Principles are not terribly important in international relations, but they can be most useful when they can be invoked in support of a particular course of action. Third, and most important, there was the question of control over the supplies and price of oil. Iraq has the second largest proven crude oil reserves and could come to occupy the first place, ahead of Saudi Arabia, if the potential in Western

Iraq is confirmed. There was one other, not often mentioned, consideration for the U.S. The Iraq-Kuwait crisis broke out within months of the Berlin Wall's collapse and the end of the Cold War. The Soviet Union still existed, but it had been reduced to a political non-entity. Diplomats in the delegates' lounge at the U.N. were lamenting the absence of 'balance' in international relations. The U.S. was anxious to seize the opportunity, thrown up by the events of August 2, to assert and establish its political and diplomatic supremacy. The U.N. provided the right forum at the right time to demonstrate the American pre-eminence in the world.

Then, as now, American spokesmen at various levels challenged the U.N. to deliver, or be labelled irrelevant. In 1990, Iraq was clearly guilty of committing aggression against a U.N. member-state, making it easy for the rest of the U.N. members to join in American initiatives. There was no question but that Iraq had to, and had to be made to, vacate its aggression. When Iraq refused to pull out, it was not difficult for the Security Council to impose economic sanctions. When the sanctions did not produce the desired result, the Council passed Resolution 678 authorising countries cooperating with Kuwait to "use all necessary means" to achieve the purposes of its previous resolutions. It was a bit more difficult to obtain convincing support for Resolution 678, 12 in favour, two against and one abstention. On the whole, the other Council members did not feel too uncomfortable supporting the resolution. Today, however, the situation is different. Iraq is no longer in occupation of Kuwait — true, it did not pull out of its own volition — and the humanitarian situation inside Iraq is near catastrophic.

The aerial phase of the Gulf War started just before 7 p.m. New York

time on January 16, 1991. The first time Iraq indicated an intention of withdrawing from Kuwait was on February 15 in a Revolutionary Command Council communique, but it was a conditional offer and, as such, did not satisfy the Security Council. The ground operations started on February 24. On February 27, the U.S. President, George Bush, ordered "temporary cessation of hostilities", bringing into effect a *de facto* ceasefire. It took another month, until March 28, for the U.S. and the U.K. to introduce "the mother of all resolutions" which, after a few amendments, was adopted on April 3 as Resolution 687 and which established a *de jure* cessation of hostilities. The U.S. delegation explained that the term 'ceasefire' was not used in the resolution since it can only be used in case of a war between two states, whereas this was a war between Iraq and a group of states acting under the U.N.'s authority.

The U.S. and the U.K. had made no secret of their strong wish to get rid of Mr. Hussein. They could not include it specifically in any resolution, just as they will not be able to today, but they hoped for an internal revolt strong enough to topple Mr. Hussein. The Shias in the south did revolt but the Iraqi forces suppressed them ruthlessly; the Americans did not help them since they were most reluctant to get involved in a civil war. They were also concerned at the prospects of increased influence of Shia-dominated Iran in the region. The Kurds in the north seized the opportunity to carve out an autonomous Kurdistan.

On April 25, the U.S. gave an ultimatum to Iraq to clear out of the north, or else. In early March, 30 Iraqi political organisations met in Beirut to hammer out an alternative to Mr. Hussein. There is, thus, something of a *deja vu* about the various options

the U.S. is considering at present, except outright invasion.

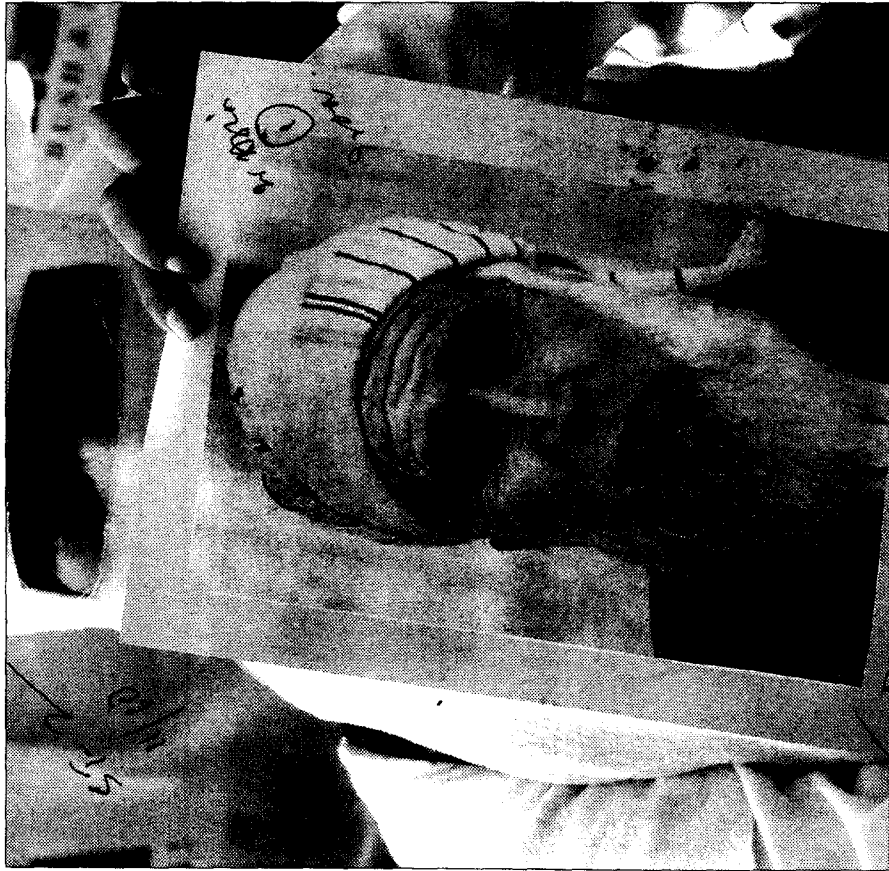
Resolution 678 of 1990 had the following innocuous looking phrase at the end: "and to restore international peace and security in the area". The Americans and the British used this all-embracing phrase as justification to go beyond Kuwait's liberation to get harsh anti-Iraqi resolutions passed in the Council. No doubt, similar language will be used in the next resolution on Iraq. It is more than probable that an attempt would be made to legitimise the no-fly zones, which so far have no basis in any Security Council resolution. There is even speculation that the U.S.-U.K. draft will seek to confer special privileges on the P-5. The French initiative of a two-stage approach will in all likelihood prevail in the end, since it will in effect help the U.S. gain added credibility, without in any way obstructing the pursuit of its objectives. Iraq can foil all possibility of invasion by cooperating with the arms inspectors. The legal position is that sanctions can only be lifted if the inspectors certify that they have accomplished all their objectives.

Nations, like individuals, have to face the consequences of their actions. The Iraqi President attacked Kuwait in 1990 and is still paying the price for it. In all objectivity, he had many an opportunity to pull out with all his forces in tact and without sanctions. Iraq could have been the pre-eminent regional power today, but Mr. Hussein miscalculated. If the present President Bush makes his own calculations and decides on an invasion, he will surely have to be prepared for the consequences. He might not succeed in getting rid of Mr. Hussein, his troops might suffer heavy casualties, he might end up further inflaming public sentiment in the Muslim and Arab worlds against his country and the coalition for the war against terror might get weakened. Or, he might succeed in his immediate objective and still have to face other adverse effects, including even a break-up of Iraq into two or three states. Or, he might succeed, without any negative consequences. The last scenario is the least likely.

11 2002

THE HINDU

Iraq invites USA to inspect 2 sites



BUSH BEARDED? An anti-US protester makes a point in Jakarta on Thursday. — AFP

Agence France Presse

BAGHDAD, Oct. 10. — The head of Iraq's armament programme today invited the US administration to "immediately" inspect two sites where Washington suspects Baghdad of having resumed its prohibited weapons programmes.

"The American administration can send whoever it wants to visit the An-Nasr and Al-Furat sites, which it suspects of being used to produce weapons of mass destruction," said Mr Abdel Tawab Mulla Howeish, also the military industries minister.

"If the US administration wants to see the two sites, we urge them to inspect them immediately," Mr Howeish said.

The two sites were mentioned in the dossier that British Prime Minister Tony Blair had released on Iraq's arsenal, while Mr George W. Bush showed a satellite photograph of Al-Furat in a speech this week in which he threatened to disarm Baghdad by force, if necessary.

Mr Howeish said sites "used to produce metal and moulded structures for cement bound for industrial and real estate construction were inspected by the UN between 1992 and 1998, notably the International Atomic Energy Agency, and were destroyed in US bombings in 1991 and 1998." "If one of you wants to visit the two sites, we will be ready to open up their doors so the truth becomes clear," he told journalists.

Congress backs Bush: Mr Bush's request for authority to use force against Iraq drew solid support today in both the House and Senate,

US planes bomb Basra airport

BAGHDAD, Oct. 10. — US aircraft today attacked the Basra airport in southern Iraq, the third strike in two weeks, destroying its radar system, Iraq said. "The evil American crowds have struck and destroyed the civilian radar system and damaged the terminal halls," a transport ministry spokesman said.

Pentagon officials said the target on that occasion was a mobile air defence radar that had been targeting US and British aircraft. Baghdad then announced on 29 September that US aircraft again attacked the airport, destroying the civilian radar system anew, a charge that went unanswered in Washington. — AFP

Basra airport had also been bombed in August 2001 by US and British forces.

An Iraqi military spokesman said yesterday that four Iraqis were killed and 10 hurt when US and British warplanes bombed Nineveh.

Iraq, which now faces the threat of a US military offensive aimed at ousting the regime of President Saddam Hussein, has never recognised the air exclusion zones, which are not sanctioned by any UN resolution. — AFP

adds AP from Washington. The Senate voted 75-25 to end delaying tactics and open the way for final passage and the House overwhelmingly defeated efforts to weaken it

W. Aziz
1
MASS DESTRUCTION WEAPONS / 'BUSH SPEECH FULL OF LIES' H0-19
1910

Iraq will not bend, declares Saddam

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), OCT. 9. The U.S. President, George W. Bush, was threatening Iraq with a war because Baghdad had refused to yield to Washington's pressure, Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein, has said.

Reacting to the recent televised address by Mr. Bush on Iraq, Mr. Hussein said that U.S. threats were a result of its inability to force Iraqis to beg for forgiveness. "Bush was unable to twist your arm and make you beg saying, 'We beg your pardon, Sir, we will not repeat what we have done,'" the Iraqi News Agency quoted Mr. Hussein as telling the people. "The reason for their (Americans') anger is clear. That is because of your desire for development and your unbending will in the face of evil, pressure and aggression," he added.

Supplementing Mr. Hussein's assertions, Iraq's Information Minister, Mohammad Saeed As-Sahaf, has said that the Bush administration was using Iraq to divert attention from "aggravating" domestic problems. Mr. Bush, he added



DESPITE ALL THE RHETORIC: An Iraqi man buys spare parts for an American car in Baghdad on Wednesday. — Reuters

was "blackmailing" the U.N. Security Council to pass an "oppressive resolution." Such a step, he felt, would only prolong the sufferings of the Iraqi people. Meanwhile, two senior members of the Iraqi Parliament have pointed to Mr. Bush's reference to the possible

Iraqi use of mass destruction weapons against the United States and said that Mr. Bush's speech was "full of lies." "(The) Bush speech is full of lies and full of unreasonable argument," Abdul Aziz Kailani, a member of the Iraqi Parliament said. "Bush is just like a beast which wants

to eat small countries and while he should help them he wants to destroy them," he added.

Another Parliamentarian denied that Baghdad possessed any weapons of mass destruction. Washington was charging that Iraq possessed non-conventional weapons in order to find an excuse to attack it. "We have no weapons of mass destruction and the whole world knows that but Bush wants to impose his hegemony on the world and subject Iraq to his rule," Abdul Aziz Shwaish, said. He also dismissed Iraq's links to terrorist groups and rejected Mr. Bush's assertion that Iraq had maintained high-level contacts for more than a decade with Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network.

AFP reports:

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, has accused the U.S. of planning to "annihilate Iraq" and then divide up the Arab world as he rallied Syrian support for Baghdad's isolated regime. The U.S. "wants to annihilate Iraq and then divide up the Middle East. We are all threatened" Mr. Aziz said in Damascus on Wednesday.

Attack on Iraq: Consensus eludes Big-5

W. Asia
①
Iron
SF-2

10/10

Press Trust of India

UNHQ, Oct. 9. — The five permanent members of UN Security Council discussed the question of authorisation of the use of force if Iraq obstructed weapons inspectors, but failed to reach any consensus.

At the meeting, which lasted for almost two hours yesterday, the USA and Britain, as expected, continued to press for only one resolution toughening the mandate of inspectors and authorising use of force if Baghdad failed meet the expectations of the inspectors.

But the remaining three Russia, France and China, stuck to their positions that there should be two resolutions, one toughening the mandate and another to authorise use of force if Baghdad fails to live up to its commitments.

USA has shown the draft of its resolution to only the permanent members.

Diplomats said little movement is expected at the

UN till the US Congress authorises the use force. The concentration of the administration is currently on the Congress, and only after it adopts the resolution, the administration would seriously start nudging the Council members to fall in line.

The US diplomats are also working in the capitals where the political decisions would be taken. Once their political masters lay down the broad policy, the diplomats would then fine-tune the language.

A senior Russian diplomat said today that his country could accept a new UN resolution on weapons inspectors as long as it addressed Moscow's concerns about the automatic use of force, AFP added from Moscow.

Deputy foreign minister Mr Yuri Fedotov said Russia continued to believe that weapons inspectors should return to Iraq quickly and that a new resolution was not needed for monitoring Iraq's weapons program.

However, Mr Fedotov said Russia could accept a new resolution as long as it

were based on previous resolutions, if it did not make demands that Iraq could not fulfil, and if it did not entail automatic use of force, should Baghdad fail to satisfy the Security Council.

Diplomats here noted that France is also softening its position. It had prepared a draft of its own to counter one prepared by the Americans. But now, diplomats said, it has revised it to bring more in line with the US draft though Washington is still not satisfied.

France favours the two-resolution approach. But in the first resolution, it has included a warning that any "serious failure" by Iraq to comply with inspectors demands would result in an immediate Security Council meeting to consider "any measure to ensure full compliance."

Meanwhile, the CIA has told the Congress that Saddam Hussein is unlikely to attack first with weapons of mass destruction but may use them if he concluded that a US attack on Iraq could no longer be deterred.

Neighbours cool to Iraq overture

110-19710
By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), OCT. 6. Encouraged by the Russian and French reservations on military strikes against Iraq, Baghdad has begun a new round of diplomacy in the region in the hope of warding off a conflict with a U.S.-led coalition.

Iraq's Foreign Minister, Naji Sabri, is in Oman after concluding two days of talks with Bahrain. He is also expected to visit Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to round off his Persian Gulf tour. Bahrain hosts the headquarters of the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, which is fanned out in the Persian Gulf while Qatar's Al Udeid base is likely to become a key command centre for conducting a possible war against Iraq.

Oman's bases of Seeb, Thumrait and Masirah store essential war supplies that can be sent to frontline U.S. locations during a war. His interlocutors are telling Mr. Sabri during his deliberations that they are opposed to a war, but are not ready to defy the U.S. In fact, Bahrain's King Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has frankly acknowledged the limitations of the Arab world, either in preventing a war against Iraq or in supporting the Palestinians in their struggle against Israel. "We should not deceive ourselves, deceive Iraq or the Palestinian people when it comes to joint Arab possibility to support them", King Hamad said in an interview to Egypt's *Al Ahrām* daily. "We cannot prevent war or impose peace. Arabs should have the courage to admit this reality so that we can build on it and save what can be saved." Iraq's neighbours are making two points during their talks with Iraqi officials. First, they are emphasising

their opposition to any unilateral U.S. military action against Iraq. However, they are amply indicating to Iraq that they may not oppose military action, in case the U.N. Security Council sanctions it. Even, Turkey, a member of the NATO and a frontline state for mounting strikes on Iraq has insisted that any decision on Iraq should be taken collectively by the U.N. Security Council.

Second, Arab nations are asking Iraq take steps that would encourage the U.N. Security Council, especially its veto-holding members such as Russia, France and China to block military action against it. Consequently, their advice to Iraq is that, it should, without any reservations, abide by the decisions that the Security Council might take. Iraq has suffered another blow in its drive to build an opposition to the use of force, with Iran's Defence Minister stating that his country was unlikely to oppose the entry of U.S. warplanes, engaged in operations against Iraq, into its airspace. "We do not consider the forced and unharmed entry into our airspace by any country as an act of enmity", Admiral Ali Shamkhani said.

Meanwhile, northern Iraq's main Kurdish opposition groups have taken a major step forward to work together in the coming days. After a gap of six years, the Kurdish Parliament has convened and unanimously ratified an agreement signed in Washington in September 1998 by Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) head, Massoud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) chief, Jalal Talabani. The Kurdish Parliament Speaker, Rozh Nuri Shaweess of the KDP, read out a message from the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, to open the meeting.

W. M. M. ①

U.S. steps up diplomacy on Iraq

49-14

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, OCT. 5. In what appears to be a boost for the efforts of the United States at the United Nations, the chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, has agreed with the Bush administration that a new Iraq resolution is needed before the inspections can resume.

At the end of an hour-long meeting here with senior administration officials such as the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor, and the Deputy Secretary of Defence, Mr. Blix remarked, "It would be awkward for us to go in and then find there was a new resolution".

The United States, in the last several days, has been hanging tough in its position that Mr. Blix and his team should not go to Baghdad for new inspections unless and until the Security Council came out with new sets of parameters on what is to be done, the conditions of weapons inspections and the implications of not following through.

There is resistance from Council members, notably from France and Russia.

The warming up to the U.S. idea on a new resolution and weapons inspections

came from the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, as well. "He (Mr. Blix) has got his men ready, but as the Council is discussing further guidance, it would be appropriate for him to know that further guidance before he resumes, and I hope that will be forthcoming shortly", Mr. Annan remarked. Apart from the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, working the telephone lines calling key officials and leaders overseas, American diplomats are said to be feverishly working the corridors of the United Nations rallying support for a new Iraq resolution that will be tough in its language and with a specific time-frame.

Russia does not want another resolution; and France wants two, the first dealing with inspections and the second, if necessary, on the use of force for non-compliance.

"We are agreed. There has to be constant pressure for Iraq to comply", Mr. Blix said, going on to make the point that over the days he has indeed seen "convergence" of views; and hoped that a new resolution does not take too long to materialise.

For his part, Gen. Powell acknowledged that differences remained with Council members but expressed optimism that they would be overcome. The talks between Mr.

Blix and senior officials of the administration came on a day when the President, George W. Bush, raised the pitch in his condemnation of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, calling him a "cold blooded killer", a phrase that he has thus far only reserved for terrorists, especially the ones responsible for the horrific acts of Sept. 11, 2001.

Mr. Bush, in a speech in Boston, once again placed the onus on the United Nations, and did not fail to remind one more time that Washington will act alone if needed. "If the United Nations won't make the decision, if Saddam Hussein continues to lie and deceive, the United States will lead a campaign to disarm this man before he harms America", Mr. Bush said.

The developments on the Iraq front came also on the day that the Senate debated the Iraq War Resolution throughout the day. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate are expected to vote on the Resolution next week.

The President came to an understanding with the leadership of the House this week; and even though there is a spirited dissent in the Senate, the White House is expected to prevail without much difficulty.

6/10

IRAQ / DEADLOCK OVER RESOLUTION CONTINUES

W. Asia
① **U.S., Britain stall** *HD-19*
arms inspectors' visit *5/10*

UNITED NATIONS, OCT. 4. Under intense pressure from U.S. and Britain, U.N. Chief Weapons Inspector, Hans Blix, has agreed to delay sending his teams to Iraq until Security Council gives him new guidelines but the Council itself was divided on the tough resolution drafted by Washington and London.

Although Mr. Blix had earlier said that the inspectors could start moving in by October 15, he changed his position after pressure from U.S. and Britain who want sending of inspectors to be delayed till the Council is able to hammer out the new resolutions. "It would be awkward if they were doing inspections and then a new mandate is given which changes the direction," he said.

At a closed door meeting at the United Nations, the 15 members of the Council moved closer to agreement on toughening the guidelines, but continued to harbour differences on authorising the U.S. to use

military force if Iraq did not live up to its commitments.

Other Council members, especially Russia, France and China, which have veto, do not want to give the United States and Britain the green signal to attack Iraq anytime.

France prefers a two-resolution approach that is first resolution giving inspectors new guidelines and second authorising use of force if that becomes necessary.

Although diplomats are optimistic about progress being made, in spite of the hardline positions taken by both sides, they point out that the "real" talks are being held in the capitals and not in the U.N., where diplomats were only discussing the language, leaving policy decisions to their political masters.

Fresh from talks with Iraqi officials, the top U.N. inspectors were scheduled to confer with the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and the National Security

Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, about how they intend to operate and ensure the safety of their teams. "We hope to hear something about what their planning is and we will tell them about our planning," said Mr. Blix, the executive chairman of the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, known as UNMOVIC.

Mr. Blix, in charge of accounting for Iraq's chemical, biological and ballistic weapons, works in tandem with Mohamed El Baradei, director-general of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, responsible for nuclear arms.

After Iraq decided to admit inspectors and agreed to most of their demands, Mr. Blix and Mr. El Baradei made plans to send advance teams to Baghdad in mid-October, which the United States opposed. Both men met with Iraqi arms experts in Vienna earlier this week. — AP, Reuters

W. Amin
① 9/10

Russia rejects use of force

H0-19
9/10

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, OCT. 3. A day before the crucial United Nations Security Council meeting on Iraq, Russia has reiterated its rejection of a U.S.-British draft resolution allowing automatic use of force against Baghdad.

"Attempts to make the U.N. Security Council subscribe to automatic use of force against Iraq are unacceptable for Russia," the Deputy Foreign Minister, Alexander Saltanov, said on Wednesday. The tough U.S.-British draft resolution on Iraq "has only firmed our position in favour of the quickest possible resumption of inspections in Iraq and a political settlement without automatic use of force," the RIA Novosti news agency quoted Mr. Saltanov as saying. "It is necessary today to do everything to prevent military action against Iraq." (China too pushed for a political solution to the crisis over Iraq on Thursday, according to a report by Reuters. "The top priority at this moment is to let U.N. weapons inspectors return to Iraq as soon as possible and start work smoothly," a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman was quoted as saying in Beijing).

In Moscow, Mr. Saltanov said Russia would map its further moves after hearing Thursday's report by the chief U.N. weapons inspector, Hans Blix, to the Security Council. Russia had prepared its own draft resolution, which he said, foresaw the return of U.N. inspectors to Iraq followed by the gradual lifting of sanctions. "We have not submitted our draft yet," he said,



JOINING FORCES?: The French President, Jacques Chirac (right), shakes hands with the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, in Paris on Wednesday. — AFP

adding that the five Permanent Members of the Security Council were discussing "all possible options" on Iraq.

Germany, France unite against war

By Batuk Gathani

BRUSSELS, OCT. 3. IN A significant move on Wednesday, Germany and France united against the U.S. line on Iraq.

The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, and the French President, Jacques Chirac, met

over dinner in Paris after the former reaffirmed his opposition to an attack on Iraq.

Observers note that Mr. Schröder's stance has created a rift with the Bush administration. Underlining this, Mr. Bush has yet to respond with the traditional message of congratulation after Mr. Schröder's re-election on Sept. 22. The German Chancellor's consistent opposition to the war strategy has revived a strong pacifist and anti-American sentiment in the centre-left quarters of German and European public opinion.

Last night, Mr. Chirac reiterated France's "utter hostility" to any United Nations resolution which would automatically sanction military intervention in Iraq. Germany is not a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council while France is, and Mr. Chirac is pursuing a strategy of "damage limitation" exercise between the U.S. and its European allies by seeking to find a middle way.

As Berlin and Paris share common perspectives over the Iraq situation, the other European Union member states hope that a dialogue on a give-and-take basis with the Bush administration could be restructured. In the continental capitals, the Blair Government has earned the status of the "odd man of the European Union".

The former U.S. President, Bill Clinton, in a moving speech at the Labour Party's annual conference, called on Mr. Blair to "rescue America from Bushism". The Europeans are trying to cope with the fast pace of events set by the Bush administration, amid the growing realisation that a war is in the offing.

A European Union ambassador said: "Although we are being told so little by the U.S. allies, we feel there is inevitability about the war in Iraq. And that is very depressing." In the financial markets there is consternation about the situation and its consequences. Oil supplies may be curtailed, pushing up prices well above \$40 a barrel as happened during the Gulf War in 1990-91.

Saddam must be disarmed: Blair

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, OCT. 3. The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, made clear on Thursday that force may have to be used to rid Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, if it was not possible to do so "peacefully". He did not rule out sending British troops to join a U.S.-led attack on Iraq, if necessary, though he hoped that such an eventuality would not arise.

The bottom line, he declared at a press conference on the concluding day of his party's meeting in Blackpool, was that "Saddam Hussein has to be disarmed".

He could continue to keep his conventional weapons but there was no question of letting him get away with his weapons of mass destruction. "If it can be done peacefully, good, or it will have to be done with force," he said acknowledging that it was a "tremendous responsibility" to have to "put our troops in that position."

Mr. Blair's remarks came even as his two major European allies, France and Germany, warned against military intervention in Iraq. However, he repeatedly emphasised the U.N. "route" to a solution of the Iraqi crisis and said negotiations on a new, "tougher" Security Council resolution were at a delicate stage.

"We're optimistic we'll get a strong and good resolution," he said but declined to give a direct reply to a question whether he supported the U.S. insistence on including the use of threat of force in the same resolution. The important thing was to disarm Mr. Saddam Hussein, he said, dismissing the controversy over "one versus two (resolutions)".

Replying to a volley of questions on Iraq at his nearly 90-minute conference, Mr. Blair stressed that Mr. Hussein must agree to provide "total, unfettered and unobstructed" access to weapons' inspectors. The sites, he said, must include Presidential palaces.

Iraq throws a challenge

BAGHDAD, OCT. 3. The U.S. President, George W Bush, should fight a duel with the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, instead of going to war and making all of Iraq suffer, said the Iraqi Vice-President, Taha Yassin Ramadan, in an interview today.

"Bush wants to attack the whole Iraq, the army and the infrastructure," Mr. Ramadan said. He suggested instead that Mr. Bush face Mr. Hussein in duel — with their Vice-Presidents as their seconds and the weapon of their choice. "In this way we are saving the American and the Iraqi people," he said. — AP

Iraq, U.N. agree on inspections

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), OCT. 2. Iraq has reiterated its rejection of a new U.N. draft resolution that threatens the use of military force in case Baghdad hampers intrusive searches for mass destruction weapons, under a new set of rules.

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, told a press conference in Turkey on Wednesday that the new resolution authored by the United States and Britain that detailed new inspection rules was unacceptable. "This proposal of the United States is unacceptable, not only by Iraq, it is unacceptable by the Security Council because there is no need for a new resolution," he said. According to the Iraqi leader, "the standing resolutions of the Security Council concerning the inspections are valid and they are enough for the perfect performance of the inspectors."

Iraq's rejection of the proposed new inspection regime was also voiced in Baghdad on Tuesday in a meeting of the Iraqi Cabinet chaired by the President, Saddam Hussein. The Cabinet spokesman, as quoted by the Iraqi News Agency, said it would be a mistake to assume that Iraq would be pushed around to give up its national rights. "If they (Britain and the United States) imagine that their evil pressure may push Iraq to accept the unacceptable,



HOPING TO BE HEARD: A woman anti-war protester stands on the top of the White House gate as members of the Secret Service talk her down on Wednesday. Protesters unfurled banners, outside fence, and chanted "No War in Iraq". — AP

including a new resolution issued under U.S.-British pressure, they are even more mistaken," he added.

