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By Atul Aneja

# Pressure mounting on Iran

**MANAMA, MAY 30.** While the debate on whether to engage or confront Iran after the Iraq-war is not yet over, the United States, followed by Britain have already intensified their political pressure on Teheran. The U.S. has a long list of grievances against Iran's religious leaders, which can be traced to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, which overthrew their ally, the Shah of Iran. But Washington of late has been especially worried about the possibility of Teheran acquiring nuclear weapon status.

Other accusations hurled against Iran are that it is supporting terrorism by giving sanctuaries to top Al-Qaeda leaders. It has also been blamed for attempts to destabilise post-war Iraq by trying to position a pro-Teheran Shia regime in Baghdad. The U.S. post-war administrator in Iraq, Paul Bremer, has accused Iran of intervention in support of Shia groups friendly to it. The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who has been the first Western leader to visit Iraq after the war, has also urged Iran and Syria to stop interfering in Iraq's internal affairs.

While pressure from Washington and London was not entirely unexpected, re-

cent statements from Russia suggesting that Iran should open all its nuclear facilities to closer U.N. scrutiny have caused some surprise. According to agency reports, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Georgy Mamedov, during a meeting with the Iran's Ambassador to Russia said that Teheran should "as soon as possible" sign an additional agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that would allow the latter to scan Iran's nuclear facilities more closely.

The Russian statement, analysts point out, was meant to send a positive signal to the U.S., ahead of the week-end meeting between the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and his U.S. counterpart, George W. Bush, at St. Petersburg. Russia has been collaborating with Iran for the construction of the Iranian nuclear facility in Bushehr under IAEA supervision. U.S. officials, however, fear that Iran could be engaged in manufacturing weapon grade enriched uranium at its secret facility in Natanz in southern Iran.

Iran, on its part, has repeatedly denied that it is engaged in developing atomic weapons. It has also advocated promoting a nuclear free zone in the region that would,

in turn, address strong suspicions about the presence of atomic weapons in Israel. Some commentators have also questioned the U.S. insistence that Iran should stall its nuclear programme, by pointing out that the conception of the Bushehr facility by Iran was the result of Washington's past exhortations.

Keen to encourage Iran to preserve its oil reserves for its future use, it was the U.S., during the Shah's regime that encouraged Iran to begin an alternative nuclear energy programme. On links with the Al-Qaeda, the Iranians have rejected U.S. accusations of shielding alleged Al-Qaeda operatives, including Saif-al Adel, who is accused of masterminding the Riyadh blasts earlier this month. Iranians, on their part, are demanding from the U.S., the handover to Teheran of Massoud Rajavi, the leader of the Iraq based Mujahedin Khalq Organisation (MKO) that has targeted Iran during the regime of the ousted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. One view circulating among Iran-watchers is that some of the main advocates for "regime change" in Iran can be found in the U.S. based American Enterprise Institute and Centre for Democracy in Iran.

# Blair hails troops' courage in Basra

**Basra, May 29** (Reuters): British Prime Minister Tony Blair brushed aside controversy today over the justification for toppling Saddam Hussein, acclaiming his troops as heroes during a lightning tour of southern Iraq.

On the first visit by a Western leader to post-war Iraq, Blair also put its neighbours Iran and Syria on notice against meddling in the nation's future or supporting terrorism.

"I know there were a lot of disagreements in the country over the wisdom of my decision to order the action," Blair told troops at a former Saddam palace as controversy grew over the unproven claims of Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction. "But I can assure you of one thing — there's absolutely no dispute in Britain at all about your professionalism, your courage," Blair added in the southern city of Basra.

"When people look back on this time and look back on this conflict, I honestly believe they will see this as one of the defining moments of the century. And you did it."

Back in Britain, however, there were new allegations that parliament and the public were duped in the lead-up to the US-led war on Iraq into believing allegations about Saddam's

weapons of mass destruction.

BBC Radio quoted an unnamed senior British official as saying a dossier compiled by the intelligence services had been altered on the request of Blair's Downing Street office to make it "sexier" by adding a statement that Saddam's weapons could be ready for use within 45 minutes.

Downing Street denied the claim.

The controversy was further fuelled by US deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz's comments that the US decision to stress the weapons' threat was taken for "bureaucratic" reasons. His remarks came a day after US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, justifying why no weapons of mass destruction had been found, said Iraq may have destroyed them before the war.

Flying in from Kuwait on a missile-carrying RAF Hercules and then moving around in a helicopter protected by a machine-gunner, Blair first met Iraq's US administrator, Paul Bremer, and Britain's envoy to Iraq, John Sawers, in Basra.

Sawers said Bremer briefed Blair on economic problems, crime, remaining members of Saddam's Baath party, and most importantly, the "growing concern about Shia Islamism, which is clearly being supported by

Iranian elements".

En route to the Gulf region, Blair had warned Iran and Syria not to meddle in Iraq's future or support terror groups and militants who may upset hopes of progress in Israeli-Palestinian peace moves.

Blair reiterated today that in relation to Syria and Iran, "we've still got big issues we need to discuss with them and we need to resolve with them", even though post-Saddam "we can do that now in a completely different atmosphere".

On his highly symbolic visit to the area of Iraq controlled by British troops, Blair also visited a local Basra school where he looked slightly bemused as children chattered excitedly and tried to shout some words in English.

At one point, Blair flew over the bombed-out wreck of a yacht used by Saddam. He also drove past captured Iraqi vehicles and rotting camel corpses.

Hand on hip and speaking off the cuff, Blair said the British troops' capture of the Faw peninsula and Basra in the south had become "famous around the world". Moving on to the port of Umm Qasr, before returning over the border to Kuwait for departure to Poland, Blair boarded a minesweeper and chatted to British commanders.

# Iran tells US to mind its own business

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Tehran, May 27

TEHRAN ON Tuesday told Washington to stay out of its internal affairs as US policymakers prepared to discuss whether to take a tougher stance on Iran aimed at destabilising its clerical establishment.

Washington has stepped up its criticism of Iran in recent days, accusing the Islamic Republic of harbouring senior al-Qaida members and developing a secret nuclear weapons programme. Iran denies the charges.

"We hope that wisdom and logic dominates the Americans' debates and they refrain from carrying out any interference in our affairs," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi.

"Iran has always defended its interests with full power and will continue to do so. It won't hesitate even for a fraction of a moment to defend itself," he said.

Washington's increasingly hostile rhetoric has alarmed Iran's clerical leaders, already unnerved by the presence of US troops across its borders with Afghanistan and Iraq.

Washington broke ties with Tehran shortly after the 1979 Islamic revolution and US President George Bush last year placed Iran in an "axis of evil" alongside Iraq and North Korea.

"The message Iran is hearing from Washington is: 'We're out to get you'," said a local analyst, who declined to be named.

*The Washington Post* on Sunday reported that the White House was due to consider on Tuesday a Pentagon-backed proposal to destabilise Iran's clerical rulers through popular uprisings.

It was not known what actions the Pentagon was proposing although some US officials have suggested Washington could pro-

## Moscow won't back out of nuke plans

MOSCOW WILL not drop plans to build Iran's first nuclear plant despite growing US pressure over fears Tehran is seeking to develop nuclear arms, Russia's atomic energy minister was quoted on Tuesday as saying. Russia's technology sales to Iran and the construction of the Bushehr power station have been a major irritant in relations with Washington, adding to unease over Moscow's refusal to back US military action in Iraq.

Reuters, Moscow

vide backing for exiled opposition groups such as the Iraq-based People's Mujahideen militia and Reza Pahlavi, eldest son of Iran's late shah.

But diplomats in Tehran caution that the exiles enjoy little support among Iranians and that while discontent with clerical rule is strong, public protests are kept firmly in check.

"The assumption that Iran is a house of cards waiting to collapse is off base," said one Asian diplomat. The heightened pressure on Iran follows United States intelligence reports suggesting senior al-Qaida members in Iran may have played a role in the May 12 suicide bombings in Saudi Arabia.

Diplomatic pressure on Iran is likely to intensify on June 16 if, as Washington hopes, the International Atomic Energy Agency declares Iran in violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Reuters

28 MAY 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

## Iran denies holding senior Al-Qaeda members

W. Ahmad  
Iran

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**TEHERAN, MAY 26.** Iran, under pressure from Washington over its role in the U.S.-led war on terrorism, said today it had arrested members of Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda but none ranked high in the network.

Leading U.S. lawmakers predicted yesterday positive developments regarding the Al-Qaeda in coming days from Iran.

The U.S. officials say they have intelligence suggesting senior Al-Qaeda members hiding in Iran had prior knowledge of the May 12 suicide bombings in Saudi Arabia in which 34 people, including eight Americans, were killed.

Iran's Foreign Ministry said some Al-Qaeda members had been arrested in the Islamic Republic "but the detainees are not senior Al-Qaeda members. Iran is serious about confronting Al-Qaeda," it said, calling on Washington to "follow logic and wisdom in international relations and avoid making interfering remarks".

Iran says it has in the last year arrested and deported around 500 Al-Qaeda members who slipped over its borders from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations, Javad Zarif, said yesterday that Iran was trying to identify a group of Al-Qaeda suspects in custody and was willing to hand them over to "friendly governments," such as Saudi Arabia.

The United States, which broke diplomatic ties with Teheran shortly after the 1979 Islamic revolution, has grown more critical of Iran since the end of the Iraq war last month. U.S. officials have accused Iran of pursuing a secret nuclear weapons programme, meddling in post-war Iraq and harbouring Al-Qaeda.

Iran denies all the charges and insists it has long been ideologically opposed to the Al-Qaeda network.

The *Washington Post* reported yesterday that the White House was due to consider on Tuesday a Pentagon-backed proposal to destabilise Iran's clerical government through a popular uprising.

— Reuters

27 MAY 2003

HINDON

# 13-year Iraq sanctions end

Press Trust of India

UNHQ, May 22. — Thirteen years of UN sanctions ended today for Iraq with the Security Council lifting the economic and trade embargo and passing a resolution to give the USA and UK wide authority to run the country as “occupying powers”.

The Kremlin said the US-sponsored resolution was a “victory of commonsense” and would ensure Russia’s economic interests in post-war Iraq. In Crawford, USA, Mr George W Bush’s spokesman said: “The President was grateful that the world had come together to lift the sanctions.”

Fourteen of the 15 Security Council members, with Syria absenting, voted for the draft resolution which would give the “occupying powers” control of the country’s oil resources which they promised to use for the benefit of Iraqis.

To win support of Russia, France and China, the sponsors — USA, Britain and Spain — agreed to some 90 changes in the original draft but the basic structure did not undergo much alteration. The revised draft, however, enhanced the UN’s role. The Security Council will review the resolution’s implementation after 12 months and take any measures it

considers necessary.

Earlier, the USA had proposed that the occupying powers be initially given a mandate for one year with automatic renewal. But the revised version is silent on that.

Syria, the only Arab member of the Council, had recalled its UN ambassador, Mr Mikhail Wehbe, for consultations as it came under pressure from the USA to vote for the draft or, at least, not oppose it.

A senior aide to President Mr Putin said: “The resolution fully satisfies Moscow and responds to Russia’s interests (Russian oil majors’ agreements with Iraq) well.”

Another report on page 2

# Shiites stage march in Baghdad, protest against US occupation

**Baghdad:** In the biggest anti-US demonstration since the end of the war, thousands of Shiite Muslims marched peacefully through the capital on Monday to protest the US occupation and reject what they feared would be a US-installed puppet government.

US forces watched the rally but let it go on.

Up to 10,000 people rallied in front of a Sunni Muslim mosque in the capital's northern district of Azimiyah, then marched to the nearby Kadhamiya quarter, home to one of the holiest Shiite shrines in Iraq. Some carried portraits of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran and other noted Shiite clerics.

"We decided to gather outside a Sunni mosque to show unity between Shiites and Sunnis," said Rashid Hamdan, an organiser.

He said the procession was organ-

- The mammoth rally was organised by religious groups
- Demonstrators gathered in front of a Sunni Muslim mosque to show unity between Shiites and Sunnis
- US forces watched the rally but let it go on

ised by religious groups from Baghdad's Al-Thawra suburb—formerly known as Saddam City, where an estimated two million Shiites live.

Since Saddam Hussein's ouster by coalition troops last month, there has been a spate of smaller gatherings, some of them hundreds strong, demanding the occupying forces' withdrawal. But Monday's march was the biggest in terms of numbers.

Meanwhile, three US soldiers were killed and six injured as US-led forces stepped up patrols in an attempt to bring order to Iraq, the Central Command has announced in Washington.

A US soldier from the Fourth Infantry division died early on Sunday in Iraq "as a result of a non-hostile gunshot," the command said in a statement, giving no further details.

And a US Marine died and another was injured when the large transport vehicle they were in rolled over southeast of the town of Al-Samawah. The injured Marine is expected to recover, officials said.

One soldier was killed and three injured as they detonated unexploded ammunition on Saturday in Baghdad, while two soldiers were injured separately when assailants attacked their transport truck, the Central Command said.

20 MAY 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Don't touch it!

## US and UK proposal on Iraq unacceptable

The Americans and the British are finding the going very tough over trying to hive off responsibility for Iraq while retaining the oil reserves for themselves and have proposed that India join in what they describe as a stabilizing role. India's priorities should be clear. We have not supported the wholly illegal and unprovoked aggression against a member state of the United Nations and it is reasonable to ask that the air should be cleared first. Colin Powell tried to convince his Russian counterpart without success. Igor Ivanov made it clear to the visiting Secretary of State that the weapons inspectors will have to return to Iraq and certify either that weapons exist, in which case something should be done about it or that they do not exist in which case, it follows that the USA and the UK, should, even in this imperfect world, pay for the physical damage they have caused, at the very least. General Tommy Franks says discovering the weapons will take months if not years; Bush concedes Saddam may have destroyed them, in which case he should answer whether doing what he was asked to do justifies the aggression; Jack Straw said two days ago that it did not matter whether the weapons are discovered at all! This gives some idea of the shameful exhibition of deceit and double-talk in which they have indulged.

Our mind should be clear and we should strive to get international agreement on it. If the United Nations is to enter the picture it must be under unambiguous UN leadership and control over every aspect — exploiting oil reserves and it follows that the contract to Haliburton must be cancelled; reconstruction costs to be paid for by the USA and the UK and the *coalition of the willing*, although the rest of the UN may contribute symbolic figures on humanitarian grounds; the policing and peace-keeping to be entrusted to a multinational force under UN command. Even as late as 15th May a coalition diplomat trying to get the UN involved on their terms said that the *UN would have a central role but not the central role*. Apart from this formulation being as clear as mud, it is useful to remember that from Bush to Powell to Rumsfeld and from Blair to Jack Straw, no one has allowed the UN any but a minimal role and that limited to humanitarian assistance paid from out of the sales proceeds of Iraqi oil *after* American costs of the war and at most the horrendous cost of reconstruction have been met first. This is wholly unacceptable to everyone except only the so-called coalition of the willing, and we know who these are.

The United Nations are fairly warned. America and Britain are in a bind; they will strive every nerve to retain the fruits of aggression and happily part with the responsibility. If there is any justice in this world, this shall not pass. The UN is in a strong position. It holds all the trumps. America and Britain need the UN desperately and must be made to pay the price. If the Security Council allows itself to get conned into a central role but not the central role, history will not forgive them. And aggression and international banditry will get a new lease of life. Surely this is not what the Iraqis have suffered so much, for so long.

THE STATESMAN

17 MAY 2003

THE STATESMAN

# Iran rules out relations with Washington

Tehran, May 13

IRAN'S SUPREME leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has flatly rejected restoring relations with arch-foe the United States arguing it would be tantamount to "surrender", newspapers reported on Tuesday.

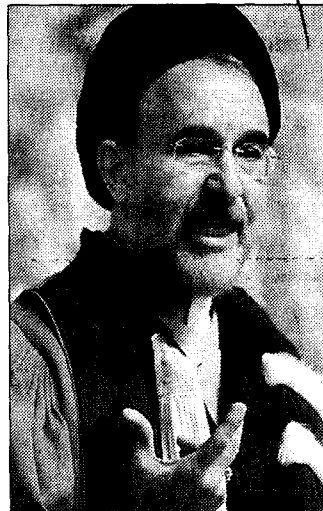
The comments by Khamenei, who has the last word on all matters of state in the Islamic Republic, should suffocate an upsurge in debate in Iran over a possible easing in Tehran-Washington ties frozen for over two decades.

The debate was fuelled by news that Iranian and US officials have held talks recently in Geneva to discuss issues related to Iran's neighbours Afghanistan and Iraq. "Some prescribe the surrender of the Iranian nation to America in the face of the enemy's adventurism. But succumbing to the enemy is by no means effective," Khamenei said in a speech to students in Tehran on Monday, newspapers reported.

US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said on Monday that the recent Geneva talks were on practical issues and did not presage a re-opening of diplomatic ties.

Washington's swift victory in Iraq prompted many officials across Iran's divided political spectrum to suggest the time was right for a policy of engagement with the US.

Influential former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani last month said the issue could be put to a referendum. Opin-



Iranian President Mohammad Khatami speaks after receiving a doctorate from the Lebanese University in Beirut on Tuesday.

ion polls show most Iranians favour better ties with the country, which Khamenei and his followers refer to as the "Great Satan".

"Some these days are talking about an opportunity being missed. Does succumbing to the enemy mean not missing opportunities?" Khamenei said.

Analysts say anti-US sentiment remains a central pillar of Iran's Islamic state and one that Khamenei is loathe to forego. Khamenei said Iran's nuclear energy programme is for "peaceful purposes" and not for developing nuclear weapons.

Reuters

14 MAY 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES



# British-educated 'Dr Germ' in US custody

Washington, May 12 (Reuters): US forces have taken into custody the British-educated Iraqi microbiologist dubbed "Dr Germ," who spearheaded the biological warfare programme under toppled President Saddam Hussein, officials said today.

Rihab Rashid Taha al-Azzawi al-Tikriti, who received her doctorate from Britain's University of East Anglia before guiding Iraq's biological arms development, was taken into custody over the weekend, a defence official said.

Taha is married to former Iraqi oil minister Amir Muhammed Rasheed, who surrendered to US forces on April 28. Ranked as number 47 on the US list of the top 55 most-wanted Iraqis, he ran Iraq's military industries until becoming oil minister in 1995. Taha is not on the list.

"She has a background in biological weapons, and so that is obviously important to us," said Maj. Brad Lowell, a spokesman for US Central Command. Central Command described her as "former director of the Iraqi bacterial/biological programme." Officials indicated that Taha surrendered to US forces but did not provide details.

The announcement of her apprehension comes a week after it was disclosed a second Iraqi woman scientist linked to Saddam's biological weapons programme had been apprehended. American-educated microbiologist Huda Salih Mahdi Ammash, the only woman on the US list of most-wanted Iraqis, is known by the nickname "Mrs Anthrax."

The US accused Saddam's toppled government of possessing large stockpiles of biological

and chemical weapons, and cited those arms as a key justification for war. US search teams have not found any such weapons.

Taha has admitted producing germ warfare agents in the past, including anthrax and botulinum. She has said all such Iraqi weapons were destroyed.

Biological weapons are living micro-organisms and biological toxins harnessed deliberately to kill or sicken others.

In an interview this year with ABC News, Taha said her work helped protect Iraqis from Israel. "We haven't done anything to harm other people. It is our right to be capable enough to defend ourselves — all what we have done is just a deterrent. Nothing more than that," she said.

UN weapons investigators tagged her with the nickname "Dr Germ" based on her work in

germ warfare agents.

While she was known to throw tantrums while being questioned by UN officials, the world body's arms inspection process played a key role in her personal life. She met her husband during talks on UN inspections in 1993 in New York, and married him after Rasheed divorced his then-wife.

In the early 1980s, she studied plant toxins at the University of East Anglia before returning to her native country to work on biological weapons. She is in her late 40s.

## New administrator

Washington's new civilian administrator for Iraq arrived in Baghdad today, full of praise for the man he is supplanting after just three weeks but refusing to predict when Iraqis would get their own government.

L. Paul Bremer said retired US general Jay Garner had been "very effective" in starting post-war reconstruction and forecast a smooth handover following a staffing shakeup seen by many as a mark of dissatisfaction with progress on restoring basic services and forming a transitional Iraqi government.

"I don't anticipate any problems with the changes," Bremer said on landing at Baghdad airport from Kuwait, via a short stop in Iraq's southern second city, Basra. He said he was proud of the work Garner and his team had done so far. Garner said last week that the core of an Iraqi government could be in place within weeks.

"We will discuss with appropriate people in Iraq a transition to an Iraqi government at a time line that still has to be determined," Bremer said.



Saddam Hussein's biological warfare expert Rihab Rashid Taha al-Azzawi al-Tikriti. (AP)

# UK minister resigns over Blair's 'false assurances' on Iraq

**DOMINIC EVANS**  
LONDON, MAY 12

**BRITISH Prime Minister Tony Blair's** outspoken Aid Minister resigned from his government on Monday, angrily accusing him of breaking a promise that the UN should have a leading role in post-war Iraq.

Clare Short, who fiercely criticised Blair's "reckless" stance over Iraq just days before British troops joined US-led invasion to topple Saddam Hussein, said his approach to Iraq's reconstruction made her position impossible.

She was the second senior minister to resign from Blair's Cabinet over the war, which was opposed by many members of his ruling Labour party and which triggered a major parliamentary rebellion in March.

Blair's office announced soon afterwards it was replacing her with junior Foreign Office Minister Baroness Amos.

The speed of the replacement suggested Blair had been preparing to remove her anyway and analysts doubted the exit of Short, 57, would have a major impact on the government. "As you know, I thought the run-up to the conflict in Iraq was mishandled, but I agreed to stay in the government to help support the reconstruction effort for the people of Iraq," Short wrote in her resignation letter to Blair. "I am afraid that the assurances you gave me about the need for a UN mandate to establish a legitimate Iraqi government have been breached," she said.

She accused Blair and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw of secretly nego-

"This makes my position impossible," she said. Before the war, Short said she would resign if a UN resolution authorising military action were not secured. That resolution never came, prompting another senior minister, former foreign secretary, Robin Cook to resign. Two junior ministers also stepped down.

Short however back-tracked and stayed in the job she loved, where she was highly regarded by the aid community and across the developing world. But her blunt attack suggested her days in government were numbered. She openly attacked Blair's fondness for media management, calling last year for an end to the "obsession with spin".

"We have to...let the truth speak for itself and not try to manipulate the media," she said in March. —*Reuters*



**Clare Short after announcing her resignation from Blair's Cabinet in London on Monday.** *Reuters*

tiating a UN resolution which contradicted assurances she had given to parliament about "the need for a UN-led process to establish a legitimate Iraqi government".

## ■ New US administrator reaches Basra

Chiefs of Staff, and Jay Garner, the retired general Bremer has replaced as the senior US civilian in Iraq.

Bremer, 61, is a former assistant to former US Secretaries of State William P. Rogers and Henry Kissinger.

Bremer's appointment was part of a shake-up in the US post-war team in Iraq, amid continuing frustration over its efforts to restore essential public services and stability to the country. Iraqis have criticised the progress as too slow.

Reacting to reports that Garner would be leaving the country earlier than originally planned, Bremer said: "I certainly intend to work with him in the next weeks here to get a bunch of serious milestones accomplished."

**REUTERS**

BASRA, MAY 12

THE new US Civilian Administrator for Iraq, L. Paul Bremer, arrived in the country on Monday to take over its reconstruction and political rehabilitation after the war that ousted Saddam Hussein.

Bremer, who flew to the southern city of Basra from neighbouring Kuwait, said he was "delighted to be here" to begin helping set the country on a democratic course.

"It's a wonderful challenge to help the Iraqi people basically reclaim their country from a despotic regime," Bremer said.

He flew in with General Richard Myers, chairman of the US Joint

# Iraqi cleric calls for Islamic rule

By Susan Sachs

**Basra:** An influential Shiite Muslim cleric whose views will help shape Iraq's political future returned on Sunday from exile in Iran and immediately rejected a liberal Western-style democracy as incompatible with the country's Islamic culture. Ayatollah Muhammad Bakr Al-Hakim said Iraq must base its laws on Islamic strictures and prohibit the kind of behaviour that may be acceptable in the West but is forbidden in Islam.

But he also hedged on his precise vision, saying a new Iraqi government must be elected and be representative of all ethnic and religious groups—not only the majority Shiites but also the minority Sunni Muslims and Christians.

"We don't want an extremist Islam," he told a cheering, chanting crowd of men here. "We don't want the Taliban brand of Islam. We want an Islam of independence, justice and freedom." His emphasis on an elected government and national unity reflected a marked shift in tone for Shiite leaders after the fervent calls for an Islamic state in the initial euphoria after the collapse of Saddam Hussein's rule.

Ayatollah Hakim, 63, spent much of his life outside the country fighting to overthrow Saddam Hussein, who deported and killed thousands of Shiites in a relentless campaign to silence dissident religious leaders. The ayatollah is also one of the few senior clerics who openly challenged the former dictator and survived assassination, chiefly because Iran



Shiite cleric Ayatollah Muhammad Bakr Al-Hakim, surrounded by bodyguards, speaks to his followers upon his arrival in Basra on Saturday. He had been in exile in Iran and under protection of its Shiite religious leaders since 1980.

sheltered and financed him for 23 years.

His ties with Teheran have made him a suspect figure in Washington, although his organisation has maintained indirect contacts with various American administrations because of its consistently virulent opposition to the Hussein government. Three years ago, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which the ayatollah founded in Teheran in 1982, was officially recognised by the US as an opposition group eligible for financing under the Iraqi Liberation Act.

Ayatollah Hakim's group apparently did not accept any American financing. But it is one of the seven exile opposition groups under the

umbrella of the Iraqi National Congress, which has been working with American officials in Baghdad to form an interim government.

Seeking to distance itself from the US, the ayatollah's group has refused to take part in meetings of other Iraqi groups organised by the Americans. But his representatives are part of a core group of opposition parties that meet regularly in Baghdad to devise a formula for choosing a transitional national assembly.

Along with the Bush administration, the other main opposition groups also fiercely reject the Iranian model of a cleric-run state. But they acknowledge privately that the Shiites' long political subjugation must be re-

dressed. Ayatollah Hakim has sought to present himself as a person who has suffered. Addressing a gathering of tribal and religious leaders, he recently said 25 of his relatives had been killed by the former government. "We diagnosed 34 years ago the nature of the Saddam regime. We launched the fight because we had a wider vision," he said.

After Saddam's fall, crowds of Shiites demanded an Islamic state. But in recent Friday prayer sermons and interviews, Shiite clerics and activists have spoken in much more moderate terms of creating a multi-party democracy in Iraq that will not provoke American hostility or frighten other Iraqis. NYT News Service

12 MAY 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# France, Russia question US plan

Ranjan Roy  
United Nations, May 10

WITH THE UN Security Council looking to avoid the bitter divisions that broke out before the war, France and Russia toned down objections to a new US plan for ruling post-war Iraq, but appeared intent to seek changes to give the United Nations a stronger role.

The US introduced a wide-ranging draft resolution that would give the UN stamp of approval for a US-British occupation of Iraq for at least a year and hand the Americans and British control of the country's oil wealth to use in rebuilding the country.

"Most delegations saw this as charting a way forward; certainly they had some questions," US Ambassador John Negroponte said on Friday after a council session where he introduced the eight-page resolution, co-sponsored by Britain and Spain.

With debate in the council due to start on Wednesday, there were differences among the members over a vision to rebuild Iraq — but the tone was muted compared with the bruising battle several months ago over an invasion of Iraq.

In that debate, France, Russia and Germany blocked the attempt by the US, Britain and Spain to win UN approval for a war — and fires between the two

sides were left severely strained. Secretary of State Colin Powell said in Washington he hoped the council would act quickly.

"This resolution is straight to the point; it's a resolution that will serve the Iraqi people; it's a resolution that will ultimately result in the lifting of sanctions so that the world can again trade with Iraq," he said.

On Friday, Russia's UN Ambassador Sergey Lavrov said Moscow has "a long list" of questions about the US draft. French President Jacques Chirac insisted that "the UN should play a central role."

But Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said they were committed to

"constructive negotiations" over the US draft. "We are ready for pragmatic solutions," Schroeder said at a summit with Chirac and the Polish President.

Even co-sponsor Spain's ambassador, Inocencio Arias, said his country believes "this text can be improved ... But altogether it's a good way to try to find a solution to a situation which is rather complicated."

Others who did not support the US attacks on Iraq reacted favourably. Angola's Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins called it "a good start" and Chile's Ambassador Gabriel Valdes said, "Our initial reaction is very positive."

AP

## June 15 deadline to restore Iraq stability

THE TOP US civilian official in Iraq on Saturday set a June 15 deadline to get Iraq's infrastructure up and running and normalise the country's health and educational systems.

"It is my object to accomplish this by the June 15," said Lt. Gen. Jay Garner. "What we are proposing for the next 45 days is to have free health care."

AP, Baghdad

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# Powell to push peace 'road map'

By Atul Aneja

**MANAMA, MAY 10.** The United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell, arrived in Israel this evening to seek Tel Aviv's endorsement of the "road map" that envisages creation of an independent Palestinian State, based on a series of confidence-building steps that the Israelis and Palestinians should implement.

Setting aside some their reservations on the "road map" whose principal author is the United States, the Palestinians have already declared that they accept its basic parameters. The Israelis, however, have in the recent past, raised 14 points that they wished to be addressed before committing themselves on the route that could lead to a permanent end to their differences with the Palestinians.

At the present moment, the Israelis appear to be linking their commitment to the U.S.-authored blueprint for peace to concrete steps by Palestinian leaders that would demonstrate their commitment to rein in suicide bombers and other perpetrators of extremist violence. Gen. Powell, on his part, has already declared that he was not prepared for lengthy negotiations with the Israelis and Palestinians to seek their endorsement of the "road map." On the contrary, hoping to get an early Israeli commitment to the broad parameters of this plan, Gen. Powell, during his visit, is aiming to go a little further.

Analysts point out that the top U.S. diplomat is working on a formulation that would result in the first tension-easing steps between the Israelis and Palestinians, since violence erupted 31 months ago. Fresh indications are emerging that Gen. Powell, during his talks, would like to convince the Israelis to ease the military pressure on Palestinian towns and cities in return for a commitment to a "ceasefire" by Palestinian extremist groups.

After concluding his talks with the Israelis by Sunday afternoon, Gen. Powell is expected

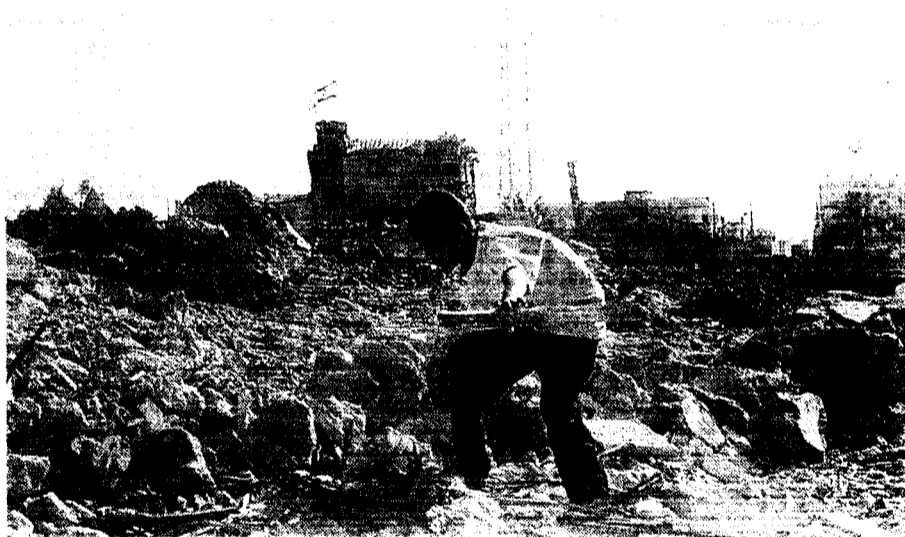
to hold discussions with the newly-elected Palestinian Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas. In 10 days time, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, will travel to Washington for follow-up talks with the U.S. President, George W. Bush.

Analysts point out that Israel's talks with the U.S. are not simply confined to the creation of an independent Palestinian State in return for a termination of terror strikes against its civilians. On the contrary, Israel is seeking to fulfil a much broader strategic agenda in the region.

Israel, which has in the past signed peace deals with Egypt and Jordan, is seeking greater security along its northern border with Lebanon. Two problems are, however, coming in the way. First, is the presence of the highly trained anti-Israel, Hizbollah group in Lebanon, that Syria and Iran support. Second, Syria, which exercises enormous

influence in Lebanon, has also positioned some of its troops in that country. Not surprisingly, Gen. Powell, who was in Syria and Lebanon last week, and has not minced words in asking Syria to end its support for Hizbollah.

Israel, diplomatic sources say, through its engagement of negotiations with the U.S., has also begun to look far at drawing benefits from the possible normalisation of its economic relations with some of the key the Arab nations in West Asia in the future. The U.S., on its part, has already taken the first steps to push for Israel's regional accommodation. Sources pointed out that by calling for a free trade area in West Asia in a decade. Mr. Bush on Friday has signalled that the Israelis and Arabs should agree to occupy a common economic space in the region in the future. U.S.-backed plans are also afoot at reviving an oil pipeline from Mosul in Iraq to the Israeli Mediterranean coast at Haifa.



A Palestinian child walks amid the rubble of a house razed by Israeli forces in Rafah on Saturday. — AFP

# Nukes from loot?

5/6 ✓ The US can't put a lid on it 10/5  
W. H. H. O. G. M.

The global community cannot remain silent at the refusal of the United States to respond to the concerns of the International Atomic Energy Agency over reports emanating from occupied Iraq, and therefore not free from suspicion, that nuclear installations there were looted as a result of the coalition forces' ineptitude after dismantling Saddam Hussein's regime. There is every reason to pressure Washington into permitting speedy return of the IAEA's qualified inspectors to verify the situation. Having carefully monitored those installations prior to the invasion, they alone would be in a position to assess the possible hazards. The belated and wishy-washy American position that no weapons-capable material was involved satisfies nobody. The US finds itself in a corner because it had been cautioned by the IAEA and advised to protect those facilities but it failed to do so. Just as it failed to secure the invaluable antiques in museums, for which it had also been alerted.

In the absence of expert examination there is every possibility that some of the looted equipment and material could find its way to terrorist outfits which, everybody knows, have the financial capacity to attract scientific talent to use the material to develop nuclear weapons, even if of an utterly crude variety. Just as the nuclear capability of established governments constitutes a credible deterrent, nuclear-capable terrorists constitute a credible threat. It must never be forgotten that the US is not the only country that has come under terrorist attack, and the potential for "dirty bombs" showing up in other parts of the world is a clear and present danger. Hence it is imperative that American arrogance is countered and the IAEA returns to Iraq to check things out, initiate any follow-up action that may be required. True that will make it difficult for the US to fabricate evidence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction — the dubious justification for going to war — but the security of the world at large cannot be compromised to avoid inconvenience to Bush and his henchmen. Should the reports of the looting be confirmed the world will not sleep until complete recoveries are effected. The truth has to be established; no more beating about the bush.

Unless the initial announcement by the Americans was a fabrication designed to defame and discredit Saddam's regime and there was no truth in it anyway!

10 MAY 2003

THE STATESMAN

IRAQ / POWELL HOLDS TALKS WITH KOFI ANNAN

# Bush Govt. eases sanctions

W. Asia 11

By Siddhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 8. The Bush administration has suspended some of the long standing sanctions against Iraq even as it prepares to present a resolution at the United Nations, which could come as early as this Friday, calling for an end to the punitive measures against that West Asian country.

"The easing of the U.S. sanctions will bring much needed aid and humanitarian relief to the Iraqi people as they begin the process of rebuilding their lives after more than two decades of brutal dictatorship," remarked the Treasury Secretary, John Snow, while announcing the administration's decision.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush, announced the suspension of sanctions at a press conference with the Prime Minister of Spain, Jose Marie Aznar, one of the key allies in the conflict over Iraq. The Suspension of the Iraq Sanctions Act means, among other things, that Government-funded and private humanitarian assistance can be shipped to Iraq and people in the U.S. can send up to \$500 a



**Iraqi women line up with their sick infants at a hospital in Baghdad on Thursday. Humanitarian aid is slowly reaching Iraqis after more than 10 years of U.N. sanctions.** — Reuters

Other senior members of the administration are travelling to major capitals in the world with a view to winning over support for the U.S.-led efforts at the U.N.

For instance, the Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, would have raised this issue in Pakistan during his trip. Pakistan is one of the 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council and is the President of the Council for May.

The Bush administration is under no illusions of the kind of "fight" that is in store at the world body even while there is optimism that ultimately the language of the resolution would be satisfying to all, especially the veto-holding members. Already, Germany and France have indicated a desire to be flexible on the issue of sanctions; and only Russia is insisting on some tough stipulations to go along with the move. This would have to do with certification on weapons of mass destruction; control of Iraqi oil revenues; and modalities of future contracts with Baghdad in the realm of oil field development.

month to family and friends. But export of certain goods in the realm of national security, will, however, require a special clearance from the Government.

The U.S., along with Britain and Spain, are getting ready to introduce a resolution in the Security Council as early as this Friday; and the administration is on a major lobbying offensive in New York and at world capitals, especially among the 15 members represented in the Council.

"The atmosphere that existed prior to the war has changed and... people now want to work together for the good of the Iraqi people," Mr. Bush said of the efforts at the United Nations. The Secretary of State, Colin Powell, met the U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan, in New York on Wednesday and is all set to begin a series of talks in Europe and in West Asia shortly.

# US seeks sanctions end to free oil exports

**United Nations, May 8**  
 (Reuters): The US today sought an early lifting of UN sanctions against Iraq that would free oil exports and suspend some trade restrictions that Washington imposed more than a decade ago.

US secretary of state Colin Powell, after visiting UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, said he expected to produce a Security Council resolution "this week" that would also give the UN a "vital" role in the country's future.

The draft is expected to be distributed to the 15 UN Security Council members tomorrow, shortly before they start a week-end retreat. Failing that, it would be circulated on Monday, Bush administration officials said.

Powell said he was working with "all our friends" including Germany, France, Russia and China, who had opposed the US-

led invasion of Iraq. "Whatever is in the past is in the past. We are not now talking about a matter of war. We are talking about a matter of peace," he said.

Diplomats said the draft would include an undefined political and economic role for the UN, which was to appoint a special coordinator.

A UN representative named by Annan would have a seat on a board that would oversee revenues from Iraq's oil industry, the envoys said. US oil executives, the World Bank and the IMF are expected to be on the board. The resolution would phase out the oil-for-food programme but it is uncertain which or how many contracts currently in the pipeline will be honoured, as Russia has insisted.

Without adoption of the resolution no Iraq or US entity in

Baghdad has the legal authority to export oil. Washington wants it adopted by June 3, when the oil-for-food programme is up for renewal.

The multi-billion dollar programme was designed to ease the impact of sanctions which were imposed when Saddam Hussein's troops invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The programme, which now has more than \$12 billion, allowed Iraq to sell oil to purchase civilian goods under UN supervision. Oil revenues are deposited into a UN escrow account, which is used to pay suppliers.

But the draft resolution does not call for the return of UN arms inspectors to verify that Iraq no longer has alleged weapons of mass destruction, as specified in UN resolutions and which several council members have demanded.

Close US ally Britain just signed on to the text of the resolution, which had been a subject of dispute between the state department and the defence department, diplomats said.

Separately, US President George W. Bush said in Washington he would suspend a 1990 US law, the Iraq Sanctions Act, because Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was no longer in power.

The action would lift trade restrictions on US firms, including licensing of industrial and commercial projects or restricting exports of US goods, technology and services.

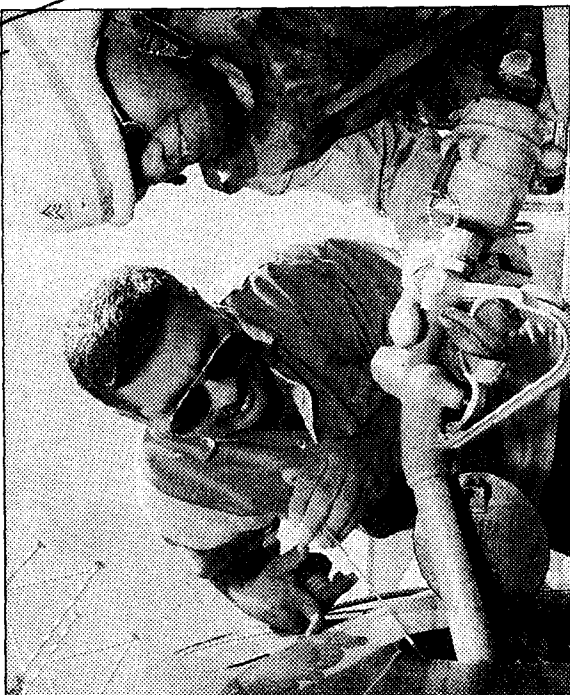
US treasury secretary John Snow said some US sanctions would be lifted immediately, allowing US residents and private groups to send up to \$500 per month to any person in Iraq for humanitarian purposes.

Bush, after a session with Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar yesterday, said he thought there was a changed atmosphere in the council.

"We believe there is a mood to work together to achieve a resolution that will expedite the reconstruction of Iraq," he said. But so far Russia and France, while saying they would be flexible, have advocated a final lift of sanctions, rather than a suspension, after the UN inspectors were back on the ground.

To get support, senior US officials are travelling to Moscow and Berlin as well as lobbying Mexico and Pakistan.

A top US envoy, trying to push a reluctant Moscow to agree to Washington's plan to lift UN sanctions against Iraq, said today both sides recognised they had to resolve their differences for the sake of Iraqis.



A US sergeant helps an Iraqi civilian pour fuel into his vehicle in Baghdad. (AFP)



# Coalition forces capture top Iraqi scientist

WASHINGTON, MAY 5. Coalition forces have captured one of Iraq's top biological weapons scientists, U.S. defence officials said today.

Huda Salih Mahdi Ammash, among the top 55 most wanted members of Saddam Hussein's fallen regime, was taken into custody yesterday, a Defence Department official said. He had no other details about the development.

The U.S. intelligence officials said that Ms. Ammash, (49), was believed to have played a key role in rebuilding Baghdad's biological weapons capability since the Gulf War in 1991.

In one of several videos of Mr. Hussein released during the war, Ms. Ammash was the only woman among about a half-dozen men seated around a table. The videos were used as Iraqi propaganda as invading forces drew closer to Baghdad and it was not known when the meeting happened nor what was the significance of her visibility on camera.

American officials say Ms. Ammash was among a new generation of leaders named by Mr. Hussein to leading posts within Iraq's Ba'ath

party. On the Pentagon's list the 55 most wanted, she is number 53 and referred to as the party's Youth and Trade Bureau Chairman.

The U.S. officials said she was trained by Nassir al-Hindawi, described by United Nations inspectors



**Mahdi Ammash**

as the father of Iraq's biological weapons programme. She has served as president of Iraq's microbiological society and as dean at University of Baghdad. Ms. Ammash and Mr. Al-Hindawi are among Iraq's top weapons scientists. Others include Amir al-Saadi, a chemical weapons researcher, and Rihab Taha, a woman who was dubbed 'Dr. Germ' by inspectors. — AP

6 MAY 2003

THE HINDO

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6 MAY 2003

BE HINDU

# U.S., Syria discuss 'road map'

10-19 915

DEE HINDU

By Atul Aneja

**MANAMA, MAY 3** After witnessing a steep decline in their relationship, Syria and the U.S. today began fresh talks to narrow down their differences and exchange views on the developments in the region following the recent war in Iraq.

The visiting U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, touched upon two broad themes during his talks with the Syrian President Bashar al Assad. First, the two sides talked about the road map visualised mainly by the U.S. in association with the European Union, Russia and the United Nations to end the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Gen. Powell, prior to his talks, gave enough indications that the U.S. was willing to accommodate Syria's conditional presence in the inner circle of negotiations on the Israeli-Palestinian question by pointing out that Washington was seeking a 'comprehensive' settlement of this crisis.

The top U.S. diplomat said that he would convey to Mr. Assad that the talks the Bush administration hoped to initiate between Israel and the Palestinians could result into wider negotiations involving Syria. The Syrian side has already made it clear that it is also looking for a 'comprehensive' settlement of the Israel-Palestinian issue. Concretely, it means that it would not be satisfied by sign-

Heights occupied by Israel since 1967. The resolution of the Israeli-Syrian dispute over Golan Heights, according to the Syrian viewpoint, had to be accommodated in a larger package of settlement that addressed the basic question of Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.

The U.S. Secretary of State reportedly sought an end to Syrian support for the Hezbollah group.

Based in Lebanon along Israel's northern borders, the Hezbollah played a key role in the end of the nearly two decades long Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon. Diplomatic sources say that Syria has trained the Hezbollah, while Iran armed this group.

The official Syrian view, however, is that the Hezbollah is a legitimate political group in Lebanon and the U.S. should raise its concerns about this group's activities with the Lebanese government.

The U.S. is also seeking the pull back of Syrian troops from Lebanon. Analysts point out that Syria is unlikely to accommodate U.S. concerns on its activism in Lebanon, unless Israel, on its part, also demonstrates flexibility.

The Israeli occupation of the Shebaa farms on the strategic tri-junction of Israel, Lebanon and Syria continues to be sources of friction among these three countries.



The Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad (left), and the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, in Damascus on Saturday. — AFP

Israel Hamas and the Islamic Jihad extremist groups in the Palestinian territories. Syria denies supporting these groups, while acknowledging that some of these organisations do run their media offices from its soil.

Second, the two sides discussed the developments in Iraq following the exit of the Saddam Hussein regime. Syrian officials are of the view that Washington is looking for Syrian support to stabilise the internal situation in Iraq.

After concluding his talks in Damascus, Gen. Powell headed for Lebanon later in the evening.

He is expected to meet the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, and the newly elected Prime Minister of the Palesti-

## Influence

According to the Syrian perception, the U.S. realises that Damascus exercises considera-

# US troops fire on protesters again

Fallujah, April 30

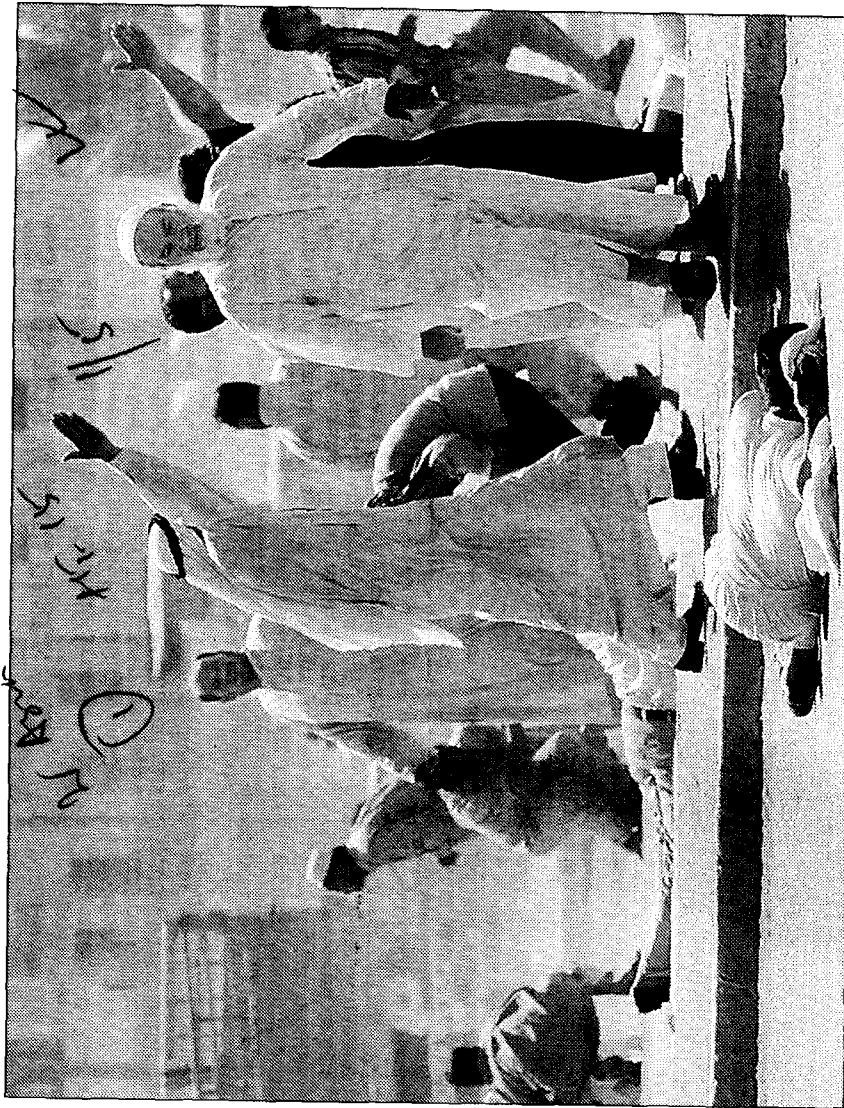
US TROOPS opened fire on anti-American demonstrators for the second time this week as Iraqis marched on Wednesday to protest the previous shooting. The city's mayor said two people were killed and 14 wounded in the clash.

An Army officer said soldiers in a convoy passing the demonstrators were shot at, and then returned fire. The gunfire came less than 48 hours after a shooting during a demonstration on Monday night that hospital officials said killed 13 Iraqis. There was no immediate indication of American casualties. US Central Command in Qatar said it was looking into the incident.

The clashes in Fallujah, a conservative Sunni Muslim city and Baath Party stronghold 30 miles west of Baghdad, reflect the area's increasing tensions as American troops try to keep the peace in Iraq.

About 1,000 residents marching down Fallujah's main street stopped on Wednesday in front of a battalion headquarters of the US Army's 82nd Airborne Division, in a compound formerly occupied by Saddam Hussein's Baath Party. The demonstrators were carrying signs condemning Monday night's shooting. Protesters started throwing rocks and shoes at the compound and troops opened fire about 10.30 am, scattering the demonstrators.

Lt Col Tobin Green, commander of the 2nd squadron of the 3rd Armoured Cavalry Regiment, which is taking over from



An Iraqi man lies dead in the street as others scramble for safety in Fallujah on Wednesday.

whose regiment came to Iraq from Fort Carson, Colorado, three weeks ago.

Fallujah mayor Taha Bedaiwi al-Alwani said two people were killed and 14 wounded and asked for an investigation and compensation for the victims.

After a meeting on Wednesday with US troops, the mayor said US soldiers have been asked to stay away from mosques, residential areas and other sensitive places. The Americans agreed to study the request.

Maj Michael Marti, an Intelli-

## Iraq belongs to Iraqis: Rumsfeld

SPEAKING ON his first visit to Baghdad since the fall of the Iraqi regime, US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Wednesday assured Iraqis that "Iraq belongs to them" and promised that US troops would not stay "one day longer" than was needed to establish a democratic government.

Rumsfeld arrived in Baghdad on Wednesday to review postwar reconstruction. In an address to the Iraqi people recorded in one of Saddam Hussein's palaces, Rumsfeld asked for their help in hunting down the ex-dictator's supporters and foreign fighters and said US forces were trying to restore essential services. He opened his speech by saying: "Hello, I'm Don Rumsfeld, the American Secretary of Defence. I am pleased to visit your country to witness your liberation."

*The Guardian, Baghdad*

officer, said the fire from the convoy was followed by soldiers opening fire from the compound.

City officials who witnessed the gunfire said they saw or heard no shooting from among the protesters. US Apache attack helicopters circled the site throughout the march and for hours afterward, barely skimming the tops of the tiled-roof minarets of Fallujah, known as "the city of mosques".

US officers met with the mayor and leading area sheikhs in hopes of reducing the tensions, while several dozen demonstrators clustered angrily outside the town hall. "Get out, get out!" one protester shouted at soldiers guarding the meeting.

Emerging from the meeting, the imam of the Grand Fallujah Mosque, Jamal Shaqir Mahmood, said, "The Americans said 'we won't reduce the numbers, they're needed for security.' But the people of Fallujah told them we already have security."

Americans and Iraqis have given sharply differing accounts of Monday night's shooting. Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne said they opened fire only upon armed men — about 25 infiltrators among a crowd of 200. Protesters insisted their demonstration was unarmed and peaceful. Ahmed Ghandim al-Ali, director of Fallujah's general hospital, said the Monday's clash killed 13 Iraqis and injured about 75. Some residents put the death toll higher, at 15. No Americans were injured.

AP

gence officer for the division's 2nd Brigade, said soldiers in a passing convoy fired on the crowd after rocks were thrown at them and a vehicle window was broken by what was believed to be automatic weapons fire.

Capt Jeff Wilbur, a civil affairs

AP

# France, Germany call for new military command

Agence France Presse

BRUSSELS, April 29. — France, Germany and two other EU countries opposed to the US-led war on Iraq called today for a new European headquarters to command military operations independent of Nato.

French President Jacques Chirac and his partners from Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg stressed they did not want to undermine the US-European alliance or the 19-nation military bloc, but the proposals issued at a controversial mini-summit of the four nations here, have the potential to provoke disquiet in Washington and London. In particular, talk of a new "European Security and Defence Union" (ESDU) could be viewed with suspicion in other EU capitals. The ESDU would "gather those member states that are ready to go faster and further in strengthening their defence cooperation", the four leaders said in a joint statement after the talks.

Such a development raises the prospect of a two-speed Europe as the EU struggles to forge a common foreign and security policy, which has been left largely in tatters by divisions over the war on Iraq. The four leaders instructed their defence ministers to

## Blair, Putin discuss Iraq

MOSCOW, April 29. — Mr Tony Blair sat down for talks today with Mr Vladimir Putin, amid nagging disagreements over the future of Iraq and its oil riches.

Mr Blair arrived in mid-afternoon for a few hours of talks with Mr Putin at his residence outside Moscow. The two "will discuss questions of cooperation in UN Security Council on the postwar restoration of Iraq, as well as the role of the UN itself in this process," Interfax said, quoting a Russian official. — AP

"take the necessary steps to establish, not later than 2004, a multinational deployable force headquarters for joint operations". The headquarters would be based at Tervuren, outside Brussels. "We believe the time has come to take new steps in the construction of a Europe of security and defence, based on strengthened European military capabilities, which will also give a new vitality to the (Nato)alliance," they said.

The development came after Mr Tony Blair issuing a thinly veiled warning to the four nations on the eve of the summit.

3 0 APR 2003

THE STATESMAN

# Abbas vows to disarm groups

RAMALLAH (WEST BANK), APRIL 29.

The Palestinian Prime Minister-designate pledged today that security services would be the only entities allowed to bear weapons, signalling his intention to disarm militant groups.

"Ending the armed chaos, which carries a direct threat to the security of the citizen, will be one of our fundamental missions," Mahmoud Abbas told the Parliament, which had convened to vote on his nomination.

"There is no place for weapons except in the hands of the Government," said Mr. Abbas, who has opposed militant violence during a 31-month-old Palestinian uprising for independence. "There is only one authority."

Turning to corruption, charges of which had dogged the President, Yasser Arafat's rule, Mr. Abbas said: "The Government will not allow anyone to misuse his position...The Government will not hesitate to bring corrupt people to court based on fair mechanisms."

## Arafat's plea

The Palestinian legislature convened on Tuesday for a vote of confidence in the Cabinet of Mr. Abbas, a key to resuming West Asia peace efforts.

Mr. Arafat urged lawmakers to approve the Cabinet and a legislator said informal polling suggested that approval was



The Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat (left), and the Palestinian Prime Minister-designate, Mahmoud Abbas, at the Palestinian Legislative Council (Parliament) in Ramallah on Tuesday. — AFP

likely. A 'yes' vote would pave the way for the presentation of the peace plan, the so-called "road map" to Palestinian statehood, by the U.S. President, George W. Bush, in the coming days.

"In this very sensitive and dangerous period the whole region is facing, I call your respected Council to give confidence to the new Cabinet that will be presented by my brother," Mr. Arafat said, referring to Mr. Abbas.

In violence on Tuesday, three

Palestinians were killed in Israeli strikes.

In the Gaza Strip, an Israeli helicopter gunship fired four missiles at a car, killing Nidal Salama, a senior member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a small radical PLO faction, and critically wounding a bystander.

In the West Bank, troops shot dead two members of the Al Qassa Martyrs' Brigade, a militia linked to Mr. Arafat's Fatah movement.

IRAQ AFTER SADDAM

# Iraq scientist calls stories about weapons programme 'all lies'

JUDITH MILLER

Baghdad, April 28: Dr Nissar Hindawi, a leading figure in Iraq's biological warfare programme in the 1980s, says the stories and explanations he and other scientists told the UN about the extent of Iraq's efforts to produce poisons and germ weapons "were all lies."

Hindawi, imprisoned during the final weeks of Saddam Hussein's rule, is now free to talk about his experiences in the programme, in which he says he was forced to work from 1986 to 1989 and again sporadically until the mid-1990s.

Iraq, as it belatedly acknowledged, he says, "produced huge quantities" of liquid anthrax and botulinum toxin, which it concentrated five to 10 times with sulfuric acid and other preservatives.

"There were orders to destroy it," Hindawi said during interviews conducted on Saturday and on Friday. "They destroyed some — whether all or not, I can't say."

He said that while he worked in the programme or was ordered to brief the inspectors on it, Iraq made 8.9 cubic meters — about 2,350 gallons — of concentrated liquid an-

thrax, one of the deadliest and most durable germ weapons, and even larger quantities of botulinum toxin, one of the most lethal poisons.

Even so, he said, there is little need for concern if US military teams hunting for unconventional weapons stumble across such stockpiles: The arsenals would have degraded quickly, he said. "Even if it's all kept until now, don't worry about it," he said.

In addition, he said, Iraq was never able to make dried anthrax, a medium that would have made the lethal spores far more durable and easier to dis-

seminate. He thought he had devised a way to turn liquid anthrax into the even more lethal powder, he said, but he did not do it. "I kept the method secret," he said. "History would have cursed me."

Several UN inspectors questioned his assertion that Iraq had not made a powdered form of anthrax. They said that in 1989, Iraq imported two drying ovens that could have made powdered anthrax, and that at least one other senior scientist in the programme appeared to know the required techniques.

But Hindawi said that if Iraq made such a weapon, it did

so after he left the scientific wing of the programme in 1989.

Though he no longer had first-hand knowledge of the programme after that, Hindawi said, he kept up on its progress through his students, some of whom stayed in the programme until the war began last month. US officials have been hunting for several scientists, including Rihab Taha, the microbiologist who reportedly headed the germ weapons programme and is known in the West as "Dr Death," and Huda Salih Mahdi Ammash, a senior scientist and Baath Party re-

gional command member who is the only woman on America's most wanted list.

Although there has been no public word from American authorities on their whereabouts, Hindawi said that he had been told that both women were hiding in Syria, as other Iraqi scientists, Baath Party members and military officers have been said to be. But Hindawi said he was not aware of Syrian-Iraqi cooperation on unconventional weapons. Iraqi scientists built their germ warfare programme themselves, he said.

Hindawi, 61 is now in the custody of the Iraqi opposition

leader Ahmad Chalabi. He painted a portrait of a biological warfare programme that was riddled with bitter personality rivalries, sycophancy and corruption. He said he was originally dismissed in 1989 because he had personally complained to Saddam about fraud in the awarding of contracts in the programme. He said Saddam appeared to agree with him, but did nothing because his son-in-law, Hussein Kamel, was in charge of the programme. "He was very gentle with me," the scientist said. "He respected me."

Saddam allowed him to

leave the programme and return to his teaching and research post at Mustanseriyeh University, he said. But there was a catch: "He said: 'If I need you, will you be available?' I said yes." Nevertheless, Hindawi seemed bitter about his colleagues and former students in the programme. He said he had been paid less than some of his assistants because he was not a permanent staff member.

"If you were a director's friend, you got paid more," he said. "If you were an important Baath Party figure, you got more."

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

6/1 2

23/4

# Dead Man Walking? US Hammers Final Nail In Saddam's Coffin

## Garner, Iraqi delegates discuss democracy on Saddam's birthday

Nadim Ladki  
BAGHDAD 28 APRIL

**A**BOUT 250 leading Iraqis from across the political and ethnic spectrum held a watershed meeting on Monday, convened by the United States to work out modalities on how to replace Saddam Hussein's iron rule with democracy.

US reconstruction chief Jay Garner opened the Baghdad meeting on Saddam's 66th birthday — until this year a public holiday — telling participants they bore a heavy responsibility to launch a new era for their war-ravaged country.

"Today on the birthday of Saddam Hussein let us start the democratic process for the children of Iraq," Mr Garner told delegates at a heavily guarded convention centre in the bombed-out heart of the capital's government district. Defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who ran the three-week war that ousted Saddam, congratulated his top field commanders during a tour of the region and mocked critics who had attacked the war plan in the early stages of the invasion.

"There were a lot of hand-wringers around, weren't there?" he told troops in Qatar, military headquarters for the war. "Never have so many been so wrong about so much." Despite the quick removal of Saddam, US troops have failed to find chemical or biological weapons — Washington's main rationale for the invasion — and they are facing demands to quit the country and make way for Iraqi rule.

Delegates at the Baghdad meeting told Mr Garner, who



**GARNERING SUPPORT:** Iraqi delegates confer during a meeting led by retired US General Jay Garner in Baghdad on Monday. — Reuters

promised Iraq on Sunday that the Americans would leave as quickly as possible, that they were grateful to Washington for removing Saddam but now wanted to run their own affairs.

Those attending included clerics from the Shi'ite majority and from the traditionally dominant Sunni Muslims, as well as Kurds from the northern mountains. Arab tribal chiefs in robes and head-dresses mixed with urban professionals in Western-style suits. Britain, the main US ally in the war, was represented at the meeting by foreign office minister Mike O'Brien, who told reporters he envisaged a process that would include a referendum on a new constitution.

It was not immediately clear if pro-American Ahmad Chalabi, leader of the Iraqi National Congress umbrella group, would accept his invitation to take part in the Baghdad talks.

The main Shi'ite Muslim

group, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), sent representatives to the meeting after boycotting a similar but much smaller gathering in Nassiriya on April 15. But several hundred demonstrators staged a rally in the capital to protest that Shi'ite leaders from the holy city of Najaf were not adequately represented at the talks.

A few of the demonstrators carried banners in support of Mohammed Mohsen Zubaidi, the former exile who declared himself mayor of Baghdad but was arrested by US forces on Sunday.

A US statement said Zubaidi had been detained because of "subversive" activities that included telling people they could not return to work without his approval. His "efforts to take political and personal advantage during this transitional period ... made it necessary for coalition forces to act decisively against him," it said. — Reuters

## Saddam is alive: Aziz

Washington  
28 APRIL

IRAQ'S former deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz has told US interrogators that Saddam Hussein survived two air strikes launched to kill the ousted Iraqi President, USA Today reported on Monday. But the newspaper also quoted a senior defence official as saying that interrogators had concluded that Aziz was lying about other matters that had come up in questioning. Aziz, who is being



**WISH-FUL THINKING:** A man holds mobiles depicting images of Saddam Hussein with the message 'Happy birthday' in Amman on Sunday. — Reuters.

questioned at an undisclosed location, said he saw Saddam alive after the March 19 and April 7 air strikes on Baghdad targeting the former Iraqi leaders and his two sons, USA Today said, citing the senior defence official.

Aziz, the most recognisable of the 13 former Iraqi officials known to be in US custody, surrendered to US forces last Thursday. He was No. 43 on the US list of 55 most wanted. — Reuters



# 'Wanted' Iraqi General captured

**QATAR, APRIL 27.** The U.S.-led forces said today that they were holding Gen. Hussam Mohammad Amin al-Yasin, head of Iraq's National Monitoring Directorate and a key figure in U.N. weapons inspections.

The Central Command here said that he was "under coalition control" but gave no details. Gen. Amin, whose agency monitored Iraq's armaments, was a familiar figure in the international media during the U.N. inspections before the U.S.-led invasion last month. He was No. 49 on a U.S. list of the 55 most wanted members of Saddam Hussein's administration and the six of clubs in a deck of cards

issued to U.S. troops hunting Iraqi leaders.

The Central Command said four U.S. soldiers were injured when their vehicles were ambushed in downtown Baghdad. The soldiers were travelling in two vehicles which were stopped in traffic when an assailant approached and fired at them from a small calibre weapon.

## Nerve gas found?

The U.S. troops found about a dozen 55-gallon drums in an open field near Baiji, a northern Iraqi town, and initial tests indicated that one of them contained a mixture of nerve gas and mustard gas, an American offi-

cer said today. Lt.Col. Ted Martin of the 10th Cavalry Regiment said troops went to the site on Friday night after being alerted by U.S. Special Forces teams, which were suspicious because of the presence of surface-to-air missiles guarding the area.

A chemical team checked the drums, one of which tested positive for cyclosarin, a nerve agent, and a blister agent, which could have been mustard gas.

An Iraqi exile who proclaimed himself Baghdad's mayor and begun issuing directives to city workers was arrested today by the U.S. forces, who accused him of exerting authority he did not have. — Reuters, AP

28 APR 2003

THE HINDU

# Serial blasts & blood break Baghdad lull

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28/4  
Zaafaraniya, April 26 (Reuters): Many Iraqi civilians were believed killed today when an arms dump blew up on the outskirts of Baghdad, sending rockets flying into houses over a wide area and sparking a string of further explosions.

With shrapnel, live ammunition and unexploded rockets strewn far and wide, the precise extent of the damage and casualties was far from clear. One Iraqi medic put the death toll at 40, while US Central Command said at least six were killed.

There was also confusion over the cause of the blast, which the US military blamed on unidentified attackers who fired a flare or incendiary device into the store of Iraqi ammunition.

Local residents said American forces had been packing cars with Iraqi weapons over the last three days and detonating them at the site, but a US officer, Col John Peabody, denied that.

Some turned their anger on the Americans, shooting and forcing them back from the scene for a while until they joined forces to search for casualties, soldiers said.

Whatever the precise cause of the explosions, they are likely to complicate American efforts to win Iraqi hearts and minds after the US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

The head doctor at Zaafaraniya hospital, Shaker Nasser, said his unit had received six dead and 13 wounded, adding that other hospitals in the capital were also taking casualties.

Some soldiers were also wounded, a US Army sergeant-major said at Zaafaraniya, a mixed residential and industrial suburb on the southern edge of Baghdad.

Local resident Tamir Kalaal said 14 of his relatives, including his father, brother and wife, were killed when a rocket destroyed his home.

"All I have left is her," he said, sobbing and pointing to his one-month-old daughter. "Those Americans did this," he said, shaking his finger in anger.

Near the scene, US Army Sergeant-Major Gary Coker said many people were trapped in buildings. The series of explosions began at about 8 am and seven hours later, sporadic blasts could still be heard.

US Central Command said in a statement issued in Qatar that an unknown number of individuals attacked American troops guarding the store and one soldier was wounded. "During the attack, the assailant(s) fired an unknown incendiary device into the cache, causing it to catch fire and explode. The explosion caused the destruction of the cache as well as a nearby building," the statement said.

An enraged man at the scene vented his fury at the US forces who took the capital two weeks ago: "Why? Why?...The war is finished. A baby, a woman, 14 under this building," he screamed in English.

"May God exact his revenge," added a woman, whose head was bandaged. She was seated next to a young girl whose dress was soaked in blood from a head injury. The girl's leg was being bandaged by a soldier.

About 500 Iraqi men, chanting anti-American, pro-Islam slogans, drove in a convoy of trucks, buses and cars out of the suburb — the first truck carrying six coffins, apparently containing bodies.

27 APR 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

# Tariq Aziz may yield clues to Saddam's fate

**Dubai:** Tariq Aziz, deputy prime minister in the Saddam Hussein regime and its face to the rest of the world for much of the last decade, surrendered to US forces on Thursday night.

The details on how he went into US custody are scarce but his family told CNN that Mr Aziz, 67, who has been suffering from heart problems, surrendered after days of negotiations. He had been concerned about a dignified surrender, added the family, who indicated he was still in Iraq.

He had been holed up in a relative's home near Baghdad since the fall of the Iraqi regime. His own luxury villa had been looted.

It is not clear what status he will have under US custody. CNN reported family members as saying that they had been told by coalition officials that the US wanted Mr Aziz to answer a number of questions, not necessarily go to jail.