Iraqi officials, however, in their discussions with an international weapons inspector's team in Vienna on Tuesday, agreed on the resumption of inspections under the old rules defined by the existing U.N. Security Council Resolution. Washington, however, has rejected any resumption of inspections under earlier rules and asserted that inspections must follow the passage of the new resolution that was under

consideration. Mr. Aziz pointed out that Iraq was ready to let in inspectors to the "Presidential sites" under an arrangement that had been worked out in February 1998 with the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. The agreement allows a "special group", comprising U.N. weapons experts and senior diplomats, to carry out searches of eight Iraqi "presidential sites," that were of special concern to arms inspectors. Iraq, in case of a war, would not attack any of its neighbours, including Turkey, Mr. Aziz, said. "No, we are not going to retaliate against

anybody in the region except American aggressors," he said.

Mr. Aziz earlier told Turkish NTV television in an interview that Iraq had learnt its lessons from the 1991 Gulf War and could inflict great losses on its enemy. "Iraq is strong, even if the Americans attack Iraq, we will fight very effectively," he said.

In a related development, Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Hassan Wirajuda, said Iraq has proposed the formation of a "companion team" with Indonesia as one of the participants that should monitor the work of the U.N. inspectors' work to ensure transparency. The proposal was the result of a meeting between Iraq's ambassador to Indonesia and the Indonesian President, Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Meanwhile, Iraq's Deputy Oil Minister is in Moscow for talks with officials and representatives of Russian oil companies. Russia, along with China and France, has opposed the passage of a new resolution on Iraq that would encourage the use of force against Baghdad. Analysts, however, point out that Russia's objections are partly driven by its oil interests in Iraq. Russia, according to them, is looking for U.S. guarantees for honouring the oil contracts that it has already signed with Baghdad. Russian and U.S. oil executives are also currently holding a crucial meeting in Houston.

Bush reaches compromise resolution on Iraq

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, OCT. 2. The United States President, George W. Bush, and the leadership in the House of Representatives have agreed on a compromise resolution for the authorisation of force in Iraq; and this morning's move has placed additional pressure on the Senate Democrats.

The Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Joseph Biden, who was working with the Republican Senator Richard Lugar, on an alternative Resolution that would have placed a lot of emphasis on the role of the United Nations, is now seeing his plan making very little headway in the Senate.

"I'm a realist", remarked Mr. Biden in the aftermath of the agreement between the President and the House leaders. Mr. Biden, as a Democratic hopeful for the Presidential election of 2004, is now of the view that the House will vote first on the Iraq resolution and this in turn will put more pressure on the Senate. Originally it was thought that the Senate will go first.

According to the accord reached, the Bush White House has agreed to the wishes of the House Democrats and pledged

to certify to Congress—before any military strike or within 48 hours of an attack—that the diplomatic means had been inadequate to protect America from the weapons of mass destruction of Iraq.

The House version of the Iraq resolution will be debated in the chamber's International Relations Committee this week. In a nutshell, it authorises the President to use the armed forces as he determines necessary and appropriate to defend the national interests and to enforce all relevant U. N. Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Biden has disagreed with the approach of the House Democrats and said that the Democratic leader there, Richard Gephardt, had made a mistake in agreeing to the plan so readily.

The House move has thrown cold water on the Biden-Lugar alternative that was going around Capitol Hill in the last two days.

Now Mr. Biden hopes to offer this as an amendment to the Iraq Resolution, and is very unlikely to pass as it stands.

Some Democrats in the Senate, like Mr. Biden, are hesitant to give the President sweeping powers.

Saddam must go at any cost: U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, OCT. 2. In what would signal to mean that assassinations are back officially in the political vocabulary in Washington, the White House has said that the "cost of one bullet" is quicker and cheaper than any elaborate military action.

"I can say that the cost of a one way-ticket is substantially less than that", the White House spokesman, Ari Fleischer, remarked while talking about the various forms for the ouster of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, including exile which would be less expensive than the cost of war. "The cost of one bullet, if the Iraqi people take it on themselves, is substantially less than that. The cost of war is more than that", the spokesman added. "Never

underestimate the yearning of people to stop being tortured, to stop being suppressed", he said. Mr. Fleischer argued that his statement on the assassination of Mr. Hussein is not a statement of the administration's policy and that he was only making a "rhetorical point about the cost of a bullet". But "if the Iraqis took matters in their own hands, no one around the world would shed a tear", he maintained.

The White House has clarified that there is no intent on the part of the Bush administration to relax the ban on assassinations that have been in the books through executive orders since 1976.

But in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, this Republican administration said that nothing prevented a President from singling out a

terrorist to be taken out by covert means.

But the discussion is still there on whether the directives against assassination of "political leaders" is also valid for "military" leaders; and the Bush administration, without getting into minute specifics, has said from time to time that it is looking at all possibilities for regime change inside Iraq.

In the meantime, the President, George W. Bush, has rejected a Senate plan that would, in his opinion, limit the options with Iraq.

"I don't want to get a Resolution which ties my hands" Mr. Bush remarked, referring to an alternative measure floated by prominent Republicans and Democrats.

Mr. Bush has been spending considerable amount of time on the Iraq Resolution.

Iraq to allow arms inspectors back

Vienna, October 1

IRAQ AGREED on Tuesday to a resumption of UN weapons inspections, with an advance team of inspectors due in about two weeks, UN and Iraqi negotiators said.

Chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix said Iraq had agreed on the logistics of resuming the inspections under UN Security Council rules.

"The Iraqi representatives declared that Iraq accepts all rights of inspection provided for in all the relevant Security Council resolutions," Blix told reporters after two days of talks.

Earlier, a senior diplomat close to the talks said he expected the Iraqi team to provide the backlog of data as a goodwill gesture. "Iraq is planning to hand over a handful of CDs (on Tuesday) with information about their dual-purpose facilities," he said. Tuesday's session began at 1000 GMT, with talks wrapping up for good later in the day.

Iraq has not provided this information, due every six months, since December 1998, when UN inspectors left Baghdad on the eve of a punitive US-British air assault. The data concerns details about the status of so-called dual-use nuclear equipment that could be used either to build nuclear weapons or for a civilian atomic energy programme.

Blix told reporters on Tuesday that the Vienna talks were designed to avoid logistical problems once inspectors return. "It is better to have discussions here than to have discussions when you arrive. Discussions in the field (are) not desirable. You want things to be going well then," he said. "And we still have things to go through."

Mohamed ElBaradei, director-general of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said after the first



Iraqi schoolgirls hold pictures of President Saddam Hussein during a gathering in Baghdad on Tuesday.

round of talks on Monday that progress had been made in working out the details of the inspectors' return. "I think we are making progress, but we still have a lot of work to do," said ElBaradei, whose agency is hosting the talks.

"We are trying to restore as much of the any time, any place and unfettered access as possible," he said. Blix and ElBaradei have said inspectors were guaranteed access to presidential sites, long a sensitive issue, according to existing agreements. But sources close to the talks say there are a number of issues that must be resolved before inspectors can return. One of these is the UN's access to

dozens of sites deemed sensitive by Baghdad, such as the defence and interior ministries.

Another is the UN's need for reconnaissance flights in the no-fly zones, where the United States and Britain have carried out bombing raids in recent days.

According to sources, the Iraqis say they are unable to guarantee the inspectors' safety in the event of an exchange of fire in what they view as a war zone.

The negotiations come amid tough language from the US and Britain, who accuse the Iraqi President of stockpiling weapons of mass destruction.

Reuters

Global diplomacy in high gear

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, SEPT. 30. Iraqi officials and U.S. diplomats are holding separate discussions in key world capitals ahead of the crucial U.N. Security Council debate that could sanction the use of military force against Baghdad.

The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Naji Sabri, has held discussions over the weekend in Iran with his counterpart, Kemal Kharrazi, and the Iranian President, Mohammad Khatami. Iran has reportedly advised Iraq to abide by the U.N. decisions to stave off a war. Iran is keen to avoid a war as it could bring in U.S. forces along its southern borders. Already, U.S. troops are present in considerable numbers along its northern borders in Afghanistan.

Iraq is also actively trying to discourage Turkey, a frontline state in case a war breaks out, from cooperating with a U.S.-led military campaign. Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, is on his way to Ankara for talks with Turkish officials. Turkey has voiced its reservations about a U.S. led attack on Iraq, apprehending that it would adversely affect its shaky economy. But despite its reservations, Turkey as a member of the NATO alliance is unlikely to resist a U.S. decision to use force against Iraq.

Nevertheless, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Elizabeth Jones, arrived in Turkey for talks on Monday with the Foreign Minister, Sukru Sina Gurel, and the military's deputy chief of general staff, Gen. Yasar Buyukanit. While Iraq has launched a new round of diplomacy, key Iraqi Opposition groups ended their three-day meeting in Turkey. These groups which included members of Iraq's Kurdish, Turkmen and Assyrian minorities have called for an end to the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein's rule.

Meanwhile, UN weapons inspectors converged in Vienna to prepare for talks with Iraqi officials on the nitty-gritty of their return to Baghdad.

The chief U.N. inspector, Hans Blix, will take part in the talks that are likely to conclude on Wednesday.

THE HINDU

1 OCT 2002

IRAQ / RUSSIA, FRANCE FIRM AGAINST U.S. MOVE

U.N. to press for unlimited inspections

18/10/19
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VIENNA, SEPT. 30. The United States hit determined opposition from Russia and France over its warlike stance on Iraq today, threatening its bid for tough new U.N.-imposed arms inspection rules as experts met in Vienna to discuss them.

Russia and France, both with veto powers in the United Nations Security Council which is to consider a U.S.-drafted resolution on Iraq, separately rebuked Washington.

Russia rapped Washington for sending its warplanes to strike a southern Iraq target yesterday, while France slammed the threat of military force contained in the U.S. draft proposal at the United Nations.

China, which like the United States and Britain also holds a veto given to the five Permanent Members in the 15-nation Security Council, also remained sceptical of the U.S. proposal.

An envoy from Britain, Washington's closest ally in its campaign against Baghdad, handed the draft to officials in Beijing, and China — which has already expressed its misgivings — was reflecting on it, a British embassy official said.

Amid the diplomatic war of words, the chief U.N. weapons inspector, Hans Blix, today began talks with Iraqi officials in Vienna, saying he expected unlimited access to sites on any return by his team to Iraq after a nearly four-year gap.

Speaking to reporters before the talks to work out details of the U.N.'s return to search for any chemical, biological or nuclear weapons in Iraq, Mr. Blix was asked if there would be any limitations on the sites open to inspectors.

"No, not that I'm aware of," he said. The United Nations inspection teams left Iraq in December 1998 on the eve of a U.S.-British bombing raid intended to punish Baghdad for allegedly not cooperating with the inspectors.

Today's talks were the first test of Iraq's cooperation since Baghdad agreed on September 16 to the unconditional return of the inspectors under threat of a U.S. military strike.

"We would like to ensure that if and when inspections come about, we will not have any clashes inside (Iraq). We would rather have these things out-



TOUGH NEGOTIATIONS: Mohammed al Baradei (left), Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency and Hans Blix (next to him), chief U.N. weapons inspector, with the head of the Iraqi delegation, Amir Al Sadi (right, centre), in Vienna on Monday. — AP

side, in advance," Mr. Blix said. Hussein, has proposed that Iraq be given one week to accept demands to disarm and 30 days to declare all its weapons of mass destruction programmes. The Security Council draft threatening military action if Iraq fails to comply and France reaffirmed its opposition on Monday, warning such an approach could threaten international stability. — Reuters

RESOLUTION / BUSH ARM-TWISTING U.N., SAYS IRAQ

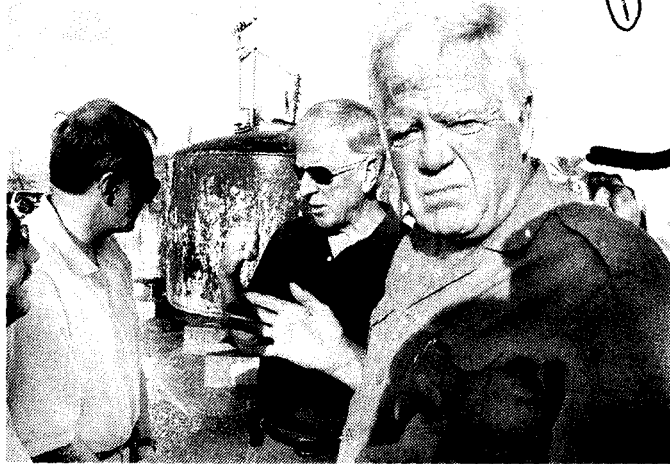
Baghdad prepares to face U.S. attacks

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), SEPT. 29. Iraq has said it was not hopeful that the U.N. Security Council will ward off an attack against it and was preparing to defend itself against U.S.-led military strikes. Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, told Iraqi satellite television that he hoped that Security Council members would oppose a new U.N. Security Council draft resolution against Iraq, but was not confident that this would happen. "I hope that the Security Council will be strong enough, fair enough to resist any American manipulation...But I am not confident about the capability of the U.N. to resist American pressure and American manipulation", he said.

France, Russia and China—three permanent members of the Security Council who have a veto power have so far resisted an Anglo-American attempt to pass a resolution that Iraq has to accept within a week. The draft resolution also demands that Baghdad should surrender all its weapons of mass destruction within a month or face military action. According to Mr. Aziz, a new Security Council resolution on Iraq was unnecessary but was being pushed down the Security Council's throat by the United States. "The logic is that there is no need for a new resolution. The new resolution, being pushed by the Americans, echoes the American policy towards Iraq, not the will of the Security Council regarding the implementation of its resolutions".

Iraq, despite the odds, was not giving up diplomacy in order to prevent military attacks



Three U.S. Congressmen, David Bonior (left), Jim McDermott (right), and Michael Thompson visit a water treatment plant in Basra, 645 km south of Baghdad, on Sunday. The three arrived in Iraq to assess the humanitarian situation in the country. — AFP

against it, Mr. Aziz said. "We take the American threats seriously and we are preparing ourselves ... But we have to do what we can on the diplomatic, political arena to avoid the aggression if possible." Under the circumstances, Iraq was, within its military limitations, getting ready to defend itself resolutely. "We cannot boast that we can break the U.S. army, but we can defend our country because we will be fighting within our own homeland, and we know the places we are fighting in and our people are fully supporting us in defending their own homeland."

Apprehending that the U.S. may have pre-judged the use of force against Iraq, Mr. Aziz said "Iraq had to be very careful because we are still being threatened by the U.S. If the inspectors declare that Iraq is free of weapons of mass de-

struction, which is the case...and we are sure of that, what is George Bush going to do?" Iraq's decision to accept the return of U.N. weapons inspectors after a near four-year break was taken because Baghdad heeded the advice from a number of friendly, Arab and Islamic countries, Mr. Aziz said.

In a related development, Iraq said on Sunday U.S. fighter jets bombarded Basra's civilian airport for the second time since Wednesday, targeting its radar systems and passenger terminals. "Planes of the American enemy targeted and destroyed for the second time the civilian radar system of Basra airport," an Iraqi Transport Ministry spokesman said in a statement to the official Iraqi News Agency. Iraq said on Thursday U.S. jets had raided Basra civilian airport and destroyed its radar system.

Defiant Iraq rejects US proposals

HASSAN HAFIDH

Baghdad, Sept. 28 (Reuters): Iraq today rejected a US-sponsored draft resolution on arms inspections as President George W. Bush's drive against Baghdad hit snags after a week of lobbying at home and abroad.

Iraq threatened a "fierce war" if attacked and dismissed the US-proposed resolution, backed by Britain, requiring Baghdad to comply with tough new arms inspection rules or face military action.

Iraq's defiant rejection came amid a US and British diplomatic campaign to persuade other permanent members of the UN Security Council — France, Russia and China — to overcome grave concerns and back the proposal designed to rid Iraq of any nuclear, biological or chemical weapons.

Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan said Iraq would not ac-

cept extra measures contained in the draft resolution, which gives Iraq one week to accept demands to disarm and 30 days to declare all its weapons of mass destruction programmes.

"The stance from the inspectors has been decided and any additional procedure that aims at harming Iraq won't be accepted," Ramadan told reporters.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz warned that the United States would sustain huge losses if it attacked Iraq and that his country would fight a "fierce war".

Bush, whose avowed policy of "regime change" in Iraq means topping President Saddam Hussein, has pledged to act without UN approval if necessary. Today, he made a pitch in his weekly radio broadcast to Americans, saying Iraq posed a grave threat that must be stopped.

"The danger to our country is grave and it is growing," he said.

"The dangers we face will only worsen from month to month and year to year. To ignore these threats is to encourage them — and when they have fully materialised, it may be too late to protect ourselves and our allies," he said.

Seeking to press the US case, undersecretary of state for political affairs Marc Grossman met Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov in Moscow today. He failed to change Russia's stance.

Moscow stood firm in calling for the rapid return to Iraq of UN arms inspectors, with the US envoy urging Russia to back the draft US Security Council resolution. "Our position is that UN weapons inspectors should return to Iraq as quickly as possible," Ivanov said. "The necessary conditions for this exist. But we are prepared to look carefully at the position of all the members of the UN Security Council."

THE MAIN DEMANDS

Following are the main demands in the draft resolution the US prepared for adoption by the UN Security Council:



- Seven-day deadline for Iraq to accept demands in the resolution after its adoption and notification by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan
- A 30-day deadline for Iraq to declare all its weapons of mass destruction programmes
- A UN member state can use "all necessary means" should Baghdad make "false statements or omissions" or otherwise fail to comply
- Any of the permanent Security Council members can request to be represented on an inspection team
- Inspectors are to have access to all sites, including President Saddam Hussein's eight palace compounds spread over 31.5 sq km, mosques and any government buildings
- Security forces are to protect the inspectors, a provision diplomats say calls for guards rather than troops
- Iraq is to be declared in "material breach" of UN resolutions dating back to a ceasefire measure adopted after the Gulf War in April 1991

A resolution needs nine votes in favour and no veto from its five permanent members to be adopted in the 15-nation Security Council

29 SEP 2002

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IRAQ / DIFFERENCES PERSIST

Baghdad rejects U.N. draft

HD-19
28/9

Mr. Aziz
Growth

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, SEPT. 28. Iraq has rejected the new U.N. Security Council draft proposal that demands that it should surrender all its mass destruction weapons within a month or face military action.

The draft the Security Council is currently considering says that "all necessary means" — a euphemism for military action — can be used against Iraq, in case it fails to declare its weapons of mass destruction within a 30-day deadline. It further points out that Iraq should neither make "false statements or omissions", nor otherwise breach the U.N. resolution.

The Council would give Iraq a week's time to accept all its demands. Iraq, on its part, has rejected the new set of conditions and maintained that the Security Council should play by the old rules that were set at the end of the Persian Gulf War.

The Iraqi Vice-President, Taha Yassin Ramadan, said on Saturday that, "the stance from the inspectors has been decided and any additional procedure that aims at harming Iraq won't be accepted".

The draft framed by the United States and Britain that also demands that the weapons inspectors protected by a special security force can visit any Iraqi site they wish is facing stiff resistance from three Security Council members — Russia, France and China — who can veto it. The Anglo-American diplomacy is also trying to bring on board a majority of the 10 non-permanent members in

the 15-nation Council whose votes would count in case the draft has to be passed.

Realising the centrality of Russia, France and China in redefining the rules on disarming Iraq, the U.S. and Britain have sent senior diplomats to these countries.

The U.S. State Department's Undersecretary for political affairs, Marc Grossman, is in Moscow after concluding a visit to Paris. The U.S. President, George Bush, spoke with his French counterpart, Jacques Chirac, on telephone on Friday while Britain had sent its team of officials to Beijing.

Russia, France and China object to the exclusion of further debate in the use of force in case the proposed initiative to disarm Iraq faces difficulties. France, for instance, wants that the U.N. should move step by step in dealing with Iraq. The present U.N. resolution should only consider the question of disarming Iraq by giving inspections and related measures a chance to succeed. However, the U.N. can subsequently consider the use of force under a separate resolution in case this effort fails to yield results.

While the Security Council tries to reconcile its differences, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, has warned that the United States would incur huge losses in case it attacked Iraq. At a conference in Baghdad, Mr. Aziz said that "any attack against Iraq won't be an American picnic, rather a fierce war that would cost it (the United States) losses that it hasn't seen for the last tens of years."

29 SEP 2002

THE HINDU

USA, Britain draft resolution on Iraq

Press Trust of India

UNHQ, Sept. 26. — The USA and Britain have drafted a new resolution on Iraq which gives about two months to President Saddam Hussein to comply with 16 resolutions adopted by the Security Council since the Gulf war.

Washington is consulting other members on the draft. But it is still not clear when the resolution would be put on the table, thus beginning tough negotiations to hammer out a final version.

If Iraq is given two months, any military action would come early next year, something which military analysts are already predicting.

Reports suggest that US secretary of state Gen. Colin Powell is working on the capitals to finalise the draft which would be brought before the Security Council. He is trying to determine how far the draft which calls for action against Iraq if it fails to comply with the resolutions would be accepted by other major powers.

US diplomats were quoted as having said that they do not expect Russia to be a major problem, for they could persuade it to abstain if it does not agree with the wording. But they have to manage nine votes needed for the resolution to be adopted by the 15-member Council.

Analysts said China is unlikely to use veto but France has yet to come on board. France

W.A.M. ① 51-32919
favours a two-resolution approach, that is, the first only asks Iraq to comply with all previous resolutions and if it does not, the second resolution authorises military action.

US aircraft strike Basra

BAGHDAD, Sept. 26. — Iraq said a US allied airstrike early today hit its civilian airport in the southern port city of Basra. The announcement did not mention casualties. A Pentagon official confirmed there was a strike early today, but had no other details. Iraq's state-owned satellite channel said the strike targeted Basra International Airport's radar system and that the terminal building also was damaged. — AP

the permanent members.
Russia wants quick solution: President Vladimir Putin today pressed for quick solution to the Iraqi crisis on the basis of existing UN Security Council resolutions, adds PTI from Moscow. Accepting credentials of the new Iraqi ambassador in the Kremlin, Mr Putin said Russia favoured a quick solution and "the decision to resume the activities of UN inspectors in Iraq opens up the possibility for this decision to be put into action rapidly..."

27 SEP 2002

THE STATESMAN

UK dossier on Iraq war plan

Agence France-Presse

LONDON, Sept. 24. — Iraq plans to use chemical and biological weapons in case of a war, British government's long-awaited dossier on Mr Saddam Hussein's regime alleged today.

It also claimed that Baghdad has tried to acquire "significant quantities" of uranium from Africa despite having no civil program that could need it. Uranium would be a key ingredient for manufacturing nuclear weapons. Iraq, it said, has "tried covertly to acquire technology and materials which could be used in the production of nuclear weapons." It says specialists have been recalled to work on a nuclear programme.

The dossier alleged that Iraq has retained up to 20 Al-Hussein missiles, with a range of 650 kms, capable of carrying chemical or biological warheads. Iraq has the capacity to deploy such weapons in 45 minutes, the document said. It said Iraq has also developed mobile laboratories for military use "corroborating earlier reports about the mobile production of biological warfare agents".

The report stated: "Intelligence also shows that Iraq is preparing to conceal evidence of these weapons, including incriminating documents, from renewed inspections."

In a foreword to the report, Prime Minister Tony Blair said it was compiled using evidence from the government's Joint Intelligence Committee. On Mr Hussein, he said: "I'm in no doubt that the threat is serious and current, that he has made progress on weapons of mass destruction and that he has to be stopped."

Meanwhile, confusion over Russia's position on the need for a new UN resolution on Iraq persisted today, with foreign minister Mr Igor Ivanov telling a Russian newspaper



HOPING FOR PEACE, WAITING FOR WAR: Iraqi women in a Baghdad hospital on Tuesday, with the omnipresent Saddam Hussain in the background. — AFP

that his country did not believe a new resolution to exert further pressure on Iraq to disarm was necessary, adds AP from Moscow.

"We believe that it's necessary to fulfil those UN resolutions on Iraq that exist and not adopt new ones that could complicate the situation," Mr Ivanov said in an interview published today in the Russian daily newspaper Vremya MN. Mr Ivanov

in recent days has appeared to be at odds with defence minister Mr Sergei Ivanov, who was quoted as saying in Madrid yesterday that Russia would not necessarily oppose a new UN resolution aimed at making the work of UN weapons' inspectors more effective.

Russia is one of five permanent members of the Security Council and its support of any new resolution

on Iraq is considered vital. In a telephone call on Friday, US President George W Bush appealed directly to Mr Putin for support, saying resolutions that accomplish the goal of disarmament are a must.

Russia strongly opposes any unilateral action against Iraq, and Mr Igor Ivanov said he was confident that Iraq's weapons programs could be put under international control.

In another development, Nato chief Mr George Robertson today called on the transatlantic alliance to arm itself for a leading role in the war against terror and weapons of mass destruction, as the USA pressed its case against Iraq, adds AFP from Warsaw. Speaking at the opening of a two-day meeting of Nato defence ministers, Mr Robertson said the alliance must transform in order to meet the new challenges unleashed in the world after 11 September. "...If there is a time, in the face of loss, for grief and remembrance, there is also a time in the face of menace, for planning and for strategy," Mr Robertson said. "We must now transform our alliance so that it can play an equally pivotal part in the war against terrorism, and the dangers of the weapons of mass destruction."

Poll on US attack on Iraq: A recent CNN/USA Today/Gallup survey showed that a majority of Americans favour US military intervention in Iraq to remove Mr Hussein from power, but would like UN and Congressional backing of the operation, adds AFP from Washington. The poll made public today showed that 57 percent of respondents would support sending US ground troops into Iraq while 38 percent opposed it. According to the poll, public support for invading Iraq could rise to as much as 79 percent, if the US had more support.

Intelligence agencies

Iraq won't expose Prez compounds

ROBIN WRIGHT
WASHINGTON, SEPTEMBER 22

IN A bid to pre-empt US and divide UN, Iraq reversed course on Saturday and said it would not abide by any new UN resolution allowing weapons inspectors access to key presidential compounds.

Baghdad's latest gambit came as the Bush administration was preparing for intense lobbying at home and UN to win passage of at least one resolution needed to confront Iraqi President Saddam Hussein over his failure to surrender weapons of mass destruction. While Washington is pursuing a



Iraq's President Saddam Hussein chairing a meeting of top Iraqi leaders in Baghdad on Saturday. Reuters

diplomatic course, it is also fine-tuning military plans in case Iraq fails to cooperate.

The Iraqi announcement, which followed a meeting between Hussein and his top officials, could further complicate diplomatic efforts to avoid use of force. "Iraq

declared it will not deal with any new resolution that contradicts what has been agreed upon with the UN secretary-general," the government said in a brief announcement read on Iraqi radio.

The move appeared to be an attempt to undermine a sweeping and tough new UN resolution that is expected to be circulated on Monday at the Security Council by the US and Britain, UN diplomats said. That resolution would charge UN teams with checking any and all sites suspected of having information on nuclear, biological or chemical weapons and ballistic missiles. It would also, in effect, scrap any past compromises.

Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said that Baghdad's latest ploy was not unexpected. "Anyone who has watched the past decade has seen the Iraqi government ... change their position," he said in an interview on CNN.

The Iraqi move could boost US efforts at winning Congressional support for a resolution authorising the use of force, if necessary, to confront Hussein. "Saddam thinks he can go back to where we left off, to when he was still setting the rules of the game. But there's no tolerance for that in this administration," said Judith Yaphe, an Iraq expert and former intelligence analyst. —L4TWP

Bush wants to destroy Iraq, control W. Asia oil: Saddam

By Julia Preston

W → (1) 10-11-10
United Nations: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has accused the Bush administration of seeking to "destroy Iraq in order to control the West Asia oil" and asserted that George W. Bush had made "distortions" to lead Americans to think Iraq had a role in the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Mr Hussein's comments came in a letter to the UN General Assembly, excerpts of which were read there on Thursday by his foreign minister Naji Sabri. The Iraqi leader assailed the administration as broadly as Mr Bush criticised Iraq in the same hall on Sept 12. Mr Hussein accused Washington of "making up problems" with Baghdad to promote the interests of Israel, which he called "the Zionist entity."

Mr Hussein declared that Iraq is "clear of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons." But he made no pledges to cooperate with United Nations arms inspectors who are preparing to return to Iraq after a nearly four-year hiatus. Expressing skepticism about their impartiality, the Iraqi leader said only, "along with you, we are waiting to see."

That wait should take about a month. Hans Blix, the Swedish arms expert who heads the United Nations chemical and biological weapons team based in New York, said in a press briefing that he expected an advance team of inspectors to arrive in Iraq on October 15. Mr Hussein's comments, his most extensive to date on the sharpening confrontation with Washington, offered no assurances to the United Nations weapons teams. NYT News Service

Lawmakers rally behind Bush on troops to Iraq

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W. Aziz (1) Iron
Tim Reid,
The Times, London.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 19. — The USA was pressing ahead last night with its preparations for war against Iraq, despite continued UN efforts to resolve the situation peacefully.

President George Bush won a promise from congressional leaders that the House of Representatives and the Senate would speedily authorise the use of military force against Iraq whatever the UN decided. Mr Bush said the pledge was "an important signal for the world to see that this country is united in its resolve".

Mr Donald Rumsfeld, US defence secretary, told the House Armed Services Committee that to delay a vote would "send a message that the USA may be unprepared to take a stand, just as we are asking the international community to take a stand".

Mr Rumsfeld also said America would have to keep some troops on the ground in a post-Saddam Iraq. "Would the USA have to have a military presence in the shorter term? Yes," he said, although he added: "We covet no country's land."

The congressional pledge injected fresh momentum into the US campaign to remove President Saddam Hussein — a campaign that has run into difficulty since the Iraqi leader managed to divide the UN by offering to admit weapons inspectors.

After an Oval Office

meeting with Mr Bush, leading congressional Democrats made clear that a congressional vote on a resolution supporting action against Iraq would be held before the mid-term elections on 5 November.

Mr Bush said he would send a draft resolution to Capitol Hill "in the next few days", and that he wanted congressional authorisation to use "all appropriate means" to counter Saddam.

Some senior Democrats

Saddam diplomatically, and "militarily, if necessary, to solve this problem".

Mr Tony Blair joined the President's call for the global community to maintain maximum pressure on Iraq.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Mr Tareq Aziz has accused Mr Rumsfeld of "provocation" aimed at wrecking Baghdad's acceptance of the return of United Nations weapons inspectors, adds AFP from Baghdad.



BREAD, NOT WAR: A woman waits for rations in Baghdad on Thursday. — AFP

want a more limited measure linked to any action proposed by the UN, but divisions within the party mean Mr Bush is likely to get his way. Mr Dick Gephardt, the Democrat House Minority leader, said a stern resolution was needed to give Mr Bush authority to deal with

Majorspeak

The USA and Britain will threaten Iraq with nuclear retaliation to dissuade Saddam Hussein from using weapons of mass destruction in any conflict, former Prime Minister Mr John Major hinted yesterday on BBC.

20 SEP 2002

THE STATESMAN

All banned weapons destroyed, says Iraq

10-14 By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), SEPT. 19. Iraq today claimed that it had destroyed all stocks of banned weapons and was free of mass destruction arms.

Iraq's Vice-President, Taha Yassin Ramadan, told a state-run Iraqi daily that all banned weapons "were destroyed over the past years." The statement assumes importance as the U.N. Security Council Resolutions framed in the backdrop of the 1991 Persian Gulf War demand that Iraq should destroy all its weapons of mass destruction and this was to be verified by a team of U.N. weapons inspectors. U.N. sanctions on Iraq, it was stated, would be lifted provided these inspectors verified that Iraq was free of mass destruction weapons.

The United States, in recent weeks, has been emphasising that Iraq should not only let in inspectors but also, more importantly, destroy all its weapons of mass destruction. Mr. Ramadan said Iraq's decision to allow in U.N. weapons inspectors unconditionally was a "sincere" move. "Iraq's initiative", he added "will provide the U.N. weapons inspectors with the chance to know for certain and from close up that Iraq is clear of weapons of mass destruction."

The U.S. so far has been sceptical about the Iraqi turnaround. Washington has maintained that the Iraqi decision to let in inspectors was a tactical ploy for dividing the Se-

curity Council members. Among the five Security Council members, France and Russia have been disinclined to back a U.S. proposal for a fresh resolution on Iraq that would encourage early launch of military strikes against Baghdad. Besides, opinion among the Council members is divided on the question of precipitating "regime change" in Baghdad.

Mr. Ramadan pointed out that Iraq's decision "would expose the U.S. administration's false claims on Iraq." Echoing Mr. Ramadan's standpoint, Iraq's ruling Baath party newspaper said that Baghdad did not pose a threat to anybody, including the U.S. Unaffected by the positive overtures now streaming out of Iraq, the U.S. forces continued to fine-tune their military plans in the region.

Top commanders of the U.S. Central Command, headed by Gen. Tommy Franks, met in Kuwait today for closed-door discussions. Those who participated in these talks included representatives of the U.S. Navy, Air Force, Marines and special operations units.

Camp Doha in Kuwait is a major warehousing complex which stores supplies for U.S. ground forces. Gen. Franks was in Qatar on Wednesday and held talks with top Qatari officials. Qatar's Al Udeid military base may play a key role in launching air strikes in Iraq, besides serving as the main command and surveillance post for the U.S. forces in the region.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2002

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GIVE BAGHDAD A CHANCE

W. A. B. A. W.

IRAQ'S DECISION TO allow weapons inspectors to resume operations within its territories without any conditions would appear to have turned the global debate around in Baghdad's favour. Russia, China and the Arab League have indicated that they did not believe that further action need be taken against Iraq at this juncture either by way of yet another United Nations Security Council resolution or otherwise. Most members of the international community have reason to be satisfied that Iraq has shown a willingness to meet their main concern that it rid itself of a Weapons of Mass Destruction capability and the ability to deliver non-conventional warheads by cooperating with a U. N. mandated and properly constituted disarmament mechanism. Hans Blix, head of the U. N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), which together with the International Atomic Energy Agency is to carry out the weapons dismantling programme, enjoys wide credibility. If Baghdad and the U. N. mandated weapons inspectors are able to establish an effective cooperation that will eventually allow the latter to issue a certification that Iraq has been rid of its WMD capability it could lead to the defusing of a problem that has disturbed the world off and on for over a decade.

Yet, Iraq's decision to allow inspections teams back into the country will not bring the confrontation with the U. S. to an end. The decision was taken in a context where the U.S. administration was gearing itself up for bellicose and coercive action even in an unilateralist mode if necessary. Washington's sceptical initial reaction clearly indicates that it is not shedding its determination to persist with its unilateral pressure on Iraq, despite expressed global misgivings. U.S. officials have observed that Iraq has not specifically promised that weapons inspectors will have unfettered access to all suspected weapons sites. The history of the inspection process provides ample testimony of the man-

ner in which the details can bedevil the inspections since each side is so deeply suspicious of the other. The potential for further confrontation was immense even before the U.S. gave clear indications, as it currently does, that the inspection process is a medium by which it hopes to achieve a regime change in Iraq. With the U.S. sounding increasingly confrontational there is a pressing need for the rest of the global community to indicate its strong preference for a multilateral approach, the only manner in which such issues can be dealt with fairness and with respect for the rights of sovereign nations.

Washington's stated intention to oust the regime of Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein, using whatever means are at hand, raises important questions pertaining to the evolution of international law in an increasingly inter-connected world. The efforts directed at a regime change bring into sharp focus the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of individual countries. Iraq's possession of a WMD capability, its record of having used them and the threat that it will do so again do add the external dimension. But when the debate moves over from questions of containment, non-proliferation and disarmament to that of changing a regime (even one that is committed to the obtainment and possession of these weapons), questions pertaining to the sovereignty of the country and the right of self-determination of its people come into salience. These are matters that require serious multilateral involvement. India has not been as intensely engaged in the debate as it ought to be, both on the basis of principle and on a consideration of the vital stakes that it has in West Asia. It is however heartening that New Delhi has not thus far resiled from its long-standing position that any action against Iraq must be carried out under the aegis of the U. N. and that sanctions on Iraq must be lifted as soon as Baghdad has fulfilled its disarmament obligations.

Neighbours urge Iraq to let in inspectors

By Atul Aneja

AMMAN, SEPT. 14. Responding to the U.S. readiness to give the Iraqi regime some more time to disarm, Iraq's neighbours, seeking an opening for averting a war, are exhorting Baghdad to let in United Nations weapon inspectors unconditionally.

Egypt's President, Hosni Mubarak, was quick to welcome the U.S. President, George Bush's intent to involve the U.N. Security Council on a decision on Iraq and also give Baghdad a chance to surrender its weapons of mass destruction soon. "I welcome the door the United States opened for the United Nations, especially the Security Council to play a pivotal role in resolving the Iraq issue", Mr. Mubarak told the Middle East News Agency in an interview.

Mr. Mubarak, however, simultaneously called upon the Iraqi leadership "to seize this opportunity and avoid serious repercussions." Similar sentiments, focused on Iraq to do its bit, in the light of Mr. Bush's remarks, were also expressed in other parts of the Arab world.

The Jordanian Information Minister, Mohammad Affash Adwan, for instance, urged Iraq to accept U.N. weapon inspections. Jordan has a major stake in preventing an Iraq-U.S. conflict. Jordan depends on Iraq for nearly \$600 million worth of concessional oil supplies. Besides, sandwiched between Iraq and Israel, Jordan apprehends that it could become a battleground once Israel was drawn into a war with Iraq.

Jordan's anxieties have been further heightened by a recent interview by Iraq's Trade Minister, Mohammad Mahdi Saleh. Speaking to the UAE newspaper, *Al-Khaleej*, Mr. Saleh said earlier this week that his country would attack Israel, in case it attempted to join the U.S. effort to unseat the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein. Despite the pressure from its neighbours, Iraq, in response to Mr. Bush's address, has been defiant. In an interview to the Saudi-owned



WARMTH AMID HEAT: The U.S. Congressman, Nick Rahall, head of an American delegation to Iraq, talks to a sick child being treated for cancer in Baghdad on Saturday. Mr. Rahall said his mission was a humanitarian one, to convince Iraqis that the vast majority of Americans were peace-waging individuals concerned with the Iraqis' hardship. — AP

Middle East Broadcasting television channel, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, said Baghdad did not accept Mr. Bush's "conditions", that included the demand for the return of weapon inspectors.

"The unconditional return of the inspectors will not solve the problem. We have an experience with them (U.S. and British) ...the 1998 experience", he observed.

U.S. and British warplanes during operation Desert Fox in 1998 had bombed Iraq after a dispute with Baghdad over weapon inspections surfaced. Mr. Aziz, however, is expected to spell out in greater detail, Iraq's stance to Mr. Bush's address at a press conference in Baghdad. The reaction in the rest of Iraq's neighbourhood to Mr. Bush's address was mainly marked with pragmatism, where key countries sought to balance the

dominant public sentiment against a war, with the U.S. pressure on them for cooperation. Not surprisingly, Qatar, which is likely to emerge as a major U.S. staging post for military strikes against Iraq, said diplomacy must be given a chance to avert a war.

Qatar's Al Udeid military base has the longest runway in the region that can be used by all U.S. aircraft, including the huge cargo planes and bombers. The U.S. Central Command that is in charge of operations in the Persian Gulf, is sending 600 staffers, apparently for a training exercise to Qatar.

Addressing a press conference in Washington, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabor Al Thani, said the U.S. had not sought Qatar's permission for the use of Al Udeid, but the request, if made, would be considered.

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14/9

Bush speech a lie: Iraq

Agence France-Press

BAGHDAD, Sept. 13. — Mr George W Bush's UN speech was full of "lies and slanders", the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Tariq Aziz, said today after the US President warned that "action would be unavoidable" unless Baghdad destroyed all weapons of mass destruction.

Addressing the UN General Assembly yesterday, Mr Bush said the Iraqi President had subverted the world body's orders to stop building weapons of mass destruction, stop encouraging terror and abusing his own people. It was the UN's obligation to enforce the resolutions against Iraq, but made it clear that if it didn't, the USA would go it alone (in attacking Iraq).

Mr Aziz said a detailed response "refuting the lies and slanders contained in Mr Bush's speech" would come at a later date. But he didn't specify the date.

In New York, a US official said the President "took pains" not to give his appeal for tough UN action against Mr Saddam Hussain overtones of personal vengeance. "Obviously, one doesn't want to appear to personalise

this."

Israel hails speech: An Israeli official today said his government was "very satisfied" with the US President's speech vester-

day, adds a report from Jerusalem. "There is no doubt over the USA's determination to force Iraq to rid itself of non-conventional weapons," a spokesman for the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr Ariel Sharon, said.

The official said Israel "was not involved in the US efforts", but his government was taking all precautions to deal with any repetition of Iraq's Scud missile attacks during the Gulf war.

Arab chief upbeat: Mr Bush's speech was "a good thing" as it underscored that the UN needed to play a role in disarming Iraq, the Arab League chief, Amir Mussa, said today in Cairo. But he said the UN resolutions on disarmament "should not be selective" aimed at the Arabs only while excluding Israel.

Egypt support reluctant: Egypt would give its reluctant support to military action against Iraq if it was endorsed by the UN, the foreign minister, Mr Ahmed Maher, said today. "Egypt, because of practical reasons and principles, can't support US military action unless there is a UN resolution against Iraq's refusal to implement international resolutions."

Bush's five demands

Bush says conditions must be fulfilled to avoid pre-emptive action

- 1 "Immediately and unconditionally destroy all weapons of mass destruction"
- 2 "End all support for terrorism and act to suppress it"
- 3 "Cease persecution of its civilian population"
- 4 "Resolve issues pertaining to the invasion of Kuwait (missing personnel, liabilities)"
- 5 "End all illicit trade outside the oil-for-food programme"

AFP 120902

ATTACK / READY FOR ANY SACRIFICE, SAYS BAGHDAD

Keep off or face action, Iraq tells Israel

DUBAI, SEPT. 13. An Iraqi Minister threatened Israel with attack if it participated in any U.S.-led military action against the regime of the President Saddam Hussein, in comments published in an Emirati daily today.

"Iraq will deliver a deep blow to Israel that it will not forget if it interferes in the war," the Trade Minister, Mohammed Mahdi Saleh, told the *Al-Khaleej* newspaper.

The Israeli Government spokesman, Avi Pazner, insisted today that the Jewish state "is not involved in the U.S. efforts." But he added his Government was taking all precautions to deal with any repetition of Iraq's Scud missile attacks during the 1991 Gulf war.

The Iraqi Minister warned the U.S. President, George W Bush, against pressing ahead with his threat to the U.N. General Assembly yesterday to strike Iraq if it does not disarm.

Washington should "study well the history of Iraq before launching a strike on Baghdad," Mr. Saleh said.

"Iraq will not capitulate and the Iraqi people are ready to die and sacrifice themselves to de-



An Iraqi man walks past papers and magazines which show the World Trade Center in New York with a two-word headline in red, "God's punishment", in Baghdad on Friday. — AP

fend their nation.

"If the United States launches an aggression against Iraq, all Arab peoples will be shaken from the (Atlantic) Ocean to the Gulf," he added, saying solidarity between Arab countries would be strengthened.

Mr. Saleh blasted the United

States for seeking "to impose their hegemony ... to steal the wealth of Iraq and change its rebellious regime."

He said Washington was "supporting terrorism and training terrorist elements on the ground to overthrow the regime in Baghdad." — AFP

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THE HINDU

Face up to Iraq or step back, Bush to tell UN

RANDALL MIKKELSEN/
HOWARD GOLLER
NEW YORK/LONDON
SEPTEMBER 12

US PRESIDENT George W. Bush will challenge the UN on Thursday to a high-stakes choice between taking action to enforce its resolutions on Iraq or risking irrelevance, US officials said.

The blunt tone of the speech may leave some of the world leaders in Bush's audience "squirming in their seats," a senior administration official said on Wednesday.

UN flak on Iraq policy
The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan challenged George W. Bush's policies on Iraq and Israeli-Palestinian conflict in his opening address to the UN General Assembly on Thursday. Annan stressed that while any country had the right to fight back when attacked, only the UN could authorise the use of force in cases that go beyond straightforward self-defence. — Reuters

The US leader, speaking a day after marking the anniversary of the September 11 attacks, will face an audience of world leaders who have opposed any war on Iraq, or at least voiced misgivings.

For its part, Iraq warned Washington it was ready to repel any invasion.

White House has released 22 pages of 16 UN Security Council resolutions it says Saddam Hussein has violated



President Bush with Kofi Annan at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Thursday. Reuters photo

said. In Washington, Defence officials said the US Military's Central Command would move up to 600 members of its headquarters staff from Florida in the US to Qatar, near Iraq, for a three-week exercise in November.

Echoing leaders throughout the world, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, due to speak minutes before Bush, planned to insist that only the UN could authorise the use of force in cases that went beyond straight forward self-Defence.

"When states decide to use force to deal with broader threats to international peace and security, there is no substitute for the unique legitimacy provided by the UN," Annan would say, according to an advance copy.

Nearly every country in the world, with the exception of Britain and Israel, has expressed grave misgivings about a pre-emptive attack on Iraq, and many want prior approval by the 15-nation UN Security Council of any military action.

Speaking to *Newsweek* magazine in an interview made public on Thursday, former South African President Nelson Mandela joined the chorus of Bush's critics.

"It is clearly a decision that is motivated by George W. Bush's desire to please the arms and oil industries in the US," Mandela said.

Iraq has the second largest oil reserves in the world behind Saudi Arabia. Oil prices are hovering around their highest level in a year, partly because of war fears, and German Finance Minister Hans Eichel said a war could endanger Germany's fragile economic recovery by possibly causing an "explosion" in oil prices.

Still some world figures appeared to lean Bush's way. Portuguese Foreign Minister Antonio Martins da Cruz said: "We believe it is a mistake some allies are doing — blaming the US. We need to blame Iraq. Iraq is not respecting UN resolutions."

Denmark's Prime Minister, due also to speak to the UN General Assembly on behalf of the 15-nation EU, was quoted as saying a new UN resolution might not be needed to launch a US-led military attack on Iraq.

British Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon, speaking before Bush's UN speech, said the UN should set Iraq an ultimatum "with a sting in its tail" to make Saddam comply with UN demands. — Reuters

Bush, Blair focus on global support

London, Sept. 8 (Reuters): British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who returned today from a summit with US President George W. Bush, said they had "total determination" to deal with Iraq but wanted the broadest international support.

Blair and Bush focused on a potential nuclear threat from Iraq at their Camp David talks yesterday, but both leaders left open whether they would take military action to counter it without the backing of other states.

Bush goes to the United Nations on Thursday to put the case for tough action to disarm Iraq, although key Security Council members Russia and France have already expressed grave doubts. China is also sceptical.

Aware of such splits, Iraq's foreign minister repeated in an interview today Baghdad's offer to accept the return of UN arms inspectors — but only under a comprehensive deal that would lift a crippling 12-year-old embargo imposed for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait that was ended by the 1991 Gulf War.

Offering support for Baghdad from an unlikely source, one former UN inspector turned up in Baghdad today to plead Iraq's cause and address parliament. Scott Ritter, who quit his UN post in 1998, says Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction.

Blair, whose summit with Bush followed a major US-British air strike on an Iraqi command-and-control post in western Iraq on Thursday, told Sky News television that the US and Britain would not act without consulting their allies.

"We have a total determination to deal with this issue. But we do want to deal with it on the basis of the broadest possible international support," Blair said.

"I think what people have been worried about is: are we simply going to go off without

any consultation or discussion with allies? That is not the case."

Unless action was taken, Iraq would carry on developing weapons of mass destruction, he said, adding: "At some point, and I can't say it is going to be next month or even next year, but at some point as a result of that, the danger will explode."

Before their summit, Bush and Blair cited security reports of new construction at sites previously linked to Baghdad's weapons programmes and intelligence about Saddam having been close to acquiring nuclear capability as evidence to support swift action against Iraq.

Later, US officials said they had information that Iraq was intensifying its bid for nuclear weapons with a global search for materials to make a nuclear bomb. Like Blair, Bush made clear the means of ousting Saddam and countering any nuclear threat was not finally decided.

"There's all kinds of ways to change regimes," he said.

Amid stepped up Iraqi moves in the face of US threats, foreign minister Naji Sabri repeated Baghdad's conditions for a return of UN weapons inspectors, who left in 1998 before a US-British bombing campaign against Iraq.

He told the Saudi paper al-Watan Iraq "will not allow the return of international inspectors unless under a comprehensive package under which a timetable is set to end the sanctions."

Backing Baghdad's line, former arms inspector Ritter said his trip to Baghdad was at his own initiative "...as an American citizen concerned about the direction that my country is taking, I think that's the reason why I'm here."

"I'm here to help set in motion a sequence of events that hopefully could prevent a war that doesn't need to be fought," he told CNN.



Tony Blair and George W. Bush at Camp David. (Reuters)

IRAQ / U.S. MAY MOVE RESOLUTION IN U.N. HO-14 719

Bush seeks to build global coalition

WASHINGTON, SEPT. 6. The United States President, George W. Bush, used telephone diplomacy on Friday to try to persuade three sceptical nations — China, Russia and France — that action against Iraq is urgently needed.

The stakes are huge: Each could use their clout in the United Nations to veto resolutions aimed at the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Bush, who has been accused of maintaining a go-it-alone foreign policy, is trying to build a global coalition for action against Iraq, just as his father did in 1991 for the Gulf War.

Opening the international phase in his campaign to win similar backing, Mr. Bush targeted three of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council for telephone calls. The United States and Britain are the other two permanent members.

The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, a staunch backer of the U.S. call for regime change in Baghdad, will meet Mr. Bush at his Camp David presidential retreat on Saturday. Mr. Bush will meet on Monday the Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, who has said he has yet to see evidence to justify Canadian support for a military campaign.



Protesters take out a rally opposing war with Iraq in Louisville, U.S., during the visit of the President, George W. Bush, on Thursday. — AP

Mr. Bush called the Presidents, Jacques Chirac of France, Jiang Zemin of China and Vladimir Putin of Russia. All three have voiced deep doubts about military action against Iraq.

France and China have said

any military action against Iraq should be decided by the United Nations. Russia opposes war with Iraq, but its stand is clouded by growing economic and diplomatic ties to the country.

Mr. Bush's conversations

could lay the groundwork for his administration's likely request that the Security Council adopt a resolution setting a deadline for Iraq to admit weapons inspectors or risk punitive action.

By not specifying there would be an attack on Baghdad, the administration hopes to avert a veto.

Officials confirmed Mr. Bush was reviewing several ideas, including giving Mr. Hussein a last-ditch deadline for allowing unfettered access to weapons inspectors, but said the President and his advisers had determined that it was too soon to show his hand.

Indeed, he does not plan to break major new ground in a Sept. 12 address to the United Nations; aides who have seen early drafts say Mr. Bush makes a forceful case for ousting Mr. Hussein and warns the United Nations that its credibility and relevance is on the line.

While there is no "huge divergence" on what to say, the topic is still the subject of lively discussions within the administration, one official said.

Aides say concrete plans to oust Mr. Hussein will likely wait for another speech, perhaps a joint session of Congress, once Mr. Bush is finished consulting allies and lawmakers and makes a final decision. — AP, AFP

Schroeder leads EU chorus of dissent

Roger Boyes, Richard Beeston, Charles
Bramner, The Times, London

LONDON, Sept. 5. — Continental Europe was set on a collision course with the USA and Britain yesterday over proposed military action against Iraq, with Germany emerging as the magnet for opponents of a war.

With Washington and London co-ordinating preparations for the possible removal of President Saddam Hussein, European leaders from across the political spectrum distanced themselves from any action that was not sanctioned by the UN and did not have the support of moderate Arab states. For the first time Mr Tony Blair came in for the sort of criticism so far reserved only for President Bush and members of his Administration amid fears in Europe that Britain's strong endorsement of Washington's policy of "regime change" would make the adoption of a common EU position impossible.

Mr Gerhard Schroeder, Germany's Chancellor, said that the Middle East would be "set ablaze" by a war against Baghdad. "Under my leadership," he said, "Germany will not be part of an intervention. Friendship should not mean that one does everything that a friend demands. Anything else would just be subordination, and that would be wrong." The USA immediately registered its anger. "The present policy of the government is isolating Germany from mainstream opinion even within the European Union," said Mr Dan Coats, the US Ambassador to Berlin.

The German leader, however, appeared to leave a cabinet meeting, in which Mr Blair's comments on Iraq were discussed, firm in his opposition to war. Although he did not directly refer to the prime minister, his remarks were seen by many as a direct response. A highly placed German official said: "The Chancellor does not want Mr Blair's war talk to be seen as the single voice of Europe." Mr Schroeder laid out what amounts to a dissenters' charter for those European governments reluctant to toe the US line. He advanced four arguments: the lack of a proper post-Saddam strategy, the lack of a Middle East policy in the wake of a war, the outstanding tasks in Afghanistan, and the devastating effects of a war on the world economy.

"It was a mistake to depart from the UN line and replace the goal of isolating Saddam Hussein with the goal of removing him from power," said Mr Schroeder, who faces a general election on 22 September. "If you want to exercise political and economic pressure then it is not rational to announce that you want to get rid of the regime." France also implicitly criticised Mr Blair's calls to prepare for a war with Iraq. It objected to the publication of a dossier about Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction and said it did not approve of publishing secret information.

A French foreign ministry spokesman said: "There is information that is by nature confidential." He added that France was adamant that UN inspectors must be allowed to return. Mr Chris Patten, the EU's external relations commissioner, said Washington and London should act only with the approval of the UN and the backing of a broad coalition. Mr Patten told the European Parliament in Strasbourg: "We must recognise that efforts to force Iraqi compliance are more likely to succeed if they are backed by a coalition of concerned parties as broad and effective as that put together with great diplomatic finesse in 1991." A poll conducted among 9,000 people showed that 60 per cent of Europeans and 65 per cent of Americans were in favour of action if it was carried out by a coalition and had UN backing.

THE STATESMAN

IRAQ / GRAND DESIGN MUST BE THWARTED, SAYS SADDAM

'U.S. wants to control oil supplies'

10-14 579



SHARING CONCERNS?The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Naji Sabri (centre), and his Saudi and Sudanese counterparts, Prince Saud al-Faisal (right) and Mustafa Ismail, at the opening session of the Arab Foreign Ministers meeting at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo on Wednesday. Arab diplomats called for rapid action and a "clear signal" to avert a U.S. strike on Iraq by prompting talks for the return of U.N. arms inspectors to Baghdad. — AFP

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), SEPT. 4. The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, has accused the United States of seeking world domination by controlling oil supplies in the Persian Gulf and by denying nuclear weapons to other countries.

During talks in Baghdad with the visiting special envoy of the Belarus President, Alexander Lukashenko, Mr. Hussein reportedly said the U.S. desire to dominate the entire world would become "ineffectual" if some countries were allowed to possess nuclear weapons.

The U.S. accuses Iraq of seeking to acquire mass destruction weapons, including nuclear bombs.

According to the State-run Iraq News Agency (INA), Mr. Hussein said the U.S. assumed that it would be close to achieving global domination if it controlled the 65 per cent of the world's energy reserves that were located in West Asia.