US intelligence officials said that if he cooperated, he might be able to provide a wealth of information about the Iraqi government, including what happened to Mr Hussein and his two sons.

But just how big a catch Mr Aziz is for the US is debatable. In official listings of the Iraqi leadership, he usually appeared at number four or five on the Revolutionary Command Council.

The fact that the US listed him only as number 43 on its list of the 55 most wanted of Mr Hussein's aides reflected something that many Iraqis felt about him—that he carried less weight in the inner councils than his ranking suggested. In the end, his value to Mr Hussein appeared to lie in his flawless English and his quick mastery of almost any issue involving Iraq's relations with the world. A former journalist, he was good

with words, and knew a telling phrase. To anybody unfamiliar with the murderous nature of the government he represented, he could seem reasonable, witty, even charming. On an October night last year, Mr Aziz had led a reporter from his office in the council of ministers' building down to the lobby of the vast, colonnaded edifice that lay at the heart of the Republican Palace presidential compound.

He was in his element, puffing on a Havana cigar, showing off the acres of marble and the gilded chandeliers, dismissive of the threat of war with the US. "If Amer-

ica invades Iraq," he said, "we will fight, and we will win," and American soldiers by the thousands would return home in body bags.

But what if he were wrong, the reporter asked, and six months hence Gen Tommy R. Franks were to walk into the same marbled lobby, looking for a headquarters for the American forces occupying Iraq?

Mr Aziz waved his cigar airily. "You tell General Franks," he said, "that by the time he comes in here he'll be chasing shadows."

Six months after that exchange, Mr Aziz, by his reference to shadows, appeared to foreshadow at least one of the truths about the American war in Iraq—that the country's top leaders would vanish before American troops could seize them, and would become the targets of a huge manhunt.

By the time US troops arrived in Baghdad, every high-ranking leader around Mr Hussein had left the fight to a few diehard paramilitaries, and become the shadows Mr Aziz spoke of last year. But now Mr Aziz himself seems to have come out of the shadows.

OWS. NYT and Agencies



Tariq Aziz

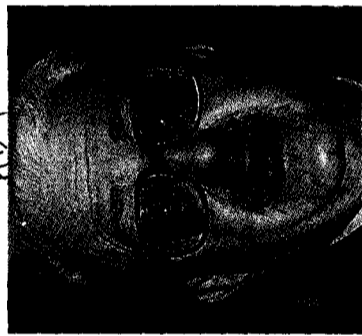
THE TIMES OF INDIA

26 APR 2003

# Tariq Aziz surrenders to U.S. forces

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 25.** Iraqis today hailed the surrender on Thursday of the high-profile former Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, to U.S. forces, saying it proved the Saddam Hussein era was over. With the best-known face of Mr. Hussein's ousted government in their control, U.S. officials guiding the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country predicted that some Government ministries could resume work by the end of next week.

Mr. Aziz, no. 43 on a U.S. list of 55 most-wanted aides of Mr. Hussein, gave himself up in Baghdad yesterday. "He did surrender. He is currently being questioned by coalition forces,"



a U.S. military spokesman said in Qatar.

Mr. Aziz, 67, last appeared in public on March 19 after rumours that he had been shot or had defected. The silver-haired,

cigar-smoking Mr. Aziz played a starring diplomatic role as Iraq's Foreign Minister in the run-up to the 1991 Gulf War.

Later he was the defiant international voice of Iraq before the invasion that overthrew Mr. Hussein.

Earlier, the U.S. administrator in Iraq said the formation of a new Iraqi Government would start next week. Speaking after talks with some of the country's prospective new leaders, Jay Garner told a news conference:

"I think you'll begin to see the governmental process start next week, by the end of next week. It will have Iraqi faces on it. It will be governed by the Iraqis," Iraqis who attended the

meeting with Gen. Garner in Baghdad expressed impatience at the failure of U.S. forces to restore essential services and law and order.

As part of the process of replacing Mr. Hussein's Government, a number of Iraqi political groupings are to meet U.S. officials in Baghdad on Monday, following an initial meeting near the southern city of An Nasiriyah last week.

Mr. Hussein and his two sons, Uday and Qusay, are missing and no weapons of mass destruction — the reason the U.S. and Britain launched the war on March 20 — have been found. — Reuters

See also Page 14

# History repeats itself in Mosul

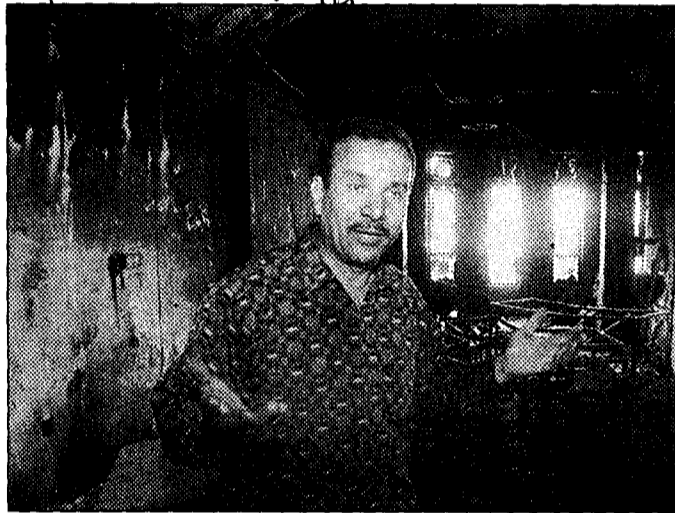
Mosul, April 25 (Reuters): Dr Khalil al-Saif holds back tears as he shows gutted classrooms and ruined equipment at Mosul University — shattered by war without a bomb coming near.

Armed men stole or destroyed all they could at the campus two weeks ago, taking advantage of a power vacuum to mount a looting spree that has left Saif and other university officials struggling to prepare for the return of students as life regains a semblance of normality elsewhere in Iraq's third largest city.

To make matters worse, the issue of university security is becoming a source of friction between the US military and officials who want to keep soldiers away from the campus.

It is a problem which illustrates the sort of challenge faced by the US army as it seeks to impose authority without upsetting locals in a city of more than one million people.

"The students will not tolerate direct contact with the occupying forces," university President Zuhair al-Sharook said in his office overlooking the campus entrance, guarded by Kur-



Mosul university teacher Dr Khalil Al Saif in a looted and burnt computer classroom. (Reuters)

dish "peshmerga" fighters with Kalashnikov rifles.

He was speaking after a recent visit from officials of the US army, which poured thousands of troops into the northern city this week in a show of force aimed at restoring order.

Sharook said he asked the peshmerga to protect the sprawling university, which has 18,000

students, until civilian guards could be arranged. A US army officer said the university administrator had wanted nothing to do with the American forces.

Well-armed Arab and Kurdish factions have been competing for power in Mosul since the collapse of Saddam Hussein's rule and US forces fear the city could be beset by factional fight-

ing along ethnic and religious lines.

There has also been opposition to the US invasion, especially since Marines shot dead at least seven people at a protest in the city centre last week. Angered at the destruction in the university and beyond, Sharook said armed US soldiers were not welcome on the campus.

"The Mongol emperor Hulo-g came to destroy Baghdad in 1280 and burned all the schools. Now history is repeating itself with the Hulo-g of the 21st century," he said, echoing a comment made by Saddam Hussein before the war.

The scale of the damage done to the university is obvious along the campus entrance road, which is littered with dozens of ruined computers, photocopiers, fax machines and pieces of furniture which have been recovered — a small fraction of what was stolen on April 10, according to campus officials.

They said the first looters were dressed in traditional Kurdish costume and were followed later in the day by armed Arab militia. The frightened staff could do little to stop them.

# Keep off Iraq, U.S. tells Iran

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 24. The Bush administration is warning Iran to stay out of Iraqi matters and issues. The United States has asked Teheran not to interfere with the democracy road map that is being laid out for Iraq.

In the last few days, against the backdrop of some major demonstrations by Shia Muslims in Iraq, the administration here has been worried about the possibility of Iran trying to get a foothold in the emerging scheme of things even while outwardly giving the impression that Washington looked at the Iraqi protests in the context of freedom and the changed environment. "We have concerns about this matter", the White House spokesman, Ari Fleischer, said without confirming that intelligence agents from Iran were making their way towards Iraq or were already inside that country. "We have made clear to Iran that we would oppose any outside organisations' interference in Iraq and interfering with the road to democracy", the spokesman remarked. "Infiltration of agents to destabilise the Shiite population clearly falls into that category", Mr. Fleischer noted. The White House is also comforting itself with the thought that Iran's efforts is not likely to succeed due to cultural differences. But this by itself is not stopping Wash-

ington from sending a blunt message to Teheran. The two countries do not have formal diplomatic relations and messages have been routed through third channels. During the war in Iraq and over the last few days, senior administration officials have issued warnings to Iran not to complicate the American and coalition efforts inside Iraq.

At the height of the hostilities, the U.S. leaned on Iran to stop members of the Badr Brigade — a militant anti-Saddam Hussein Shia group based in Iran — from crossing over into Iraq to take on the Saddam Hussein regime. And in the recent past, the intelligence community here is talking about an unknown number of Iranian or Iran-backed agents operating in southern Iraq with a view to promoting Shia and Iranian interests among the Shia community there. Iran is supposed to be particularly active in Najaf, Karbala and Basra with some help coming from the Badr Brigade.

The administration here will not admit this openly but it has been taken by surprise by the huge anti-American crowds that have been showing up in the streets of Iraq, especially the thousands of Shia Muslims telling the U.S. "thank you" but at the same time, asking it to leave.

Many in this community are calling for the establishment of an Islamic state.

25 APR 2003

THE HINDU

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# Syria still suspicious of U.S. intent

40-15

By Atul Aneja

**DAMASCUS, APRIL 24.** While hoping for a thaw in its recent tensions with the United States, Syria is still unsure whether the upcoming visit of the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, will put an end to the possibility of a war.

There is considerable apprehension in Syria's official and academic circles that some influential pro-Israel "hawks" in the Pentagon may have made up their mind to go after Syria. In that case, they could override Gen. Powell, even if he, after talks in Damascus, showed an inclination to pursue diplomacy to address U.S.-Syria differences.

One view circulating in Syria is that the influence of the Pentagon "hawks" in the Bush administration has grown in the aftermath of the Iraq war. Consequently, the scales in U.S. decision-making circles are clearly tilted in favour of the hardliners who might favour a more aggressive approach towards Syria, rather than the more cautious practitioners of diplomacy in the State Department. While not ruling out the possibility of a war, Syrian intelligentsia in gener-

al, is, however, veering round to the view that the U.S., in the end, may not choose to attack Syria. There are three reasons being espoused here on why Washington may wish to avoid a conflict with Damascus.

First, unlike Iraq, the U.S., with the exception of Israel, is unlikely to find friends that could set up a "coalition of the willing" that would be inclined to target Syria. Spain has already declared that it would not support an aggressive approach towards Syria. In Britain, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, appears more inclined to get the Israel-Palestinian question resolved in order to soothe the deep sense of hurt among the Arabs following the Iraq war, rather than target Syria for attack. Other key Security Council members, Russia and China, will under no circumstance approve a war against Syria.

### Growing difficulties

Second, the growing difficulties being encountered by the U.S. to govern Iraq is likely to discourage it from pursuing a similar course in any other neighbouring country. Besides, Syrian officials point out that there would be recognition in Washington

that unlike Iraq, where U.S. forces occupied Baghdad and other cities such as Tikrit, not by fighting, but after negotiating surrender deals with Iraqi Generals, the cost of a U.S. attack on Syria would be prohibitively high.

Third, it might be in U.S. interests after the Iraq war not to have Israel as the unrivalled military power in West Asia. In that case, the presence of a relatively strong Syria may be ultimately in U.S. interest, provided relations between Washington and Damascus improve.

According to Mahdi Dahlala, editor-in-chief of the *Al Baath* newspaper, the U.S. rhetoric against Syria has been part of an effort to "pre-empt" some of the difficulties that Washington visualises in the aftermath of the Iraq war. By putting Syria under the scanner, the U.S. hopes to discourage that country from providing external support to emerging resistance groups inside Iraq that might destabilise the post-war situation. Besides, with the dialogue to bring about a thaw in the Israel-Palestinian relations likely to commence soon, the U.S., with its rhetoric, might be seeking to "soften up" Syria that has exercised considerable influence over Palestinian groups.

THE HINDS

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# 'U.S. not planning bases in Iraq'

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 22. The United States Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, has argued that Iraq should be a democracy and not a theocracy; and has flat out rejected media reports that the U.S. is seeking bases in that country in the context of a long-term relationship.

"There should be a country that is organised and arranged in a way that the various ethnic groups and religious groups are able to have a voice in their government in some form. And we hope for a system that will be democratic and have free speech and free press and freedom of religion", Mr. Rumsfeld maintained during a press conference at the Pentagon.

Iraq, in the very recent past, has been witness to some major demonstrations and some from within the Shia community have suggested forming an Islamic republic on the lines of neighbouring Iran — a notion that is clearly not welcome in Washington.

## Demonstrations

The U.S. has made it known that it does not favour a form of government in Iraq

where the writ of the ayatollahs run. The administration here does not seem to be overly concerned — at least on the outside — of the anti-American demonstrations; and these have been passed off as Iraqis having the right to protest in a changed environment from the past. At the Pentagon, Mr. Rumsfeld rejected right away a report that the U.S. is seeking long-term relationship with Iraq that would see the use of at least four bases in the country. "It's flat false", Mr. Rumsfeld said, making the point that the idea has not even been discussed with him or in his presence.

Quoting unnamed administration officials, *The New York Times* had said on Sunday that the U.S. was keen on four air bases, including the international airport on the outskirts of Baghdad. "The likelihood of it seems to me to be so low that it did not surprise me that it's never been discussed in my presence, to my knowledge", the top administration official remarked. "Why do I say it's low? Well, we've got all kinds of options and opportunities in that part of the world to locate forces. It's not like we need a new place. We have plenty of friends", Mr. Rumsfeld said.

Further, he is making the point that he could not speculate on the future of U.S.-Iraq military relationship as there is no government yet in Baghdad. But Mr. Rumsfeld did rule out the possibility of a reduction of American forces in the Gulf region. "I would personally say that a friendly Iraq that is not led by a Saddam Hussein would be a reason we could have fewer forces in the region, rather than more. I mean, just logically".

## Chemical weapons

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has not yet officially responded to reports that U.S. weapons experts have found chemical ingredients and equipment that could be weaponised. The "discovery" was supposedly based on information provided by a former official of the Saddam Hussein regime who was supposed to be a part of Iraq's chemical weapons programme. The scientist is said to have claimed that Iraq destroyed and buried its weapons of mass destruction, along with the equipment just days prior to the start of the war on March 20. Senior officials here are also said to be "highly sceptical" of the information provided by the scientist.



# US overseer arrives in Baghdad

**Dubai:** Iraq's post-war administrator, retired American General Jay Garner, arrived in Baghdad on Monday amidst reports that the US was planning to establish four long-term military bases in that country as part of a redeployment of forces which could transform its capability to wield power in West Asia.

Gen Garner's arrival coincided with reports that two more top aides of Saddam Hussein, including his son-in-law, had been captured while a key Iraqi opposition leader, Ahmad Chalabi, claimed that the ousted Iraqi dictator was alive and in Iraq and that his son Qusay had been seen in Baghdad.

"Yes, he (Saddam) is in Iraq. Yes,

he is moving around," said Mr Chalabi, who heads the Iraqi National Congress. "We have received information about his movements and the movements of his sons," he claimed, but added that the information reached his sources too late for them to locate Mr Hussein before he had moved on again.

Soon after the 64-year-old Gen Garner landed at Baghdad airport on his first visit to the Iraqi capital, he said that his priority was to restore basic services like water and electricity in Baghdad where residents have become increasingly restless because of the disruption in these services after the invasion. He refused to fix a deadline for their restoration. "I

wouldn't put 90 days as a mark on the wall. We will be here as long as it takes. We will leave fairly rapidly."

With the situation returning to normal in Baghdad after days of looting, the US Marines have withdrawn and left the US army in control of the capital where a curfew between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. has been imposed.

Meanwhile, the *New York Times* reported that a US military team said a scientist who claimed to have worked with Iraq's weapons programme for more than a decade had told them that Iraq destroyed chemical weapons and biological warfare equipment days before the war began. Agencies

● Related reports on Pages 9, 10

# Managing the transition in Iraq

274 By Jack Straw 10-11

The famous British novelist, Graham Greene, once remarked that "there is always a moment when the door opens and lets the future in". The world witnessed such a moment as we all watched the statue of Saddam Hussein toppled from its plinth in central Baghdad. The stunning pictures from Fardous Square — where it happened — did not just symbolise the end of a 24-year reign of terror. They also marked the point when an oppressed people could begin to look forward to a prosperous future, free from the threat of intimidation, torture and summary execution. We saw the fall of Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's base, with little resistance.

It is time to turn our energies to winning the peace. Of course, there is no room for complacency. Iraq's potential — its cultural riches, its wealth of natural resources, and its talented people — is extraordinary. But realising this potential and repairing the damage caused by Saddam's rule will take an immense effort. The civil disorder which we recently witnessed across the cities of Iraq reminds us that the challenges for the international community do not disappear with the collapse of the Ba'ath regime. We should not be surprised by the people of Iraq turning against the institutions of a state which had for three decades held them in fear and repression. Of course, I do not condone the disorder, and we are now, thankfully, seeing considerable improvements in the situation. Coalition forces, working with ordinary Iraqi people, are beginning to bring stability to the streets of Iraq. It is a partnership — of the international community working together with ordinary Iraqi people — which will, more

generally and in the longer term, bring peace, prosperity and stability back to Iraq.

We have been giving a huge amount of thought to the post-conflict arrangements in Iraq. Our immediate priority is to ensure the delivery of food, medicine and humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq. British forces are already heavily involved in the provision of essential aid and the organisation of basic services in the south. In this, they are working closely with U.N. agencies and non-governmental organisations.

As well as restoring order on the ground and improving the humanitarian situation, we need to look at the post-Saddam era. A

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## OPINION

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dictatorship has been removed. But what will fill the vacuum? There is, in fact, a great deal of common ground on the ends: the creation of a stable and prosperous Iraq, run by the Iraqi people, disarmed of its weapons of mass destruction and living in peace with its neighbours. Discussion will focus on the means. Our position is clear. The United Nations should play a vital role in the rehabilitation of Iraq. We will seek the adoption of new United Nations Security Council Resolutions which reaffirm Iraq's territorial integrity, ensure the rapid delivery of humanitarian relief and endorse an appropriate post-conflict administration for Iraq.

We also support the early formation of an Iraqi Interim Authority which progressively will assume the functions of government. The coalition will need to work with the United Nations in establishing this body. At the right moment, I envisage a national

conference bringing together credible representatives from all parts of Iraqi society to agree on the establishment of this Interim Authority.

Managing the transition from dictatorship to democracy in Iraq is an enormous challenge. The international community will have to commit financial and human resources to Iraq for years to come. Some commentators are already suggesting that the task is beyond us, that international efforts to promote reconciliation and nation-building will prove no match for age-old ethnic and tribal rivalries. I do not underestimate the scale of the challenge. But we can take heart from recent precedents. In Afghanistan, the Afghan people now have a genuinely representative government. Almost two million refugees who fled the brutality of the Taliban regime have returned. In the Balkans, dictatorship has been replaced by democracy. The people of Kosovo no longer live in fear of persecution. They are beginning to enjoy the privileges of freedom which Western democracies have long taken for granted.

The task of the international community is to bring these privileges to the people of Iraq. To those who argue that we are doomed to failure, I simply say this. One of the abiding lessons of the twentieth century was that the values of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law ultimately triumphed over the greatest threats. I have no doubt that, with international support, these same values will take root in Iraq. They will be the foundation for the prosperous future every Iraqi parent wants for their children. And they will provide a fitting memorial to the millions of victims of Saddam's dictatorship.

*(The writer is Britain's Foreign Secretary)*

IRAQ / SADDAM'S SON-IN-LAW, SCIENTIST HELD

# Interim ruler to restore basic services

*AD-13  
2/2/9*

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 21.** The retired U.S. General appointed as Iraq's post-war administrator arrived in Baghdad on Monday, while two more top members of Saddam Hussein's regime — including his son-in-law — were reported captured.

Landing at Baghdad's airport in his first post-war visit to the capital, retired Lt. Gen. Jay Garner (65), said his priority was to restore basic services such as water and electricity as soon as possible — a task he said would take intense work.

The U.S. Central Command said forces had captured Abd al-Khaliq Abd al-Ghafar, Mr. Hussein's Scientific Research Minister, on Saturday — a development that could shed light on Iraq's nuclear programme. Mr. Abd al-Ghafar was the fourth of four in the U.S. military's most-wanted deck of cards.

Also, Mr. Hussein's son-in-law and one of the ousted President's bodyguards, both hiding in Syria, were persuaded to leave that country and surrendered to members of the opposition Iraqi National Congress in Baghdad, according to a spokesman for the group, Haidar Ahmed.

In Baghdad, the U.S. military opened a warehouse to U.N. aid shipments and stockpiled flour

on Sunday, trying to head off potential food shortages. Workers laboured to restore basic services like power and water. A convoy of food arrived over the weekend for the malnourished animals of Baghdad Zoo.

U.S. forces, together with returning Iraqi police, are trying to restore order until the inter-

im authority led by Gen. Garner can take over.

Gen. Garner heads the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, set up by the

U.S. administration to help rebuild Iraq and eventually turn authority over to the Iraqis. — AP



**The U.S. interim administrator for Iraq, Jay Garner, greets a patient during a visit to the Yarmuk hospital in Baghdad on Monday. — AFP**

# LESSONS FROM IRAQ-I

## Where The American Plans Misfired

By VLADIMIR KUZAR and SERGEI SUMBAYEV

It has become evident that the USA made not just a political mistake when it launched the Iraqi war without the approval of the world community but also miscalculated when formulating the strategy and preparing for the war. An indirect proof of this was the resignation of Richard Perle from the post of chairman of the Pentagon's Defence Policy Board. It is believed that this board of 30 ranking retirees who had worked in the US armed forces and special services, which acts as the consultative body of the Pentagon, coordinated the strategy for the Iraqi war. However, the war did not proceed according to the US plan.

What was that plan and where did the USA blunder? Experts say that the plan stipulated a lightning air-ground operation, with massive missile and bombing strikes at the vital centres and military facilities of Iraq destroying the bulk of its defence capability and undermining the morale and fighting spirit of the Iraqis and their will to resist. The combined effect of this was to allow the ground troops to ride into Baghdad without much ado.

### Guerrilla tactics

It was also expected that Iraq's army, which stopped developing in 1985-90, would not be able to resist the powerful precision-guided US strikes and that the Iraqi people, tired of living under Saddam's diktat, would welcome the liberators with open arms.

But the Pentagon clearly underestimated the opponent. The Iraqi leadership studied the experience of US military operations during the recent conflicts and chose the only true strategy of defensive battles designed to maintain broad resistance to the enemy and draw out the war. The Iraqi plan was to avoid head-on collisions with the

*The authors are political observers associated with Ria Novosti*

US troops and use instead a flexible guerrilla tactic of quick counter-strikes and ambushes. But the main idea of the Iraqis was to shift fighting to large settlements.

It has transpired that when Baghdad prepared for the imminent war, it sent to cities special groups that prepared them for street fighting. As a result, the advancing coalition troops came ac-

USA as the enemy set to occupy their country. This explains fierce resistance and readiness for self-sacrifice. Even the Iraqi opposition tried to keep away from the war, which they saw as the war of conquest.

Experts ask themselves why the Pentagon underestimated the possibilities of Iraq. On the one hand, the answer is clear: the USA



had limited intelligence possibilities because it did not have a network of agents in Iraq and consulted

Knowing that Baghdad would be the main war target, the Iraqi leadership divided the country among five regional commands with the right to independently make battle plans. This reduced the dependence of these commands on the central command and made war management more autonomous.

### Resistance

The US plans concerning the Iraqi public turned out to be wrong, too. The bulk of the Iraqis, who have suffered much during the ten years of international sanctions, which they think were imposed by Washington, see the

had limited intelligence possibilities because it did not have a network of agents in Iraq and consulted agents from among the opposition, Kurds and defectors certainly pursued their own goals. On the other hand, Britain, which was the main US ally in this war, is believed to have one of the largest agent networks in the region. Why did London not warn Washington about the genuine state of affairs in Iraq? Or did the Americans, consumed with the gung-ho spirit, disregard the advice?

The Pentagon clearly overestimated the possibilities of an air-ground operation. The first such operation was held during the 1991 Gulf War and was subsequently used as the basis for planning

the aggression against Yugoslavia. And most recently, the counter-terror coalition used the experience during the operation in Afghanistan. It was seemingly thanks to air strikes that the coalition won such effective victories there, which encouraged some Russian analysts to say that the future belongs to the air-ground operations. They even called on the military command to give priority attention to the development of air force.

### Air strikes

But a serious analysis of past wars shows that victories were scored not thanks to air-ground operations; other factors played the crucial role. During the 1991 war, Baghdad opposed the entire world community and the Iraqis knew the price they would have to pay for their aggression. Consequently, there was no sense or reason to continue fighting. The Yugoslav armed forces sustained minimal losses from the air strikes and retained their fighting ability, but political intrigues forced the country's leadership to surrender to the aggressors. In Afghanistan the Taliban were crushed not by massive bombing strikes (which were not as massive as the propaganda machinery led to believe) but by the Northern Alliance.

It should be said in this connection that some specialists are rather sceptical about the air-ground operations, especially when the air element clearly dominates. The US air-ground operation in Iraq is a vivid proof. Relying on massive missile and bombing strikes, the US command concentrated over 500 combat aircraft and 1,000 Tomahawk cruise missiles in the region. But the group of ground forces was not prepared to serious fighting and not enough ground troops were accumulated in the region.

*(To be concluded)*

## JEWISH VIOLENCE

### New ingredient in Mideast cauldron

AS though anything was necessary to boil the waters of the Mideast conflict further, a Jewish terrorist attack on Palestinian civilians has now taken place. An explosion at a school in the northern West Bank has injured 29 children and a radical Jewish group calling itself "Revenge of the Babies" has claimed responsibility. The name of the group is supposed to be a reference to children killed in Palestinian terror attacks. Many radical rightwing groups are made up of settlers in occupied territories, seeking *lebensraum* at the expense of Palestinians living there. While they are drawn by the lure of cheap land and other benefits from the Israeli government, they can conjure lofty theological premises for their "right" to occupy Palestinian land. Ariel Sharon claims that the Palestinian Authority, or whatever is left of it after being steamrollered by the Israelis, does not exert itself enough to bring terrorists to book. Will he set an example by bringing to justice those responsible for the latest atrocity?

President Bush has now promised to devote as much time to settling the Mideast conflict as Tony Blair devotes to Northern Ireland. Given that the war in Iraq has further inflamed Arab opinion, Bush will need to keep at least one-tenths of that promise. And that would not be good for Israel either. Ultra-conservatives in the US administration had argued that deposing Saddam Hussein would remove an "existential threat" to the Israelis and pave the way to a Mideast solution. Now that aim has been achieved, it is time for Tel Aviv to make some concessions to the Palestinians. That would mean not carving up the West Bank and Gaza strip into little Bantustans before implementing the "two state" solution. One hopes both Washington and Tel Aviv have the perspicacity to understand that.

THE STATESMAN

20 APR 2003

# Ex-minister, scientist arrested

Baghdad, April 19

US FORCES got a shot in the arm on Saturday with the arrest of two key members of Saddam Hussein's toppled regime.

Officers from Iraq's newly revived police force arrested Saddam Hussein's former finance minister, one of the 55 ex-leaders on the US most-wanted list, and turned him over to the Marines, the US Central Command said on Saturday. One of Saddam's top scientists, the mastermind of Iraq's nerve agent programme, also turned himself in.

Hikmat Mizban Ibrahim al-Azzawi, who also served as a Deputy Prime Minister, was arrested in Baghdad on Friday, the command said. The arrest raised hopes of tracing billions of dollars the ousted President may have stashed away.

The US military hopes he can help track funds alleged to have been secretly transferred abroad by Saddam and his family, whose

fate and whereabouts remain a mystery.

"As the Deputy Prime Minister for Finance and Economics he could have information on the locations of money that belongs to the Iraqi people," said Captain Stewart Upton, a spokesman at Central Command in Qatar.

"He's a Deputy Prime Minister. That in and of itself says that he has knowledge of the inner workings and the command structure of the regime," he said.

Saddam is thought to have amassed a fortune estimated at between \$2 and \$24 billion over his 24 years in power, much of which may be stashed in offshore accounts overseas.

There is speculation Saddam kept secret funds abroad. US officials may seek leads on this from Azzawi and Saddam's half-brother Barzan Ibrahim Hasan, once ambassador to the UN in Geneva and reputed "banker in the West", who is also in custody.

al-Ani of involvement with an alleged chemical weapons plant in Sudan with links to al-Qaida.

Military officials say US troops have found no confirmed chemical or biological weapons so far in their searches inside Iraq. No evidence of links between Iraq's government and the al-Qaida terrorist group has been found, either, military officials say.

If he cooperates with the Americans, al-Ani may be able to provide information on both.

Al-Ani was allegedly involved in Iraq's development of the nerve agent VX, one of the world's deadliest chemical weapons — and a substance that is difficult to make. He once headed the research and development programme at Iraq's Muthanna State Establishment, a key chemical weapons laboratory, and later headed Iraq's Falujah 2 chemical weapons plant.

Other figures from the most-wanted list captured previously

include Saddam's top science adviser, Lt. Gen. Amer al-Saadi; Saddam's half brothers Watban Ibrahim Hasan and Barzan Ibrahim Hasan, and Samir Abd al-Aziz al-Najim, a senior leader of Saddam's toppled Baath party.

A Central Command spokesman, Marine Captain Stewart Upton, said al-Azzawi's arrest showed the effectiveness of the US military's screening process for hiring police and getting them back on the job.

"The new police being hired are working for the people of Iraq," he said. "They are going after regime leaders."

The Central Command also said on Saturday that Khala Khader al-Salahat, a member of the Abu Nidal terrorist outfit, had surrendered to Marines in Baghdad. Abu Nidal, who died in Baghdad last year under mysterious circumstances, led a terror campaign blamed for more than 275 deaths on several continents.

Agencies



Hikmat Mizban Ibrahim al-Azzawi.

The arrest of scientist Emad Husayn Abdullah al-Ani raised hopes of a breakthrough in the as-yet-fruitless search for banned chemical and biological weapons in Iraq.

US officials have also accused

## Transfer of power within weeks: Chalabi

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 18.** Amid mounting protests demanding that the U.S.-led coalition leave Iraq quickly, the Opposition leader, Ahmad Chalabi, promised today that power would begin to be transferred to Iraqis within weeks.

Elsewhere, limited fighting continued between the U.S.-led troops and forces loyal to Saddam Hussein, while the Americans stepped up their hunt for the toppled Iraqi leader and his loyalists. The U.S. forces captured a senior Iraqi official overnight, and new footage of Mr. Hussein said to be taped April 9 — the day Baghdad fell — raised new questions on his fate.

### Cleric's call

In Baghdad, a leading cleric, Ahmed al-Kubeisy, criticised the American "occupation" and asked the U.S. soldiers to leave.

"You are the masters today," al-Kubeisy said to cheers from worshippers at the Abu Haneefa al-Nu'man Mosque. "But I warn you against thinking of staying. Get out before we force you out."

After the sermon, thousands of people marched through the streets, chanting both anti-American and anti-Saddam Hussein slogans and calling for unity among the country's Sunni Muslims, Shi'ite Muslims and Kurds. Long time opponent of Mr. Hussein and head of the Iraqi National Congress who enjoys Washington's backing, Ahmad Chalabi, in his first public appearance, said he expected general elections be held within two years. But, he was vague on the specifics of the process to select an interim government.

In Washington, Maj. Ted Wadsworth, a Pentagon spokesman, said coalition forces have released more than 900 Iraqi prisoners, beginning the process of sorting through the thousands detained in the month-old war. U.S. officials said Samir Abd al-Aziz al-Najim, a senior leader of the Baath Party, was handed over to U.S. forces overnight by Iraqi Kurds near the northern city of Mosul. Al-Najim was the oil minister until earlier this year.

Abu Dhabi television on Friday broadcast a footage of what it said was Mr. Hussein being greeted by an enthusiastic crowd in the streets of Baghdad. Later, the United Arab Emirates-based station broadcast a separate audio of a speech reportedly recorded on the same day by Mr. Hussein. — AP

19 APR 2003

SEE HINDU

# Embassy attack <sup>14/4</sup> angers S. Koreans

By P. S. Suryanarayana

**SINGAPORE, APRIL 13.** The shock waves of the U.S.-led war in Iraq have begun to be felt across East Asia. While South Korea's embassy building in Baghdad is suspected to have been bombed by the American warplanes, China has openly and strongly condemned the looting that occurred at its diplomatic premises in Baghdad.

While Indonesia insisted that the U.S. should not install a puppet government in Baghdad, thousands of Indonesians held rallies across the country today to protest against the perceived atrocities of the U.S. forces in Iraq. The South Korean authorities tried to figure out how best to cope with a situation of popular demonstrations against not only the Iraq war but also the suspected American game plan of threatening North Korea in the military field itself.

The Roh Moo-hyun administration in Seoul did not formally make an issue of the reported bombing of the South Korean mission in Baghdad by American warplanes. However, the popular sentiment in Seoul was one of general dismay. The building on the banks of the Tigris in Baghdad was said to bear signs of damages that could only be attributed to an aerial bombing, most likely by the U.S. warplanes. The South Korean embassy was also believed to have been ransacked, and the strong suspicion was that the Iraqi looters had got into the act in the free-for-all climate that characterised the hours that followed the U.S. military thrust into Baghdad itself. Though South Korea's experience is somewhat reminiscent of the U.S. "accidental bombing" of China's diplomatic mission in Belgrade at the height of the Kosovo war, Seoul has not yet taken a definitive stand, given also the initial indications that there were no casualties in the incident.

As an 'ally' of the U.S, South Korea has, instead, announced plans to send the first batch of "non-combat troops" to the Iraqi theatre by the end of this month to work under the overall American military command.

Commenting on the 'robbery' at the Chinese embassy in Baghdad, the Foreign Ministry spokesman in Beijing "deeply regretted the anarchy caused by the war in Iraq" and condemned the incident. The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Hassan Wirayuda, said in Jakarta today that any new Iraqi government should be "legitimate and representative" in character. "The U.N. holds the key for that," he underlined. The Indonesian President, Megawati Sukarnoputri, is likely to visit Russia soon for talks with the President, Vladimir Putin, on establishing new strategic linkages with Moscow and on the Iraq crisis.

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THE HINDU



# Iraqis cry for Islamic state, ask US to go

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**Baghdad, April 18 (Reuters):** Muslims poured out of mosques and into the streets of Baghdad, calling for an Islamic state to be established, after the first Friday prayers since US forces took control of the Iraqi capital.

Carrying Qurans, prayer mats and banners, tens of thousands of people marched in the city's biggest protest since US forces toppled Saddam Hussein more than a week ago — a protest unthinkable under the former President.

"Leave our country, we want peace," read one banner aimed at the Americans who seized control nine days ago but failed to check looting, power black-outs and chaos in the aftermath.

"No Bush, No Saddam, Yes Yes to Islam," read another.

The organisers called themselves the Iraqi National United Movement and said they represented both Iraq's majority Shia Muslims and powerful Sunnis.

Shias, close to Iran's leaders, were marginalised under Saddam's Sunni-dominated government and some Iraqis have feared sectarian clashes could erupt.

"No Shi'ites, No Sunnis, Yes Yes for United Islam," another banner read.

The marchers came from several mosques and converged in a central district, Aadhamiya, for the peaceful protest.

One of the biggest columns came from Abi Hanifah Nouman mosque. Its dome was bombed during the recent war.

The imam, Ahmed al-Kubaisi, said in his sermon that the US invaded Iraq to defend Is-

rael, and also denied Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.

"This is not the America we know, which respects international law, respects the right of people," he said.

His followers poured out chanting anti-US slogans and waving banners that read "No to America. No to Secular State. Yes to Islamic State" and "We reject American hegemony".

Saddam's Baath Party, which has ruled for three decades, was secular.

Standing on and all around a tanker truck crawling down the road, the men, some in turbans and with long beards, chanted: "We are Sunni and Shi'ite brothers, we will not sell this nation."

"We will give the American troops a few months to leave Iraq. If they do not, we will fight them with knives," one demonstrator said.

One woman watching the crowds said it would not be easy to force out the US troops.

"What are these people talking about? They want to force the American troops to leave? It is too late to do so. The American troops dug in in Baghdad and now it is difficult to get them out," said Um Huda, a housekeeper.

A statement issued by the movement urged Iraqis to oppose a "federal government that the US wants to set up in the coming few days".

"Our movement wants every Iraqi to take part in rebuilding Iraq and set up a new modern state," said the statement, signed by Kubaisi.

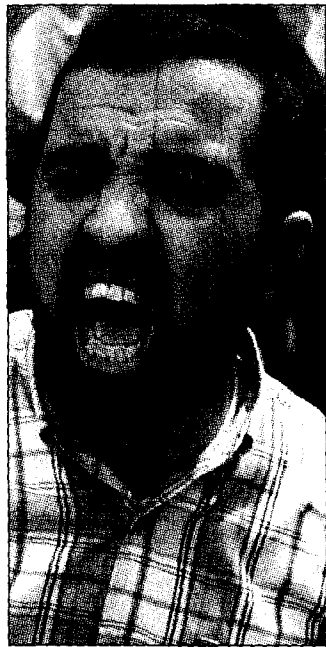
In Tehran, one influential conservative Shia cleric also called for the US-led forces to leave.

"Unite with each other and send America and Britain out of your country. It is a duty for the Iraqi nation," Ayatollah Mohammad Emami-Kashani said in a sermon broadcast live on radio.

The US has said a former American general will lead an interim government in Iraq for an indefinite period but insists it will hand over control as soon as possible.

"People will have the right to demonstrate in a free Iraq," said US Brigadier General Vincent Brooks. "There may be some that say, 'Get the coalition out of here'."

"We want the governance of Iraq to be handed over to the Iraqi people as quickly as we can and we've made a commitment to not staying any longer than it takes to get those key actions completed," he told a news briefing today.



An Iraqi shouting anti-US slogans in Baghdad. (Reuters)

1 8 APR 2003

# Iraqis want their 'liberator' out

Baghdad, April 18

MUSLIMS Poured out of mosques and into the streets after the first Friday prayers in a US-controlled Baghdad, calling for an Islamic state to be established.

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A child looks up as clerics offer prayers at a mosque on Friday.

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Reuters

## Number 24 on most-wanted list in US net

As Sayliya Camp, April 18

IRAQI KURDS near Mosul have handed over to US-led forces a member of Central Command's list of most-wanted Iraqis, US Brigadier General Vincent Brooks has said.

"Last night coalition special operations forces captured another key member of the regime. Samir Abul Aziz al-Najim, one of the top 55 leaders of the regime, was handed over to coalition forces by Iraqi Kurds near Mosul in northern Iraq," Brooks told a news briefing on Friday.

Najim was a Baath Party regional command chairman for East Baghdad and listed as No. 24 on the US most-wanted list.

He is the fourth person on the list in US custody.

"We know that he certainly has an insight on how the Baath Party Central Committee worked," Brooks said, adding there were some indications — but no confirmation — that Najim may have been posted to the north of the country to take command of some military operations there.

On Thursday US-led forces captured ousted President Saddam Hussein's half-brother, Barzan Ibrahim Hasan al-Tikriti, and former head of Iraqi intelligence in Baghdad.

"All the members of that list of 55 have useful information about the inner workings, the inside of this regime, and more importantly some of its actions and decisions that have been taken over time," Brooks said.

Reuters

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# Licence to loot

✓ 576 First act of changed regime 19/4 ✓

It has been plunder by proxy these past few days in every Iraqi city. For while American and British soldiers may have limited their participation in collecting spoils of war to souvenirs, their collective indifference to the looting renders them guilty of abetting the widespread criminal activity that followed their ejecting a supposedly repressive regime. There is only limited validity to the soldiers' plea that they were tasked with destroying the military might of the enemy and neither mandated nor equipped to police the territory over which they had assumed control. The thrust of the campaign had been regime change, even if unearthing weapons of mass destruction was the fig leaf under which it was conducted.

It requires no legal tome to spell out that those responsible for dismantling one administrative system are required to replace it. No vacuum should have been permitted to develop, the coalition was aware of what it was doing. That eventually some Iraqis stepped forward and offered to try and restore some order indicates both their love for their country — which is no crime, not even if that country has been projected in the darkest of hues by the Bush-Blair combine — as well as their lack of faith in the capacity of the occupation armies to get the job done. That the coalition waited until there was little left to loot before accepting their offer only confirms that their intentions were far from honourable. As for the troops' ability to enforce security, it was amply demonstrated when required to protect the prime American and British interests — the oil fields.

The men, or rather their officers, who raced through the desert in Humvees, Bradleys, Abrams, Warriors, Challenger-IIs and Land Rovers are guilty of sparking off the mayhem. Had they not displayed such glee in pulling down images and statues of Saddam Hussein — by no stretch of imagination were they legitimate military targets — they would have demonstrated a certain respect for underpinning of an organised society. Their vandalism was the key that unlocked the gates to the highway to hell that Iraqi cities have become. They showed the way to the lumpen elements they had "liberated," and the banditry was not limited to the palaces of the erstwhile regime but hospitals, stores, homes and even the riches of a museum that played host to a heritage that even Saddam Hussein could not destroy. No, the coalition cannot get away with emulating Pontious Pilate during this Easter Week.

Rather than be revolted at one result of the action he had authorised, Donald Rumsfeld tried to write it off as only to be expected. Worse, it was projected as the result of pent-up emotions, of a deprived society settling scores with its rapacious leadership. That argument would justify the sacking of Windsor Castle and the White House, the average Brit and Yank do not live in such splendour. Rumsfeld had the temerity to declare that a false impression was created by television re-running the scenes of looting — the man had no complaints when for hours those same channels repeatedly screened the pulling down of Saddam' statue in central Baghdad, which was projected as the collapse of his regime.

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THE STATESMAN

## Transfer of power within weeks: Chalabi

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19 APR 2003

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# Company with political connections bags contract

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By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 18. In a move that has already raised eyebrows here and overseas, the United States Agency for International Development has awarded the Bechtel Corporation about \$ 35 millions to start work in Iraq — the amount which could get as high as \$ 700 millions over an 18- month period.

The politically active San Fransisco based corporation which has actively courted to both Republicans and Democrats over the years will be actively involved in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq, focussing on power, water, sewage systems as also having a role to play in the rehabilitation of airport facilities and up-garding the Umm Qasr seaport in cooperation with partners.

But Democrats on Capitol Hill have criticised the bringing in of Bechtel Corp; but much of the criticism has been on USAID's fast track bidding system rather than on the deep political pockets of the company.

Some Democrats have spoken of the "troubling pattern" that is beginning to emerge as powerful corporations are beginning to be awarded contracts without any transparent process.

The Bush administration has been saying that even within the present constraints of time the bidding process has been quite intensive.

A criticism in the run up to the war against Iraq has been that major corporations are the only biggest cheerleaders of the administration as they were heading the conflict route since they stood to gain the most in the post-war phase.

One estimate is that the tab for Iraq in the post conflict phase could run as high as \$ 100 billions over a 10 year period and one fourth of this will be in the realm of reconstruction.

## Suspicion remains

The concern overseas has been that the



A painting depicting war stands in the rubble of the Ministry of Defence in Baghdad on Thursday. — AFP

United States will seek to corner every advantage in Iraq much to the detriment of others in Europe and Asia in the rebuilding phase. The Bush administration has sought to allay fears, but the suspicion remains that those highly critical of Washington during the conflict phase could be left out in the cold.

In addition to the Bechtel Corporation, the other that is meriting perhaps a higher degree of attention was Halliburton which was at one time headed by the Vice-President, Dick Cheney. Halliburton's subsidiary, the KBR, was invited to bid but declined and is now expected to be doing sub-contracting.

Senior law makers have approached the General Accounting Office, GAO, asking it to investigate if all procedures have been

followed. The GAO has said that issues pertaining to Iraq, including reconstruction, will be reviewed. "We will not be targeting any particular company. But no company will be off the radar screen", a spokesman has said.

For its part the USAID has said that all procedures have been followed and that companies have not been pulled out of the "thin air". Bechtel Corp has had powerful executives like George Shultz, former Secretary of State, and Casper Weinberger, the former Defence Secretary.

According to the Centre for Responsive Politics, the Corporation and its Employees contributed some \$ 277,000 dollars to federal candidates and party committees in the last election cycle — 57 per cent to Democrats and 43 per cent to Republicans.

19 APR 2003

THE HINDU

# Syria getting ready for talks

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, APRIL 18. While the threat of force against it has not receded, Syria appears to be getting ready for tough negotiations during the visit to Damascus by the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell. Gen. Powell has included Syria as one of his destinations in his coming visit to the region. With the war in Iraq practically over, the U.S. is expected now to pay vigorous attention on the West Asia "road-map" for achieving lasting peace.

The U.S., prior to its dialogue with Syria has not, however, abandoned its threatening posture towards Damascus. While many of its warships have left the waters surrounding Iraq, the U.S. has continued to retain two of its aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean Sea, not far from Syria. The U.S. carriers Theodore Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman continue to remain deployed in these waters, while only one aircraft carrier, Nimitz, has now been retained in the Persian Gulf.

Signalling the threat of force earlier, the U.S. had chosen to bomb the Syrian trade centre in Baghdad. Economic pressure has also been stepped up after the U.S. special forces blocked the Iraqi oil supply to Syria along the Mosul-Banias oil pipeline. There is also considerable talk about imposition of economic sanctions against Sy-

ria in the last few days has been in the process of spelling out its stance. By demanding that West Asia should become a zone free of mass destruction weapons, Syria has asserted that it would not consider the demand for shedding its mass destruction weapons alone. Israel, its hostile neighbour, it has stressed must also be brought within the ambit of disarmament.

Focused on the removal of mass destruction weapons in the entire region, including Israel, Syria has ruled out admission of weapons inspectors on its soil. Syria has also reiterated its rejection of the U.S. presence in Iraq. At a press conference in Cairo on Thursday, the Syrian Foreign Minister, Farouk al Shara, stressed the necessity of the withdrawal of invading forces from Iraq. During Gen. Powell's visit, the Syrians are expected to urge Washington to persuade Israel to withdraw from its 1967 occupation of the Syrian Golan heights.

Considerable progress has been made in the past on defining a peace package that could include Israeli withdrawal from the Golan area backed by Syrian security guarantees for Israel and a formulation that would ensure fair usage of the area's water resources. The U.S. Secretary of State is certain to ask Syria to withdraw its support to the Hezbollah and pull back its troops from Lebanon.



**NOT FAR FROM SYRIA: Two F/A-18 Hornets take off aboard the USS Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier, which the U.S. continues to retain in the Mediterranean.** — AP

ria under the Syria Accountability Act.

The surge of U.S. interest in Syria is because of the capacity of Damascus to upset U.S. long-term goals in Iraq. Besides, Syria can be an impediment in the expansion of the security zone of U.S. key ally, Israel, along its borders in the north and the northeast. Analysts point out the U.S. has recognised that it faces a potential, Lebanon type situation in Iraq. Relentless guerrilla warfare spearheaded by Syrian and Iranian backed Hezbollah fighters had forced out Israel out of Lebanon, after nearly 20 years of partial occupation that began in 1982.

The U.S. now apprehends that it could be a target of unconventional warfare inside Iraq and face a similar situation, in case potential anti-U.S. fighters are armed and supported by an external force in the neighbourhood. Apprehending that Syria could support such a movement inside Iraq, the U.S. is imposing enormous pressure on Damascus to dissuade it from pursuing such a course. The U.S. would also want Syria to terminate its support for the Hezbollah, enhancing Israeli security. Besides, Washington, apprehending that Syria has mass destruction weapons, wants these stockpiles to be eliminat-

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THE HINDU

# Securing Baghdad, the priority: U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

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debris remained to be examined; and this work has to be done with the use of heavy equipment, it is said.

At a town hall type meeting at the Pentagon, the Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, argued that the higher priority of finding weapons of mass destruction would also take a long time and the key to this will be in the hands of Iraqis who know details of any weapons or programmes of weapons of mass destruction.

"I don't think we'll discover anything, myself", Mr. Rumsfeld told employees of the Pentagon.

"I think what will happen is we'll discover people who will tell us where to go find it. It is not like a treasure hunt where you just run around looking everywhere, hoping you'll find something."

One of the things that is attracting a lot of attention on the ground in Iraq and here is

increasing concern that stockpiles of dangerous chemicals and biological materials such as VX, nerve gas agents and mustard gas should not slip out of the country or fall into unscrupulous hands. It is said that thousands of soldiers and experts are working in Iraq to locate these substances.

The Bush administration is coming under a lot of pressure and scrutiny on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction — the rationale of the very existence is what this Iraq war was supposed to be.

Meanwhile the Bush administration is said to have enlisted the help of about 10 former Weapons Inspectors in the hunt for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons; but the work of these inspectors has got off to a slow start.

The identities of the inspectors have not been revealed but they are believed to be mostly Americans with perhaps some British nationals.

WASHINGTON, APRIL 18. The Pentagon is making it known in quite clear terms that one of the main priorities in Iraq right now is firmly securing Baghdad, and in finding weapons of mass destruction — not in looking for evidence whether the deposed Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, is alive or dead. Further the point is being made that giving anything conclusive on the whereabouts of Mr. Hussein could take several weeks given the magnitude of the task on hand. The White House Chief of Staff, Andrew Card, remarked in an On Line session that he believed the former Iraqi leader was dead. The Pentagon maintains that even if Mr. Card is correct in his assumption, proving this could take weeks. Investigative teams of the United States have gone through two sites which have seen massive American bombing on March 19 and April 7. But still tons of

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W. R. King  
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# Syria getting ready for talks

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, APRIL 18. While the threat of force against it has not receded, Syria appears to be getting ready for tough negotiations during the visit to Damascus by the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell. Gen. Powell has included Syria as one of his destinations in his coming visit to the region. With the war in Iraq practically over, the U.S. is expected now to pay vigorous attention on the West Asia "road-map" for achieving lasting peace.

The U.S., prior to its dialogue with Syria has not, however, abandoned its threatening posture towards Damascus. While many of its warships have left the waters surrounding Iraq, the U.S. has continued to retain two of its aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean Sea, not far from Syria. The U.S. carriers Theodore Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman continue to remain deployed in these waters, while only one aircraft carrier, Nimitz, has now been retained in the Persian Gulf.

Signalling the threat of force earlier, the U.S. had chosen to bomb the Syrian trade centre in Baghdad. Economic pressure has also been stepped up after the U.S. special forces blocked the Iraqi oil supply to Syria along the Mosul-Banias oil pipeline. There is also consideration about imposition of



**NOT FAR FROM SYRIA: Two F/A-18 Hornets take off aboard the USS Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier, which the U.S. continues to retain in the Mediterranean.** — AP

ria under the Syria Accountability Act.

The surge of U.S. interest in Syria is because of the capacity of Damascus to upset U.S. long-term goals in Iraq. Besides, Syria can be an impediment in the expansion of the security zone of U.S. key ally, Israel, along its borders in the north and the northeast. Analysts point out the U.S. has recognised that it faces a potential, Lebanon type situation in Iraq. Relentless guerrilla warfare spearheaded by Syrian and Iranian backed Hezbollah fighters had forced out Israel out of Lebanon, after

ed. Syria in the last few days has been in the process of spelling out its stance. By demanding that West Asia should become a zone free of mass destruction weapons, Syria has asserted that it would not consider the demand for shedding its mass destruction weapons alone. Israel, its hostile neighbour, it has stressed must also be brought within the ambit of disarmament.

Focused on the removal of mass destruction weapons in the entire region, including Israel, Syria has ruled out admission of weapons inspectors on its soil. Syria has also reiterated its rejection of the U.S. presence in Iraq. At a press conference in Cairo on Thursday, the Syrian Foreign Minister, Farouk al-Shara, stressed the necessity of the withdrawal of invading forces from Iraq. During Gen. Powell's visit, the Syrians are expected to urge Washington to persuade Israel to withdraw from its 1967 occupation of the Syrian Golan heights.

Considerable progress has been made in the past on defining a peace package that could include Israeli withdrawal from the Golan area backed by Syrian security guarantees for Israel and a formulation that would ensure fair usage of the area's water resources. The U.S. Secretary of State is certain to ask Syria to withdraw its support to



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# Company with political connections bags contract

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 18. In a move that has already raised eyebrows here and overseas, the United States Agency for International Development has awarded the Bechtel Corporation about \$ 35 millions to start work in Iraq — the amount which could get as high as \$ 700 millions over an 18- month period.

The politically active San Francisco based corporation which has actively contributed to both Republicans and Democrats over the years will be actively involved in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq, focussing on power, water, sewage systems as also having a role to play in the rehabilitation of airport facilities and up-garding the Umm Qasr seaport in cooperation with partners.

But Democrats on Capitol Hill have criticised the bringing in of Bechtel Corp; but much of the criticism has been on USAID's fast track bidding system rather than on the deep political pockets of the company.

Some Democrats have spoken of the "troubling pattern" that is beginning to emerge as powerful corporations are beginning to be awarded contracts without any transparent process.

The Bush administration has been saying that even within the present constraints of time the bidding process has been quite intensive.

A criticism in the run up to the war against Iraq has been that major corporations are the only biggest cheerleaders of the administration as they were heading the conflict route since they stood to gain the most in the post-war phase.

One estimate is that the tab for Iraq in the post conflict phase could run as high as \$ 100 billions over a 10 year period and one fourth of this will be in the realm of reconstruction.

## Suspicion remains

The concern overseas has been that the



A painting depicting war stands in the rubble of the Ministry of Defence in Baghdad on Thursday. — AFP

United States will seek to corner every advantage in Iraq much to the detriment of others in Europe and Asia in the rebuilding phase. The Bush administration has sought to allay fears, but the suspicion remains that those highly critical of Washington during the conflict phase could be left out in the cold.

In addition to the Bechtel Corporation, the other that is meriting perhaps a higher degree of attention was Halliburton which was at one time headed by the Vice-President, Dick Cheney. Halliburton's subsidiary, the KBR, was invited to bid but declined and is now expected to be doing sub-contracting.

Senior law makers have approached the General Accounting Office, GAO, asking it to investigate if all procedures have been

followed. The GAO has said that issuing aid to Iraq, including reconstruction, will be reviewed. "We will not be taking any particular company. But no one will be off the radar screen", a spokesman has said.

For its part the USAID has said procedures have been followed at companies have not been pulled out "thin air". Bechtel Corp has had prominent executives like George Shultz, former Secretary of State, and Casper Weinberger, former Defence Secretary.

According to the Centre for Responsive Politics, the Corporation and its Em contributed some \$ 277,000 dollars over the last election cycle — 57 per cent to Democrats and 43 per cent to Republican

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THE HINDU

19 APR 2003

# Securing Baghdad, the priority: U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 18. The Pentagon is making it known in quite clear terms that one of the main priorities in Iraq right now is firmly securing Baghdad and in finding weapons of mass destruction — not in looking for evidence whether the deposed Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, is alive or dead. Further the point is being made that giving anything conclusive on the whereabouts of Mr. Hussein could take several weeks given the magnitude of the task on hand. The White House Chief of Staff, Andrew Card, remarked in an On Line session that he believed the former Iraqi leader was dead. The Pentagon maintains that even if Mr. Card is correct in his assumption, proving this could take weeks. Investigative teams of the United States have gone through two sites which have seen massive American bombing on March 19 and April 7. But still tons of

debris remained to be examined; and this work has to be done with the use of heavy equipment, it is said.

At a town hall type meeting at the Pentagon, the Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, argued that the higher priority of finding weapons of mass destruction would also take a long time and the key to this will be in the hands of Iraqis who know details of any weapons or programmes of weapons of mass destruction.

"I don't think we'll discover anything, myself", Mr. Rumsfeld told employees of the Pentagon.

"I think what will happen is we'll discover people who will tell us where to go find it. It is not like a treasure hunt where you just run around looking everywhere, hoping you'll find something."

One of the things that is attracting a lot of attention on the ground in Iraq and here is

increasing concern that stockpiles of dangerous chemicals and biological materials such as VX, nerve gas agents and mustard gas should not slip out of the country or fall into unscrupulous hands. It is said that thousands of soldiers and experts are working in Iraq to locate these substances.

The Bush administration is coming under a lot of pressure and scrutiny on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction — the rationale of the very existence is what this Iraq war was supposed to be.

Meanwhile the Bush administration is said to have enlisted the help of about 10 former Weapons Inspectors in the hunt for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons; but the work of these inspectors has got off to a slow start.

The identities of the inspectors have not been revealed but they are believed to be mostly Americans with perhaps some British nationals.

THE HINDU

IRAQ / ANOTHER ROW ON THE CARDS

# S. for lifting U.N. sanctions

by **Krishnaswami**

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Under the new scheme of things major powers are worried that in the event of the U.N. lifting sanctions who would be the main source within Iraq that will be super- vising the imports. And this is where the political fight is a perception — and a valid

# Shia clerics filling power void

**NAJAF (IRAQ), APRIL 17.** In this holiest of Shia cities, clerics are run- ning a self-declared Government. It's the same in nearby Karba- la, another sacred Shia city.

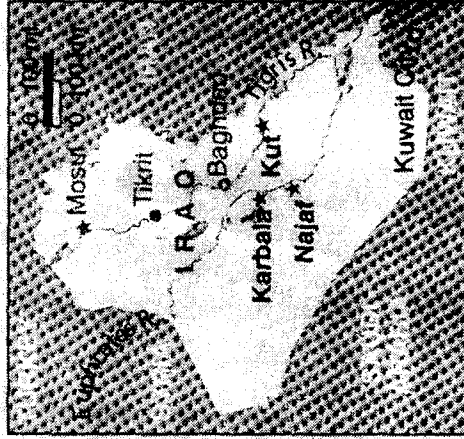
Shia clerics have in the past week moved swiftly to fill the power void created by Sad- dam Hussein's ouster — appointing gover- nors, imposing cur- fews, offering protection, jobs, health care and giving financial assistance to the needy.

In some respects, they have replaced Mr. Hussein as Iraq's new leadership. They distrust the Americans who rid them of Mr. Hussein's tyranny and have little faith in the Oppo- sition leaders now returning to Iraq from years in exile. They also question whether Western democratic values are suited for their country. And, they seem unwilling to surrender authority to a cen- tral government they don't like.

Shias make up 60 per cent of Iraq's 24 million people, but have traditionally been pushed to the political sidelines by members of Islam's mainstream Sunni sect, of which Mr. Hussein is a member. They have long complained of religious persecution in the previous regime and erupted in jubilation at its downfall, practising their rituals in public for the first time in years.

Scores of Shia pilgrims can now be seen walking on highways and country roads to Najaf and Karbala, carrying the black flags that mourn the 7th century martyrdom of al-Hussein, one of the sect's most revered saints. Al-Hussein's shrine is in Karbala, while his father, Imam Ali, son-in-law of Islam's Prophet Muhammad, is buried in Najaf. — AP

DPA reports from Teheran: The leader of the Iraqi Shia Opposi- tion group, SCIRI, today called on all Shias to attend a massive religious gathering in Karbala, southern Iraq, next week. The Ira- nian news network Khabar quoted Ayatollah Seyed Mohammed Bakr el-Hakim of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SCIRI) as saying that all Shias should attend the ceremonies



**SOURCES:** United Nations; Associated Press

Debate soon

Politics apart, there are tough legal issues involved and diplomats are saying that it could take months before anything is called down at the Security Council. But the first debate on the subject is expected to begin next week when the U.N. weapons inspector, Hans Blix, is due to appear before the Council. Basically much of the attention is on how to manage Iraqi oil sales which until now has been going into a U.N. managed escrow account.

The Bush administration seems to suggest that the U.N. can continue to supervise all oil deals first with U.S. officials and later with Iraqi officials. The equally tougher issue is that of dropping all sanctions, from a

political and a legal perspective. From a political point of view under the old scheme of things, Iraq could purchase goods but under the close supervision of the U.N. And the former Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, essentially denied out contracts to such countries like Russia, France and China or others who were calling for an end to the sanctions regime.

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spent. It is a view that is hardly a so-

bering or to many countries in the Security Council. The problem with lifting sanctions is not confined to the realm of politics. The Security Council likes the punitive measures it has taken against Iraq. And it is here that the Bush administration wants to have it by any means. It wants the environment for the lifting of sanctions against Iraq to be in place. It will not allow U.N. weapons inspectors back into Iraq. Or for that matter is Washington hardly thrilled about the top inspectors in the United Nations Monitoring & Verification and Inspection Commission.

# Powell to visit Syria soon for 'candid talks'

By Sethar Krishnamoorti

WASHINGTON, April 17. With a view to underscoring the seriousness of the atmosphere, the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, will be travelling to Syria soon for talks with its President, Bashar Assad.

Gen. Powell said that the administration had begun a "very vigorous diplomatic exchange" with Syria.

"Syria does not want to be a safe haven for the aftermath of Operation Iraqi Freedom," Gen. Powell said addi-

tioning that "lots of messages" had been exchanged recently between Washington and Damascus directly as well as through other European countries, including France and Spain.

The Secretary of State has given no firm date for his travel plans but it is expected to be as part of a larger West Asia tour that is designed to fine-tune the peace process between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

"I would expect to travel to Syria to have very candid and straightforward discussions with my Foreign Minister

colleague and President Mr. Assad," Gen. Powell said.

In all the talks on the military operations and other issues, there has been a war of basically not and of having come

year efforts during the conflict, but also pending with a cooperation in the aftermath of the conflict by giving refuge to members of the extremist Saddam Hussein regime. These charges have obviously been denied by Syria. One of the latest charges flying around

is that Damascus gave shelter to a top Iraqi intelligence officer who has been linked to the assassination attempt of the former U.S. President, the elder George Bush.

Damascus has denied that the former head of Iraqi intelligence, Faruq Hijazi, was in the country.

But *The Washington Times*, quoting an unnamed administration official, has said that Mr. Hijazi was tracked within the last two days from his post as Ambassador to Tunisia to Damascus

on board a commercial ship.

The sharp word to Syria on a number of issues stopped with just from officials, but to the President.

And officials say no handling matter thing that Damascus what basically at supplying Iraq with oil and anti-aircraft of the Iraq conflict. It is clear that the

Islam's mainstream Sunni sect, of which Mr. Hijazi is a member, have long complained of religious persecution and erupted in jubilation at its downfall in public for the first time in years.

Scores of Shia pilgrims can now be seen walking country roads to Najaf and Karbala, carrying 17th century martyrdoms of al-Hussein, most revered saints. Al-Hussein's shrine is in Karbala, Iraq, some 100 miles from Baghdad.

DPA reports from Tehran: The leader of the Shia group, SCIRI, today called on all Shias to gather in Karbala, southern Iraq, for a religious gathering. Karbala is a city of 1.5 million people. Karbala is a city of 1.5 million people. Karbala is a city of 1.5 million people.

DO NOT PRINT

# U.S. for lifting U.N. sanctions

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 17. The United States is setting the stage for a much bigger political fight at the United Nations and world capitals by proposing that the punitive measures imposed on Iraq by the forum should be eased.

"Now that Iraq has been liberated, the U.N. should lift economic sanctions on that country," the U.S. President, George W. Bush, said in St. Louis on Wednesday while touring a Boeing Company plant. But the general impression has been that countries like France and Russia, which hold veto powers at the U.N., are hesitant to give the U.S. a major say in post-war Iraq.

And basically it is the Security Council that should lift sanctions against Iraq, measures that date back to the invasion of Kuwait and its aftermath. The Bush administration is under no illusions of having an easy ride in New York but is nevertheless confident that a mechanism can be worked out that will have the Security Council revamp the systems that had placed it in charge of Iraq's oil revenues as well as imports.

## Debate soon

Politics apart, there are tough legal issues involved and diplomats are saying that it could take months before anything is nailed down at the Security Council. But the first debate on the subject is expected to begin next week when the U.N. weapons inspector, Hans Blix, is due to appear before the Council. Basically much of the attention is on how to manage Iraqi oil sales which until now has been going into an U.N. managed escrow account.

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Under the new scheme of things major powers are worried that in the event of the U.N. lifting sanctions who would be the main source within Iraq that will be supervising the imports. And this is where the political fight is a perception — and a valid one — that it will be the U.S. sitting in charge of how Iraq's oil revenues could be

spent. This is a view that is hardly a sobering one to many countries in the Security Council. The problem with lifting sanctions is not confined to the realm of politics. The legal dimension is that before the Security Council lifts the punitive measures it will have to certify that Iraq is free of all weapons of mass destruction. And it is here that the Bush administration wants to have it both ways: it wants the environment for the lifting of sanctions against Iraq to be in place but will not allow U.N. weapons inspectors back into Iraq. Or for that matter is Washington hardly thrilled about the top weapons inspectors in the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

# Shia clerics filling power void

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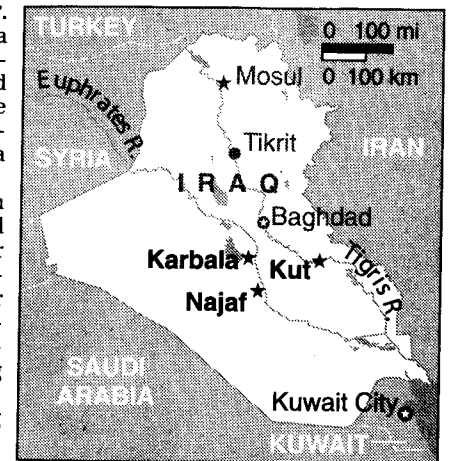
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rid them of Mr. Hussein's tyranny and have little faith in the Opposition leaders now returning to Iraq from years in exile. They also question whether Western democratic values are suited for their country. And, they seem unwilling to surrender authority to a central government they don't like.

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SOURCES: United Nations; Associated Press

AP

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colleague and President Mr. Assad," Gen. Powell remarked.

In all the goings on in Iraq during the military operations and after, there has been a war of words in Washington basically not only accusing Damascus of having complicated the coalition war efforts during the conflict, but also persisting with non-cooperation in the aftermath of the conflict by giving refuge to members of the erstwhile Saddam Hussein regime. These charges have obviously been denied by Syria. One of the latest charges flying around

is that Damascus gave shelter to a top Iraqi intelligence officer who has been linked to the assassination attempt of the former U.S. President, the elder George Bush.

Damascus has denied that the former head of Iraqi Intelligence, Faruq Hijazi, was in the country.

But *The Washington Times*, quoting an unnamed administration official has said that Mr. Hijazi was tracked within the last two days from his post as Ambassador to Tunisia to Damascus

on board a commercial jet.

The sharp words from Washington to Syria on a number of fronts have not stopped with just senior administration officials, but have gone all the way to the President, George W. Bush.

And officials say that the charges are no laughing matter and that it is something that Damascus needs to address. What basically started off with Syria supplying Iraq with night vision goggles and anti-tank weapons at the peak of the Iraq conflict, the list and accusations have grown by the day.

# Meeting in Saddam's palace, US generals seal victory in Iraq

By Michael R. Gordon and John Kifner

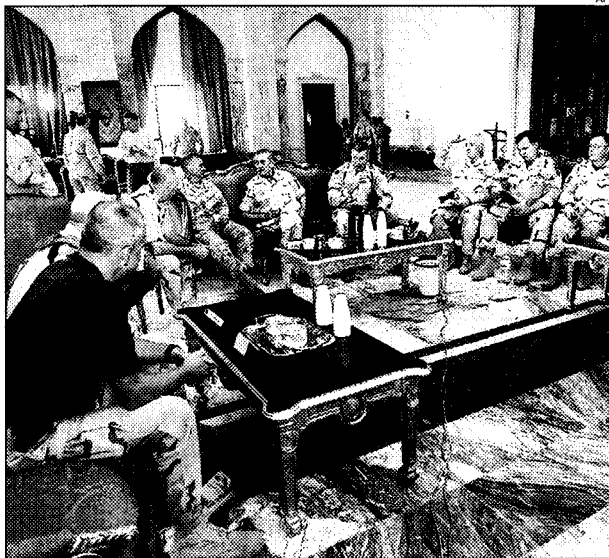
Baghdad: Gen. Tommy R. Franks, commander of America's war on Iraq, sealed his victory on Thursday by convening a meeting of his top allied land, air, naval and special operations officers in what was once one of Saddam Hussein's proudest palaces, now a symbol of his vanished grip on the country.