Iraq, which holds the second largest oil reserves in the world after Saudi Arabia, was being

the U.S., Mr. Hussein alleged, would curb the economic development of many countries, while ensuring that its own economy registered a "continuous circle of development."

He added that the countries which would suffer on account of the U.S. control over world oil supplies and prices included China, Japan and France.

Given the "grand design" of the U.S., it was important for "all patriotic individuals to rise and confront Washington's moves", Mr. Hussein was reported to have said.

Meanwhile, Iraq continued its efforts to persuade key U.N. Security Council members to prevail on Washington to change its plan of seeking a regime change in Baghdad.

After concluding a visit to China, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Naji Sabri, is now visiting Russia for talks with his counterpart, Mr. Igor Ivanov. Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, who is in Johannesburg to attend the earth summit, met the Venezuelan President, Hugo Chavez there. Venezuela is a member of OPEC.

targeted because it was an obstacle in the fulfilment of U.S. designs. By controlling the oil supply,

'Bush will consult Congress on Iraq'

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, SEPT. 4. While stressing that the President, George W. Bush, intended to consult Congress before embarking on any military action against Iraq, the White House said in a strict legal sense, the President did not have to get Congressional authorisation. The White House spokesman said Mr. Bush's role as Commander-in-Chief under the Constitution, the terms on which the 1991 Gulf War was ended and the Congressional authorisation given last year on the use of force for terror meant that the President did not have to seek Congressional approval for an attack on Iraq. The White House, nevertheless, made a distinction between what is legal and what is practical. "...there are many other important circumstances that would need to be considered prior to taking military action, involving Congress and Congress' role, diplomacy, historical precedence vis-à-vis Congress... the legal issue is a different issue from the practical issue," the spokesman, Ari Fleischer, said.

Mr. Fleischer was asked to cite a precedent when a President had asserted his executive power based on legal opinion on making war on a sovereign nation that would involve a substantial number of ground troops. Would Lyndon Johnson and the Vietnam War be an example? Mr. Fleischer did not give a direct answer. Lawmakers, including many senior Republicans, are not just dissatisfied with the case the administration has presented on Iraq. Some, especially Democrats, are stunned that the White House has assumed that the administration can use the 1991 resolutions in the Senate and the House of Representatives as a continuing sanction to wage war against Iraq.

Top Democrats say the 1991 war is totally different from the present scenario — eleven years ago, the then Republican administration sought to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Today, it is a question of invading a "sovereign" nation with the stated goal of a regime change. This, in the view of senior Democrats, requires a new Congressional sanction.

W. R. ...
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Blair takes off the gloves on Iraq

By Hasan Suroor

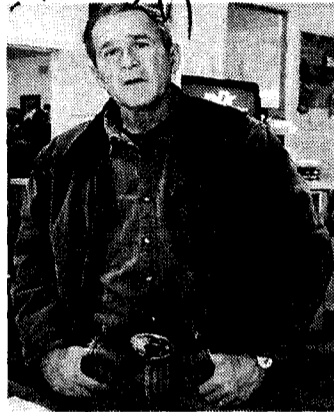
HD-15 579

LONDON, SEPT. 4. In the clearest indication yet that Britain is willing to back any U.S. military intervention in Iraq, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has said that a regime change in Baghdad is the only option to remove the threat from the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction.

Breaking his month-long silence on the issue at a press conference in his Sedgefield constituency on Tuesday, Mr. Blair played down the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw's emphasis on the return of U.N. weapons' inspectors to Iraq as a way to avert the war saying there seemed to be little sign of Mr. Hussein agreeing to give the inspectors the kind of unfettered access required under the U.N. resolutions.

He also refused to commit that Britain would insist on a fresh U.N. mandate before agreeing to support an attack on Iraq.

Mr. Blair's hawkish remarks, ahead of a visit to the U.S to



The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair (right), pictured here in Sedgefield on Tuesday, strikes a similar pose to the U.S. President, George W. Bush, pictured in Crawford, Texas, in this December 31, 2001 file photo. — Reuters

meet the President, George W. Bush, were widely interpreted to mean that he had started to prepare Britain for a pre-emptive strike despite growing public opposition and threat of a virtual revolt within his own party on the issue.

In a stark warning, he said: "Either the regime starts to function in an entirely different

way — and there is not much sign of that — or the regime has to change".

Though he insisted that no decision had been taken yet, he made clear that if the U.S. eventually decided to tackle militarily, he would have no hesitation supporting it.

In what is seen as a veiled criticism of his European allies

who are opposed to an attack on Iraq, he said: "If Britain and if Europe want to be taken seriously as people facing up to these issues (of threat from terrorism), then our place is facing them with America, in partnership, but with America."

There was a touch of annoyance when asked whether there was sufficient evidence against Iraq to justify an attack.

"One of the sights I have found bizarre is the sight of very decent liberal-minded people lining up and saying we should not do anything about the regime of Saddam Hussein," he said insisting that Mr. Hussein was "still trying to develop chemical. Biological (and) potentially nuclear capability." And to allow him to do so "without any let or hindrance... would be irresponsible".

Mr. Blair said that a dossier documenting the threat from Iraq would be published soon. The dossier was promised months ago, but was shelved prompting speculation that the Government had not been able to gather clinching evidence.

Is an attack on Iraq legal?

By V. S. Mani

THE STAGE is being set for the United States to take unilateral military action against Saddam Hussein. The 'hawks' in the U.S. administration are in a frenzy even as the first anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks draws near. The Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, has said that fleeing Al-Qaeda terrorists from Afghanistan have found refuge in Iraq. He ridiculed the suggestion that Mr. Hussein was possibly unaware of this. He is reported to have said: "In a vicious, repressive dictatorship that exercises near-total control of its population, it is very hard to imagine that the Government is not aware of what is taking place in the country." (He would not, of course, extend the same logic to other, 'friendly' military dictatorships!). Addressing a National Convention of the American Veterans of Foreign Wars on August 26, the U.S. Vice-President, Dick Cheney, conceded that "Intelligence is an uncertain business, even in the best of circumstances". Yet, he was convinced that, "simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us. And there is no doubt that his aggressive regional ambitions will lead him into future confrontations with his neighbours — confrontations that will involve both the weapons he has today, and the ones he will continue to develop with his oil wealth". "The risks of inaction are far greater than the risk of action," he thundered to the enthusiastic applause of the war veterans.

The legal arguments in support of a possible pre-emptive attack on Iraq appear to be three-fold, one based on the U.N. Security Council resolutions, the second, the right of self-defence, and the third, a duty to prevent and punish acts of international terrorism.

So far the Security Council has, acting both in camera and in open sittings, adopted wide-ranging resolutions pursuant to its broad powers of enforcement action under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter. Resolution

678 of November 30, 1990, inter alia, authorised "member-states cooperating with the Government of Kuwait," i.e., the 28-member multinational group led by the U.S., "to use all necessary means to implement Security Council Resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area". It was well known that "necessary means" included the use of military force by the U.S.-led multinational group, which the Cuban representative promptly characterised as "a virtual declaration of

The U.N. Security Council alone is competent to authorise military action under its direct control against a recalcitrant state.

war". Can this resolution be the basis for further military action against Iraq? Obviously not. Its purpose was to vacate the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and resolve related issues. While one may have serious legal reservations about the Security Council's constitutional power to delegate unconditionally its plenary powers (to employ armed forces on behalf of the organisation) to a selected group of states to be exercised without any accountability to the Council, this authorisation expired when the objectives of vacating the aggression were achieved by April 1991. Hence, the all-pervasive Council resolution 687 of April 5, 1991, which laid down the framework for shearing Iraq of all potential for weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological weapons, and delivery systems, under international supervision. Violations, if any, of the obligations imposed on Iraq by this and other subsequent resolutions would call for remedial action by the Council acting under Chapter VII. It would not justify unilateral action by the U.S. outside the framework of the Charter. No one has authorised the U.S. and its allies to sit in judgment over such violations and 'enforce' the obligations imposed by the Council, on its behalf.

A second basis for possible unilat-

eral action by the U.S. against Iraq would be self-defence. But where is the justification for such action? Military action in self-defence must respond to an armed attack. Two arguments are raised here in support of the U.S. One, Iraq has been shooting at U.S. and British aircraft over the two "no-fly zones" over Iraq and hence the several retaliatory air strikes by the U.S. and U.K. over the years since March 1991 when these zones were established. The legal basis of these "no-fly zones" is claimed to be the Council resolution 688 of April 5, 1991. This resolution, adopt-

ed not under Chapter VII, condemned the repression by the Iraqi Government of its Kurdish population, which amounted to a threat to international peace and security. In fact, the establishment of these zones was a unilateral act by U.S.-U.K.-France, a clear violation of Iraqi sovereignty, and no authority flowed from the Council resolution. In other words, the establishment of the no-fly zones was illegal *per se* and no right of self-defence arises in defence of an originally illegal situation.

A second argument on the basis of self-defence is more remarkable. The Dick Cheney argument runs thus: Saddam Hussein's 'conduct or history' does not give any scope for hope. The U.S. should not repeat the mistake it made during World War II in ignoring the magnitude of the danger it faced until it received, unexpectedly, a devastating blow at Pearl Harbour. "What we must not do in the face of a mortal threat is give in to wishful thinking or wilful blindness." So, don't wait until the 'monster' hits you with nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. Thus, action now and a regime change in Iraq are in order. This argument is legally flawed in two respects. First, the use of force in self-defence is justified only in case of an armed attack, not in case of a perceived security

threat. Second, effecting a regime change is not the function of an outside power; it is inane in the face of the Iraqis' right to self-determination. Forcible intervention to effect a regime change was roundly condemned by the International Court of Justice in the Nicaragua case. (1986, paragraphs 255, 258).

Finally, does the obligation of every state to "prevent and punish" acts of international terrorism imply a right to resort to military force unilaterally? The obligations in respect of "preventing and punishing" criminal acts of terrorism are obligations to be implemented within the territorial jurisdiction of a state. By no stretch of imagination can a duty to "prevent" imply a duty to "take unilateral military action" against another state under the facade of enforcement of international obligations.

At any rate, since the adoption by the Security Council of Resolution 1373 on September 28, 2001, the Council alone is competent to authorise military action under its direct control against a recalcitrant state. Nor can the U.S. claim an extended right of self-defence based on the September 11 attacks on the specious argument that many Al-Qaeda operatives, driven out of Afghanistan, have now found safe havens in Iraq illustrating Mr. Hussein's complicity in promoting international terrorism.

It is understandable that arrogance of power usually leads to a preference for unilateralism in use of military force. In any unilateral action of this type, the biggest casualty is the truth. It is therefore advisable to seek the interposition of the available international organisation in such matters.

Organisational interposition has a dual advantage. One, a claim of gross violations of international obligations could be subject to multilateral appraisal. Two, responses to them would have better chances of international legitimacy and accountability.

(The writer teaches International Law at the School of International Studies, JNU.)

THE HINDU

4 SEP 2002

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IRAQ / 'U.S. NOT INTERESTED IN DIALOGUE' *u. s. not*
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Inspections again linked to sanctions

JOHANNESBURG, SEPT. 3. Iraq said on Tuesday it was ready to discuss a return of U.N. weapons inspectors, but only in a broader context of ending sanctions and restoring Iraqi sovereignty over all its territory.

"If you want to find a solution, you have to find a solution for all these matters, not only pick up one certain aspect of it," the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, said after meeting the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, at the World Summit. "We are ready to find such a solution."

Iraq has made similar proposals before.

As he has in the past, Mr. Annan urged Mr. Aziz to comply with Security Council resolutions, which call for the unconditional return of inspectors, his spokeswoman said.

The Secretary-General's office described the 20-minute meeting as part of an "ongoing dialogue aimed at agreeing on the return of inspectors, which in turn will lead to a comprehensive solution, including the lifting of sanctions."

Mr. Aziz described the meeting as an exchange of views. "We are ready to co-operate with the United Nations," he said. But he said such talks must include not only the return of inspectors but also the lifting of



The U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, shows the way to the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg on Tuesday. — AP

sanctions, the restoration of Iraqi sovereignty in the north and south of the country, and the end to U.S. threats of invasion and "changing our political system."

Noting that the last team of U.N. inspectors stayed for 7 1/2 years, Mr. Aziz said new ones would only be welcome "if they come for a special mission" but not "if they send people who drag their feet for years."

He reiterated Baghdad's invitation last month to U.S. Congress members and experts of their choice to search sites in Iraq where they suspect weapons are hidden. The White

House has dismissed the offer as a stunt.

Mr. Aziz accused Washington of being uninterested in dialogue.

"If the question of so-called weapons of mass destruction is a genuine concern by the United States, this matter could be dealt with reasonably and equitably," he said. "But if it's a pretext, pretexts can change. ..."

"In the end, they will use whatever pretext remains in their hands to attack us," he said, adding that "we are preparing ourselves to defend our country."

Meanwhile, in Cairo, the Iraqi

Foreign Minister, Naji Sabri, said his country would not make specific demands on fellow Arabs meeting in Cairo this week to consider the U.S.-Iraq crisis and other issues.

"The agenda is full of important issues and we agree with the Arabs in dealing with these issues. We will not present any requests during this session, but will participate in discussing the threats against all the Arab nations," Mr. Sabri told reporters after arriving in Cairo Tuesday, a day before an Arab League Foreign Ministers meeting. "The whole world rejects ... the rule of the jungle adopted by extremists and Zionists within the U.S. administration of evil," Mr. Sabri added.

The Arab Foreign Ministers are also expected to discuss developments in the Palestinian territories.

The meeting was preceded by consultation at the League's Cairo headquarters on how to include Iraq on the regular meeting's agenda.

All Arab countries oppose a U.S. strike on Iraq, but some Arab governments wanted to urge Iraq to allow the return of U. N. weapons inspectors.

Baghdad has sought instead a message of Arab support, according to Arab diplomats. — AP

Iraq to talk with Annan, Russia warns US

ALISTAIR LYON

London, Sept. 2 (Reuters): Iraq, stepping up a diplomatic drive to avert a threatened US attack, said today it would discuss a conditional return of United Nations arms inspectors with UN secretary-general Kofi Annan. Russia warned the United States that using force against Iraq could destabilise the region, Russian news agencies said.

Iraqi deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said he would hold talks with Annan at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg tomorrow to discuss the deepening crisis with the United States.

"We would consider this issue (the inspectors) within the context that I mentioned, with

the comprehensive settlement," Aziz told reporters. The UN inspectors left Baghdad in 1998.

Aziz did not spell out what such a settlement would entail, but Sabri wrote to Annan last month proposing a deal under which "all the requirements of the relevant Security Council resolutions would be satisfied in a synchronised manner".

Iraq has in the past said UN arms experts would have to discuss in advance what they were looking for before searches for weapons of mass destruction resumed. Baghdad insists that all its banned weapons programmes have been scrapped.

Iraq has argued that the United States would use any new inspections to spy on its military

capabilities or to provoke a confrontation which it could use as a pretext for war.

It was not immediately clear if Aziz's remarks, made only a day after he told CNN that letting the experts back under the direction of chief UN arms inspector Hans Blix was not an option, represented a genuine change of heart by Iraq.

Oil ambition

In Baghdad, President Saddam Hussein said US hostility masked an ambition to grab control of the region's oil reserves.

"Why all this American animosity against Iraq?" the official Iraqi News Agency quoted Saddam as saying. "Because America believes that if it destroys

Iraq, it would control oil of West Asia which makes up 65 per cent of world oil reserves."

Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov, speaking at a news conference with his Iraqi counterpart Najji Sabri, said Moscow had no evidence of any Iraqi threat to US security.

He said Iraq must accept the return of UN inspectors to determine whether it held weapons of mass destruction.

"Any decision to use force against Iraq would not only complicate an Iraqi settlement, but also undermine the situation in the Gulf and West Asia," Ivanov said. Sabri was visiting Russia, a permanent member of the UN Security Council with veto power, as part of Iraqi efforts to

fend off US threats of military action to topple Saddam.

Ivanov, whose country backs the US "war on terror", but has long had good ties with Baghdad, said he hoped the council would never be asked to authorise a strike on Iraq "and, therefore, the right of veto will not be necessary".

Former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa told reporters he was "appalled" by United States policy on Iraq.

Iraq is pulling out the diplomatic stops to counter US threats to remove Saddam by force for his alleged efforts to acquire doomsday weapons that Washington says Iraq might use against the West or its allies, or hand over to terrorists.

E.U. seeks to evolve joint policy on Iraq

M Asia
HD-12

By Vaiju Naravane

PARIS, Aug. 31. European Foreign Ministers meeting informally in a seaside town near the spectacular castle of Elsinore — the setting of Shakespeare's Hamlet — are attempting to avoid open dissensions and knit together a joint E.U. policy on Iraq, West Asia and the thorny question of the International Criminal Court.

At a time when the United States is desperately seeking to split voices within the European Union in a bid to get at least a few major E.U. nations on its side over plans to attack Iraq, there is every likelihood that Governments in Italy and Spain break ranks in support of Washington.

European heavyweights like France and Germany have spoken out against a unilateral invasion of Iraq, stressing the need for full consultation within the

framework of the United Nations Security Council. Britain has shifted its position from one of total support to the U.S. to that of a proposed U.N. deadline for the return of arms inspectors to Iraq. Italy and Spain, headed by hard-line conservative Prime Ministers, Silvio Berlusconi, and Jose Maria Aznar, are likely to favour strikes by Washington.

In a major foreign policy speech on Thursday, the French President, Jacques Chirac, said, "The emergence of a temptation to legitimise unilateral and preventive use of force" was a "worrying" development. He said this was contrary to France's vision of collective security which is based on cooperation between states, the respect of law and the authority of the U.N. Security Council. "We shall evoke these rules when necessary and notably in connection with Iraq. If Baghdad stubbornly refuses the return of inspectors, the Security

Council, and it alone should decide what measures to take."

However, Mr Chirac's Foreign Minister and confidant, Dominique de Villepin, softened France's earlier stance on U.S. action against Iraq by saying Saddam Hussein's defiance of the international community was "indefensible". He said, "We Europeans know too well the price of weakness in the face of dictators if we close our eyes and accept to play a game of passivity. We should therefore maintain with the greatest firmness our demand for the unconditional return of U.N. inspectors."

France is, therefore, keeping its options open, reassuring Arab, north African and West Asian countries with which it has traditionally cordial ties, while telling Washington it shares U.S. fears about terrorism and the threats posed by Iraq.

That leaves Germany exposed as far

as Washington is concerned, with the Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, the only E.U. leader to stick his neck out in opposition to U.S. plans. He insisted Germany would not be party to such an attack "at least not under my leadership."

The German Foreign Minister, Joscha Fischer, said, "We believe a regime change brought about by military intervention to be highly risky and its consequences unclear."

The Foreign Ministers' meeting is also likely to see further European disunity over the International Criminal Court with Britain and Italy likely to sign bilateral agreements with the U.S. to the effect that they will not prosecute U.S. peace-keepers for war crimes or human rights abuses. The U.S. has already obtained such bilateral agreements from Israel, East Timor and Romania.

China, India oppose force against Iraq

Beijing, Aug. 28 (Reuters): China and India, the world's two most populous countries, stressed their opposition to the use of force against Iraq without mentioning the US by name.

The reaction today from the two Asian giants, which together account for more than a third of humanity, was the strongest in the US-led war on terror.

Australia, however, has expressed support for a US strike on Iraq but said a diplomatic solution would be preferable.

US officials have stressed that no decision has been taken to attack Iraq but senior administration figures have not been shy about putting their case for a change of regime in Baghdad.

US Vice-President Dick Cheney this week laid out the case for pre-emptive action, saying Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was stalling for time to develop weapons of mass destruction and that the Iraqi leader would have nuclear weapons "fairly soon".

The risks of inaction were "far greater than the risk of action", Cheney said.

But China said using force against Iraq would increase instability. "Using force or threats of force is unhelpful in solving the Iraq issue and will increase regional instability and tensions," China's official Xinhua news agency quoted foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan as saying in a meeting with his Iraqi counterpart.

part Naji Sabri in Beijing. "The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Iraq should also be respected."

China, a permanent member

of the UN Security Council, said it wanted Baghdad to implement UN resolutions calling for weapons inspections and that it would play a "positive role" in

trying to ease tensions.

US President George W. Bush has named Iraq, Iran and North Korea as forming an "axis of evil" promoting terrorism. Iraq

Khatami issues warning to Bush

Tehran, Aug. 28 (Reuters): Iranian President Mohammad Khatami warned the US today against attacking Iran, particularly in the aftermath of a possible US strike on neighbouring Iraq.

Calling for "realistic" policies from Washington to avoid the global implications of attacks, Khatami urged Washington to drop its hostile attitude and improve ties with Iran.

US President George W. Bush has branded Iran and Iraq as part of an "axis of evil" — along with North Korea — for allegedly seeking weapons of mass destruction, and said the US was determined

to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Iran and Iraq deny the charge. "We will do our utmost so that no attack or aggression takes place against any country, including our own country," Khatami told a news conference. "But if such an attack takes place, naturally we should be ready to pay the price and defend our interests."

"We hope Iraq will not be attacked, and if this occurs we hope that (America) will not try its luck by attacking other countries and realise that American public opinion will not tolerate this policy for very long," Khatami said.

has refused to allow weapons inspectors into the country since a US-British bombing campaign in December 1998.

Diplomats said China's position on Iraq was fuelled by a desire to see countries act within an international framework rather than unilaterally.

Beijing, which says it has an even-handed policy in West Asia, was also keen to ensure US action did not open the door to potential interference in its own backyard, one diplomat said.

India, a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, said it also strongly opposed military action against Iraq.

Ties between India and the US have warmed in recent years, but New Delhi said it could not

accept the use of force against any nation.

"We are very clear that there should be no armed action against any country, more particularly with the avowed purpose of changing a regime," external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha told reporters this week. A foreign ministry official said today there was no change in India's stand on Iraq.

"There is a consistency in our policy and it is not going to change in the next few days or weeks," he said.

There was no immediate reaction from Pakistan, a key US ally since the September 11 attacks on Washington and New York, or from mostly Muslim Malaysia.

Iraq defiant, Arabs alarmed by US rhetoric

ALJSTAIR LYON

London, Aug. 27 (Reuters): Renewed US talk of war to topple Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein drew defiance from Baghdad today and a warning from Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak that any such attack could plunge West Asia into chaos.

US warplanes attacked a radar site in northern Iraq and an air defence command facility in the south after what the US military called hostile acts against US and British jets patrolling two no-fly zones in Iraqi airspace. The allied planes struck as Arab leaders digested

yesterday's call from US Vice-President Dick Cheney for preventive action against Iraq, saying Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction posed a mortal danger to the United States.

"We could not care less about the threats that are out there. Iraq has a long history with these threats and such despotism," Iraqi Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan told reporters in Syria after meeting President Bashar al-Assad.

In Baghdad, President Saddam Hussein told Qatar's foreign minister that a US assault on Iraq would be an attack on "all the Arab nation", the official Iraqi News Agency reported.

Saddam said Iraq had implemented all its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions and accused the world body of failing to reciprocate by lifting crippling sanctions imposed 12 years ago for Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"If there is a genuine desire to find a solution, it has to be based on international legitimacy, international law and the UN charter... and has to include implementing commitments by all parties," the Iraqi leader added.

Iraq has refused to allow UN weapons inspectors into the country since a US-British bombing campaign in December 1999. US fears that Iraq is devel-

oping doomsday weapons and might turn them over to terrorists increased after the September 11 attacks on US cities, which killed around 3,000 people.

But Cheney's remarks caused fresh alarm among Washington's Arab allies, which strongly supported the US-led coalition that drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war.

"Striking Iraq is something that could have repercussions and post-strike developments. We fear chaos happening in the region," Egypt's Mubarak told a group of students, adding there was "no need" to attack the sanctions-hit Arab country.

Qatar's foreign minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr al-Thani said he was visiting Baghdad to avert a "catastrophe", in clear reference to US threats to oust Saddam by force.

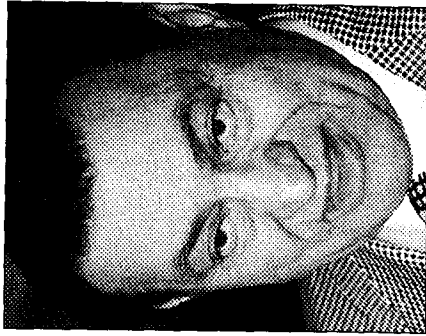
Qatar, which hosts a big US airbase that is now being upgraded, has joined other Arab countries in opposing any US attack on Iraq. "We are of course against any military action," al-Thani told reporters yesterday.

Anti-American feeling is high in the region because of US support for Israel as it tries to crush the Palestinian uprising against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "(Cheney's) position can only

express the depth of rancour and hatred for the Arab and Muslim nations," said Ramadan, urging Arabs to close ranks in response.

Ramadan was quoted by Iraq's *Rafidain* newspaper today as saying the return of UN weapons inspectors to Iraq — a step the UN inspection chief has said might avert war — was futile if Washington planned to attack Iraq anyway.

Syria's official *al-Baath* newspaper accused Washington of seeking to install puppet regimes across West Asia to serve US and Israeli interests. "All the Arabs without exception are at risk," it said.



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. (Reuters)

28 AUG 2002

Baghdad denies having ballistic missiles

Agencies

WASHINGTON, Aug. 25. - A top Iraqi envoy has denied his country has ballistic missiles capable of striking Israel or ties to Islamic militants behind the September 11 terrorist attacks as he sought to ease US pressure on Baghdad.

But the Iraqi ambassador to the UN, Mohammed Aldouri, also stopped short of offering UN weapons inspectors unconditional access to his country, calling instead for talks to resolve "remaining" issues between Iraq and the international community.

"We are asking to have a thorough discussion on what has been implemented of all of the Security Council resolutions and what are the remaining issues," said Mr Aldouri on CNN's "Novak, Hunt and Shields" programme aired yesterday.

"We thought that we have obligations and we did our obligations," he explained. "If there is any other obligations, we have to listen to the UN."

The Iraqi envoy dismissed allegations his country possessed nuclear weapons capability or any hidden medium-range Scud missiles capable of reaching Israeli soil.

"We don't have that," Mr Aldouri said. "I think we are obliged to have a very short-range missiles... We cannot reach Israel... And we have no intention to do that."

Baghdad was forced to destroy its arsenal of Scud missiles and their components under terms of UN ceasefire resolutions that brought an end to the 1991 Gulf War.

The resolutions also limited the range of its ballistic missile force to 150 km.

'Iran not neutral over attack on Iraq': Iran has slammed the American posturing on Iraq and said it was opposed to any unilateral US military action against its once hostile neighbour.

The Iranian foreign minister, Mr Kamal Kharrazi, told the official Iranian news agency Irna in Teheran yesterday there was no basis to speculations that his country had adopted a neutral stance toward a possible US attack on Iraq and reiterated Teheran's opposition to a military action. "Interpreting Iran's stance over the current Iraqi crisis as neutral is unreal and contradicts the country's clear and official position on this," he said.

"Iran has announced its opposition to the American unilateral action and considers any military action against that country as totally void," Mr Kharrazi added.

Many countries agree with Iran on this "realistic" stance which is based on the interests of the international society, he added.

Mr Kharrazi stressed that it was up to the Iraqi people "who have suffered many hardships" to determine their own fate and that "no body else has the right to decide on their behalf".

The Iranian foreign minister, however, said that "world countries as well as Iraq's neighbours must encourage Baghdad to respect UN resolutions so that the ground and pretext to unleash an invasion against Iraq and create tensions and insecurity in the region is removed".

5 hostage takers at Iraqi Embassy were asylum-seekers

Associated Press

BERLIN, Aug. 21. — Five men who barricaded themselves inside the Iraqi Embassy in Berlin with a group of hostages that included Baghdad's acting ambassador had applied for asylum in Germany, authorities said today.

The hostage takers' five-hour stand at the embassy in a western Berlin suburb, claimed by a previously unknown dissident group seeking the ouster of Iraqi leader Mr Saddam Hussein, was ended by commandos last evening after 20 attempts by police to establish tele-

phone contact went unanswered. Iraq's acting ambassador and his designated successor, who had been tied up, were freed uninjured.

The suspects were to be brought before a judge later today to determine whether they should remain in custody.

Berlin justice officials said the five men were aged between 32 and 43. Four of them had registered as asylum seekers in Berlin in March of this year, and the fifth had done so last year.

"So far they have kept silent" in questioning, said an official who spoke on condition of ano-

nymity. He did not have details of their nationality.

Investigators said they had no information about the group calling itself Democratic Iraqi Opposition of Germany, which issued a statement claiming responsibility, other than it appeared to be newly formed.

Baghdad on Berlin siege

BAGHDAD, Aug. 21. — Baghdad said today the hostage drama at the Iraqi embassy in Berlin was an attempt to pressure Germany into changing its stance against possible US-led strikes on Iraq.

"This criminal act aims to influence the official and public German stance, which is opposed to US threats against Iraq," said *Ath-Thawra* newspaper, mouthpiece of the ruling Baath party in Baghdad. — AFP

Iraqi officials as well as dissident groups abroad said they had never heard of it. Police did not identify the hostages.

An official list of diplomats identifies Iraq's acting ambassador as Shamil M o h a m m e d. Berlin's state interior minister said today his administration would review the embassy's security arrangements.

A statement by the group, written in nearly flawless German, said: "We are taking over the Iraqi Embassy in Berlin and thereby take the first step toward the liberation of our beloved fatherland." "Our action is peaceful and limited in time," it added. "Our path is the liberation of Baghdad."

A White House spokesman told reporters in Texas that as much as US President Mr George W Bush wants to see Saddam toppled, the USA does not condone hostage-taking in pursuit of that goal.

Pentagon sending arms to Middle East

Press Trust of India

NEW YORK, Aug. 19. — In the first tangible signs of a logistical buildup around Iraq, the Pentagon is sending weapons and other supplies to the Middle East that could be a critical part of war stocks if the USA decides to attack Iraq.

The Pentagon has hired two giant cargo ships to carry armoured vehicles and helicopters, among other war materials, and eight additional cargo ships capable of carrying ammunition, tanks and ambulances, defence department and military officials said.

The Air Force is stockpiling weapons, ammunition and spare parts, including airplane engines, at depots in the Persian Gulf region and in the USA. Arsenal of Air Force and Navy, precision-guided weapons, which proved devastating in Afghanistan, should be fully replenished by autumn, military officials said.

Senior Pentagon officials were quoted by the New York Times as saying the logistical movements do not represent a stealth deployment and should not be interpreted as evidence that a campaign against Iraq is imminent, or even a certainty.

Indeed, some of the movements now underway were ordered months or even years ago. But taken together, the Times said the steps suggest that those responsible for arming America's fighting forces in time of war are beginning serious planning.

House okays Saddam for another term



Mr Saddam Hussain

Saddam to run for another term. — AP

BAGHDAD, Aug. 19. — Iraq's parliament unanimously endorsed today the nomination of President Saddam Hussein for another seven-year term. "Today's session reflects the Iraqis' full support to their hero president amid the USA's aggressive threat against our country," Mr Sadoun Hammadi, Speaker of the 250-member Iraqi National Assembly, said in a speech. The approval came a few days after the Revolutionary Command Council, Iraq's top decision-making body, nominated

"We don't know when the next contingency might be, but we want to get this in the hands of the war fighters," Gen Lester L Lyles, chief of the Air Force Materiel Command, said in an interview.

Defence department and military officials who described the logistical plans indicated that a public discussion of the growing American arsenal confronting Iraqi President Saddam Hussein fit an emerging information strategy to unnerve Iraq ahead of possible combat and weaken it in case of war, as well as reassure skittish allies in the region.

The Pentagon is contracting for one ship to move troop-carrying combat vehicles from Europe and the USA to the Persian Gulf to join equipment for four armoured brigades already stored there. Another will carry vehicles, helicopters and ammunition to a Red Sea port for a military exercise this year.

The Defence department also has awarded a contract to Maersk Line to operate eight cargo ships capable of carrying ammunition and tanks. The ships will be positioned near the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, home of a British base used by the USA as a staging point, the Times said.

Senior officials, the paper says, acknowledge that the shipments could support war options that Gen Tommy R Franks, the chief of the military's Central Command, has recently presented to President Bush.

Logistics planners are closely tracking the various war options, officials said. The mundane task of setting aside food, fuel and weaponry for troops is essential for sustaining any major military operation.

Military transportation planners were quoted as saying that the magnitude of the air and sea lift of US troops and equipment to

the Middle East would be daunting: 7,000 miles by air and 12,000 by sea from the East Coast, and more from the West Coast.

"Logistically it won't be a cakewalk," said Gus Pagonis, a retired three-star Army general who was chief of logistics during the Gulf War of 1991. "To feed, house, equip and medically support 250,000 troops is not an easy task, but it's not insurmountable." Plans, for positioning American military equipment in the Gulf, the Times said quoting military officials, began just two months after the 1991 war ended.

Today, equipment for two reinforced Army armoured brigades is on the ground in the region, and the 9,000 troops to use it could be airlifted and ready for action in 96 hours.

The armaments are stored in 37 warehouses, each averaging 60,000 square feet, in Kuwait and Qatar.

Each of those countries holds in storage about 115 M-1A1 Abrams tanks, 60 M-2A2 Bradley fighting vehicles, 100 armoured personnel carriers, 25 mortars and 20 155mm howitzers, said a spokesman for Army forces assigned to the Central Command.

Ammunition is stored in both countries, with field artillery rounds in Kuwait. The Kuwait warehouses also hold 30 days' worth of food and fuel. Equipment for another armoured brigade from the Army and one from the Marine Corps — another 9,000 troops — is afloat on ships in the region, officials said.

20 AUG 2002

U.K. seeks legal advice on Iraq

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, AUG. 18. With pressure mounting on the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to desist from joining any U.S. military intervention in Iraq, Downing Street is reported to have sought legal opinion on whether a fresh U.N. authorisation is necessary before attacking Baghdad.

The Attorney-General, Lord Goldsmith, is to advise the Government on the issue which has caused a serious rift within the Cabinet with Robin Cook, the former foreign secretary and currently Leader of the Commons, becoming the latest voice of dissent in the Government.

The move to turn to the Attorney-General for advice follows deep scepticism at the highest level of the defence ministry over the legality of going into Iraq without seeking another mandate from the UN. Military experts, including the Chief of Defence Staff, Sir Michael Boyce, are believed to have warned of the risk of heavy British casualties and argued against any hasty action without making out legal case for it.

The Government is said to be desperate to establish Iraq's "terrorist" links after a dossier, prepared by intelligence agencies sometime ago, failed to link Baghdad with the September 11 outrage. "M16, the intelligence service, has been asked to go back to its sources, including Iraqi informants, and to review the latest findings of

the international investigation into the al-Qaeda network," according to one newspaper report.

A former Labour foreign office minister, Tony Lloyd, said it was not good enough to say, "trust the White House". Insisting that there was "no legal basis for regime change" in Iraq, he said: "How could there be, when it gives carte blanche to superpowers everywhere to kick out whatever regimes they fall out with" he asked as the Labour opponents of British involvement in Iraq stepped up their campaign.

The line-up of senior ministers who oppose Mr. Blair's pro-U.S. tilt on the issue now includes the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, the Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, and Margaret Beckett, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Mr. Cook has been widely quoted as saying that he would insist on a full debate in the Cabinet on how Britain should handle the Iraq question.

The Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, while playing down reports of a split in the Cabinet, admitted that there were differences. Personally he himself is counted among the sceptics, but unlike some of his other Cabinet colleagues he has not spoken out publicly. A showdown on the issue is widely expected at the Labour Party's annual conference with party MPs and trade unions insisting on a debate. They also plan to hold an anti-war rally outside the conference venue.

U.S. pressuring Arab states

AMMAN, AUG. 18. American diplomats are sending an uncompromising message to Arab states: those who do not support the planned United States operation against the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, will be treated as enemies.

The warning is beginning to galvanise those who had been hoping that the threat of war would evaporate. "Many countries have been hiding their heads in the sand," said one Western official. "Now there are the beginnings of a realisation that they must ensure they remain on the right side of the Americans."

The decision is toughest for the Governments of Egypt and Jordan, who have stuck by their peace treaties with Israel in defiance of public opinion. "They are sitting on the fence with

both ears to the ground," said a diplomat in Tel-Aviv. "This is a very uncomfortable position which is impossible to hold for very long."

Practically every Arab leader would be happy to see Mr. Hussein go if it could be done overnight. The problem is that it is not clear how this is going to be achieved, how long it will take, and who will replace him. Until they are sure of the result, no Arab country is ready to offer the Americans in public the use of its air bases.

There are signs that some in West Asia are determined to be on the winning side, with a stake in fashioning the post-Saddam future of Iraq.

America, however, will have to clarify what diplomats call "the day after" issue. It was fears of Iraq splitting into three

'statelets' — and the effect that this would have on Saudi Arabia — that prevented Washington from toppling Saddam in 1991.

The Saudis, once the favoured ally of the U.S., are under intense pressure. Senior members of the royal family were sued by relatives of victims of the September 11 attacks for financing the al-Qaeda network. *Al-Riyadh*, a Saudi newspaper that reflects government thinking, has called on the kingdom to "reconsider US-Saudi strategic ties". The Gulf war of 1991 was run from the Prince Sultan air base in Saudi Arabia, but that option is not available.

This puts the spotlight on the tiny emirate of Qatar, where the Americans are rushing to finish off a vast airbase at al-Udeid.

— ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2002

19 AUG 2002

Iraq for 'technical discussions' on inspections

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

BAGHDAD, Aug 17. — Iraq has urged fresh "technical discussions" on renewed UN arms inspections "to achieve the full implementation of Security Council resolutions in accordance with the UN Charter", an official text of its reply to the UN chief, Mr Kofi Annan, said here.

"We are renewing this offer for the holding of technical discussions to review what was achieved in the last phase (of weapons inspections) and discuss how to tackle issues which were still not settled when the inspectors left Iraq of their own accord in 1998," the foreign minister, Mr Naji Sabri, wrote to Mr Annan, according to the text carried yesterday by the official INA news agency.

"The technical delegation from the UN will be able to raise all matters it deems

necessary to advance the discussions and establish the groundwork for the next phase of monitoring and inspection," the letter said.

He said the delegation "could also examine the practical preparations with a view to a reestablishment of the surveillance system in the future and prepare the ground for the simultaneous application of all the pertinent Security Council resolutions." Iraq was "keen to continue dialogue with the UN secretariat, despite the difficulties, with the aim of fully implementing Security Council resolutions in accordance with the UN Charter," he said.

On 6 August, Mr Annan wrote to Mr Sabri asking him to confirm Iraq's readiness to abide by all Security Council resolutions, after he rejected an offer from Baghdad for talks with chief UN weapons inspector, Mr Hans Blix.

In his letter, Mr Sabri said Baghdad's proposal for technical discussions was intended "to avoid the disagreements and crises which marked the work of inspectors in the past and build a solid base for future cooperation." "Without settling the questions in abeyance, it will be difficult to start a new stage marked by professional cooperation and we would return to the same minefield... of disagreements and crises," he said.

"The proposal contained in our letter constitutes an important step toward the conclusion of a global agreement guaranteeing the simultaneous application of the pertinent Security Council resolutions." The minister also criticised Mr Blix for turning down an Iraqi invitation for him to visit Baghdad to review what had been done to disarm Iraq, saying his attitude was similar to that of his

predecessor, Mr Richard Butler, "who exceeded in his behaviour and statements the authority of the UN secretary general and Security Council." Mr Blix, who heads the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, set up in December 1999 to replace the former inspectorate, UNSCOM, had said it was for the Security Council to decide if he would go to Iraq. The USA dismissed the invitation as a stalling tactic.

Mr Blix said yesterday Iraq must let him start work before he could assess what it needs to do to satisfy the Security Council it has disarmed.

Iraq accused UNSCOM director Mr Butler of spying for the USA and has not allowed UNMOVIC to set foot in the country. UNSCOM withdrew its inspectors on the eve of a US and British bombing campaign in late 1998.

Iran seeks a key role in Afghanistan

110-14 By Atul Aneja H. A. 11

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), AUG.13. Iranian President, Mohammad Khatami, has concluded a daylong visit to Afghanistan as part of an effort to demonstrate Teheran's unwavering interest in Kabul. Mr. Khatami is the first Iranian President to have visited Afghanistan after the ouster of the Taliban regime in November last.

Mr. Khatami held discussions with his Afghan counterpart, Hamid Karzai, covering bilateral security issues including cross border movements, drug trafficking and developments in the region. These talks assume importance as Iran can play significant role in promoting stability in Afghanistan.

Two factors determine Iran's influence in Afghanistan. First, Iran has considerable influence over Afghanistan's ethnic Hazara community. That means its influence can be felt in large portions of central and northern Afghanistan, where the Hazaras are in strength. Iran's clout will come into



The Iranian President, Mohammad Khatami (left), with his Afghanistan counterpart, Hamid Karzai, in Kabul on Tuesday. — AP

play even more prominently if major oil companies in the world decide to use the Afghan corridor for transiting Central Asian oil and gas to South Asia.

These pipelines will have to be built across the Hazara dominated areas because of the relatively easier terrain there. Iran also has influence in western Afghan city of Herat where it continues to support the area's

leader, Ismail Khan. Second, Iran acquires its influence on account of its geographic location.

Iran, for instance, is the only alternative to Pakistan for transiting goods from landlocked Afghanistan to the sea. Iranian ports are linked to Afghanistan to some distance by rail and thereafter by road.

Not surprisingly, Afghanistan today acquires a considerable amount of humanitarian relief by road from the Iranian city of Mashad, which is not far away from Herat. Iran is also close to the Panjsheris, the supporters of the late Ahmad Shah Massoud, who all hail from Afghanistan's rugged Panjsher valley.

The Panjsheris, who are mostly ethnic Tajiks play a major role in post-Taliban Afghanistan's security, foreign and interior ministries.

By maintaining influence over the Panjsheris, Iran is in a fairly good position to smoothen their relations with the ethnic Pashtun element in the Afghan establishment, represented by Mr. Karzai.

Arms inspections over, says Iraq

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WASHINGTON, AUG. 13. Iraq appeared to rule out the return of weapons inspectors, undermining its diplomatic charm offensive as a debate over the justification for war was beginning in Washington.

Baghdad described as "pure invention" American and British claims that it was still developing weapons of mass destruction, and said there was no need for United Nations inspectors to return after an absence of four years.

Diplomats on both sides of the Atlantic reacted cautiously, saying it was far from clear that this was Iraq's last word on the matter and further manoeuvrings designed to divide America and Europe were highly likely.

"The work of inspection teams in Iraq had been completed," Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, Iraq's Information Minister, told the Arabic-language *Al-Jazeera satellite channel*.

Seeking to avert the threat of a U.S.-led attack, Iraq had asked U.N. officials to go to Baghdad to discuss disarmament, and issued similar invitations to American and British experts to "inspect" suspected sites.

But Mr Al-Sahaf seemed to upset this diplomatic manoeuvre when he said that Iraq's request for an "equitable dialogue" with the U.N. did not

HD-15
include any offer for the return of inspectors.

His comments will strengthen the Bush administration's case that Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction means he must be overthrown and undermine those arguing for a continued policy of containment.

Some senior Democrats and Republicans in Congress have begun to question the wisdom of a war and many have argued that the administration needs to do more to justify military action.

As a result, the administration has moved closer to requesting debates in the Senate and House of Representatives similar to those held in January 1991 on the eve of the Gulf war.

The case against war was put by Carl Levin, a senior Democrat and chairman of the Senate armed services committee, at the weekend.

Richard Lugar, soon to be the senior Republican on the Senate foreign relations committee, said an attack on Mr. Hussein was "probable" but had to be justified. "The President has to make the case that... to wait for provocation is to invite a very, very large disaster," he said.

"At the end of the day, we have to separate those weapons of mass destruction from Saddam. It would not be a cake-

h Arms ©
walk. There would be serious casualties, and he would almost certainly have time if we massed an attack to use those very weapons of mass destruction against us." — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2002

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THE HINDU

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Iraq: to invade or not

By Chinmaya R. Gharekhan

There is some speculation whether the fact that Saddam Hussein is an unfinished business of the previous Bush administration has anything to do with all this.

THERE ARE many debates going on in this great country — about the crookedness of chief executives of gigantic corporations who have milked their companies of billions of dollars and reduced the hard earned savings of their employees and ordinary investors to worth less than the paper on which the stocks are printed, about social security, about the state of the economy, about the spate of child kidnappings resulting in most cases in murder of little girls of 5 to 7 years age, and so on. For the rest of the world, however, the debate that has been raging for the past weeks over the projected invasion of Iraq is of particular relevance and importance.

A report in *The New York Times* a few days ago, based on a classified document which the daily claimed was in its possession, informed the world that a proposal to launch an invasion of Iraq with the stated objective of overthrowing its President, Saddam Hussein, was in an advanced stage of discussion in the administration. A massive force of 250,000 troops, with appropriate air and naval support, would be deployed to rid Iraqis of their hated leader and the region of a serious menace to peace and stability that is posed by his ambitions of possessing weapons of mass destruction. The clinching argument for the invasion and for rallying public opinion at home and internationally is that the action would be part of the ongoing global war on terrorism since Mr. Hussein's Iraq has links with Al-Qaeda. No decisions have yet been taken, one is told. The Government is acutely conscious of the risks and costs involved, in human and material terms, as also in terms of the damage to the "coalition" that has been so effortlessly set up since 9/11. In fact, the original coalition of 1991 to fight the Gulf War which is technically still in existence, might get broken up. The almost certain alienation of the Arab and Muslim world is very much in the minds of those planning the invasion. According to published reports, senior levels in the joint

chiefs of staffs have serious reservations about the proposal.

To inform the American people of all the complex issues involved, as he put it, so that they could take, through the Congress, a logical and suitable decision, Joseph Biden, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, convened public hearings on July 31 and August 1. Experts from various fields, including Richard Butler, former leader of the United Nations weapons inspection regime in Iraq called UNSCOM, other well known names from think-tanks as well as one former Republican Secretary of Defence and one former Democrat National Security Adviser, appeared before the Committee and gave the American people the benefit of their experience and wisdom. This is a very useful instrument to take the people into some kind of confidence, something we in India should consider adopting. The hearings were televised live.

All kinds of questions were gone into: is Mr. Hussein really a threat? What is the status of his ambition of acquiring WMD? What about his support to terrorists and Islamic fundamentalists? Does he have links with Al-Qaeda? What will or should replace him? What would it take to 'take him out'? How many tens of billions of dollars would the operation cost? Can America keep the anti-terrorism coalition in tact? Can America create another coalition? Can such a risky operation be undertaken while the Middle East is aflame? If the American troops have to stay in Iraq for a length of time after accomplishing their immediate objective, how will Iran react to that?

Not a single expert said that the operation could not be launched successfully. Some stated that as many as 75,000 troops might have to

stay on for as long as three years to ensure security and to protect the regime that might have been established. Dr. Hamza, a former senior nuclear engineer who defected from Iraq, and Mr. Butler suggested that Mr. Hussein might acquire nuclear weapons by 2005, his principal source of supplies for the crucial components being the former Soviet Republics and the route for them being through Syria. Some experts maintained that Mr. Hussein had always supported terrorists. Regarding coalition stability, the former Defence Secretary, Casper Weinberger, opined that they would all fall in line once they saw the U.S. achieving success. As for a post-Saddam Hussein scenario, it would not be easy to bring together the external opposition elements, which are known, and the internal elements, which are not known but which must surely exist. However, this should not be an insuperable problem. As for Iran's reaction, if it was made clear from the beginning that the American presence would be thinned out in predictable stages, it might not have a big objection after all. Regarding the cost, no one had any guess, though most seemed to think it ought to be less than the \$70 billions the Gulf War had cost and most of which was paid for by others. But if the U.S. had to maintain a long-term presence and pay for the inevitable reconstruction work, the figure could be as high as \$200 billions. As Mr. Biden said, America would have to go in to destroy and then pay to rebuild what was destroyed. About Mr. Hussein's links with terrorist outfits, Mr. Butler volunteered the information that when he was Australian Ambassador to Thailand, there had been an Iraq-supported plot to attack the embassies of America, Britain and Australia.

Not one expert challenged the basic, underlying premise that Mr. Hussein was a menace and had to be got rid of.

The hearings appeared to be a healthy demonstration of the functioning of American democracy. However, a strongly discordant voice was introduced by Scott Ritter, an American expert with UNSCOM who had worked for seven years as a weapons inspector in Iraq. He was devastating in his interview, aired immediately after the Senate hearings. Describing the hearings as a 'sham', Mr. Ritter said Mr. Hussein did not pose any threat to the national interests of the United States, that Iraq's nuclear capability had been thoroughly destroyed and that Mr. Butler or Dr. Hamza had not produced a shred of evidence to support their guess about Iraq acquiring nuclear weapons by 2005. He stated that the U.N. inspectors had not been thrown out by Mr. Hussein in 1998 but pulled out since the U.S. wanted to bomb Iraq, which it did two days later. He added that Mr. Butler was a complicit in this American game. Many of the inspectors, Mr. Ritter maintained, had done espionage work for the U.S. He did not agree about Iraq's alleged links with terrorist groups, pointing out that Mr. Hussein was an enemy of fundamentalists. There was absolutely no evidence of Iraq having any weapons of mass destruction. It did have sarin and tabu nerve gases, but they had been largely destroyed. Even if Iraq had managed to hide some munitions, they would be completely harmless by now due to degradation. He described the hype about Iraq as having nothing to do with facts and everything to do with politics.

It should be mentioned that Mr. Ritter appeared clearly disappointed at not having been invited as a witness at the hearings. The House will hold its own hearings shortly. There is some speculation whether the fact that Saddam Hussein is an unfinished business of the previous Bush administration has anything to do with all this.

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THE HINDU

Iraq offers to 'let in inspectors'

PETER GRAFF
LONDON, AUGUST 11

IRAQ's President Saddam Hussein has promised a British Parliamentarian that he will give weapons inspectors access to his country, a British Sunday newspaper reported.

The Mail on Sunday said George Galloway, a member of parliament from PM Tony Blair's Labour Party, had met the Iraqi leader at a secret underground bunker near Baghdad.

Saddam announced "he would implement all UN resolutions on Iraq and admit weapons inspectors without hindrance", the paper said, although it did not quote the pledge directly. It said Saddam had asked for better ties with Britain.

"We don't know why you



turned against us more than any other European country," it quoted Saddam as saying.

But Saddam also echoed Win-

Iraq is an enemy until proven otherwise: Bush

WASHINGTON: Branding Iraq as "enemy until proven otherwise", US President George Bush said that he is discussing with Congress and other American allies regarding the ouster of Saddam Hussein.

"We're in the process of consulting not only with Congress but with our friends and allies. And the consultation process is a positive part of really allowing people to fully understand our deep concerns about this man. (Saddam) his regime and his desires to have weapons of mass destruction," Bush, said yesterday at the Ridgewood Country Club in Waco, Texas. —PTI

ston Churchill to warn that if Western countries invade Iraq, "we will fight on the streets, on the rooftops, from house to house, we will never surrender".

The British Foreign Office was not immediately able to comment.

Saddam's meeting with the maverick Galloway, who has made several visits to Iraq in the past, came at a time when Blair is facing increasing unease at home over his backing for a tough line on Iraq.

Iraq said on Saturday it was waiting for an official response from the U.S. Congress to an invitation to visit Baghdad which it said could include arms experts.

The Iraqi letter on August 5 said such experts would be given free access to any site alleged to be developing weapons of mass destruction. —Reuters

12 AUG 2002

IRAQ / BLUSTER, SAYS U. S.

Iraq reminded of commitments

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, AUG. 9. The Bush administration has brushed aside the fiery speech of the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, calling it "bluster" and has once again pointed to all the commitments that Baghdad has not lived up to after the 1991 Gulf War.

"The Iraqi government needs to comply with the responsibilities it agreed to at the end of the Gulf War," said the White House spokesman, Scott McClellan, in Crawford, Texas, where the President, George W. Bush, is vacationing.

"The President has not decided on a particular course of action...we will consult with our friends and allies as well as Congress as we move forward," he said.

The State Department was far tougher in its observations of Mr. Hussein's speech calling it "bluster from an internationally isolated dictator, demonstrative yet again that his regime shows no intention to live up to its obligations under U.N. Security Council obligations".

At least one unnamed intelligence official has been quoted in an agency report as saying that Mr. Hussein's speech was "edgier and more bellicose" than his typical statements and



The Iraqi National Congress spokesman, Sharif Ali Bin Al Hussein, discussing the overthrow of Saddam Hussein during a speech in Washington on Thursday. The Iraqi Opposition groups are scheduled to meet U.S. officials later on Friday offering their ideas for regime change. — AP

had more references to religion than usual.

"It could be an effort to garner more popular support by appealing to Islam and appealing to the Arab masses," he said.

At the heart of the debate in this city and country is not whether Mr. Hussein should be thrown out of power in Iraq, but how this is to be done. The Bush

administration strongly believes in regime change through the military option.

Hawkish members of the Cabinet are continually talking of Baghdad flouting U.N. Resolutions and how that regime is a threat to the international system by acquiring and stockpiling weapons of mass destruction.

But there are those in the administration who say that Washington will have to factor in the implications of any military option in the Arab world.

The President has said that he has not ruled out the diplomatic option while pursuing the policy of regime change and the Vice-President, Dick Cheney, recently said that the United States would be seeking an international consensus.

In the immediate context, the issue is of the return of the United Nations Weapons Inspectors with Baghdad saying that it is ready to resume a dialogue to get this process moving. Washington and many at the United Nations are of the view that Mr. Hussein has come up with this latest tactic of a 'dialogue' with a view to buying time.

Responding to Mr. Hussein's latest speech, the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, remarked, "I don't see any change in attitude".

U.K. 'cautions' U.S. on Iraq

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, AUG. 9. With pressure mounting on the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, not to rush to a decision on Iraq, Britain is reported to have cautioned Washington that an attack on Baghdad in the current climate could have implications for other trouble spots around the world, including Kashmir where the Muslim opinion is likely to be inflamed.

Britain is believed to be particularly concerned that a military intervention in Iraq without first reviving the Palestinian peace process could further complicate the situation in the region, particularly in view of the openly hostile position which America's traditional Arab allies such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan have taken on the issue.

British officials were quoted as disagreeing with the American position that "you can deal with Iraq in a separate box", as one official put it. "It doesn't mean that you cannot do anything

until there is a settlement in the Middle East (West Asia) but you have to make progress. We want the Americans to say they are going to fix it in the Middle East," he told a newspaper.

On Friday, *The Independent* pointed to a "deepening discord" between Britain and the U.S. quoting Whitehall officials as saying that Americans appeared to be overlooking the risk that an attack on Iraq would 'contaminate' the situation in Israel, Afghanistan and Kashmir. For the first time since the Iraq debate started, Britain is seen to be moderating its position.

The Government's anxiety on the issue has been fuelled by the findings of a poll commissioned by Downing Street — revealing the U.S. President George W. Bush's "spectacular unpopularity" among British voters.

The poll done by Mr. Blair's personal pollster, Philip Gould, showed that Mr. Bush was even more unpopular than the Tories regarded as Britain's most unpopular political class.