The bevy of commanders who gathered at Abu Ghraib palace, an extravagant amalgam of marble, tile, gold fittings and massive chandeliers, all surrounded by an azure moat discussed how to maintain security and rebuild Iraq now that Mr Hussein is gone, and agreed to meet again in General Franks's headquarters back in Qatar in several days to complete plans.

As part of the arrangements for securing the country, the Army will take responsibility for Baghdad and territory to the north, while the Marines deploy in the south, where the British control the most important city, Basra.

The two-hour session, which concluded with a video conference with President Bush, was the first such gathering since war erupted four weeks ago and was laden with symbolism. It made clear that the Americans now dominate Iraq. But General Franks avoided downtown Baghdad, landing at the international airport and travelling the short distance to the palace under heavy security.

As much as American



US General Tommy Franks meets with his commanders during a visit to a palace of Iraq's toppled leader Saddam Hussein near Baghdad on Wednesday.

troops were striving to re-establish order, Baghdad on Thursday remained a shattered city still groping for normal life, still in the thrall of looters and arsonists and full of wary and confused people with much hostility toward the Americans. In the city of Mosul in the north, Marines opened fire and killed Iraqis as they had on Tuesday, trying to quell unrest.

Ahmad Chalabi, a well-connected Iraqi exile who last saw Baghdad in 1958, arrived here late on Thursday, his aides said. The putative interim government of Baghdad was claimed hours earlier by his representative here, Mohammed Zobeidi, who swept through the Palestine Hotel, the headquarters of foreign journalists and the

Marine civil administration, accompanied by an entourage of Sunni and Shiite religious leaders, tribal sheikhs and apparently rehabilitated police commanders.

"I want to serve the people and work for the stability of the country," Mr. Zobeidi told reporters.

General Franks, after his meeting, acknowledged that much remained to be done. "The Republican Guard no longer serves in this country," he said. "The Special Republican Guard no longer serves in this country. The regular army in this country no longer functions. In that respect, certainly, the decisive combat portion of the campaign is finished. Now having said that every day we see the remnants of what we call Arab fighters or families

fighters who have come in from a number of other countries. We see them here in Baghdad. So, now we are about the business of rooting them out."

The commanders who met included Lt. Gen. T. Michael Moseley, the air-war commander; Vice Adm. Timothy J. Keating, the naval commander; Lt. Gen. David McKiernan, the land-war commander who has now made his headquarters in the frigid and electricity-starved halls and chambers of Abu Ghraib palace; and Brig. Gen. Gary L. Harrell, the Special Operations commander.

Despite the clusters of people in Baghdad streets, and the several stores and sidewalk kebab stands opened on main thoroughfares, the atmosphere remained tense.

"Affairs are natural, things are returning to normal," said Walid al-Fartousi, a 33-year-old fruit and vegetable vendor on a bustling market block of Karadara Street in the city center.

Within seconds, his optimism gave way to ambivalence. "Frankly, the people are beginning to lose their trust in America," he said. "Because America promised Iraq to remove the tyrant government, but now things are even worse. Some people are even beginning to wish Saddam had stayed because all the troubles erupted after his departure."

"Until today we are sitting in our houses," he went on. "Not safe from killers, looters. American forces stand by and do nothing. There is no security, no order. People

18 APR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# A 'model' of democracy

By K.K. Karwal

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 17.** Just when the Bush administration professes to make the new Iraq a model of democracy in West Asia, it finds itself embroiled at home, diplomats here note, in a bitter controversy over the award of contracts for the reconstruction of that country. How does it square up, it is asked, with the assuring words of American diplomats who, while seeking support and understanding of various countries, India not excluded, for Washington's plan for regime change, said that they would have a share in the rebuilding of Iraq, ravaged by a decade of sanctions? There was also an un-stated and implied part of the assurance — that there would be new opportunities for reconstruction because of the damage to be

caused by the war.

What stands out at the moment are the charges of favouritism, of bending of rules. In an angry comment *New York Times* says: "The Iraq war was fought in the name of high principles. Victory should not turn into an undeserved financial bonanza for companies that have cultivated close ties with the Bush administration."

Critics were intrigued when, before the war, the subsidiary of Halliburton, headed by Dick Cheney for five years before he took over as Vice-President, was given contract for controlling fires of oil wells in Iraq that could be set ablaze by the Saddam regime. The deal was clinched without the normal processes — of calling for bids, etc. It did not go unnoticed though the administration was given the benefit of doubt — on

the ground that it had to deal with a sudden, emergency situation and that normal commercial rules could not be followed. According to critics, this has turned out to be a rule, not an exception.

Going by the account of the daily, the Agency for International Development had limited bidding to a short list, mainly of government contracting insiders. Among these were Bechtel Group, which has a former Secretary of State, George Sultz, in its board and the Fluor Corporation.

"Companies unfairly excluded from bidding for these contracts are justifiably upset, including those in Britain, America's most important ally in Iraq," says *New York Times*. Under WTO rules, it notes, procurement contracts are supposed to be open to all bidders, domestic and foreign.

## 'Civilisation stripped of history'

Aviation Minister  
faces

By Our Special Correspondent of the very institutions housing the market for aviation...

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

# Iraq war could impact growth: U.N. survey

By Sushma Ramachandran

and other geopolitical uncertainties.

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 17.** The United Nations' annual Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific today warned that the Iraq war and its aftermath along with sluggish growth in developed economies could have an impact on the GDP growth in India during 2003. It originally forecast a growth rate of around 6 to 7 per cent from 2003 to 2005, but has revised the figure down to 5.1 per cent for the current year in view of these volatile external factors.

The report notes that sustaining growth in the region will depend primarily upon domestic policies given the absence of any evidence of a strong pick up in the global economy at least in the first half of this year. The war in Iraq

and other geopolitical uncertainties. The survey brought out by the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), has revised its GDP growth projection downwards largely to the expected impact of the Iraq war as well as continuing depressed demand in the U.S., Japan and Europe.

Even after the revision in the ESCAP forecast, India continues to be one of the fastest growing nations after China, slated to grow by 7.5 per cent, Vietnam — by 7 per cent, and Fiji by 5.2 per cent. While the global growth rate has been revised to 2.3 per cent from the earlier stance of 2.8 per cent, the GDP growth for the developing nations of the Asia-Pacific region was revised to 5 per cent from 5.4.

On the policy challenges for countries in the region, the survey says that the domestic demand stimulus measures have relied on a mixture of fiscal and monetary policies. However, with levels of public debt exceeding 50 per cent of the GDP in most economies of the region, the question of fiscal consolidation has to be tackled in earnest before too long. In the case of monetary policy also, as a result of falling inflation, it says interest rates have reached quite low levels so that the scope for further reduction is limited in most countries.

Besides, it urges that the programmes of reform of the corporate and financial sectors should continue to be implemented with renewed vigour to enhance investor confidence. It says that the levels of investment in the private sector are still below pre-1997 levels in Southeast Asia. Without a pick up in private investments, it cautions, medium term growth is likely to be jeopardised.

The survey had originally observed that the prospects in 2003 are for a pick up in the overall GDP growth rate in the South Asian countries of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. However, it maintained that the uncertainties remained, such as the military conflict in Iraq and this along with tentative growth in the global economy could affect export growth adversely.

In addition, the report pointed out that the South Asian region is a heavy importer of energy and higher energy prices would be a negative development for both growth and inflation in this area.

18 APR 2003

HINDU



# After the deluge

By Rajeev Dhavan

*Without the countries of the world coming together to monitor the aftermath of the war, an already delicate situation will explode to destabilise the region, tear Iraq apart and start fresh wars with Syria and elsewhere.*

11/29/18/11

USING NAPOLEON as a mouthpiece, George Bernard Shaw makes a telling comment on British Imperialism, which is no less — if not more — apposite to the American imperialism of our time. He says: "There is nothing so bad or so good that you will not find an Englishman doing it; but you will never find an Englishman in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles; he robs you on business principles; he enslaves you on imperial principles; he bullies you on manly principles; he supports his king on loyal principles

cut off his king's head on republican principles". America is no different. It claims to act in terms of international law; but feels free to subvert international norms whenever it wants. It supports the authority of the United Nations but turns its back on the U.N. to suit its convenience. It globalises trade in the name of fairness; and most unfairly usurps the major trade benefits to its own advantage. It launches a war to secure the largest oil reserves in the world but pretends it fights for peace. It claims to act in the name of democracy, but leaves behind battered states wherever it has gone. It fights a war for peace, but makes huge profits by the sale of arms that follows. Its peacekeeping results in war. Its war brings no peace. No sooner are its interests maintained, it leaves behind a debris of enfeebled states. It is never at a loss for an effective moral attitude.

Amidst these contradictions, the fate of Iraq hangs in the balance. After I wrote last, I received a spirited defence on the legality of the war from the British High Commission enclosing Attorney-General Lord Goldsmith's considered opinion that Resolution 678 authorised force to liberate Kuwait in 1992. But after the Kuwait war, the ceasefire Resolution 687 suspended the use of force. However 10 years later, the use of force revived because Resolution 1441 found Iraq to be in breach of earlier Resolutions. So, the Kuwait war continues for reasons that have nothing to do with Kuwait. But, if no further authorisation was required

from the U.N. why did the allies move the Security Council to authorise action and then withdraw the proposed resolution in the face of French and other opposition. And, of what use is the charter of the U.N. if the exclusive powers to authorise armed intervention under Article 42 are usurped by a somewhat crazy and unprincipled

interpretation to violate Iraq's sovereignty by ghastly and relentless bombing. There is nothing in the text of the U.N.'s Iraq resolutions which credibly supports the laughable theory that the U.S.' Iraq war was authorised by the U.N. as a continuation of the Kuwait war. Indeed, distinguished English Counsel (Rabinder Singh QC and Alison Macdonald) gave an Opinion for 'Peace rights' which wholly negates the revival theory. America's unpredictable policy on Iraq raises new fears. No doubt, various U.N. Resolutions such as Resolution 1154 require Iraq to comply with its obligations. But, equally the Security Council has always remained "actively seized of the matter". The U.S. is not the U.N. The U.S. cannot override the U.N. But, the U.S. can rise to greater mischief in the name of the U.N. A later and much contested Resolution 688 also mentions the repression of the Iraqi people "including most recently in Kurdish populated areas". This has very wide implications. Although this Resolution (unlike Resolution 678) does not refer to using all necessary means, it is this Resolution that was used as a basis for badgering Iraq to cease military activity above the 36th parallel. If the U.S. plan to create 'safe havens' is implemented, the U.S. will find itself interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq. It is this that made several nations contest this resolution. India and China abstained.

The U.S. presence in Iraq is linked to the control of oil, the arms trade, the reconstruction contracts and American hegemony over Iraq through a captive government. But, if U.S. governance in Iraq interferes in internal affairs concerning the Kurdish question or Shia and Sunni portions in an otherwise fragile Iraq, which is wrecked and enfeebled by a devastating war, there is a

Pandora's box waiting to be opened. The American empire has not been averse to dividing nations. Apart from divisions created after the Second World War, Korea remains divided. Yugoslavia has been split and splintered. Grenada suffered a divisive onslaught. The Middle East is in ruins. South East Asia suffers even now.

The restlessness for expensive control is now directed towards Syria to intimidate and control the Government in Damascus. Syria has been warned about its weapons of mass destruction on the basis of some obscure evidence. Syria wholly denies these accusations. Charges and postures of this nature can only put the region into further gloom. A spokesperson for the U.N. Secretary-General expressed his concern that "...recent statements directed at Syria should not contribute to the wider destabilisation in a region already affected by the war in Iraq". American and British plans to weaken the entire region are angular and partial. Not a word is said about Israel's open violations of international norms and gratuitous attacks on its neighbours — including the headquarters of Yasser Arafat in scenes that shocked the world. America's policy for the area is riddled with injustice.

Nations which suffer the treatment given to Iraq do not recover easily. The remains of America's

Vietnam War are still visible day's South East Asia — 30 years after the event. Such war's produce 'failed states' which years to re-build. Apart from Iraq and Kosovo, Somalia remains whilst Haiti struggles for grace. The Afghan war resulted in unfinished aftermath. There is reason to fear America's 'd and control' policy. The destruction is complete. The control is optimistic. The policy of reconstruction espouses welfare without self-governance. The best of soldiers make the worst of the imper. Whether America is among the best of soldiers can hardly be judged by the cowardly and un wars it has engaged in since. But, it remains amongst the worst imperialists. The political map world has been re-drawn as a result to America's unfin business.

Even though America with its porting cast from Britain has passed the U.N. it is difficult to believe and accept that the U.N. defunct. The U.N. peacekeeping has been injured. But, the U.N. forms a large number of functions. Peacekeeping must be restored to the U.N. which must retain its all insight. It is through the U.N. focal point and peoples' resist that pressures emerge on imperial powers in a unipolar world. N is suggesting that a bypassed should clean America's mess the deluge. America should be to pay reparations for the Iraq which is indefensible morally legally.

But without the countries of the world coming together to monitor the aftermath of the war, an already delicate situation will explode to destabilise the region, tear Iraq apart and start fresh wars with Syria elsewhere. Horrifying and unimaginable tensions will be released world which already suffers a s of them. If India wants to be in Security Council, it must speak a voice that commands respect its wisdom.

If it does not do so it is just a nation floundering in a narrow diplomatic space.

18 APR 2003

THE HINDU

# No arms inspection, says Syria

CAIRO, APRIL 17. Syria's Foreign Minister said today that his country would not accept arms inspections, but would join forces with the world to rid the entire West Asia of weapons of mass destruction in line with its recent proposal to the United Nations.

Washington accuses Syria of developing chemical weapons, a charge the Arab state denies. Asked by reporters in Cairo whether Syria would allow arms inspections, the visiting Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara said: "No... After this initiative, this Syrian proposal (at the United Nations)... Syria won't allow any inspection. It will only participate with its (Arab) brothers and all of the states of the world in turning the West Asia into an area free of weapons of mass destruction."

It was not immediately clear if the remarks were a departure from Syria's previously stated position that it would only allow weapons inspections if they applied to all countries in the region, including Israel, which is widely believed to possess nuclear arms. A ministry spokesman in Damascus declined to expand on Shara's comments.

Syria's Deputy Ambassador to Washington, Imad Mustapha, told a U.S. television programme on Sunday that Syria would welcome intrusive U.S. inspections into the arms programmes of all countries in the Middle East if they included Israel. On Wednesday, the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said he intended to go to Syria for talks with President Bashar Assad.

## U.N. must play role: E.U.

European Union leaders meeting in Athens agreed today that the U.N. must play a "central" role in rebuilding Iraq and urged the U.S. to maintain law and order in the country as they sought to put behind them the bitter split over the U.S.-led war.

The 15 E.U. leaders also were concluding their two-day summit with a call for a "successful conclusion" of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process through the implementation of a "road map" that was agreed upon by the E.U., the U.S., Russia and the U.N.

## Saddam's half brother captured

U.S. special forces today captured a half brother of Mr. Hussein who, according to one American commander, has "extensive knowledge" of the toppled regime's inner workings.

Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, in a briefing at U.S. Central Command, said Barzan Ibrahim Hasan al-Tikriti, a top adviser to Saddam, was captured alone in Baghdad.

Barzan Ibrahim was head of Iraq's secret police, the Mukhabarat. — Reuters, AP, AFP

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18 APR 2003

AF HINDO

# Iraq war could impact growth: U.N. survey

By Sushma Ramachandran

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17. The United Nations' annual Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific today warned that the Iraq war and its aftermath along with sluggish growth in developed economies could have an impact on the GDP growth in India during 2003. It originally forecast a growth rate of around 6 to 7 per cent from 2003 to 2005, but has revised the figure down to 5.1 per cent for the current year in view of these volatile external factors.

The report notes that sustaining growth in the region will depend primarily upon domestic policies given the absence of any evidence of a strong pick up in the global economy at least in the first half of this year, the war in Iraq

and other geopolitical uncertainties.

The survey brought out by the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), has revised its GDP growth projection downwards largely to the expected impact of the Iraq war as well as continuing depressed demand in the U.S., Japan and Europe.

Even after the revision in the ESCAP forecast, India continues to be one of the fastest growing nations after China, slated to grow by 7.5 per cent, Vietnam → by 7 per cent, and Fiji by 5.2 per cent. While the global growth rate has been revised to 2.3 per cent from the earlier stance of 2.8 per cent, the GDP growth for the developing nations of the Asia-Pacific region was revised to 5 per cent from 5.4.

On the policy challenges for countries in the region, the survey says that the domestic demand stimulus measures have relied on a mixture of fiscal and monetary policies. However, with levels of public debt exceeding 50 per cent of the GDP in most economies of the region, the question of fiscal consolidation has to be tackled in earnest before too long. In the case of monetary policy also, as a result of falling inflation, it says interest rates have reached quite low levels so that the scope for further reduction is limited in most countries.

Besides, it urges that the programmes of reform of the corporate and financial sectors should continue to be implemented with renewed vigour to enhance investor confidence. It says that the levels of invest-

ment in the private sector are still below pre-1997 levels in Southeast Asia. Without a pick up in private investments, it cautions, medium term growth is likely to be jeopardised.

The survey had originally observed that the prospects in 2003 are for a pick up in the overall GDP growth rate in the South Asian countries of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. However, it maintained that the uncertainties remained, such as the military conflict in Iraq and this along with tentative growth in the global economy could affect export growth adversely.

In addition, the report pointed out that the South Asian region is a heavy importer of energy and higher energy prices would be a negative development for both growth and inflation in this area.

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says that the levels of invest- inflation in this area.

Handwritten initials and a circled 'D' next to the title.

# A 'model' of democracy

By K.K. Katyal

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 17.** Just when the Bush administration professes to make the new Iraq a model of democracy in West Asia, it finds itself embroiled at home, diplomats here note, in a bitter controversy over the award of contracts for the reconstruction of that country. How does it square up, it is asked, with the assuring words of American diplomats who, while seeking support and understanding of various countries, India not excluded, for Washington's plan for regime change, said that they would have a share in the rebuilding of Iraq, ravaged by a decade of sanctions? There was also an unstated and implied part of the assurance — that there would be new opportunities for reconstruction because of the damage to be

caused by the war.

What stands out at the moment are the charges of favouritism, of bending of rules. In an angry comment *New York Times* says: "The Iraq war was fought in the name of high principles. Victory should not turn into an undeserved financial bonanza for companies that have cultivated close ties with the Bush administration."

Critics were intrigued when, before the war, the subsidiary of Halliburton, headed by Dick Cheney for five years before he took over as Vice-President, was given contract for controlling fires of oil wells in Iraq that could be set ablaze by the Saddam regime. The deal was clinched without the normal processes — of calling for bids, etc. It did not go unnoticed though the administration was given the benefit of doubt — on

the ground that it had to deal with a sudden, emergency situation and that normal commercial rules could not be followed. According to critics, this has turned out to be a rule, not an exception.

Going by the account of the daily, the Agency for International Development had limited bidding to a short list, mainly of government contracting insiders. Among these were Bechtel Group, which has a former Secretary of State, George Sultz, in its board and the Fluor Corporation.

"Companies unfairly excluded from bidding for these contracts are justifiably upset, including those in Britain, America's most important ally in Iraq," says *New York Times*. Under WTO rules, it notes, procurement contracts are supposed to be open to all bidders, domestic and foreign.

THE HINDU

## IRAQ AFTER SADDAM

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# Big powers resume sparring

**Baghdad, April 17 (Reuters):** Just one week after US forces seized Baghdad, the big powers returned to diplomatic sparring over Iraq's future today after Washington urged an end to UN economic sanctions on the "liberated" country.

Shifting focus from combat to reconstruction amid what it sees as improving security in the ravaged Iraqi capital, the US said it would propose a resolution "in the near future" to wind up the 13-year-old sanctions.

But lurking in the background were unresolved questions about the future UN role in Iraq, invaded four weeks ago by US and British forces without the explicit backing they had sought from the world body.

The EU, divided over Iraq, today said the UN must play "a central role" in rebuilding Iraq but also stressed that the US-led forces in the country had a responsibility to restore stability.

Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov said today in Moscow economic sanctions against Iraq could not be lifted

unless the country complied with previous UN Security Council conditions.

"This decision cannot be automatic. It demands that conditions laid out in corresponding UN Security Council resolutions be fulfilled," Ivanov said.

"For the Security Council to take this decision, we need to be certain whether Iraq has weapons of mass destruction or not." But he said Russia did not oppose the removal of Iraqi sanctions: "I think it is in the interests of the international community that these sanctions be removed as soon as possible."

Moscow has in the past consistently lobbied for sanctions to be removed, mainly in the hope of making good billions of dollars in oil contracts for its firms, the biggest buyers of Iraqi crude oil before the US campaign.

At the UN, diplomats said an end to sanctions should depend on the UN certifying that Iraq is free of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

Its alleged possession of such weapons was the main reason

Washington gave for the war. That in turn raises the question of whether any weapons of mass destruction are going to be found in Iraq. None has been so far, but US commanders say there could be up to 3,000 sites to check.

Gen. Tommy Franks, who commanded the invasion that overthrew Saddam Hussein, said after a visit to Baghdad that the orgy of looting that erupted in the city after American troops arrived was now subsiding.

"The looting goes down every day and I think you will continue to see it go down because the Iraqis are now stepping up and controlling the problems for themselves," he said in Kuwait.

He said 2,200 Iraqi civilians volunteered yesterday in Baghdad to work as unarmed police officers. Franks earlier told President George W. Bush that water and power were being restored in Baghdad and hospitals were starting to function again after days of anarchy.

"Now that Iraq is liberated, the UN should lift sanctions on that country," Bush said yesterday.

day. The sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait barred all trade with Baghdad but to relieve hardship on the Iraqi people, a UN programme was established in 1996 that allowed Iraq to sell oil to buy food and essentials.

America's UN ambassador, John Negroponte, said Washington envisioned a "step-by-step procedure" to lift the sanctions.

Franks flew to Baghdad airport yesterday where runways are still pockmarked with craters from US bombs.

He met troops and military commanders and gave Bush a progress report via video-conference from one of Saddam's abandoned palaces.

The EU statement, issued by president Greece, said: "The UN must play a central role, including in the process leading towards self-government for the Iraqi people." But it added: "At this stage, the coalition has the responsibility to ensure a secure environment, including provision of humanitarian assistance and protection of the cultural

heritage and museums." The US has said it will not allow the UN Security Council any decisive role in Iraq after the body refused to vote for its invasion. With the talk turning to how Iraq will be governed after Saddam, Australia announced that most of the 2,000 military personnel it sent to the Gulf to support US and British forces would start returning home in May.

Ahmad Chalabi, a leader of the Opposition Iraqi National Congress (INC) and a favourite of the Pentagon, became the first major exile politician to return to Baghdad since Saddam's fall.

An adviser, Zaab Sethna, said Chalabi was meeting people who had been INC supporters in Baghdad. Opposition parties were driven underground by Saddam's Baathist government.

The head of the fledgling US-led civil administration of Iraq, retired Gen. Jay Garner, said today that despite many problems lying ahead he was optimistic Iraqis could overcome deep divisions to establish a vibrant democracy.



Gen. Tommy Franks pumps his fist at the Baghdad International Airport. (AFP)

IRAQ TALKS / FRANCE INITIATES STEPS

# Now a battle to win over the Iraqi Shias

By Atul Aneja

**A, APRIL 16.** After unseating the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the U.S. engaged in a fierce contest with the majority Shia population of Iraq. The U.S. clearly expected that after winning the contest, a population was not on



**The Iran-based Iraqi Shia Opposition leader, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, whose boycott of the peace talks in Ur, Iraq, on Tuesday, sent alarm signals in Washington.**

Iran went first to Najaf and then into exile near Paris, to engineer the fall of the pro-U.S. Shah of Iran. In other words, not only have the French been cohabiting with the Shias for long, they have also shown an inclination to ally with Shia leaders in order to undermine U.S. interests in the resource rich Persian Gulf countries.

Despite the effort, it is not clear whether the French initiative to woo Mr. Hakim is

wind of the French operation, the U.S. played the Shia card of its own. The pro-U.S. Kurdish leader and a close friend of Mr. Hakim, Jalal Talabani has also reportedly landed up in Teheran. He is understood to be still engrossed in a dialogue with the Shia leader.

While major international players seek to influence Mr. Hakim, they may be unable to do so, unless they factor in Iran's preferences in Iraq. This is because Iran's clout over Mr. Hakim and his group - Mr. Hakim is also personally beholden to Iran, which has been sheltering him and his group on its territory for over a decade. Meanwhile, Syria's interests among Iraqi Shias are also tied with Iran. Syria apprehends that the emergence of a hostile leadership in Najaf is likely to undermine its influence among Shias. In the battle for influence over Shia hearts and minds, the Anglo-American alliance appears to have lost the first round. The pro-British Shia cleric, Abdulmajid al-Khoei, who was reportedly smuggled into Najaf in a tank has been assassinated, while the U.S. is discovering that Najaf's Grand Ayatollah, Ali Sistani has, so far,

# Arrest of Palestinian, a big catch: U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

**WASHINGTON, APRIL 16.** The U.S. has confirmed the arrest of Abul Abbas, notorious leader of a Palestinian group that in 1985 hijacked a cruise liner, Achille Lauro, killed an American passenger and threw him into the sea. "He got away from us and we have been chasing him ever since. He's a big catch for us. It's an old score to settle," a former top counterintelligence official of the CIA has said.

What is being said here is that American commands and special forces raided several sites in the southern outskirts of Baghdad and nabbed Abbas and several of his associates. Several documents including Yemeni and Lebanese passports and a cache of weapons like rocket-propelled grenades were also found. Abul Abbas, known as Mohammad Abbas, was the head of the Palestine Liberation Front and was first headquartered in Tunisia.

After the attack on Achille Lauro, it relocated to Iraq. But successive U.S. administrations were tracking him for the murder of the Jewish American passenger and the U.S. President, George W. Bush, mentioned Abbas by name last October while making a case for getting rid of Saddam Hussein from power.

"Iraq has...provided safe haven to Abul Abbas who was responsible for seizing the Achille Lauro and killing an American passenger. And we know that Iraq is continuing to finance terrorism and gives assistance to groups that use terrorism to undermine Middle East (West Asia) Peace," he said. Abbas, which has been keeping a close tab on Israel, nabbed several Palestinians trained at the PLF camp in Iraq and said that those captured were instructed by Abbas to attack an airport and other targets in Israel.

Further, it was generally believed that Iraq



**The leader of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) Abu Abbas (right), greeting the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Mohammad Said al-Sahhaf, at the opening of the Palestinian embassy in Baghdad in this 1 April, 2001 file photo.**

drama in October 1985 ended when Egypt negotiated the release of the cruise liner and surrender of four hijackers who were flown out of Egypt. But that jet was intercepted by U.S. Navy fighters and forced to land in Sicily which touched off a diplomatic tussle between the U.S. and Italy.

Italy refused to detain Abbas for two reasons: that the evidence compiled against him by the U.S. was insufficient; and that he held an Iraqi diplomatic passport. But Abbas managed to slip out of the country and Italian authorities filed charges against him and issued a warrant of arrest which remains active. In 1986, Abbas was tried in absentia and sentenced to life in prison for masterminding the hijacking. The U.S. officials have not said if Abbas will continue to be detained in Iraq or taken to another country. At this time, officials are tight-lipped on where Ab-

IRAQ TALKS / FRANCE INITIATES STEPS

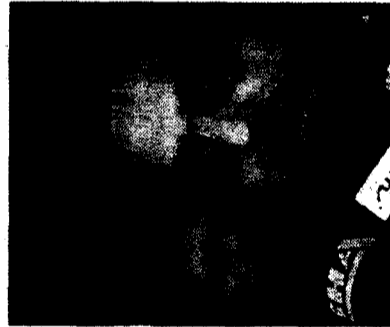
# Now a battle to win over the Iraqi Shias

By Atul Aneja

**MANAMA, APRIL 16.** After unseating the regime of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, the U.S. is engaged in a fierce contest with France and Iran for influencing the majority Shia population of Iraq. The U.S. clearly realises that after winning the war, it could lose the peace if the Shia population was not on its side.

The U.S. drive for influencing the Shias has acquired fresh urgency after this community boycotted the first U.S. sponsored post-war meeting on Tuesday in the southern Iraqi town of Ur. Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim, leader of the Iraqi Shia grouping, Supreme Assembly for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI), failed to show up at this meeting, much to Washington's alarm. Not surprisingly, key international players are falling over each other to influence Mr. Hakim.

The French appeared to be first off the block as there are reports that French teams have been speaking to Mr. Hakim in the last few days. The French connection with the Shias is old. For instance, the leader of the Iranian revolution, the late Ayatollah Khomeini after exiting



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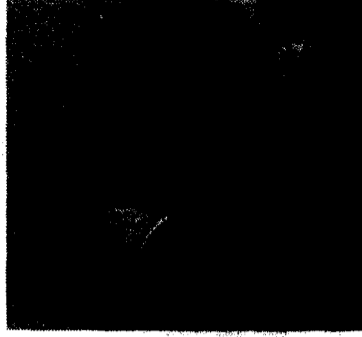
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Further, it was generally believed that Iraq used Abbas and the PLF as a conduit for payments to families of suicide bombers. The high



**The leader of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) Abul Abbas (right), greets Foreign Minister, Mohammed al-Matani at the opening of the Palestine Liberation Front in Baghdad in this 1 April, 2001**

drama in October 1985 ended with the release of the cruise liner of four hijackers who were flown that jet was intercepted by U.S. forces and forced to land in Sicily which triggered a tussle between the U.S. and Italy refused to detain Abbas that the evidence compiled against U.S. was insufficient; and that diplomatic passport. But Abbas out of the country and Italian charges against him and issued a warrant in absentia and sentenced for masterminding the hijacking. Officials have not said if Abbas will be detained in Iraq or taken to another country. Officials are tight-lipped as will face charges, in particular, the Justice Department will be keen on the murder of the American.



U.S. STEPS UP PRESSURE ON SYRIA

# Fugitive Palestine leader held in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, APRIL 16. The commander of the U.S.-led forces in Iraq, Gen. Tommy Franks, entered Baghdad for the first time today after four weeks of war even as violence erupted in Mosul for the second consecutive day. A U.S. Central Command spokesman said Gen. Franks was "in Baghdad and he is meeting with his commanders".

The U.S. forces hailed the capture of Abu Abbas, the Palestinian who masterminded the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise liner, Achille Lauro, as a proof that Saddam Hussein's regime "harboured terrorists". The U.S. said they had achieved "yet another victory in the global war on terrorism" with Abbas' capture.

Abbas, leader of the Palestine Liberation Front, who was living in Iraq under the protection of Saddam Hussein, was seized when U.S. troops stormed his hideout in southern Baghdad on Monday, U.S. officials said.

His presence there proved that the Iraqi regime supported terrorism, said Brigadier-General Vincent Brooks.

"He was a terrorist and remains a terrorist... But more importantly, he was found in Baghdad and we have said for a long time that Baghdad and the Iraqi regime that no longer exist have harboured terrorists and provided safe haven for terrorists."

Abbas was sentenced in absentia in Italy to five life terms for his role in the hijacking.

## Pipeline shut down

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Abu Abbas

ports from Iraq that the U.S. military had shut the pipeline.

"(But) I cannot assure you that all illegal oil flowing from Iraq to Syria is shut off. I just hope it is," he added.

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jazi, a suspected high-ranking Iraqi intelligence officer, had reached Syria from Tunisia, apparently to seek refuge after Mr. Hussein's regime was toppled.

Washington believes he played a key role in an alleged plot to assassinate the senior Bush during a visit to Kuwait, which was freed from Iraqi occupation in the 1991 Gulf war.

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And in response to the allegations that it possessed chemical weapons, Damascus said it would submit a resolution to the U.N. Security Council calling for the Middle East to be free of weapons of mass destruction.

"Allegations of Syria providing refuge to some symbols of the Iraqi regime are absolutely groundless," said Bussaina Shaaban, director of the Ministry's information department.

"Syria never had good relations with the Iraqi regime, and in fact there were many operations done against our citizens by the Iraqi regime in the past, and so these kinds of allegations are absolutely groundless," she added.

The U.S. troops on their hunt for illegal weapons and fugitive members of Mr. Hussein's inner circle raided the home of a scientist dubbed "Dr. Germ" by U.N. weapons inspectors.

The U.S. special forces, backed by about 40 Marines armed with heavy-calibre machine guns, raided the home of Rahib Taha, a microbiologist nicknamed "Dr. Germ" by weapons inspectors.

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## Child operated upon

Meanwhile, Ali Ismail Abbas, who lost both his hands in the bombing, underwent surgery after being evacuated with other maimed children to Kuwait by the U.S. military.

"All his family is dead," his uncle Mohammad al-Sultani told presspersons as the boy was wheeled into a specialised burns unit. — AFP, AP



## U.S. sends dollars to Iraq

WASHINGTON, APRIL 16. The United States is airlifting dollars from the New York Federal Reserve Bank to temporarily replace the Iraqi dinar, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

As an initial step, U.S. officials charged with the reconstruction of Iraq would use small-denomination notes to make "emergency" payments to the hundreds of thousands

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THE HINDU

players are talking over each other to influence Mr. Hakim.

The French appeared to be first off the block as there are reports that French teams have been speaking to Mr. Hakim in the last few days. The French connection with the Shias is old. For instance, the leader of the Iranian revolution, the late Ayatollah Khomeini after exiting

have the French been communicating with the Shias for long, they have also shown an inclination to ally with Shia leaders in order to undermine U.S. interests in the resource rich Persian Gulf countries.

Despite the effort, it is not clear whether the French initiative to woo Mr. Hakim has worked. It appears that getting

appears to have lost the round. The pro-British Shia cleric, Abdolrazaq al-Khoei who was reportedly smuggled into Najaf in a tank has been assassinated, while the U.S. is discovering that Najaf's Grand Ayatollah, Ali Sistani has, so far, not shown inclination to play a politically active role.

mine Middle East... Israel, which has been keeping Abbas, nabbed several Palestinian PLO camp in Iraq and said that were instructed by Abbas to attack other targets in Israel.

Further, it was generally believed Abbas and the PLO as a commitment to families of suicide bom

## Iran comes down on U.S. move

**TEHRAN, APRIL 16.** The Iranian President, Mohammad Khatami, said on Wednesday his country would not recognise a U.S.-installed interim administration in Iraq and would support Syria if it is attacked. It was the first time a senior official had defined Iran's already well-known stance on a post-war Iraq.

"We will not recognise any administration other than an all-Iraqi government. However, we are not seeking tension or confrontation with anybody," Mr. Khatami told reporters after a Cabinet meeting.

On Tuesday, the retired U.S. Gen. Jay Garner, chosen by the United States to lead the interim administration, opened a conference in Uq. Iraq, with the goal of shaping Iraq's post-war government.

"The Iraqi nation will not accept any foreign rule," Mr. Khatami said. "It is in the interests of morality, civility and international law that an administration representing all Iraqi ethnic, religious groups take over in Iraq and in the long term a government is elected on the basis of one vote for each Iraqi citizen."

In the first official Iranian comment on U.S. claims that Syria was hosting members of Saddam Hussein's regime, Mr. Khatami said the rhetoric was a "bluff" and that Iran would support Syria if attacked.

"Syria is on the front line against Zionist pressures, defending the cause of the Palestinian nation, freedom and peace in the region. We will defend Syria but it doesn't mean we will engage in military confronta-

tion," he said. The U.S. administration has accused Syria of harbouring remnants of Mr. Hussein's toppled regime, supporting terrorism and possessing chemical weapons, raising fears that Syria is America's next target. Mr. Khatami said the United States must learn to respect other nations and live with them in peace.

"Their (U.S.) interests also require that they give up (bullying) methods and live with the world in peace," he said.

Mr. Khatami called on the United States to avoid tension with Iran.

"We have big problems with America. But we don't welcome tensions either. If we feel they are changing their behaviour, then a new situation may emerge (in our relations)," he said. — AP

THE HINDU

16 APR 2003

# IRAQ WAR

WEDNESDAY 16 APRIL 2003

## story behind the story of oil and war...

### Press Trust of India

NEW YORK, April 15. — Washington claims it was compelled to attack Iraq as Saddam Hussein refused to destroy his weapons of mass destruction. Could it be unfulfilled American commercial interests that were at the heart of the invasion?

A declassified US state department document says, defence secretary Mr Donald Rumsfeld had visited Iraq in 1983 as a special envoy to seek Mr Saddam Hussein's sanction for the San Francisco-based Bechtel Co. to build an

Iraq-Jordan pipeline. Mr Hussein had summarily rejected the US proposal. Mr George Shultz was the president of Bechtel before he joined the Reagan administration as the secretary of state.

"Now 20 years later, Mr Shultz (currently on the board of Bechtel) and Mr Rumsfeld are among the fiercest of war hawks. Their philosophical fights in favour of the war would seem more graceful, and much less unsavoury, if they weren't flying with the baggage of Bechtel and other large commercial interests that have so much to gain from the war," columnist

Bob Herbert wrote based on the dossier in the *New York Times*. Indicating that the USA had taken pipeline rejection as a prestige issue, the report said: "Mr Shultz wanted to withdraw from the project. But the US state department joined with Bechtel to push it".

"The ouster of Mr Hussein have given the hawks and their commercial allies carte blanche in Iraq and the company with perhaps the sleekest and most effective of all the inside tracks, a company that is fairly drooling with anticipation over oil and reconstruction

contracts worth scores of billions of dollars, is of course the Bechtel Group," the article said. "During his meeting with Mr Hussein and foreign minister Mr Tariq Aziz, Mr Rumsfeld realised that Iraq was concerned about the proximity to Israel as the pipeline would enter the Gulf of Aqaba."

The Iraqis were afraid that Israelis might destroy the pipeline. Mr Rumsfeld said he could understand that there would need to be some sort of arrangement that would give those involved confidence that it would not be easily vulnerable.

... work in the following project funded by Debrautrac?

Troops comb Baghdad

THE STATESMAN

# Plan for postwar Iraq kicks off

By Jane Perlez

**Kuwait:** Representatives of some of Iraq's often-quarrelsome factions met on Tuesday in Ur, the ancient Mesopotamian city, to begin shaping the country's post-war government.

Thousands of Shiite Muslims, whose representatives were boycotting the meeting, demonstrated in nearby Nasiriya against the gathering, held at Tallil air base. Many other Iraqis said that they would not attend the meeting and that they opposed US plans to instal retired Lt Gen Jay Garner to run Iraq for the Bush administration.

"It's critical that the world understand that this is only the fledgling first meeting of what will hopefully be a much larger series of meetings across Iraq," said Jim Wilkinson, a spokesman at the US Central Command in Doha, Qatar.

British foreign secretary Jack Straw also sought to dampen expectations about the meeting. "It is not a one-off, it's the beginning of a process to restore governance," he said in Qatar.

The American-led interim administration could begin handing power back to Iraqi officials within three to six months, but forming a government will take longer, said Maj Gen Tim Cross, the top British member of General Garner's team.

General Garner, who was expected to lead the meeting, flew to Iraq on Monday to begin a process he himself predicted would be messy and contentious. But he insisted that American-style democracy could sprout on the shards of President Saddam Hussein's government.

"I don't think they had a love-in when they had Philadelphia" in 1787, he said in an interview here before his departure. "Any time you start the process, it's fraught with dialogue, tensions, coercion, and should be." Iraq, he suggested, could be the richest country in the Middle East within a few years.

The invitations to about 70 to 80 people, including prominent exiles like Ahmad Chalabi and Iraqis unknown to the outside world, were issued in the name of the war commander, Gen Tommy R. Franks, to whom General Garner reports.

For General Garner, who will spend his 65th birthday in Nasiriya,

## US troops fire on Mosul crowd, kill 10

**Mosul:** At least ten persons were shot dead and scores wounded on Tuesday in the northern Iraqi town of Mosul, a hospital doctor said, with witnesses claiming that US troops had opened fire on a crowd after it turned against an American-installed local governor.

Those charges were denied by a US military spokesman here, who said troops had come under fire from at least two gunmen and had fired back, without aiming at the crowd. Three witnesses questioned by AFP and some of the wounded who spoke to the hospital staff said US troops had fired on the crowd, which had become increasingly hostile towards governor Mashaan al-Juburi as he was making a pro-US speech.

In Doha, Brig Gen Vincent Brooks said he had seen no military reports of the incident and could not confirm it. But the military spokesman in Mosul later said, "There were protesters outside, 100 to 150. There was fire. We returned fire." AFP

greeting and cajoling Iraqis he has never met before, the politics of Iraq is just one of the major tasks ahead.

General Garner, appointed by President Bush in January to oversee aid, reconstruction and civil government in Iraq, will be the most visible American face on what many in the Middle East and Europe view as a singularly American enterprise which, in their opinion, should be more international in scope and sensibility. Many European governments believe that the United Nations should play a more central role.

General Garner will oversee how \$2.4 billion authorised by Congress last week will be spent in Iraq. He will pass judgment on problems like setting up television stations and selecting a police force for a population of 24 million in 17 provinces. His voice will be important when Washington decides how to revive the Iraqi oil industry and how quickly to seek to lift UN sanctions. NYT NEWS SERV.

16 APR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

12 KILLED IN MOSUL FIREFIGHT ■ NEXT CONCLAVE IN 10 DAYS

# Shi'ites boycott Opp. meeting

5/1 16/2 W Am ① grow



ODD ONE OUT IN PENTAGON COLONY: US soldiers at the entrance of Baghdad's presidential palace on Tuesday. With them is the camel Josephine that fled Mr Uday Hussein's zoo. — AFP

## Agencies

UR (Iraq), April 15. — A US-backed forum of anti-Saddam Iraqi leaders met here today in search of a new leadership for the country, even as tensions ran high with US troops firing on a crowd in Mosul, killing 12 people.

The meeting, boycotted by several Shi'ite groups in protest against the coalition's plan to install an American atop an interim authority, adopted a statement declaring that the future government must be democratic and formed on the basis of country-wide consultations and that no leader should be imposed from outside. It also called

for dissolution of Mr Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party. The leaders agreed to meet again in 10 days.

Lt.-Gen. (retd) Jay Garner, who will head the US-led interim administration, opened the conference under a golden-coloured tent at Tallil air base, close to the 4,000-year-old ziggurat at Ur, a terraced-pyramid temple of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians. "What better place than the birthplace of civilisation could you have for the beginning of a free Iraq?" Lt.-Gen. Garner said, wearing an Iraqi flag pinned on his shirt.

Among the participants were Kurds, Sunnis and some Shi'ites from Iraq as

well as those who have spent years in exile. White House envoy Mr Zalmay Khalilzad told the 80 delegates that the USA had "no interest in ruling Iraq. We



want you to establish your own democratic system based on Iraqi traditions and values." Apart from the USA, representatives from Britain, Australia and Poland too attended the meeting.

A rally of around 20,000 Shi'ites in nearby Nasiriyah, unthinkable even a week ago, protested against the meeting. Some of the demonstrators shouted: "No to America." Mr Abdul Aziz Hakim, leader of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (largest Iraqi Shi'ite

group), said: "Iraq needs an Iraqi interim government. Anything other than this tramples the right of the Iraqi people and will be a return to the era of colonisation."

Mr Ibrahim al-Jaafari, a leader of the al-Daawa Party, another influential Shi'ite group, refused to accept the invitation to join the talks, saying he was against foreign powers "exerting pressure on certain groups and favouring others".

Even some of those who attended the meeting said they did not want Lt.-Gen. Garner leading the interim administration. "We'll press for any

Turn to page 2

# Fugitive Palestine leader held in Baghdad

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 16.** The commander of the U.S.-led forces in Iraq, Gen. Tommy Franks, entered Baghdad for the first time today after four weeks of war even as violence erupted in Mosul for the second consecutive day. A U.S. Central Command spokesman said Gen. Franks was "in Baghdad and he is meeting with his commanders".

The U.S. forces hailed the capture of Abu Abbas, the Palestinian who masterminded the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise liner, Achille Lauro, as a proof that Saddam Hussein's regime "harboured terrorists". The U.S. said they had achieved "yet another victory in the global war on terrorism" with Abbas capture.

Abbas, leader of the Palestine Liberation Front, who was living in Iraq under the protection of Saddam Hussein, was seized when U.S. troops stormed his hideout in southern Baghdad on Monday, U.S. officials said.

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## U.S. charges are falsifications: Syria

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DAMASCUS, APRIL 15. Syria on Tuesday denounced U.S. accusations that it was developing chemical weapons as "threats and falsifications" designed to further Israeli interests.

In a statement, the country's Cabinet said the "escalated language of threats and accusations by some American officials against Syria are aimed at damaging its steadfastness and influencing its national decisions and (Arab) national stances".

The statement came after Washington said Syria was a rogue nation and that the U.S. would examine diplomatic and economic measures against Damascus.

At the U.N. a spokesman for the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, said, "the Secretary-General is concerned that recent statements directed at Syria should not contribute to a wider destabilisation in a region already affected heavily by the war in Iraq."

Earlier, in Madrid, Syria's ambassador to Spain said the U.S.

accusations that Syria was harbouring terrorists were an insult.

"It's an insult to my country, an insult to a country that is a member of the U.N. Security Council and an insult to a peaceful country that is struggling and working for a lasting peace in the Middle East," the ambassador, Mohsen Bilal, told Spain's Cadena Ser radio.

Asked about a White House spokesman's description of Syria as a terrorist state harbouring terrorists, he said, "we reject this accusation categorically because it is baseless". Mr. Bilal also denied Syria had granted protection to senior Iraqi leaders who may have fled across the border.

On Monday, the U.S. Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, had accused Damascus of testing chemical weapons within the last 12-15 months and of harbouring Saddam Hussein's top associates. The Secretary of State, Colin Powell, warned of possible diplomatic or economic sanctions. — Reuters

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THE HINDO

# Iraq weighs guided democracy



An Iraqi mimics the pose of a statue of Saddam Hussein that has been pulled down. (Reuters)

Washington 16/4  
Tallil airbase, April 15 (Reuters): Iraqi political and religious leaders held first talks on their country's future with US and British officials today and pledged to work for a democratic, federal Iraq.

The meeting also touched on the sensitive issue of the role of religion in the future state, according to a statement published on the website of the US Central Command war headquarters.

Participants were flown to a makeshift US airbase beside the ancient Mesopotamian city of Ur in southern Iraq and they gathered in a carpeted marquee pitched near the famed terraced ziggurat temple erected in 2100 BC.

But in nearby An Nasiriyah, thousands of Iraqis protested that they did not need American help now that Saddam Hussein had gone.

"No to America. No to Saddam," chanted Iraqis from the Shia Muslim majority oppressed by Saddam, who is of the rival Sunni sect. Arabic TV networks said up to 20,000 people marched.

After a day of delay, the meeting agreed that a future government of Iraq should be organised under a democratic, federal system after consultations across Iraq.

A spokesman for the Iraqi National Congress (INC), which sent a representative to the meeting, said there was no formal vote but the meeting agreed to a 13-point statement by consensus. That statement was published on the Central Command website. "(The meeting) was low level and never intended to produce concrete results," spokesman Zaab Sethna said.

Around 80 Iraqis — radical and mainstream Shia and Sunni

## THE PLAYERS

### ● Iraqi National Congress

Funded by the US, it is run by London-based Ahmad Chalabi, who has friends in the Pentagon and Congress. Not trusted by others

### ● Kurdistan Democratic Party

Founded by Mustafa Barzani in 1946, it is one of Iraq's oldest opposition groups

### ● Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

Jalal Talabani left the KDP to form the party. Talabani has good ties with Iran and Saudi Arabia

### ● Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq

Led by Iran-based Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim, it speaks for the majority Shia group

### ● Iraqi National Accord

Ayad Allawi, a British-educated neurologist, defected from Baath Party to form INA with the support of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Has good ties with the US

### ● Iraqi National Coalition

Its leader Major-General Tawfiq al-Yassiri is in contact with other officers in exile

### ● Iraqi National Front

Based in the US, it supports free elections and free market

Muslims, Kurds and supporters of the monarchy axed in 1958 — attended the gathering, 375 km southeast of Baghdad.

A leading Iran-based Shia Muslim group stayed away. "We cannot be part of a process which is under an American general," a spokesman for the Iran-based Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq said.

Sethna predicted they would attend the next meeting.

Those who did attend agreed that the Baath Party of Saddam had to be dissolved.

They voted to hold another meeting in 10 days at a location

to be decided, and to invite other Iraqi groups to begin deliberations on setting up an interim authority.

Jay Garner, the former US general leading the drive to rebuild Iraq, opened the conference on his 65th birthday.

"What better birthday can a man have than to begin it not only where civilisation began but where a free Iraq and a democratic Iraq will begin today?" he asked.

But scepticism ran deep among groups united by little more than joy at Saddam's fall or unease at getting too close to Washington.

INC leader Ahmad Chalabi, eager not to be seen as a stooge of the Americans who back him, opted to stay away and sent a representative instead. One of his aides said the majority of participants agreed with the INC's vision of Iraq's future.

Alluding to the protests in Nasiriyah, the aide said: "We know that Iran has sent money and people into the region, into all the major cities in the south, and they are trying to increase and capitalise on anti-American sentiment."

Garner is to head the Pentagon's Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance until Iraqis take over, probably in six months to a year. He will report to General Tommy Franks, who commanded the invasion of Iraq.

In his opening remarks to the meeting, President George W. Bush's special envoy to the region, Zalmay Khalilzad, said the US had no intention of ruling Iraq. "We want you to establish your own democratic system based on Iraqi traditions and values.... I urge you to take this opportunity to co-operate with each other," he said.



# Protests mar talks for new govt.

**UR (IRAQ), APRIL 15.** A U.S.-sponsored forum that brought Iraqi opposition leaders together to shape the country's post-war government began on Tuesday with a U.S. promise not to rule Iraq and concluded with an agreement to meet again in 10 days. Some Shiite Muslim groups boycotted the meeting and thousands protested nearby while representatives from some of Iraq's many factions met in the biblical birthplace of the prophet Abraham.

Jay Garner, a retired Lt. General, who is to head the U.S.-led interim administration in Iraq, opened the conference under a golden-coloured tent at Tallil air base, close to the 4,000-year-old ziggurat at Ur, a terraced-pyramid temple of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians. "What better place than the birthplace of civilisation could you have for the beginning of a free Iraq?" he said wearing an Iraqi flag pin on his blue shirt. The White House envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, told delegates that the U.S. had "no interest, absolutely no interest, in ruling Iraq".

Participants included Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites from inside the country and others who have spent years in exile. U.S. officials invited the groups, but each picked their own representatives.

Many Iraqis boycotted the meeting in opposition to U.S. plans to install Mr. Garner atop an interim administration. Thousands of Shiites demonstrated in nearby An Nasiriyah, chanting "No to America and no to Saddam Hussein!"

U.S. officials hope more Iraqis join the process over time and stressed that this was just the first of many such meetings in Iraq. The meeting concluded with the delegates voting by a show of hands to meet again in 10 days, a senior U.S. Government official said.

A national conference is planned to select the interim administration, perhaps within weeks, a senior U.S. official said on condition of anonymity. The

interim administration could begin handing power back to Iraqi officials within three to six months, but forming a government will take longer, said Tim Cross, the top British member of Mr. Garner's team.

Mr. Garner's Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance is given the charge of coordinating humanitarian assistance, rebuilding infrastructure shattered by years of war and U.N. sanctions, and gradually handing back power to Iraqis leading a democratically elected government.

Tuesday's meeting was the first step toward that goal after the ouster of Saddam Hussein.

In addition to Mr. Khalilzad and Mr. Garner, the meeting was attended by representatives from Britain, Australia and Poland, which contributed forces to the coalition.

There are already tensions between the U.S. and some Iraqi factions. Kurdish groups appear unwilling to compromise on their demand to expand the border of their autonomous area to include the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and Kurdish parts of the city of Mosul. That could pose a problem for the U.S., because Turkey worries that Kurdish control of Kirkuk could lead to aspirations for independence and in turn encourage separatist Kurds in Turkey.

Iraqi Opposition leaders fear the U.S. administration is trying to force Ahmed Chalabi, head of the London-based umbrella Iraqi National Congress, on them as leader of a new Iraqi administration.

Mr. Chalabi was the first top Iraqi Opposition leader to be airlifted by the U.S. into southern Iraq as the fighting wound down, and he and other top members of his group plan to meet soon in Baghdad. U.S. officials said Mr. Chalabi was brought in because he offered forces to the coalition.

Neither Mr. Chalabi nor many other leaders of anti-Saddam Hussein groups attended Tuesday's meeting, but they sent delegates.



Thousands of Iraqi Shiites demonstrate on Tuesday against a meeting to rebuild the war-torn nation being held in Nasiriyah in southern Iraq. They chanted slogans: "Yes to freedom... Yes to Islam... No to America... No to Saddam". — AP

Meanwhile, to the north, in Tikrit, looters ransacked the agricultural building. Tanks were parked outside Mr. Hussein's palace and helicopters roared over the Tigris. A key bridge that American forces seized a day earlier was damaged, and U.S. troops refused to let people cross.

In Baghdad, hundreds of residents swarmed the Palestine Hotel on Tuesday, appealing for order in the capital. One held up a sign in English reading: "Bloody liberation movie is started. Bad director." Some chanted "down, down, U.S.," and "U.S. out".

Looters broke into Government warehouses and carted away sacks of sugar and flour. The three-storey National Library smouldered, and the nearby Religious Affairs Ministry library — home to valued religious texts — was looted and gutted by fire.

Baghdad and Basra, Iraq's two largest cities, still lacked power, water and medical care.



The White House special envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad (second from right), talking with representatives of two prominent Iraqi tribes and Maha al-Shaibib Joudi (right), member of the Project for the Future of Iraq, at the opening of a U.S.-sponsored meeting at the Tallil airbase, in southern Iraq, on Tuesday. — AFP

Half the medical clinics in Basra had been looted and the children were suffering from diarrhoea, the aid group "Doctors of the World" said in Paris.

In Baghdad, U.S. marines

were combing the capital for holdouts on Tuesday, a day after American military officials declared that major coalition combat operations were over

— AP

## f [REDACTED] Syria

**DAMASCUS** [REDACTED] Tuesday denounced U.S. accusations that it was developing chemical weapons as "threats and falsifications" designed to further Israeli interests.

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16 APR 2003

WE HIND

# Arafat rejects PM's Cabinet

Robert Tart/The Times, London

JERUSALEM, April 15. — The revival of the West Asia peace process is under threat after the rejection by Mr Yasser Arafat of a Cabinet proposed by the man he chose to be Prime Minister.

Palestinian sources say the Palestinian Authority leader is furious at the choices of the Prime Minister-designate Mr Mahmoud Abbas, because they exclude many of his own supporters. He is understood to be particularly angry at moves to give responsibility for security to Mohammad Dahlan, who is respected by USA and Israel. Mr Arafat's opposition could delay or even block approval of the proposed new Cabinet by Palestinian deputies. The US President has made publication of an international peace "road map", which plans for an independent Palestinian State by 2005, conditional on the swearing-in of Mr Abbas's new government.

Mr Arafat created the post of Prime Minister under pressure from America and Israel, who refused to deal with him and demanded a new Palestinian leadership. Mr Abbas, widely known as Abu Mazen, presented his proposed 22-member Cabinet, made up of many reform-minded technocrats in line with international demands, to Mr Arafat on Sunday. According to local reports, Mr Arafat threw the list on the floor in disgust. Sources also suggest that American officials were told of the list's contents before Mr Arafat. Because of Mr Arafat's objections, a planned meeting of the central committee of his Fatah organisation to approve the new Cabinet was postponed.

The dispute comes after weeks of tension between Mr Abbas and Mr Arafat over the Prime Minister's powers and his chosen Cabinet. Mr Abbas was given a two-week extension to form a government after reports that he had threatened to resign because of frustration over Mr Arafat's alleged interference. At the heart of the disagreement is the status of Mr Dahlan. Mr Dahlan and Mr Abbas have both criticised militant attacks on Israeli targets.

When Mr Arafat objected, pressing the case for ally, Mr Hani al-Hasan, Mr Abbas tried to resolve the dispute by appointing himself interior minister. Mr Arafat was still not satisfied.

Mr Abbas was hoping to present his Cabinet this week, but the last-minute manoeuvring threatened another delay. President Bush has expressed impatience in the drawn-out negotiations.

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# Protests mar talks

**UR (IRAQ), APRIL 15.** A U.S.-sponsored forum that brought Iraqi opposition leaders together to shape the country's post-war government began on Tuesday with a U.S. promise not to rule Iraq and concluded with an agreement to meet again in 10 days. Some Shiite Muslim groups boycotted the meeting and thousands protested nearby while representatives from some of Iraq's many factions met in the biblical birthplace of the prophet Abraham.

Jay Garner, a retired Lt. General, who is to head the U.S.-led interim administration in Iraq, opened the conference under a golden-coloured tent at Tallil air base, close to the 4,000-year-old ziggurat at Ur, a terraced-pyramid temple of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians. "What better place than the birthplace of civilisation could you have for the beginning of a free Iraq?" he said wearing an Iraqi flag pin on his blue shirt. The White House envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, told delegates that the U.S. had "no interest, absolutely no interest, in ruling Iraq".

Participants included Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites from inside the country and others who have spent years in exile. U.S. officials invited the groups, but each picked their own representatives.

Many Iraqis boycotted the meeting in opposition to U.S. plans to install Mr. Garner atop an interim administration. Thousands of Shiites demonstrated in nearby An Nasiriyah, chanting "No to America and no to Saddam Hussein!"

U.S. officials hope more Iraqis join the process over time and stressed that this was just the first of many such meetings in Iraq. The meeting concluded with the delegates voting by a show of hands to meet again in 10 days, a senior U.S. Government official said.

A national conference is planned to select the interim administration, perhaps within weeks, a senior U.S. official said on condition of anonymity. The

interim administration could begin handing power back to Iraqi officials within three to six months, but forming a government will take longer, said Tim Cross, the top British member of Mr. Garner's team.

Mr. Garner's Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance is given the charge of coordinating humanitarian assistance, rebuilding infrastructure shattered by years of war and U.N. sanctions, and gradually handing back power to Iraqis leading a democratically elected government.

Tuesday's meeting was the first step toward that goal after the ouster of Saddam Hussein.

In addition to Mr. Khalilzad and Mr. Garner, the meeting was attended by representatives from Britain, Australia and Poland, which contributed forces to the coalition.

There are already tensions between the U.S. and some Iraqi factions. Kurdish groups appear unwilling to compromise on their demand to expand the border of their autonomous area to include the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and Kurdish parts of the city of Mosul. That could pose a problem for the U.S., because Turkey worries that Kurdish control of Kirkuk could lead to aspirations for independence and in turn encourage separatist Kurds in Turkey.

Iraqi Opposition leaders fear the U.S. administration is trying to force Ahmed Chalabi, head of the London-based umbrella Iraqi National Congress, on them as leader of a new Iraqi administration.

Mr. Chalabi was the first top Iraqi Opposition leader to be airlifted by the U.S. into southern Iraq as the fighting wound down, and he and other top members of his group plan to meet soon in Baghdad. U.S. officials said Mr. Chalabi was brought in because he offered forces to the coalition.

Neither Mr. Chalabi nor many other leaders of anti-Saddam Hussein groups attended Tuesday's meeting, but they sent delegates.



**Thousands of Iraqi Shiites den nation being held in Nasiriyah to Islam.**

Meanwhile, to the north, in Tikrit, looters ransacked the agricultural building. Tanks were parked outside Mr. Hussein's palace and helicopters roared over the Tigris. A key bridge that American forces seized a day earlier was damaged, and U.S. troops refused to let people cross.

In Baghdad, hundreds of residents swarmed the Palestine Hotel on Tuesday, appealing for order in the capital. One held up a sign in English reading: "Bloody liberation movie is started. Bad director." Some chanted "down, down, U.S." and "U.S. out".

Looters broke into Government warehouses and carted away sacks of sugar and flour. The three-storey National Library smouldered, and the nearby Religious Affairs Ministry library — home to valued religious texts — was looted and gutted by fire.

Baghdad and Basra, Iraq's two largest cities, still lacked power, water and medical care.

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CONTINUES IN BAGHDAD, TIKRIT

# talks for new govt.



Thousands of Iraqi Shiites demonstrate on Tuesday against a meeting to rebuild the war-torn nation being held in Nasiriyah in southern Iraq. They chanted slogans: "Yes to freedom... Yes to Islam... No to America... No to Saddam". — AP

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The White House special envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad (second from right), talking with representatives of two prominent Iraqi tribes and Maha al-Shaibb Joudi (right), member of the Project for the Future of Iraq, at the opening of a U.S.-sponsored meeting at the Tallil airbase, in southern Iraq, on Tuesday. — AFP

Half the medical clinics in Basra had been looted and the children were suffering from diarrhoea, the aid group "Doctors of the World" said in Paris.

In Baghdad, U.S. marines

were combing the capital for holdouts on Tuesday, a day after American military officials declared that major coalition combat operations were over. — AP

# From Saddam to Shia clerics

K.P. NAYAR

Washington, April 14: The Americans who "liberated" Iraqis from Saddam Hussein's tyranny are finding themselves caught between the devil and the deep sea.

There is concern here that Shia clerics — whose images in black robes, turbans and beards in neighbouring Iran still make Americans stiffen — are quickly filling the void left by the Baath Party.

Yesterday, as millions of Americans sat back complacently and watched images of rescued US prisoners of war, the leadership here was grappling with "disturbing" clips in the European media of looters in Baghdad's Saddam City bringing back cartloads of stolen goods to the Sadr mosque in this huge Shia shah.

Looted goods, returned by vandals, are now piled high on the premises of Sadr and other mosques in Saddam City. They have been surrendered following calls by Shia clerics that it is against Islam to steal or to profit from stolen goods.

European TV stations also showed black-urbanised Shia re-

ligious leaders in Saddam City going round in jeeps fitted with loudspeakers preaching peace and order and asking people to keep calm.

Saddam City has already been renamed by its residents: not as Bush city or Blair town to celebrate its "liberation", but as Sadr city.

Imam Sadr of An Najaf was once the "potential" Ayatollah Khomeini of Iraq, but Saddam Hussein had him executed more than two decades ago, thus making him an icon among his country's persecuted and-deprived majority Shias.

American officials are already saying their troops did not shed blood to hand over Iraq to Mohammed Bakr al Hakim, the ayatollah who is in exile in Tehran and heads what is known as the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. An Islamic Republic of Iraq is among the organisation's objectives.

Ominously for the Americans, the group has boycotted the meeting in An Nasiriyah tomorrow of sundry Iraqi factions called by the coalition to discuss the country's future.

"We are not going to attend the Nasiriyah meeting because it is not to the benefit of the Iraqi nation," Reuters quoted Abdelaziz Hakim, a leader of the group, as saying.

"From the beginning, independence has been our manibrella or anybody else's. The Iraq nation refuses any dependency," he said.

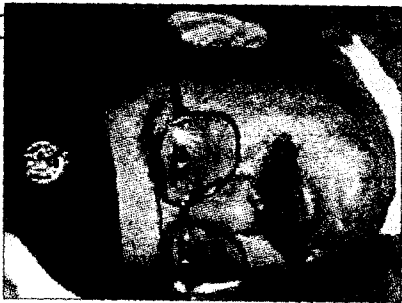
Washington's problem is that as Iraq descends into chaos, there are only two poles in the country to which its society can be tethered. One is religion and the other is the Baath Party or what remains of it.

That poses a hard choice for the Americans. The crisis they face is that the challenges that call for immediate action will not wait for a decision to be made in Washington, London or even at the UN, as the virtual takeover of Saddam City by the mullahs has shown.

US intelligence is now convinced that the uprisings widely predicted by the Americans as their troops marched into Iraq did not happen because Ayatollah Mohammed Bakr al Hakim sent messages from Tehran asking his followers not to take sides during the invasion and withhold support both from Saddam and the Anglo-American forces.

Washington had tried to co-opt the ayatollah into its campaign as early as August last year when he was invited here for a meeting hosted jointly by the state department and the Pentagon.

The ayatollah refused to attend and only sent his representative to the concave in which other players in post-Saddam Iraq such as Ahmad Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress and Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan participated.



Saddam Hussein's half-brother, Wathban Ibrahim, captured on Sunday. (Reuters)

# Thieves of Baghdad

Iraq's suffering continues unabated

The cities of "liberated" Iraq, Baghdad included, are fast running out of food, water and medical supplies. Lack of availability of international aid, however, is not the problem, there is plenty standing by in Kuwait or in ships docked at Umm Qasr port. The problem is that the aid cannot be moved to the people who need it, as in every city that fell to the coalition forces anarchy reigned, looters took over the streets, some armed groups even fought each other for the spoils. That was the story in Baghdad, Basra and Mosul — the sole exception being Kirkuk, to which we will come later for the lessons it offers. Red Cross workers have been killed, and one of Baghdad's largest hospitals has been stripped clean of its equipment, rendering it unworkable. In Baghdad the looting went on for four days under the eyes of coalition troops, who stood aloof. Belated steps are at last being taken to restore order, but not before the National Museum of Antiquities, which held priceless antiquities from early civilizations on the Euphrates and the Tigris, was stripped of anything valuable. Both Washington and London held the view that it is not the job of soldiers to become policemen; White House spokesman Ari Fleischer even said that the looting was understandable as a "reaction to oppression". That would have been half-way plausible if the looting had been confined to government ministries or a few top leaders' houses, but Fleischer should know better.

The Red Cross has pointed out that according to the Geneva Convention security, law and order and welfare of the population is the charge of the occupying power; Kofi Annan has also expressed a similar view. Kurdish troops who took over Kirkuk did a far better job at managing the transition than either the British or the Americans — there is little lawlessness there, and electricity, water and hospitals are functioning normally. Their secret is that they went in with a plan for taking over the city's administration as soon as the earlier administration collapsed. Appallingly, coalition forces did not go in with similar plans in the cities that came under their control: a few suicide attacks appear to have rattled them to an extent where they looked incapable of doing much more than watching their backs. Now the Kurds are being asked to leave Kirkuk in order to please the Turks and American tanks are rolling in; one hopes there will not be a repeat of the disorder that took place in other cities that Kirkuk had been spared so far. If security isn't established soon and people's lives noticeably improve, recent Afghan history may repeat itself in Iraq — defeat the enemy of the day (whether the Soviet Union or the Ba'athist regime), declare victory and go home, oblivious of the fact that there is only one thing that can fill the ideological and power vacuum left behind — Islamic fundamentalism. The reverberations of that kind of fundamentalism were felt on September 11, 2001, and may be felt once again.

THE STATESMAN

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# Uday found it tough to be his father's son

Wishing of the Mr. 16 15/4



**Uday Hussein**  
Living like a prince

New York, April 14

IT IS difficult being in the family of Hussein. People want to kill us," Uday, son of Saddam Hussein, wrote to an uncle in 1990 in a letter, which *Time* magazine says was found in Uday's palace in Baghdad.

In the letter, Uday says his father plans to create a greater Iraq that includes Kuwait, Palestine and Arabstan, a region of Iran historically controlled by Baghdad. The note says Saddam is beginning with the easiest — Kuwait, *Time* said on Monday.

The palace, in the Baghdad suburb of Karada, it said, was not Uday's main residence but rather a safe house where he could hide out, as well as, according to a neighbour, a "love

nest", to which Uday would bring his many girlfriends. "There is nothing in my heart towards my father, not any love or kindness. In the end I ask God to, keep his house safe," Uday wrote, according to *Time*.

An official letter found in the palace signed by Uday and countersigned by seven witnesses, the magazine said, notes that well-known Opposition Shia leader Thafer Mohammed Jaber was captured on September 3, 1995, and was being kept in one of Saddam's palaces. Jaber, say Iraqis, has not been heard of since.

Among other items found in the palace were videos *License to Kill* (two copies), *Like Father Like Son* and *Loose Cannons*, receipts from Uday's 1989 New Year's party.

A love letter kept by Uday, with a lipstick kiss writes, "Remember me when you listen to Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, which I heard for the first time with you."

*Time* says its correspondent also found instructions for a Health Diagnostics HIV test. Also found were charred corners of \$100 and \$50 bills. "He used to light cigars with them," a neighbour was quoted as saying.

After American forces entered Iraq, people looted his lavish three-storey home.

The looters, *Time* says, took everything they could, including fuses from the fuse boxes. But they left documents that the magazine says paint a colourful portrait of the unhappy eldest son of Saddam, who hasn't been

seen since reportedly entering the restaurant obliterated by US bombs in the al-Mansur neighbourhood.

Snapshots found in the remains of a darkroom show him fishing with friends, riding a motorbike in a black leather jacket, posing with pet lions and hanging out in shorts and a cowboy hat, *Time* said.

And then there is Uday's university transcript from 1988, the year he was awarded a degree in civil engineering.

"He ranked 1st in a class of 174 students," the transcript reads before detailing his grades: excellent in every subject, except physical training and first aid, in which he was satisfactory, the highest grades offered for such courses.



# Anglo-American axis trains guns on Syria

TIMES NEWS NETWORK AND  
AGENCIES

**Washington\London:** Signalling a new muscular approach after the Iraq war and sending tremors throughout the Arab world, the US has now warned Syria of consequences if it does not stop cross-border exfiltration and harbouring fugitives of the Saddam Hussein regime.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Monday that the US would consider imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions against Syria for its support for members of Mr Hussein's regime.

"We will examine possible measures of a diplomatic, economic or other nature as we move forward," he said. "We are in touch with Syrian authorities, and will make them aware of our concerns, and we'll see how things unfold," he said.

Across the Atlantic, in a remarkably calibrated pincer movement, London publicly and chillingly confirmed it too "had concerns about Syria for quite some time". But Britain said it had no intention of invading Syria after Iraq.

Washington has stopped short of threatening war against Syria, but the menace is unmistakable as several top US officials have turned the heat on Syria over the weekend. President George W. Bush joined his cabinet principals on Sunday in rebuking Syria for failing to cooperate with the US, and going public with the assertion that Damascus had chemical weapons, a long-standing US suspicion that has never been aired openly.

"Each situation will require a different response. First things first. We're in Iraq now," Mr Bush told reporters on Sunday amidst widespread speculation in the international diplomatic community that Washington was lining up Syria after it finishes with Iraq.

Similar warnings to Syria were issued by Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who

sion interview that "the Syrian government is making a lot of bad mistakes, a lot of bad judgment calls, in my view, and they're associating with the wrong people". Asked if Syria was next on the US hit-list, he said, "That's above my pay grade. Those are the kinds of things that countries and Presidents decide."

On the other hand, in a babel of confusing soundbites, Tony Blair's cabinet big-hitters alternately cautioned and cajoled Syria on Monday, even as they repeatedly denied it was next on the hit-list of the Anglo-American alliance.

Foreign secretary Jack Straw said there was "much evidence of considerable co-operation between the Syrian government and the Saddam regime", but added, "Syria is not next on the list. There is no next list."

Defence secretary Geoff Hoon said, "Our immediate

concern is the risk that some of those involved in Iraq's WMD programmes might escape across the border into Syria, obviously boosting Syria's own efforts in those directions."

But British officials were unable to provide answers to this paper at the time of writing about Mr Hoon's claims on Monday that the UK government had submitted a memo to parliament more than a year ago expressing concern about a Syrian banned weapons programme.

London warned Damascus to be forthcoming on three counts—providing information on its "unlawful holdings (of chemical weapons)", physical and human intelligence on "fugitives from Saddam's regime" who are alleged to have fled from Iraq into Syria and "answers to important questions (about whether they have been developing any kind of illegal or illegitimate chemical or biological programmes)".

As part of his carrot-and-stick approach, Mr Blair spoke to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on Sunday, while despatching foreign office minister Mike O'Brien to talk turkey with Damascus on Monday.

But in a significant giveaway, the British foreign office issued an updated travel advice to its nationals, warning of a "high threat" of terrorist attacks that "could involve the use of chemical or biological materials".

In response to the Anglo-American charges, Syria said, "Of course, Syria has no chemical weapons," and pointed to the case of Iraq where the presence of these weapons had not been confirmed so far. A foreign ministry spokesperson said, "I would like to say that there are biological, chemical and nuclear weapons of mass destruction in West Asia. They are in Israel, not in Syria," she said.

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● See Edit: Victory & Vandalism,

## On the battlefield



● US troops gain control of Tikrit

● US Marines engage in heavy gun battle with snipers outside Hotel Palestine in Baghdad

● Top Iraqi nuclear scientist Jaffar al Jaffar surrenders in Iraq: US

● All Iraqi oilfields now fall within allied-controlled areas

● Russia blames US

forces for allowing sacking of Baghdad's archaeological museum

from page 1

# TIKRIT:

secure the town of Samarra, where seven American PoWs were rescued today and taken to Kuwait.

US commanders indicated that Tikrit's seizure is likely to mark the end of the "decisive phase" of Operation Iraqi Freedom, launched on 20 March. "Clearly we are at a point when the decisive military operations that were focused on removing the regime... is coming to a close," said Brig.-Gen. Vincent Brooks, spokesman for the US central command.

After air strikes throughout last night, three Marine battalions entered Tikrit before dawn, meeting resistance only on the edges of the city.

Five armoured vehicles were deployed in the main square early today. A US commander said one Iraqi soldier died in the fighting. There have

been no reports of any coalition casualties.

The central command said some Saddam loyalists in Tikrit had not given up the fight, but the US military no longer considered the Iraqi army an effective force. "The Iraqi military appears to be over as an organised force," said Captain Frank Thorp in Qatar. "But it is premature to say the war is over as long as there continues to be resistance."

Normal life seemed to be making a slow return to Baghdad, although most shops remained closed and most parts of the city were without water and electricity. US forces and Iraqi police started joint patrols for the first time since the city came under coalition control on Wednesday. "More people are on the streets, so we think there is some progress in terms of security," said Nada Doumani, an ICRC spokeswoman in Geneva.

Looting reportedly died down in the capital, but clashes continued to plague the city. US commanders said foreign fighters were behind most of the attacks.



FINAL FRONTIER: US Marines in front of Al-Faruq palace in Tikrit on Monday. — AFP

As a dozen Marines with M-16 rifles looked on edgily, some 300 people pressed against the barbed wire encircling the entrance of a hotel and shouted: "Where is our future?", "We want security" and "We

want a clean Iraq".

**Oil wells:** The US central command today claimed that all Iraqi oil wells were under its control.

Coalition forces had previously taken all of 1,000 oil wells in southern Iraq, while Kurdish allies last week seized the northern oil city of Kirkuk, Iraq's No. 2 oil centre, which pumps 900,000 barrels a day.



BEHAVE YOURSELF: A US soldier guards looters caught inside a bank in Baghdad on Sunday. — AFP

The ambassador, who returned home from Baghdad today via Damascus, said it was "most probable" that the Iraqi President and his close associates were killed in one of the bombardments of secret presidential bunkers.

He left Baghdad on 6 April by road and on his way to Damascus, his diplomatic convoy was attacked by the US Rangers near the Iraqi capital souring Moscow's already strained relations with Washington.

He had to leave his badly wounded driver in the hospital in Iraqi town of Al Fallujah and drive all the way to Iraq's border with Syria with a fractured finger and shrapnel stuck in his shoulder.

Next day, Mr Titorenko returned to Al Fallujah to evacuate his driver to a Damascus hospital, where he was operated for the second time on his abdomen, wounded by three American bullets.

# Pentagon was warned of heritage loot, did nothing

Iraq also has 13 regional museums at risk, including another world-renowned facility in the northern city of Mosul, as well as thousands of archaeological sites, ranging from the fabled ancient cities of Ur, Nineveh, Nimrud and Babylon to medieval Muslim villages abandoned in the country's vast western reaches. "To the extent possible, and as soon as though it were yesterday, someone needs to post border guards to intercept antiquities as they try to leave the country," said archaeologist and art historian John Russell of the Massachusetts College of Art. "There is a smuggling network in Iraq, and there could have been professional thieves among the looters."

In January, a statement from the Archaeological Institute of

America called on "all governments" to protect cultural sites during an expected conflict and in its aftermath. Gibson and others said they were especially concerned because of the example provided by the 1991 Gulf War. Allied forces scrupulously avoided targeting Iraqi cultural sites during the bombing of Baghdad 12 years ago — one attack put only a shrapnel dent in the National Museum's front door even as it levelled a telecommunications facility across the street.

But the end of that war kicked off a looting rampage, and eventually allowed systemic smuggling to develop. Artifacts from inadequately guarded sites were dug up and hauled away during the 12 years between the wars. "We

wanted to make sure this didn't happen again," Gibson said. "They said they would be very aware and would try to protect the artifacts," Gibson said, recalling January meetings with Pentagon officials charged with target selection and protection of cultural sites. "We told them the looting was the biggest danger, and I felt that they understood that the National Museum was the most important archaeological site in the entire country. It has everything from every other site."

Pentagon officials knowledgeable about those meetings referred questions to the public affairs office, which said the military has tried to protect the sites.

Since the 1920s, Iraq has required that anyone digging within

its borders file a report with the museum. In more recent years, expeditions had to submit all excavated material to the museum for formal cataloguing after each year's digging "season." Looters apparently burned or otherwise destroyed most of those records last week, but Gibson suggested scholars worldwide could duplicate the archive by copying their files and reports and resubmitting them to Iraqi authorities. The museum's artifacts are another matter.

Although the damage done is almost certainly catastrophic, Russell said, "it's going to be a matter of weeks or months before we're going to be able to identify any particular thing." Iraq is the home of ancient Mesopotamia and has a cultural heritage that extends for

95-2  
1879  
thousands of years and encompasses the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Parthians, Sassanids and Muslims, to name only the best known civilizations. "There are thousands of unique items," said Boston University archaeologist Paul Zimansky. "If somebody walks off with those things, we'll never see them again. It is a disaster of major proportions."

The museum houses the 5,000-year-old alabaster Uruk Vase, which shows a procession entering a temple — the earliest known depiction of a ritual. Also from Uruk is the "White Lady," the stone face of a woman that looks as if it was carved during the Greek Classic period but is 5,500 years old, one of the earliest known examples of rep-

resentational sculpture. The bust of an Akkadian king, dated 2300 B.C., is the earliest copper casting ever found. The Neolithic collection, of items about 9,000 years old, includes small sculptures of birds' heads from Nemrik, north of Mosul.

Russell said the museum staff attempted to pack up the portable items on display and stash them in vast below-ground storage rooms and vaults, but looters found them. The museum also contained a spectacular cache of gold artifacts from the burial tombs of Assyrian queens in Nimrud. "They were sent away to the Central Bank, and I told the Pentagon about those, too," Gibson said. "But I hear they looted the Central Bank as well." —LATWP

# IMF haze over Iraq horizon

**B**Y Sunday morning, the mood music emanating from the spring meetings of the world's economic decision-makers in the US capital was a soothing ode to peace and global harmony. The message being trumpeted by ministers from the Group of Seven leading industrial nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank was all about a new "spirit of cooperation".

But, in truth, only a last-minute deal to paper over the deep divisions between the key players prevented these Washington talks, under the umbrella of the IMF spring meetings, from deteriorating into another disastrous breakdown in international cooperation. The global diplomatic tensions that have undercut the credibility of the UN came dangerously close to severely poisoning world economic relations – and to consigning the IMF and the World Bank to the same fate as a hapless and hamstrung UN.

It may be true that the weekend's hard-won IMF agreement on co-operation over post-war reconstruction was the first time that international consensus on Iraq has been secured since Britain helped to broker UN resolution 1441 in the build-up to the conflict. But the deal in Washington is little more than a sticking plaster. It remains to be seen if it will stick for long, or if the wounds will heal.

As Baghdad smoulders, few of the participants in these talks emerge with much credit from the unedifying spectacle of what a G7 official called "jockeying for position". There are few, if any, tangible measures to boast about that would help to relieve the urgent problems on the ground in Iraq. How, for example, will a viable currency to replace the Iraqi dinar be established? How will Iraq's massive debts be dealt with? There weren't many answers to be found in Washington.

For all of this, there are faults on most sides. It seems incredible that, despite its designing in advance a complex post-war bureaucracy for

'A lot of fiddling while Rome burns.' This was the gloomy and depressingly accurate assessment of an official in Washington at the weekend amid unseemly wrangling over the fate of post-war Iraq, writes GARY DUNCAN



LONG LIVE: Relatives, friends and colleagues applaud as the coffin containing the remains of Spanish Tele-5 TV cameraman, Jose Couso, arrives in La Almudena Cemetery in Madrid on Sunday. Couso was killed in a US tank fire in Baghdad's Palestine Hotel last Tuesday. — AFP

Iraq, it never occurred to the USA to consider the appropriate – and ultimately vital – future role of the IMF and World Bank.

Still, Washington's undisguised bafflement at the World Bank's ludicrous and legalistic insistence that it could not pay even a Baghdad hotel bill for its officials without a new UN resolution is not hard to understand. Nor is justifiable American impatience at another apparent display of dog in the manger attitudes over all this from France.

The weekend's agreement should at least open the way for the IMF and World Bank to begin the basic but essential fact-finding tasks of establishing what needs to be done to turn Iraq's totalitarian command-and-control economy

into a working market-based system under the rule of law. But the discord in Washington does not augur well for the much greater effort that is required to restore Iraq to relative prosperity and to improve the living standards of its people.

There remains plenty of sand in the gears.

The agenda of unfinished business over Iraq's rebuilding, physically and otherwise, is daunting. The billion-dollar question, which still hangs unanswered in the stale air of the IMF's meeting rooms, is whether Washington has the will and the commitment to invest the years, rather than months, of intense exertion that is needed. Given the scale and probable cost

of the task, it is unquestionably in the interests of the USA, as well as that of the Iraqi people, that the whole international community should be deeply involved. Whether the Bush Administration will recognise this and make the necessary overtures to bring Europe, in particular, fully on board remains in serious doubt.

The prize of a newly prosperous and peaceful Iraq will be hard to secure but worth every ounce of effort and cent of expense. If a self-governing Iraq is to remain politically stable and pro-Western, then laying firm foundations for sustainable growth and steadily rising living standards is imperative.

More than this, a successful market-based Iraq economy will be a

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powerful example for the rest of West Asia, whose economies are dogged by a deep-seated malaise that makes them such fertile grounds for fundamentalism and terrorism.

Despite the huge resource advantages that oil has offered the Gulf states, the opportunities and potential offered by this wealth have often been squandered. As George Abed, of the IMF's West Asia department, details in a recent analysis, growth across much of the region has faltered over the past two decades as the rest of the developing world has enjoyed a relatively robust expansion.

Ironically, the non-oil economies of the region have actually done better. Across West Asia and North Africa as a whole, real GDP growth has averaged only 3.5 per cent over the past three decades – substantially less than the 5 per cent average for all developing countries.

As Abed explains, this poor performance has flowed from a near-vacuum over economic and political reform, widespread corruption, a failure by the West Asian states to take advantage of globalisation, underdeveloped financial markets, and trade restrictions. A crucial factor has been the growth of unwieldy public sectors as oil wealth has fuelled a relentless expansion of government activities by authoritarian regimes, crowding out private sector development. The consequences of all these have been baleful for the people of the region and disastrous for global stability.

Iraq offers the chance to create an alternative model – one to which the people of other West Asian countries could aspire. A successful and wisely-led reconstruction drive could create a beacon for the region and a bulwark against fundamentalism. For this to happen, though, there must first be vision and leadership from the USA, and goodwill and commitment from Europe. It is a challenge to which both must quickly rise.

— *The Times, London.*

# G7 pact on UN gets aid moving

GLENN SOMERVILLE  
WASHINGTON, APRIL 14

A WEEKEND pact among global finance chiefs to seek a new UN resolution on rebuilding Iraq may speed the mobilisation of aid but may not resolve the tricky question of who will lead the effort.

US treasury secretary John Snow, who met the Group of Seven (G7) finance ministers and central bankers on Friday and Saturday, was able to say later that the World Bank can now begin to study Iraq's needs. But the agreement by the G7, which comprises the US, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan, on a new UN Security Council resolution was so vague as to be open to nearly any interpretation. This means the weekend's burning question — whether the UN or the international financial institutions will spearhead the Iraq rebuild — may not yet be answered.

"We recognise the need for a multilateral effort to help Iraq," a communique on Saturday said. "We support a further UN Security Council resolution." None of the lenders among the G7 have produced a definitive cost figure for Iraqi reconstruction, but some estimates range as high as \$20 bil-

## Saddam's contracts

DUBAI: OIL companies hope new Iraqi government will open its reserves to foreign investment. US and British companies are expected to compete with Russian, Chinese and French ones that led negotiations under Saddam's government. By far the largest deal was for West Qurna, by a Russia consortium led by LUKOIL, but Baghdad cancelled that contract. *PII*

lion a year for several years on projects from schools and roads to modernising its oil-pumping capacity.

The G7 deal to back a new UN resolution let Snow say the World Bank can get on with the job. He told the IMF later Iraqis "have waited long enough" for aid. Analysts said the deal was a significant development from the meetings.

"The most important outcome seems to have been some rapprochement, with a coming-together of the industrialised countries after the division that marked the period before the Iraqi war," said economist Lynn Reaser of Banc of America Capital Management Inc. *Reuters*

# World powers battle it out over Iraq debt

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, APRIL 14

IT'S the latest battle: What to do with Iraq's gargantuan foreign debt? Total Iraqi liabilities, including Gulf War claims, may exceed \$380 billion. Fissures remained over Washington's informal push for debt forgiveness for a new Baghdad administration. French, German and Russian finance ministers were not ready to back US calls for the debt to be forgiven. "We will get our money back," German Finance Minister Hans Eichel said. Russia said it would offer no more than other creditors. France said Iraq was not alone in needing debt relief.

Meanwhile, two interna-



Dinars being sold as war souvenirs in Amman. *Reuters photo*

tional lending agencies endorsed a US request to send fact-finders to Iraq to assess rebuilding costs as finance offi-

cials on Sunday wrapped up meetings dominated by divisions over post-Saddam Iraq. The Bush Administration,

wanting to show Iraqis some tangible and immediate economic benefits from President Saddam Hussein's overthrow, had pushed for teams from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to enter Iraq as soon as it was safe.

That demand was opposed at first by European countries unhappy with what they saw as a threat of US domination of the reconstruction effort. But World Bank President James Wolfensohn said the weekend talks had resulted in an unanimous understanding that the mission would go ahead when conditions were safe.

IMF MD Horst Kohler said, "I appeal to the leaders to keep the IMF out of this dispute and allow us to become

active on the basis of our legitimacy." For their part, the Europeans want the UN to play the lead role in rebuilding and installing a new government. President Bush has suggested limiting the world body to advising the US and its partners in the war. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan sent Rafeeduddin Ahmed, his special adviser on post-war Iraq, to Washington for meetings beginning Monday with Bush Administration officials.

Now that the war is practically over, there is no dearth of sympathy from world powers. US Treasury Secretary John Snow told the World Bank's steering committee on Sunday, "the people of Iraq have waited long enough for the promise of

aid and assistance from the international community." Britain's international development secretary, Clare Short, said countries need to offer a "coherent and comprehensive response" if Iraqis are to succeed "in their efforts to rehabilitate and reconstruct their country."

There was no talk at the meetings about exact amounts of the aid to come from the 184-nation IMF and the World Bank. Nor was there discussion about when the US might call for an international donor's conference to try to round up contributions from other wealthy nations.

There are no official estimates of how much the rebuilding will cost.

# HK cell firm launches SARS locating service

REUTERS  
HONG KONG, APRIL 14

A HONG KONG mobile phone company is launching a service that lets customers know which nearby buildings have housed carriers of the deadly SARS virus.

"With the dial of a few digits, subscribers can find out the number of affected. They need to go about their everyday lives," said Bruce Hicks, MD of Sunday Communications Ltd., among the smaller



Boys wear masks to keep SARS at bay. *Reuters photo*

of Hong Kong's six fiercely competitive cellphone service providers.

Subscribers can access SARS-related data in Chinese or English, including the names of buildings within one kilometre of the user's calling area where SARS cases have been confirmed.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, has hit Hong Kong hard, killing 47 people and infecting 1,190. Over the weekend, the Hong Kong government

bowed to public pressure and began releasing data on where SARS cases have been located. The outbreak has been concentrated in clusters, the most notorious being the Amoy Gardens housing estate.

Newspapers have begun publishing maps of the territory showing the locations of buildings where SARS patients live.

Sunday also said it was donating mobile services to SARS patients recovering in hospitals.

# 'Damascus has key questions to answer'

By Atul Aneja

**MANAMA, APRIL 14.** The visiting British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, today said the Anglo-American coalition did not intend to attack Syria, but Damascus had to answer key questions about its alleged role in shielding Iraqi fugitives.

"As far as 'Syria next on the list', we made clear that it is not," Mr. Straw told reporters in Bahrain, his first halt in a four-nation tour of the Persian Gulf countries that also includes Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. "There is no next list," he said. "There are important questions which the Syrians need to an-

swer." While ruling out a war threat, Mr. Straw made it clear that Syria was still not off the hook. On the contrary, his observations come a day after the U.S. President, George Bush, issued a blunt warning to Syria, urging it to change course on the question of Iraqi fugitives and chemical weapons.

Israel, Syria's neighbour, also stepped up the pressure on Damascus on Monday. The Israeli Defence Minister, Shaul Mofaz, has asked Syria to dismantle the extremist group, Hezbollah, and to ensure that rockets belonging to this group are removed from southern Lebanon from where they can target Israel.

Reinforcing the squeeze on Syria, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Saud al Faisal, and the British Foreign Office Minister, Mike O'Brien, called on the Syrian President, Bashar Al-Assad, on Monday, apparently to discourage him from sheltering Iraqi leaders.

Diplomatic sources point out that the intense pressure that is being mounted on Syria is because of Anglo-American fears that Damascus, through its exertions, can deprive the alliance of a justification for waging war against Iraq. The U.S. so far has been unable to find Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, whose alleged existence inside Iraqi territory was the chief cause for targeting Iraq.

As the hunt for these weapons is turning increasingly fruitless, pressure is mounting in London and Washington to explain the launch of military action against Baghdad. Consequently, Syria has increasingly become the focus of Anglo-American attention. Syria on its part has denied the existence of any chemical weapons or the presence of Iraqi fugitives on its territory. It has also blamed Israel for souring its relations with the United States.

"Of course Syria has no chemical weapons. They (Americans) have been talking for years about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. But so far, the presence of these weapons has not been confirmed," said the Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Bouthayna Shaaban.



Tents erected at the base of the Temple of Zigguret, built 4000 years ago for the moon, in preparation for the U.S. State Department Interim Government of Iraq Summit at Tallil Air Base, in the southern Iraqi desert, on Monday. Iraqi Opposition groups are to gather here on Tuesday for the first time since Saddam Hussein's fall. — AFP

## Syria has chemical arms: Bush

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

**WASHINGTON, APRIL 14.** After his senior officials like the Defence Secretary and his Deputy went after Syria in the last two weeks, the U.S. President, George W. Bush, on Sunday stepped up the rhetoric, demanding "cooperation" from Damascus, but was careful not to say anything that would even remotely suggest that Washington was planning military strikes.

"They (meaning Syria) just need to cooperate", Mr. Bush said on Sunday.

"We expect cooperation and I'm hopeful we'll receive cooperation". He warned Syria against taking in deposed Iraqi leaders and charged that country had chemical weapons. It is not clear if Mr. Bush was talking about chemical weapons and its production at centres in

Syria or referring to allegations that the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq had sent chemical and biological weapons to Syria prior to the start of the conflict on March 20 for storage and safe-keeping.

"People have got to know that we are serious about stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction", Mr. Bush remarked even as he laughed away a question on whether Syria was a good candidate for his "Axis of Evil" list.

"We will deal with each situation as it arises."

If Syria has been meriting a lot of attention in senior circles of this Republican administration, some of it has to do with allegations that Damascus was deliberately hurting the coalition military actions in Iraq by shipping military hardware, including anti-tank weapons and night vision goggles to the Saddam

Hussein army.

The Bush administration does not subscribe to the view that this "trade" in military merchandise could be done at private levels — the impression here is that Damascus could have stopped it if it wanted. And in the closing stages of the military conflict in Iraq, the Bush administration started lashing out at Syria for giving refuge to "terrorists and war criminals" from Iraq, notably the top echelons of the leadership.

Rumours were rife during the course of the conflict that Mr. Hussein's first wife and two of his daughters have found protection in Syria.

But on Sunday, the administration's frustration and anger at Syria was reflected in the Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld's comments that foreign military fighters in Iraq came from Syria and

# Alternative as dilution

By Brinda Karat

40-10  
15/5

**T**HE ALTERNATIVE Women's Reservation Bill promoted by Yogendra Yadav (*The Hindu*, May 9) that advocates reservation for women in party lists instead of reservation of seats, is no alternative at all since it does not have as its aim the guarantee of a minimum number of women in the decision-making bodies. It will ensure more women in party lists but not in Parliament or in State Assemblies. In fact, in the 25-odd countries that have a quota for women in party lists, the system of elections is based entirely or substantially on proportional representation (PR) unlike in India. In a PR system, a party decides on a list of candidates and linked to the percentage of votes polled after crossing a minimum threshold, the names in descending order are considered elected. However even this has been found to be inadequate to increase women's representation because parties often put the women's quota candidates at the lower end of the list. So it is not enough just to have a quota for women on the party list but to put in place legal guarantees that puts their names in the upper end of the list. Another interesting experience is from South Africa which also has a PR system. The major party, the ANC, voluntarily decided on a 30 per cent quota for women in its list of candidates. This influenced other parties who also put up more women. Women demanded that the names of women candidates be put in equal number on the upper end of the list. Today women constitute almost 30 per cent of the South African Parliament.

Going by the global experience, if women's quotas in party lists are to be a viable method of increasing women's representation in elected bodies in India, we will require a complete overhaul of the electoral system and a switch to proportional representation and a guarantee of women alternating with male candidates in the preferential order of party lists.

To introduce reservation for women in party lists within the present system is a kind of tokenism that Indian women do not need. Anyone

with a minimum knowledge of how party tickets are distributed knows that there is a very strong pro-incumbency factor. Few parties would risk upheavals within by removing sitting MPs or MLAs and replacing them with women, certainly not to the extent of 33 per cent. Difficult or unwanted seats would be farmed out to women to meet the quota requirement. The proposed alternative suggests having the State as the unit for Lok Sabha elections and the district for a unit in Assembly elections. In-

party lists claim that this method will address the vexed issue of OBC reservation within women's reservation being demanded by some parties. This is not correct. Just as parties will decide the names of women candidates if reservation for women is made in party lists so also will they decide which woman is to replace a male candidate if his seat is reserved for women. At present, due to struggles against upper caste hegemony, OBC men form the single largest caste group in the Lok Sabha. If some

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*To introduce reservation for women in party lists within the present system is a kind of tokenism that Indian women do not need.*

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dia does not have a two-party system. Parties have uneven strengths within States and districts, thus such a clause would not prevent unwinnable seats being given to women. Moreover, the compulsion of seat adjustment between different parties in this era of coalition politics makes such a suggestion simply impractical.

The opponents of the present Bill are particularly incensed at the provision for rotation of seats. Many countries and parties have a fixed tenure for elected positions. This is much more democratic than having a system where individuals can monopolise positions of power for decades. In a huge country like India rotation will help bring to the fore a large bank of talent and human resources. Rotation of seats will also ensure that women all over India will have the opportunity to benefit from the reservation. During the discussions in the Parliamentary Select Committee when the Bill was first mooted, women's organisations were open to the suggestion that the rotation of seats should take place after two terms, that is ten years instead of five years. However, once it was declared that women's reservation would exist only for 15 years the two-term rotation proposal was automatically given up

The proponents of reservation in

of those seats are reserved for women, the caste composition is not likely to change but the gender composition will change and the only difference will be that an OBC female candidate will replace the OBC male.

These are some of the reasons why the proposal to shift ground from reserved seats to reservation in party lists is considered a dilution and a diversion by most women's organisations. The main focus at present should be on the role of the Government. It is not the Bill that is flawed but democratic processes and the lack of morality in those who rule India.

When the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, retreated from his responsibility to put the Women's Reservation Bill to vote in Parliament and instead referred it to the Speaker, he was making Parliamentary history though for the wrong reasons.

Firstly it is the job of the Government not the Speaker to decide and ensure the business of the House. Secondly, the Prime Minister did so with the full knowledge that the Speaker, belonging to a party bitterly opposed to women's reservation, had publicly stated his opposition to the Bill in the name of there being no consensus.

Thirdly, Mr. Vajpayee had the required numbers to get the Bill through. It is for the first time that

any Prime Minister in India received the unstinting support of the main Opposition parties that too in writing, for the passage of a controversial Bill.

The sordid drama brings to mind a chapter in Parliamentary history that could have lessons for the present. The Indian Parliament had seen equally stormy scenes on the issue of women's rights, when on February 5, 1951, Dr. Ambedkar, India's first Law Minister, moved the Hindu Code Bill in the Constituent Assembly. The process of reform and codification had been opposed strongly by the self-proclaimed defenders of Hindu culture and tradition including the predecessors of the present rulers organised then in the Hindu Mahasabha. After months of prevarication, Nehru withdrew the Bill.

Ambedkar disgusted with Government capitulation handed in his resignation letter on September 27, 1951 in which he wrote "For a long time I had been thinking of resigning my seat from Cabinet. The only thing that held me back from giving effect to my intention was the hope that it would be possible to give effect to the Hindu Code Bill before the life of the present Parliament came to an end. I even agreed to break up the Bill and restricted it to Marriage and Divorce in the fond hope that at least much of this labour may bear fruit. But even that part of the Bill has been killed. I see no purpose in continuing to be a member of your Cabinet."

However, after the ensuing General Elections, the continuing pressure from women's organisations and movements outside Parliament and a larger support base within Parliament persuaded Nehru to enact the reforms in 1956, though in a truncated form.

There is no Ambedkar in the Indian Government today to assert the principles of accountability and commitment to the struggle to eliminate discrimination against women. But it would be better to wait for a more sympathetic Parliament and Prime Minister than to push through a so-called alternative that brings little benefit to women.

15 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

# Syria next in Bush line of fire

Ed Vulliamy  
Washington, April 13

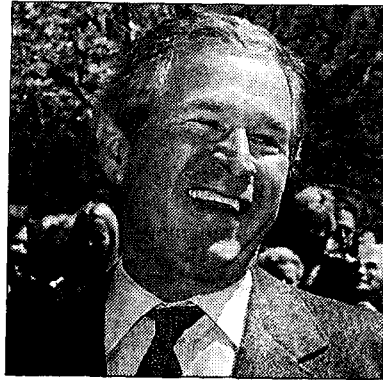
THE US has pledged to tackle the Syrian-backed Hezbollah group in the next phase of its "war on terror" in a move, which could threaten military action against President Bashar Assad's regime in Damascus.

The move is part of Washington's efforts to persuade Israel to support a new peace settlement with the Palestinians. Washington has promised Israel that it will take "all effective action" to cut off Syria's support for Hezbollah — implying a military strike if necessary, sources in the Bush administration said.

Hezbollah is a Shia Muslim outfit based in Lebanon, whose fighters have attacked northern Israeli settlements and harassed occupying Israeli troops to the point of forcing an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon three years ago.

The new US undertaking to Israel to deal with Hezbollah via its Syrian sponsors has been made over recent days during meetings between administra-

tion officials and Israeli diplomats in Washington, and Americans talking to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in Jerusalem. It would be part of a deal designed to entice Israel into the so-called



George W Bush  
All smiles

## America steps up pressure on Damascus

PRESIDENT BUSH warned Syria on Sunday not to harbour fleeing Iraqi leaders. Bush did not say he was threatening military action against Iraq's western neighbour, but said of the Syrians: "They just need to cooperate."

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has charged Syrian fighters have been killed or captured by US forces in Iraq, but has declined to say what Washington might do if Saddam Hussein were found in Syria.

"The last thing I would do would be to discuss that," he said in a television interview on Sunday, stressing that if

the missing Iraqi President turned up in the neighbouring state, it would show that "Syria would have made an even bigger mistake".

"The (Syrian) government is making a lot of bad mistakes, a lot of bad judgments in my view," Rumsfeld said in an interview on CBS's *Face the Nation*.

The Secretary has in recent days repeatedly charged that Damascus has not only voiced support for Saddam's fallen government, but has been helping senior Iraqi leaders enter Syria to stay or move on to other countries.

Reuters

roadmap to peace package that would involve the Jewish state pulling out of the Palestinian West Bank, occupied since 1967.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has so

far rejected the roadmap initiative — charted by the United States with its ally, Britain — which also calls for mutual recognition between Israel and a new Palestinian state, structured ac-

ording to United States-backed reforms. The American guarantee would be to take armed action if necessary to cut off Syrian support for Hezbollah, and stop further sponsorship for the group by Iran.

"If you control Iraq, you can affect the Syrian and Iranian sponsorship of Hezbollah, both geographically and politically," says Ivo Daalder of the Brookings Institution think-tank in Washington. "The US will make it very clear, quietly and publicly, that Baathist Syria may come to an end if it does not stop its support of Hezbollah."

The undertaking dovetails conveniently into "phase three" of what President Bush calls the "war on terror".

Hawks close to the Bush White House have prepared the ground for an attack on Syria.

Washington intelligence sources claim that weapons of mass destruction that Saddam was alleged to have possessed were shipped to Syria after inspectors were sent by the United Nations to find them.

The Observer

14 APR 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES



From page 1

## IRAQ:

co-opt the existing police force in Mosul sparked angry reactions from Kurdish residents.

In Baghdad, looting spread to a vast stretch of army barracks and warehouses on the western outskirts even though US forces for the first time detained 25 looters. US troops will start joint patrols with Iraqi security forces to restore order in the capital.

Looters using trucks and horse-drawn carts made off with bathtubs, sinks and construction material from one of the

largest warehouses.

Nearer the city centre, an institute of military studies was looted and then torched.

Other parts of Baghdad are limping back to normal. US troops guarded banks and hospitals, shops began to open, and hundreds of cars loaded with personal belongings entered from the west, a sign that people who fled the fighting were coming home.

Marines fanned through neighbourhoods of north-east Baghdad, finding large caches of weapons and ammunition in schools, parked trucks and even in fields where children play.

With combat in most of Iraq over or winding down, the US military was shifting its focus to stabilising the country. As part of that effort, a team of 32 US army engineers flew into Baghdad today to help restore electricity.

The US secretary of state, Gen. Colin Powell, in an interview to BBC tried to ease doubts about the US role in Iraq's post-war reconstruction.

Reiterating that post-war Iraq will be for Iraqis alone, he said: "The USA has not appointed anyone to be the future leader of Iraq or to be the leader of the interim Iraqi authority."

'Shiite cleric asked to leave': Gunmen

in the holy city of Najaf yesterday surrounded the house of Ayatollah Ali Sistani, Iraq's leading Shiite cleric, and ordered him to leave the country, a cleric in Kuwait said.

"Armed groups in Najaf are threatening Imam Sistani and demanding that he leave Iraq within 48 hours," Mohammed Baqir Musawi al-Muhri said in a statement.

Ayatollah Mohammed Mohammed Sadek al-Sadr, another Shiite leader, was assassinated in 1999 reportedly on Saddam regime's order, sparking riots in the southern city of An-Najaf, one of the holiest cities for Shiite Muslims.



Iraqis stage a protest demanding a new government as soon as possible, in front of the Palestine hotel in Baghdad on Saturday. — AP

## U.S. hopes he will spill the beans

WASHINGTON, APRIL 13. The Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein's top scientific adviser who surrendered to U.S. forces was the key player of Iraq's suspected biological, chemical and nuclear weapons programmes and holds the secrets to their hidden locations, a U.S. intelligence official said.

Gen. Amer Hammoudi al-Saadi turned himself in to the U.S. soldiers in Baghdad yesterday and was driven away in a military jeep. "He is crucial to our understanding of what has been going on with their WMD (weapons of mass destruction) programme for years," the U.S. intelligence official told Reuters.

"He knows where stuff is hidden and he also knows the names of the major scientists associated with the programme, and what their roles were and what they did. And how far along Iraq was in certain areas," the official said.

The U.S. main stated reason for launching the war against Iraq is that it posed a threat because it had suspected weapons of mass destruction, which Baghdad denied. The U.S. troops have not uncovered any confirmed weapons of mass destruction.

'No WMD'

In Baghdad, Mr. Al-Saadi



Amer al-Saadi, science adviser to Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein, is shown in an interview with ZDF TV in Baghdad, on Saturday. — AP

said he had no information on Mr. Hussein's whereabouts. Before leaving his Baghdad villa with his German wife, Helga, and presenting himself to an American warrant officer, he insisted that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction.

"He's a really big fish," said Ewen Buchanan, spokesman for the U.N. weapons inspection team. "But who knows whether he will tell them anything or just stick to his guns."

Mr. Al-Saadi is believed to be the first of the 55 regime figures sought by the U.S. forces to enter custody. His official ti-

tle was Mr. Hussein's science adviser and he negotiated with inspectors on behalf of the regime.

In February, the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, vilified Mr. Al-Saadi in a speech to the U.N. Security Council, accusing him of being on a committee set up by Mr. Hussein to spy on inspectors.

Mr. Powell said Mr. Al-Saadi's job was "not to cooperate, it is to deceive; not to disarm, but to undermine the inspectors; not to support them, but to frustrate them and to make sure they learn nothing."

Mr. Al-Saadi denied the charges then and suggested that evidence Mr. Powell presented to the Council was fabricated. A month later, U.N. nuclear inspectors said a piece of intelligence on Iraq's nuclear programme provided by the United States was a forgery.

Former and current inspectors describe Mr. Al-Saadi, a scientist in his mid-50s with an advanced degree in chemistry, as extremely intelligent, professional and mild-mannered.

Educated in Britain and Germany, his excellent command of the English language made him an ideal spokesman and he often led news conferences about the inspections when they resumed in November.

Mr. Al-Saadi's main areas of expertise are in the fields of chemical and biological weapons but U.N. inspectors have long believed that he had a deep understanding of the country's missile and nuclear programs as well.

On Saturday, Mr. Al-Saadi told ZDF he had spent the war in his cellar and emerged after he saw a British TV report that he was being sought.

"I know the programmes for weapons of mass destruction and have always told the truth about these old programmes, and only the truth. You will see, the future will show it, and nothing else will come out after the end of the war," he said in an interview with ZDF, according to the broadcaster's German translation.

"Because I know the programme, together with my colleagues, because we have always worked together and nobody intervened. Nobody ever told me what I should say."

Mr. Al-Saadi first caught Mr. Hussein's attention with his scientific and organisational contributions as Iraq expanded its arsenal to include long-range missiles and chemical weapons.

Mr. Al-Saadi is a member of Iraq's Shia Muslim majority. — Reuters, AP

### WAR CAMPAIGN / FALL OF BAGHDAD

## U.S. forces struck a deal with Iraqi General?

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, APRIL 13. As efforts to unveil the mystery surrounding the sudden collapse of Iraqi resistance in Baghdad and three other cities gather momentum, it is becoming increasingly clear that a top Iraqi General may have played a leading role in bringing this about. After offering stiff resistance to the U.S. Marines on the bridge over the Diyala river on Baghdad's eastern gates on last Wednesday, the Iraqi Special Republican guards' forces, all of a sudden, at 11 am local time, abandoned their posts en masse.

That allowed the U.S. Marines to enter eastern Baghdad, unimpeded, amid scenes of jubilation in Saddam city, a poor Shia stronghold.

The Iraqi decision not to destroy the bridges over the Diyala and the Tigris rivers facilitated the U.S. advance into the city. Iraqi forces, despite having credible quantity of arms and ammunition also declined to resist at Al Almehara which has fallen to the U.S. troops. A single Marine battalion reportedly took over this strategic city on the Iran-Iraq border, as the forces of the Iraqi

fourth corps withdrew and 'melted away.'

Iraqi capitulation was also evident in northern Iraqi oil cities of Mosul and Kirkuk, where the U.S. forces did not achieve victory through fighting, but by engineering Iraqi mass surrenders.

The situation in Kirkuk, however, became complicated when the Kurdish forces "jumped the gun" and took over the city ahead of the planned arrival of U.S. troops. Like the rest of the Iraqi urban heartland, the U.S. forces are also expected to walk in and take control of Tikrit, known to be a stronghold of the Saddam Hussein.

Safe exit

It now appears that collapse of the Iraqi resistance in Baghdad can be attributed to a deal between Maher Safian Al-Tikriti, a top Iraqi General of the Special Republican Guard, and a combination of the U.S. Special forces and intelligence operatives. In return for dropping their resistance in Baghdad, the U.S. forces reportedly allowed Gen. Al-Tikriti and his troops, a safe exit out of the city.

Two questions however, remain unanswered so far. First, was Gen. Al-Tikriti's

deal with the U.S. confined to Baghdad alone, or was part of larger package of capitulation, which also covered the cities of Mosul, Kirkuk and Al-Almhara? In case it was a package deal, which also involved a network of other Iraqi military commanders whose forces were also similarly allowed to disperse, the U.S. forces will not encounter much resistance in Tikrit? Second, the fog is yet to lift on whether Mr. Hussein and his sons sanctioned the deal between the key elements of the Republican Guard and the U.S., fully or partially.

In precipitating the Iraqi collapse in Baghdad and other key Iraqi cities, the U.S. military commander, Tommy Franks has followed on the footsteps of Dwight D. Eisenhower.

As military commander in Paris, Gen. Eisenhower, in 1944-45, successfully persuaded the local German command to lay down its arms through a show of strength and successful psychological operations.

As a result the U.S. military commander, later President, avoided the high casualty risk of storming Paris to evict the Germans. Gen. Franks has achieved a similar objective in Baghdad.

## 7 U.S. soldiers traced in good shape

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 13. The Pentagon has said that Iraq has released seven American soldiers as U.S. troops were entering the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit.

Six soldiers of the 507th Maintenance Company had been listed as Prisoners of War; and one other soldier has not been immediately notified.

The soldiers "are in good shape" according to the Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, though two have gunshot wounds. According to Mr. Rumsfeld, the Iraqis had told U.S. Marines that they could find the seven missing soldiers at a location some 5 or 6 km south of Tikrit. "They said 'You should go get them' and they did", Mr. Rumsfeld said. Earlier in the day, Gen. Tommy Franks said that coalition forces had found six U.S. troops previously classified as missing; and that the six appear to be in a healthy condition.

Gen. Franks, the overall war commander, on various talk shows this morning, argued that he was reluctant to pass on more information for he wanted to be sure if the six troops had been listed as missing or were part of seven who were listed as Prisoners of War.

"They appear to be healthy," he told ABC News Senior civilian and military officials at the Pentagon had been consistently making the point that tracking down soldiers still listed as missing or held as Prisoners of War was a top priority; and the spectacular rescue of Private First Class Jessica Lynch from a hospital was meant to underscore the determination of the military authorities.

"For sure we are going to take care of our own. This is very good news," Gen. Franks remarked on CNN.

The news about the missing soldiers from Gen. Franks came at a time when the U.S. forces are closing in on Tikrit, the hometown of the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, and that there was resistance in and around the town.

The United States Air Force has been softening the ground in Tikrit over the last several days carrying out intensive operations in a bid to weaken if not totally demoralise the remnants of the Republican Guard and other die-hards loyalists of Mr. Hussein. There are conflicting versions on whether or not Tikrit has fallen.

According to one version reaching here, the U.S. troops have secured control with little to no resistance from any armed forces loyal to Mr. Hussein.

Information on Tikrit is hard to come by as most major television media have no presence in that part of the country; and word is that a CNN team that tried to reach the town came under fire and had to withdraw. At least, two members of the travelling party are said to be slightly injured. U.S. officials here are maintaining that the prospect of a long and lasting battle in Tikrit appeared unlikely as there have been large scale desertions and the area has been extensively damaged as a result of the sustained air strikes.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon is not saying much on the surrender of Hussein's top scientific advisor, Amer Al Saadi, but privately administration officials here are quite happy that a one time top regime hand has turned himself in.

Mr. Al Saadi continues to say that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction, but officials here are making the point that what he says in public could be substantially different from the de-briefings in private. At the height of the showdown over Iraq in the United Nations, the Bush administration pointedly took on Mr. Al Saadi on his role during the weapons inspections.

## U.S. charges Syria with harbouring Iraqi leaders

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 13. The Bush administration is turning up the heat on Syria, saying that some senior Iraqi leaders may have fled to that country.

The latest charge came from the Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, who not too long ago accused Damascus of complicating the American war efforts in Iraq.

"We certainly are hopeful that Syria will not become a haven for war criminals or terrorists," he said.

One of the major charges against Syria is that it is allowing people to go to Iraq knowing that they are fighters who are

going to engage the U.S.-led coalition forces.

The U.S. has captured one of the busloads of Syrians along with several hundred thousands of dollars in cash and leaflets "suggesting that people would be rewarded for killing Americans", according to Mr. Rumsfeld.

Damascus, which has vehemently denied that it is helping Iraq in any fashion, has said that the responsibility of monitoring Iraq's western borders with Syria rested with the U.S.

The Bush administration is increasingly being viewed with suspicion on its fuller agenda in the Middle East after the "re-

gime change" has been effected in Iraq. And one perception is that Washington will now turn its attention on Syria — a country which is in the State Department's "List of Nations" sponsoring terrorism but not in President, George W. Bush's "Axis of Evil" list.

While senior Pentagon officials have made it a point to talk bluntly when discussing Syria, top civilian officials like Mr. Rumsfeld have made no bones of the fact that in the last phases of the Saddam Hussein regime it received military supplies, including night vision goggles and anti-tank weapons, to help in its conflict with the coalition forces.

The Deputy Secretary of Defence, Paul Wolfowitz, recently said that

Washington was not seeking a "regime change" in Damascus, but was only seeking to change the "current bad behaviour" of that country. Syria, Mr. Wolfowitz asserted, "should not meddle in Iraq".

On a different issue, Mr. Rumsfeld said on Sunday that he did not have any solid evidence over the fate of Saddam Hussein but the regime was history.

"He either is dead or he is going to be caught; we'll find him, the world will find him," he added.

1 4 MAY 2003

RIYADH BLASTS / WESTERN RESIDENCES TARGETED

# A string of car bomb attacks

By Atul Aneja

**MANAMA, MAY 13.** Amid a spate of suicide bombings in which at least 10 U.S. nationals were killed, the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, arrived in Riyadh this morning.

In closely coordinated incidents, a string of massive car bomb attacks last night rocked Riyadh's three plush residential compounds, resided mainly by westerners and foreigners of other nationalities.

A fourth car bomb went off on Tuesday morning outside the headquarters of Siyanco, a joint U.S.-Saudi owned company, without causing much damage. Gen. Powell on arrival from Amman confirmed that at least 10 Americans had been killed. Two Filipinos and an Australian were also believed killed in these incidents, taking the death toll to 13.

A U.S. official reportedly said that overall casualties appeared to be in the hundreds. British, German, French, Australian and other Arab citizens were among the dead and wounded, apart from several personnel of the Saudi National Guard. Casualty figures were expected to mount as identification of bodies disfigured by the blasts was becoming difficult.

Eyewitnesses reported that the bombings had wrecked 16 housing blocks in one

location, while a multi-story building housing single American men has been devastated in another. "Terrorism strikes everywhere and everyone," Gen. Powell said after arrival. "It is a threat to the civilized world." While no one has claimed responsibility for the attacks, Gen. Powell said the bombings "had the earmarks of Al-Qaeda." "I believe Al-Qaeda has been weakened, but it has not been destroyed," he told a news conference earlier Tuesday in Amman.

## Hub of activities

Analysts point out that the bombings and events in the preceding one-month indicate that Saudi Arabia is beginning to succeed Afghanistan as the hub of the Al-Qaeda activities.

On May 7, 19 men, including 17 Saudis had escaped from a shootout when a major Al-Qaeda attack that targeted the Saudi Interior and Defence Ministers was foiled. This incident was fourth in a string of terrorist strikes in Saudi Arabia in the last one month.

In an indication that the Al-Qaeda may have now re-grouped, an E-mail message to a Saudi newspaper quoted the Al-Qaeda spokesman, Thabet ibn Qais, that "an attack against America was inevitable"

Mr. Thabet reportedly said that the Al-

Quaeda had "carried out changes in its leadership and sidelined the September 11, 2001 team." He added, "future missions have been entrusted to a new team which is well protected against the U.S. intelligence services." The old Al-Qaeda leadership, he said, was unaware of these changes.

Diplomatic sources see last night's terror strikes sharpening the polarisation between the extremists and moderates inside Saudi Arabia. With the incident causing significant American casualties and the Al-Qaeda seeking to reassemble in Saudi Arabia, the moderate Saudi leadership may have no option but to mount a sustained campaign against the network, with U.S. help. This is, however, going to result in stiff resistance as anti-U.S. sentiments in Saudi Arabia, especially after the Iraq-war, are high.

Besides, the extremists reportedly have significant pockets of influence within Saudi Arabia's ruling elite that could weaken a counter-terror campaign. But aware of the high costs involved, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Saud al Faisal, who received Gen. Powell, hinted that Riyadh might not hesitate to take tough measures.

Monday's attacks, he said "should increase our efforts and should make us not hesitate to take whatever measures that are needed to oppose these people, who know only hate, only killing."

THE HINDU

# Panel to study 'harassment' of women

By Aarti Dhar

**DELHI, MAY 12.** Even before the International Labour Office released its global report on discrimination at work place, the Union Labour Minister, Sahib Singh Verma, constituted a committee to ascertain the extent to which the Government has been able to remove discrimination at the work place, particularly sexual harassment of women.

The five-member committee, headed by an officer of the rank of Joint Secretary, will have representatives from the trade unions and women's groups. Announcing this after releasing the ILO report here today, Mr. Verma said the committee would submit its recommendations by the month-end and the report would be sent to the ILO. The Government had decided to allow women to work at night after ensuring full security for them.

Mr. Verma said the ILO would now work towards removing geographical barriers to ensure freedom of work to all the countries with excess human resources should be allowed to send their people to other countries and the ILO can do a lot in removing the regional discrimination because we are now talking in terms of the

ment's efforts in checking child exploitation have been appreciated.

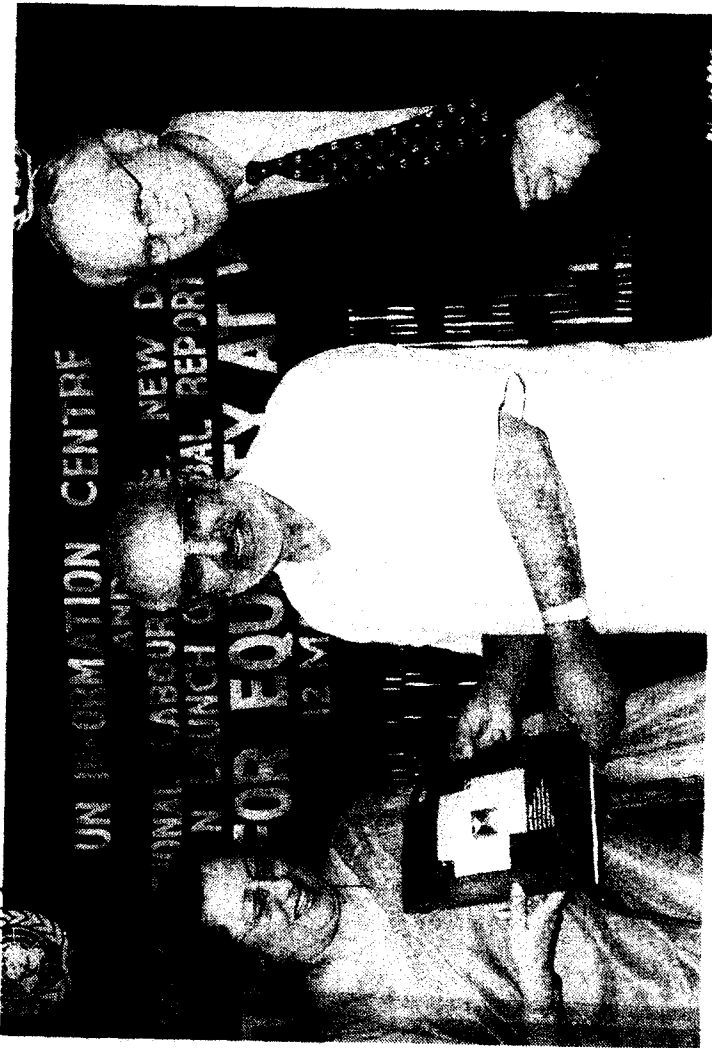
Another area where India was found discriminating was in the case of HIV/AIDS patients where breach of medical confidentiality led to dismissal or resignations from the jobs.

Other forms of discrimination could be dismissal without evidence, notice or a hearing, demotion to positions of lower experience and skill, denial of insurance benefits to pay for AIDS-related expenses, reduction in salary or harassment.

The socio-economic and sexual discrimination experienced by women increased their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS with the rates of infection among women showing a rise.

The ILO study revealed that the burden of caring for HIV-infected family and community members fell more often on women and girls, thereby increasing their workload and diminishing their income-generating and schooling possibilities.

Older women workers might have to assume responsibility for orphaned grandchildren, although their skills were not granted any economic value.



The Union Labour Minister, Sahib Singh Verma, handing over a copy of ILO's Global Report on "Time for Equality at Work" to the Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, Najma Heptulla, at the U.N. Conference Hall in New Delhi on Monday. The Director (India), ILO, Herman van der Laan, is at right. — Photo: V.V. Krishnan

world being one trade organisation," he said.

While India has been criticised for discrimination in wage classification of skilled and un-

skilled workers that sometimes places women in the unskilled, lower-paying wage category and men in the skilled, higher-paying category, irrespective of the work place. The Govern-

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# Secret team hunts banned arsenal

Baghdad, April 12

BRITAIN AND the US have by-passed the United Nations to deploy a secret team of inspectors to resume the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

It is a sign of the desperation in London and Washington to find a "smoking gun" to justify the war that the Anglo-American team has already conducted three inspections in the past two weeks. No banned weapons have so far been found.

The decision to set up a new group of inspectors, dubbed US-movic because they are an American-led rival to Unmovic, will infuriate the UN.

Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, pointedly reminded Britain and the US this week that Unmovic still has a mandate to carry out inspections.

On Friday, chief weapons inspector Hans Blix added his criticism by saying that war against Iraq was a foregone conclusion months before the first shot was fired. In a scathing attack on Britain and the US, Blix accused them of planning the war "well in advance" and of "fabricating" evidence against Iraq to justify their campaign.

Blix told the Spanish daily *El Pais*: "There is evidence that this war was planned well in advance. Sometimes this raises doubts about their attitude to the [weapons] inspections."

He said Iraq was paying "a very high price in terms of human lives and the destruction of a country" when the threat of banned weapons could have been contained by UN inspections.

The role played by the new in-



Ahmed Chalabi (right), who heads the Iraqi National Congress, with tribal leaders at the US camp near Nasiriyah. AFP

spectors, who set up a base in Kuwait a week before the war began, was disclosed to the *Guardian* by David Kay, the former head of Unscorm, the arms inspections team which left Iraq in 1998 after Iraq accused it of being infiltrated by spies.

No mention has been made of the new group by ministers or military spokesmen, who have indicated that weapons inspections are carried out by military forces. But the group, headed by Charles Duelfer, a former deputy head of the Unscorm weapons inspectors, has travelled extensively in Iraq.

It is understood that Duelfer's team was called in to inspect weapons and papers found at an airbase in Iraq's western desert two weeks ago. In the past week it has made two separate visits to sites on the road between Kuwait and Baghdad.

The failure to find any weapons of mass destruction after three weeks of war has raised questions about the casus belli. But British intelligence officials said it might be months before evidence was uncovered.

A Cabinet Minister said Saddam's failure to use chemical weapons was not an indication of their absence. They had been dismantled and hidden around the country. "The regime has not had time to reassemble the things," a British official said.

"You will not find a missile factory," a source said. "They would have been broken down."

Paul Rogers, professor of peace studies at Bradford University, said the existence of the secret team would lead to a dispute. "If this team finds a smoking gun, people will not believe it."

The Guardian

# Anti-war league survives Iraq war

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, APRIL 12. The anti-war coalition of Russia, Germany and France has survived the quick allied victory in Iraq, as their trilateral summit in St. Petersburg showed. Though the coalition leaders insisted their meeting in Russia's former imperial capital on April 11-12 was not aimed at engineering new global splits, their stated positions clearly clashed with the views of the Iraq war allies, the U.S. and Britain.

They vowed to press for the leading role of the United Nations in resolving the Iraq crisis and any other international problems. "Our views on the main issues practically coincide," the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, said after talks with the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, and the French President, Jacques Chirac. "We recognise the central role of the United Nations in international relations."

The three leaders called for the settlement of the Iraq problem within the U.N. framework. "The task of restoring the political, economic and social system of Iraq is enormous," Mr. Chirac said. "Only the United Nations has the legitimacy to do that." Mr. Schroeder said that details of the peace process in Iraq could be discussed with the U.S.-led coalition "but we must reach agreement under the U.N. aegis."

Mr. Putin warned against the "export of capitalist democratic revolutions" to other



The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, is flanked by the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder (right), and the French President, Jacques Chirac, at a meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Friday. — AP

countries in the same way the communist nations tried to export "the socialist revolution". "We have always said that the regime of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, did not correspond to democratic and human rights standards," he said. "But this problem cannot be resolved by military means. Up to 80 per cent of the world's nations do not meet Western democratic standards.

Are we to go to war with them? The people of these nations alone can determine their future.

The principle of sovereignty should remain unshakable," Mr. Putin said.

The three leaders vowed to work for reforming the United Nations to improve its ability to resolve international disputes and conflicts.

# Saddam turned down last-minute Russian 'call to go'

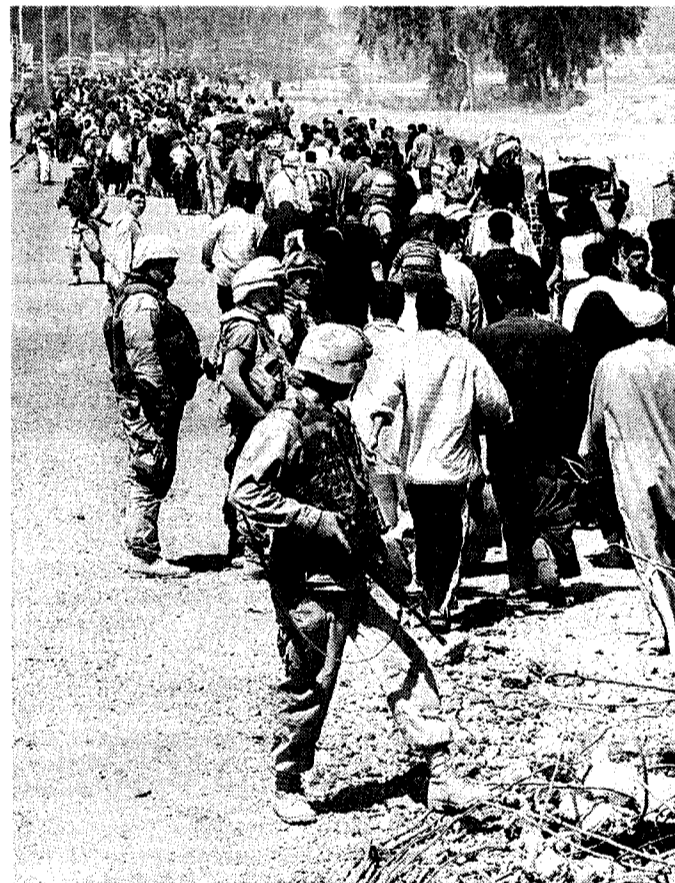
MOSCOW, APRIL 12. The veteran Kremlin envoy pleaded with the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, to step down only three days before the U.S. big guns opened up on Baghdad. The Iraqi strongman heard Yevgeny Primakov out, patted him on the shoulder...and then walked out of the room without another word.

Mr. Hussein's defiant answer to Russia's last-minute top-secret mission to stave off the U.S.-led offensive against Iraq emerged late yesterday from Mr. Primakov, a former Russian Prime Minister and old friend of Iraq who had known Mr. Hussein for years.

Mr. Primakov (73), said the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, sent him on the make-or-break mission on March 17 — only three days before the U.S.-led offensive opened up and sealed Mr. Hussein's fate.

Recalling on Russian television his dramatic, last encounter with Mr. Hussein in one of his palaces, Mr. Primakov said: "I told him this, 'If you love your country and love your people...and if you want to save your people from these sacrifices, you must leave your post as president of Iraq.'"

"I told him that I understood how difficult this proposal was for him and how it could change his life, but that he had to understand that he was doing this for Iraq, for his motherland," Mr. Primakov said. He did not say if he suggested Mr. Hussein go into exile or whether he proposed a specific country for him to go to. The Kremlin has always denied Mr. Hussein was offered shelter in Russia. Looking back on Friday on his March mission, he said the proposal he put to Mr. Hussein at first met stony silence. "First he listened to me, without a word. Then he said that during the first Gulf War we also tried to talk him into something, but a land operation turned out to be unavoidable all the same," Mr. Primakov said. "He then patted me on the shoulder and walked out." — Reuters



U.S. marines stand by as thousands of families who fled Baghdad during the U.S. bombardment return and others leave on Saturday. — AFP

# Saddam is gone, says Al-Douri

UNITED NATIONS, APRIL 12. On his last day at the United Nations, Iraq's U.N. Ambassador, Mohammed Al-Douri, said on Friday that Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, is gone and it's time to work for peace and reconstruction in Iraq.

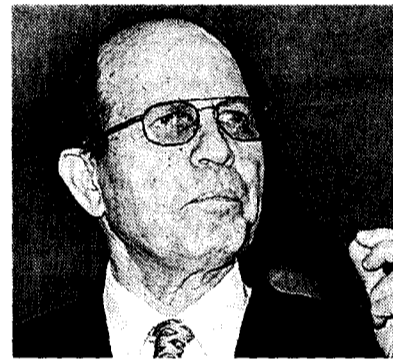
"Now we are looking for the future — forward," he said. "My hope is that Iraqi people will live in peace and in security."

Mr. Al-Douri, the first Iraqi official to concede defeat in the U.S.-led war, was expected to fly to Paris, then head to the Syrian capital, Damascus.

More than two years after he arrived in New York as Iraq's Ambassador, Mr. Al-Douri (60), left U.N. headquarters after a final round of good-byes to fellow diplomats and a farewell lunch in the Delegate's Dining Room. He was escorted to the door by half a dozen Arab diplomats including Egypt's U.N. Ambassador, Ahmed Aboul Gheit.

Shortly before he left, Mr. Al-Douri told reporters that he had spent more than two years at the U.N. working for peace in Iraq and was "very serene with myself" about leaving. Right now, he said, "the situation there is very bad," but he expressed hope that it would improve and that there will be "peace for our people there who are suffering."

In an interview with the Dubai-based *Al Arabiya* satellite channel, he was more candid about his reasons for not remaining at the U.N. "I am leaving because I don't think there is a possibility for me to work as I want from a country that is mili-



tarly invading Iraq, destroying, ravaging and killing," he said. "I don't think that this occupied country (Iraq) will allow me to work with full freedom at the United Nations. Because I fear pressure to which I might be subjected, I have chosen to quit with honour and dignity."

When asked on Friday whether he feared anything from U.S. authorities, he said, "Not at all. They've always treated me with dignity."

The Ambassador vehemently defended his country for months as the U.S. and its allies sought U.N. backing for war on Iraq. He insisted that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction and was cooperating with U.N. weapons inspectors.

Two weeks ago, during a heated U.N. debate, Mr. Al-Douri accused the U.S. of "criminal aggression" against Iraq and warned the U.S.-led coalition was "about to start a real war of extermination that

will kill everything and destroy everything."

He said U.S. and British forces were being "hoodwinked" into believing "that the Iraqi people would receive them with flowers and hugs."

The outburst caused the U.S. Ambassador, John Negroponte, to walk out of the open Security Council meeting, saying he'd "heard enough." With the fall of Baghdad on Wednesday, however, Mr. Al-Douri declared "the game is over," becoming the first Iraqi official to concede defeat.

Mr. Al-Douri said then that he had no "relationship with Saddam" and had not been in communication with the Government for a long time.

On Friday, when he was asked how he felt now about the President, Mr. Al-Douri said: "Saddam Hussein is gone. Saddam Hussein is gone. What is important for me is the people of Iraq, and the future of the people of Iraq. The past is already in the past."

Privately, many U.N. diplomats see Mr. Al-Douri as a respectable colleague.

The British Ambassador, Jeremy Greenstock, whose country's troops are fighting alongside American forces, said of Mr. Al-Douri's statement that the war was over: "I pay tribute to him acknowledging it." "He is a decent man," Mr. Greenstock said. "I hope he finds a decent life, representing a decent government. He must wonder what his situation is now and I sympathise with him." — AP

# Hard fighting might still lie ahead, says Bush

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 12. The United States President, George W. Bush, has told Americans that "hard fighting" might still lie ahead, as coalition forces try to wrap up the military conflict in Iraq by focussing on the hometown of the erstwhile leader, Saddam Hussein, even while trying to come to grips with the lawlessness that is seen to be getting out of hand.

In his weekly radio broadcast, the President repeated what one of the Iraqis said while pounding away on the pedestal of the giant Saddam Hussein statue in trying to bring it down. "I'm 49, but I never lived a single day. Only

now I will start living", the Iraqi national had said. "Millions of Iraqis feel the same way", Mr. Bush said in his address. "The nightmare of Saddam Hussein's rule in Iraq is ending. Soon, the good and gifted people of Iraq will be free to choose their leaders who respect their rights and reflect their character. As people throughout Iraq celebrate the arrival of freedom, America celebrates with them", Mr. Bush said.

On a constant basis over the last three days the Iraqi "celebration" comes by way of footages on television showing, among other things, mobs tearing down pictures of Mr. Hussein from walls of buildings and hotels as

well as bringing down imposing statues in Baghdad and elsewhere. But Mr. Bush carefully avoided the issue of the looting and anarchy going on in parts of Iraq in the aftermath of the fall of the regime, with many Iraqi citizens openly questioning if this is what the country and its population bargained for in the name of "freedom".

The mayhem has reached such proportions that ambulances and medicines are being looted from major hospitals in Baghdad. Senior administration officials like the Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Richard Myers, are saying that the brief interlude by way of looting and law-

lessness will give way to law and order. And the impression is that the plans are being re-worked as to give room for American and coalition soldiers to take charge of the civil unrest. A large contingent of police and judicial officers from the United States is on its way to Iraq — Baghdad especially — it is said.

Meanwhile, on Friday, Mr. Bush and Laura Bush visited injured service personnel at the Army's Walter Reed Medical Facility in Washington D.C. and the Navy's Medical Centre at Bethesda, Maryland. Mr. Bush spent a lot of time individually and with groups of injured troops and promised that every effort will be made to find those Americans listed as prisoners of war.

"We pray they are alive, because if they are, we'll find them", the President said. The President refused to declare "victory" in the Iraqi conflict as well as saying that he did not know the fate of Mr. Hussein except remarking that "I do know he's no longer in power".

Mr. Bush, who will be spending the weekend at Camp David, where he will be getting regular updates on the military goings-on in Iraq from his War Council, has basically left it to the Commander of the Forces, Tommy Franks, to decide when the war will be formally over. "The war will end when Tommy Franks says we have achieved our objectives", the President said.

IRAQI-U.S. JOINT PATROLS PLANNED; CURFEW LIKELY IN BAGHDAD

# U.S. forces bracing to restore order as looters rule the roost

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 12.** The U.S. forces battled to restore order in Iraqi cities today as gangs of looters stripped government buildings, ransacked stores and pillaged Baghdad's famed antiquities museum.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz's house was looted and ordinary Iraqis were terrified that their homes could be next.

A Reuters report said that the U.S. military and the Iraqis had agreed to joint patrols to restore order in Baghdad. The Iraqi police chief, Col. Mohammed Zaki, said the patrols would start in a day or two.

The Marines confirmed that a night curfew was under discussion. Anarchy and violence also traumatised the northern cities of Mosul and Kirkuk, which were seized almost unopposed by Kurdish fighters over the past 48 hours. "If the Americans are liberating us, let them restore order because this has been as bad as any two days of my life with Saddam," said Jassem Mohammed, a Turkmen butcher in Kirkuk.