'Iraq ready to face US'

NADIM LADKI
BAGHDAD, AUGUST 8

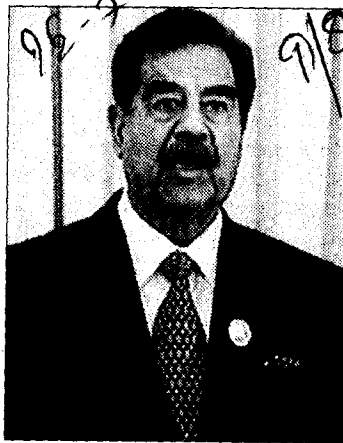
IRAQ President Saddam Hussein said on Thursday he was not frightened by US threats to topple his administration and warned that those who attacked Iraq would "dig their own graves."

Marking the anniversary of the end of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, Hussein called for "equitable dialogue" with the UN but made no offers in response to calls for weapons inspectors to be allowed back into Iraq. "The forces of evil will carry their coffins on their backs, die in disgraceful failure, taking their schemes back with them, or digging their own graves," Hussein, 65, said.

Any invaders would "bring death to themselves" in the Arab world, "including Iraq, the land of the *jihad* and Muslim banner," he added in a 22-minute address to the nation.

Hussein saluted Palestinians, who began an uprising in 2000 against Israeli occupation, and other Holy Warriors. In a show of force, thousands of Iraqi volunteers, clad in military fatigues and brandishing assault rifles, paraded in Baghdad, vowing to defend Iraq and Hussein to death. Ordinary Iraqis appeared galvanised by the defiant speech.

He said in the taped televised speech, "There is no other choice for those who use threat and aggression



Saddam Hussein addresses the nation in this grab from Iraqi TV broadcast on Thursday. Reuters

but to be repelled even if they were to bring harm to their targets. I say it in such clear terms so that no weakling should imagine that when we ignore ill talk, this means that we are frightened by the impudent threats...and so that no greedy tyrant should be misled into an action the consequences of which are beyond their calculations." Hussein called on the UN Security Council to answer a list of questions recently posed by Baghdad, and said the UN should honour obligations over trade sanctions imposed on Iraq in 1990 after its invasion of Kuwait.

He repeated his earlier position and said, "The right course is to respect the security and rights of oth-

Plans urban warfare to maximise US casualties

WASHINGTON: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has said that he aims to thwart US invasion by massing his military in major cities where civilian and American casualties would be highest. In meetings in recent weeks, US officials said, Hussein has outlined a strategy that appears to center on drawing US forces into Baghdad and other urban settings where his equipment and troops would not be exposed to America's warplanes and high-tech weaponry. —LATWP

ers, through dealing with others in peace and establishing the obligations required by way of equitable dialogue on the basis of international law and international covenants."

His address came a day after Bush said that while Baghdad posed "real threats," he would consult with Congress and US allies on how to proceed. Analysts said there was nothing new in his speech. "He's not saying anything new," Raanan Gissin, an adviser to Israeli PM Ariel Sharon, said. Israel has expressed support for any US military action but many Israelis are concerned Hussein would again target the Jewish state with Scud missiles as he did during 1991 Gulf War. —Reuters

Evil forces will carry their coffins: Iraq President Saddam issues grave threat

Baghdad, Aug. 8 (Reuters): President Saddam Hussein said today he was not frightened by US threats to topple his administration and warned that those who attacked Iraq would be "digging their own graves".

Marking the anniversary of the end of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, Saddam called for "equitable dialogue" with UN but made no new offers in response to international calls for weapons inspectors to be allowed back into Iraq.

"The forces of evil will carry their coffins on their backs, die in disgraceful failure, taking their schemes back with them, or digging their own graves," Saddam, 65, said.

Any invaders would "bring death to themselves" in the Arab world, "including Iraq, the land of the jihad and the (Muslim) banner", he added in a 22-minute address to the nation.

Saddam saluted Palestinians, who began an uprising in 2000 against Israeli occupation, and other Holy Warriors.



A female member of Iraq's national militia during a military parade in Baghdad. (AFP)

"Greetings...to the Arabs in the forefront of whom come the heroic people of Palestine, and to every honourable warrior of the faithful who met his God

with a pure heart," he said.

In a show of force, thousands of Iraqi volunteers, clad in military fatigues and brandishing assault rifles, paraded in Bagh-

dad, vowing to defend Iraq and Saddam to the death.

Ordinary Iraqis appeared galvanised by the defiant speech.

"We are not afraid of America, Bush or others," Hadi Abbass said. "We are ready to sacrifice our blood, soul and children for the President."

US President George W. Bush has said repeatedly Saddam was a threat to peace and stability, and he wanted a "regime change" in Iraq, clearly advocating the overthrow of the Iraqi leader. A US-led coalition drove Saddam's invasion forces out of oil-rich Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf War but stopped short of deposing the Iraqi leader. The coalition was forged by Bush's father and then US President George Bush.

Saddam, dressed in civilian clothes, was defiant but stuck to well-known Iraqi positions.

"There is no other choice for those who use threat and aggression but to be repelled even if they were to bring harm to their targets," he said.

US shift over Saudi-Iraq deal

Michael Evans
The Times, London

LONDON, Aug. 7. — Saudi Arabia is in the process of concluding a special trade deal with Baghdad and is likely to deny US access to its military bases for any future attack on Iraq, according to diplomatic sources.

The Saudi government, host to 500,000 US troops for Operation Desert Storm in 1991, has been engaged in talks with Iraq that could result in the establishment of a free-trade area between the two countries. The growing rapprochement between Riyadh and Baghdad, at a time when the Pentagon is

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A kernel of evil: Pentagon

WASHINGTON, Aug. 7. — A secret briefing given to senior Pentagon officials has described Saudi Arabia as an enemy of the USA and an "evil" state that funds and directs international terrorism.

The highly sensitive intelligence report, which reflects a potentially explosive deterioration in relations between Washington and Riyadh, described the kingdom as "the kernel of evil, the prime mover, the most dangerous opponent" that the USA faces in the Middle East.

weighing up the military options for toppling President Saddam Hussein, has underlined the huge changes in the region's political environment since the last US-led campaign against Iraq. Intelligence sources said the

USA had "as good as eliminated Saudi Arabia" as a possible base for operations against Mr Hussein, and was having to make alternative arrangements for troop and fighter aircraft deployments in the Gulf region.

The key Iraqi player in the

trade talks with the Saudis has been Mr Ezzat Ibrahim al-Douri, deputy chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council in Baghdad and one of Mr Hussein's most trusted lieutenants. He visited Riyadh earlier this year and met Prince Nayef Abd al-Aziz, the Saudi interior minister, who, according to diplomatic sources, is in charge of communication channels between the countries.

The normalising of relations between Riyadh and Baghdad was illustrated during the Arab League summit in Beirut in March, when Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia was seen to embrace Mr Ezzat Ibrahim, Mr Hussein's representative, on live television.

UN will urge Iraq to submit weapons agenda before talks

United Nations: UN secretary general Kofi Annan will urge Iraq to propose an agenda compatible with UN Security Council procedures before new technical talks on weapons inspectors can take place.

Mr Annan told reporters he would view Iraq's invitation to chief UN arms inspector Hans Blix to visit Baghdad "in a different light" if Iraq agreed to a 1999 Security Council resolution that outlined a work programme for the arms experts, out of Iraq for nearly four years.

After meeting the 15 council members over lunch on Monday, Mr Annan said he would write to Iraqi foreign minister Naji Sabri in reply to the invitation sent last week. Mr Sabri, in his letter, raised for the first time the return of the inspectors.

"All members of the council agree that we should do everything to get the inspectors back, and if Iraq is open to that sort of idea, there are practical bases for moving forward, and this is something we are going to explore in the next letter," Mr Annan said.

At issue is Iraq's insistence for a joint evaluation of what has been achieved in investigating its weapons of mass destruction, what needs to be done and how it will be done.

But a 1999 Security Council reso-



Kofi Annan

lution says the inspectors cannot determine unresolved tasks until they are back on the ground to see what happened since they left in mid-December 1998, the eve of a US-British bombing raid to punish Iraq for not cooperating with the arms experts.

Movement on the inspectors would probably create new international pressure on the United States to hold back any military action against Iraq, which the Bush administration is exploring in an effort to oust President Saddam Hussein.

Mr Annan repeated earlier positions that "it would be very unwise to attack Iraq, given the current circumstances— what's happening in the Middle East." He welcomed Mr Sabri's letter but said, "There are clarifications, which we have to give to the Iraqis and get them to understand that the council has given certain instructions to Mr Blix as to how to proceed."

The inspections are key to suspending UN sanctions against Iraq, imposed when Baghdad's troops invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The weapons experts, who went into Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War, spent seven

years inspecting and destroying Iraq's nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic arms.

Mr Blix, now on a vacation in Sweden, discussed similar issues on July 4-5 with Iraqi arms officials during the third round of talks led by Mr Annan and Mr Sabri in Vienna. He said he would discuss "practical" arrangements with Iraq— such as where his UN Monitoring Inspection and Verification Commission was going to have its office but not what data was missing.

Obviously concerned with the US threats, the Iraqi government on Monday sent a memorandum to Mr Annan, saying unless unresolved issues were discussed, there was bound to be a clash with Washington.

"We cannot think of starting a new stage without solving the pending issues of the previous stage because that will surely mean that we are going back once again into the mine field, and the return of the inspectors will only be for a few weeks, and differences and crisis will return," Iraq said.

The end result would be "the departure of the inspectors and the United States will call for aggression on Iraq as was the case during 1991-1998," the memo said. Reuters

Bush reviews options for attacking Iraq

Washington: President George W. Bush has reviewed the Pentagon's latest scenario for attacking Iraq with the general who oversaw the war in Afghanistan and with other key advisers at the White House.



G.W. Bush

There was no indication on Monday, however, that a final decision on how Mr Bush will follow through on his goal of "regime change" in Baghdad was imminent.

Gen Tommy Franks, who would command any invasion of Iraq, has been refining the Pentagon's strategy and offering updates to the National Security Council over the past few weeks.

Mr Bush has raised the threat of a military assault to depose the Iraqi leader but also said other tactics would

also be considered.

Possibly in anticipation of a decision, Saddam Hussein has invited the chief UN weapons inspector, Hans Blix, to Baghdad for talks, with the hint it might result in renewing a hunt for illicit weapons that was suspended in December 1998. But the Bush administration rejected the offer as well as one to members of Congress to tour suspected biological, chemical and nuclear weapons sites.

US administration officials said that would not satisfy the President's demand for rigorous inspections in Iraq. Secretary of defence Donald H. Rumsfeld stressed the difficulty of locating Iraq's weapons caches since some are underground and others mobile. "I can't think of anything funnier than a handful of Congressmen walking around. They'd have to be there for the next 50 years trying to find something. It's a joke," he told reporters. AP

7 AUG 2002

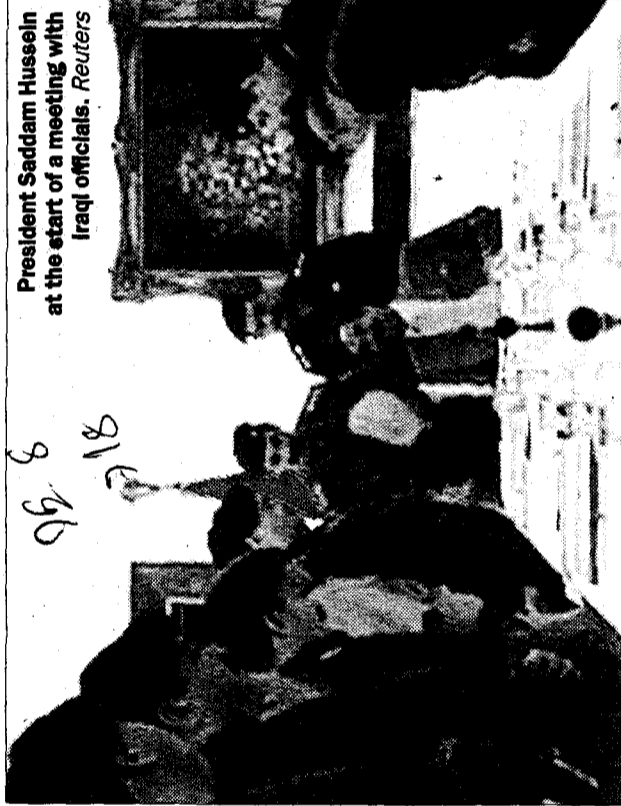
US tells Baghdad to stop playing games

RANDALL MIKKELSEN
PITTSBURGH, AUGUST 6

THE White House and top Senate Democrats on Monday dismissed an Iraqi invitation to the US Congress to inspect suspected weapons development sites, saying they wanted action from Iraq, not talk. "There's no need for discussion. What there is a need for is for the regime in Baghdad to live up to its commitments to disarm," US National Security Council spokesman Sean McCormack said. He spoke during a visit by US President George W. Bush to Pittsburgh.

Iraq on Monday invited Congress to send a mission to Baghdad and said it would be given free access to any sites alleged to be involved in the development of weapons of mass destruction.

Senate Majority Leader Tom



President Saddam Hussein at the start of a meeting with Iraqi officials. Reuters

Sanctions will continue, says UN weapons inspector

STOCKHOLM: UN sanctions on Iraq will not be lifted this year even if arms inspectors were allowed back and given unhindered access to carry out their task, Hans Blix, head of the United Nations weapons inspectors team, said on Tuesday. Verifying Baghdad's compliance would take more than six months, Blix said.

— Reuters

Daschle, a South Dakota Democrat, accused Iraq of "playing games" and said Baghdad was trying to "deflect attention from their unwillingness" to abide by international commitments.

"The US Congress isn't asking for an invitation, we're asking Iraq to grant the UN weapons inspection team the full, un-

fettered access they need to do their job," Daschle said in a statement.

Delaware Democrat Sen. Joseph Biden, chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, also quickly poured cold water on the offer.

"Iraq must end its stalling tactics," he said. "If it has nothing to hide, it should comply with the UN Security Council resolutions and allow immediate, unfettered access to UN inspectors — which it has refused to do for nearly four years."

McCormack reiterated the Bush administration's view that inspections were not the ultimate goal of international pressure on Iraq — rather, the goal is the elimination of any Iraqi capability to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction. The US is also committed to a policy of ousting President Saddam Hussein, which officials said is not linked to the inspections issue.

— Reuters

Iraq invites US Congress to inspect weapon sites

Baghdad, Aug. 5 (Reuters): Iraq's influential parliament Speaker invited the US Congress today to send a mission to Baghdad and said it would be given free access to any site alleged to be developing weapons of mass destruction.

However, The White House and a top Senate Democrat today dismissed the invitation to the US Congress to inspect suspected weapons development sites, saying they wanted action from Iraq, not talk.

Speaker Saadoun Hammadi, in a letter to Congress, extended the invitation to a delegation "comprising whatever number of Congressmen you see fit, accompanied by experts in the fields you deem relevant to the purpose of the visit, i.e. chemical, biological and nuclear".

US President George W. Bush accuses Saddam Hussein of being a menace to the region and has said he is "looking at all options, the use of all tools" to deal with the Iraqi leader.

The Iraqi leadership held a meeting last Friday, which Hammadi attended.

Hammadi is close to Saddam and any statement he makes is likely to have the approval of the Iraqi leader.

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THE TELEGRAPH

W.A.S. 15
Iraq: U.S. stance irks U.K. 5/8

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, AUG 4. Differences are reported to have emerged between Britain and the U.S. over the insistence by Pentagon 'hawks' on a regime change in Iraq even if the President, Saddam Hussein, allows the U.N. weapons inspectors back into the country.

Speculation over a simmering 'rift' was fuelled after the U.S. Under Secretary for Arms Control, John Bolton, told the BBC's Radio 4 that "let there be no mistake...our policy at the same time insists on regime change in Baghdad and that policy will not be altered, whether inspectors go in or not".

Foreign policy analysts said this was at variance with the British position which was restricted to dealing with the threat

from Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Its aim, they pointed out, was to force Mr. Hussein to implement the relevant U.N. resolutions on weapons inspections by allowing 'unfettered' access to inspectors.

"Jack Straw (British Foreign Secretary) has always said that the aim of our policy would not be regime change," a Foreign Office source was quoted as saying.

Officially however there was no comment and a Foreign Office spokesman told *The Hindu* that there had been "no change" in the British position. "Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have made our position clear. Nothing has changed," he said but declined comment directly on Mr. Bolton's controversial remarks.

Mr. Tony Blair has consistently main-

tained that while Britain shares the American concerns over the 'threat' posed by Iraq and agrees that the 'issue' must be dealt with, no decision has been taken. There was some embarrassment here this week when King Abdullah of Jordan told an American newspaper that Mr. Blair had "tremendous concerns" about military intervention in Iraq. His remarks went unchallenged here reinforcing the impression that Britain did not fully share Washington's gung-ho approach. The British Government is reported to have been told by its legal experts that an attack on Iraq would need a fresh U.N. mandate.

Meanwhile, the Opposition to British backing for any U.S. action in Iraq gathered more support with a number of Church leaders 'deploring' the move.

5 AUG 2002

IRAQ / 'NO CHANGE IN POLICY'

U.S. dismisses Baghdad's offer

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, AUG. 3. The Bush administration has brushed aside Iraq's offer to talk about the return of weapons inspectors and has maintained that there is no change in its policy of that Saddam Hussein should be ousted from power.

"Inspection is not the issue, disarmament is, making sure that the Iraqis have no weapons of mass destruction," the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, who is on a trip in South-East Asia said. "We have seen the Iraqis fiddle with the inspection system before... The goal is not inspections for inspection sake," he said.

The President, George W Bush's advisor on West Asia and Persian Gulf issues said the administration remained sceptical about Baghdad's commitment to disarm. "Iraq has not fulfilled that obligation," said Zalmay Khalilzad, a member of the President's National Security Council. He said while there was nothing new in Iraq's latest offer to the United Nations, Washington was not opposed to it. But a White House spokesman said the Iraqi leader must agree to inspections "anytime, anywhere". "It should be a very short discussion," said Sean McCormack.

Meanwhile, at the United Nations, the Iraqi Foreign Minis-

ter's letter to the Secretary General, Kofi Annan, met a lukewarm response.

In fact, a spokesman for Mr. Annan said while the Secretary-General welcomed the letter, the procedure spelt out for the return of the inspectors was at "variance" with the Security Council resolution of 1999.

"The resolution says that Iraq must first agree to admit the weapons inspectors. They would conduct on-site inspections for a period of sixty days and then report to the Security Council with a proposed programme of work," Fred Eckhard, said.

Many in the political establishment here believe that Mr. Hussein's offer is nothing more than a game to stall any American military strike against Iraq. The administration has held a tough line on Baghdad with Mr. Bush refusing to rule out a military attack to remove Mr. Hussein from power.

Congress wants the administration to consult it before launching an attack against Iraq. Some also say that the administration should not insist on the return of the weapons inspectors to Iraq.

"It puts off any chance for regime change... Why wouldn't he (Saddam Hussein) let inspectors back in and buy himself a year or two," said Republican Senator Fred Thompson.

Saddam planned to arm Palestinians with biological weapons

SC 11/8
MICHAEL EVANS
THE TIMES, LONDON

LONDON, Aug 3. - President Saddam Hussein is suspected of planning to arm a Palestinian terrorist group with biological weapons to attack either American or Israeli targets.

A Whitehall dossier containing a detailed assessment of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction programme, which has been circulated to the Prime Minister and other senior Cabinet ministers, is understood to focus on Iraq's biological weapons capability.

Details of the dossier came to light as the UN rejected a new offer from the Iraqi leader. Mr Kofi Annan, the

UN Secretary-General, said that an Iraqi letter calling for a further round of technical talks with Mr Hans Blix, the head weapons inspector, set conditions "at variance" with the demands of the United Nations Security Council.

Using mobile laboratories for their research, the dedicated team of scientists working for Saddam is believed to be developing a range of biological agents that can be "delivered" by an aerosol system.

The latest assessment in Washington and London is that Saddam's plan is to produce a basic weapon that can be used by a terrorist group to attack the Iraqi leader's enemies, the USA and Israel. In the same way

The Iraqi leader knows from experience that it is far more difficult to hide work on nuclear weapons because of the substantial infrastructure required. Saddam's attempts to develop long-range ballistic missiles, capable of reaching America, have also been carefully monitored from space and there is no sign that he has succeeded beyond trying to modify the old Russian Scud missiles he launched against Saudi Arabia and Israel in the 1991 Gulf War.

In assessing the threat posed by Saddam's weapons of mass destruction programme, the emphasis has, therefore, been on his biological warfare projects, which pose as great a threat as nuclear devices and can

be developed relatively easily away from the sensors of America's spy satellites.

The Palestinian connection is now at the heart of intelligence thinking. Despite the belief in some quarters in America that a senior officer in Saddam's intelligence service met an Al-Qaida terrorist in Prague last year, before September 11, this is given no credence by the CIA, the FBI, or by British Intelligence. Saddam has funded Palestinian extremist groups for many

years, and the assessment now is that, with West Asia in turmoil, the Iraqi leader may see that the best way of taking revenge against the USA and Israel is by using a Palestinian organisation as his proxy terrorists.

Iraq softens up on UN arms inspection

EVELYN LEOPOLD

United Nations, Aug. 2 (Reuters): Iraq hinted it might let UN inspectors return to investigate its suspected weapons programmes for the first time since 1998, as Washington reaffirmed its aim of toppling Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

However, the United States poured cold water on Iraq's offer of talks on weapons inspectors and renewed its call for the ouster of President Saddam Hussein. White House National Security Council spokesman

Sean McCormack said the US was demanding completely "unfettered" inspections of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes.

He said Washington would maintain its policy of seeking to oust the Iraqi leader, calling that a separate issue from the weapons inspections. "Our policy remains the same. It has been the same since 1995 and that is regime change. ... Everyone understands the nature of Saddam Hussein and his regime," McCormack said.

A British foreign office

spokesman said Saddam had to give inspectors "unfettered access".

"Saddam has a long history of playing games. As his track record shows, he does not deliver," he added.

In a letter to UN secretary-general Kofi Annan yesterday, Iraq's foreign minister Najib Sabri said he would like the talks "at the earliest possible" date between chief UN inspector Hans Blix and his arms experts.

Sabri said discussions should cover outstanding disarmament issues "to establish a solid basis

for the next stage of monitoring and inspection activities and to move forward to that stage".

But he also mentioned the need for an assessment and a "comprehensive review" of Iraq's arms programmes. Blix, who met Iraqi arms experts in Austria last month, said then he could only arrange practical issues and could not evaluate weapons of mass destruction until the inspectors were back on the ground.

Annan concluded an unsuccessful third round of talks with Sabri in Vienna on July 4-5 with

no progress but left the door open for technical talks. But he told reporters and Security Council members he would not meet Sabri again on this issue unless Iraq showed willingness to admit the inspectors.

The inspectors left Iraq in December 1998 on the eve of a US-British bombing campaign to punish Baghdad for not cooperating with the arms experts. Accounting for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction is key to suspending UN sanctions, imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Blix, the executive

chairman of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, known as UNMOVIC, was not available for comment. A senior UN official confirmed Annan had received the letter. The official Iraqi News Agency also reported the sending of the invitation.

The letter arrived on a day that US President George W. Bush reaffirmed his administration's commitment to a "regime change", a euphemism for toppling Saddam.

"The policy of my government, our government, this ad-

ministration, is regime change, for a reason," he said after talks with Jordan's visiting King Abdullah.

Sabri, at the Vienna talks, insisted arms inspectors could not return until four conditions were met: US ended its threats, sanctions were lifted, US and Britain ended their "no-fly" zones over Iraq and West Asia was made free of nuclear arms — a reference to Israel.

Sabri's letter made no mention of these demands, which Annan was not in a position to respond to.

W. Ash (1) 8/8

3 AUG 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

Iraq invites UN chief arms inspector

Associated Press

UNHQ, Aug 2. - Facing an increasing possibility of US military action, Iraq gave the first solid indication in nearly four years that it will allow UN weapons inspectors to return and invited the chief inspector to Baghdad for talks.

The return of inspectors is a key demand of the UN Security Council and especially of the USA, which has accused Iraq of trying to rebuild its banned weapons programmes and of supporting terrorism.

In a surprise move, Iraq's foreign minister, Mr Naji Sabri, sent a letter to the UN Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan, yesterday referring twice to the return of inspectors and hinting that talks with the chief inspector, Mr Hans Blix, could lead to an agreement for a resumption of inspections.

There was no immediate comment on the Iraqi proposal from UN or US officials. The letter arrived four weeks after Mr Annan failed for the third time since March to persuade Mr Sabri to allow the inspectors back.

Unlike many Iraqi letters to the UN, this one was moderate in tone and did not contain political rhetoric. It was sent on a day the Senate Foreign Relations Committee wrapped up hearings on whether the USA should force Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from power. It was generally agreed at the Senate hearings that Saddam's development of weapons of mass destruction pose a serious risk, though there have been differences about whether the threat could be ended only by military action.

While President Bush called for Saddam to be removed, citing the threat posed by Iraq's development of chemical and biological weapons and its pursuit of nuclear weapons, administration officials insist no decision has been made on whether to in-

vade Iraq. Nonetheless, there has been an increasing spate of media reports that the Defence decision to invite the chief UN inspector for talks and also claimed credit for the move, saying



FOR THE HEARTH AND HOME: An Iraqi woman cries during the Friday on prayer in a Baghdad mosque as she listens to a cleric praying "God save Iraq from US attack". — AFP

Secretary, Mr Donald Rumsfeld, is examining military options.

The letter also arrived on the day the USA assumed the rotating presidency of the Security Council. Under UN Security Council resolutions, sanctions imposed after the invasion can be lifted only when inspectors certify that Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons have been destroyed, along with the long-range missiles that could deliver them.

Russia today hailed Iraq's de-

cision to invite the chief UN inspector for talks and also claimed credit for the move, saying

that it has offered a peaceful way out of the crisis. The Russian foreign ministry said Iraq's decision to invite Mr Blix came right after a Russian delegation visited Baghdad for talks on "deblocking the Iraqi problem."

The USA has warned Saddam he faces unspecified consequences if he does not allow the return of the inspectors, who left ahead of 1998 allied air strikes meant to punish Iraq for blocking inspections.

Mr. Anand
112-15

Wary Iraq seeking Arab friends

29/7

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), JULY 23. Iraq has stepped up its campaign to win friends in the region as part of an effort to create a broad front of Arab countries that are opposed to an U.S. attack on Baghdad.

The Baathist state is making special efforts to woo regional heavy weight Saudi Arabia as well as Iran. Saudi Arabia enjoys considerable influence in the Sunni heartland of Arab states in the Persian Gulf, while Iran pulls considerable weight in the Shia strongholds of Syria and Lebanon. Iraq is hoping to forge commercial links with Saudi Arabia and Iran by opening new border checkpoints, either for bilateral trade or for transit to third countries. Not surprisingly, Iraq has reached a U.N. mediated agreement to open the Arar border centre for Saudi goods to pass through. Saudi Arabia, on its part, has reportedly announced that it is ready to trade goods with Iraq that have not been manufactured in the kingdom. Similarly, Iraq has agreed to open a third border checkpoint for trade with Iran. Iranian trucks can now pass through the Zerbateyah crossing on the Iraqi border which can also be used for transiting Iranian goods to third countries as well. Two checkpoints, Al-Munzereyah and Al-Shalamja on the Iran-Iraq frontier, are already open for Iranian cargo to transit.

In a conciliatory gesture, Iraq, after years

of stalling, has this week sent back the remains of Iranian soldiers who had either been killed in the Iran-Iraq war or died during detention. Iran is expected to match the Iraqi move.