## Saddam's adviser surrenders

Meanwhile, Mr. Hussein's science adviser surrendered to the U.S. authorities today, insisting that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction and the U.S.-led invasion was unjustified.

Lt. Gen. Amir al-Saadi is the No. 1 Iraqi wanted for questioning about Iraq's chemical weapons because he was the senior weapons adviser to Mr. Hussein and oversaw the country's chemical program in the past. He is believed to have in-depth knowledge of other weapons programmes as well.

## ICRC plea

Medical care at major Baghdad hospitals remained virtually paralysed, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said in Geneva today, urging the U.S. forces to protect health workers.

An ICRC spokeswoman said the U.S. had started preliminary contacts with the Swiss-based humanitarian agency about what priorities to set in restoring order after Mr. Hussein's administration collapsed.

## Planes head for Tikrit

U.S. military commanders remained focussed on wrapping up the war, sending planes to pound Mr. Hussein's home base, Tikrit — the only important town still holding out in the 24-day war.

Lead elements of the powerful U.S. 4th Infantry Division al-



U.S. Marines frisk an Iraqi Colonel, who agreed to offer his services to restore law and order, as he arrived at the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad on Saturday. — AFP

so moved into Iraq today, as the army started to reposition their ground forces ahead of an expected assault on Tikrit, some 180 km north of Baghdad.

In the capital, looters ransacked the Iraqi National Museum, smashing display cases to grab treasures dating back to thousands of years to the dawn of civilisation in Mesopotamia.

"They have looted or destroyed 170,000 items of antiquity... They were worth billions of dollars," said the deputy director, Nabhal Amin, weeping openly.

In some well-to-do neighbourhoods, locals formed armed vigilante groups to protect their personal property, kicking and punching anyone suspected of plundering goods.

A group of protesters demonstrated in the city centre over the breakdown in law and order.

"The Americans replaced the regime and security is part of their responsibility," said Haidir Shawk, a 58-year-old engineer.

In the north, Kurdish "peshmerga" fighters tried to impose some order in the oil hub of Kirkuk, which they took on Thursday amid scenes of wild jubilation, checking cars coming in and out of the city in search of suspected looters and

their bounty.

## Clashes in Mosul

There were also unconfirmed reports of violent Arab-Kurd clashes in Iraq's third city, Mosul, which fell to the "peshmerga" on Friday after an entire Iraqi army corps surrendered.

In Kirkuk, Kurdish fighters began withdrawing and the U.S. forces are increasing their presence to establish control in the city.

Turkey is terrified that Iraqi Kurds want to claim Kirkuk as capital of an independent state, fanning separatism among its own Kurds.

The Kurds say they will withdraw from the city by today, handing over control to nearby U.S. troops.

There was evidence that the invading forces were shifting some attention towards administration, with the U.S. officials making plans for a meeting of local politicians in Iraq early next week to discuss the country's future government.

U.S. bombers pounded positions around Tikrit today, preparing the way for an eventual ground assault. Initial elements of the United States' 30,000-strong 4th Infantry Division moved into Iraq from Kuwait



An Iraqi woman taking away a chair from a deserted government office in Baghdad on Saturday. — AP

today — the only U.S. division in the area yet to see any action.

## Firing along Tigris

Firing erupted in central Baghdad on Saturday with the Marines and Iraqi fighters battling tree-to-tree along the Tigris river. Heavy machine gun fire and explosions could be heard along the river.

U.S. forces reopened two strategic bridges on Saturday in the heart of Baghdad and crowds of looters surged across — taking advantage of access to new territory that had not already been plundered. U.S. forces did nothing to stop them.

U.S. Army troops and armour blocked access to the main palace grounds.

The Oil Ministry also seemed

intact with a heavy U.S. military presence inside.

## Qusay spotted?

Residents of a Baghdad suburb said today that they saw Mr. Hussein's younger son, Qusay, alive. On Monday a B-1 bomber dropped four 900 kg bombs on the building in the Mansur district after the CIA received a tip that Mr. Hussein and sons Qusay and Uday were inside. — AP, Reuters, PTI

## 'Only U.N. can oversee Iraq reconstruction'

**ST. PETERSBURG, APRIL 12.** The leaders of France, Germany and Russia today wound up a two-day "peace camp" summit on Iraq stressing the primacy of law as embodied in the United Nations as the means of resolving global crises.

Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, his French counterpart, Jacques Chirac, and the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, demanded a central role for the

world body in the reconstruction of Iraq but implicitly acknowledged their powerlessness by ending their meeting without a joint declaration.

Mr. Putin told an audience of jurists at the Saint Petersburg Law Faculty that the three leaders, who had strongly opposed the United States-led drive to war on Baghdad without U.N. approval, agreed that only the

U.N. could oversee the rebuilding of Iraq.

"The United Nations must play a central role to assure Iraq's sovereignty," said Mr. Chirac.

In comments likely to further strain relations with Washington, the three leaders said the future world order was at stake as only the U.N. could ensure that Iraq's reconstruction was taking place within the frame-

work of international law.

Mr. Schroeder, who was awarded an honorary law degree from the University where Mr. Putin himself once studied, stressed that "the U.N. Security Council must confer legitimacy" on any reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

"The United Nations is the only organisation that rests on universal and cooperative notions." — AFP

# US troops move into lawless Mosul

Mosul (Iraq), April 12 (Reuters): US troops moved into Mosul today in the first significant American deployment in Iraq's main northern city since troops loyal to Saddam Hussein surrendered without a fight.

But Iraq's third-largest city remained anarchic, dangerous and rife with gunfire despite the US presence, with reports of ethnic fighting between Arabs and Kurds in which three Kurdish peshmerga guerrillas and possibly one journalist had died.

A Reuters team driving around the city today, one day after its fall, saw US troops with heavy weapons at various road junctions. The two-man posts were as ostentatious as possible, draped with the Stars and Stripes, apparently to send a message that US troops have arrived and are beginning to introduce order after looting and vandalism swept Mosul yesterday.

A crowd gathered around one post, chanting mostly pro-American slogans as well as "Iraq, Iraq", and praise for the peshmerga, or Kurdish militia, who entered the city yesterday.

But an Arab Iraqi climbed a pillar just 20 metres away and tried to raise the flag of Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

The crowd roared and ran towards him, and Kurdish peshmerga at the junction responded by unleashing a heavy and long-lasting burst of fire, sending the crowd diving for cover.

After encountering another firefight and amid Kurdish warnings that the centre of Mosul's Arab quarter, on the other side of the Tigris river, remained volatile and dangerous with frequent shootings, the Reuters team withdrew from the city. Other foreign journalists who left the city later reported fierce fighting between Arabs and Kurds in Mosul.

A correspondent for Dubai-based Arabiya television in the northern city of Kirkuk said she had heard reports from people leaving Mosul that three Kurds and possibly also a journalist had been killed, but could not confirm reports of 20 dead.

She said the fighting apparently erupted in the city centre when the Kurdish peshmerga tried to halt looting. US troops had reportedly also been fired on and a journalist travelling with the Americans was possibly wounded or killed. There was no immediate independent confirmation of the reports.

Even away from the central

Arab quarter, the scene of violent looting and torching of buildings yesterday, Mosul looked thoroughly ransacked. Waste paper, looted from thousands of offices, blew around the streets, filling the gutters. Roads and pavements were blocked by debris and broken furniture.

Smoke rose from various parts of the city today.

US troops were seen earlier securing key intersections around the city. A Kurdish fighter said US forces had also headed to the airport, but this report could not be confirmed.

This morning, a Reuters journalist counted about 40 US military vehicles, mostly Humvee all-terrain vehicles and some trucks, entering Mosul.

In the afternoon, Reuters photographer Caren Firouz saw another US armoured convoy of approximately 15 vehicles, including around seven tanks, one ambulance Humvee, one large tanker and armoured personnel carriers heading out of the main Kurdish Iraqi town of Arbil towards Mosul.

US forces have been flying into the Harir airstrip in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq to coordinate with the Kurdish peshmerga guerrillas, who

surged from their mountain strongholds onto the plain after Saddam's forces withdrew.

Under heavy US and Turkish pressure, the Kurdish peshmerga who occupied the northern oil hub of Kirkuk on Thursday, said they would withdraw as soon as US troops arrive.

Neighbouring Turkey suspects Iraqi Kurds of wanting oil-rich Kirkuk as capital of an independent Kurdish state, which it fears would fan separatism among its own restive Kurdish minority.

Washington wants Iraq to remain whole and to prevent the country's Kurds, who have controlled the autonomous north since the 1991 Gulf War, from breaking away.

## Kurds to leave Kirkuk

Iraqi Kurd guerrillas said they would be out of the northern city of Kirkuk today as US soldiers in the strategic oil hub made their presence increasingly felt.

But the number of US troops visible in central Kirkuk was just a few dozen, not enough to secure the ethnically diverse city of some 700,000 people.

Kurdish "peshmerga" fighters swept into Kirkuk on Thurs-

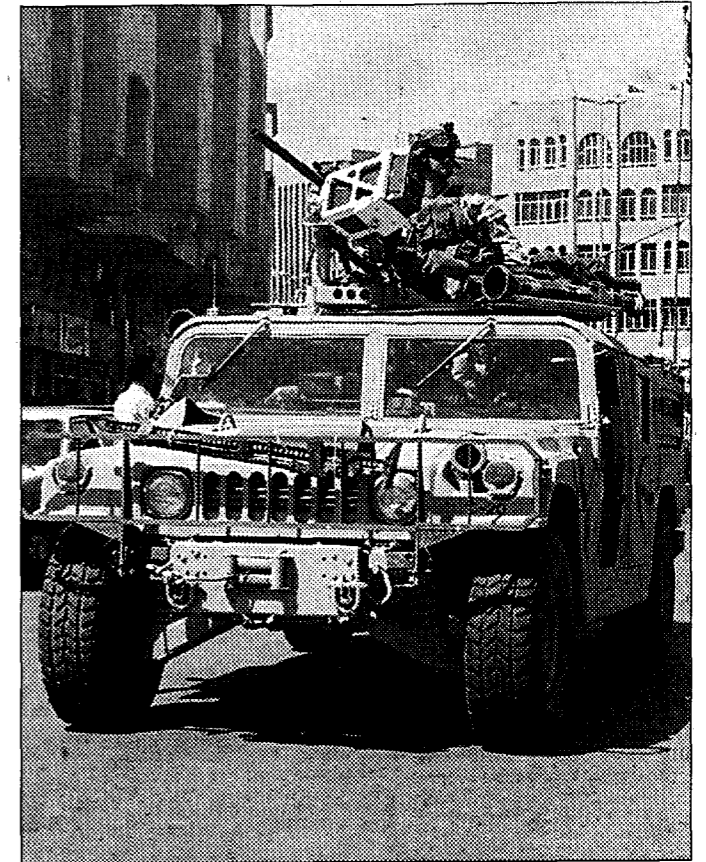
day as government forces collapsed, ringing alarm bells in neighbour Turkey which suspects Iraqi Kurds want to claim the city as capital of an independent state. Turkey fears this could fan separatism among its own Kurds.

"Yesterday we withdrew half our peshmerga forces and today we are moving the remaining forces," said Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), one of two main parties in Kurd-controlled northern Iraq.

But he added that some would stay behind at the invitation of the US military to help impose order in a city where looting and vandalism broke out on Thursday and yesterday.

Mam Rostam, a senior peshmerga commander, told Reuters a committee would be formed uniting Kirkuk's ethnic groups — including Kurds, Arabs and Turkmens — which would discuss restoring law and order and returning looted property to owners.

In the Turkish-speaking Turkmen quarter of the city, Haji Halir showed Reuters correspondents around his sister's home which had been badly vandalised.



US soldiers patrol a street in Mosul. (AFP)



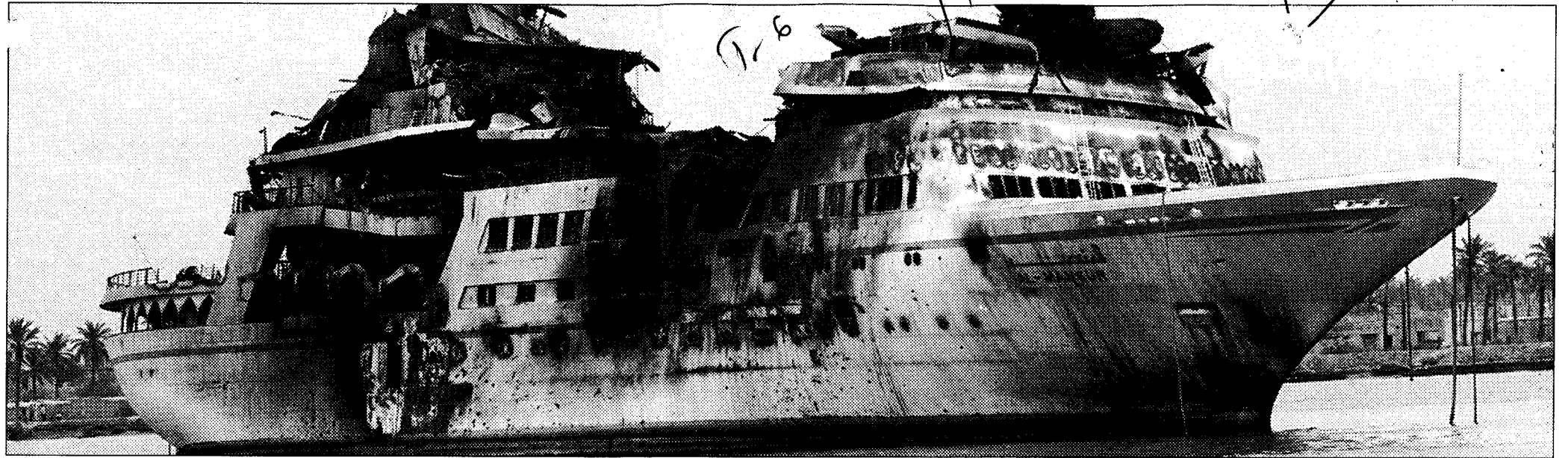
# Bombed *Victor* in looters' sights

Saddam Hussein's once gleaming, multi-million-pound private yacht was a listing, bomb-damaged hulk adrift in the Shatt al Arab waterway yesterday, a worthy metaphor for his grip on power in Iraq.

Leaning heavily to port, the 350ft Al Mansur — The Victor — was being carried by the tide around the main dock of Basra surrounded by an ugly diesel oil slick.

The Iraqi flag was hanging limp and torn at the stern.

The German-made vessel was a shadow of its once-glamorous past as it drifted in view of crowds of looters who were waiting for it to beach on a sandbank



The Al Mansur lies at the dockside in central Basra on Friday. (AFP)

so that the serious business of stripping it bare could begin.

"It was so beautiful when it came up the Shatt Al Arab, it looked like a big, white bird," Ta'ad Al Taher, a local dockworker, said. "Now look at it. Is it really the same boat?"

Locals said it had been hit by 16 allied bombs over the last

two weeks. There were pockmarks from shrapnel from bow to stern and the main living area was an enormous cavity of burnt wood, twisted metal and torn cables.

Boarding the vessel involved hiring a local fisherman and clambering up a buckled gangplank hanging by a danger-

ously thin hawser on the unburnt side.

Only a few of its once glamorous fittings had escaped the flames, including an operating theatre on a lower deck, a table tennis table and an enormous wooden eagle, the Iraqi symbol of state.

Some of the original manu-

facturers' labels — Schat-Davit, Hamburg — were visible on control panels and door handles.

Locals said the ship had a crew of 120 special members of the Republican Guard but there was no sign of them.

Moved from the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr shortly before

the war began on March 20, Saddam's supporters had hoped that the Al Mansur would be safe from allied forces.

It was attacked repeatedly, however, both from the air and with allied naval artillery from Royal Navy ships out in the Gulf.

Given to Saddam by the

Saudi royal family back in the 1980s as a gesture of thanks for keeping the fundamentalist threat at bay by fighting the Islamic Republic of Iran, the vessel was reported to have been kept stocked with the finest food and drink in case Saddam decided to use it.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

# The battle begins now

By Amit Baruah

10  
10/9

THE WORLD has been "shocked and awed" at the sight of American and British ordnance raining down on Iraqi cities and civilians. The live "television" war has brought images of Iraqi civilians — dying and dead — into the households.

The American "projection" before the war was such that it appeared as if the Iraq President, Saddam Hussein, was already gone. All that was needed was a new "chosen" leadership and massive doses of aid for the country.

Whatever the fate of Saddam Hussein's security forces, the Iraqi people have already sent out a signal to their "liberators" — that there is a distinction between "regime" and "nation". Whether you disliked Saddam Hussein or hated him, Iraqi nationhood was a fact that seemed to have eluded the television-savvy military planners sitting in the United States.

The markers of victory have been shifting. The first attack was on a "target of opportunity", Saddam Hussein. It failed. After it became clear that a "dead" Saddam Hussein being displayed on television was an improbability, the "main target" shifted to the "regime". And, then it reverted back to Saddam Hussein.

But what will be the benchmark of victory? American and British firms taking control of Iraqi oil and trying to build a state out of a shattered nation? Or a stable, secure, democratic, secular Iraq — without foreigners determining its destiny, at peace with its neighbours? Or the Stars and Stripes fluttering over Saddam's palaces?

In one sense, the Americans lost their "war" even before it began. This war has no legitimacy, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441 does not give any sanction for America to go to war against Iraq. Post-September 11, all the sympathy that the U.S. won for itself has been dissipated by George W. Bush & Co. The attack on Iraq was pre-determined, and anything that the Iraqis might have done to cooperate in the

U.N. search for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) would not have led to a change in the plan. Apart from securing access to Iraqi oil, the war is about "control". George Bush & Co. are clearly of the view that they can "order" the world to their specifications. And that Saddam Hussein and Iraq have no place in this order.

All hope that the world order, after the Cold War, would be more peaceful and cooperative has been shat-

and indiscipline. The invasion of Iraq has united people across the globe. Spaniards, Moroccans, Indonesians, Australians, Britons... the list is endless. But it does not seem to have had any impact on how Iraq is to be dealt with. Is not protest part of democracy? Are the protests taking place on Jupiter? As far as the Bush regime is concerned, that would seem to be the case. Tony Blair has been made painfully aware that pro-

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***America's 'victory' will not bring peace to Iraq. At best, it will administer a sullen population, one that may be as unhappy under a retired American general as under Saddam Hussein.***

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tered by what the Americans have done. It needs to be stressed that the unilateralist impulses of the Bush administration have been clear for some time. Whether it was on the Kyoto protocol, the International Criminal Court or the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty — the impulses were evident.

You might not have liked the Soviet Union, but while it existed there were things that both Moscow and Washington could not do. The "balance of terror" worked for the smaller nations. Would Iraq have happened if the Soviet Union had existed? Probably not. Today, Mr. Bush is presiding over the emergence of a unilateral world order, not even a unipolar order, where "might is right" for some. If it is Iraq today, it could be Iran tomorrow. What about Vietnam and China, nations that do not conform to what the Bush administration thinks is democracy? They could be down the line.

No one is safe; all countries are on notice after Iraq. Recent statements coming from senior functionaries in the Bush administration talk of the signals that Iraq should send out to Syria, Iran and North Korea. That "errant" nations must "behave" or face the consequences of defiance

tests are taking place nearer 10 Downing Street and might even lead to a "regime change" in London. Though there has been a large protest in Kolkata and smaller ones in other cities, Indians by and large have expressed their disapproval in private. Muted protests on Iraq would appear linked to the general lack of desire among Indians to take to the streets these days.

The Vajpayee Government was forced to concede that ordinary Indians were against the war and finally agreed to a unanimous resolution in Parliament. The resolution began by saying that it was an expression of "national sentiment". As India initially adopted the middle path, France, Russia and Germany performed a limited. Standing up for the U.N. system might cost these countries and their companies lucrative contracts in the post-war scenario. But, simply differing with the method of disarming Iraq (not the objective) has led to trans-Atlantic tensions. France, especially, is being seen as a spoiler. China has largely kept out of the limelight, making some noises when the occasion demanded.

But all that might change if the U.S. actually goes ahead with the

"threats" issued against countries such as Syria and Iran. North Korea and what happens there, too, is of particular interest to Beijing.

There is, however, need for both the permanent and non-permanent members of the U.N. Security Council to take this issue further. A resolution can still be introduced in the Council at least "disapproving" of the unilateral American-British war. It will certainly attract a veto, but the point would have been made. If another Iraq is to be prevented (even as the world deals with the mess being created there), France, Russia, China, Germany, NAM, the Arab League will all have to display more gumption. Standing up to the U.S. is no easy task.

As fighting and looting take place in Iraq, the world will continue to watch what will happen in the cradle of civilisation. Tragically for the Americans, there seem to be differences on who will play the role of a Hamid Karzai in Iraq. America's 'victory' will not bring peace to Iraq. At best, it will administer a sullen population, one that may be as unhappy under a retired American general as under Saddam Hussein.

And, what about the "smoking gun" that was never found? Iraqi weapons of mass destruction? As the war winds down, desperate Iraqis have not so far used any chemical or other weapons. Was that a sign that the U.N. weapons inspectors were successful in defanging Iraq? Given the kind of propaganda that is being conducted across Western television channels, it would hardly be surprising if some weapons of mass destruction actually "turned up" somewhere in Iraq.

For a world that was talking about the benefits of globalisation and making ever-more complicated rules for trade, the war on Iraq could have more implications for multilateralism than have been conceived. This is an unjust and unjustifiable war. No gloss, no provision of "humanitarian" aid can cloak its patent illegality. American and British soldiers must quit Iraq.

## IRAQ ALARM BELLS OVER KURDISH INTRUSION

# Turkey threatens to send in forces

By Atul Aneja

**AS SAYLAH (QATAR), APRIL 11.** In seeking to establish its hold over the northern Iraqi oil fields, the U.S. is facing a major challenge, not from Iraqi guns, but from the movement of ethnic Kurds that is agitating neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Iran and Syria.

The problems in northern Iraq have arisen because ethnic Kurds pursued by the hundreds into the northern Iraqi oil capital of Kirkuk on Thursday. The move rings alarm bells in Turkey, leading Ankara to seek an urgent clarification from the U.S. Secretary State, Colin Powell, on the steps Washington envisaged to reverse this development. Otherwise, Turkey indicated that it was prepared to send forces of its own which had already been deployed along Turkish-Iraqi border into Kurdish strongholds.

Iran and Syria have not expressed their consternation explicitly, but are unlikely to take the Kurdish intrusion into Kirkuk lightly. Turkey is agitated because it fears that by controlling Kirkuk and its oil fields, the Kurds would acquire the resources to create an independent

ent Kurdish state or Kurdistan. That, in turn, would generate secessionist pressures inside Turkey, which has a Kurdish population of around 15 million residing along its border with northern Iraq. In other words, Turkey apprehends that it could lose part of its territory dominated by Kurds to an independent Kurdistan that is sustained by the oilfields of Kirkuk and Mosul. Turkey has also historical claims over the area's oil resources, which are traced to the days of the Ottoman Empire.

It also fears that with the Kurds arriving in Kirkuk in hordes, the ethnic Turkoman population in the city, which has been traditionally close to Ankara, would be overwhelmed. The diminishing influence of the Turkmans in Kirkuk would not suit Turkey's interests. Iran, with an estimated Kurdish population of six million and Syria, which has nearly 1.5 million Kurds, also feel threatened by the Kurdish presence in Kirkuk, which is seen as a stepping stone to an independent Kurdistan that could tear down parts of their existing frontiers.

The Kurds, however, disagree with these arguments as they check their escape. Gen. Brooks said the Anglo-American forces were hunting for 55 leaders of the ousted regime of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein. The U.S. forces had also blocked the main exit points on the Syrian border to check their escape.

# Saddam's half-brother, dead



**CAIRO, APRIL 11.** The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein's half-brother, Barzan al-Takriti, died today morning in a U.S. bombing of his farm, in the region of Ramadi, west of Baghdad, a family friend told AFP.

Mr. Barzan had been placed under house arrest by Mr. Hussein on March 5 in a villa of the Radwaniya presidential palace compound, in Jadriya, near Baghdad airport. Mr. Bar-

zan was appointed head of Iraq's intelligence in 1983 and fell out with Mr. Hussein in 1988 because he objected to the marriage of one of the toppled President's daughters to Hussein Kamel Hassan, said the family friend.

Hussein Kamal is a member of the Takriti clan who became a leading figure of the regime, in charge of military industrialisation, before he defected in 1995 to Jordan.

He was killed in 1996 upon his return to Iraq. — AFP



relatives shot and killed are travelling in allegedly Marthes. The family say. — AP

## ip-led ofowitz

terim Authority will set up elections, draft a new constitution leading to the creation of a new government in Baghdad. There are a lot of ofowitz among Republicans and Democrats on the manner in which the Bush administration is going about the post-conflict phase in Iraq. For instance, many lawmakers want to know why the administration is reluctant to send Gen. Garner to Capitol Hill to answer a few questions.

Many others are particularly disturbed at the fact that reconstruction business in Iraq is being awarded without any competitive bidding. And when there are serious questions on whether the United States would be wise enough to ignore sentiments of the international community on a more proactive role for the United Nations.

(By post) from candidates residing in Assiut, Wadiyanaya, Rumaynah, Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Lahaul and Spiti districts and Pangl sub-division of Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh, A&N Islands or Lakshadweep or abroad). Pay Scale (Approx total emoluments excluding HRA & CCA) & upper age limits immediately follow name of the post.

The date for determining eligibility of all candidates in every respect shall be the normal closing date prescribed for receipt of applications viz. 15.2.2003.

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# Turkey keeps troops on alert

- US, Kurds take control of Mosul without a fight
- Baghdad plunges into anarchy, Tikrit targeted

Ankara/Baghdad: Turkey on Friday accepted US promises to block any bid by Iraqi Kurds to control northern oil fields, but signalled that it was still ready to send its own troops if it saw a Kurdish move toward independence.

Turkey sounded an alarm on Thursday after Kurdish peshmerga fighters moved into the oil city of Kirkuk abandoned by Iraqi government forces.

The US, fearing a disruptive Kurdish-Turkish clash if Ankara invaded, moved quickly to dispatch its own units to take control of the situation.

Images of the jubilant peshmerga, splashed over newspapers, have touched on a raw nerve in Turkey where school-children learn of perfidious Western powers conniving 80 years ago at the partition of Turkey's heartland and creation of a Kurdish state.

US and Kurdish forces took Iraq's third city of Mosul without a fight on Friday as support for Saddam Hussein collapsed in the north, but shooting and looting plunged Baghdad and other cities into anarchy.

In Mosul, the entire Iraqi 5th Corps surrendered to US troops.

In Baghdad, where US tanks moved in on Wednesday, gunmen apparently from the downtrodden Shiite Muslim community in the east-side slums battled Fedayeen paramilitaries loyal to Mr Hussein overnight, US military sources said.

Elsewhere in the capital, armed men roamed the streets, robbing buildings and hijacking cars. Hundreds of Iraqi civilians stormed the headquarters of Iraq's military intelligence and dug desperately in search of relatives they believed were trapped in dungeons below. Later, US soldiers in armoured vehicles took over the compound.

The chaos in Baghdad and elsewhere,

and the murder of a religious leader in the holy city of Najaf, highlighted the problems US troops face in restoring order despite a crushing military victory.

The whereabouts of Mr Hussein and other former Iraqi leaders were unknown. US commander General Tommy Franks, visiting Afghanistan, said they were "either dead or running like hell". Brigadier General Vincent Brooks said at a briefing in Qatar that they were trying to escape abroad and that US troops had been issued with a list of 55 people to be captured or killed.

Events in the north left Mr Hussein's home town of Tikrit, as the one significant target left for the US-led forces.

A US aircraft dropped six "smart bombs" on the residence of Barzan Ibrahim Hasan al-Tikriti, Mr Hussein's half-brother and former head of Iraq's Mukhabarat intelligence service. The results of the attack at Ramadi, 70 miles west of Baghdad, were not immediately known.

Fears of suicide attacks led Marines to open fire on a vehicle that ignored warnings to stop at a checkpoint in Nasiriyah on Friday, killing two children, the Marines said.

The US is trying to organise a meeting of Iraqi opposition leaders to start selecting an interim government. Central Command in Qatar said on Friday that White House special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad would chair a meeting of prominent Iraqis in the coming week to begin discussions on the country's future.

Meanwhile, Russian, French and German leaders, who opposed the war in Iraq, gathered in St Petersburg on Friday to press calls for the UN to oversee postwar reconstruction. Agencies



A pack of US military playing cards with pictures of Iraqi's 55 most wanted.

- Related reports, Pages 10, 11
- See Edit: Ends & Beginnings, Page 12

## Ends and Beginnings

Having all but "liberated" Baghdad — complete with five pictures of Saddam's statues being toppled and his portraits disfigured — the "allies" are faced with a thorny conundrum. Just when do they declare the war over and claim victory? The question, ironically, has arisen not because the war is going badly but because it has gone a little too well. The old regime has collapsed so spectacularly in the last few days that there's simply no one "big" enough left to "surrender" to the invaders and bring the war to a formal close. While Iraq's ambassador to the UN has publicly acknowledged that "the game is over", his minor status as well as lack of proximity from the scene of action means that he cannot discharge that role. Adding to the uncertainty is the mystery about Saddam's fate. Despite repeated US claims of having "got the man", there isn't enough evidence to suggest that the dictator is finally history. And since the avowed object of the war was the removal of Saddam, it's difficult to proclaim victory in the absence of any definite information about his status.

Perhaps the best the Americans can hope to achieve at this moment is to persuade Iraq's most public face of the last three weeks, information minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, to appear on state television and call a truce on behalf of the fallen army. This might convince at least some among the Saddam loyalists of the futility of continuing what is clearly a lost battle. Freed from the task of securing the city, the invading troops can then hopefully turn their attention to controlling the anarchy and chaos that have descended on the streets of Baghdad. Away from the situation on the battleground, there are other questions. Sooner rather than later, New Delhi has to decide on what to do with the local Iraqi diplomatic staff. Representatives of a fallen regime, they can no longer realistically expect to retain their privileged status. But many will ask for political sanctuary given the near-certainty that they'll face reprisals back home. This situation can become stickier if Washington were to demand the deportation of some on charges of their links with the old order. Then there is the tricky issue of the nature of our relationship with General Jay Garner and his all-American military administration. Clearly, the MEA has an important diplomatic tightrope to walk in the coming days. One can only hope that it is not found as flat-footed as it has been in the past.

1 2 APR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

SEARCHING FOR SADDAM'S HALF BROTHER, US TRIES TO HALT LOOTING

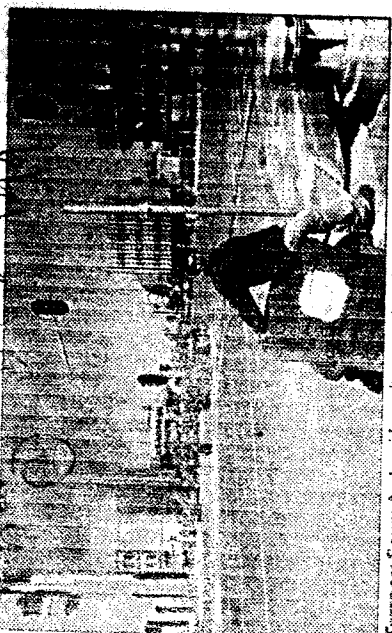
# Iraqi corps surrenders in Mosul

Mosul  
13 APRIL

**A**N entire army corps surrendered in northern Iraq's largest city on Friday, leaving Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit as the last major holdout of his regime. Unarmed, bootless ex-soldiers began a long trek home, while looters moved in, pillaging banks and other buildings. Mosul, the main city in the north and third-largest in Iraq, fell without bloodshed as US forces arrived and accepted the surrender of the Iraqi army's 5th Corps commander. Looting and celebrations spread quickly; some people grabbed wads of bills from the central bank.

In Qajar, Iraq Gen. Vincent Brooks of the US Central Command said officials have drawn up a list of 55 leaders who must be captured or killed. Cards with names and photos are being distributed to soldiers to help their identify those still at large.

In Baghdad, where regime



**FREEDOM SONS:** An Iraqi boy sits on a chair he looted as smoke rises from a government building in Mosul on Friday. — AP

helped Iraq's army to retreat already, but the US command order to bring the city under control, it could force the Iraqi forces to retreat. The US forces for city in the north. Some cities have government buildings nearby, which have been captured virtually intact.

Navy Capt. Frank S. ... as US Central Command spokesman in Qatar, said that command is seeking Iraqi forces within a territory in and around Mosul. The US forces are surrendering the 5th Corps, a very significant force, which is the very first of the US forces in the future of the city.

On the night of the attack, thousands of Iraqis were seen walking away from the city, some carrying their families. A black helicopter was seen in the air, and some of them were seen to be carrying their families. Some said they were taking their families to the north, but others said they were taking them to the south. — AP

Before dawn on Saturday, US warplanes fired six satellite-guided bombs at an intelligence building in Ramadi, 100 km west of Baghdad, believing that Saddam's half brother, Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti, was inside. US commanders said they were still assessing damage and casualties from the strike. Al-Tikriti, a former head of the Iraqi secret police, was a close adviser to Saddam and allegedly

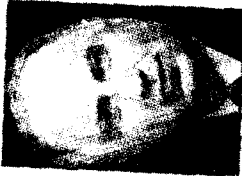
control collapsed on Wednesday. US troops were trying to curb looting that continued unabated for a third straight day. In parts of the capital, Marines were starting to enforce a dusk-to-dawn curfew. The looters' latest targets included Baghdad's nursing college and engineering college. In some cases, entire families — parents and children — searched together for plunder.

# Chalabi caught in allied crossfire

By Rashme Z. Ahmed  
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

London: Amidst reports of looting, chaos and anarchy in Baghdad, Mosul and Kirkuk, the allied coalition's great battle is about who or what will fill the vacuum and whether it should really be a Rolex-wearing, flashy dresser magic-car-peted from posh Knightsbridge to dusty Nasiriyah in southern Iraq.

For now, London is refusing to believe Ahmed Chalabi, a Pentagon favourite, really is Iraq's prime minister-in-waiting. But on Thursday night, Mr Chalabi, 58, appeared desperate to sound like the unifying "one-nation" prime minister for Bush-Blair's promised new Iraq. "We see no room for a US administration," he bravely declared to BBC domestic TV in an exclusive interview.



Ahmed Chalabi

Even as he sat amidst a posse of US army guards and hoped "elections would be held within two years".

Almost immediately, but without naming names, British foreign office minister Mike O'Brien responded by pointedly insisting, "The diaspora must form political parties and fight elections. Ultimately it is a matter for the Iraqi people." London's doubts are supported by Washington's liberals, including the US State Department, which does not trust the controversial Shia banker who founded the fractious Iraqi National Congress 11 years ago. Many of the 3.5 million Iraqi exiles across Britain are furious about the "Pentagon puppet" flown into Nasiriyah on Monday with 700 men with the apparent aim of being parachuted into the leadership of the future interim Iraqi authority.

But Mr Chalabi testily said on Thursday that it was "not relevant" that he had not lived in Iraq for nearly 40 years. "I am in the country now. People in the country look to people who are Iraqi, who are free to express their vision for

the future of the country." He said the first "a constitution (would be) drafted by Iraqis, approved by a constituent assembly and put to a free public referendum". Britain is aware its opposition to Mr Chalabi conflicts with some of Washington's more headline thinkers, including defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld and vice-president Dick Cheney. Both reportedly wanted Mr Chalabi installed as interim leader as soon as it was safe. But Tony Blair is understood to have been instrumental in persuading President George W. Bush to junk the idea and set up a "broadbased interim body" instead.

According to the Bush-Blair summit communique earlier this week, the interim body would include "members from all of Iraq's ethnic groups, regions and diaspora".

In another development, in a hasty announcement that appeared to conflict with reports that too few coalition troops were in Iraq to police the country, Britain's defence minister announced a scaling down of the UK's military presence.



Members of a Baghdad family mourn the death of three male relatives shot and killed by U.S. Marines on Wednesday night after the car they were travelling in allegedly did not stop while passing a building occupied by the Marines. The family came to know of the incident only on Thursday. — AP

## Parallel U.S., Iraqi-led Ministries, says Wolfowitz

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 11. At a time when there are several voices in the international community calling for a "central" role for the United Nations, the Bush administration has made it increasingly clear that the world body can have a "role" only.

The point was further emphasized by the Deputy Secretary of Defence, Paul Wolfowitz, while appearing before a Congressional panel on Thursday. Referring to the United Nations, the senior administration official remarked, "It can't be the managing partner. It can't be in charge." This has been perhaps the most blunt assessment that has come thus far from an administration official who is in the inner circle of decision-making in the White House.

"What we're trying to avoid is a situation that we've seen in other places of the world where Iraq might become some sort of permanent ward of the international community. There's no reason for that to happen," Mr. Wolfowitz told lawmakers of the Senate Armed Services Committee. The senior official talked of the Pentagon envisioning parallel Ministries that would be led by Americans and Iraqis that will be running Iraq until such time as an interim government can be set up. The control of the Ministries of pub-

lic services would be gradually shifted from the U.S.-led Ministries to Iraq. But Mr. Wolfowitz gave no time table for how long an interim Government would take or how long the United States will be staying back in that country. In the view of Mr. Wolfowitz, the plans are subject to change "when we get to the ground."

The Bush administration, according to Mr. Wolfowitz, is planning to have a "rolling dialogue" next week with many Iraqis with leadership potentials to discuss the emerging Government in Baghdad.

The Commander of the Central Command who is in charge of the war, Gen. Tommy Franks, is holding the meetings, which are organised in partnership with three coalition nations that have troops on the ground and with the United Nations and other coalition partners invited as observers.

Mr. Wolfowitz sees a three-phase process on the road to creating a permanent government in Baghdad — first, it will be the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance led by the retired General Jay Garner. This office is not the provisional government, it is being stressed. Second will be the creation of an Iraqi Interim Authority with Gen. Garner's office growing increasingly to an advisory body. And third, this In-

terim Authority will set up local elections, draft a new constitution leading to the creation of a new government in Baghdad.

There are a lot of misgivings among Republicans and Democrats on the manner in which the Bush administration is going about the post-conflict phase in Iraq. For instance, many lawmakers want to know why the administration is reluctant to send Gen. Garner to Capitol Hill to answer a few questions.

Many others are particularly disturbed at the fact that reconstruction business in Iraq is being awarded without any competitive bidding. And then there are serious questions on whether the United States would be wise enough to ignore sentiments of the international community on a more proactive role for the United Nations.

HINDO

## 'Syria must not meddle in Iraq'

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 11. The Bush administration has said that it is sensitive to the fact that the war in Iraq has given rise to suspicions in the Middle East and that the U.S. has no intention of staying in Iraq for a day more than is necessary.

At a "Invitation Only" briefing at the Washington Foreign Press Centre, the Deputy Secretary of Defence, Paul Wolfowitz, said Washington is aware of the suspicions in the region. "Given the history of the region, that is understandable," he said. With Mr. Wolfowitz was the Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff, Gen. Peter Pace. Mr. Wolfowitz said the Bush administration was not seeking "regime change" per se in Syria; rather it was seeking a "change in the bad behaviour" of Damascus.

He referred to some of the allegations made by other senior administration officials such as the Defence Secretary about military assistance to the Saddam Hussein regime. "Syria should not meddle in Iraq," Mr. Wolfowitz asserted, adding that "hopefully" Damascus has started getting this message.

He said the conflict in Iraq was only three weeks old and that coalition forces "are on track and on plan".

## IRAQ: ALARM BELLS OVER KURDISH INTRUSION

# Turkey threatens to send in forces

By Atul Aneja

AS SAYLAH (QATAR), APRIL 11. In seeking to establish its hold over the northern Iraqi oil fields, the U.S. is facing a major challenge, not from Iraqi guns, but from the movement of ethnic Kurds that is agitating neighboring countries such as Turkey, Iran and Syria.

The problems in northern Iraq have arisen because ethnic Kurds poured by the hundreds into the northern Iraqi oil capital of Kirkuk on Thursday. The move rang alarm bells in Turkey, leading Ankara to seek an urgent clarification from the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, on the steps Washington envisaged to reverse this development. Otherwise, Turkey indicated that it was prepared to send forces of its own which had already been deployed along Turkish-Iraqi border into Kurdish strongholds.

Iran and Syria have not expressed their consternation explicitly, but are unlikely to take the Kurdish intrusion into Kirkuk lightly. Turkey is agitated because it fears that by controlling Kirkuk and its oil fields, the Kurds would acquire the resources to create an independ-

ent Kurdish state or Kurdistan. That, in turn, would generate secessionist pressures inside Turkey, which has a Kurdish population of around 15 million residing along its border with northern Iraq. In other words, Turkey apprehends that it could lose part of its territory dominated by Kurds to an independent Kurdistan that is sustained by the oilfields of Kirkuk and Mosul. Turkey has also historical claims over the area's oil resources, which are traced to the days of the Ottoman Empire.

It also fears that with the Kurds arriving in Kirkuk in hordes, the ethnic Turkoman population in the city, which has been traditionally close to Ankara, would be overwhelmed. The diminishing influence of the Turkomans in Kirkuk would not suit Turkey's interests. Iran, with an estimated Kurdish population of six million and Syria, which has nearly 1.5 million Kurds, also feel threatened by the Kurdish presence in Kirkuk, which is seen as a stepping stone to an independent Kurdistan that could tear down parts of their existing frontiers.

The Kurds, however, disagree with these arguments as they

trace their heritage to Kirkuk. Kirkuk, their home turf, is believed to be the place where two dozen holes in the ground have been venting natural gas for thousands of years.

The local population, according to Plutarch's accounts, had set afire a street sprinkled with oil seepages to impress Alexander the Great when he passed through this area during his conquests.

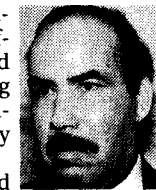
In seeking the reversal of Kurdish intrusion from Kirkuk, the United States is, therefore, attempting to remove the key irritant that could encourage countries such as Turkey and to a lesser extent, Iran and Syria, to directly or indirectly intervene in the ongoing Iraq war.

Aware of the stakes involved, the spokesperson of the U.S. Central Command, Vincent Brooks, said the U.S. 173rd airborne division had positioned itself in the oil fields in north-west Iraq.

Gen. Brooks said the Anglo-American forces were hunting for 55 leaders of the ousted regime of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein. The U.S. forces had also blocked the main exit points on the Syrian border to check their escape.

## Saddam's half-brother 'dead'

CAIRO, APRIL 11. The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein's half-brother, Barzan al-Takriti, died today morning in a U.S. bombing of his farm, in the region of Ramadi, west of Baghdad, a family friend told AFP.



Mr. Barzan had been placed under house arrest by Mr. Hussein on March 5 in a villa of the Radwaniya presidential palace compound, in Jadriya, near Baghdad airport. Mr. Bar-

zan was appointed head of Iraq's intelligence 1983 and fell out with Mr. Hussein in 1988 because he objected to the marriage of one of the toppled President's daughters to Hussein Kamel Hassan, said the family friend.

Hussein Kamel is a member of the Takriti clan who became a leading figure of the regime, in charge of military industrialisation, before he defected in 1995 to Jordan.

He was killed in 1996 upon his return to Iraq. — AFP



## MOSUL FALLS; TIKRIT THE LAST MAJOR HOLDOUT

# Lawlessness spreads in Baghdad

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 11.** Lawlessness spread in Baghdad on Friday even as the fighting dwindled to occasional bursts of machine-gun fire. Thousands of Iraqis — including entire families — went on looting sprees and plundered engineering and nursing colleges. In Mosul, northern Iraq's largest city, an entire army corps surrendered today, leaving the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit the last major holdout of his regime.

In Baghdad, U.S. troops worked to hold key intersections and manned checkpoints, on high alert against suicide attacks by fighters loyal to Mr. Hussein. Top U.S. commanders issued new rules of behaviour for American forces in the capital to stop the looting.

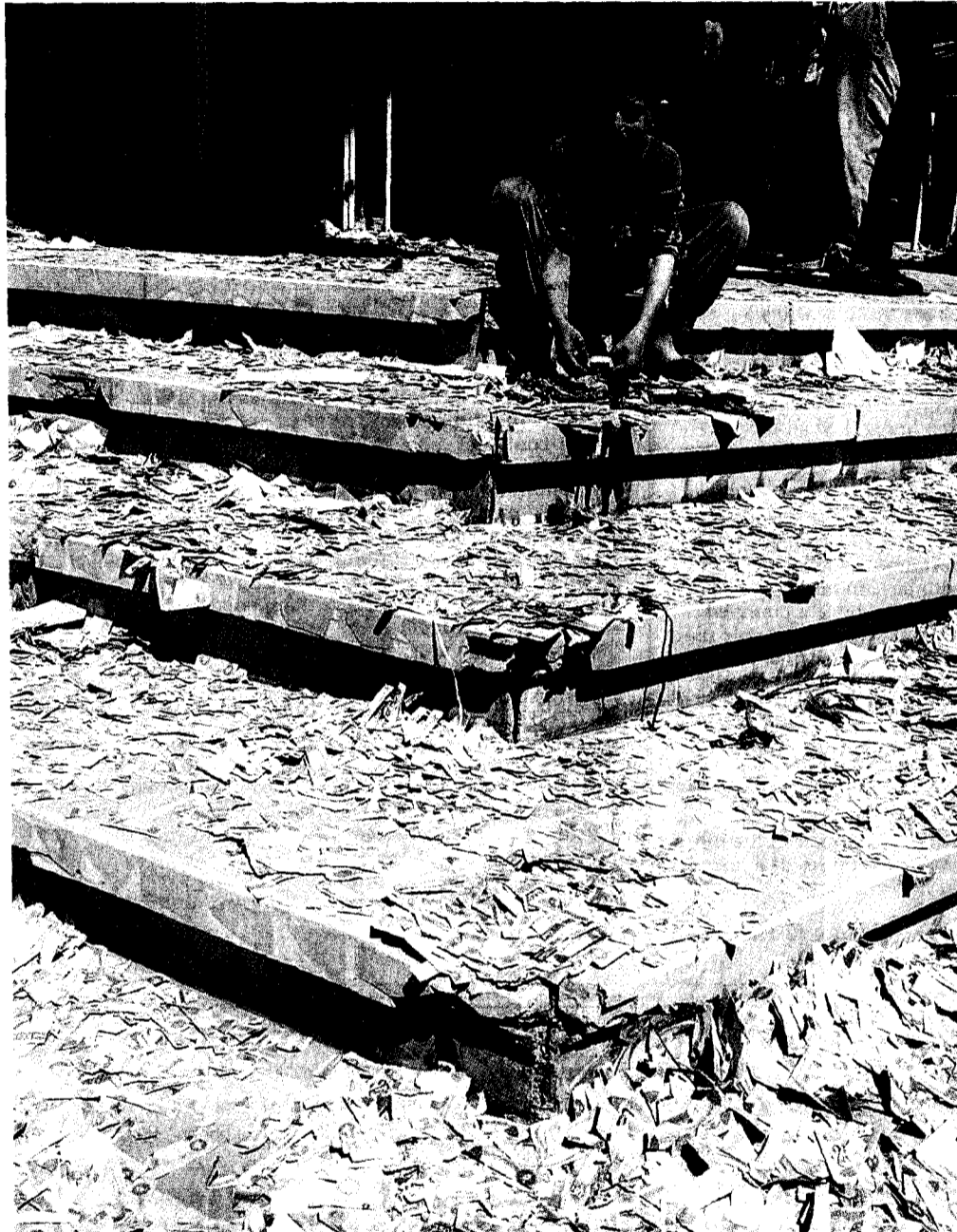
Under the rules issued Friday by U.S. Gen. Tommy Franks, troops are forbidden to use deadly force to prevent looting. They should allow government workers to go to their jobs. Hospitals, businesses and mosques should remain open. Schools should reopen and record attendance.

However, British forces shot and killed five men trying to rob a bank who opened fire on them in Basra, the scene of looting over the past week, a U.S. military spokesman said today.

A car carrying an Iraqi family drove through a checkpoint in Baghdad without stopping today, and Marines opened fire. Three adults were killed, and a 5-year-old girl was wounded.

In the Al-Mansour district in western Baghdad, pro-Saddam bands of Arab volunteers manned sandbagged positions, armed with rocket-propelled grenades and Kalashnikov rifles. Residents said they were mostly Syrians.

The looting and lawlessness provoked criticism against coalition forces. "Tell the Americans to stop the killing and the looting. We can't live like this much longer, with Muslims looting other Muslims," said 41-



**An Iraqi boy gathering currency notes in front of a ransacked bank in Mosul on Friday. Widespread looting was reported in this northern city even as U.S. and Kurdish fighters claimed control of it. — AFP**

year-old Jabryah Aziz. "I need to feel safe so I can go and collect my food ration." The Trade

Ministry was also smouldering, along with one of the main markets in the city centre.

In the Karadah neighbourhood, residents fought back: They armed themselves with

Kalashnikov rifles, set up roadblocks and checked passing cars for stolen goods. Any plunder was confiscated, and people in the cars were taken out and beaten and tossed in an alley.

In Saddam City, a Baghdad slum dominated by Shia Muslims and named after the Sunni Muslim leader they despised, mosque minarets blared appeals to people to stop looting and destroying their city. Some people heeded the clerics' calls and brought stolen goods to mosques for safekeeping.

In some neighbourhoods, residents erected street barricades of tiles, huge rocks and sandbags to keep looters out.

A man strapped with explosives blew himself up at a checkpoint near the Saddam City section of Baghdad on Thursday night. Four Marines were seriously wounded. A short time later, a man started walking toward U.S. soldiers stationed at an intersection near the Government's tourism department. The soldiers fired four warning shots, but the man kept coming. They opened fire. When they found his body in the morning, he was unarmed.

The nursing college at Baghdad University was ransacked along with the Engineering College Al-Mustansiriyyah. The fall of Mosul, a city of more than 600,000, came a day after U.S. and Kurdish forces took Kirkuk, the other major city in the north. Both cities have economic links to nearby oil fields that have been secured virtually intact. Mosul, the main city in the north and the third-largest in Iraq, fell without bloodshed as American forces arrived and accepted the surrender of the Iraqi army's 5th Corps commander.

Unarmed, bootless ex-soldiers began a long trek home, while looters moved in, pillaging banks and other buildings. Looting and celebrations spread quickly; some people grabbed wads of bills from the Central Bank.

Kurdish civilians from their autonomous region in the far northeast of Iraq were streaming into Kirkuk on Friday, delighted at the chance to see friends and relatives for the first time in years. Many were dressed in what appeared to be their finest clothes.

A report from Cairo said Mr. Hussein's half-brother, Barzan al-Takriti, died today morning in a U.S. bombing of his farm, in the region of Ramadi, west of Baghdad. — AP, Reuters, AFP

1 2 APR 2003

THE HINDU

BUSH, BLAIR SEEK TO ALLAY IRAQIS' FEARS

# Skirmishes at Baghdad palace, mosque

MD-1  
M/A

M. Azim

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 10.** U.S. forces battled holdout fighters here today as rampant looting persisted in the capital. To the north, Kurdish fighters reported a major gain, entering the city of Kirkuk near some of Iraq's most productive oil fields.

A day after U.S. officials declared that Saddam Hussein's regime no longer controlled Baghdad, the U.S. Central Command said American marines engaged in "intense fighting" with pro-Saddam forces at the Imam Mosque, the Az Amihyah Palace and the house of a leader of the Baath party.

Capt. Frank Thorp, a spokesman at the Central Command in Doha, Qatar, said U.S. troops acted on information that regime leaders were trying to organise a meeting in the area. During the operations, he said, Marines were fired on from the mosque compound.

He said he didn't know whether Saddam was among those trying to organise the meeting or whether any regime leaders were captured or killed.

That engagement aside, the largely one-sided battle for Baghdad appeared nearly over, and U.S. commanders were focussing on plans to oust pro-Saddam forces from remaining strongholds — including Saddam's heavily-defended hometown of Tikrit and the northern city of Mosul.

U.S. military officials said in Qatar that navy bomber and special forces teams were targeting Tikrit, 160 km north of here, to ensure it does not become a new command centre for the regime as Iraqi soldiers are pushed into the area both from the capital and the north.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush, and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, sought to calm fears that the coalition troops would become an 'occupying force'. "We will help you build a peaceful and representative Government that protects the rights of all citizens. And then our military forces will leave", Mr. Bush said in a video message, broadcast on Thursday in Iraq.

Mr. Blair said: "Our forces



**A U.S. Army man entertains children outside the former Baath Party headquarters in Ad Dayr near Basra on Thursday. — AFP**

## U.S. soldier killed in suicide attack

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 10.** At least one U.S. soldier was killed today in a suicide attack in Baghdad, Major Matt Baker of the U.S. Marines told AFP.

"It happened north of here," Maj. Baker said, speaking at the Palestine Hotel in downtown Baghdad where the foreign press is staying.

It was the first suicide attack against American forces since they captured the capital yesterday. — AFP



**An Iraqi with the currency notes which he looted from a bank in Baghdad on Thursday. — AP**

industrial neighbourhood of Kirkuk. It was unclear whether Iraqi forces were still in Kirkuk. Shooting initially erupted on the city's northwest edge, but then Kurdish forces were able to drive around at will.

U.S. military officials stressed that the Kurdish fighters were acting in coordination with American special operations troops, an apparent attempt to

Abdullah Gul, today said that Turkey would send military observers to Kirkuk — at the invitation of the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell — to make sure Iraqi Kurdish fighters withdraw from the city.

There was no sign of damage to the northern oil wells, which U.S. officials had said were rigged with explosives. Kurdish

with wheelbarrows and push-carts for a second day of looting, setting fires to some Interior Ministry buildings and making off with anything they could carry.

Looted buildings included the German embassy and the French Cultural Centre.

"There's civilian looting like crazy, all over the place," said

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THE HINDO

FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2003

W/Ariz 9/20/03  
RETURN TO THE U.N. 110-10 11/4

THE COLLAPSE OF Baghdad, stupefyingly swift and etched in memory by the way the towering statue of Saddam Hussein was brought tumbling down on Shaheed Square, signifies that the primary objective of this American war of aggression has for all purposes been achieved. With the regime change goal secured, even as it goes in hot pursuit of the fallen dictator, the occupying nation has the task of winning the peace and returning the country to Iraqi civil rule in the shortest possible time. Besides, it has the duty to the international community of finding those weapons of mass destruction, the presumed presence of which in Iraq was the prime reason cited by Washington and its cohorts to justify the launch of this illegitimate war. It will be time soon for the U.S. to produce proof. For the searches to be credible, the United Nations weapons inspectors must return to the country to continue their interrupted work. The U.S. Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, has repeatedly promised to find and eliminate these WMDs and their delivery systems and to work back up the chain of proliferation to find their sources outside the country. Invading American and British soldiers have discovered very little evidence of chemical or biological weapons, though military analysts had warned that Iraq might use them to counterattack. Failure to find these weapons will be interpreted by most nations to mean an intolerable deceit of the world.

The U.S. must also get the issue of post-war reconstruction in all its aspects back to the U.N., giving it the lead role. President George Bush's remarks after his summit talks in Belfast with the British Prime Minister, promising a "vital role" for the U.N., must be dismissed as resort to semantics to conceal continuing differences between the two allies and will be unacceptable to the rest of the world. The "vital role" Mr. Bush was ready to concede would reduce the U.N. to an aid distributor. It is vital to ensure that humanitarian relief reaches the people without loss of time. But equally vital for the future of the

country and the region are the composition and powers of the interim political administration which will run the country until democratic elections are conducted. Giving the lead role to the world body to manage these issues would, first, pull international relations back from the abnormality of the past month, secondly, heal the trans-Atlantic wound and, thirdly, silence Arab and other critics who suspect that Washington's ultimate objective in waging this war is to gain control over the oil wealth of Iraq. The Bush administration unfortunately seems determined to go its way and install a team of lackeys in Baghdad, ignoring warnings that the anger in the Arab street can only get inflamed further by such decisions.

The reaction of the Arabs has so far remained muted, the population shellshocked by the rapidity of the changes in Iraq. The wild scenes witnessed in the streets of the Iraqi capital were a contrast. The manner in which Fortress Baghdad has crumbled, defiance melting into disappearance, has drawn a parallel to the collapse of the Berlin Wall, though the celebrations on Wednesday appeared to be lacking the scale and spontaneity of the historic event that heralded German reunification. The poor of Baghdad had other preoccupations, like stripping Saddam Hussein's offices and the capital's stores of their contents. The absence of resistance from the forces of the formidable ruler, who had successfully kept the country on a tight leash for two decades, meant that his men were overwhelmed by the crushing superiority of their opponents. As for the top leaders themselves, including Saddam Hussein, if they have not perished in the two targeted bombings of the three-week-old war, they have perhaps retreated to their strongholds in the north for a last stand. Perhaps not. This brief campaign has already shattered many of the notions carefully built up by Saddam Hussein and his allies. The only certainty is that neither Iraq nor the Middle East, or for that matter, the world, will be the same again.

1 1 APR 2003

THE HINDO

BAGHDAD / MEDIA CAMPAIGN NOW

W. Sridhar  
10-19 11/9

# Friends, not conquerors: Bush

By Sridhar Krishnaswami  
WASHINGTON, APRIL 10. Launching a major media campaign, the President, George W. Bush, is telling the people of Iraq that "Your nation will soon be free"; and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, is assuring the local population that coalition forces "are friends and liberators, not conquerors".

The joint address by the leaders of the United States and United Kingdom to the people of Iraq has been set for 6 p.m. local time in Baghdad and the overall Washington-London campaign is intended not only to assure Iraqis, but to the region of West Asia in general of the objectives of the coalition forces. "The goals of our coalition are clear and limited... The nightmare that Saddam Hussein has brought to your nation will soon be over", Mr. Bush has said in his address lasting two and a half minutes which has been produced with Arabic subtitles. "You deserve to live as free people. And I assure every citizen of Iraq: Your nation will soon be free", the President has said.

The address by Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair is to be beamed from a U.S. C-130 Hercules aircraft flying over the skies of Iraq. Five hours of programming for five days a week has now been

but to all those nations in West Asia which are deeply suspicious of the U.S. and this Republican administration and are stunned at what has come about.

The White House did give a brief glimpse of the reactions of the President, including his response to the statue of Saddam Hussein being brought down on Wednesday. Mr. Bush did not watch the statue being ripped off its pedestal because of the series of meetings he had been attending at the time. But after the meeting, Mr. Bush did watch television for some time. "They got it down" is what the President is said to have remarked.

Mr. Bush, while being clearly pleased at the turn of events, is said to have told aides that many things could still go wrong. Administration officials are saying that Mr. Bush is not yet ready to address the nation, saying the war is over. He might not have wanted to talk about a "victory" for the allies but this did not stop his Vice-President, Dick Cheney, who said the fall of Baghdad vindicated the military plans that came under sharp criticism.

"With every day, with every advance of our coalition forces, the wisdom of the plan becomes more apparent", Mr. Cheney said.



**NOTHING TO FEAR?: Iraqi girls watch a U.S. Marine in Baghdad on Thursday.** — AFP

scheduled and will include rebroadcast from independent news outlets in the U.S. and Britain. The coalition goals that Mr. Bush has said are "clear and limited" include ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, ending the present state of things politically, providing security, respecting religious traditions, building a representative government and

ing not just the ordinary Iraqis the creation of a sovereign nation. During the "fall" of Baghdad — and one day after the historic day — the Bush administration has been very careful in how it is responding to the evolving scheme of things in Iraq. The White House obviously does not want to be seen having "victory celebrations" for fear of offending representative government and

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# Iraqis ransack homes of Saddam's allies



**THIEVES OF BAGHDAD:** Iraqis loot the French Cultural Centre in Baghdad on Thursday. Dozens of people broke into the office in central Baghdad, seizing everything they could find. — AFP

Baghdad  
10 APRIL

**I**RAQIS on Thursday looted the deserted luxury homes of senior figures of Saddam Hussein's regime, including his maverick son Uday, under the watchful eyes of joking US marines after the euphoria of the fall of Baghdad. Looters also turned their attention to the German embassy and the French cultural centre, an AFP photographer witnessed. But a stark reminder that not everyone in Baghdad is pleased to see US troops in the city came earlier when the marines were attacked by forces loyal to Saddam, along the northern banks of the Tigris river. One marine died and 13 were wounded in the exchange.

Baghdadis were awoken to a series of loud blasts on the city's outskirts around 7:30 am (0900 IST) while planes could be heard flying overhead. The city centre, however, was calm in the morning as it had been throughout the night for the first time since the war to oust Saddam's regime began on March 20. "There are small pockets of resistance and we'll continue to root them out," major Mike Birmingham of the US Army's 3rd infantry division said from Baghdad airport, an installation that is firmly in US

daughter Hala, his half-brother Waiban, and army generals, were systematically ransacked, according to an AFP correspondent. Uday's villa was stripped except for a fixed wrought iron barbecue in the middle of the garden. A truck outside Uday's house was laden with a huge oak table and gold chairs, while a painting of Saddam was left abandoned on the ground.

"We also found a photo album and an address book of names of young women he brought to his home to satisfy his filthy tastes," one looter said of Uday who once cruised the city hunting for girls. The street leading to Uday's luxury house, which was closed to traffic when the Iraqi regime controlled Baghdad's streets, was clogged with vehicles.

Around midday, a US Army unit that had been stationed overnight at Tareq Aziz's home joked with a group of around 20 looters who feverishly waited outside in anticipation of being able to ransack the house. As soon as the Americans left, the group rushed in to grab anything that came to hand.

US soldiers said the furniture had been left covered with sheets, as if the owner had been planning to return. US forces seized control of most of Baghdad on Wednesday and met little re-

11 APR 2003

The Economic Times

## Transition time in Iraq

Okay, you won the war, but it will take more than marines to manage the peace

96 8  
THERE comes a moment in the history of nations when their history and future hangs in balance. Iraq, at present, seems to be poised precisely at such a point of transition. The old order has changed and a new one is yet to emerge. Some would even say that the shape of the new one is not even clear as yet even if some of the principles defining them have been public knowledge for a long time. The change itself is premised on the reality that it is being brought about by the use of military power of a foreign country which would take quite some time to exercise effective control over the situation. The fighting has not ended as yet. But it is also clear that regardless of the viciousness of future battles, having virtually lost the war, the old regime can only lose more lives even if any punishing resistance was to emerge in the short term.

The first challenge for the Anglo-American forces in this twilight zone between war and peace is to usher in a visibly more attractive alternative in terms of governance for the Iraqis. This requires security and humanitarian assistance to a suffering nation which has survived a quarter century of wars and economic sanctions. If western reports about the continuing humanitarian problems in the small port town of Umm Qasr are correct, the task of

restoring normalcy, leave alone bringing succour to the suffering people in a country of 23 million people, is going to be enormous. For the victors of the war, this could rapidly translate into a whole set of new challenges which could undermine their efforts to establish the new order. The ability of Anglo-American forces to enforce law and order in cities like Baghdad and Basra, now coming under their control, would become a touchstone of their role in shaping Iraq's political structure.

Meanwhile there are other challenges to deal with. The Anglo-American summit declaration at Belfast specifying a "vital" role for the UN would be welcome across the world, even if it appears to have come too late to deal with the basic problem. In any case, any polarisation of the international community is unlikely to contribute to a more peaceful world, leave alone one that can deal with major global challenges like global terrorism. Washington would need to work hard to win the "hearts and minds" of the international community, especially of developing countries, many of which suddenly feel more vulnerable, if it wishes to lead them through difficult times. Much, therefore, is at stake for the sole superpower in building — and winning — the peace, once this war is over.

1 1 APR 2003

INDIAN EXPRESS

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INDIAN EXPRESS

Marines greeted by smiling manager, angry scribes in Baghdad's Palestine Hotel

# Publicity machine falls silent

ADRIEN JAULMES

**Baghdad, April 10:** The manager of the Palestine Hotel put on his best suit and a broad smile and crossed his parking lot to meet the Americans.

"Happy to see you," he said to an approaching group of soldiers. Cradling their M16s and casting wary glances around them, the Marines had just emerged from their armoured vehicles in front of the hotel in the middle of Baghdad. They looked taken aback by the strange welcoming committee.

With his helmet pulled down low over his brow, Col B.P. McCoy of the US Marine Corps seemed surprised to be shaking the hand extended to him. "Follow me, please," growled the manager of the hotel, which since the start of the war served as Iraq's ministry of information.

The Marines followed their commanding officer through a scrum of cameramen. Their vehicles were parked on the square, with its domed mosque and the statue of Saddam Hussein raising his arm to the heavens, which has served as the background for television reports broadcast around the world these past two weeks.

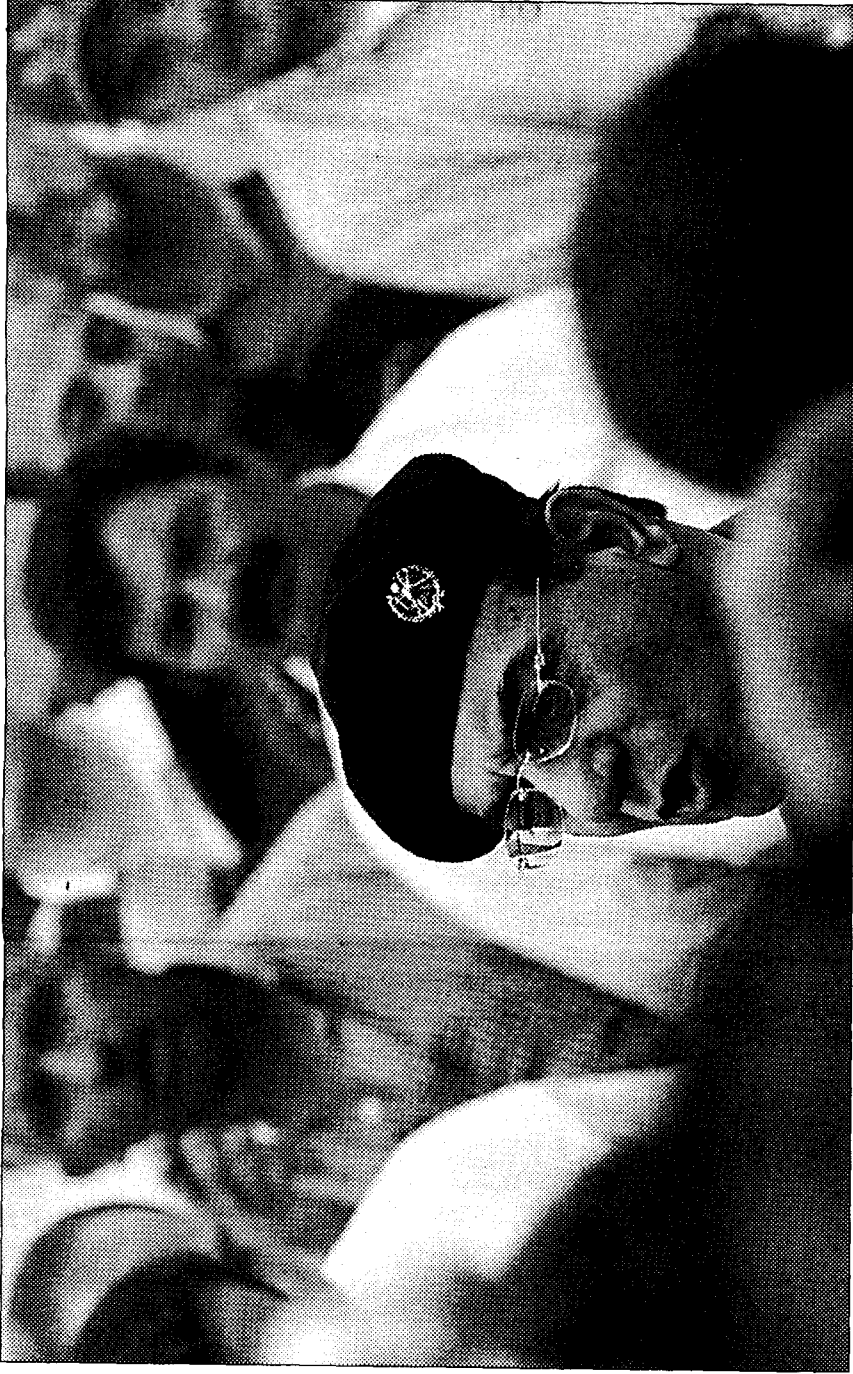
Loaded up with water bottles

and magazine clips, the Marines burst through the tape-covered glass doors of the Palestine. "Go, go," barked an officer. "Spread out around the lobby."