(The Arab League has rejected the use of force against Iraq.) Baghdad, meanwhile, has stepped up its engagement of the European Union, Russia and Turkey so as to stall the U.S. effort to bring together an anti-Iraq coalition. Saudi Arabia is likely to favour the status quo in Iraq on several counts. First, the unseating of Saddam Hussein does not necessarily favour Riyadh, as a regime change in Baghdad is likely to be followed up by a new pro-U.S. democracy there. With a change of guard, the U.S. may draw up new strategic plans not to Saudi Arabia's liking. For instance, after Mr. Hussein has been ousted, the U.S. can have easy access to Iraqi oil. That would mean reduced U.S. dependence on Saudi oil, thereby making Washington less prone to pressures from Riyadh. Already, Saudi Arabia may be losing some of its importance for protecting U.S. interests in the region.

For instance, Washington has started building new military command and control facilities in Qatar, which previously existed only in Saudi Arabia. U.S. officials point out that they are not winding up facilities in Saudi Arabia which are necessary to co-ordinate military strikes in the region. But they are widening their options by du-

plicating some of the Saudi-centred military infrastructure in Qatar. Second, Saudi Arabia may find a new pro-U.S. democratic dispensation in Iraq uncomfortable to live with, as Baghdad, after a regime change has been accomplished, could become a launching pad for introducing U.S.-style democratic reforms in the conservative Arab kingdom.

Analysts point out that the existence of the status quo in Iraq suits Saudi Arabia best as neither a regime change nor a strengthened Mr. Hussein will suit its regional interests. In case Mr. Hussein becomes too strong, that will mean the introduction of a political rival in the region who could, in due course, undermine Riyadh's pre-eminence among Arab countries. Saudi Arabia also opposes an attack on Iraq on ideological considerations as well. The Saudi crown prince, Abdullah Abdulaziz, has already shown a genuine desire to promote Arab interests in the region. The Saudi crown prince, for instance, championed a new proposal in the Arab League last March that will guarantee security to Israel in return for an independent Palestinian state.

Iranian rulers are also likely to oppose military attack on Iraq, especially if it is meant to undermine Iraq's potential as a nuclear power. That could mean Iran is next in the firing line as its own quest for atomic weapons has been well recorded.

THE HINDU

24 JUL 2002

Malaysia, Iran against U.S. war plan for Iraq

HD-14

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PUTRAJAYA (MALAYSIA), JULY 22. The leaders of Iran and Malaysia agreed on Monday that military action against Iraq would not improve global stability, an official present at the meeting said.

The Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, a moderate Muslim leader who has become a key U.S. ally in the fight against terrorism, hosted the Iranian President, Mohammad Khatami, for more than one hour of talks at the Malaysian leader's office in Putrajaya, the administrative capital. The Malaysian Foreign Minister, Syed Hamid Albar, who was present, said topics included bilateral trade, the West Asia crisis, terrorism and Iraq. Neither leader spoke to reporters.

Asked if the leaders discussed possible U.S. military action against Iraq, Mr. Syed Hamid did not reply directly, but said that Iran and Malaysia shared similar views about respecting Iraq's territorial integrity. "As far as Malaysia is concerned, we have always considered that war and aggression and military action or sanctions do not achieve their objective of bringing peace and stability." He added, "I think both leaders share the same view."

The leaders also discussed the role of the 57-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the world's largest Muslim grouping, and agreed that greater effort was needed to project Islam more positively as "against all acts of terrorism," Mr. Syed Hamid said.

Mr. Mahathir is slated to chair a key summit of

the Islamic Conference in October next year. Mr. Syed Hamid said the leaders had agreed that the conference "should be used as a vehicle for improving the image, stature and position of Islam." Mr. Syed Hamid said the two leaders also shared similar views on the issues of Israel and the Palestinians and terrorism. He repeated Malaysia's position that oppression of Palestinians is one of the "root causes" of international terrorism and must be addressed to end terrorism.

During a meeting of Cabinet ministers and other delegates from both sides, the two leaders signed six agreements covering trade, tourism, women's issues and information technology.

Earlier, Mr. Khatami received a 21-gun salute and inspected a royal guard of honour at an official welcoming ceremony at Malaysia's parliament. The President and his wife, Zohreh Khatami, then had a private audience with King Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail. Mr. Mahathir and his wife, Siti Hasmah Mohammed Ali, also paid an informal visit to the Iranian couple at their hotel.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush, has said Iran, Iraq and North Korea form an "axis of evil" and last week denounced the Iranian Government for its "uncompromising, destructive policies." The three-day visit is Mr. Khatami's first trip to Malaysia. The former Iranian President, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, visited Malaysia in 1994. — AP

THE HINDU

23 JUL 2002

Iranian rivals unite against U.S.

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), JULY 19. Rebuffing criticism by the U.S. President, George W. Bush, on the internal situation in Iran, reformers in Teheran have asserted that the much-required changes in their system will not be brought about through remote control.

While supporters of Iran's moderate President, Mohamad Khatami, continue to advocate change, they have, nevertheless, united with the hardliners among the clergy to denounce external interference in their affairs. Even the pro-reform religious leader, Ayatollah Jalaeddin Taheri, who has publicly clashed with the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, last week, has supported the latter's call for street protests against the U.S. ahead of the weekly Friday prayers. While Ayatollah Taheri called upon all Iranians to participate in the protests, he has also reiterated the need for persisting with reforms.

Ayatollah Taheri had recently accused the country's political decision-makers of corruption, paralysing the Government and stifling intellectual freedom. Though Iran has an elected Parliament and President, real powers rest with the Council of Guardians, comprising religious leaders who are answerable to Ayatollah Khomeini alone. Reflecting Iranian sentiments, an official quoted in the official news agency IRNA said there were fundamental differences



A woman holds a picture of the late spiritual leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, during an anti-U.S. rally in Teheran on Friday. — AP

between changes that the reformists wanted and, what he called, American-style reforms.

Unhappy with Mr. Bush's statements which not only attacked the conservatives but also appeared to encourage the recent large-scale student protests against the country's rulers, Mr. Khatami has sought an apology from the U.S. to the people and Government of Iran. Such a step, he said, would breach the wall of mistrust, which separates the two countries.

Meanwhile, Ayatollah Khomeini said that Mr. Bush's remarks were a repetition of the big mistakes made by the U.S. in the past. Despite their obvious differences, analysts here point out that the American clubbing of Iran with North Korea and Iraq as the axis of evil maybe bringing the reformers and conservatives together. One

view that is finding some currency here is that Iran could also be on the U.S. hit-list after a regime change in Iraq, as publicly sought by Washington, has been achieved. Those who hold this viewpoint point out that like Iraq, which the U.S. wants to strike because it could pass nuclear weapons it might be developing to international terror groups, Iran too can be targeted on similar grounds.

Iran's efforts to build nuclear weapons and missiles are well recorded. The U.S. has also accused it of having close links with Shiite extremist groups located in Israel's periphery in Lebanon and Syria as well as supporting the extremist Islamic Jihad and the Hamas groups operating in Palestinian territories. Besides, the U.S. has blamed Iran for allowing remnants the Al-Qaeda to enter its territory across the Afghan-Iran border.

28 JUL 2002

APR 11 2002

U.S., Turkey discuss Iraq

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), JULY 16. Turkey and the United States today discussed the nuts and bolts of possible military strikes against Iraq and its likely implications on the region. The visiting U.S. Deputy Defence Secretary, Paul Wolfowitz, the senior-most official from Washington to have visited Turkey after its recent political crisis — held detailed discussions with the countrys military top brass.

These talks assume importance in the light of the traditional moderating role that Turkish Generals have played during times when a political crisis has threatened Turkeys vital interests. Diplomatic sources, however, said that the focus of Mr. Wolfowitzs discussions was Iraq. Turkey, during the Gulf war was the springboard of U.S. air strikes against Iraq, its neighbour. It will continue to play a key military role in case another conflict with Baghdad erupts in the coming months.

Reliance on Turkey, a NATO member may become all the more crucial, in case Saudi Arabia and some of Iraqs other neighbours are not whole-hearted in their support for military strikes. The U.S. also wants stability in Turkey to project Ankara as a model moderate Muslim

State before the Islamic world. In fact, Turkey is heading a U.N. Assistance force that is meant to maintain law and order in Kabul. Mr. Wolfowitz incidentally has also visited Afghanistan during his visit to the region.

Despite its importance, Turkey too faces serious difficulties, in case of an involvement in a war against Iraq. The Kurdish rebels that it has been battling earlier for a number of years are its prime concern. In fact, Turkey may have to face hard choices in case of a war. For instance, ethnic Kurds who reside along the Iraq-Turkey border arc, but are mainly concentrated in the safe havens created on the Iraqi side under an Anglo-American military initiative may flee in hordes in case a war begins. Panic is likely to set in soon as the Kurds have not forgotten the severe Iraqi repression that was mounted against them in the early nineties. That would mean a flood of refugees that an economically challenged Turkey might find hard to absorb. A clear-cut victory may also not go entirely in Turkeys favour. A defeat of Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein may result in the creation of a Kurdish State in the safe haven areas of Iraq.

In that case the new state can become the springboard for a new offensive by Turkish minority Kurds against Ankara.

THE HINDU

17 JULY 2002

Iraq seeks to mend fences with neighbours

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), JULY 8. Anticipating a further hardening of the U.S. stance towards it, a defiant Iraq has sought to build bridges with the radical segment of the Arab world in order to ward off a confrontation with Washington.

Within days of rejecting the unconditional return of U.N. weapons inspectors, Iraq has accused Washington of harbouring a grand design to fundamentally re-shape the territorial co-ordinates of the Arab world.

In an article in *Babel*, the President, Saddam Hussein's son, Uday, while exposing "the U.S. grand strategy" in the Arabian Gulf, offered Iraqi assistance to the Arab world to ward off the looming military threat from the United States.

According to Mr. Uday, who used a pseudonym, Abu Haten, the U.S. administration has drawn a plan aimed at striking Iraq and breaking up the countries of the region.

The article claimed that the U.S. plan did not envisage the carving of a Palestinian state from areas currently dominated by Israel. Instead, it wanted to make Jordan, which already has a large Palestinian population, as an alternative country for the

10-14 9/7
Palestinians. Besides, the U.S. "map-making exercise" included division of Saudi Arabia into three parts. Bahrain, which was once part of Iran would also have its identity scrapped and would be re-attached to Persia.

With opinion in the region veering to the view that Saudi Arabia may lose its importance to Iraq as the custodian of U.S. strategic interests in the region after a regime change in Baghdad has been achieved, the article makes a special effort to reach out to Riyadh. Iraq is ready to come to the rescue of Saudi Arabia if the country is threatened. Besides, support will be given, either by un-armed men or men armed to the teeth, by tanks placed at the border for Saudis to use or tanks manned by Iraqis.

With U.S. pressure mounting on the Palestinian establishment to crackdown on Islamic extremists, the article singled out Palestinians for support. According to the article, Mr. Hussein has announced that 6.5 million Iraqis have been mobilised to liberate Palestine and are waiting for Arab states bordering Israel to open up their frontiers. Notwithstanding the Iraqi pledges of solidarity, Mr. Hussein appears to have found little support for his rejection of the U.N.

demand for weapon inspections in Iraq.

A commentary in the Saudi-run pan-Arab daily *Al-Hayat*, indicated that given Iraq's recent track record towards its neighbours, Arab support for Mr. Hussein in his hour of crisis may not be forthcoming. Baghdad is set to pay an exorbitant price for the procrastination and arrogance that prevented it from reconciling with its Arab neighbours ahead of September 11.

For they no longer hold any of the keys to resolving the crisis, the daily claims. Apart from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, who already host a large U.S. military presence, are likely to play the role of frontline states in a future war against Iraq.

As the war of words between the U.S. and Iraq intensifies, a large section of the intelligentsia in the region appears resigned to the inevitability of a war between the two by winter.

According to an article in the UAE daily *Al-Khaleej*, a show of flexibility by Iraq over the inspection issue may not have made any difference in the U.S. military plans towards Baghdad. Washington, it says, would not have shelved its war plans even if Baghdad had submitted to the U.N. demand for the readmission of arms inspectors.

9 JUL 2002

THE HINDU

HD-14

U.S. threat not new: Iraq

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BAGHDAD, JUNE 18. Iraq's Foreign Minister, responding to the disclosure of stepped up U.S. efforts to topple the President, Saddam Hussein, has said U.S. threats against his country are nothing new.

"The United States has been conducting conspiracies against Iraq for the past 30 years," Mr. Najj Sabri was quoted as saying by the state-run *Al-Qadisiya* newspaper on Tuesday. He said Iraqis were not frightened and accused the U.S. of resorting to deception to justify its policies.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush, signed an order early this year directing the CIA to increase support to Iraqi opposition groups and expand intelligence collection efforts within the Iraqi Government. The plan, first reported by *The Washington Post*, also calls for possible use of CIA and Special Forces teams to capture Mr. Hussein, and to kill him if the teams are acting in self-

defence. Mr. Bush said earlier he favoured a regime change in Baghdad. He has also warned Mr. Hussein that he faces unspecified consequences if he fails to meet American demands that U.N. weapons inspectors be allowed into Iraq to verify whether it has dismantled its weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq has barred the inspectors and claims it has met all U.N. demands to disarm.

Reacting to the development, Australia said it supported the right of the U.S. to launch pre-emptive attacks against nations such as Iraq where terrorists may gain access to weapons of mass destruction. The Defence Minister, Robert Hill, said a new U.S. doctrine emphasising pre-emptive strikes over deterrence had emerged in the wake of the Sept. 11 hijack airline attacks on New York and Washington. — AP, PTI

USA expels Iraqi diplomat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

UNHQ, June 15. — The USA has ordered an Iraqi diplomat to the United Nations expelled for alleged espionage activities.

US state department deputy spokesman Mr Philip Reeker said the USA has "informed the Iraqi mission to the UN that one of its diplomats was being expelled for engaging in activities that are incompatible with his status as a diplomat".

Mr Abdul Rahman Saad is accredited to the UN, but under an agreement bet-

ween the world body and the USA, such cases are handled bilaterally and the UN does not get involved, diplomatic sources said.

Earlier, the USA had delivered a letter to the Iraqi mission seeking withdrawal of the diplomat and that he leave by June end.

Mr Abdul Rahman Saad is working with the economic and social committees of the world body.

"The UN secretary-general has no role in this. It is a bilateral issue. And if Iraq would submit any information to the UN, the information would be passed on to

the US mission," a UN spokesman said.

The USA has had no diplomatic relations with Iraq since it attacked Kuwait in 1990 but allows the Iraqi mission to the UN to operate from New York.

Some 16 diplomats are accredited to the United Nations from the Iraqi side.

In 1989, Washington had asked an Iraqi diplomat to leave in retaliation to the Iraqi expulsion of an American diplomat who had visited Kurdish areas in the northern part of Iraq without any permission from Baghdad.

THE STATESMAN

15 JUN 2002

Fresh incursion into Bethlehem

Agence France Presse

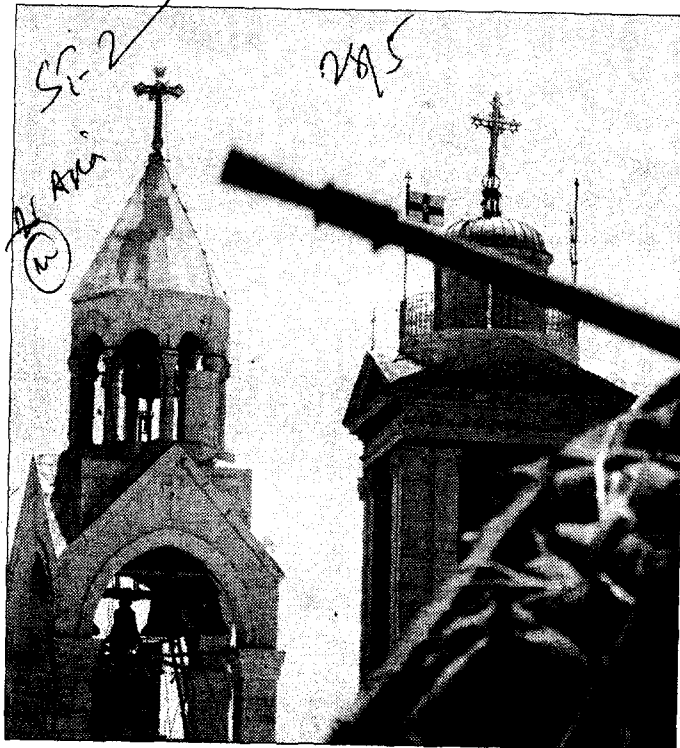
RAMALLAH, May 27. — Israeli Army stormed back into Bethlehem today as its incursions into Palestinian autonomous zones continued, arresting dozens of suspects, Palestinian and Israeli sources said.

Infantry units backed by about 20 armoured vehicles took up positions in different parts of the town, including outside the Church of the Nativity, in the second such raid in 24 hours, Palestinian sources said. They declared the whole area a "closed military zone" and slapped curfew on the town.

Palestinian security sources said Ahmed Moghrabi, Bethlehem head of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed offshoot of Mr Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement at the forefront of anti-Israeli attacks, had been arrested.

Three other Al Aqsa militants were also detained at the Dheishah refugee camp in the town. The sister of a woman suicide bomber who killed two Israelis in a Jerusalem supermarket on 29 March was also taken prisoner, the same sources said.

In Qalqilya, two Palestinian 10-year-old girls were hit in the neck by shrapnel. The Army said two suspects had been captured



The belltowers of the Church of the Nativity appear ahead of the gun barrel of an Israeli armoured carrier at Manger Square. In Bethlehem on Sunday. — AFP

in a raid which started yesterday.

The army has encircled Tulkarem, north of Qalqilya, which it had also occupied yesterday, while Palestinian sources reported overnight raids in Hebron and four nearby villages.

Mr Yasser Arafat expressed fears of a renewed occupation of the city of Ramallah as Israeli forces mount more raids in search of militants, chief negotiator Mr Saeb Erakat said today. **Putin offer to Saudi Arabia:** The

Suicide bomber kills 2 Israelis

JERUSALEM, May 27. — Two Israelis, including a three-year-old girl, were killed when a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up outside a shopping mall at a Tel Aviv suburb today.

Local police chief Mr Yehuda Bacha said the second victim was also a child, but hospital sources said it was an elderly woman. More than 20 people were injured, at least five of them seriously. Police were searching for a second suspected bomber in the area.

In Gaza, Mr Yasser Arafat condemned the bombing and rejected Israeli charges that he is to blame for the killings.

The bomber detonated the explosives at a cafe near the entrance to a shopping mall on Gissin Street. It was the first human bomb attack on Petah Tiqvah town. — AFP

Russian President has offered to cooperate closely with Saudi Arabia to stabilise the situation in West Asia. The offer was made by Mr Vladimir Putin in a letter to King Fahd released by the Kremlin press service today.

Iraq criticises sanctions overhaul

167
10-18

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

UNITED NATIONS, MAY 15. The United Nations Security Council resolution to revamp the sanctions regime against Iraq marks yet another phase in the international community's dealing with the West Asian country. The 15-0 vote yesterday tightened the military embargo against the Saddam Hussein regime but eased the flow of civilian goods.

Diplomats here feel that the last word has not been said on the subject and say that the world body has to come to terms with not only the existing measures but go beyond them. The Russians have said that the next step should be a comprehensive settlement that would include measures leading to the suspension of the military embargo against Iraq. Clearly, the Western nations, especially Britain and the United States, are not looking that far ahead.

The resolution essentially extends the oil-for-food programme for a further six months starting May 30. The Council has

also paved the way for a near free flow of civilian goods. However, in the process the Council also adopted a 300-page checklist of items that could have potential military use. Iraq has to obtain the approval of the United Nations for importing items such as high-speed computers, sprayers and heavy-duty trucks. Baghdad needs approval to import even Botox, a drug approved by the American Government to remove wrinkles but it is thought the drug could cause botulism.

The United States — which had pushed for a unanimous vote in the Council — and Britain have argued that the new review list will reduce United Nations bureaucracy and speed up delivery of goods. But Iraq does not see it in that light. Baghdad has objected to the shake-up in the sanctions, calling it "a new harassment" of the Iraqi people.

The vote brought to end months of intense and delicate diplomacy and behind-the-scenes efforts by the United States, Bri-

tain and Russia. The idea was to get tougher on the Iraqi leader while at the same time appearing to be not too intrusive on the humanitarian front. The broad objective was to hammer out a resolution that would not invite a veto from any one of the five permanent members. At one time, Britain and the United States were suggesting measures to cut off the oil smuggling routes of Iraq and place monitors on the Iraqi borders. The Russians apparently were unwilling to go along with the idea and threatened to veto any resolution along these lines.

Iraq has started a dialogue with the United Nations on the return of weapons inspectors with a third meeting between its Foreign Minister and the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, expected to take place soon. For the last several years, Iraq has used diplomacy to try and dismantle the sanctions regime. Washington has threatened to take military action if the weapons inspectors are not allowed back.

An unlikely invasion

W. Azim
①

No consensus on Iraq 5-9-2003

Frankly, one doesn't get the impression that either the world or the Persian Gulf region really wants another military campaign against Iraq. Both President Putin and UN Secretary General have warned the United States against going it alone, while the British, who are usually thick with the Americans, say they are yet to be consulted. George Bush has apparently gone back on what Colin Powell said a few months ago and is determined to push ahead with his plans without allied support. The logic is not very clear, unless Iraq has been steadily rebuilding its weapons of mass destruction, in secret locations. But the Americans are yet to present the world with a clear estimate of the kind of threat that the clandestine Iraqi rearming programme poses to its immediate neighbours which includes Israel. Given the fact that manufacturing sites, at least for biological and chemical weapons are easily relocated, and that almost ten years of on-site and satellite surveillance have not been able to bring weapons production to a stop, the Americans think they have a case for removing Saddam.

The question is whether Saddam intends using these weapons against his neighbours - Kuwait and Israel, primarily. He is aware of the awesome might of the American military. Bush is thinking in terms of deploying 200,000 ground troops, which means a regular invasion. Saddam is not going to do anything to provoke this behemoth. But, he knows that he is detested by the Americans. He wants the weapons for his own protection, in case the US decides to attack. Can the international community afford to lift the embargo in such circumstances? Difficult to say. It is unlikely that Saddam will embark on a military adventure of the Kuwait type again, unless he is completely crazy. The only threat he poses is to sections of his own population — Kurds in the north, Shias in the south. That cannot be a major American preoccupation. One doubts whether the Gulf States who will, willy-nilly, be involved, will feel good about it. The rationale is no longer as self-evident as it was in 1991.

THE STATESMAN

25 MAR 2002

Iran rules out talks with U.S.

18-15 W RND
DUBAI, MARCH 19. Upset over a reported U.S. contingency plan to launch nuclear strikes at several countries including Iran, the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei, has ruled out all talks with Washington.

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"U.S. threats against us are inadmissible, and there will be no discussions with the United States," Ayatollah Khamenei told senior government officials, including the Iranian President, Mohammed Khatami, yesterday.

The official Iranian news agency IRNA said the leader of the country's Islamic revolution was concerned over a *USA Today* report published last week about a U.S. Defence Department contingency plan to launch nuclear strikes against seven countries — Iran, China, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Russia and Syria. Ayatollah Khamenei also outlined steps to be taken to counter the U.S. threat.

The stand-off between the two countries is w expected to set off yet another war of words.— PTI

THE HINDU

20 MAR 2002

Without an exit strategy

A poem by the American poet Wallace Stevens begins, *After the final no there comes a yes/And on that yes the future world depends.* If only the world leaders of our time would understand the principle of affirmation and ongoing-ness that Stevens evokes in those two lines. But, sadly, many do not.

George W Bush, Ariel Sharon, Yasser Arafat, Tony Blair and Osama bin Laden see the world from a particular narrow perspective, each closed to the possibility that there are alternative ways in which history can unfold.

Two years ago, Mr Arafat was certain he could hold out for more in negotiations with Israel, even as Ehud Barak offered most of what the Palestinians wanted from the negotiations. Mr Arafat insisted on the impossible, the total satisfaction of Palestinian demands. Unable to see beyond this single agenda, unwilling to consider that if the negotiations failed – as they did – the Palestinian future might be war and devastation, Mr Arafat pursued his fixed course.

He turned out to be, however, not the guarantor of victory for the Palestinians but the partial author of today's unending conflict and bloodshed. Mr Sharon entered office convinced he had the one and only perspective that would serve Israel.

His was a strategy based on escalated responses to each attack and every threat. If anyone is as single-mindedly dense as Mr Arafat, it is Mr Sharon.

The former could not see that struggle without compromise may condemn Palestinians to another 50 years of refugee camps and mire them in negative economic development. The latter could not see that escalation only brings expanded war – that one does not terrify one's adversary into submission, only into greater and more violent resistance.

Because neither Mr Arafat nor Mr Sharon realises that the future always lies before us as a realm of possibilities rather than a determined course of events, neither has an exit strategy. Neither has a way to get out of a morass that is ever deepening.

Alternative futures and exit strategies have no place in the thinking of Mr Arafat, Mr Sharon, or Mr Bush.

Seymour Hersh, America's leading investigative journalist, reveals in a chilling essay in this week's *New Yorker* magazine that the discussion in the Bush administration is not about whether the USA should attack Iraq, but when.

It has been concluded, among Republican hawks and Republican moderates, that America must and will attack Iraq. The reasons proffered for such aggressive interventions are so unidimensional as to be almost catch phrases; though there is some truth in each assertion, the reality is always more complex than the Bush administration acknowledges.

Here is what the war-bent Republicans say. Iraq possesses "weapons of mass destruction", meaning chemical and biological weapons and a developing nuclear

Truly chilling is that those shaping policy in Washington, those making the decisions about whether to go to war and how to prosecute the war, do not consider that events can transpire in alternative ways, writes HUCK GUTMAN

capacity, which are a threat to the USA.

Saddam Hussein is a dictator. Mr Hussein is crazed by power. Mr Hussein has a deep enmity for the USA. Having spoken with many highly placed figures in the US state department, defence department, and National Security Council, Hersh reports that the USA is likely to attack Iraq some time between April and late September.

For Mr Bush, the need to attack Iraq seems determined, fixed. (He

be easily toppled from power. Or that Iraq's army may not respond as Washington expects. Or that the battle may quickly and tragically escalate beyond the borders of Iraq.

Americans are almost always surprised to discover that people outside their national borders are not filled with love for the USA. Why the world's greatest power should believe that everyone subject to its domination – sometimes quiet domination, sometimes brutal – should

formulate American policy and strategy have considered what would happen if the Iraqi army dispersed into small units lodged in thousands of small cities and villages throughout the country.

What would America do then? Bomb every village, kill every civilian, in Iraq? The USA encountered immense difficulties with a dispersed army in Vietnam, as did the Russians with similar situations in Afghanistan and Chechnya. Yet no one in Washington is planning a lengthy



Iraqi Kurds shouting anti-US slogans outside the UN Development Programme office in Baghdad on Saturday. — AP/PTI

will win a war his father neglected to finish.) Likewise, for Mr Bush's advisers, the course of the prospective war seems preordained. They believe that when the USA employs heavy aerial bombardment, as it did in Afghanistan, and makes use of surrogate forces indigenous to Iraq with leadership currently living in exile, it is a certainty that the Hussein regime will crumble.

The only debate is about which surrogate government to put in place when Mr Hussein is forced out of power.

Truly chilling is that those shaping policy in Washington, those making the decisions about whether to go to war and how to prosecute the war, do not consider that events can transpire in alternative ways. It is, in fact, possible that massive bombing and local insurrection may topple Mr Hussein's government, that Iraq's armed forces may prefer change to prolonged battle and potential destruction.

But the best-laid schemes o' mice an' men/Gang aft a-gley, as Robert Burns so famously said, and what Washington has are not even the best-laid of schemes. For it is very possible that Mr Hussein may not

somehow respond to America with love and forbearance is a mystery.