Col McCoy, who has just led his Marines across half of Iraq in less than three weeks, making his way up the Tigris from Basra to Baghdad, followed the manager up the stairs to his office, from which the portraits of Saddam have miraculously disappeared.

He removed his helmet, and took a long draught from a bottle of mineral water offered to him by the manager. His night vision goggles hung on his chest, and a grenade was attached to his flak jacket. Col McCoy and his men had just occupied the last official centre of Saddam's regime still active in Baghdad. Even after the rest of the administration had ceased to function, the Palestine still housed the Iraqi propaganda machine and the information minister, Mohammed Said al-Sahaf.

"We have come to make sure everybody is safe," said the captain, in an American accent so strong it attracted everyone's attention. The correspondents from the Arab networks were not delighted by this change of spokesman. A journalist from Egypt's Nile TV asked: "Are you going to stop the looting? Is there



Information minister Mohammed Saeed al Sahaf speaks to the press in front of the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad on Monday. (Reuters)

going to be a curfew?"

"I don't know, ma'am," said the colonel politely. "For now, we are still in a combat zone." A star Italian television presenter, who until a few days ago had been friendly with the former head of the Iraqi press centre, piped up in the same angry tone. "World opinion considers you invaders. What do you say to that?" "I haven't seen the television for a long while," said Col McCoy. "We had to fight hard to get here. But we have seen people cheering our entry into Baghdad."

The hotel manager kept smiling for the new arrivals.

Only the night before, he had been taking orders from the Iraqi minister. Sahaf, who an-

nounced during his last press conference at the Palestine on Tuesday afternoon the imminent defeat of the Americans.

Yesterday morning, the Iraqi press office in the hotel's former souvenir shop was empty. The large tables from which the official guides would oversee the journalists were empty. The last translators seemed unsettled by the absence of orders, like all the hotel staff.

The minister's cashier, whose job was to take \$225 a day from the journalists, had disappeared with a large sports bag over his shoulder. After more than 30 years under the yoke of an especially debased mafia-minded totalitarianism, dressed

up as nationalism, the Iraqis were struggling to accept its demise.

No one even dreamed of taking down the large photograph of Saddam taped to the Palestine's glass windows. Instead of the apocalypse predicted in months of Iraqi television propaganda, former officials stared in astonishment at the huge Marines, in round spectacles, standing in the hotel lobby with their pink cheeks, American twangs and outsized assault rifles.

In front of the hotel sat their Abrams tanks, one on Abou Nawas street, in front of a statue of the Thief of Baghdad on his magic carpet. Beneath the euca-

lyptus trees, Marines took out their rations, put spread on their crackers and awaited orders.

The great battle of "Saddamgrad" predicted by the regime had not occurred. Saddam's security services, the Republican Guard and the Fedayeen had not fought to the last man, defending Baghdad house by house.

More used to repressing their own people than infantry combat, they had fled. Their sandbag bunkers were abandoned yesterday in central Baghdad. You could see scraps of uniforms here and there. The last people to resist were young Islamic volunteers, not the regime's elite.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH



# Looting in Baghdad streets as Saddam regime 'falls'

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 9.** United States troops swept into the heart of Baghdad to an ecstatic welcome today, as Saddam Hussein's 24-year rule crumbled into chaos and looting. Invasion forces have yet to find any banned chemical or biological arms, a key justification for the war.

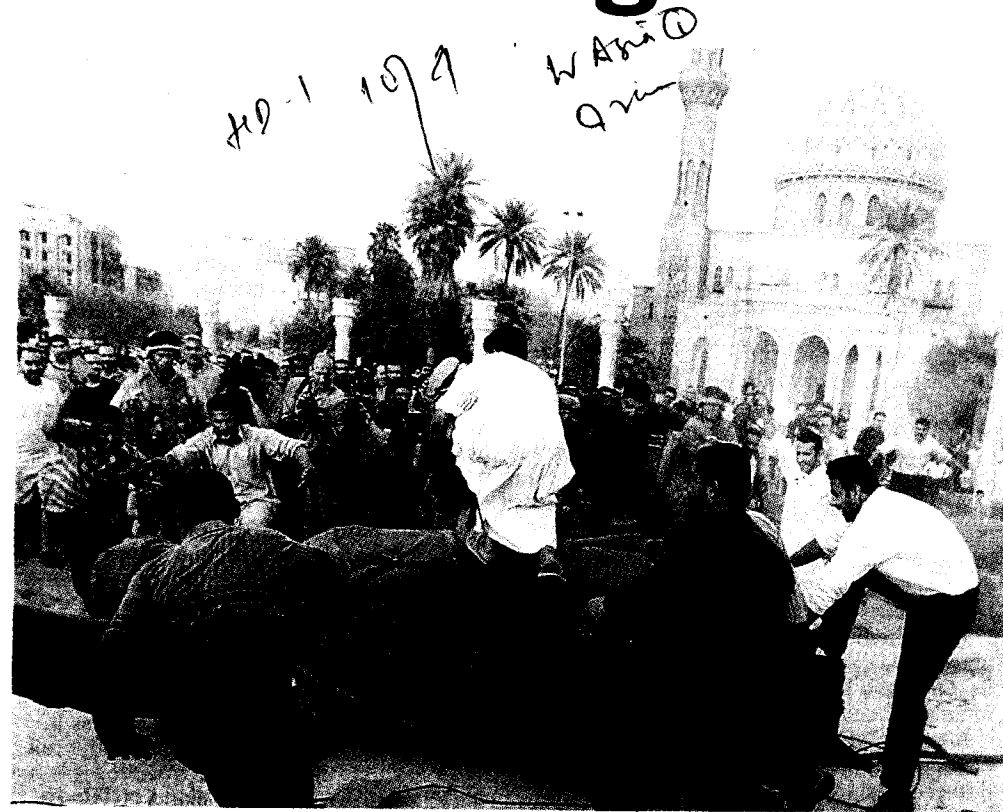
As U.S. Marines rolled in from the east on day 21 of the war, hundreds of people gutted official buildings, hauling off anything from air-conditioners to flowers. The U.S. military said a crucial point had been reached at which ordinary people realised Mr. Hussein's rule was over.

Thousands of U.S. troops moved towards the centre overnight from the west, northeast and south, meeting little resistance. Residents woke to the sound of birdsong and only occasional shooting after one of the calmest nights in three weeks of war.

"The capital city is now one of those areas that has been added to the list of where the regime does not have control," said Vincent Brooks at the U.S. Central Command in Qatar. However, Brig. Gen. Brooks said Mr. Hussein's loyalists were holding out in the north, including in his hometown of Tikrit, and still posed a threat.

There were no signs of Iraqi police or uniformed men on the capital's main streets. Information Ministry officials who had shadowed reporters through the conflict were nowhere to be seen.

Even the Iraqi Information Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, who had turned up daily to pour abuse on the Americans and deny all their reports of advances, failed to make an appearance. There was no word on the fate of Mr. Hussein or his sons, targeted by U.S. planes that dropped four 900-kg bombs on a western residential



**Iraqi civilians kicking a statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad on Wednesday. — AP**

area of the city on Monday.

American troops stood by as looters raided sports shops around the bombed headquarters of the Iraqi Olympic Committee, headed by Mr. Hussein's elder son, Uday, who also led the fidayeen militia. U.S. troops pulled down a 20-foot high statue of Mr. Hussein in central Baghdad today and Iraqis danced on it in contempt for the man who had ruled them with an iron grip for 24 years.

In scenes reminiscent of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Iraqis earlier took a sledgehammer to the marble plinth under the statue of Saddam. Youths had placed a noose around the statue's neck and attached the rope to a U.S. truck. Marines seized a headquarters of Mr.

Hussein's feared secret police, Reuters reported. The deserted Directorate of General Security building in an eastern district was already being looted when the Marines arrived.

Sporadic shooting in parts of Baghdad prompted the International Committee of the Red Cross to suspend operations, citing "chaotic and unpredictable" conditions. It said its staffer, Vatche Arslanian, a Canadian, was missing since Tuesday. He was feared wounded when his vehicle came under fire. Two other ICRC staffers in the vehicle escaped.

Jubilant crowds threw flowers and cheered as Marines drove into the city from the vast eastern township of Saddam City, home to about two million

Shi'ite Muslims. Elsewhere in the capital, U.S. forces steadily expanded their reach, securing a military airport, capturing a prison and setting fire to a Republican Guard barracks. They were operating in every quadrant of the city. The Iraqi Government's efforts to sustain its public relations campaign collapsed. State television went off the air on Tuesday, and on Wednesday foreign journalists said their "minders" — Government agents who monitor their reporting — did not turn up for work.

In Basra, looters have been plundering government buildings, universities, even hospitals.

While intent on completing the takeover of Baghdad, U.S.

commanders also were turning their attention to Tikrit, about 145 km to the north. Defended by well-trained troops, and home to many of Mr. Hussein's most devoted followers, the city of 260,000 is considered one of the few remaining strongholds of the Iraqi regime. The Central Command said coalition airstrikes were targeting the Republican Guard's Adnan division in Tikrit, "shaping the battlefield" before U.S. ground forces move in. — AP, Reuters

## Saddam's secret archives in Moscow?

**MOSCOW, APRIL 9.** Saddam Hussein's secret archives could already be in Moscow despite the CIA's bid to block their evacuation by firing at the Russian diplomatic convoy near Baghdad on Sunday, media reported today.

Quoting intelligence sources *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* today reported that Sunday's attack by the U.S. rangers on the Russian ambassador's convoy near Baghdad was a "direct clash between the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service SVR and the CIA".

Moscow had asked the U.S. for safe passage from Baghdad to Syria for its ambassador's convoy and a "Predator" drone was hovering over it all along the way from the embassy in Baghdad transmitting live video pictures, the daily said ruling out any case of mistaken identity by the U.S. troops which fired at it. Meanwhile, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesman denied what state-run television said today were Western media reports that Mr. Hussein had taken refuge at the Russian Embassy in Baghdad, saying they "do not correspond with reality". — PTI, AP

# War almost over, Iraq waits to win peace

**American officials contradict British intelligence, say Saddam is dead** • **Crowds celebrate amid chaos in Baghdad**

TIMES NEWS NETWORK  
AND AGENCIES

**Washington \ Baghdad:** Chaos, confusion and celebration swept across Baghdad and other cities and towns in Iraq on Wednesday as the last vestiges of the Iraqi authority disappeared from the country. "The capital city is now one of those areas that has been added to the list of where the regime does not have control," US military spokesman Brig Gen Vincent Brooks said in Doha.

US officials now say Saddam Hussein is almost certainly dead or seriously impaired and the iron rule of his Baath Party is over.

Contrary to early British reports that suggested Mr Hussein may have escaped Tuesday's air strike, US intelligence accounts say the Iraqi leader was present in the residential compound and "may be toast by now".

The CIA, which tracked him and plotted his death, is said to be in a euphoric mood. According to sketchy accounts that are emerging in Washington, the CIA had intelligence assets, including US and Iraqi spies on the ground and a Delta Force commando in disguise, who saw Mr Hussein and his entourage walk into a hideout near the al Saa restaurant in the al Mansour neighbourhood before they called in the air strike.

However, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said it was not clear whether Mr Hussein was alive or dead but warned that he had "missed his chance" to go peacefully into exile. Another White House official cautioned neighbouring nations against admitting Mr Hussein, saying any effort by the Iraqi dictator to seek refuge would be a "No go" from Washington's point of view.

In Baghdad, accounts of Mr Hussein's demise triggered off riotous scenes in some places as both the Iraqi military and the civic authority collapsed. Iraqi troops and police opted out of uniform and government officials abandoned their posts. Fedayeen and the freelance fighters

disappeared and looters had a field day in many places.

The ubiquitous Iraqi ministers who would accompany all foreign journalists did not turn up for work on Wednesday and, most of all, Iraqi information minister Mohammed al-Sayyaf, who has been voice of the Iraqi government in the past week, was incommunicado.

US troops swarmed all over downtown Baghdad, including the Palestine Hotel. But sporadic fighting continued in other parts of the city. Brig Gen Brooks said Mr Hussein's loyalists were also holding out in the north and still posed a threat. US troops have tried to block the roads from Baghdad to Tikrit, Mr Hussein's hometown, to stop Iraqi leaders from fleeing there.

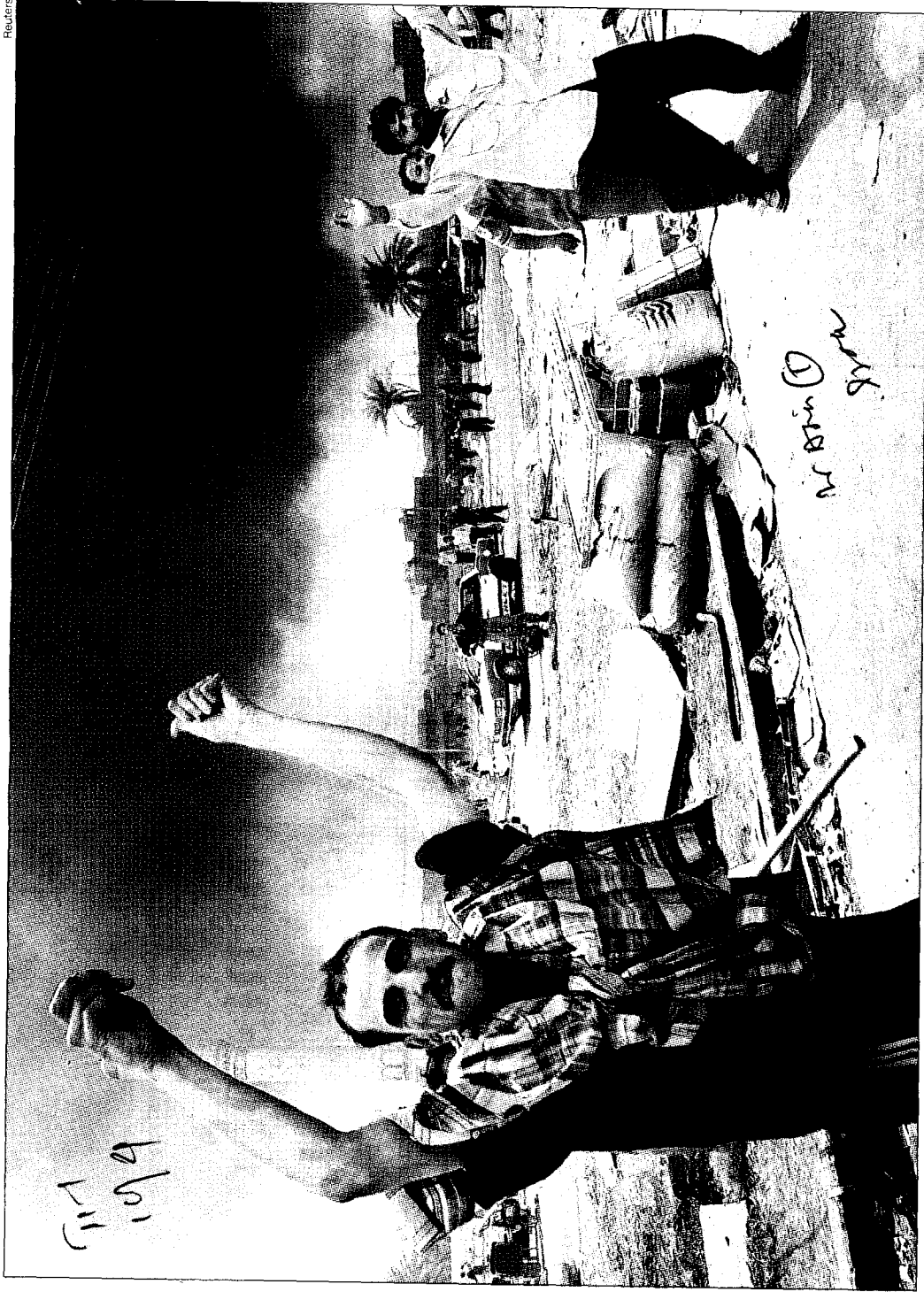
Tasked now with policing a sprawling city that has gone out of kilter with thinly spread ground troops, US officials adopted a cautious tone, saying they were heartened by the developments but it was by no means all over. The sober, low-key reaction, and the reluctance on part of Washington to declare a total victory suggested the US was mindful of the pitfalls ahead.

Despite television cameras capturing some scenes of jubilation in parts of Baghdad and Irbil, especially in the Shia-dominated localities, large parts of Iraq are still not under coalition control and there is still no general sense of whether the Iraqis see the Americans as liberators or invaders. Most Iraqis seem unimpressed by the US presence and are staying indoors although those who have suffered most under the Mr Hussein's regime are out celebrating. "We believe the population recognises that the end is near (for Mr Hussein's government)," Brig Gen Brooks said, adding that coalition troops had not met with any hostile crowd reaction.

Some US analysts have repeatedly cautioned that winning the peace would be a more difficult task than winning the war.

• **See Edit: Chief of Baghdad,**  
**Page 12**

Reuters



Iraqi men gesticulate in front of goods looted from a government building at Saddam City in Baghdad on Wednesday.

## With reign men gone, who'll say pax?

By Rashmee Z. Ahmed  
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**London:** As Saddam Hussein's regime crumbled on television screens throughout the world and the US-UK alliance said the Iraqi population was at "tipping point", British Prime Minister Tony Blair confessed not knowing the answer to the biggest question of the Allied military campaign: When to declare the war over and who would the Western forces take a surrender from? Deliberately downplaying any suggestions of triumphalism, Mr Blair on Wednesday became the highest-ranking coalition leader publicly to articulate Gulf War II's so-called \$64,000 question—Has three weeks of bombing left anyone alive in Baghdad's old regime officially to throw up its hands, throw in the towel and say Pax?

"It has to be someone with proper authority

let the Iraqis take me alive, never let them take me prisoner. Shoot me."

Mr Wihab, who left Iraq ten years ago after a dispute with Mr Hussein, told BBC domestic radio that the Iraqi leader was likely to try to get to Tikrit because he thinks he would be more protected there. "He is a master in protecting himself. He will protect himself until the last moment and then order his close ring protection to kill him," he said.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, British intelligence sources were quoted as directly contradicting their American opposite numbers' assessment by declaring that Mr Hussein managed to get away alive 12 minutes before 2,000 lb earth-penetrating bombs were dropped on a Baghdad restaurant which he was supposed to be visiting.

(to surrender)," Mr Blair said even as his officials privately admitted that further resistance might be possible in the fast-moving situation.

Addressing parliament, Mr Blair said, "It is extremely difficult to know what is left of the governing higher ranks of Saddam Hussein's regime." Meanwhile, in a unique twist to the intense speculation worldwide about Mr Hussein's final whereabouts and/or his resting place, his former head of protocol Haitham Rashid Wihab has gone public with a remarkable insight into the Iraqi leader's thought processes during the end game.

According to Mr Wihab, Mr Hussein's final words will, perhaps, be an order to his bodyguards to shoot him dead. He said Mr Hussein had issued similar instructions at a low point during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. Mr Wihab recalled Mr Hussein telling his guards, "Never

• Related reports on Pages 10, 11

# 'Saddam's secret archives could be in Moscow'

Moscow: Saddam Hussein's secret archives could already be in Moscow despite American Central Intelligence Agency's bid to block their evacuation by firing at the Russian diplomatic convoy near Baghdad on Sunday, media reported on Wednesday.

Quoting intelligence sources, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* on Wednesday reported that Sunday's attack by the US Rangers on the Russian ambassador's convoy near Baghdad's was a direct clash between Russian's foreign intelligence service SVR and the CIA.

Moscow had asked the US for safe passage from Baghdad to Syria for its ambassador's convoy and a "predator" drone was hovering over it all along the way from the embassy in Baghdad transmitting live video pictures, the daily said, ruling out any case of mistaken identity by the US troops which fired at it.

"The CIA was under the impression that the SVR was evacuating Saddam's secret archives under the diplomatic cover of ambassador's convoy... This also explains why at several occasions after the firing the Ameri-

can troops had tried to search Russian vehicles," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* wrote.

It also noted that though the Iraqi escort vans were totally destroyed by the Americans along with their occupants, in case of the Russians they tried to put their vehicles out of order to prevent further movement.

"All the details we could learn only after fifty years in 2053, when the SVR is expected to declassify its secret documents relating to the operation," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* said.

The SVR in Moscow has refrained from commenting on the daily's claim that the Russian diplomatic convoy in Iraq was attacked due to "a direct clash of interests between the SVR and the CIA".

"This information is completely untrue and ungrounded," SVR spokesman Boris Labusov was quoted as saying by Interfax.

Mr Labusov officially dismissed "media speculation" that Russian diplomats were carrying Saddam Hussein's secret archives out of Iraq. PTI



S. Hussein



British soldiers from the 16 Air Assault Brigade throw chocolate bars from their ration packs to children in the Iraqi village of Qaryat Nasr.

## Shiites in Iraqi villages are grateful but wary of Americans

By Dexter Filkins

Baghdad: President Saddam Hussein's agents were working until the last moment.

This morning, as thousands of American troops moved deeper into Baghdad, a group of Iraqis were being tortured by border police inside a local jail. The Iraqi men said the police were beating them, gouging them with wires and burning them with cigarettes.

But by the time an American Marine convoy arrived, the jailers had fled. The captives, some still shackled and blindfolded, were set free.

"The Americans saved me," said Hamid Neama, a labourer who lives in the Amin neighbourhood in southeastern Baghdad. He held out his hands, swollen like overripe fruit. "The police beat my hands, they beat me on my body."

Mr Neama's account, which was confirmed by a senior Marine officer, was echoed by others in this predominately Shiite neighbourhood in eastern Bagh-

dad. Yet for all the thanks expressed to American troops and reporters for the campaign being waged against Mr Hussein's government, many Iraqis say they are worried that America will see in their gratitude a blank check to remake their country.

That, said the residents of this neighbourhood today, could inspire a loathing for the Americans at least equal to that felt here for Mr Hussein. Even Mr Neama expressed scepticism.

"Of course I'm grateful that the Americans saved me," Mr Neama said. "But I'm only one of 28 million people in this country. We would not like it if the Americans try to stay here for long."

The people of Amin discussed the future of their neighbourhood today as thousands of American marines took up positions less than 100 yards from its edge. The First Marine Division began preparing for a final push into the centre of the city, a move that many here fear could lead to civilians being killed.

- Tales of torture emerge from Shiite villages
- Shiite strongholds are focal point of Saddam's repression
- Civilian casualties could undermine Iraqi support for US action against Saddam

Neighbourhoods like Amin, which like much of eastern Baghdad is overwhelmingly Shiite, have long been said to be a focal point of Mr Hussein's repression. He is a Sunni Muslim, and has violently suppressed the Shiite majority, some 60 per cent of Iraq's population.

A stop in any Iraqi Shiite village, over a glass of black, sugary tea, will more often than not bring forth tales of woe. In America's war against Mr Hussein's government, the Shiites in Iraq would seem to be natural allies even if made wary by the American failure to support their uprising in 1991 in southern Iraq.

Mr Neama, a labourer, said he was standing in front of his brother-in-law's house this morning when two men in civilian clothes drove up and asked him to get into the car. He was blindfolded, he said, and driven to a building about 10 minutes away. There, he said, he was beaten and questioned about his connections to the Americans. Mr Neama said he insisted that he had performed no special acts for the Americans who, unknown to him, were then just a few minutes away. "It didn't matter what I said to them," he said. "They accused me of cooperating with the Americans."

Yet Mr Neama was not convinced that the American invasion would turn out to be a good thing. "It could be good, if the Americans do not try to stay," he said.

At that point, an elderly man, Sultan Mahdi, stepped forward to declaim that such ambivalence was an evasion. "For 75 years I have been alive, and I'll say this," he said. "If the Iraqi people loved Saddam Hussein, the American mili-

tary wouldn't be able to last one day in Iraq. Not one day. We would attack them.

"If Bush just wants to get rid of Saddam, that's fine, but if he is going to try and alter our basic institutions, like our religion and traditions and culture, then he will have no support."

Mr Mahdi said most Iraqis would welcome Americans in helping set up a government that would spread around the country's vast oil wealth. But beyond such help, he said, the Iraqis were not interested.

As Mr Mahdi spoke, Marine troop carriers in the next field began leaving for an operation to clear a neighbourhood in eastern Baghdad. Indeed, the marines seem to be preparing for a final push into the city centre, possibly linking up with the Army, which has been battling in from the west. The plans are raising concerns here of large numbers of civilian casualties, which could undermine Iraqi support for the American action against Mr Hussein's rule. NYT News Service

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2003

## OVERWHELMING BAGHDAD

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FROM A STRICTLY military standpoint, the speed and effectiveness with which the U.S. forces have tightened their grip on Baghdad have been extremely striking. The larger issue, however, is the extraordinary human cost of this aggressive push into the Iraqi capital and, that too, in an unequal war where there was always going to be only one victor. Not surprisingly, the tremendous aggression with which the U.S. forces have swept into Baghdad has met with widespread criticism. Disapproval of the ruthless tactics was aired even by sections of the British media, which contrasted this with the relatively patient and subtle strategy used by Britain's own forces in capturing Basra. The assault on Baghdad clearly reveals that the U.S. strategy is dictated by the overweening consideration of bringing the battle to a quick end. Among the many fears about engaging in a longer war is the adverse impact it will have not only in the Arab countries but pretty much all over the world, where anti-war sentiments, coupled with anti-U.S. emotions, are growing with every passing day.

The cost of a quick and aggressive occupation of a capital such as Baghdad is exactly what it was feared to be — considerable collateral damage. Washington never tires of repeating that it is doing whatever it can to minimise such damage, a claim which is hardly corroborated by the events on the ground. Iraq claims that the occupying forces have already killed almost 1,300 civilians. The U.S. counters that this is grossly exaggerated and while there are no independent and accurate figures for civilian casualties at this juncture, the available evidence does suggest that these are already high. Many Iraqi soldiers have surrendered and the Government is clearly no longer in control of Baghdad, but questions remain about the degree and extent of resistance the Republican Guard and troops loyal to Saddam Hussein, reportedly holed up in civilian areas, will stage. If there are strong pockets of resistance, the chances are that the U.S. may

inflict more civilian casualties than in any other recent war it has engaged in. The Iraq conflict has shown that while precision munitions may work well in open country, their use in densely-populated urban areas cannot but kill innocent people. For instance, the bombs that were intended to kill Saddam Hussein in a restaurant missed the eatery but flattened the area around it, killing at least 14 people and wounding scores of others. To make matters worse, the U.S. has demonstrated that it is not averse to liberally using far less accurate heavy artillery in urban areas.

In Baghdad, two journalists already paid for this with their lives and others were injured when U.S. tanks fired at the Palestine Hotel, where a number of reporters from around the world are staying. Washington's claim that the hotel was targeted in response to sniper fire has evoked sceptical reactions. This is partly because it is difficult to see what threat a sniper or two could have posed to a convoy of U.S. tanks. Moreover, why respond by pounding a building that has clearly been identified as a hotel and one which journalists inhabit? Besides, on the same day the office of the television station al-Jazeera was hit, killing a cameraman; so was the office of Abu Dhabi TV. Twelve journalists have been killed in the conflict so far, raising serious questions not only about the safety of the press but also about issues relating to the management of news and the possible disregard for those who have chosen, as opposed to the embedded journalists, to witness and report on the war independently. The strategy employed to capture Baghdad and incapacitate the Saddam Hussein regime so quickly may provide a lot for military historians and strategists to pore or gloat over. But what will weigh heavily on the minds of most people are the cost at which this was achieved and the basis it provides for constructing an edifice for peace — something which is going to be a much lengthier and a much more significant battle.

1 0 APR 2003

THE HINDON

# The end game is near, says U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, APRIL 9. The Pentagon is maintaining that it could take several days before an assessment is made if the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, is alive or dead from the latest targeting of a site in Baghdad.

Officials here are saying that the final determination depends on a lot of digging, forensics and DNA tests. But at a briefing at the Pentagon, the Vice-Director of Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, argued that the end game was near. "I think that the end game is the end of the regime and that's much closer than people thought it was," Maj. Gen. McChrystal remarked, while going on to make the point that some key elements of the Republican Guard were still operating and appeared to be getting orders from the Iraqi leader but not necessarily following them. "The Republican Guard are receiving instructions, but in many cases are not following them and not capable any more so they're not an effective fighting force," the top military official remarked.

Maj Gen McChrystal was asked about the importance of targeting the Iraqi leader and his sons. "As much as they can exert any kind of influence — even if it is limited to Baghdad — we'd like to reduce that," he responded.

The top Pentagon official said that he could not provide much information at this time on the whereabouts of the Iraqi President as the site of the attack remained in the hands of the local authorities.

"We do not have hard battle damage assessment on exactly what individual or individuals were on site," Maj Gen McChrystal said. A B-1B bomber dropped four bombs including two bunker busters on a target where Mr. Hussein and his sons were holding a meeting.



**Buildings in the al-Mansour neighbourhood of Baghdad lie in ruins after a U.S. warplane dropped four bunker-busting bombs on the site where the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, was believed to be holding a meeting with his sons on Monday. — AP**

The site is a restaurant in a residential neighbourhood. Television footages have shown the area completely wiped out to a distance of several hundred yards and at least one 60 feet crater.

Aboard Air Force One, the President's National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, has told reporters that the U.S. has no further intelligence to confirm whether Mr. Hussein was in the building. "What is clear is that this regime is coming down. Iraq is going to be returned to the people of Iraq, but I don't think anyone knows when the regime is finished," Dr. Rice said. The President, George W Bush, also had no information on the whereabouts of Mr. Hussein following the Monday night bombing at the upscale al Mansour neighbourhood in Baghdad.

"I don't know whether he survived. The only thing I can tell you is...that grip I used to describe that Saddam Hussein had around the throats of the Iraqi people is loosening. I can't tell you if all 10 fingers are off the throat, but finger by finger it's coming off and the people are beginning to realise that," Mr. Bush remarked.

A member of the fighter aircraft that dropped those lethal bombs has been quoted as saying that the plane was directed to the site after it had finished refuelling over western Iraq. The crew were told that this mission might be the "big one". Some 12 minutes later the bomber unleashed two 2,000 pound GBU-31s and two special "bunker busters" that penetrate a target before detonation.

# The world order after the Iraq war

By Muchkund Dubey

*The most likely scenario will be that the traditional western allies will patch up their differences by making suitable gestures to each other.*

NOW THAT the United States is very soon going to proclaim victory in the Iraq war and bring about a regime change in that country, there is a lot of speculation as to the nature of the world order that would emerge after that. It is taken as axiomatic that the world order under-pinned basically by the United Nations, the NATO and the new alliance of the Permanent Members of the Security Council (P-5) will not remain unscathed.

A constant refrain has been that the recent events have rendered the U.N. "irrelevant". Nothing can be farther from the truth. For, with the exception of a brief interregnum of 3-4 years after the Cold War, the collective security system, as enshrined in Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, has seldom been allowed to function. Throughout the Cold War period, which spanned all but 12 years of the 57-year life of the U.N., the collective security system remained virtually paralysed for want of unanimity among the P-5. There was a brief spurt of U.N. involvement in peace-keeping operations during 1990-93. After that, the new alliance of the P-5 arrived at an informal understanding not to entrust the U.N. with any major peace-keeping operation. Subsequently, all such operations have been undertaken by the U.S. and its Western allies, as a coalition or under the NATO. Russia and China have, after initial protestations, just let that happen. In this background, the latest instance of the use of force in Iraq without the authorisation of the Security Council cannot be said to have rendered the U.N. irrelevant. As a matter of fact, the U.N. deserves to be congratulated because this time it did not allow itself to be stampeded into legitimising an unjust and illegal war.

Besides, the U.N. does not consist only of its collective security system. Over the years, the U.N. has put in place a comprehensive international system consisting of a number of sub-systems — the world aviation, postal, telecommunications and

space orders; the human rights system; and the whole corpus of norms, standards, codes and guidelines in practically all important spheres of international life. To these, should be added the world trading, financial and monetary systems which, while being very much a part of the U.N. system, function somewhat outside it.

These sub-systems are indispensable for the world community, including the U.S. Without them, there would be utter chaos which none of us can afford to live with. Besides, some of these regimes, particularly the international trading, monetary and financial systems, are designed to promote and accelerate the process of globalisation. These have by no means been rendered irrelevant, even from the yardstick of U.S. interests.

All talk about the U.S. bringing about sweeping changes in the U.N. system are unrealistic. For example, it is naively suggested that the U.S. would deprive France and Russia of their permanent membership, and hence their veto in the Security Council. This would simply not be possible because it would require an amendment of the Charter which cannot be carried out without the positive votes of these countries in the Security Council. Again, if the U.S. wants to legalise preemptive use of force in self-defence, it will have to get Article 51 of the Charter amended. There is no way member-states would ever agree to such an amendment. All the U.S. can do in its current mood against the U.N. is to prevent the democratisation of the decision-making process in the Security Council by not agreeing to its expansion; and, in any case, not allowing Germany to become a permanent member. But this is not

important as the expansion process already stands stalled and there is no evidence of its gathering momentum in the near future.

The other likelihood is that in future the U.S. would systematically bypass the U.N. while using force in self-defence and replace it with a "coalition of the willing". There will be nothing new in the former case as the major powers using force without or with only a fig leaf of U.N. sanction has already become the norm. As regards the latter, a coalition without France, Germany and Russia and the vast majority of the Third World countries is hardly likely to carry any credibility. The U.S. can, of course, muster rump coalitions of this kind from time to time. But this can serve only propaganda purposes and in the absence of a legal framework like that of the Charter, the support of such coalitions would not legitimise unilateral and arbitrary use of force.

The U.N. is, in fact, coming back into reckoning as the Iraq war is nearing its end. It seems that in order to keep together its current coalition supporting the Iraq war, the U.S. may have to seek legitimacy from the U.N. for the regime likely to replace Saddam Hussain and for mobilising international support for rehabilitation and reconstruction. The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, seems to have given a commitment to the British Parliament that he would fall back on the U.N. for the above purposes. And in spite of stiff opposition from the Pentagon, the U.S. State Department is also nudging towards this position.

Very few tears would be shed if the Iraq war sees the demise of NATO. In the perception of most of the countries outside the western alliance, NATO had no reasons for survival after the liquidation of the Warsaw

Pact. France distanced itself from the military command of NATO right from the beginning. In recent years, the European Union has been considering building a defence structure of its own independent of NATO. The European powers needed NATO as an institutional device to compel the U.S. to under-write their security which was then threatened by the Soviet Union. This need disappeared with the end of the Cold War.

For the U.S. NATO is a bulwark to further its wider interests in Europe. By offering NATO membership, the U.S. wanted to wean away the East European countries finally and irrevocably from the Russian orbit and ultimately to integrate them with the Western liberal order. At the same time, NATO was seen as an attempt at weakening Russia by marginalising it in Europe.

Subsequently, when Russia was sufficiently enfeebled, the U.S. made the grand gesture of according to it a special associate position in NATO. The organisation has thus by no means lost its utility for the U.S. It is, therefore, unlikely that, in spite of its current anger against France and Germany, the U.S. would do anything to weaken NATO, let alone replace it with an amorphous and shifting new alliance.

As a matter of fact, the Iraq War is unlikely to lead to a permanent rupture in the western alliance. The American and European economies are far too integrated — financially, commercially and technologically — for these nations to embark on a course of confrontation. Moreover, they have a deep common interest in pursuing jointly the current process of globalisation. Therefore, the most likely scenario after the Iraq war will be that the traditional allies will patch up their differences by making suitable gestures to each other. The Europeans will show greater sensitivity to the new heightened homeland security perception of the U.S. And, the U.S. will allow the Europeans a greater say in the execution of its newly-structured security strategy.

THE HINDU

APR 2002

# Iraqis fight back as Baghdad burns

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 8.** Iraqi forces staged a major counterattack today, sending buses and trucks full of fighters across the Tigris river in an attempt to overrun U.S. troops holding a strategic intersection on Baghdad's western side.

At a summit in Hillsborough, Northern Ireland, the U.S. President, George W. Bush, and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, endorsed a "vital role" for the United Nations in Iraq and called for world unity over the country when fighting ended.

Explosions, the thud of shells landing, anti-aircraft and machine-gun fire and the drone of aircraft filled the midday air in Baghdad today.

At least 50 Iraqi fighters were killed, said Philip Wolford, a company commander with the Army's 3rd Infantry Division. Two U.S. soldiers were reported wounded, one seriously, by snipers on rooftops.

U.S. Marines and Iraqi paramilitary fighters were locked in fierce combat as U.S. forces took control of a military airport, destroying Iraqi tanks and armoured personnel carriers. The Rashid airport is in a "militarily significant" area between

the Diala and Tigris rivers in southeastern Baghdad, U.S. military officials said.

Taking the airfield would help the U.S. secure the Iraqi capital and keep high-ranking Iraqi officials from escaping.

An A-10 tank-killing warplane was shot down by a surface-to-air missile during the fighting. The pilot ejected safely and was rescued by U.S. ground forces near the airport.

American military officials said it was unknown whether the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, had been killed in a U.S. attack on a restaurant where he was believed to be meeting with his sons.

In southern Iraq, British soldiers began distributing water to battle-weary residents of Basra but were unable to quell looting that erupted when the soldiers moved into the city a day earlier.

The Iraqi counterattack began shortly after dawn, when more than 20 buses and trucks dropped off dozens of Iraqi foot soldiers firing assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades at U.S. tanks blocking an intersection leading to a bridge over the Tigris.

Two A-10s targeted the building tops and the street with 30mm cannon fire, and British Tornado fighter jets dropped precision-guided bombs.

About an hour after the fire-fight began, Capt. Wolford moved his tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles forward again and retook the intersection.

Iraqi fighters also appeared to be probing U.S. defences in other areas, with short exchanges of fire. American troops showed no signs of pulling back.

U.S. forces are also fighting north of Baghdad, with units of the Army's V Corps, and small pockets of resistance elsewhere in the capital and east of Karbala.

One day after a U.S. B-1 bomber blasted a smoking, 18-meter crater at a Baghdad restaurant, U.S. officials said it was unclear whether Mr. Hussein had survived the attack.

"We believe the strike was effective in hitting the target, creating the desired effect, but we don't know all the circumstances of what happened to those who were contained inside," said Vincent Brooks at the U.S. Central Command in Doha, Qatar. The attack also destroyed or damaged nearly two dozen houses.

The Iraqi Information Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, speaking to reporters on Tuesday made no mention of Mr. Hussein's fate, and rejected any suggestion that Iraq would surrender to the American forces drawing a noose around the regime. "They will be burnt. We are going to tackle them," he said.

For the first time since the war began, residents of the capital could see, rather than just hear, allied aircraft.

A lone fighter jet flew over Baghdad, swerving, diving and, at times, causing a boom that rocked the city.

Most residents were hunkered down in their homes and there was little traffic on the streets.

London and Washington hope their agreed vision of the post-war stages in Iraq will



Explosions rock the Iraqi Planning Ministry in Baghdad on Tuesday, in U.S. air strikes. — Reuters



An Iraqi woman screams upon arriving with her injured husband and son at a hospital in Baghdad on Tuesday. — AP

placate anti-war nations such as France, Germany and Russia, and appease widespread international suspicion of U.S. motives in Iraq. "We are of course agreed, as we say in our joint statement, that there will be a vital role for the U.N. in the reconstruction of Iraq," Mr. Blair told a news conference at his summit meeting with Mr. Bush.

"We will move as quickly as possible to place governmental responsibilities under the control of an interim authority composed of Iraqis from both inside and outside the country," said Mr. Bush at a news conference at Hillsborough Castle.

"The interim authority will serve until a permanent government can be chosen by the Iraqi people. Rebuilding of Iraq will

require the support and expertise of the international community. We are committed to working with international institutions, including the U.N.,

which will have a vital role to play in this task."

But when pressed on what precisely the U.N. role would be, Mr. Bush mentioned only

humanitarian work and "suggesting" people for the interim authority. — AP, Reuters, AFP

More reports on Page 14

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2003

## SHAPING POST-WAR IRAQ

K2-10  
9/9

THE STAB WOUNDS inflicted on Baghdad by American battle tanks signal the end of the beginning of the war on Iraq. In the weeks ahead lie some crucial questions and critical tests for the international community relating to reconstruction of not just Iraq but the global order. The issues are more fundamental to global peace and order than the fate of just one individual. They go beyond Saddam Hussein. The immediate question relates to the role of the United Nations in a post-conflict Iraq and how U.N. members can simultaneously ensure that a war waged without Security Council sanction does not secure legitimacy through the backdoor. In the longer term is the vital question of the measures that the global community needs to take to counter the emergence of a new imperial order based on George Bush's strategic doctrine of pre-emption, which according to an Oxford historian would take the world back to the law of the jungle. There have been enough clues to the thinking of the current political leadership in Washington to cause deep concern and disquiet. From the anger and warning over the telecast of video clippings of American prisoners of war — it was without doubt unfortunate and unacceptable but the protests ignored the U.S.' record on treating Taliban prisoners — to the sabre-rattling against Syria and Iran which lie on either side of Iraq, Washington's impatience and intolerance were on full display. The rest of the world can ignore the signals only at its own peril.

As the American President flew across the seas to Belfast, Northern Ireland, for his third summit meeting in three weeks with the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, his staunchest ally in the war campaign, attention focusses on the perils ahead if Washington persists with its self-serving unilateralism. If the remarks of American officials are a sign of things to come, it is

unlikely that the U.N. will be given any major role in the economic and political reconstruction of Iraq. There would be a role for the U.N. as a mechanism for bringing humanitarian assistance to the people, said the Deputy Secretary of Defence, Paul Wolfowitz. "But our goal has got to be to transfer authority not to some other external authority but to the Iraqi people themselves." Clearly, whatever marginal role the U.N. is allowed to play, it will be American rule in Iraq for at least the next six months by men hand-picked by the Pentagon and its tough-talking patron saint, Donald Rumsfeld, the Defense Secretary.

The remarkable successes in the war will no doubt serve to boost the voice of the Rumsfelds. But this is a perfect recipe for disaster in the Middle East at this juncture when Arab emotions are raw and the street scene is hostile. Any programme of reconstruction and rehabilitation, political, economic and social, will have little support or little chance of acceptance in the region if it lacks the endorsement and leadership of the U.N. On the eve of the summit, Mr. Blair appealed to Mr. Bush to combine America's quest for its own security with the wider needs of international justice. Mr. Blair and his Foreign Secretary have publicly called for making the U.N. the umbrella organisation in post-conflict Iraq, with Jack Straw declaring that it will not be foreign nationals, meaning American or British, running the Iraqi Government. The "Iraq for Iraqis" call conceals concerns that Washington might allow opportunistic, friendly, returning exiles to take political charge of their country. There is little chance that Mr. Blair will persuade his American guest. In which case, the world will continue to hear more of the logic of the colonial era from the Bush Presidency in the coming weeks.

9 APR 2003

THE HINDO



4 U.S. SOLDIERS, 2 JOURNALISTS KILLED IN IRAQI ATTACKS • SADDAM PALACE STORMED

# U.S. forces march into heart of Baghdad

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 7.** American forces thundered into the heart of Baghdad today, storming a presidential palace and briefly placing tanks outside the Information Ministry, a message to Saddam Hussein's regime that coalition forces could enter the Iraqi capital at will. American tanks also briefly surrounded the Al-Rashid Hotel where Iraqi snipers fired on U.S. soldiers. U.S. tanks returned fire.

A U.S. commander said resistance coming into the city was heavier than expected as Iraqi troops laid new minefields and set up new firing positions. A report from Basra, quoting British officials, said Ali Hassan al-Majid, one of the most brutal members of Mr. Hussein's inner circle, was apparently killed by an airstrike on his house. He had been dubbed "Chemical Ali" by opponents for ordering a 1988 poison gas attack that killed thousands of Kurds.

On Monday afternoon, nearly 10 hours after the battle began, the city continued to be rocked by explosions from areas on the west bank of the Tigris, where a fierce battle was thought to be raging.

More than 70 tanks and 60 Bradley fighting vehicles took part in the early morning raid under cover of tank-killing A-10 planes and pilot-less drones.

Two U.S. soldiers and two journalists were killed and 15 people wounded today in an Iraqi attack on a U.S. communications centre on the southern outskirts of Baghdad, military sources said. Two other Marines were killed and two wounded when their armoured troop carrier took a direct hit from an artillery shell at a bridge over a

canal on the outskirts of the capital, according to B.P. McCoy of the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines. About a half hour later, Marines swarmed into the capital on foot, crossing a bridge spanning a canal at the south edge of the city, meeting little resistance.

Also, a group of U.S. armoured personnel carriers was hit by rockets in southern Baghdad, according to field reports. Six American soldiers were reported missing and a large number wounded.

There was no estimate of Iraqi casualties from the raids, but about 100 Iraqis in military uniform were killed in fighting at Baghdad's international airport in a seven-hour battle that ended shortly after midnight. An official at Baghdad's al-Kindi hospital said at least 75 wounded civilians had been brought in since morning, most suffering from gunshot wounds, burns and shrapnel.

U.S. officials have said nearly 3,000 Iraqi fighters may have been killed in that initial incursion.

Tanks with the 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division barreled into the capital on the western side of the Tigris at 6 a.m. Iraqi fighters with assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades put up moderate resistance as the tanks approached the city along Highway 8. However, the Iraqi Information Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, declared, "I assure you Baghdad is safe." They are beginning to commit suicide at the walls of Baghdad," he said at a hastily called news conference outside the Palestine Hotel, where many foreign journalists are

slaying. "There is no presence of the American columns in the city of Baghdad, none at all." By noon, explosions and small-arms and machine gun fire continued from the southern section of the Old Palace compound, 5 km from the New Palace. The intensity suggested a fierce battle between U.S. troops and Iraqi defenders. Iraq radio broadcast a religious sermon exhorting Iraqis to fight and denouncing the U.S. and Britain.

Iraqi TV broadcast patriotic songs, footage of Iraqis chanting slogans in support of Mr. Hussein and archival material of the Iraqi leader firing a gun and greeting crowds.

U.S. Army columns moved northeast to the newest and main presidential palace on the river, which divides the capital. The palace, close to the Baath Party headquarters, apparently was used mainly as a residence rather than for administrative purposes.

The party headquarters have been destroyed, although it wasn't clear when the damage was done. Iraqis — some nearly naked — fled along its banks. Some jumped into the water. An ammunition depot across the river was on fire.

Before the Americans seized the complex, Iraqis shot small arms fire at them from a clock tower overlooking the compound.

Tanks quickly destroyed it. With Bradleys and tanks taking up fighting positions around the presidential palace, units with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry inside the bombed-out palace buildings rifled through documents and looted ashtrays, pillows, gold-painted Arab glassware and other items. Some rooms had spectacular river views. A thick layer of dust covered gilded, imitation French baroque furniture.

The main palace building was flooded in the basement and first floor.

The rest of the building appeared to be destroyed, hit by cruise missiles or laser-guided bombs. Palace curtains were strewn over the ground, blown from their windows by the explosions.

Most of the compound was severely damaged from prior U.S. raids. U.S. Col. David Perkins, a brigade commander, told his troops before the operation that the mission was intended to be a demonstration of force to prove that U.S. forces could move about the city at will. — AP, Reuters



A U.S. Army soldier amid the ruins of one of Saddam's headquarters in Baghdad on Monday. — AP

## WMD found in Iraq?

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

**WASHINGTON, APRIL 7.** The Pentagon has not formally responded to a report that U.S. forces have stumbled on weapons of mass destruction — a cache of some 20 medium-range missiles equipped with potent chemical weapons.

This report came from the National Public Radio (NPR), which attributed it to a top official of the First Marine Division. Apparently, the missiles were of the BM-21 variety and equipped with sarin and mustard gas and were "ready to fire". The official said that new intelligence data has showed that the chemicals were "not just trace elements".

The cache was supposedly found by U.S. Marines following the Army's 101st Airborne Division after the seizure of the Saddam Hussein International Airport, now renamed the Baghdad International Airport.

Meanwhile, there was another report on television that American troops had found suspicious material while seizing and securing Iraq's Atomic Energy Agency headquarters. According to this version, troops found jars and packets of unidentified material and gas masks.

# New Iraqi Govt. months away, says Wolfowitz

Mr. Krishnaaswami MO  
Mr. 7. As American industries are reportedly collapsing of the Iraqi Hussein's regime is not weeks away, the new Iraqi government is running in about six weeks, after the coalition is the country. At the Pentagon is stressing objective is not to install some par- the new leaders of utely contradicts the demography," argued the top hawks in the is Republican admin-

istration. But academics have said that it is a "pipe dream" — talking about "democracy" in Iraq in such a short span of time.

Mr. Wolfowitz would not get into the specifics of a time-table for Iraq, only noting that it took six months for a government to form in northern Iraq after the Gulf War in 1991. "This is a more complicated situation. It probably will take more time than that," the senior administration official said while doing the Sunday talk shows.

The number two civilian official at the Pentagon said the Bush administration was not really interested in talking about democracy and then turning around and choosing leaders of post-conflict Iraq. At the same time, he was insistent that while the United Nations would have a role to play, Washington was not for the world body to be in

supervising and running the show.

"Not another Kosovo," The Bush administration has been making it clear that Iraq is not going to be another Kosovo or East Timor. "It is not a model we want to follow, of a sort of permanent international administration," Mr. Wolfowitz remarked. "I think the right goal is to move as quickly as we can... to a government that is, if I could paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, of the Iraqis, by the Iraqis and for the Iraqis. Not to make them a colonial administration or a U.N. administration or run in any way by foreigners," he said.

But an Iraqi Opposition leader, who is one of Washington's closest allies, argued that the U.S. military might have to stay in Iraq for as long as two years. Ahmad Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress has said that he ex-

pects a constitution to be ratified "within two years." Mr. Chalabi has been meriting a lot of attention in this country and for different reasons — he has been apparently sentenced to 22 years hard labour in Jordan for bank fraud and embezzlement; and from the conflict point of view, had advised the administration that a U.S.-led invasion would quickly lead to an uprising. Analysts are pointing to the fact that the fighting is now in the third week and no popular uprising has been seen thus far.

## Iraq's future

The future of Iraq will be on top of the agenda when the President, George W. Bush, meets the Prime Minister of Britain, Tony Blair, at a working dinner on Monday night at the Hillsborough Castle, south of Belfast. This is the

third time the two leaders are meeting in the last three weeks. One of the differences between the two is over the role of the United Nations — Mr. Blair sees a stronger role for the world body than Mr. Bush.

In New York, the U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan, has asked for the Security Council to meet so that he could discuss issues relating to Iraq. Permanent members such as Russia, France and China are not willing to do anything that would be seen as the Council endorsing what the United States and Britain have done. Major powers at the U.N. are for playing a key role in the post-conflict Iraq; but the Bush administration has said that this role will largely be confined to humanitarian activities and in the realm of reconstruction but nowhere near the political scheme of things.

8 APR 2003

THE HINDU

# Saddam's gasman: Dead or alive?

## WAR BRIEFS

### Soldier reunites with kin

Frankfurt, April 7: Private first class Jessica D. Lynch was reunited with her family at a military hospital in Germany on Sunday as doctors said she might have been shot during her captivity.

The report contradicted a previous announcement by the commander of the hospital that she had not been shot.

Orthopaedic surgeons who examined fractures in Lynch's upper right arm and lower left leg now say there is a possibility that they were caused by a "low-velocity, small-caliber weapon". The evidence of gunshot wounds had not been detected earlier because doctors were focused on a spinal injury.

Lynch underwent five hours of surgery on her spine on Thursday, a day after she was flown here from Iraq. On Friday, surgeons turned their attention to her broken bones, which also include her right foot and ankle. Hours earlier, the commander, Col. David A. Rubenstein, had said medical evidence did "not suggest that any of her wounds were caused by either gunshots or stabbing injuries".

NYTNS

### THUMBS UP



An Iraqi girl signals after receiving food rations from US troops. (AFP)

### 'Decent' prison

Washington (Reuters): US freelance photographer Molly Bingham said on Monday she was treated well by Iraqi authorities who arrested her at her Baghdad hotel and held her in prison for more than a week. Bingham, along with two *Newsday* journalists, said she was taken by seven Iraqi troops from her hotel late at night. The three were blindfolded and led to a Baghdad prison where she was questioned. "I've paid for worse hotel rooms in Africa," Bingham said of her cell on NBC's *Today* show. "It was decent, it was a clean cell. I slept on a cement floor with two wool blankets, I was given three meals a day and had access to a bathroom. I will say that I was treated humanely, I think we all were, we weren't physically abused in any way," she added. Bingham, who turned up safely in Jordan last week, said she and her fellow reporters heard other prisoners being beaten.

### Iran protest

Qom (Iran), (Reuters): About 3,000 Iranian clerics and theological students burned US and British flags on Monday in the holy city of Qom to protest the presence of Western forces close to Shia Muslim shrines in southern Iraq. Another group of around 70 clerics and students also protested outside the British embassy in Tehran, which has become the focal point for anti-war protests in Iran. The protests were peaceful, unlike one outside the British embassy 10 days ago when several windows in a building inside the compound were smashed by stones hurled by protesters.

London/Baghdad, April 7 (Reuters): The British military think it has found the body of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's cousin 'Chemical Ali', but are still awaiting firm confirmation.

"We believe we have found the body of Chemical Ali. However, we need to get that confirmed," said a British spokesman at Central Command headquarters in Qatar.

Sky Television quoted a British military officer near Basra as saying they had found the body of Ali Hassan al-Majid, who is nicknamed Chemical Ali after he ordered the use of poison gas on Kurdish villages in the rebellious northern areas in 1988.

British officials were cautious about confirming what would be a major blow to the Iraqi

administration but British forces commander Air Marshal Brian Burridge said he appeared to have been killed while meeting with other senior Baath Party leaders at a home in Basra.

"We've recovered some bodies but positive identification is ongoing," Burridge told reporters at the war headquarters in Qatar. But he added: "I have to say that open sources locally in Basra say that's the man."

The US military said it could not confirm that Chemical Ali, the commander of Iraq's southern front, had been killed in an air strike on his house.

Sky said British officers... "have confirmed the death during a briefing earlier this morning... that's the news we are getting, that he is in fact dead."

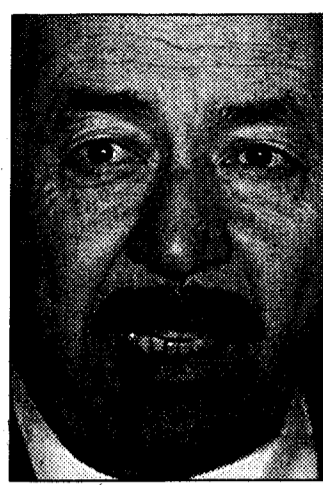
A ruthless clansman of Sad-

dam, Majid played a leading role in Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait from 1990-91 and in the violent suppression of Kurdish and Shia Muslim uprisings that followed the 1991 Gulf War.

"Majid is Saddam's hatchet man. He has been involved in some of Iraq's worst crimes — including genocide and crimes against humanity," the US-based group Human Rights Watch said in January.

In August 1990, after Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait, Saddam appointed Majid military governor of Iraq's "19th province" but replaced him three months later for fear that his brutal reputation was strengthening the hand of Kuwait's allies.

When a US-led coalition expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait



Chemical Ali: Cloud on fate

in 1991, Saddam appointed him interior minister to help stamp out a Shia rebellion sweeping

southern Iraq.

But he is best known for leading the Anfal (spoils of war) campaign against Kurdish rebels who took advantage of Iraq's 1980-88 war with Iran to step up their long campaign for autonomy in their northern heartlands.

Human rights groups say Majid's scorched earth policy led to the murder or disappearance of some 1,000,000 Kurds and the forced removal of many more. Hundreds of Kurdish villages and communities were destroyed.

In a single attack, some 5,000 men, women and children were killed in Halabja in March 1988, when government forces bombed and shelled the town with gas.

International reaction to the killings was muted because Iraq

was still waging an eight-year war with revolutionary Iran. But 15 years later, the US and Britain both used it to bolster their "moral case" for overthrowing Saddam.

Believed to be in his early 60s, Majid is a confidant of Saddam — one of several close family members who have formed his inner circle since a 1968 revolution returned Iraq's Baath Party to power.

Married to a daughter of Hassan al-Bakr, President until Saddam assumed full control of Iraq in 1979, Majid was a motorcycle messenger in the army before the Baath took over.

He has served as defence minister, security and intelligence chief, and has been a prominent member of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council — the supreme decision-making body

in Iraq.

In 1996, Majid oversaw the revenge killings of his two nephews, Hussein and Saddam Kamel, who returned to Baghdad with a promise of amnesty just months after defecting to Jordan.

Reports said Majid commanded forces who surrounded the house where the two nephews sought refuge. After their father — Majid's brother — ignored his pleas to leave, the family was mown down in a hail of bullets.

In a rare trip abroad in 2002, Majid visited north Africa. Opposition groups said he was looking for a hiding place for Iraq's alleged banned weapons — which Washington and London said he had retained in violation of UN demands — or a safe haven for Saddam's family in the event of war.

## Bush, Blair in Belfast date

Belfast, April 7 (Reuters): War allies George W. Bush and Tony Blair flew into Northern Ireland today to try to bridge transatlantic differences over post-conflict Iraq and to assess their troops' gains on the battlefield.

The US President's first visit to Belfast was a political payback for the British Prime Minister, who has stood by him throughout the Iraq crisis and flown twice across the Atlantic for war councils this year.

Blair was expected to use the third meeting in a month to press an apparently reluctant Bush to back a leading role for the UN after the conflict.

London wants the involvement of the UN to placate anti-war countries like France and Germany, and to appease many Britons who are sceptical of US motives in Iraq.

In an ambitious agenda, Bush and Blair were also to discuss the stalled West Asia and Northern Irish peace processes.

As both arrived at late afternoon in Belfast, where hoax bomb scares brought chaos to roads and airports, officials spelt out their positions on post-war Iraq.

Some fear that issue could be as divisive as the abortive attempt to win a second UN resolution on war.

"It is absolutely clear we want to see UN authority for the operations there in exactly the way we did in operations in Afghanistan," British defence secretary Geoff Hoon said.

But US officials have ruled out a leading political role for the UN, saying Washington and its

allies have earned the right to call the shots by giving "life and blood". They oppose the idea of the UN running an interim government in Iraq as it has in Kosovo, East Timor and Afghanistan.

US national security council spokesman Sean McCormack said Bush still stood, however, behind a statement issued with Blair in the Azores on the eve of war committing Washington to seeking new UN Security Council resolutions on Iraq.

They included resolutions to affirm Iraq's territorial integrity, ensure rapid delivery of humanitarian relief, and endorse an "appropriate post-conflict administration".

Speaking to reporters in Belfast, McCormack said Bush would use the visit to "lend support" to the peace plan set out by Blair and Irish leader Bertie Ahern for Northern Ireland. Bush would shortly release a so-called roadmap for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but the next step was confirmation of a new Palestinian Prime Minister, he said.

Other US officials told reporters that Bush and Blair had already agreed on the need for an interim Iraqi authority, but had yet to decide whether it should be launched in the south before President Saddam Hussein can be toppled in Baghdad. "It may be an attractive option," one said.

Bush has sought to assure Blair the Americans' concept is of an interim authority not made up solely of Iraqi exiles, the White House said.



A combat engineer in the US Army stands on a portrait of Saddam Hussein at Baghdad's international airport. (Reuters)

## Rice on rushed repair run to Russia

Moscow, April 7 (Reuters): US President George W. Bush's top national security aide met Russian officials today in a lightning visit to Moscow to try to repair relations badly shaken by the war on Iraq.

With Moscow smarting over an armed attack on a Russian diplomatic convoy in Iraq — so far unexplained — US national security adviser Condoleezza Rice held talks with foreign minister Igor Ivanov and other senior officials.

Russian media quoted Rice as saying she left the talks that they had been "very good", but neither she nor her Russian hosts made any other public statement. There was no indication of how much yesterday's incident had figured in discussion.

Gunfire raked the convoy of Russian diplomats and journalists as it left Baghdad. An embassy driver was wounded in the side and needed surgery and four diplomats, including ambassador Vladimir Titorenko, were slightly hurt.

The convoy travelled on to Syria today, though the wounded driver and one other member of the embassy staff stayed behind in an Iraqi hospital.

"We have been through some difficult times and differences over Iraq have strained the relationship and we look forward to exchanging views on how to move forward," a US embassy spokesman said as Rice began the talks with Ivanov.

Apart from foreign minister Ivanov, Rice also met defence minister Sergei Ivanov and other officials in the Kremlin.

Russia sought to dissuade the US and Britain from going to war to topple Iraq's President Saddam Hussein, arguing for a diplomatic solution to the crisis over banned weapons.

President Vladimir Putin, with an eye on ties with Washington and future economic interests in Iraq, has softened this criticism and says a US military defeat would not be in Russia's interests.

Though Moscow admonished Washington over US air attacks on Baghdad last week which it said struck uncomfortably close to the Russian embassy there, Putin has since told Bush he wants to maintain "an intense political dialogue" with Washington.

He told Russia's parliament to set aside differences with the US on Iraq and ratify a landmark treaty on slashing numbers of deployed nuclear warheads.

## Kerala cans American cola, sips mango juice

VENKATESH RAMAKRISHNAN

Thiruvananthapuram, April 7: American and British goods are facing the heat of the US-led war on Iraq in Kerala.

The Anti-War Forum, a loose grouping of over 250 political parties and organisations in the state — most with a Left orientation — has launched a boycott campaign against the goods.

It appears to be having a telling effect as traders estimated a "more than 50 per cent drop in the sale of these items" over the past 10 days. Beverages such as Coke and Pepsi have been particularly badly hit.

The forum has announced it will convert Kerala into a

Coca Cola-Pepsi-free zone by April 13. The goal appears within reach as the forum has widespread support among the people and intellectuals such as jurist V.R. Krishna Iyer and litterateur M.T. Vasudevan Nair.

Wholesalers and retailers have refrained from picking up new stock of US and British products apparently for fear of a backlash.

"We are no longer stocking US or British products. The campaign against these products by Left organisations is very aggressive and a lot of customers are rejecting them voluntarily, too," said a major wholesaler here.

A distributor in south Kerala, who refused to be named,

said: "Our sales have been hit by more than 50 per cent in the last one week. There has been very little demand for fresh stocks. It has all been so sudden and drastic that I am not really able to tell what might be the situation after April 13. One should not be surprised if the state really becomes Coke and Pepsi-free."

According to retailers in several parts of Kerala, some of their customers are demanding substitutes for the products listed on the boycott roster.

"I have my shop in a residential area. Most of my customers are regulars who settle the accounts monthly for daily purchases. Four families have given me a fresh list of items to be substituted for items on the

boycott list," said Haridas, a department store owner in the state capital. "For example, they have said toothpastes like Colgate or Pepsodent should be replaced by the Indian herbal product Neem."

"If their children ask me for a bottle of Coke, I have been told to give them locally-bottled mango juice," he said.

The forum has gone on a shop-to-shop campaign to persuade traders against stocking products of US companies. Even house-to-house visits have been carried out across Kerala to persuade people against buying US products.

The authorities of companies such as Coca-Cola in India are alarmed at the trend in Kerala, one of India's most

consumerist states with an approximate population of 30 million.

"We have divested 49 per cent of the company's equity for operations in India. We have 1 million retail suppliers of our products here. In the event of a boycott, it is the Indian economy that will be hit," Sunil Gupta, vice-president, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages Pvt Ltd, told reporters.

"We plan to invest \$100 billion in India this year towards infrastructure building. Forty per cent of this money is to be spent in southern India, which includes Kerala. So the boycott call on Coca-Cola by the people of Kerala is in effect a call to boycott Kerala's own development," he said.

The forum convenor, Thomas Isaac, who is a CPM legislator, said their campaign's objective is to effectively channel society's anti-war sentiments by motivating the people of Kerala to boycott US and UK-made products.

"We do not have any illusions of inflicting a severe blow on the US economy by boycotting Coca-Cola. It is our way of protesting against America's attitude to other nations," he said.

"Coca-Cola is a symbol of America's rash and irrational culture. Its boycott is a political statement by which the people of Kerala register their protest against the war that America is waging on Iraq," Isaac said.

## MOCKED IN WEST, HERO AT HOME 'Brave liar' keeps up Baghdad TV battle

es, he said, were "sick in their minds". Sahaf, 63, who kept a low profile before the war, has become an unlikely media star and a hero to many in the Arab world, at the same time as Western audiences gasp at his bravado.

While Iraqi troops fight in the field, the former foreign minister has dug deep into the lexicon of Arabic insults for verbal salvos to lob at the "evil invaders".

He branded the British and the US leaders "an international gang of criminal bastards", "blood-sucking bastards", ignorant imperialists, losers and fools.

He calls the US and British forces flocks of sheep doomed to die in Iraq or like them to a snake slithering through the desert that will be chopped into pieces. Sahaf often leaves foreign reporters

astonished at his version of events, but roundly dismisses US and British reports of the war as lies and "illusions".

Sahaf firmly denied the US forces were at Baghdad's international airport despite television footage apparently showing them strolling through the damaged passenger terminal.

When asked the next day about US reports that troops were in the heart of the capital, Sahaf retorted: "You can go and visit those places. Nothing there, nothing there at all."

In the Arab world, where he is seen as a hero by some, Sahaf escapes the mockery his utterances evoke in Western newspapers.

"I believe Sahaf exaggerates a little, but he needs to do that to reassure his

people," said Hazem, a 25-year-old security guard in Cairo. "Of course he knows that he is talking to the American soldiers as well, so his words are part of the psychological war that's going on."

Abdul-Aziz, a Saudi writer who would not give his last name, said: "Sahaf is vulgar but he is a brave liar... If the rest of the Iraqi government or army were this brave, they would inflict many more losses on US and British forces."

The view is different in the US and Britain.

"With regard to the information coming out of Baghdad, spin is all very well and to be expected but it has to keep links with reality," said Rear Admiral Richard Cobbold, director of Royal United Services Institute think-tank.

Sahaf was Iraq's foreign minister for almost a decade and ambassador to India, Italy and the UN. Although on good terms with Saddam, and a member of his Baath party, there is no love lost between him and the president's son, Uday.

Saddam removed Sahaf as foreign minister in April 2001 and put him in charge of the information ministry after Uday's newspaper criticised him.



A video grab of Sahaf speaking on Monday in Baghdad. (AFP)

# WAR ON IRAQ

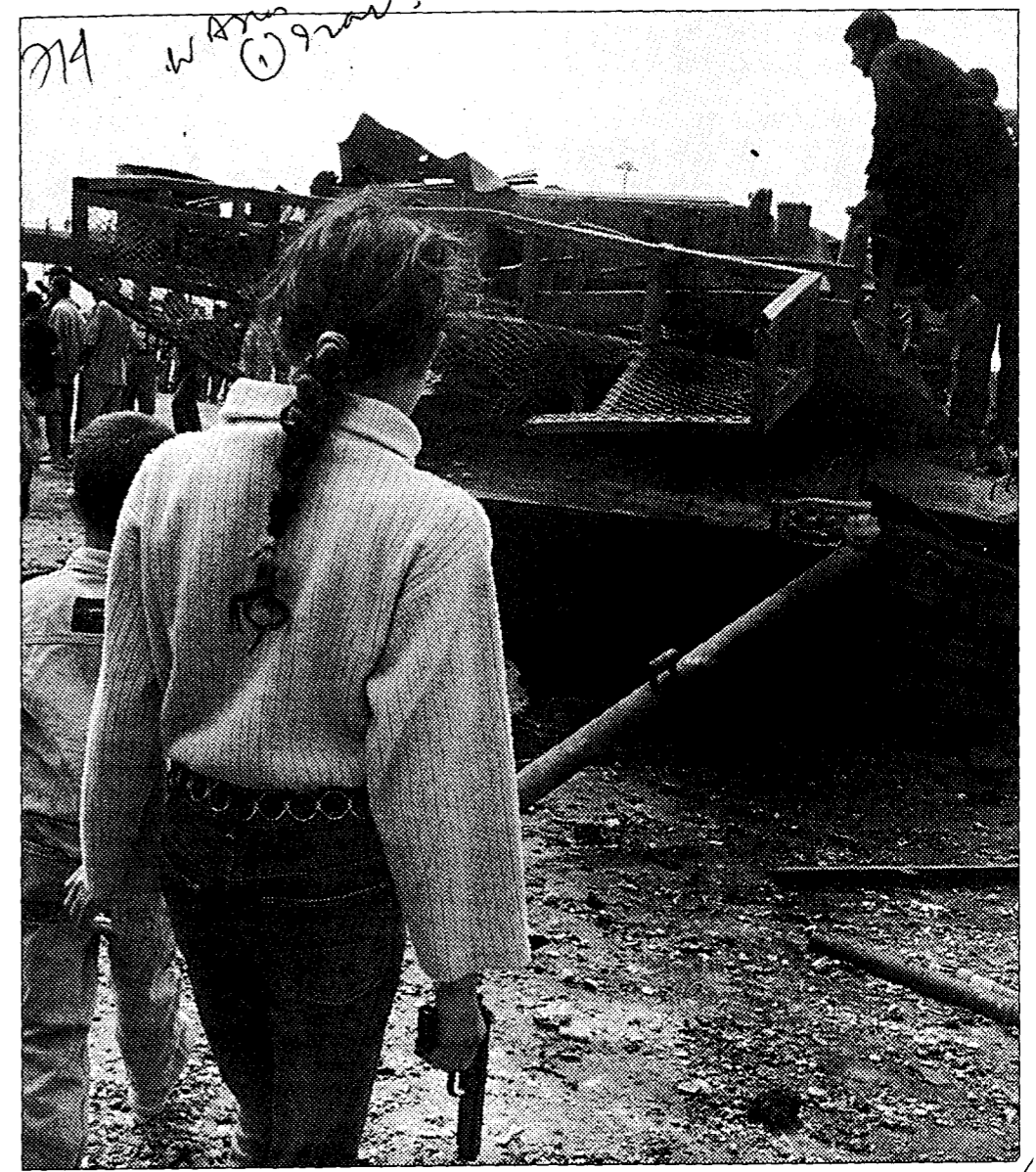


## Tank trophy on show

Baghdad, April 6 (Reuters): Iraqis chanting "Long live Saddam Hussein" crowded around a destroyed US tank today on a highway leading south out of Baghdad where the army said four US soldiers were killed.

Journalists were taken by Iraqi officials to the site of what they said was a battle yesterday about 25 km from the city centre, on the highway to Mahmoudiya south of Baghdad. "Yesterday morning, eight US tanks tried to enter Baghdad from the direction of Mahmoudiya and we confronted and destroyed all of them, killing four US soldiers," Iraqi Brigadier Mohammed Jasim told journalists at the site.

An Iraqi girl approached the tank with a loaded gun, (AFP picture on the right) which was gutted by fire, with ammunition belts scattered on the ground. Iraqi officers said the other seven US tanks had been destroyed and removed from the battlefield. This correspondent saw six or seven burnt Iraqi vehicles at the site. Some men also flashed victory signs atop anti-aircraft guns yesterday (Reuters picture on the left) on the southern outskirts of Baghdad.



# Simpson in scene from hell

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**AMITROY**

**London, April 6:** To even write about the injuries sustained by an individual reporter when hundreds of Iraqis are being killed might seem like an indulgence but to British television audiences, John Simpson has simply been the country's most famous foreign correspondent. It's a well-known face in India, too.

The BBC's 58-year-old world affairs editor lost his customary cool when he was injured today in the latest example of "friendly fire". This happened when an American plane bombed a Kurdish convoy in northern Iraq, which included members of the US special forces.

Despite bleeding from his ears and shrapnel wounds to his legs, Simpson was immediately

on the satellite phone to the BBC in London to describe the area, littered with the dead and injured and burning vehicles, as a "scene from hell".

Clearly livid with what had happened, he observed: "This is a really bad own goal by the Americans."

In a second report, Simpson revealed that an American special forces officer had "confessed" to him that he had been responsible for calling in the American aircraft because he feared the Iraqi enemy was nearby.

Simpson also revealed the BBC's local translator had one leg blown off and died from blood loss.

Shrapnel had pierced Simpson's upper thigh and a large piece had hit his spine but luckily had been unable to penetrate

his flak jacket.

Simpson began his report today by saying: "Well, it's a bit of a disaster. I was in a convoy of eight or 10 cars in northern Iraq coming up to a place that has just recently been captured. American special forces in a truck — two trucks I think — beside them, plus a very senior figure."

When an American soldier tried to intervene, Simpson shouted: "Shut up, I'm broadcasting! Oh yes, I'm fine — am I bleeding?"

The soldier was merely being solicitous when he told Simpson: "Yes, you've got a cut."

Simpson responded: "I thought I've just got a bit of shrapnel in the leg, that's all."

Instead of seeking medical help, he carried on. "That was one of the American special

forces medics — I thought he was going to try to stop me reporting. I've counted 10 or 12 bodies around us. So there are Americans dead. It was an American plane that dropped the bomb right beside us — I saw it land about 10 feet, 12 feet away I think. We were so close to the damage and — it didn't damage us (the BBC team) badly at any rate. This is just a scene from hell here. All the vehicles are on fire. There are bodies burning around me, there are bodies lying around, there are bits of bodies on the ground."

He added: "We don't really know how many Americans are dead. There is ammunition exploding in fact from some of these cars. A very senior member of the Kurdish Republic's government who also may have been injured."

He apologised to viewers: "I am sorry to be so excitable. I am bleeding through the ear and everything but that is absolutely the case. I saw this American convoy, and they bombed it. They hit their own people — they may have hit this Kurdish figure — very senior, and they've killed a lot of ordinary characters, and I am just looking at the bodies now."

"It is not a very pretty sight." In a 30-year career with the BBC, Simpson has reported from most of the world's trouble spots. His urbane manner has won him a wide following and his reporting many awards.

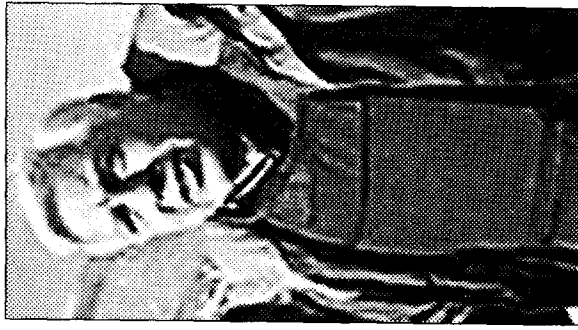
But he has been ribbed by the journalistic fraternity for claiming he had "liberated" Kabul during the Afghanistan war. He was one of the first TV correspondents to enter Kabul

after the fall of the Taliban but his colleagues from BBC World Service radio had been reporting from the capital for many weeks.

Only last week, a media watcher, Kim Fletcher, poked fun at Simpson for not being in the thick of the action this time.

Fletcher wrote: "The first name up in any media discussion of this war is John Simpson... Each night, Huw Edwards has turned obediently to the BBC's biggest name, but Mr Simpson, stuck in Kurdistan, has managed to do little more than point glumly south, where the action is."

Today, the BBC spokesman stressed that war reporting is not for the weak-hearted. "Sometimes you don't have to look for the action," he remarked laconically. "The action finds you."



Simpson

## Post-war Games

What next after the war in Iraq? From the look of things, another battle is coming up: For the control of post-war Iraq. And this battle may be even more one-sided than the last one, with the US forging ahead on all fronts, leaving the United Nations, and most of Europe, including Tony Blair's Britain, watching from the sidelines. The American stand is unambiguous: Having conceived, scripted and directed the war practically on its own, the US will not grant anyone else, least of all those who opposed the war, the right to decide the contours of Iraq's future - whether in respect of government formation or in allotting contracts for reconstruction. As much has been made clear by Condoleezza Rice's recent statement that the leading role in post-Saddam Iraq will be played by the US and not the UN. Indeed, even the precise shape of the new government appears to have been worked out, judging by Ms Rice's assertion that Iraq would be run by an office headed by a retired US general, who, in turn, would be answerable to the Pentagon. There have been other signals, including most importantly, a supplementary amendment passed by the US Congress excluding France, Germany, Russia and Syria from participating in US-funded reconstruction bids.

Earlier, Colin Powell had hinted at a severely curtailed role for the UN by holding that a single appointee would act as the "UN's eyes and ears" in a US-run interim administration. It goes without saying that none of this can be to the liking of the rest of the world. Russia has already reacted by calling the move "absolutely impermissible from the point of view of common sense and international law." As for Tony Blair, who overrode both popular opinion at home and strong opposition from his own party to fight on the side of America, it must embarrass him no end that after all he has done, he finds himself left out of the post-war planning. And the embarrassment will be all the more considering he, of his own accord, had promised the full involvement of the UN in the humanitarian and reconstruction aspects in Iraq. Mr Blair had also projected an "Iraq for Iraqis" vision. Clearly, having used Mr Blair's services to strengthen its case for war, the US has no further need for him. What does this presage for the future? First, anyone who opposes the US can face what amounts to economic sanctions. Second, even a trusted ally must eventually be prepared to be cast out into the cold.

7 APR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Israel faces pressure on endorsing peace plan

Jerusalem: Israel on Sunday hammered home its demand for a Palestinian crackdown on militants as a condition for implementing a peace "road map" as it prepared for possible pressure at a US-British summit to accept the plan.

"The entire move depends on whether it indeed transpires that Abu Mazen is capable of wielding real authority to stop terrorist activities," Israeli cabinet minister Ehud Olmert said, referring to the new Palestinian prime minister.

Mr Olmert spoke on Israel Radio hours before Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was due to convene a limited forum of cabinet members to discuss the "road map" drawn by the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia.

The long-awaited proposal, drafted against the backdrop of a 30-month-old Palestinian uprising, envisages a Palestinian state by 2005 and security for Israel, along with a freeze in Jewish settlement expansion on occupied land in the West Bank and Gaza. Such a settlement freeze could shake the foundations of the right-wing government Mr Sharon formed after the Israeli election in January.

US secretary of state Colin Powell told anxious European leaders on Thursday Washington would unveil the "road map" once a new reformist Palestinian cabinet took office and promote it without changes from either side.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who has battled internal dissent over Britain's role in the US-led Iraq war, has urged US President

## The long-awaited proposal, drafted against the backdrop of a 30-month-old Palestinian uprising, envisages a Palestinian state by 2005 and security for Israel

George W. Bush to present the plan quickly. The two leaders are to meet in Northern Ireland on Monday and Tuesday to discuss the Iraq conflict and West Asia peace moves.

Dov Weisglass, a top Sharon aide, insisted in an Israel Radio interview on Saturday the Israeli government has "a clear understanding with the American administration whereby we will be allowed to voice our responses (to the road map)".

Mr Weisglass, expected to travel to Washington later this week to discuss the plan with US officials, said "there will be no compromise" on Israeli security in putting the proposal in motion.

In West Bank violence on Saturday, Israeli troops killed a Palestinian gunman who fired on a Jewish settlement near the town of Hebron, the army said. A US peace activist, Brian Avery, was severely wounded in the face in another incident.

Witnesses said Mr Avery, a member of the International Solidarity Movement to Protect the Palestinian People, was hit by an apparent ricochet bullet from an Israeli armoured vehicle while in the streets of the West Bank city of Jenin during a curfew.

7 APR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# US jets bomb own troops

● Baghdad surrounded but Wolfowitz says Iraqi govt still controls large parts of city

TIMES NEWS NETWORK AND AGENCIES

AFP

Washington: US forces completely surrounded Baghdad on Sunday, and in an effort to stop anyone from fleeing the besieged capital, they used air power to mistakenly fire on convoys of its own troops, Kurdish allies, and Russian diplomats.

American jets strafed a joint convoy of US troops and Kurdish fighters, killing 12 and wounding 45. Among those killed was the brother of Masoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party. Also injured in the incident was BBC Television's world affairs editor John Simpson, who suffered shrapnel wounds in the leg.

"I've counted 10 or 12 bodies around us, so there are Americans dead. It was an American plane... dropped the bomb right beside us, I saw it land about 10 to 12 feet away," Mr Simpson said moments after the blast.

US officials said the incident was being investigated and made no mention of American casualties.

There were also reports from Moscow about US forces firing on a Russian convoy that included Moscow's ambassador to Iraq Vladimir Titorenko, who was leaving Baghdad through Damascus with a small core team of diplomats. Mr Titorenko was reportedly injured in the attack.

Russian officials said Moscow had informed Washington about the evacuation in advance and added that they did not know whether the convoy came under attack from Iraqi or US-led coalition forces. The US Central Command in Qatar said that Iraq controlled the area where the convoy was fired on.

US officials, meanwhile, warned against people driving out of Baghdad if they were to save their lives. Iraq also imposed a 12-hour night time ban on travel to and from the capital.

US forces are readying for another swing through the Iraqi capital after reporting that they had killed between 2,000 to 3,000 Iraqi fighters during their first sortie through the city's southwestern quadrant.

There were reports of the Republican Guard and Fedayeen putting up a resistance. US officers said Egyptians, Jordanians, Saudis and Syrians were fighting alongside Iraqi troops, using tactics, including suicide bombings, which left two marines dead.

An officer with the 1st Marine Division said the US troops fought a 10-hour battle with hundreds of such fighters south-east of Baghdad on Friday. "We were ambushed twice,



Kalashnikov-wielding Iraqi women on Sunday celebrate near a US Abrams tank destroyed by Iraqi forces south of Baghdad on Saturday.

and there were four suicide car bombings against tanks," he said.

He said contact was initially with some 150 black-clad fighters, but by the end of the battle some 300 to 400 had been killed. "They kept bringing them in by the busload," he said. "It's a whole conglomerate of Islamic freedom fighters."

Journalists in Baghdad were shown the wreckage of a US Abrams tank on the outskirts of the capital, which Iraqi officials said was knocked out in intense fighting that left four Americans dead on Saturday.

Meanwhile, some reports spoke of Saddam Hussein having fled Baghdad for Tikrit with his two sons. "I have been informed that once he had firm evidence that the Americans were closing in on Baghdad, he fled to his home town of Tikrit," claimed Haitham Rashid Wihab, Mr Hussein's former chief of protocol.

However, US deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz said the Iraqi government still controlled large parts of Baghdad. "I suppose you would have to say that the regime

controls large sections of Baghdad," he told Fox News.

US officials hope to be in complete control of Baghdad by Tuesday and install an interim administration as early as Tuesday. The US plan, which is a military occupation in all but name, envisages the Pentagon calling the shots at the expense of not just the United Nations, but also its allies and even the State Department.

There are visible differences between the White House and the Pentagon on one side, and the State Department, the Congress, and America's European allies and the UN on the other, about the post-war scenario in Iraq. Led by retired Lt Gen Jay Garner, the Pentagon's Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid will administer three regions, with retired Gen Buck Walters in the south, retired Gen Bruce Moore in the north and former US ambassador to Yemen Barbara Bodine in the central region.

- See Edit: Post-war Games, Page 14
- Related report on Page 11, 12

## THE BATTLEFRONT DAY 18

- British tanks enter centre of Basra, face stiff resistance
- US starts airlifting Iraqi opposition fighters to southern Iraq to establish physical Iraqi presence among coalition forces
- British troops discover more than 200 decomposed bodies in a warehouse between Basra and Zubayr
- US Central Command said on Sunday that six soldiers were killed when a Black Hawk helicopter crashed in southern Iraq on Wednesday
- Iraq claims 50 US soldiers killed and six tanks destroyed around Baghdad airport



**IRAQ / CONVOY COMES UNDER FIRE**

FD 14  
M 1

# Russian Ambassador, diplomats wounded

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, APRIL 6.** The Russian Ambassador to Iraq and several diplomats were wounded on Sunday as they were evacuated from Baghdad by road to Syria.

The Ambassador, Vladimir Titorenko, as well as 22 Russian diplomats and TV reporters were in a convoy of embassy cars, which came under fire after leaving the Iraqi capital. Two diplomats received serious injuries and were being operated upon by Iraqi surgeons 40 km from Baghdad, the *RIA Novosti* news agency said.

The convoy is expected to continue its journey to the Syrian border on Monday. It was not immediately known who had opened fire on the convoy.

The Ambassadors of the United States and Iraq were

called to the Russian Foreign Ministry and told "in tough terms" to guarantee the Russian citizens' safety in Iraq, investigate the circumstances of the attack and punish those responsible, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

The U.S. Ambassador to Moscow, Alexander Vershbow, admitted that the coalition forces had been informed about the evacuation plan and assured safe passage for the diplomatic convoy.

Russia was one of the few countries to have kept its Ambassador and 25 diplomats in Iraq after the war began.

Following their evacuation, the embassy will still have some technical personnel and security guards.

Today's incident happened at a time when Russia was trying

to ease tensions with the U.S. over the war.

The issue was raised with the U.S. National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, who arrived in Moscow on Sunday for talks on Iraq with the Russian Foreign and Defence Ministers, the Interfax news agency said.

Ms. Rice is also expected to call on the Russian President, Vladimir Putin. The visit came a day after Mr. Putin discussed the Iraq crisis with the U.S. President, George W. Bush, on telephone.

The two leaders "stressed the importance of pursuing intense political dialogue between the two countries despite their known differences (on Iraq) in order to find solutions in the interests of the international community," the Kremlin press service said.

THE HINDU

2 April  
9:30 AM

# Coalition troops encircle Baghdad

NEAR BAGHDAD, IRAQ, APRIL 6. U.S. forces encircled the Iraqi capital today and the U.S. Central Command said 3,000 Iraqi fighters were killed in a show-of-force foray into Baghdad by American armoured vehicles.

The Iraqi President, along with his two sons, fled Baghdad three days ago for his hometown of Tikrit, 175 km to the north of Baghdad. Haitham Rashid Wihab, Mr. Hussein's former Chief of Protocol, said: "I have been informed that once he had firm evidence that the Americans were closing in on Baghdad, he fled to his hometown of Tikrit."

The Iraqi Information Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf warned Baghdad residents against rumours and lies. "Open your eyes and keep your minds alert to be able to differentiate between information and the inadequate ones," he said during a news conference.

An AFP report quoting US officers said the coalition prepared to launch a final assault on Baghdad to oust Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The Third Brigade of the US Army's Third Infantry Division was circling northward from the west while the Marines launched a pre-dawn push from the southeast towards the Tigris river, said Major Rod Legowski.

He claimed that Egyptians, Jordanians and Syrians were fighting alongside Iraqi forces against U.S. troops moving on the capital. The consolidation of U.S. positions around Baghdad came amid a fresh wave of coalition air raids on the capital, with explosions and artillery fire rocking the city centre and the southern outskirts, as the war



Iraqi soldiers atop a destroyed U.S. tank in the southern outskirts of Baghdad on Sunday. — Reuters

entered its 18th day.

In northern Iraq, a U.S. warplane bombed a convoy of Kurdish fighters and U.S. Special Forces, Kurdish officials said. A Kurdish spokesman said 17 of its fighters were killed and 45 others injured. The British Broadcasting Corp. said one of its translators was killed.

In Moscow, the Kremlin said a convoy of Russian Embassy diplomats, including the Russian ambassador to Iraq, came under fire as they were evacuating from Baghdad and starting to drive toward Syria. A Russian Foreign Ministry official said four or five persons were wounded but that the injuries were not life threatening.

British forces in southern Iraq made their deepest push yet into Basra, with a column of

40 armoured personnel carriers rolling into Iraq's second-biggest city after a series of strikes on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's loyalist defenders.

U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace said in Washington that Iraqi "freedom fighters" were being airlifted to southern Iraq

to join coalition troops and form the nucleus of a new national army for that country.

"These are Iraqi citizens who want to fight for a free Iraq, who will become basically the core of the new Iraqi army once Iraq is free," Pace, vice chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, said on the ABC television program "This Week."

Though the Army's 40-km incursion on Saturday through an industrial section of southern Baghdad was brief, it inflicted a heavy toll, U.S. military spokesman Jim Wilkinson said. More than three-dozen tanks and armoured vehicles were involved; U.S. casualties were described as light, he said. The blitz took two task forces of the 3rd Infantry Division from the southern outskirts of the city past

Baghdad University and near the banks of the Tigris River, then back to the western outskirts of the city to the airport, which is under U.S. control.

Iraqi authorities took Baghdad-based journalists to the city's southern outskirts on Sunday to show them a U.S. tank destroyed in the recent fighting.

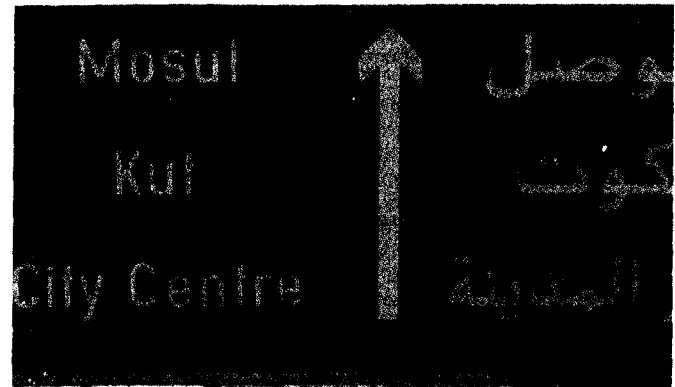
A commander said four more tanks also were destroyed but had been towed away to clear the road. The number of casualties in Baghdad is so high that hospitals have stopped counting the number of people treated, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

U.S. pressure in and around Baghdad intensified on Sunday, including an attempt by Marines to take a bridge over a canal leading into the city.

Another Marine battalion overran a Republican Guard headquarters and seized one of Saddam's palaces south of the city. Overhead, U.S. warplanes were flying round the clock, coordinating precision strikes in support of upcoming ground attacks.

A Reuters report, quoting a military spokesman on Iraqi television, said that Iraq fired five missiles at the U.S.-led forces on the outskirts of Baghdad, in an admission that the 18-day old invasion has reached the doorstep of the Iraqi capital.

In Washington, the U.S. Deputy Defence secretary, Paul Wolfowitz, said today that the Iraqi Government still controlled large parts of Baghdad. "I suppose you would have to say that the regime controls large sections of Baghdad," he told *Fox News*. — AP, AFP



A U.S. army convoy moves on a highway in Baghdad on Sunday. — AP

## First U.S. plane lands

**BAGHDAD AIRPORT, APRIL 6. The first U.S. military aircraft landed at Baghdad airport today, a senior source in the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division's aviation brigade said. The C-130 military transporter landed at about 0800 hrs local time (0930 hrs 1ST). — Reuters**

# U.S. forces conduct raid on Baghdad

NEAR BAGHDAD, IRAQ, APRIL 5. U.S. ground forces made a bold daytime raid into the Iraqi capital today, U.S. officials said, as other coalition troops moved in from the south to test the strength of President Saddam Hussein's defenders, who are believed to have fallen back for an urban battle.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Gene Renuart said an American unit swept in and out of Baghdad, but declined to say if any other troops remained in the city.

The Iraqi military, in a statement read on satellite television, said U.S. forces were repulsed when they tried to advance on Baghdad from the south. "We were able to chop off their rotten heads," the statement said.

The Iraqi TV played patriotic music, and soldiers and militiamen loyal to Saddam Hussein vowed to keep fighting.

The American incursion was not an attempt to capture large sections of Baghdad, which remained under tenuous Iraqi Government control. Rather, the intent was to show the Iraqi leadership "that they do not have the control they speak about on their television," Maj. Gen. Renuart said in a briefing at Central Command in Qatar.

## 'Forces not sighted'

Witnesses, however, reported seeing no U.S. forces around the Tigris river, which flows through the centre of the city of five million. And a reporter touring several sections of the city by car at midday saw no coalition soldiers.

Earlier, Navy Capt. Frank Thorp, a U.S. Central Command spokesman, said American armoured combat units "have moved through the heart of Baghdad, defeating the Iraqi troops we have encountered."

Thorp refused to be specific about the troops' incursion.

Firing mortars as they went along, U.S. Marines approaching Baghdad drove along roads lined with deserted shops and grubby tire repair shops. There were bodies of Iraqi fighters on the side of the road.

Refugees, including women carrying babies, were headed away from the city on foot, some of them begging for water.



A destroyed plane lies beside United States Army tanks and armoured vehicles on the tarmac of Baghdad's international airport on Saturday. — AFP

Smoke filled the air from trenches of burning oil that Iraqis had set on fire.

At one point, Marines said they came across four men who played dead — and then jumped up and started firing.

In addition to the raid by U.S. armoured troops from the south, coalition forces were surrounding the city to prevent reinforcements from entering it, Renuart said.

Meanwhile, U.S. armoured combat troops on Saturday took several "objectives" surrounding Baghdad in the north and northwest, according to a U.S. official. The official declined to identify the objectives taken.

With Saddam's most-trusted fighters likely embedded in Baghdad's heart, the coalition must take its next steps very carefully, British spokesman,

Group Capt. Al Lockwood, said. "I believe that those still loyal to the regime may well retreat into the city in some kind of last-ditch stand," Lockwood said. "But we are hopeful that a large number of them have gone home."

In marshy lands barely a km south of Baghdad's city line, Marines fought a tense battle with militant forces loyal to Saddam. Marines with bayonets were in the reeds, lunging at the fighters. Many of the combatants were foreign — Jordanian, Egyptian and Sundanese, said Lt. Col. B.P. McCoy. Iraqi officials have said there are thousands of such Arab volunteers.

There was only light traffic on Saturday on the hazy streets of Baghdad. There were long lines at gas stations as tens of thousands of residents fled north.

Members of Saddam's Fedayeen, a notorious militia, appeared in the city centre for the first time since the war began. A blackish cloud hung over the southwestern horizon — in the direction of Baghdad's airport.

## Search for holdouts

At the airfield, members of the 101st Airborne Division were searching for Iraqi holdouts in an extensive underground network of tunnels, said Lt. Col. Lee Fetterman.

Hundreds of Iraqi fighters had been killed, he said, including several would-be suicide attackers who were found with bombs strapped to their bodies. Still, Iraqi officials insisted that they had prevailed at the airport.

Shortly after the first tanks rolled into Baghdad, soldiers

with the 3rd Infantry Division captured a Republican Guard key base about 50 km southwest of Baghdad.

Army forces were unopposed as they rolled into the guard's Medina Division headquarters in the town of Suwayrah, where it appeared Iraqi defences had completely collapsed. Bunkers and foxholes and dozens of artillery pieces — anti-aircraft guns, tanks, and armoured personnel carriers — were abandoned. The officer's parking lot was empty.

The headquarters had been heavily damaged in airstrikes. Inside the general's office, troops found a flag, photos of other senior officers and a memo with instructions on how to deal with a U.S. attack: "Don't panic, don't act stupidly," it said.

In northern Iraq, U.S. aircraft attacked Iraqi positions in the direction of the oil centre of Mosul, near the line between Iraqi forces and Kurdish fighters. Saddam's fighters, who had struggled on Friday to hold a key bridge in the area, appeared to be pulling further back into Iraqi-held territory. — AP, AFP

10-14  
 [Handwritten signatures and marks]

# Blackout foreshadows humanitarian crisis

**NEW YORK, APRIL 5.** The shut-off of Baghdad's electrical power and water supply foreshadows a potential humanitarian crisis that could overwhelm coalition forces, even as they battle to quell resistance by Saddam Hussein's die-hard defenders, military and relief agency experts say.

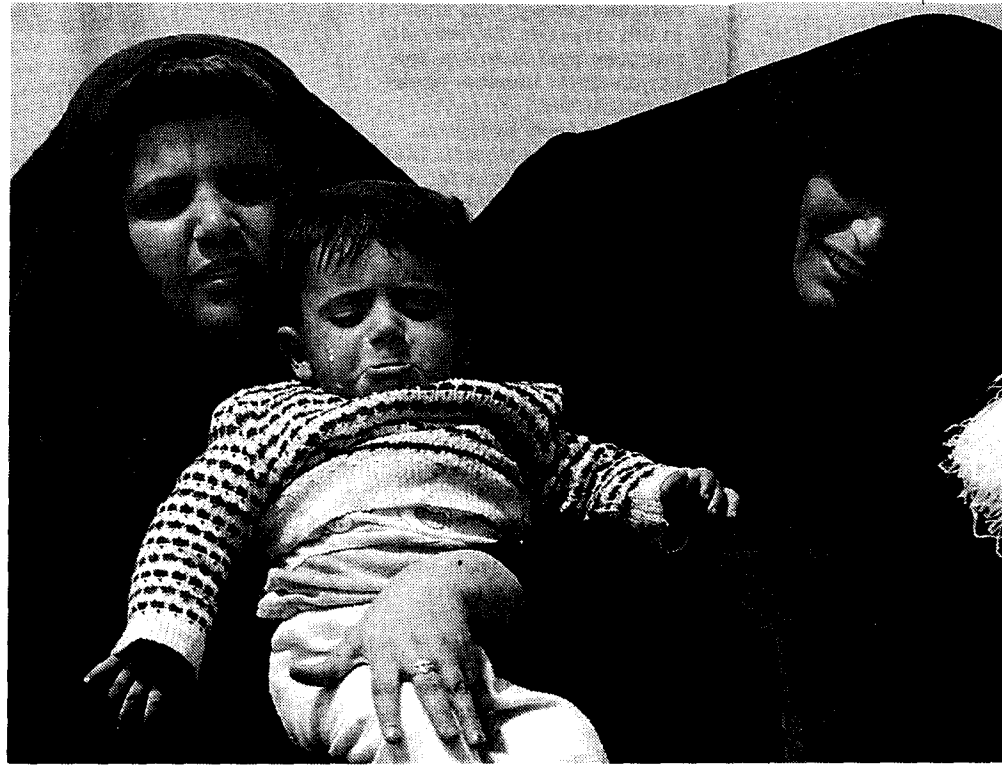
The scenario is not just of one but of many nightmares — food riots, disease, suicide bombers and widespread civilian casualties in the city of more than 5 million, said Patrick Garrett, an associate analyst at Globalsecurity.com, a Virginia-based think tank.

"Nothing up to now has been as difficult as this is likely to be," he said. "The most difficult days are ahead. It could be days, weeks, months — or it could be hours, if Saddam has left Baghdad and gone to Tikrit — in which case they get to do it all over again."

"What you have is the making of a humanitarian catastrophe," said Sid Balman, spokesman for InterAction, an umbrella group of 165 relief organisations.

Baghdad went dark on Thursday for the first time since the war began on March 20, just as spearhead troops of America's 3rd Infantry Division closed in on the international airport on the capital's southwestern outskirts.

U.S. officials denied targeting the electric grid. "We didn't do it. It's as simple as that," said Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, chief spokesman for the U.S.



Iraqi women with a child flee Baghdad on Saturday. — AP

Central Command in Qatar.

Experts said it was more in Mr. Hussein's interest to shut down the power, creating a crisis that the allied forces would have to deal with, and triggering an outcry from the international community and the United Nations. "They (the Iraqis) can't afford a siege. They haven't got the troops for it," said Robert Hutchinson, a defence consultant with *Jane's*

*Defence Weekly* in London.

"Saddam must be wanting to prolong this as long as possible in hope that casualties will affect public opinion or that the horrors of urban warfare will bring pressure to stop," he said.

The United States would be blamed by some for a humanitarian crisis because it would not have happened without an invasion, Mr. Garrett said.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush's top military adviser said on Thursday that American forces might stop short of storming Baghdad and instead isolate it while a new national government is organised.

Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Pentagon reporters that if Baghdad was "basically isolated," it would no longer control Iraq. "Whatever's happening

inside Baghdad is almost irrelevant compared to what's going on in the rest of the country," he said.

An expanding civil crisis could require the administration to revise that plan, sending troops into the city or hastily revamping its strategy in other ways, Mr. Garrett said.

Along with the Red Crescent Society — the Arab equivalent of the Red Cross — Medecins Sans Frontieres, Australian CARE and a few others already in Baghdad, some 25 U.S.-based agencies would be expected to work in Iraq. But they would not risk going into the capital unless it was secure, officials said.

"A secure environment is critical for NGOs to do their work safely — it is the bottom line consideration," Mr. Balman said. "Baghdad would not be a secure environment if there is a full-blown siege."

On Friday, Medecins Sans Frontieres — also known as Doctors Without Borders — reported two of its members were missing in the Iraqi capital.

Mr. Balman said that after seven months of talks with Bush administration officials, InterAction does not know what U.S. plans are for dealing with a potential humanitarian crisis. "Their argument has been that to share these plans would reveal the war plans, and that they can't plan for something that has not happened," he said.

An urban nightmare could

have many parts, beginning with a water shortage, and expanding to include food riots, sewage pollution, possible infectious diseases and a breakdown in civil order.

Even tight U.S. control of major portions of Baghdad could not prevent resistance by armed militants and Fedayeen militants.

"The task of distribution would be insane, and that's what would play into the hands of the militants. It's when it's chaotic, or you have the food riots, that the Fedayeen would be able to slip in and set off suicide bombs," he said. "That would be absolutely horrendous, a huge area where the Marines or what-have-you were trying to dole out food to people who were hungry, and a suicide bomber detonates himself. The sheer chaos that resulted would be unimaginable."

One problem would be the enormous need for water, food and other relief supplies. "Water is critical. But you have new-born babies, pregnant women, everything that exists in a city," said Mr. Balman, who worked in the Bosnian city of Sarajevo, during the siege there.

"Sarajevo was pretty low tech and a much smaller city. Here you have the world's most powerful military against a regime doing everything it can to survive. ... We don't see how they plan to handle it," he said.

— AP

6 APR 2003

THE HINDU

# Tyrant or ally? Saddam's been both to US

## Iraq lifts ban on Jazeera

**Doha, April 5 (Reuters):** Correspondents for Qatar-based al Jazeera satellite television resumed reporting from Iraq yesterday after Baghdad lifted bans on two of its journalists.

"Al Jazeera welcomes the move by the Iraqi information ministry to reverse its decision and immediately relaunches the activity of its correspondents in Baghdad, Basra and Mosul," the Arabic-language channel said.

Jazeera, which has been criticised by the US and Britain for its allegedly pro-Iraq war coverage, said on Thursday Iraq had ordered one of its reporters to leave the country and told another to stop working.

The Iraqi authorities gave no reason for the decision.

Jazeera had responded by telling all its eight correspondents in Iraq to stop reporting but continued to broadcast live and taped events, including news conferences by Iraqi officials and air strikes on Iraqi cities.

US television network CNN's reporters were expelled from Baghdad a day after the start of the US-led war on March 20.

Jazeera, which is widely watched in the Arab world, is the only international network with reporters in the northern city of Mosul and the Iraqi-held part of the southern city of Basra.

It has been criticised by the US and Britain for airing pictures of slain US and British troops.

But many Arab viewers regard its Iraq war coverage as more comprehensive and balanced than Western media reports.

**Washington, April 5 (Reuters):** "Evil tyrant" or tactical ally?

Saddam Hussein has been both to the US over the past 20 years, depending on where it saw its interests.

In the 1980s, when the enemy was Iran's revolutionary spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and Iraq was at war with Iran, Washington courted and bankrolled Saddam as a foil to Iranian expansionism.

Knowledge that Iraq was using chemical weapons, and suspicions it was trying to build a nuclear bomb, did not stand in the way of a marriage of convenience or billions of dollars in US agricultural loan guarantees and trade credits.

"Iraq was the lesser of two evils," said Raymond Tanter, who served on the US National Security Council staff from 1981 to 1982 and took the position at the time that Washington should not support either side.

"Cozying up to Saddam Hussein was not such a brilliant idea, but I understand why it happened," said Tanter, an Iran expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

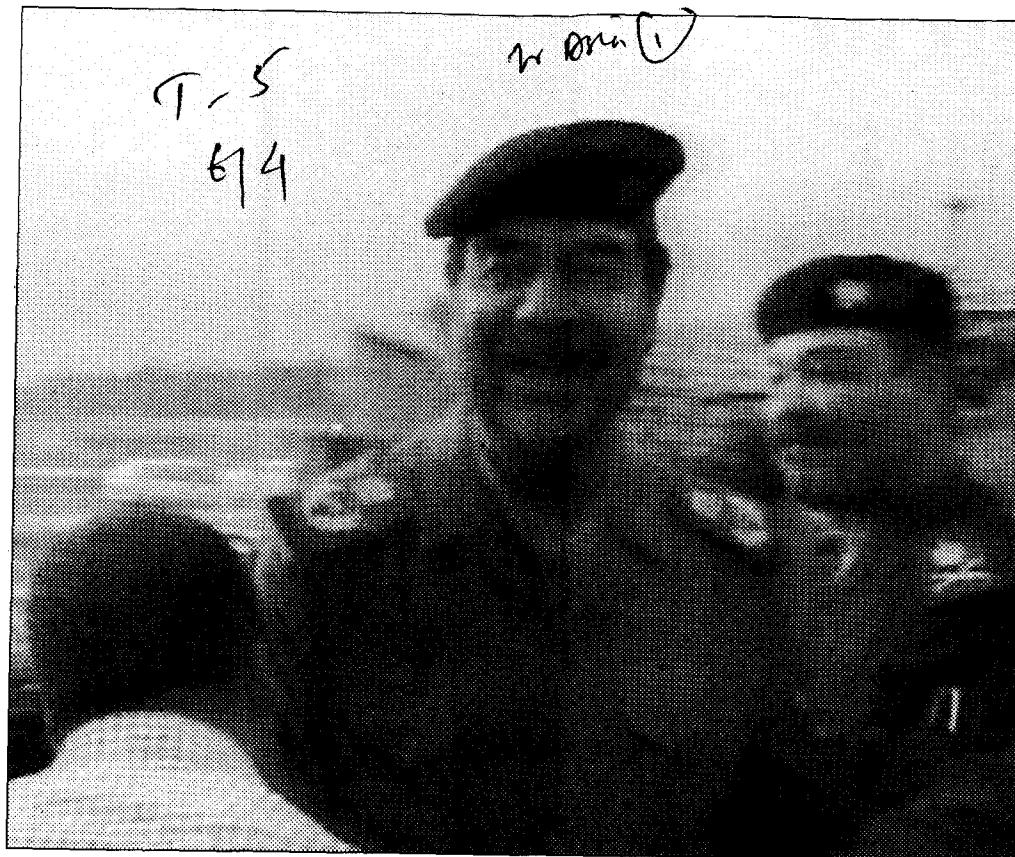
"Times have changed," he added. "You have to adapt your policies to the nature of the threat."

Other scholars see the demonisation of Saddam by President George W. Bush as something more fundamental.

Ted Carpenter, vice-president for defence and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute in Washington and a critic of the war on Iraq, argues that US foreign policy needs to demonise erstwhile allies who become adversaries.

Saddam, he said, has fit that mould since his invasion of Kuwait in 1990 when he became a "client who got greedy".

"From that point on, as is typical with American foreign policy, he had to become evil incarnate," Cato said.



**Saddam Hussein (centre) in Baghdad on Friday. (Reuters)**

"Whether it's Manuel Noriega, Slobodan Milosevic or now Saddam, it's never a fight over US interests," said Carpenter.

Instead, he said in a seeming dig at Bush's rhetoric: "it's always a fight against Manichean evil".

Mani was a 3rd century Persian sage who regarded the world as divided between the forces of light and darkness.

Bush went to war to topple Saddam under a new doctrine, forged after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US, that says the United States has the right to stage a pre-emptive strike on any country it deems a threat.

In Saddam's case, Bush has argued that Iraq's alleged

weapons of mass destruction not only threaten the region but could also end up in the hands of groups like al Qaida and be turned on the US.

"These are sacrifices in a high calling—the defence of our nation and the peace of the world," Bush told US Marines in a speech on Thursday.

"Overcoming evil is the noblest cause and the hardest work."

It was not always that way with Iraq.

Defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, for example, met Saddam in Baghdad in December 1983 during the Iran-Iraq war, which lasted for eight years, when he served as West Asia

envoy for President Ronald Reagan.

Recently declassified US documents show the state department knew at that time that Iraq was making "almost daily" use of chemical weapons against Iranian forces and that the CIA suspected Saddam would try to build a nuclear bomb.

Rumsfeld was filmed shaking Saddam's hand and, according to a US diplomatic cable, the Iraqi President drew "obvious pleasure" from a letter Rumsfeld handed him from Reagan.

"Our initial assessment is that (the) meeting marked (a) positive milestone in (the) development of US-Iraqi relations," the cable concluded.

Within a year of that meeting, Iraq and the US had re-established diplomatic ties after a 17-year break.

Critics of US policy toward Iraq in the 1980s argue that American money and technology, directly or indirectly, helped Saddam pursue his weapons programmes.

Until 1990, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, hefty US agricultural loan guarantees and trade credits flowed to Iraq, despite strong evidence of severe human rights abuses and non-conventional weapons programmes.

President George Bush, father of the current president, signed a waiver on grounds of national interest in January 1990 to override a congressional block on trade credits to Iraq that lawmakers imposed after Saddam used poison gas against Iraqi Kurds.

Bush senior had this comment in April 1990, after Saddam threatened to use chemical weapons against Israel: "I don't think it helps peace in the Middle East".

The rights group Middle East Watch, in a report on Iraq that month, said that because of Iraq's oil wealth and the possibilities for trade, Washington put "the nurturing of newly friendly relations with Saddam Hussein's government well ahead of the violent and repressive nature of his regime".

Rumsfeld has argued his main purpose in meeting Saddam in 1983 was to ensure Iraq did not "make mischief" in West Asia after a truck bomb in Beirut killed 241 US Marines.

He says he raised Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iranian forces in talks with Tariq Aziz, then Iraq's foreign minister.

And he denies the US misjudged Saddam. "No, not at all," Rumsfeld told NBC's *Meet the Press* last month. "I mean, people are what they are."

# Saddam's men prepare for battle

## Free nations will not wait for another 9/11: Bush

Washington, April 5 (Reuters): US President George W. Bush said today the Iraq war has made clear that "free nations will not sit and wait" while enemies plot another September 11-style attack.

In his weekly radio address, Bush vowed that invasion forces will keep fighting until Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's government is gone, and said his loyalists will face war crimes charges.

"Village by village, city by city, liberation is coming," he said.

"The people of Iraq have my pledge: Our fighting forces will press on until their oppressors are gone and their whole country is free," said Bush, who plans to meet war ally British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Monday and Tuesday in Northern Ireland.

Bush said the Iraq war was part of a "great and just cause." He has tried to link Iraq to al Qaeda, blamed for the September 11, 2001, attacks, but no definitive proof has been established.

"Free nations will not sit and wait, leaving enemies to plot another September 11 — this time perhaps, with chemical, biological or nuclear terror," Bush said.

"We'll remove weapons of mass destruction from the hands of mass murderers. And by defending our own security, we are ridding the people of Iraq of one of the cruelest regimes on Earth. The US and our allies pledged to act if the dictator did not disarm. The regime in Iraq is now learning that we keep our word," he said.

Bush has established a new American doctrine of pre-emptive action that asserts the US has the right to attack countries it deems a threat.

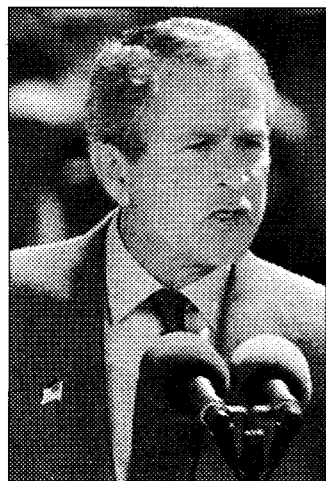
With US troops in control of Baghdad's airport, Bush pledged that "Saddam's thugs" will face war crimes charges for their conduct during the war.

He accused them of shielding themselves with women and children, killing Iraqi citizens who welcome US and British forces, forcing some into battle by threatening to torture or kill their families, executing prisoners of war, waging attacks under a truce flag and concealing combat forces in civilian areas.

"In this war, the Iraqi regime is terrorising its own citizens, doing everything possible to maximise Iraqi civilian casualties, and then to exploit the deaths they have caused for propaganda.

"These are war criminals, and they'll be treated as war criminals," he said.

Bush met a number of Iraqi exiles at the White House yesterday and told them the US will help in a transition but that "the people of Iraq are perfectly capable of running Iraq."



George W. Bush

Baghdad, April 5 (Reuters): Paramilitary forces, dressed in black and carrying AK-47 assault rifles and grenades, headed towards the outskirts of the Iraqi capital today or joined soldiers in full combat gear digging in around the city.

With US military spokesmen saying American forces had entered Baghdad, forces loyal to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein moved into position across the city or headed south towards the battle front.

Trailers and buses full of Saddam's Fedayeen, the black-clad paramilitary forces under the command of Saddam's eldest son Uday, drove south on one thoroughfare.

"Move out of the way," they shouted as they sped away from a military compound, touting AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenade launchers and clutching Chinese-made hand grenades. Armoured personnel carriers were also driving south.

Driving freely around the southern outskirts, the south east, the southwest and near the presidential palaces and the main security buildings of the

Iraqi capital, Iraqi forces were preparing for battle and board-up shops.

The sound of heavy artillery fire could be heard from the fringes of the city, but there was no sign of US forces.

Soldiers in full combat gear and members of Saddam's Fedayeen crouched on the corners of highways leading to the south and east. Iraqi forces appeared to be repositioning themselves constantly.

A US spokesman said early today that American forces had pushed into the heart of the battered Iraqi capital for a first time in the 17-day-old war. The push, the spokesman added, was "more than a patrol that goes in and comes back out".

But Iraqi information minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf said US forces had not entered the city and had been expelled from the city's international airport to the west.

"The film they broadcast to you is a lie," he said of television footage showing US troops and armour on a highway with signs indicating the City Centre and Baghdad airport.

"They're trying to deceive everyone. They're in the outskirts of Abu Ghreib," he told the Arabic satellite network al Jazeera, adding that they were 30-40 km from Baghdad. "This is a ploy," he added.

The Fox News Channel in the US showed a line of tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles which it said were from the US 3rd Infantry Division and were rolling into Baghdad.

The column, moving in broad daylight and firing intermittently, passed several burning and destroyed vehicles.

The Fox News Channel footage showed few buildings on either side of the road, a large sand-coloured mosque with twin minarets and a line of larger-than-life statues but no footage of any built-up area.

An Iraqi in civilian clothes and with his hands up emerged from a grove beside the highway and lay down on the asphalt.

Fox had a correspondent with the column riding atop a Bradley.

The vehicles passed under several highway bridges. One road sign pointed to Bayaa and

City Centre. Another shown later in the sequence pointed to Baghdad Airport.

The Arabic satellite network al Jazeera later carried footage of jubilant Iraqis on a highway next to the burnt-out wreckage of what looked like US armoured fighting vehicles. Road signs there also pointed to the airport and City Centre.

US military spokesmen said rocket-propelled grenades had damaged one US tank. A second had to be abandoned in Baghdad because of mechanical failure, they added.

The southern outskirts of Baghdad looked like a war front, with scores of Iraqi soldiers and paramilitary forces heading out to confront an approaching US enemy.

Overnight raids left more government complexes in ruin.

Shops in normally busy districts, such as New Baghdad, were almost all shut, and far fewer cars were on the roads. Long queues formed at those petrol stations still open. What cars there were sped faster than usual.

Drivers, who rarely give

Baghdad traffic lights much respect, ignored them completely.

Heavy artillery and rocket launchers were positioned in the Dawra area, home to the main oil refinery feeding Baghdad and an area where a US spokesman said American tanks drove early today on a reconnaissance mission. Palm trees and farms provided cover. Iraqi artillery occasionally fired to the south and southeast.

Inside the city, checkpoints were installed on the road to the airport and the paramilitary directed traffic. Heavy military gear could be seen moving on roads around the centre.

Republican Guards were seen around one presidential compound in the city. Soldiers spilled out of pick-up trucks and took up positions near main highways. US fighter jets flew overhead.

A convoy of police cars with sirens wailing drove around the centre of Baghdad. The officers inside fired AK-47s in the air and raised pictures of Saddam and Iraqi flags to celebrate what Iraqi officials said was the recapture of the airport.



The wreckage of an Iraqi anti-aircraft truck lies on a major highway intersection on the outskirts of Baghdad. (AFP)



BEGINNING OF THE END: Cheering Iraqi soldiers head for the outskirts of Baghdad on Saturday. (AFP)

## Tough world of cigarette barter

Southern Iraq, April 5 (Reuters): Is a Cuban cigar worth swapping for a can of processed meat?

In a war zone, no way.

US troops in Iraq are running low on cigars, cigarettes and chewing tobacco, plunging them into a hard-nosed world of barter where nicotine commands a premium price. "I can give you a ham — it's all I have left, then after that, all my goodies are gone," said Ross, a US Marine keen for a drag on a Jose L. Piedra Cuban cheroot.

His offer declined, the private first class shrugged and resumed playing solitaire with cards depicting naked women, relying on the heavy metal blaring from his earphones for stimulation.

Cigars are among the most highly valued luxuries among members of the American-led invasion force, but cigarettes are also leaping in value as reserves burn up.

"I'd offer anything from \$10 to \$20 a pack, which I'll get through in a day," said Lance-Corporal Sean Enghauser, 21, wandering a sandy roadside in search of

smokes. Twenty dollars would be a major premium — a packet of 20 cigarettes normally costs about \$5 at the Marine's home base in California.

Like other Marines, Enghauser has discovered that being on a battlefield is not generally good for your health, but Iraq is turning out to be a good place to cut down on smoking.

Many in the US military, who had expected to capture Baghdad within a week or so, packed only enough nicotine to last that long. Comfort packages bursting with replacements sent by loved ones have not yet arrived. The strain is beginning to show. Marines speak of swapping a portable CD player for a single packet of cigarettes, or even their combat knives.

Mouth problem?

Chewing tobacco, known as "chew" or "dip", is also becoming increasingly scarce.

Troops keep the moist, peaty substance wedged in between their lower lip and gum, forming a bulge in their mouth that

looks to the untrained eye like a nasty oral complaint. The substance stimulates saliva production, filling the mouth with a tobacco-like taste and forcing users to discharge yellow goblets of spit at frequent intervals.

First-time consumers complain of dizziness and sometimes vomit, but old hands swear by it — pointing out that unlike the glow of cigarette ends, it cannot give away their position to the enemy in the dark.

"It gives me that little buzz that I need," said Lance-Corporal Danny Brooks, 22, happy to have just obtained a tin of Copenhagen fine cut blend from a fellow Marine.

"I'm not going to go on my knees for dip, but I've got \$150 out here and nothing to spend it on. I'm willing to pay a price," he said. Some say they fire machineguns and chew tobacco at the same time — a move more tricky with cigarettes.

As supply falls, demand has increased. The old adage that war is 99 per cent boredom and one per cent pure terror has proved true for many in Iraq. Cigarettes help deal with both phases.

## Baghdad cleric seeks divine intervention

Baghdad, April 5: The imam leaned on his sword and intoned to the ranks of the faithful. "Allah! Do not let us down! Defeat our enemies, the English, the Americans, the Jews!" he cried into his microphone.

"Make the earth tremble beneath their feet! Turn their blood to ice! Show us the extent of your power!"

With his long beard, white turban and with one hand on his sword in its scabbard, the other making broad gestures, Sheikh Bakr al-Samarai, the imam at Baghdad's al Gailani mosque, invoked divine intervention to avenge the "infidel".

"Iraqis! Allah has chosen you as his people! Allah! Give us victory and show the right path for our leader Saddam Hussein!"

The message echoed through loudspeakers. All of Baghdad's main mosques have their own generators. In a city deprived of electricity since Thursday evening, the imams' voices will not be silenced.

And this was not just any audience. Among the traditional keffiyeh and the occasional pair of jeans were plenty of olive green uniforms belonging to members of the Baath party and the various secret services.

"Allah is the greatest!" concluded the imam. The ranks of faithful bowed down, feverishly muttering. Built in the 12th century above the tomb of Sheikh Abdelkader al-Gailani, known as the Supreme Saviour, one of the great holy men of the Sunni faith, the mosque is a regular venue for the Iraqi regime's top brass. Among the marble columns, the moustachioed generals kissed each other affectionately. Uniformed Baath Party leaders, with pistols on their belts, gathered before the Supreme Saviour's tomb.

The minister of religious affairs passed with a wave of his hand, surrounded by bodyguards. His entire entourage was armed. The next to leave was Imam Samarai, with his head held high. His brother, a large man holding a Kalashnikov, dismissed the crowd.

In front of the mosque, an old man in a headscarf prophetically announced an American defeat.

"We are not Somalia, we are not Afghanistan," said Hadji Salahuddin, his voice quavering.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

## Thank you for coming, Iraqis tell Marines

Aziziyah (Iraq), April 5 (Reuters): Cheering Iraqis handed out soft drinks and offered cigarettes to US Marines today, warmly welcoming the troops and making throat-slitting gestures at pictures of President Saddam Hussein.

The Marines rolled into this town, 80 km southeast of Baghdad, to tackle any pockets of resistance from Saddam loyalists bypassed as the US vanguard swept towards the capital in the last two days.

Instead they saw hundreds of young men heading away from the capital, apparently deserting the Iraqi army. Senior officials of Saddam's Baath Party had fled the town, residents said.

Happy crowds milled around the Marines' armoured vehicles, asking in faltering English if they had come to free Iraq or take their oil, as the Iraqi leadership has repeatedly claimed.

A loud hurrah went up as a Marine told the crowd that the US-led forces had come to liberate them.

"Thank you for coming, now I don't have to serve in the army," said Taha Ahmed, 35. "All of us have run away from the Iraqi army, we don't want to fight, we are tired of war."

US troops expressed disappointment in the early days of the invasion when instead of an expected welcome from Iraqis they met stiff resistance.

The Marines were slightly bemused by the warmth with which they were greeted in this medium-sized town but accepted the bottles of soft drinks they were offered and politely declined the cigarettes. A girl in a blue vest held out a pink flower to a passing US vehicle.

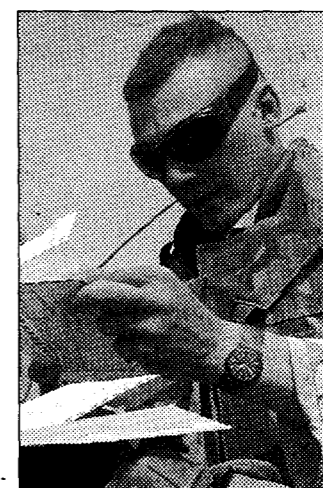
"It sure beats having to shoot them," said one Marine, sweating heavily in his protective anti-chemical weapon suit under the blazing sun.

The reception in Aziziyah mirrored the friendly atmosphere in many Iraqi towns passed through in recent days.

All Iraqi forces and senior officials of Saddam's Baath Party had fled the town two days previously, leaving the locals to loot and burn their offices and tear down posters of Saddam, said Sirown, 21, who was too afraid to give his family name. Sirown

said he had come to Aziziyah from Baghdad to escape the bombing of the Iraqi capital.

His friend, Ali, 27, pulled out a large bankroll, pointed at the picture of Saddam that graces each Iraqi banknote and drew his finger across his throat with a smile. "People are very happy now. We couldn't speak before because the Baath Party would kill them. Now everything is OK," Ali said. He said the first thing he wanted any new government to change was the banknotes.



Jason Hare of the 3rd Infantry Division reads a letter from his girlfriend as unexpected mail reached US troops near the Euphrates river, 20 km outside Baghdad. (Reuters)

"Will we have new money or will we have dollars?" he asked.

The crowd were curious, querying how long the US forces would stay, what would happen to oil revenues, when UN food distribution would restart and when the power and water supply would come back on.

Some asked why US forces would have to stay up to two years in Iraq and when they would have their own army again. "Will we have democracy and clean water soon?" asked Malek Farhan, who said he was a town councillor.

"Thank you for coming. For 17 years I've been running away from the army," said Hassan Zebun, who said he was unable to marry or buy a house since he could not get a job with his deserter status.

# BAGHDAD:

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Much of the US military activity around Baghdad today appeared aimed at preventing any regrouping of Republican Guard forces to the rear of the coalition. Armoured troops took several "objectives" surrounding Baghdad, said a US official who declined to identify the targets taken. On the road to the airport, Iraqi Army troops flashing the V-sign danced on top of what they said were US armoured personnel carriers destroyed over the past two days. Southwest of the capital, the 3rd Infantry captured the abandoned hub of the Republican Guard's elite Medina division - one of Iraq's best-trained units - in Suwayrah.

The Iraqi military in a statement read on satellite TV today said US forces were repulsed when they tried to advance from the south: "We were able to chop off their rotten heads." Mr Saddam Hussein, in a statement read on Iraqi TV by Mr al-Sahhaf, urged his men to charge at the coalition "and destroy them".

As Marine units advanced, Iraqi civilian vehicles and even horse-drawn carts fled south, packed with bundles and bearing improvised white flags made from torn-up towels or T-shirts. The road was smoking because the Iraqis dug long trenches, filled them with oil and set them on fire. Some refugees begged US soldiers for water as they trudged through the scorching 41° Celsius heat.

As US troops drove into Suwayrah, hundreds of young men in civilian clothes waved from the roadside. "Look at all the Republican Guard waving at us," said Sgt. Bryce Ivings, suggesting the men on the roadside had quickly changed out of their uniforms. At another location off Baghdad, 3rd Infantry soldiers found an ambulance carrying cases of grenades, a rocket-propelled grenade launcher and boxes of classified Republican Guard documents.

In the north, Kurdish forces have started gathering near the southern edge of their autonomous region ~~in~~ striking distance of the oil-rich city of Khaneqin, while in the north, US planes hit Iraqi positions near the market city of Mosul.

Coalition warplanes flew round-the-clock missions over Baghdad to prepare for the final ground attack, said Air Force Lt.-Gen. Michael Moseley, in charge of the air war. He dismissed the notion that coalition air power was being used to soften up the Republican Guards: "We're not softening them up. We're killing them."

**'Chemical Ali' attacked:** Two coalition aircraft struck with precision-guided bombs the Basra residence of Mr Hussein's cousin, Ali Hassan al-Majid, or "Chemical Ali", commander of Iraq's southern forces, the Central Command said. Ali, a key member of the "inner circle", came to notorious prominence after the ruthless gassing of Kurds in 1988. An assessment of the full impact of the strike is underway, US officers said.

**Endgame talks:** As the endgame on the streets and alleys of Baghdad approached, on the political front Russian President Mr Vladimir Putin and Mr George Bush today agreed in a telephonic conversation on the need to continue Russian-American political dialogue on the Iraq war, the Kremlin said, reports AFP from Moscow.

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# BAGHDAD:

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# Arab media portray war as killing field

By Susan Sachs

Cairo: It was a picture of Arab grief and rage. A teenage boy glared from the rubble of a bombed building as a veiled woman wept over the body of a relative.

In fact, it was two pictures: one from the American-led war in Iraq and the other from the Palestinian territories, blended into one image this week on the website of the popular Saudi daily newspaper *Al Watan*.

The meaning would be clear to any Arab reader: what is happening in Iraq is part of one continuous brutal assault by America and its allies on defenceless Arabs, wherever they are.

As the Iraq war moved into its third week, the media in the region have increasingly fused images and enemies from this and other conflicts into a single bloodstained tableau. The Israeli flag is superimposed on the American flag. The Crusades and the 13th-century Mongul sack of Baghdad, recalled as barbarian attacks on Arab civilisation, are used as synonyms for the American-led invasion of Iraq.

Horrific vignettes of the helpless armless children,

crushed babies, stunned mothers cascade into Arab living rooms from the front pages of newspapers and television screens.

"The media are playing a very dangerous game in this conflict," said Abdel Moneim Said, director of the Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo. "When you see the vocabulary and the images used, it is bringing everybody to the worst nightmare the clash of civilisations."

The rage against the US is

fed by this steady diet of close-up colour photographs and television footage of dead and wounded Iraqis, described as victims of American bombs.

Fahmi Howeidy, a prominent Islamist writer in Cairo, says the reactions are not necessarily pro-Saddam. "Of course, we think Saddam Hussein will not continue in power, but if he resists for weeks, at least he will defend his image as a hero who could resist US and British power," Mr Howeidy said.

Gasra Mustafa Abaido, an assistant professor of communications at Ain Shams University in Cairo, said, "What we see in the media is an indirect way for the governments and the public to reject the war."

According to Dr Said, "In the longer run, these images can breed a certain type of people, not the ones who are looking to develop our societies but those who think how to sacrifice themselves."

Arab leaders, pragmatists by necessity, have tried to accommodate those feelings, while also trying not to jeopardise their defence and foreign aid arrangements with Washington.

"Most people realise that it's not in our national interest to burn our bridges with the US," a senior Jordanian official said. But if the war in Iraq does not end soon, many Arab intellectuals say, its iconic images could set off a backlash of extremism.

"Some people said, before the invasion of Iraq, that solving the Saddam problem would make the reputation of the US better," said Turki al-Hamad, a Saudi commentator. "Now if the US said 2 plus 2 is 4, no one would believe them." NYT News Service



Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, as shown on the state-owned television channel, walks in a Baghdad street with his entourage on Friday

# Saddam pops up on capital street



A puppy looks for food outside Baghdad on Friday. (Reuters)

## Flight from night of hell

Baghdad, April 4 (Reuters): Residents fled suburbs near the Iraqi capital's main airport towards the city centre today, running from what one called a "night of hell" as US forces moved in.

Cars loaded with blankets and possessions on the roof raced up the main highway from the airport as residents felt that the 16-day-old US-led war had arrived in Baghdad.

There was little sign of new military preparations, aside from groups of green-uniformed militiamen armed with automatic rifles manning barricades throughout the city.

Most shops were shut and people stayed indoors, confused as reports — not carried on state media — percolated through that Saddam International Airport had fallen.

US commanders said the airport was indeed now under their control.

"There was banging all night. It was a night of hell," said one woman, trembling after her drive from the airport district.

The city centre itself was initially deserted but around mid-morning some life returned, as a few private cars ventured out and Baghdad's big red double-decker buses resumed services. There were some queues at petrol stations that were open.

Most were closed because all electric power in the city went off overnight, but some stations used their own generators. In the early afternoon, explosions could be heard from the direction of the international airport. Elsewhere, it was hard to tell where there was fresh bomb damage.

Air force command headquarters, struck three days ago, appeared to have suffered a fresh hit. US-led forces said they had targeted the building in central Baghdad.

It was not clear whether the power outage, which continued through the morning, was caused by bombing or by the Baghdad authorities.

The completeness of the blackout suggested it might have been done to conceal the overnight Iraqi troop movements. The weather was hot and black smoke drifted over the city from oil-filled trenches set alight on the outskirts in an attempt to thwart US-led air raids. State television, off the air for a while, came back on, broadcasting nationalist songs in praise of President Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi army.

The television said Saddam had ordered compensation within 72 hours for all families whose homes were destroyed by bombardment. He also ordered generous payments to families of the killed and injured.

Iraqi satellite television showed a recorded message by an unidentified, but senior-looking, Shia cleric calling on Iraqis to "do their duty before God" and fight the US-led invasion of their "holy, Muslim country".

The broadcast came a day after influential Iraqi Shia leader Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani urged followers to remain neutral in any fighting — a step which experts said could undermine Saddam's hopes of rallying Iraqis in a "holy war" against US and British troops.

Baghdad, April 4 (Reuters): Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, breaking his habit of avoiding the public gaze, was shown on Iraqi television on Friday being mobbed by cheering Iraqis in a bombed area of the capital threatened by US troops.

A smiling Saddam greeted mobs of chanting admirers walking amid bomb-damaged buildings with smoke seen from oil fires burning in the distance.

Some kissed him on his cheeks and hands and he held up a small child.

"How are you?" Saddam was heard asking excited and clearly surprised citizens.

"May God protect you, President," said one Iraqi.

Another man said: "We'll defend you with our blood and souls, Saddam."

It could not be immediately confirmed whether the footage released by Iraqi television was shot on Friday. A Reuters driver said he saw a large crowd of people on Friday afternoon in the area of Baghdad which Saddam was said to have visited. He did not see the President.

Saddam, who made similar public tours of parts of Baghdad during the 1991 Gulf War, is believed to have last been seen in public as long as two years ago. His whereabouts have been the subject of intense speculation since US-led forces bombed Baghdad on March 20 targeting the Iraqi leader and his two sons.

But earlier on Friday in a taped address read on Iraqi television, Saddam provided the first real clue that he had, in fact, survived that attack when he mentioned the downing of an Apache helicopter by an Iraqi farmer on March 24.

"The enemy is overtaking our valiant defences around Baghdad just like it did around other cities and they (enemy) are avoiding clashes..." Saddam said in his address.

"They are deploying here and there, just like we expected, and these deployments are normally



THE SURVIVOR: A picture from Iraqi TV shows a man kissing Saddam Hussein's hand in Baghdad. (Reuters)

thin and we can confront them with the weapons available, and you recall the Iraqi peasant that downed an Apache with his rifle."

Iraqi information minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf announced on March 24 that Iraqi farmers had shot down two Apaches.

US defence officials confirmed that an Apache Longbow was downed in Iraq but had no comment on claims that a second helicopter was shot down.

Saddam urged the people of Baghdad to "strike the enemy with force" and predicted victory over the invading US and

British troops.

"Hit them with force, resist them, oh people of Baghdad whenever they advance upon your city and remain true to your principles, your faith and your honour," said Saddam, dressed in a green military uniform.

It was not clear when the statement was filmed. Iraqi television has repeatedly shown footage of him in what it says are meetings with ministers, most recently on Thursday.

Iraqi foreign minister Naji Sabri told the BBC that despite nightly bombing of Baghdad, Saddam and his

government are intact.

"The President is well, the leadership are well...and they are functioning as normal," he told BBC.

The Pentagon labelled as "interesting" the videotape depicting Saddam greeting people in Baghdad, adding that officials do not see effective control over the Iraqi military from Iraq's President.

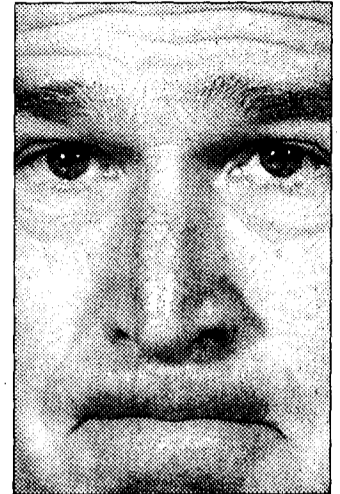
"We find it interesting that Saddam Hussein, if he is alive, feels the need to walk in the street to prove that," Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, vice-director for operations for the US military's Joint Staff, told

a Pentagon briefing.

"What we don't see is effective command and control from his level. We do see some sort of regime command and control, but effective military command and control, which is normally emanated from the core of the regime, has not been apparent on the battlefield."

Pentagon chief spokeswoman Victoria Clarke, speaking at the same briefing, said the defence department had "no idea where the tapes have come from. I just don't think it's that significant what may or may not be in tapes or when they may have been made."

## S-word out of Bush's victory



George W. Bush

Washington, April 4 (Reuters): The White House said today it would consider military action in Iraq a success even if US forces failed to find President Saddam Hussein, whose appearance on Iraqi television could prove he survived a US bombing raid on the first night of the war.

While finding Saddam — either dead or alive — would be "helpful", White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said President George W. Bush's "definition of victory" was removing the current government from power and eliminating the country's alleged weapons of mass destruction.

Fleischer said newly-aired tapes of Saddam were being analysed by the US and that it was too soon to draw "firm conclusions one way or another" about whether the Iraqi leader is alive or dead. "We don't know," he said.

If Saddam eludes US forces, he would join the ranks of America's most wanted, a list now topped by al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden, whom Washington blames for the September 11 attacks on the US.

"What's important in the President's judgement is that the regime be disarmed and that the regime be changed so the Iraqi people can be free and liberated," Fleischer said.

"Certainly, any clear resolution about Saddam Hussein's fate helps provide some clarity to that," Fleischer said. "But the definition of victory is those two factors that I cited, that the President has cited."

"In the bigger scheme of things, it really doesn't matter because whether it is him

or whether it isn't him, the regime's days are numbered and are coming to an end," he added.

Fleischer said Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair would meet next Tuesday in Northern Ireland to discuss the Iraq war and reviving the West Asian peace process.

Though Fleischer said no dates have been set, Bush administration officials are considering quickly installing an interim Iraqi authority in areas under the control of US-led forces while the government in Baghdad is cut off from the rest of the country.

American officials, aware that they stand to suffer severe international criticism for running what would amount to a puppet government, said they want to involve Iraqis in the running of the government as soon as possible.