Perhaps, what the poet WH Auden wrote of individuals is also true of countries: *For the error bred in the bone/Of each woman and each man/Craves what it cannot have,/Not universal love/But to be loved alone.*

As will be clear to anyone living outside the borders of the USA, it is not a foregone conclusion, if America attacks Iraq, that Iraqis will rise against Mr Hussein, shouting "Allah be praised for this American intervention!" When put into words such as these, it seems downright unlikely. Far more probable is a surge of patriotic pride, a new national coherence in the face of an external aggressor.

So it cannot be assumed, as Washington currently assumes, that a massive aerial attack will depose Mr Hussein. Quite the opposite, a consolidation of his support, is as likely, perhaps more likely, to take place.

Nor, as Hersh notes, is the Iraqi army certain to form huge encampments and defined battle lines, allowing US bombers to decimate their ranks. Apparently, few or none of those who

war, nor a war fought with heavy US casualties.

Hersh also raises the spectre of wider involvement, a consequence the Bush administration ignores. In the Persian Gulf War, when American forces expelled Iraq from Kuwait and pushed deep into Iraq, one of Mr Hussein's strategic initiatives was to launch Scud missiles against Israel.

There is small reason to believe he would not use a similar strategy in the face of another war, and ample reason to believe that some of the Scuds would have chemical or biological payloads.

Yet if weapons of mass destruction are used against Israel, it is probable that Israel under Mr Sharon will respond in similar and escalated fashion. It takes little mental capacity to imagine that an Israeli bombardment of Baghdad with chemical, biological or nuclear weapons would precipitate a regional war.

But even that small mental capacity is not to be found in the Bush administration. The thinking seems to be that since the USA was able to restrain Israel from retaliating against Scud attacks in the last war, it will be able to exercise similar restraint if a

similar but more destructive attack occurs in the next war.

So the USA, under the aegis of the Bush administration, seems prepared to go to war without considering whether the war will proceed precisely as diagrammed on the blackboards in the Pentagon and state department.

The current government in Washington is not prepared for patriotic support of Mr Hussein, for an Iraqi military smart enough to disperse rather than fight in battalions susceptible to being bombed, for a war which escalates beyond the boundaries of Iraq.

This is where an exit strategy comes into play. If the US government cannot imagine the war proceeding otherwise than planned, it of course cannot conceive of the need for an exit strategy.

Yet what happens if, contrary to the pundits' predictions, the war is protracted, and American casualties mount? What happens if to gain military advantage the American leaders face a decision that commits them to bombing hundreds of thousands of civilians? What happens if, either through pan-Arabic solidarity or through an attack on Israel, the conflict expands into a huge regional war between Arabs and Americans?

What happens if the planned intervention in Iraq escalates into a conflagration with Muslims on one side, Christians and Jews on the other? In the halls of power where the American assault on Iraq is being planned, none of these questions appear to be seriously considered.

Yet if no one in Washington can conceive of difficulties, who will think of how to extricate the nation from escalation or prolonged war, should they occur? There is a kind of circle here: Because US policy-makers cannot see that US intervention in Iraq might result in a variety of outcomes, they do not consider how to extricate the nation if things go wrong.

And because they do not have to consider how difficult it is to make an exit from a situation in which the war is enlarged or casualties are mounting, they have no second thoughts about mounting an assault on Iraq in the first place.

The Wallace Stevens poem with which this essay commenced ends, "It can never be satisfied, the mind, never." Sadly, the minds of America's policy-makers today seem all too satisfied. Those minds are content with a single scenario; they are unwilling to consider the complexity of any society but their own and woefully unaware that the course of history cannot be predicted.

The minds in the Bush administration seem to be marching in lockstep, impermeable to change, listening to the drum-roll of their own invention. It would be tragic if the final consequence of their obstinacy were that citizens both of the USA and other nations find themselves drawn into a forced march to the same martial music.

(Huck Gutman is a regular columnist for The Statesman [Kolkata] and a regular contributor to Dawn [Karachi].)

Khatami is annoyed at Washington's criticism of Teheran after Taliban's fall

By Jal Taraporevala
Times News Network

MUMBAI: Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has expressed annoyance at Washington's criticism of Teheran, following the toppling of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Iran, which shares a 900-km-long frontier with Afghanistan, has three reasons for concern.

First, the presence of American special forces in Afghanistan and Washington's success in securing military facilities in some of the Central Asian republics (a region where the U.S. has traditionally had little influence) have significantly reduced Iran's freedom of manoeuvre in the field of international affairs.

Second, Teheran's concerns should be interpreted in terms of the strident and growing frequency of the criticism from Washington. U.S. President George W. Bush has characterised Iran as part of the "axis of evil".

There are also allegations that Teheran is sheltering some Al Qaida activists and Washington

has called upon the Khatami regime to stop supporting such groups as Hamas and Hezbollah. This being so, Mr Khatami is seeking to shore up his own position by underscoring the point that on this issue at least, there is little difference in the stands adopted by the country's moderates and conservatives.

Finally, Ismail Khan, who is widely backed by Iran, is now in effective control of the region

NEWS ANALYSIS

around Herat in western Afghanistan and the Shiite-based Hezb-i-Wahdat is part of the current interim administration in Kabul. Even so, given the continuing uncertainties in Afghanistan and the fact that the level of American involvement in the country is unlikely to be reduced in the foreseeable future, the leadership in Teheran is keen that Mr Khan and the Hezb-i-Wahdat further consolidate their position once a new transitional government is formed in Kabul in June.

These factors notwithstanding, the post-Taliban period in Afghanistan offers certain opportunities which Teheran is trying to leverage.

The toppling of the Taliban from power, a regime with which Iran had extremely frosty relations, has cleared the way for Teheran to reduce its troop deployment along the common frontier.

Besides, with the changed political equation in Kabul, the potential now exists for the phased repatriation of the nearly two million Afghan refugees who are currently housed in Iran and a gradual reduction in the illegal cross-border trade in opium from Afghanistan.

But how far these potential gains actually accrue to Teheran will hinge on several factors.

These include the dynamics of the economic and security situation in Afghanistan, Teheran's equation with the transitional government which will be established in Kabul in three months' time and the state of U.S.-Iranian relations.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

11 MAR 2002

U.S., E.U. split over
West Asia 30/1
By Batuk Gathani

BRUSSELS, JAN. 29. The chasm of divide between the European Union and the United States over the fate of the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, has been widening in recent weeks. The U.S. President, George Bush, has strongly criticised the Palestinian leader for his failure to stop acts of terror against Israel. But this week, the E.U. renewed its political support for Mr Arafat.

Many Europeans feel sorry for Mr Arafat who is virtually imprisoned in his office complex by Israeli tanks. Last night, at their routine meeting here, 15 E.U. Foreign Ministers said "Israel needs the Palestinian Authority and its elected President Mr Arafat, as a partner to negotiate with." A strongly worded note was also sent to the Israeli Government, in which the Foreign Ministers complained about the damage caused by Israel to E.U.-funded infrastructure projects in Palestine.

The statement highlights Europe's resolve to stand by the state of Palestine and its aspirations under Mr. Arafat, its democratically elected leader. In the Western world, the E.U. is the Palestinian Authority's largest aid donor and trading partner. The Europeans have widely blamed Ariel Sharon, Israeli Prime Minister, for the current deteriorating situation since the Israeli Government has launched military escalation, destroying Palestinian infrastructure and homes.

The E.U. has called upon Israel to withdraw its military forces and stop "extra judicial executions" of Palestinians and lift restrictions imposed on Palestinian people. The Europeans are concerned that the Bush administration appears to have put on hold the American mission to broker peace between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

The U.S. diplomats have also hinted that the Bush administration may even sever all diplomatic ties with Mr Arafat on the ground that the Palestinian Authority is engaged in an arms build-up exercise masterminded by Iran and Egypt.

THE HINDU

30 JAN 2002

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Khamenei pardons legislator

TEHERAN, JAN. 15. Iran's supreme leader has agreed to pardon a jailed reformist lawmaker whose colleagues had been outraged at what they saw as his harassment by the hardline judiciary. State television reported on Tuesday that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a letter that he agreed to a recommendation by the head of the hardline judiciary to release Hossein Loqmanian, the first lawmaker to be imprisoned since the 1979 Islamic revolution. State television did not say when Mr. Khamenei wrote his reply to Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, the judiciary head, or when Mr. Shahroudi wrote his letter suggesting the pardon. There was no word on when Mr. Loqmanian would be released.

Mr. Shahroudi praised "the strength of legal verdicts and decisions by the judiciary and the respected judges" before asking for Mr. Loqmanian's pardon, State television quoted Mr. Shahroudi's letter as saying. Earlier on

Tuesday, Parliament Speaker, Mehdi Karroubi led a walkout from the chamber after declaring he would not preside over the 290-seat body as long as Mr. Loqmanian remained imprisoned.

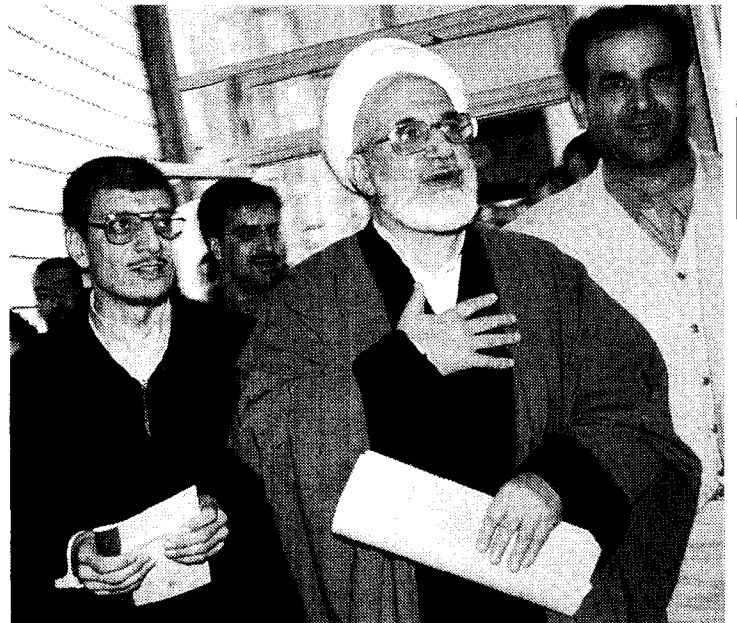
In a speech to the Parliament during live coverage of the session by the Iranian State-run radio, Mr. Karroubi said "that the judicial branch has invaded the legislative branch" and called on Mr. Khamenei to step in to resolve the matter. After more than a year of hearings and appeals, Mr. Loqmanian was jailed on December 25 to serve a 10-month sentence for insulting the judiciary. The case had created a furore in Parliament, where members feared the judiciary planned to use similar tactics against others in the Assembly.

The President, Mohammad Khatami, who has promoted Iran's political, social and economic reforms, has accused the judiciary of violating the Constitution by prosecuting lawmakers

despite their parliamentary immunity. In cases similar to Mr. Loqmanian's, two other legislators have had their jail sentences upheld by an appeals court, but have not yet been jailed. Another legislator is appealing his jail sentence. All were convicted of various charges involving insulting officials and religious sanctities.

On Sunday, about 60 Iranian lawmakers walked out of Parliament to protest Mr. Loqmanian's imprisonment. Mr. Loqmanian represents the western city of Hamadan. Meanwhile, State television quoted Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, head of the oversight Guardian Council, as saying that all citizens are equal before the law and that lawmakers should not enjoy special immunity, since "immunity has no Islamic roots."

Mr. Jannati's comments were in response to a letter from Mr. Shahroudi who called on Mr. Jannati to interpret Article 86 of the Constitution, which lawmakers say grants them immunity. — AP



Members of Iran's Parliament follow the Speaker, Mehdi Karroubi, as he walks out of the House on Tuesday. — Reuters

THE HINDU

16 JAN 2002

How Russia nudged Iran's missile programme

In July 1998, a congressional commission headed by Donald H. Rumsfeld, now US defence secretary, predicted that Iran might be capable of causing "major destruction" to the United States "within five years." While few experts doubt that Iran is rapidly emerging as a regional missile power, opinions are divided over whether its programmes pose a real threat to US interests. In the first of two articles, MICHAEL DOBBS looks at the Iranian missile programme and Russia's role as a proliferator of missile technology.

THE first time Vadim Vorobei went to Iran in 1996, he was amazed by the number of foreign missile scientists wandering openly through Tehran. For the most part, they were people like

he and other Russian missile scientists were brought to Iran in part to demonstrate to the rest of the world that Iran was making rapid strides toward becoming a major missile power that would soon be able to target the US. In fact, he insisted, Iran's capabilities remain much more modest than that. "It was a huge mess," recalled Vorobei, describing a five-year collaboration with Iran, from 1996 to 2000. "The Iranians took people who were needed and people who weren't needed. There was something artificial about it. They were trying to show that Russians were working for them and everybody else should be scared by it."

VOROBEL's activities confirm what Western analysts have long suspected and

along in missile development, has declared a testing moratorium.

Iran has had trouble perfecting its top-of-the-line Shahab-3 missile, with a range of about 800 miles, and has shown little sign of embarking on a serious intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) program. "The Iranian programme is not developing as quickly as the Iranians have claimed, and Israeli and American assessments expected," said Gerald M. Steinberg, a strategic issues expert at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. He said that the Shahab-3 missile, when it is eventually deployed, will be capable of hitting Israel, but is hardly a threat to the US.

"A missile remains the least likely delivery vehicle for a weapon of mass destruction," said Joseph Cirincione, director

of the Center for Strategic Studies, "and it is not used throughout their flight."

With the possible exception of Nazi Germany and the V-2, the precursor to all modern-day missile systems, no country has ever produced a missile entirely on its own. Both the US and the Soviet Union were helped enormously by teams of German scientists and missile engineers, recruited or simply taken prisoner at the end of World War II. The Soviets helped the Chinese, who

information from us, but at the same time they were not willing to tell us everything they were doing," Vorobei said. "That made it difficult to help them."

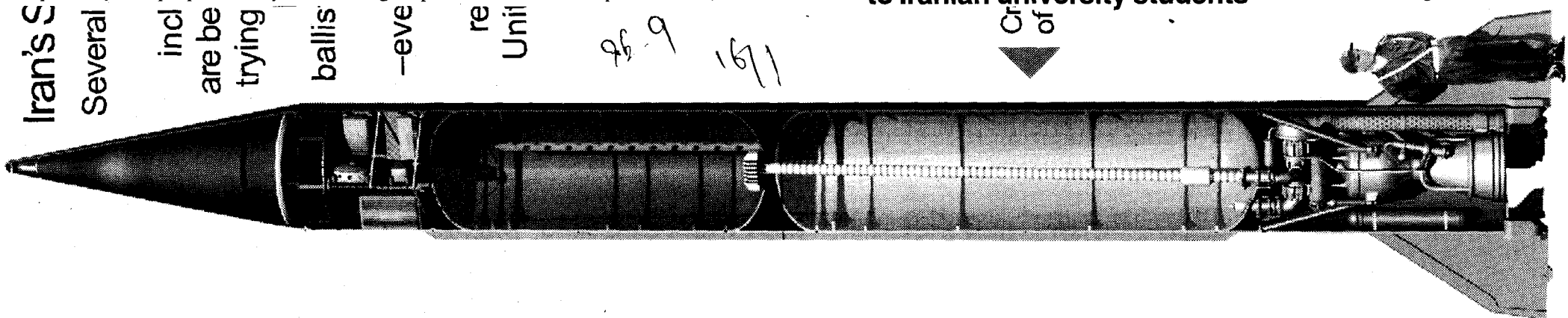
While Vorobei and other Russians concede that they helped Iran build up its general scientific base — the first step toward a successful missile program — they insist they stopped well short of transferring secret information banned by interna-

sporadic, low-level, and largely confined to dual-use materials that can be used for missile construction rather than entire missile systems.

The most concrete allegations of Russian assistance to the Iranian missile program concern the 1997-98 period when the Clinton administration imposed sanctions on 10 Russian companies for cooperating with Iran. There have been no new sanctions on Russian companies since 1998.

While Iran has succeeded in independently producing some of the components for the Shahab-3 missile, it also has experienced significant setbacks. The biggest, according to US, Israeli, and Russian officials, was its apparent inability to perfect its own version of the Shahab-3 engine that it sought to build, rather

The first time Vadim Vorobei went to Iran in 1996, he was amazed by the number of foreign missile scientists wandering openly through Tehran. All had been lured to Tehran on the pretext of giving lectures on rocket technology to Iranian university students



him: elderly representatives of the old Soviet technological elite impoverished by the collapse of communism and willing to sell their services to the highest bidder.

One day, Vorobei would spot a leading Russian missile guidance specialist; the next, a well-known missile engineer from Ukraine. All had been lured to Tehran on the pretext of giving lectures on rocket technology to Iranian university students.

From the US government perspective, Vorobei and his friends are symbols of one of the most serious challenges of the post-Cold War era, the worldwide proliferation of ballistic missiles. In this view, Iran is a "rogue state" seeking weapons of mass destruction. The prospect of such a country acquiring long-range missiles is the nightmare scenario underpinning President Bush's decision to push ahead with the deployment of a national missile defense system and withdraw from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia.

Seated in his office at the Moscow Aviation Institute, one of several Russian institutions under US sanctions for proliferating missile technology, Vorobei insists that American fears are exaggerated. He claims

the Russian government has repeatedly denied — the existence of an underground railroad of Russian scientists travelling to Iran to work on missile and nuclear weapons

The leakage of missile technology from Russia to Iran hasn't been on the scale necessary for Iran to develop an ICBM within 10 years. Evidence suggests the transfers have been sporadic, low-level and largely confined to dual-use materials that can be used for missile construction rather than entire missile systems

programmes. But Vorobei's experiences also underscore the difficulties Iran has faced in developing long-range missiles. Interviews with policymakers, missile scientists, and independent experts in a half-dozen countries suggest that the prospect of a ballistic missile attack on US territory by a "rogue state" is in some ways less likely now than in the summer of 1998, when the Rumsfeld Commission issued its five-year warning. North Korea, the Third World country furthest

of the nonproliferation project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "The September 11 events have shown that people can inflict mass casualties on the US with cutting

knives and imagination."

EVER since the US and the Soviet Union deployed tens of thousands of nuclear-tipped missiles during the Cold War, the ballistic missile has become the classic symbol of a country's great-power aspirations. A ballistic missile is one that falls unassisted in a predetermined trajectory following its initial launch. Ballistic missiles are usually larger, and capable of flying longer distances, than cruise missiles, which are pow-

helped the North Koreans, who have helped the Iranians, Syrians and Libyans.

CIA analysts say Iranian officials sought Russian assistance to build their own improved version of the No Dong, manufacturing their own sophisticated components rather than relying on systems imported from North Korea. Any assistance by Russia to the Iranian programme would be a violation of its commitments under the 1987 Missile Technology Control Regime, an international agreement that restricts the sale of parts and expertise for any missile with a range of more than 300 kilometers.

JUST how much help Vorobei and his colleagues gave Iran is a matter of dispute. US and Israeli experts say Russian cooperation with Iran has been more extensive than Vorobei and his colleagues acknowledge. For example, they said they have evidence of Russian experts attending Iranian static engine tests, in which a missile engine is strapped to the ground and fired, prior to a full missile test.

Vorobei said the Russian contribution to the Iranian missile program has been limited by Iranian paranoia and secretiveness. "They wanted to receive

tional agreement. "It is one thing to learn rocketry in theory, and quite another to move to actual production," said Yevgeny Mishelov, dean of the Moscow Aviation Institute's metallurgy department. Vorobei said he doubted US projections that Iran could obtain an intercontinental ballistic missile within five or even 10 years. "Their progress is very slow," said Vorobei. "In order to build missiles, you need a strong resource base. You need steel, aluminum, not to mention composite materials, a machine tool industry. Iran has very little of this."

BEFORE the publication of the Rumsfeld Commission report in 1998, CIA analysts testified it would take Iran at least 10 or 15 years to develop an ICBM, even with maximum cooperation from the Russian government. "Ten years is when the Russians come in, build the plant, operate the plant, and build the missiles," the agency's top missile expert, David Osias, testified in 1996.

The leakage of missile technology from Russia to Iran has not been on the scale that Osias and others predicted would be necessary for Iran to develop an ICBM within 10 years. Evidence suggests that transfers have been

than relying on the original North Korean engine. So far, there have been three flight tests of the Shahab-3; in July 1998, February 2000, and September 2000. The first and third tests ended in failure, apparently due to problems with the domestically produced engines, according to US and Israeli experts. The second test, in February 2000, appears to have been relatively successful, but only because Iran replaced its own engine with an engine produced in North Korea.

DESPITE the setbacks, most experts agree that Iran will perfect and eventually deploy the Shahab-3 missile, enabling it to reach targets in Israel and the eastern Mediterranean. Evidence that Tehran is interested in longer range missiles rests mainly on statements by Iranian officials referring to a Shahab-4 and Shahab-5, as follow-ups to the Shahab-3. Recent statements from Iranian officials, along with evidence from Iranian missile tests, suggest that Iran is now shifting its emphasis from long-range liquid fuel missiles, such as the Shahab, to short-range solid-fuel missiles.

(Tomorrow: How American politics redefined the missile threat)

Mr. Sabri (U)

IRAQ / U.S. WARNING RATTLES BAGHDAD

APD-12 14/1

Saddam urges Arab nations to unite

BAGHDAD, JAN. 13. The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, has urged Arab states to unite to defend themselves against external threats. "Arabs are one nation and they must act as one," Mr. Hussein said while receiving the commander of the army's air force, Hamed Ridha Shallah, and a group of medical researchers.

"The unity of the Arab world has become necessary to guarantee its defence," he said. "Even the strongest and richest Arab states cannot play their own part without melting into the Arab world and linking their fate to it."

Baghdad has relaunched ties with most Arab countries since the Gulf War but diplomatic relations remain frozen with Kuwait, which it invaded in 1990 and occupied for seven months, and Saudi Arabia, the base for the U.S.-led forces which ultimately defeated it.

Ahead of a rare visit to Baghdad by the Arab League secretary general, Amr Mussa, planned for January 18, Iraq has been very contained in its language towards Arab countries.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush, has warned that Mr. Hussein Hussein would "find out" the consequences if he did not allow the return to Baghdad of United Nations weapons inspectors, triggering speculation that Iraq might be the next target of U.S. forces. The ruling Baath party newspaper *Al-Thawra* said Washington wanted to use the issue of weapons inspectors as a pretext to attack Iraq.

"Accusations by U.S. officials that Iraq is developing weapons of mass destruction are



The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, makes a televised address to the nation in Baghdad recently during which he hailed his troops for fighting two major wars in the past 20 years. — Reuters

false and aim at achieving other goals," the paper said in a front-page editorial.

The U.N. inspectors left Iraq in December 1998, shortly before a U.S.-British bombing campaign, and have not been allowed to return since.

Iraq, still under international sanctions over its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, says it has no weapons of mass destruction and wants a complete end to the U.N. embargo.

The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Naji Sabri, did

not answer a question posed by Iraqi television on Saturday night on whether Iraq would allow the inspectors to resume work. Mr. Sabri was quoted by the pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* newspaper as saying that his Government was studying a Russian proposal to allow the inspectors back in return for suspending U.N. sanctions and gradually lifting them.

Iraqi newspapers today blasted suggestions that the U.S. might target Iraq in its war against terrorism and said Washington itself was a threat to world stability. The official *Al-Qadisiya* newspaper condemned "U.S. threats against the so-called rogue nations" which include Iraq.

"The Americans have once again repeated their threats...American officials have repeatedly threatened Iraq and other nations saying that these countries threaten their stability, while Washington is the one which threatens world stability," it added.

The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, William Burns, said the U.S. had yet to decide whether to use military force against Iraq and that Washington planned to discuss the issue with its allies from the 1991 Gulf War.

Speculation has intensified that the U.S. could start a new phase in its war on terrorism after Afghanistan by attacking such countries as Somalia, Iraq or Sudan.

Iraq, which is on a U.S. list of states sponsoring terrorism, denies any links to international terrorism. — AFP, Reuters

THE HINDU

1 4 JAN 2002

Iran none too happy about U.S. warning

HO-12
12/11
By Kesava Menon H. Asia ①

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), JAN. 12. Iran became disillusioned with the Taliban soon after it emerged on the Afghanistan scene and then came to loathe the hardline regime. Over the same period, the U.S. tried to first woo the Taliban and then largely ignored it. Iranians cannot now be faulted if they are outraged by the self-righteousness with which Washington warns them about having any truck with the remnants of the Al-Qaeda.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush took it upon himself to warn the Iranian Government that they must not give shelter to Al-Qaeda men fleeing Afghanistan and that they should not do anything to destabilise the transitional Government in Kabul. The first warning appears related to reports that Al-Qaeda men have been spotted in parts of eastern Afghanistan and the second warning to the reports that Iranian security men have been sighted in the vicinity of Herat. Iranian authorities might have been well within their rights to say "that is none of your business" in respect of

the first warning and "so what" in respect of the second. But they have settled for the politer option

of denying both reports, thereby implicitly rejecting the warning.

Members of Al-Qaeda could have entered eastern Iran for the most prosaic of reasons. The border between Iran and Afghanistan is long and the terrain is such that it cannot be completely sealed. In fact, Iran had done much work to block as much as it could of

the trails of drug traffickers who transit their territory while moving heroin from Afghanistan to the West and the world bodies concerned have whole-heartedly appreciated the Iranian Government's role in the war against drugs. But the fact that gun battles between Iranian security services and drug gangs occur

periodically, with a large number of security men being killed over the years, shows that policing this border is a difficult task even with the best of intentions. Baloch tribes on both sides of the border can provide the guides and facilities to enable people to transit illegally from Afghanistan to Iran.

Being hammered from the air and chased on the ground as they are, Al-Qaeda members could have well opted for the run through the deserts south of Kandahar. It is reasonable to think that the Iranians would have caught all the Al-Qaeda men on their territory if they had the means to do so. After all which country would want a bunch of Arab, Chechen and other assorted fanatics roaming about their own backyard. Iran did have a connection with the Sunni-based Islamist groups, especially those with allegiance to the Sudanese spiritual leader, Hassan al Turabi, in the early 1990s. But the Iranians grew to loathe the Taliban-Al-Qaeda network when this force entered

Mazar-e-Sharif in 1996 and promptly murdered Iranian diplomats and a journalist. The rift became complete when the Taliban turned on the Hazara Shias and massacred them wholesale.

While the U.S. administration discovered

the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance only after September 11 and only after the most effective anti-Taliban Afghan leader had been assassinated, Iran had been one of the three most consistent backers of Ahmed Shah Masoud. It is not likely that the Karine A (the weapon-laden ship captured by Israel in the Red Sea) incident, has led the U.S. to assume that there could be a revival of the connection between hardliners in Iran's Shia theocracy and Sunni radical groups. (Iran has denied that the weapons found on Karine A were provided by it). Israel says that the weapons on board Karine A were paid for by the Palestinian Authority and not the radical Islamist Hamas or Islamic Jihad. But even if the Karine A cargo was actually proved to be a delivery from Iran to the Sunni-based Hamas or Jihad, it does not mean that it proves an Iran-Al-Qaeda connection. If the Iran-Al-Qaeda connection looks unlikely, the sighting of Iranian security officials in western Afghanistan could hardly be considered so shocking as to warrant a U.S. Presidential threat.

Iran did co-operate with the U.S. in the anti-Taliban campaign by promising to rescue grounded pilots, and according to some reports, even by providing an air corridor. Iran was involved with Commander Ismail Khan and his men in Herat before the Taliban overran this western Afghan

town and after it. Iran does have interests to protect in western Afghanistan and if the U.S., Russia, Uzbeks, Pakistanis or whoever feel free to send their personnel into different parts of Afghanistan there is no reason why Iran should not do so either.

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