## Baghdad braces for final showdown



SEARCH FOR SAFETY: An Iraqi family flees Baghdad on Friday. (Reuters)

Baghdad, April 4 (Reuters): The people of Baghdad realise now that the final battle has reached their doorstep.

The capital's fate, in the war started by the US two weeks ago to oust Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, is about to be decided, they feel. But they do not know what to do about it.

"This is it. This is the final battle. We have no way out. We are facing a reality now. We're confronting the mightiest army in the world. What can we do? Where can we go? We're at a loss," said Nour Khaled, 48, a mother of two.

Perhaps the worst aspect of life under bombing is fear and uncertainty. Fear of dying or being maimed, fear of losing one's child and husband or parent. "We will definitely die. Who can escape such a war? My husband and I pray to God that if we're to die we wish to die together. Our main fear is that our children will die and we will stay alive."

"Yesterday we saw death in front of our eyes," a traumatised Khaled added, recounting how a missile crashed near her home on the outskirts of Baghdad, forcing her to flee barefoot carrying her two children.

Even if the state-run media did not report the advances of US forces to some 20 km from the

capital, the fierce blitz that accompanied the thrust conveyed the message. Wave after wave of US planes pounded positions of the elite Republican Guard, Saddam's best warriors and key defences as US ground combat troops moved towards Baghdad's Saddam International Airport last night.

"I cannot talk. I cannot even begin to describe to you what happened. It was a night of hell. There was relentless bombardment all night. We thought that they have entered all of Baghdad and occupied the whole city," said one woman.

"The planes were dropping and unloading their bombs over our heads," she said, trembling after her drive from the airport district. She had stopped to buy bread at one of the few stores open today.

"It was terrifying. Not just for the kids but for us adults," the woman said, adding that many of her neighbours in the Radwaniya suburb near the airport were also fleeing to take refuge with friends and relatives closer to the centre.

The people of Baghdad have no illusions or hope that anything can spare them carnage.

After so many inconclusive battles, bombardments and skirmishes over the past 13 years since Saddam began his conflict

with the world's sole superpower, most people believe that this is the final showdown.

Many, aware that their leadership will not surrender, believe Iraqi civilians will become the meat in the sandwich between US forces and Saddam's troops.

Most said they could no longer live with uncertainty and were ready to face their destiny even if it meant death.

Code-named "Shock and Awe" the US military operation has involved raids by hundreds of fighter jets and bombers on Iraq's airport, air defence facilities, command centres and military positions.

The force of the latest air assault and quick advance towards the capital and airport appeared to have been surprising and devastating to many of the people of Baghdad, a city with an estimated population of five million.

"The bombardment was horrific. It was the worst and the most powerful so far. We felt as if the Americans were going to be outside our homes any time," said Jamila Husamy, 45, who was among many fleeing the suburbs near the airport into the city.

Cars loaded with blankets and possessions on the roof raced at high speed up the main highway from the airport toward the city centre.

## Gigantic, bronze tyrant razed to the ground in Najaf

JIM DWYER

Najaf, April 4: At one end of the city, the Tomb of Ali, son-in-law of the prophet Muhammad, occupies a place of honour that has been revered by Shias for centuries. And dominating the four-lane boulevard approaching the holy site is a monument loathed by the Shias for a decade: a gigantic bronze statue of Saddam Hussein on a horse, seeming to dare posterity to set its gaze on his grandeur.

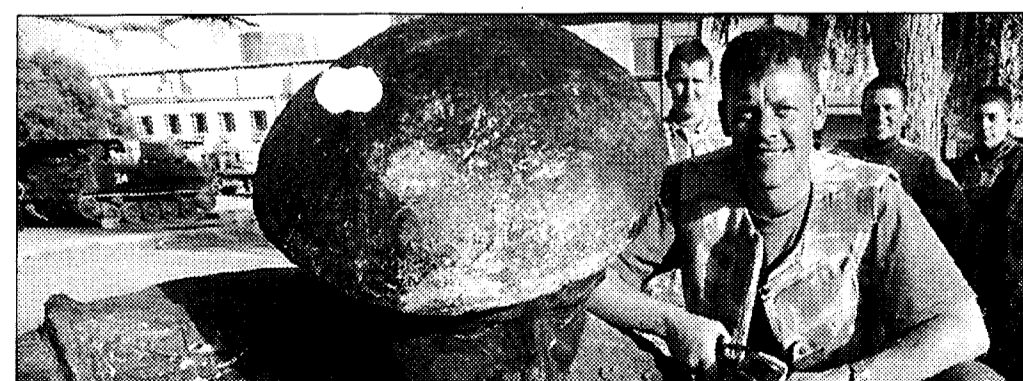
In a couple of hours yesterday, a handful of American soldiers proved it was possible to topple Saddam. Officially, the demolition was carried out at the behest of an Iraqi Army colonel leading several dozen Iraqi soldiers who styled themselves as the Coalition of Iraqi National Unity.

The actual razing of the statue, however, was a production of US army engineers.

"Six bangalore torpedoes," Sergeant Kris Catts, 23, said, reciting the explosive recipe he used. "Eight blocks of C-4. One M-12 — that's shock tube, it'll detonate when you push the button. One M-11, another shock tube. One M-14, a timer fuse, set for five minutes. Two M-81 fuse igniters, in case the shock tube doesn't blow. Fifty feet of detonation cord."

Catts made a ladder out of rope and pulled himself 20 feet up the marble pedestal on which the statue stood, guided from the ground by Sergeant Shawn Love. The explosives were passed up by rope to Catts by Love and Corporal Francisco Santiago.

"This statue will come down," said Love.



British soldiers pose with the remains of a Saddam Hussein statue in al Zubayr, southern Iraq. (Reuters)

That prospect drew crowds. The Saddam monument is in one of the few verdant patches in this city of 400,000, where other than the golden domes of the mosques, the poured concrete ar-

chitecture stretches into grindingly dusty vistas, interrupted only by broken glass, or crumbled buildings.

There is little public art other than elaborate portraits of Sad-

dam, which appear on government buildings, sometimes with Saddam depicted firing his rifle into the sky other times just gazing into the distance. Many of these seem to have taken a beat-

ing in the last few days.

As the engineers strapped explosives to the legs of the horse that Saddam sat astride, army tanks blocked entry to the boulevard. Hundreds of men and boys crowded on nearby street corners. The blast, when it came, was met with rousing cheers.

The horse and its rider were sent hurtling off the pedestal, crashing to the base. Then the Iraqi colonel and his men began speaking over a loudspeaker, proclaiming an uprising against the government of Saddam. When they were finished, residents snapped pictures of friends on top of the pile of ruins of the statue, or posed with the soldiers. Then came questions for the nearest available Americans.

"When Saddam Hussein goes?" Ali Salah asked. "Not in

Najaf. Saddam in Baghdad."

With the first day of very hot weather, the lack of water in the city continued to be a problem, but by late in the day, the army had shipped in 1,000 gallons for residents of the neighbourhoods occupied by the brigades.

Of the 24 schools in this region inspected by soldiers from the Second Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, all 24 had large quantities of arms stored in classrooms, according to Maj. Pierre Gervais. "At least 1,000 mortar rounds, hundreds of rocket propelled grenades, 1,200 anti-personnel mines, 250 anti-tank mines," Gervais said, listing the confiscated ammunition.

Lt Col Joseph Anderson added: "The schools were the armories."

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

# Restoring Iraq to Iraqis

When the guns fall silent, new challenges face the world

IF the Iraq war posed a whole range of challenges that shook the five decade old trans-Atlantic alliance and re-emphasised US unilateralism, besides unleashing a tide of blood and tears, steering a post-war Iraq to peace and prosperity may yet prove the bigger challenge. One can only hope at this stage that the suffering of the Iraqis would remain uppermost in the thinking of policy makers across the world and not get lost in the cynical power play among nations. Realism and pragmatism should be built around the needs of ordinary people rather than the advantages others may see in the emerging situation. Fortunately, Iraq is endowed with tremendous amount of natural resources in the shape of oil to pay for its own re-construction. But the danger is that this itself has been seen as a prize by many.

There is a natural tendency to seek a role for the UN in post-war Iraq. If we look at the tasks ahead dispassionately, then three areas stand out: An immediate challenge of humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of people, the challenge of ensuring effective administration of the country, and last, but not the least, the reconstruction of Iraq and its institutions. When seen together there is an obvious potential for international co-operation, although what areas would be shared among who and in what way would remain

contentious. The task of humanitarian assistance would be best handled by the UN and its agencies. An early decision on this issue could be helpful in reducing at least the depth of emotions, if not the actual differences in other areas. The UN secretary general should take the lead in nominating a co-ordinator and his team, preferably from the developing world, for this task.

Realities of the war, and what has gone on before it, would indicate that the US would not be willing to give up a dominant role in decision making for the dispensation of the immediate and subsequent administrative authority in Iraq. Washington has already spelt out the contours of the immediate military administration and the shape of the interim authority that it would prefer. With close to 200,000 troops in the country it would be logical and necessary for the administration to be supported by the Americans. At the same time, the US should make it clear that its military would remain there for the briefest possible time to ensure that law and order is maintained, and reprisal killings do not derail the process of re-building peace. It must be remembered that Iraq is not Afghanistan. The search for Iraqi participation in the administration must commence as early as possible; and this should go beyond the political divide to include traditionally respected families and clans, even if they are from Tikrit.

5 APR 2003

# War tears their life apart

HD-15 5/2

**HILLA (IRAQ), APRIL 4.** The boy, perhaps 10 or 11, was bewildered, separated from his parents, lying on a hospital bed. All about was chaos, mothers weeping for their dead and wounded children, doctors and nurses shouting to be heard, coffins shouldered along the corridors to taxis that stacked two and three on their roofs at a time, serving as makeshift hearses.

It was not clear, in the confusion, if the boy was told why he had been asked to follow the nurse out of the ward, down the passageway, past the lamentations and the cursings, to the operating theatre. He seemed frightened, and if he heard the question, he never gave his name, or any details of how he got his wound.

Once on the operating table, quickly anaesthetised, he knew nothing. His wounded arm was unbandaged and amputated rapidly by the surgeon just below the elbow. So it was at the general hospital in Hilla, an hour's drive south of Baghdad, on the road to the site of the ancient town of Babylon, now a soulless recreation of ancient glory, built as a backdrop to one of Saddam Hussein's ubiquitous palaces.

Hilla itself is a nondescript place. But it is a front-line city, and a showcase of what Mr. Hussein's Government



**An Iraqi man holds his injured child at a hospital in Hilla on Wednesday. The child is among 310 people who were wounded in the U.S.-British bombing of a residential area near Hilla on Tuesday. — AFP**

wants the world to believe about the American way of war. Officials marshalling the buses from the Palestine Hotel in the capital made it plain that, for them, the case was open and shut, an example of American weapons being used indiscriminately to kill civilians.

Saad al-Fallouji, the hospital's chief surgeon, said on Tuesday alone, the hospital received 33 victims dead on arrival and 180 others who were wounded by American fire.

"Most of them — no, all of them — were civilians," he said. "All of them were from

Nadir village, women and children and men of all ages, mostly they had very serious injuries to their abdomens, to their intestines, to their chests and their heads. Many of the bodies were completely torn apart."

Reporters had no difficulty confirming that there had been scores of casualties — the dead evident in the procession of coffins, and in the torn bodies that crowded the shelves of the large refrigerator in the hospital's front garden, the wounded filling every ward, many eager to recount how they had come under American fire. Hussein Ali Hussein (26),

a door-to-door gas salesman, lay on a bed, the stump of one leg covered in a bloody bandage, a mass of flies settling on the gauze. He said he had been in a car that was hit by an American tank shell as he drove south toward Kifl, near Najaf. "We believed the Americans, when they said they were not going to attack civilians," he said.

Another patient, Bassan Hoki (38), said he was in the bus attack. Surgeons had amputated his right arm above the elbow, and seeping bandages covered deep wounds on both his legs.

It was difficult to mesh accounts from the hospital with the scenes where the attacks were said to have occurred. In Nadir, a sprawl of one- and two-storey brick or mud homes astride the line of the American advance, reporters were shown the bus on which, doctors said, 18 people were killed and 16 wounded by American tank fire. The bus stood in a clearing and reporters were led on a tour of sinuous alleyways to see the damage from what was described as the cluster bombing of an entire neighbourhood. Nadir, by noon, was deserted, save for families here and there loading up possessions into cars and glimpses of men in military uniforms, some with the red triangular shoulder flashes of the Republican Guard. — *New York Times*

THE HINDO

5 APR 2003

ARNS OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ASSAULT; ANOTHER SUICIDE ATTACK

# Forces take over Baghdad airport

something that is non-conventional against them, not military. It will be a great example to them," he said.

"Unless they surrender quickly, I don't think there's any chance that they will survive," he said, referring to the U.S. forces outside Baghdad. "We consider it an isolated island"

## Republican guards surrender

Meanwhile, to the southeast of Baghdad, the Marines reported that about 2,500 Republican Guards surrendered between the cities of Kut and Baghdad. The former pulled on chemical suits as they prepared for what could be the final assault on Mr. Hussein's seat of power.

The attack on the airport began at dusk on Thursday with units of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division moving in to seize the nearly four-km main runway. Gunshots were heard from inside. It was unclear how many Iraqi troops remained in the airport.

Navy warplanes from the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk dropped scores of satellite and laser-guided bombs on the airport and a nearby military complex on Thursday night and early on Friday. F/A-18 Hornets and F-14 Tomcat strike fighters hit a hanger and fuel depot at the airport with a barrage of 225-kg laser-guided bombs, said Lt. Brook DeWalt, a spokesman for the ship.

Eight 900-kg satellite-guided bombs were dropped on a target listed as a military complex near the airport, Lt. DeWalt said. Other targets included artillery posts, a possible surface-to-air missile site and bunkers, he added. The U.S. Marine 1st

Division was massed on the southeastern outskirts of Baghdad on Friday morning after hours of pushing up the Tigris river past abandoned Iraqi positions with little resistance.

However, an Iraqi force was believed standing between them and the capital. Despite high temperatures, the Marines pulled on stifling protection suits in case of chemical attack.

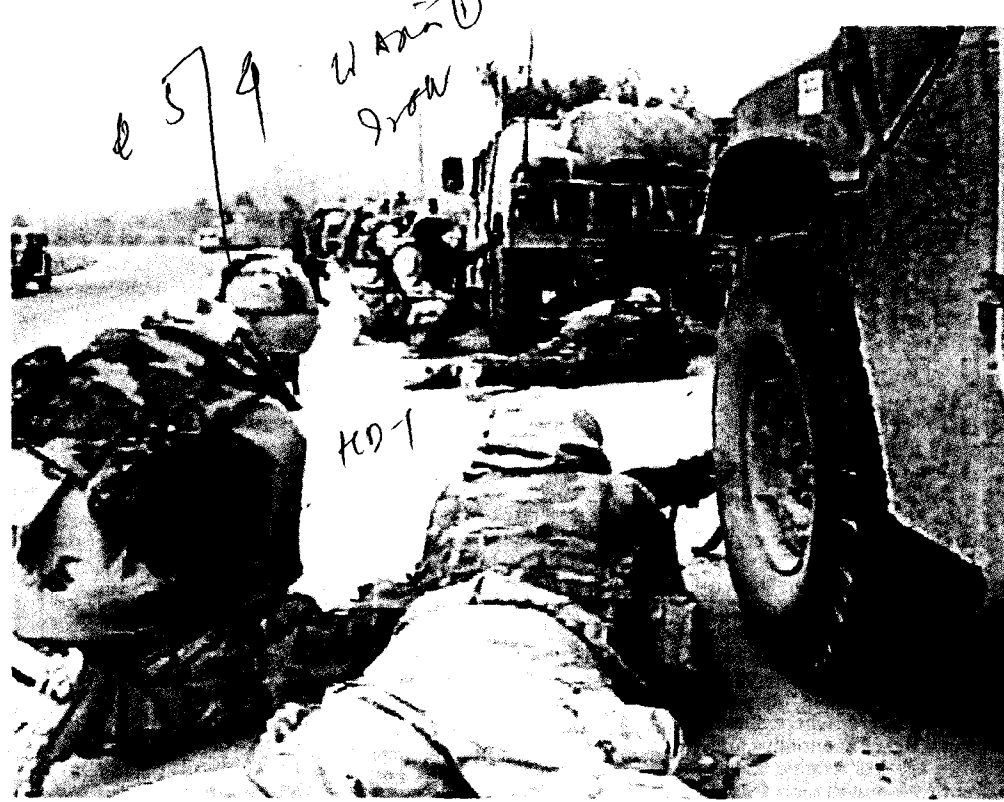
On Friday, members of the 3rd Infantry continued a sweep through the outskirts of Baghdad amid palm groves, paddy fields, cornfields and irrigation canals and came across what appeared to be the front line of a Republican Guard company.

A firefight broke out and two Republican Guards in uniform were wounded. Two Republican Guards who had put on civilian clothes were also taken prisoner. One, speaking through an interpreter, said: "We got bombed last night, and most of our tanks were destroyed."

Near Numaniyah, southeast of Baghdad, Marines manned a checkpoint on Friday on a highway leading to the capital and said they were seeing a steady flow of young men they suspected were Iraqi soldiers trying to rejoin their shattered units.

Elsewhere, U.S. air strikes and Kurdish Peshmerga militia forced Iraqi troops to pull back along the road towards the northern oil city of Mosul today, after 24 hours of heavy bombing.

A Reuters photographer said the retreat started at around midday, when Iraqi troops pulled back from trenches where they had held out since late yesterday morning, after coming under repeated strikes from U.S. aircraft. "A vice is closing on the regime," the U.S.



U.S. soldiers approaching the Saddam International Airport on Friday after an all-night tank and infantry assault. — AP

President, George W. Bush, told Marines at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina. Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the Iraqi

President, Saddam Hussein, had lost control of 45 per cent of Iraq's territory. Gen. Myers indicated there may not be an all-out battle for Baghdad but that

members of Mr. Hussein's regime might be isolated and replaced with a "interim administration." — AP, AFP, Reuters

## Saddam on Baghdad streets

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 4.** Iraqi television showed footage of what it said was President, Saddam Hussein, visiting residential areas of Baghdad today.

Dressed in military uniform, Mr. Hussein was mobbed by cheering, chanting Iraqis. Some of them kissed him on his cheeks and hands and he held up a small child. The television said he visited buildings bombed by U.S. warplanes.

There was no way of verifying when the film was made. Mr. Hussein has a number of doubles. The clip was shown on a day when the U.S. troops said they had taken control of the Saddam International Airport, just 20 km southwest of the capital.

Saddam Hussein appeared in olive green military garb on the main square of the al-Mansour residential neighbourhood of Baghdad, flanked by a few bodyguards, but packing a firearm in a holster.

The footage, which showed a scene in daylight, was broadcast at about 1730 GMT (11 a.m. IST).

Smiling broadly, the Iraqi strongman accepted the kisses of his hand from the jubilant crowd, which chanted "With

our blood and our souls; we shall redeem you" and "Bush, Bush, listen well, we all love Saddam Hussein."

### Hit them with force

Earlier in the day, Mr. Hussein mentioned the shooting down of a U.S. Apache helicopter by an Iraqi farmer in late March, indicating that he survived the first days of the war.

"The enemy is overtaking our valiant defences around Baghdad just like it did around other cities and they (enemy) are avoiding clashes..." Mr. Hussein said in his address.

"They are deploying here and there, just like we expected, and these deployments are normally thin and we can confront them with the weapons available, and you recall the Iraqi peasant that downed an Apache with his rifle."

The Iraqi Information

Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, announced on March 24 that Iraqi farmers had shot down two Apaches.

U.S. defence officials confirmed that an Apache Longbow was downed in Iraq, but had no comment on claims that a second helicopter was shot down.

Mr. Saddam Hussein's address came as U.S. forces took control of Baghdad international airport 20 km from the Iraqi capital.

He urged the people of Baghdad to "strike the enemy with force" and predicted victory over the invading U.S. and British troops.

"Hit them with force, resist them, oh people of Baghdad whenever they advance upon your city and remain true to your principles, your faith and your honour," said Mr. Hussein.

It was not clear when the statement was filmed. — Reuters, AFP

No parallel between Iraq & Kashmir, says U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

**WASHINGTON, APRIL 4.** Even while recognising the "very serious nature" of the situation in Kashmir, the Bush administration says that attempts to draw parallels between Iraq and Kashmir are "wrong and overwhelmed by the differences" between them; and that the circumstances that made the coalition military action necessary in Iraq did not apply to the sub-continent.

"Indian officials have recently speculated that U.S. pre-emptive action in Iraq could be seen as a justification of similar action by India against Pakistan over Kashmir. Any attempts to draw parallels between the Iraq and the Kashmir situations are wrong and overwhelmed by the differences between them," a State Department official told *The Hindu*.

"Iraq invaded, occupied and brutalised Kuwait in 1990. The international community came together to drive Iraq out of Kuwait in 1991. A decade earlier, Iraq attacked another neighbour Iran and used chemical weapons in that war. The Iraqi Government had used chemical weapons to kill thousands of its own people," the official argued.

"The U.S. and its coalition allies have taken action against Iraq only after 12 years of U.N. Security Council resolutions, including UNSC 1441 which was passed 15 to 0, failed to achieve Iraq's disarmament. The circumstances that made coalition military action necessary in Iraq do not apply in the sub-continent and should not be considered a precedent," the official said.

"The U.S. recognises the very serious nature of the situation in Kashmir. Our joint statement last week with the United Kingdom made clear our repugnance at the killing of innocents that have been taking place in Kashmir with alarming frequency," the official said.

Sinha talks of fresh thinking: Page 11

HINDU

APR 5 2003

# U.S. forces take over Baghdad airport

NEAR BAGHDAD (IRAQ), APRIL 4. U.S. forces secured Baghdad's Saddam International Airport today, a crucial step in their bid to establish a base of operations for coalition forces just outside the Iraqi capital, and renamed it as Baghdad International Airport.

"It is a gateway to the future of Iraq," said Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, U.S. Central Command spokesman at a briefing at the central Command headquarters in Qatar. He said that in western Iraq, a car exploded at a special operations checkpost, killing three coalition soldiers, a pregnant woman and the car's driver.

An AFP report, quoting witnesses said that the airport had come under artillery fire leaving dozens killed and injured outside Baghdad.

In capturing the airport, U.S. tanks punched through a perimeter wall and rumbled past a towering portrait of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein. Soldiers conducted a building-by-building sweep for Iraqi defenders. And the airport entrance closest to Baghdad was sealed off.

This prevents Iraq's leaders from fleeing by air and enables coalition forces to use it now or in the future, Brig. Brooks said. "Most important, we preserved it for the future of Iraq," he said.

The Iraqi Information Minister, Mohammad Saeed al-Sahhaf, told newsmen in Baghdad that the American forces would be "annihilated". The Iraqi forces had surrounded the coalition units and cut them off from other units near the city, he said, adding that Iraq would carry out a "non-conventional" attack against the U.S. troops.

"Tonight we will carry out

something that is non-conventional against them, not military. It will be a great example to them," he said.

"Unless they surrender quickly, I don't think there's any chance that they will survive," he said, referring to the U.S. forces outside Baghdad. "We consider it an isolated island"

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HINDU

5 APR 2003

# Napalm then, cluster bomb now

WAR BRIEFS

## Loss of torture data feared

Washington, April 3 (Reuters): Former Iraqi athletes trying to prove that Saddam Hussein's son Uday had sports stars tortured and killed for losing said yesterday they feared the evidence had gone up in smoke in a US air strike on the headquarters of Iraq's National Olympic Committee.

"I'm not worried about the concrete or the furniture but I am worried about the evidence," said Issam Thamer al-Diwan, a former volleyball player and coach who alleges 52 athletes were murdered on the orders of Uday and others in the Hussein clan. "I want to show that to the world, to show how they used the logo of the International Olympic Committee to cover up their crimes," Diwan said by telephone from the San Diego area of California where he has lived since fleeing Iraq in 1991. Diwan said Uday, 39, had him thrown in jail for three months in September 1990 after he refused to go with other sports officials to Kuwait to loot sports equipment following the Iraqi invasion.

## Human rights

Hanoi (Reuters): Communist Vietnam today denied US accusations that it violates human rights and tartly suggested America should not be making such allegations while it leads the war against Iraq. In its annual review of human rights around the world, the US state department said on Tuesday the southeast Asian country continued to have a poor record. It practiced arbitrary detention, sometimes beat suspects and was reported to be responsible for "the disappearances of numerous persons", the report said.

## German advice

Berlin (Reuters): German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said today Iraq's territorial integrity must remain intact after the war, and that its oil and natural resources must remain under the control of the Iraqi people. Schroeder also said the UN must play the central role in shaping post-war Iraq. He said he remained opposed to the US-led war, but hoped it would be over quickly and that the Iraqi people would be able to live in freedom from dictatorship.

## Food packet

United Nations (Reuters): The UN children's fund Unicef expressed concern yesterday that Iraqi children might mistake yellow food packets being handed out by US-led forces with small bombs with identical coloring. A Unicef statement said food packets known as "humanitarian daily rations" that were being handed out by the US and British forces in Iraq were wrapped in bright yellow plastic. Unicef called on the military to urgently change the colour of the food packets.

## Embassy open

Cape Town (Reuters): South Africa said yesterday it had rejected a US request to shut down the Iraqi embassy and deport senior officials, saying it would be guided only by the UN on the issue. Last month, the US said it was expelling Iraqi diplomats and had asked other nations to close down Iraqi embassies. The South African spokesman said Washington had made the request to around 60 countries, most of whom had refused. He said the UN still considered Iraq to be a legitimate country.



Iraqi Republican Guard units gather on the outskirts of Baghdad on Thursday. (AFP)

SUJAN DUTTA AND REUTERS

Kuwait, April 3: British forces in south Iraq have used cluster bombs on 'military targets' in or near the city of Basra that have caused civilian casualties.

Cluster bombs — cases of smaller bombs called 'bomblets' — are usually dropped by aircraft and explode in mid-air to cause devastation over a large radius. The bomblets are designed to explode and pierce armour.

British military spokesman Colonel Chris Vernon did not deny that cluster bombs have indeed been used but asserted that "I can vouch that cluster bombs have not been used on civilians." Vernon said the use of cluster munitions against military targets — such as Iraqi regular forces and convoys — was "legitimate".

International human rights organisations have campaigned steadily against the use of cluster bombs — like land mines. They say many of the bomblets do not explode on impact and cause civilian casualties later. Amnesty International

said at least five per cent are 'dud' bomblets and fail to explode on impact, effectively turning them into anti-personnel mines.

The rights groups fear that cluster bombs will soon overtake landmines as the most lethal legacy of war.

Every modern war throws up a weapon of destruction that continues to haunt people long afterwards. In the Second World War it was the atom bomb; in Vietnam, it was Napalm; and in Afghanistan it was the cluster bomb.

The British forces are known to have the "L20" cluster bombs in their arsenal. In a situation like Baghdad, it would be difficult to distinguish all the time between regular army units and irregulars from the distance the British forces are currently in.

The US forces have been using the CBU-87 cluster bomb. During Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, US air force bombers were reported to have dropped the CBU-87s on Taliban positions but the bomblets dis-

persed a long way, taking a heavy toll of civilian life.

Iraqi officials have been alleging that the coalition forces have been using cluster bombs regularly in the war. Iraqi information minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf today accused US forces of dropping cluster bombs on the Douri residential area of Baghdad, killing 14 people and wounding 66.

A day earlier, Dr Sadid Moussawi, at a hospital in the medieval city of Hilla, 100 km south of Baghdad, said 33 Iraqi civilians had been killed and more than 300 wounded in US air raids on a residential area using cluster bombs. "They are using cluster bombs," Moussawi said. "We can tell from the distribution of shrapnel."

The US military said on Wednesday its B-52 bombers had dropped new precision-guided 1,000-pound cluster bombs on Iraqi tanks defending Baghdad, but did not say where the attack took place.

And they insisted that, while they reserve the right to use these new cluster bombs in combat, they would never target

civilians with them.

The controversial weapons dropped by the US B52s are new and upgraded versions of older munitions, adapted to allow for wind and weather conditions to make them more accurate. After they are dropped, they open up in the air and disperse bomblets by parachute. The bomblet packages are designed to land more precisely on intended target areas.

Amnesty International UK demanded on Wednesday a moratorium on the use of cluster bombs in heavily populated areas.

"The use of cluster bombs in an attack on a civilian area of Hilla constitutes an indiscriminate attack and a grave violation of international humanitarian law," it said in a statement. Amnesty said the type of cluster bomblets used in the Hilla attack was BLU97 A/B. Each canister contains over 200 bomblets.

According to one estimate, US forces dropped over 50 million cluster bombs in the 1991 Gulf War. Thousands of unexploded bomblets remain in Iraq and Kuwait from the Gulf War.

## Mystery of Baghdad's elite guards

As Sayliya Camp, April 3 (Reuters): Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his entourage have promised US-led invasion forces bloody street fighting in the battle for Baghdad.

But just what form that will take — and whether Saddam's forces will use the chemical weapons Washington accuses them of hiding — is anybody's guess. US commanders concede even they do not know what lies ahead. "As to what's inside of Baghdad, we'll see soon enough," Brigadier General Vincent Brooks told a briefing at the US Central Command advance headquarters in Qatar today.

"There are a number of things which could be considered at this point," he said, listing a range of scenarios.

"Has this regime expended all of its capability in other areas? Did they use too much of what they had against us?" he asked. "Have they pulled back into Baghdad to await our arrival? We'll have to take that into consideration and see if that is the case."

But with US advance units almost at the gates of the Iraqi capital, the status of the Republican Guard may prove critical. Washington says the Republican Guard's Baghdad Division and Medina Division have been put out of action. Iraq rejects this.

"We have reports that members of the other four divisions are moving south," Captain Frank Thorp said at US Central Command. "We are engaging them, but we don't yet have any direct confrontation with the Republican Guard divisions as a whole."

The advance of the past two days went so quickly, that some have questioned whether the Republican Guard withdrew deliberately to lure the Americans into a trap.

But military experts say they believe the Republican Guard, a 70,000-strong elite force reputed to be fiercely nationalist, may well have been defeated.

"I don't think it's a trap or it was a surprise," said Klaus Rein-

hardt, a German former commander of the Nato-led peace-keeping force in Kosovo.

"The Americans are going forward very systematically," he said. "They have secured their lines of communication."

"They have brought forward extra forces, specifically three regiments of marines, and they have fixed and struck the Republican Guards ahead of them with their air force, artillery and with combat helicopters. And they have done this successfully."

Jonathan Eyal of London's Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, agreed.

"What we have effectively done is achieved some of the key objectives of the alliance very quickly — to separate two Republican Guard divisions but, more importantly, also to draw out of the immediate defences of the Iraqi capital some of the best assets that Saddam Hussein has," he said.

"The strategy of the alliance has also been to tie in as tightly as possible a siege around the Iraqi capital, but also to draw out of the Iraqi capital the military assets of Saddam Hussein. It is working, and yesterday one has to admit it worked even much better than the alliance commanders envisaged."

Reuters correspondents in Baghdad say pick-up trucks equipped with machineguns and anti-aircraft guns are dotted across the city suggesting preparations for urban warfare.

Military experts predict that the next phase of the conflict is likely to go more slowly.

French military consultant Colonel Jean-Louis Dufour said US forces would have to assess the extent to which they have destroyed the enemy before they can move on.

"What has happened to the Republican Guard? Have they been wiped out, or have they withdrawn from circulation to regroup in Baghdad?" he asked.

"Until you actually get somewhere, it is very difficult to assess the damage done on the ground by air strikes."

## Allies want all but 'embeds' out

SUJAN DUTTA

Kuwait, April 3: On the three major roads leading out of north Kuwait, the Kuwaiti Army manning checkpoints check each vehicle as much for saboteurs in the rear as for journalists trying to get into southern Iraq. The coalition command does not want more journalists than they can manage, having already taken in about 500 reporters as 'embeds'.

The closer the coalition forces get to Baghdad, the more intensive the military operations in Iraq and the more difficult it is to get into the country. The fortuitous few who have managed to get into southern Iraq are now being weeded out and pushed back into Kuwait. The only journalists welcomed are 'embeds' with units of the coalition forces. In nine out of 10 cases, the 'embeds' are American or British, in six out of 10, they are more likely to be from television.

"The battlespace is not safe. We have ability to take a certain amount of 'embeds' and we are encouraging others to leave,"

Colonel Chris Vernon, spokesman for the British forces in charge of southern Iraq says in deliberate understatement. The 'encouragement' like the tactics the British claim to be using to overcome Basra, is hostile as well as benign.

Among the latest to receive the less kindly form has been Arnim Stauch. Stauch works for WDR Radio, a German station. Weeks ago, Stauch had access to the Forward Press Information Centre when it was still in Kuwait at a camp near

the border. The F-PIC has since been moved to Umm Qasr. The F-PIC in Umm Qasr is now a camp for media representatives from the "Coalition of the Willing". Only yesterday, six television journalists were taken into the camp — two from TVA (Spanish), two from Rai (Italian) and two from a Dutch channel.

"Your colleague, John Tully, asked us to get out," Stauch told Vernon today. "Tully further said: 'Germans and French want to get their shitty stories out of my camp. That will not be al-

lowed.' Will you please give me your definition of a 'shitty story'?" Germany and France have opposed the war.

The coalition command's policy is that journalists "will have as much access as they have contributed troops on the ground". On conducted trips, the public affairs department says its policy is to take one international for one British and one American journalist.

In the early days of the war, when a few 'unilaterals' — Pentagonese for independent journalists who are not embedded with units of the coalition forces — did manage to make it to southern Iraq, they were subsequently escorted out when found. Sabine, a producer with France 2 and six journalists from Arab News who made it to Basra and were nearly caught in a crossfire, were put up for a night in a camp of the British 7th Armoured Brigade and early in the morning 'escorted' out. Four other journalists who had slept a night on a platform at Umm Qasr port were denied access to a hotel that was occupied mostly

by troops. The soldiers ignored them when they found them at the port but did warn them that they would be helpless if the officers found out. "Such things are happening against all free reporting regardless of nationality," says Stauch indignantly. Beside him a reporter from the *Daily Mirror*, London, agreed. She tried getting across the border yesterday. "Is there a bias in favour of television," she asked Vernon. "We've looked across TV," he replied. "Some print editors did not want their reporters embedded and it is only now that they are realising their error."

Editorial managements of some newspapers in Britain refused to accept the 'embedding' policy because it was thought that would compromise credibility as such reporters will put out "only what they see through the gun sight". While the debate will continue, a few stories from 'embeds' do not do the military proud. The *Washington Post's* 'embed', for example, was able to give an eyewitness account of the killing of women and children in a car near An Najaf.

The Telegraph IRAQ EXCLUSIVE

## Shia fatwa shot in arm for US

Najaf, April 3 (Reuters): After battling pro-Baghdad loyalists, US troops moved into the centre of Iraq's holy city of An Najaf today, bolstered by an edict from a top local Shia leader urging people not to interfere with them.

US officers said they believed most of the fidayeen paramilitary fighters loyal to President Saddam Hussein had dropped their equipment and fled — but that a few were still in the city putting up a fight.

"Ideally, we would kill them all," Colonel Joseph Anderson, a brigade commander of the 101st Airborne Division, said. "But if they choose to change their mind and flee, there's not much we can do."

The US military said a senior Shia cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who had been held under house arrest by Saddam's government, had ordered local people in a "fatwa" not to interfere with the US-led invasion

troops. "We believe this is a very significant turning point and another indicator that the Iraqi regime is approaching its end," Brigadier General Vincent Brooks told reporters in Qatar.

A Reuters correspondent in Baghdad just one week ago saw a fatwa issued by Sistani still pinned to the door of a main Shia mosque in the capital saying Iraqis would "stand together against any invasion".

In London, the Shia Al Khoi foundation confirmed the ayatollah's new ruling and said that until now his followers had been "confused" over whether to fight the US forces.

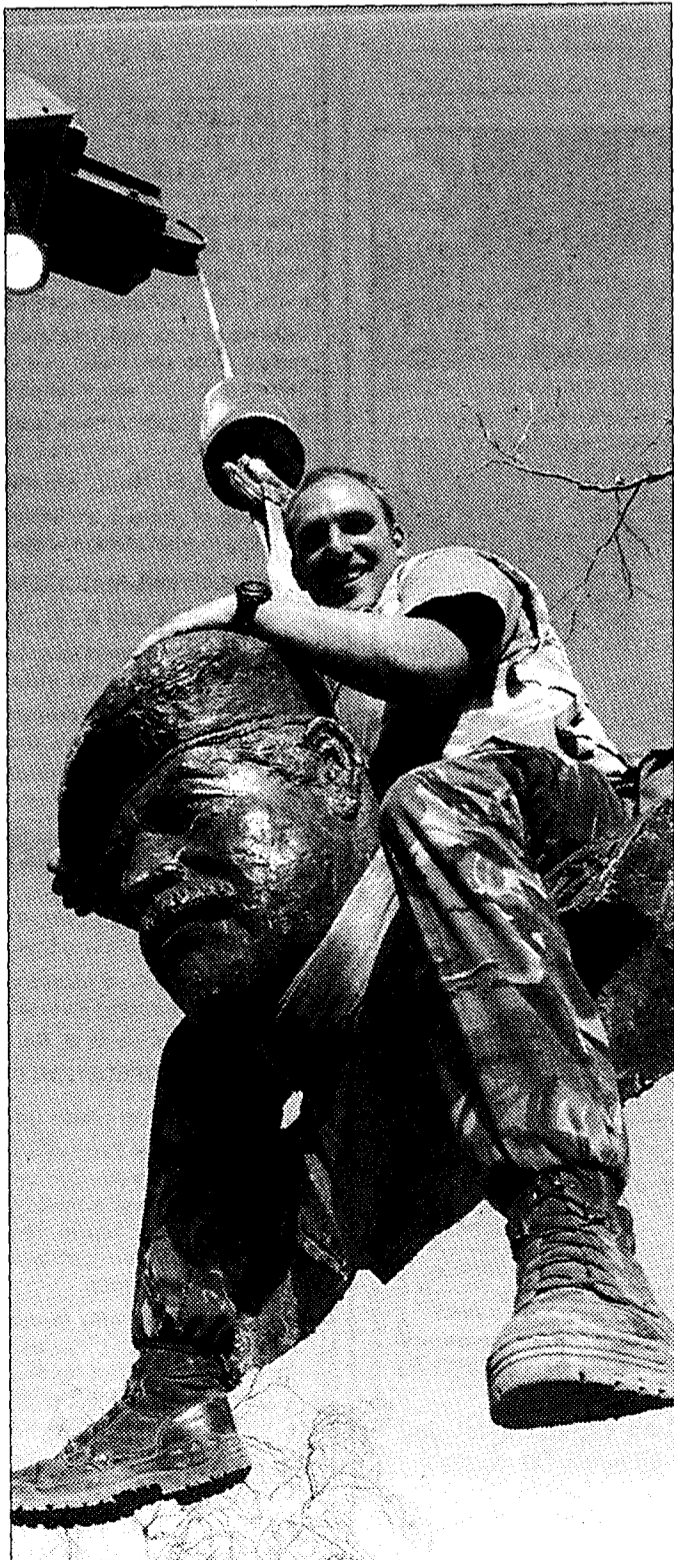
Najaf, 160 km south of Baghdad, is one of Iraq's most important religious centres and home to the revered gold-domed Ali Mosque, which contains the tomb of Imam Ali bin Abi Talib, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed.

Some Najaf residents appeared alarmed by the actions of the US troops. CNN footage showed soldiers trying to calm a crowd who apparently thought they were planning to seize the mosque. US military sources said one of the two brigades of the 101st Airborne in Najaf had been in negotiations with Sistani about how to govern Najaf in the absence of pro-Saddam forces.

Earlier, mortars, rockets and sporadic gunfire had echoed before dawn before US soldiers fanned out on house-to-house missions to search and secure poor neighbourhoods.

"Every building can hold a surprise. It is extremely resource-intensive and it takes a lot of time," said Captain J.P. Swoopes.

Soldiers said they had found sizeable caches of rocket-propelled grenades, assault rifles and multiple-launch rocket systems in searches of homes yesterday.



A coalition soldier sits on the head of a 17-foot-tall statue of Saddam Hussein that was toppled and beheaded by allied troops in Az Zubaya. (AP/PTI)

## Lashkar founder spurs cadre to jihad

Islamabad, April 3 (Reuters): An Islamic militant leader in Pakistan said today he was urging followers to go to Iraq to fight a holy war against invading US and British forces.

The call came from Hafeez Mohammad Saeed, founder of the outlawed Lashkar-e-Toiba group, who said Muslim countries should also send their armies to fight the US and allied forces in Iraq.

"We consider the attack of America and its allies on Iraq as an attack on the Islamic world," Saeed said today in his first interview since his release from jail four months ago.

"Jihad is an Islamic obligation and it is waged whenever an Islamic territory is attacked by non-Muslims or they try to occupy it."

Iraq says more than 6,000 Arab volunteers have arrived in the country to battle US and British forces, half of them would-be suicide bombers.

Asked whether he would send militants to join war in Iraq, Saeed, who has tens of thousands of followers, replied, "We are inviting people and persuading them. We are telling Muslims that the only solution to this problem is jihad." However, a source in the militant group said it was now difficult to travel to Iraq because of the war and no fighters had gone there from Pakistan. "In addition, we need Arabic-speaking volunteers, but hardly any Pakistani speaks Arabic," he added.

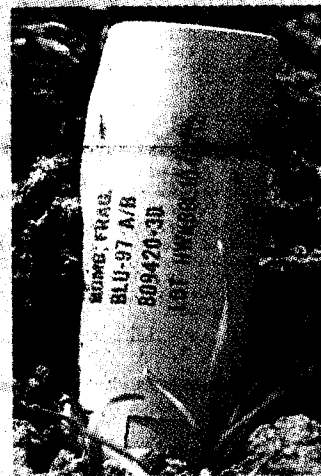
Saeed officially quit the leadership of the Lashkar-e-Toiba weeks before it was banned and put on a US list of terrorist groups. He launched a new group, the Jamaat ud Dawah which preaches Islam, holds rallies, runs schools, hospitals and publishes a monthly projecting its militant views.

# Dark Baghdad lies in wait

## THE WAR JIGSAW



### SOUTHERN IRAQ

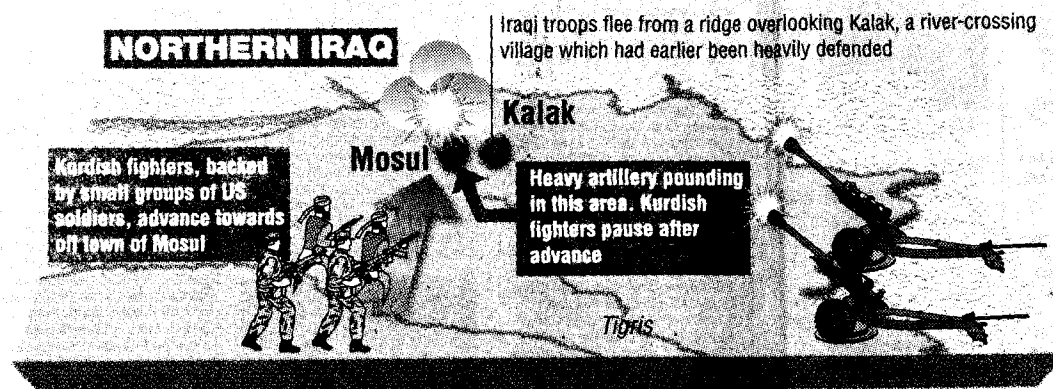


• British forces use cluster bombs (left) — cases of bomblets that cause devastation in a large radius — in Basra

• US Marines tighten grip on Nasiriyah, said to be in control of most bridges in the city

• An F/A-18 Hornet fighter jet crashes. US military investigates possibility of an American missile bringing down the fighter

### NORTHERN IRAQ



Kurdish fighters, backed by small groups of US soldiers, advance towards the town of Mosul

Iraqi troops flee from a ridge overlooking Kalak, a river-crossing village which had earlier been heavily defended

Heavy artillery pounding in this area. Kurdish fighters pause after advance

### BAGHDAD



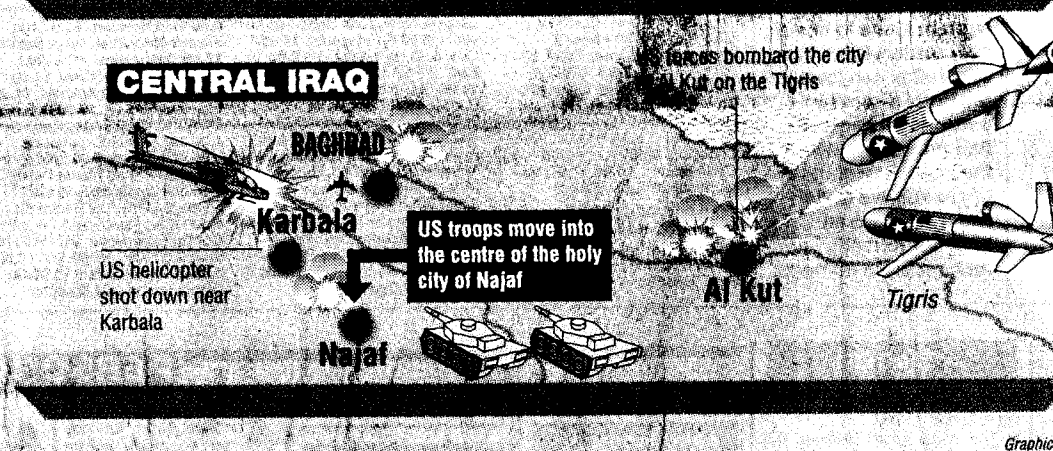
Relentless air strikes on Baghdad. Almost 40 'smart bombs' dropped on a military store

Some US troops cross a 'red line' into areas where coalition officers say Iraqi forces might launch a chemical attack

US armoured units advance to 10 km from the edge of Baghdad and launch an assault on the city's airport

• US military officials say elements of four elite Iraqi Republican Guard divisions are moving south

### CENTRAL IRAQ



US helicopter shot down near Karbala

US troops move into the centre of the holy city of Najaf

Jets bombard the city of Al Kut on the Tigris

grl SUJAN DUTTA 4/9

Kuwait, April 3: They had shone bright, as if radiating defiance, through the rain of bombs and missiles on Baghdad, all of the war fortnight. For the first time this evening, the lights went off and the Iraqi capital plunged into darkness as US forces mounted a charge on the airport.

ABC Television reported late tonight that US troops have captured Baghdad airport, facing almost no opposition from Iraqi forces. Saddam International Airport can be used to fly in more troops and equipment. US forces have to not only physically occupy the airport but also destroy air defences around it.

At least three explosions went off in central Baghdad with the coalition forces within sight of the city's skyline as President George W. Bush declared that a "vise is closing".

The US denied having targeted electricity supply in Baghdad, but it is possible that power has been switched off by the Iraqis themselves in preparation for the street-by-street fighting that could start once the Americans enter the city.

US forces specially equipped to fight by night have night-vision devices, but the Iraqis know their territory better. The blackness of the night, combined with the smoke from oil trenches that are burning in a ring of fire, makes for effective cover.

Special forces of the US 101st Airborne Division have set up intermediate bases in the Iraqi desert from where they are "leapfrogging" and hitting at the defences of Baghdad from the

## The Telegraph IRAQ EXCLUSIVE

west and the south. A breach in the defence between two divisions of the Iraqi Republican Guard has allowed the vanguard of the main land thrust of the coalition forces to get within sight of the city's skyline. American forces now also supervise, at different points, the three main highways leading out of the Iraqi capital — south, east and the road to Syria.

There is no official statement from the coalition land forces command. However, network journalists embedded with frontline units reported intermittently that the advance was at the gates of Baghdad.

One network reported that US forces were "six miles" from Baghdad around 3 pm (1730 IST) Kuwait time. In contrast, journalists reporting live from Baghdad said there was no sign of consternation in the Iraqi top brass. Military commanders and ministers had held a string of meetings and conferences with journalists through the day.

US forces are specially trained to operate by night. A further advance is expected

**QUOTE**  
A vise is closing  
GEORGE W. BUSH

through the night, but mainly from the thrust along the Tigris, from the south-east of Baghdad.

A sweep into the city by the main body of the coalition forces — the 3rd Mechanised Infantry — from the south-west looks implausible in the absence of other fronts maturing simultaneously.

However, there are defensive measures which military observers were expecting the Iraqi forces to take that have not yet materialised. Among these were a possible sabotage of bridges and a breach in the embankments of the Tigris or a dam on the Euphrates to deliberately flood the plains and marshes and retard the advance of coalition forces.

The coalition forces have reported having found at least two bridges to which charges were fixed but not detonated.

It is possible that the actions of the 101st Airborne Division were crucial here. The division was pressed into service in An Najaf, central Iraq, and now again to the west of Baghdad.

Typically, the tactics of the 101st, the largest air-assault division with some 270 helicopters and gunships, involve penetrating enemy lines in small squads of four or five.

The squads report on enemy defences and guide gunships to attack tanks and artillery using electronic signals. It is possible that the division has now also established a base inside Iraq in the Samiya Desert, from where it can be deployed rapidly for operations in several directions.

US Central Command spokesmen in Doha, Qatar, claimed that the Republican Guard's Baghdad Division was destroyed. But Iraq dismissed as "baseless" the US claim.



SADDAM AIRPORT ATTACKED, CAPITAL PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS

# BATTLE FOR BAGHDAD

SM  
a/a  
Agencies

SOUTH OF BAGHDAD, April 3. — Coalition forces surged to the outskirts of Baghdad today but lost a helicopter and a warplane and at least one American soldier. Saddam International Airport, 16 km from city centre, came under US artillery fire in the evening, leaving dozens killed and injured.

As coalition aircraft continued bombing Baghdad, the capital plunged into darkness around 8 p.m. The US defence department could not explain the reason of the power failure. General Richard Myers, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, denied that his forces had targeted Iraq's power grid.

Mr Saddam Hussein, in the face of coalition troops' steady advance towards his seat of power (the forces were reported to be 6.5 km from the edge of Baghdad), today issued a statement through his information minister, urging Iraqis to "fight the enemies with your hands". The minister, Mohammed al-Sahhaf, claimed that coalition forces were not within 100 km of the capital. He also claimed that the southern city of Basra was "firmly under Iraqi control".

In North Carolina, Mr George W Bush said US-led forces had Iraqis in a "tightening vise" and that Mr Hussein's regime would soon come to an end. "What we've begun, we'll finish," he told gathering of 20,000 Marines.

Since last night, US army troops have been closing in on the capital from the southwest, crossing the Euphrates, and Marines from the southeast along the Tigris. Coalition officers claimed that dozens of Iraqi soldiers surrendered during the final push towards Baghdad.

Special forces had earlier taken a dam near the capital which they feared Iraqis could blow up causing a flood that could halt coalition's advance.

Today's air assault on Baghdad targeted Republican Guard units and a bunker of Mr Hussein. Coalition commanders claimed that two Republi-



SWINGING IT BEYOND SADDAM? A British soldier sits on the shoulders of a 17-foot statue of Mr Saddam Hussein beheaded by Royal Engineers at Az Zubaya. — AFP

can Guard divisions had been destroyed and that other Guard units had been moved to the south to shore up

Baghdad's defence.

Coalition troops are now faced with a tantalising choice: Continue the charge

into the capital or wait for reinforcements. The US 4th Infantry Division, which has some of the most advanced tanks and equipment, is arriving in Kuwait and could field a brigade-sized task force of a few thousand soldiers as early as Monday or Tuesday.

The rapid advances brought thousands of troops within the so-called red zone, an imaginary line on the map near Baghdad, where coalition commanders fear Iraqis may use of weapons of mass destruction. US soldiers in some lead army units donned chemical protection suits and marine helicopter pilots were ordered to be prepared to do so.

Coalition troops would try to avoid street-by-street battles that Iraq wants to use as traps by focusing on key areas rather than trying to take over the entire city, he said.

Despite the gains, US defence secretary Mr Donald Rumsfeld cautioned that some of the toughest fighting may lie ahead. He ruled out the chance of the USA agreeing to an arrangement that would halt the war and allow Mr Hussein to survive. "It doesn't matter who proposes it, there's not going to be one."

On the downing of a *Black Hawk* helicopter and a Navy *F/A-18C Hornet*, the Pentagon first announced that the two had been shot down, but commanders in the Gulf said they were investigating the causes of both incidents.

Brig.-Gen. Vincent Brooks of the US central command said "hostile fire" was not suspected to be the cause of the downing of the helicopter and that there were reports that the *Hornet* was hit by missiles, not clarifying whether they were Iraqi or coalition missiles. The Pentagon said six Americans aboard the helicopter were killed, while the *Hornet* pilot was missing.

**Red Crescent tragedy:** In Doha, US central command said it was investigating reports that its warplanes had bombed a Red Crescent maternity hospital in Baghdad.

More reports on pages 3 & 4

THE STATESMAN

# Across war's mindfields

SHAILAJA BAJPAI  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 3

**THERE'S** Betsy, Buster and Dolphin. Names of special forces caught on camera by CNN when it tired of tanks, trucks and troops. Betsy is Walter Rodgers' vehicle in which he accompanies American forces. A few days ago, he took us on a guided tour of its interior. It looked pretty much as such a vehicle should — electronically wired and short on space.

Buster is a dog straight out of Enid Blyton. Instead of a sleepy small English village, he's somewhere in Iraq sniffing out the enemy. He panted plenty happy so obviously he's found them to his liking. Dolphin is that cute water baby made famous by the American TV serial, Flipper. Richard Blystone found one frolicking along with the Americans forces on deep sea missions. "It's like a child," said a fond Mr. Jennings of his wet charge. To the rest of us he was Flipper. In a war devoid of happy stories, these features were a relief.

**Torture Chambers:** Back in the real war. On Thursday, CNN's Clive Myrie inspected a deserted Iraqi police station and was shocked by the condition of its prison cells. We don't know what he expected (a hotel suite?) but here a single room was 4x8, with a dirty pillow. Furniture consisted of car tyres. For entertainment he discovered electricity wires, used by police to electrocute prisoners. Not surprisingly, he found only locals willing to speak on the subject.

But instead of the prisons, Myrie asked what he'd like to do to Saddam Hussein. "I would cut him into 50 pieces." Why 50, you wondered, and not 100? A first-hand account of Iraqi prison conditions came from four journalists, missing in Baghdad, who resurfaced at the Kuwait border, Wednesday. Again, expectations were high because their sojourn in jail "was not much fun". They heard "screams" and cries", they were "blindfolded" and "interrogated". And Molly Bingham thought "are they gonna kill me?" The *Newsday* correspondent admitted he had "pushed the envelope" too far in one of his stories. However, the contents of the story were not revealed, nor, the questions the Iraqis asked — pretty sensational stuff. But short

on facts. It's that kind of war.

**Public Opinion:** The Iraqi voices we hear are in the presence of coalition forces. In the prison story, an armed soldier stood a few feet away from the Iraqi. On the road between Basra and Baghdad, Iraqi men were frisked and then sat down for a friendly chat. According to the interpreter, that "they are living in hell". Probably, but if it was heaven on earth, they were unlikely to say so when a gun dangles over their heads.

**Destination Baghdad:** the coalition forces are advancing "rapidly" — "faster than anyone could have imagined," BBC's Adams told us from Qatar on Wednesday but WorldView India's

anchor doesn't believe him. She asked Satish Jacob in Baghdad about the "delays" in the advance. To confound the confusion, channels disagreed how close to Baghdad the forces were: 30 kms (BBC, CNN, DD), 40 kms (Zee News), or 60 kms (Star News)?

**The Thin Red Line:** You've heard about it often over the last two weeks without quite knowing where exactly it was located. Wednesday, BBC's Adams found it "exists in Hussein's mind". It's the point at which he crosses over and in a "last throw of the dice", releases chemical weapons. This, said anchor Nisha Pillai, "is the American's reading of Hussein's psychology".

**Rhetorical Warfare:** That's Steve Kingstone's description of the American strategy now (BBC). Translated, it means the Americans are not only reading Hussein's mind but trying to "demoralise" and "degrade" the Republican Army by "staggering claims". One such claim was Tuesday's assertion that it had taken out two Iraqi divisions. Livingstone and Andrew Gilligan in Baghdad were "sceptical". So was the anchor of the claim that Iraq's anti-aircraft capability had been "taken out" when they had shot down a Black Hawk and an F-18 Bomber.

**Chemical Chimera Part II:** We're still not there, but we're getting closer. To Baghdad and the threat of chemical warfare by Iraqis and to the discovery of the C-weapons. BBC's John Simpson found manuals training soldiers in chemical warfare. "We haven't found any weapons?"



**WAR LIVE**

**EXPRESS**

# LAST MILE MARCH

## American troops race to Baghdad outskirts, pound Saddam International airport with artillery fire



LIGHT MY FIRE: A Household Cavalry Regiment soldier in southern Iraq.

Baghdad, April 3

US TROOPS raced almost unimpeded to the edge of Baghdad on Thursday and attacked the international airport. Tracer rounds, anti-aircraft fire and artillery blasted near Saddam International Airport, 10 miles southwest of the city centre, after allied forces had pushed through the outskirts of the darkened capital.

Large parts of Baghdad lost power for the first time since the war began after huge explosions rocked the capital. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the US Central Command had not targeted the city's power grid.

US troops from the 7th Infantry rolled down a single-lane road on the southern edge of the city earlier in the day, despite punishing heat. They fired at Iraqi troops who tried to ambush the armoured column on both sides.

One unit came within 10 miles of Baghdad's city centre at one point but then moved off in a different direction, because they were more interested in engaging Iraqi troops than holding territory.

Parts of four elite Iraqi Republican Guard divisions were moving south, US officers said, setting up a potential showdown for the capital — the key prize in the two-week-old war to topple Saddam Hussein. The coalition claimed to have "destroyed" two Republican Guard divisions in Wednesday night's battles.

Coalition troops chased away another Republican Guard division in the morning as they passed down roads littered with black combat boots as Saddam's loyalists shed their uniforms and switched to tribal robes hoping to avoid capture. The only hindrance seemed to be traffic jams as hundreds of allied vehicles rolled down the single tarmac and dirt road.

On their way to Baghdad airport, the allies raided one of Saddam's palaces and seized some documents. American troops also pounded the Iraqi President's bunker — allegedly strong enough to withstand any strike short of a direct hit by a nuclear bomb as big as the one dropped on Hiroshima.

Earlier, thousands of US military vehicles of the 7th Infantry pushed across the Euphrates from the south and west of Baghdad after foiling an Iraqi attempt to hold the bridge at Musayyib, 35 miles due south of the capital. The bridge had been wired with explosives, which were defused by American engineers.

As the troops approached Baghdad, Iraqi deserters and civilians flooded out of the city by the busload and surrendered to them, a television reporter travelling with the

Marines said. "There are so many people on the road now that it's impossible to further conduct military operations and so our unit has stopped now and set up a hasty prisoner of war compound," ABC correspondent Mike Cerre said.

Reporting from just south of Baghdad with the 1st Marine Division, Cerre said US support aircraft had counted more than 60 buses filled with Iraqis fleeing Baghdad.

"What is stopping us now is the flood of deserters and civilians, on buses, trucks, taxicabs and whatever they can catch a ride on, trying to make their way south to their families or American forces to surrender," he said.

ABC showed grainy television footage of scores of Iraqis walking towards US forces with their hands up. The footage also showed several large touring buses on the road.

In Kut, an Iraqi military town on the Tigris, Marines from the 3rd Battalion (4th Marines) were battling Iraqi fighters building to building. The Marines were jumping on rooftops and going through all the rooms in some buildings. Tanks roamed the city and the Marines were taking small arms fire and mortars. Three Marines were wounded, two lightly, one more seriously.

On the outskirts of Kut, Marines opened fire on a military training academy, blowing a hole into a mosaic portrait of Saddam.

At several places, Iraqi units quickly abandoned defensive positions and fled, leaving behind trenches littered with everything from mortars and small arms to teapots and bedspreads. "When they ran, it wasn't for lack of ammo. They've got enough," one Marine said as he examined the trenches.

The Iraqis' only success overnight lay in shooting down a US Navy F/A-18C Hornet fighter with a surface-to-air missile near Karbala on Wednesday night and a US Army Black Hawk helicopter south of Baghdad, killing seven soldiers and wounding four.

President George Bush said US-led forces had their Iraqi foes in a tightening vise and that Saddam's regime would soon be finished. "What we have begun, we will finish," he said. "The course is set. We're on the advance. Our destination is Baghdad, and we will accept nothing less than complete and final victory."

Pentagon leaders called on Iraqi officers to turn against their government. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the Iraqi armed forces were reinforcing battered Republican Guard divisions with troops from the less-capable regular army.

Full coverage on Pages 15 & 16

# Trub A1A Poet punch to war

London, April 3 (Reuters): Britain's official poet has taken the highly unusual step of writing a poem condemning the war in Iraq.

Andrew Motion said that from Eden to Babylon, death was cutting a swathe through one of the cradles of civilisation.

But the poet laureate insisted he was not unpatriotic, saying that he "wished well" for the British troops fighting to topple Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

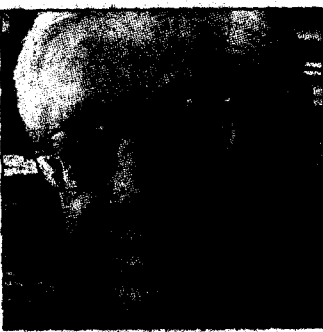
The poem, entitled *Regime Change*, was a break from tradition for the poet laureate, who is appointed by Queen Elizabeth's household and traditionally writes non-political poems to commemorate major national and royal occasions.

After reading the poem out on BBC Radio on Thursday, Motion said: "I wouldn't say this poem is precisely unpatriotic but I would say it is violently opposed to the war."

"Even though my opposition to the war is very vehement, like many other people who are opposed to it, I do nothing but wish well to the troops themselves."

It is Motion's second anti-war poem. He wrote a 30-word poem, *Causa Belli*, questioning the motives of war in January.

His work followed a rich tradition of British protest poets — Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen — famed for graphic imagery bringing home the hor-



Andrew Motion

rors of World War I trenches.

Those protest poets buried the romantic view of war epitomised by Shakespeare's *Henry V* as the young monarch urged his troops to "stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood".

Britain has had a poet laureate since the mid-17th century and the famous roll-call ranges from John Dryden to William Wordsworth and Lord Tennyson. Tennyson sparked controversy after the Crimean War when he wrote of the brave but foolhardy *Charge of the Light Brigade* with the line "The soldier knew someone had blundered".

Motion wrote a ceremonial poem to mark the death of Britain's Queen Mother last year but has also written about Nelson Mandela, homelessness, national identity and bullying.

"My underlying feeling is that poetry ought to be part of general life rather than being

ghettoised," he said.

So today, he pitched into a fierce national debate about the war which has polarised opinion in Britain. Reflecting on the irony of war being fought amid names famed in different cultures, he read the poem on BBC radio:

*Advancing down the road from Nineveh*

*Death paused a while and said, Now listen here*

*You see the names of places round about*

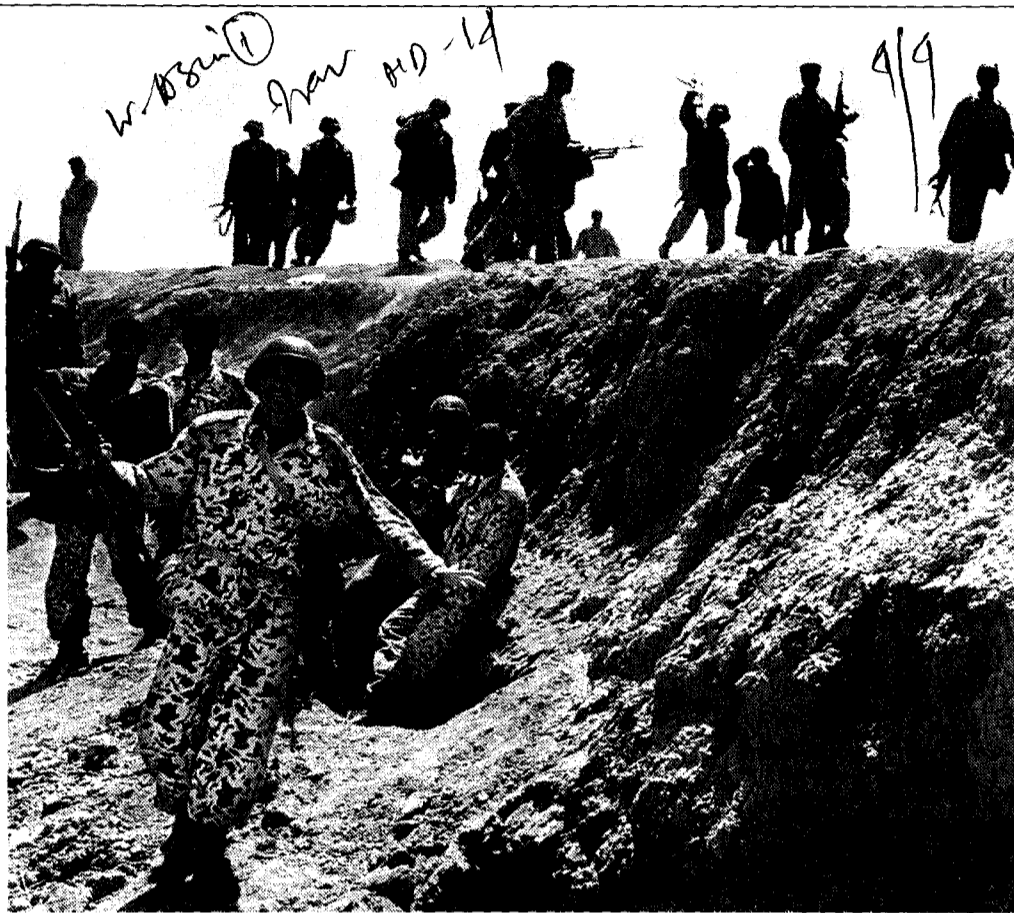
*They are mine now and I have turned them inside out.*

*Take Eden further south. At dawn today I ordered up my troops to tear away its walls and gates so everyone can see that gorgeous fruit which dangles from its tree. You want it don't you? Go and eat it then and lick your lips and pick the same again.*

*Take Tigris and Euphrates. Once they ran through childhood-coloured slabs of sand and sun. Not any more they don't. I have filled them up with countless different kinds of human crap.*

*Take Babylon. The palace sprouting flowers, which sweetened empires in their peaceful hours. I have found a different way to scent the air. Already it's a by-word for despair.*

*Which leaves Baghdad, the star-tipped minarets, the marble courts and halls, the mirage heat. These places and the ancient things you know you won't know soon. I am working on it now.*



Iraqi Republican Guard forces gather on the outskirts of Baghdad on Thursday.

**IRAQ / TURNAROUND IN STAND**

**Schroeder backs 'regime change'**

**BERLIN, APRIL 3.** The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, for the first time called for the removal of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, in a speech to Parliament on Thursday, dropping his objection to regime change as a goal of war.

The turnaround marked a significant attempt to patch up differences within Europe as attention turns to rebuilding a post-Saddam Iraq.

"We all hope that the earliest possible end to the war will keep the number of victims as low as possible," Mr. Schroeder said.

"And we hope that through the defeat of the dictatorship, the Iraqi people can realise its hopes of a life in peace, freedom and self-determination as soon as possible."

Germany firmly opposed the war, joining France and Russia in diplomatic efforts against any

U.N. resolution that would have authorised force, arguing peaceful means to disarm Iraq had not been exhausted.

The Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, signalled Germany's acceptance of regime change before meeting his British counterpart, Jack Straw, in Berlin on Wednesday night, as the pro-war and anti-war camps made a concerted effort at patching up differences.

In his speech to Parliament, Mr. Schroeder, however, maintained the German position that war could have been averted through peaceful disarmament supervised by U.N. weapons inspectors.

However, he said the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Iraq necessitated the speedy installation of a new regime in Baghdad — one shaped by the United Nations. — AP

**UNICEF's appeal on rations**

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

**UNITED NATIONS, APRIL 3.** The U.N. is expressing serious concern about the humanitarian daily rations handed out by coalition forces in southern Iraq. These rations are covered in a bright yellow plastic wrap and are similar to the colour of the BLU 97 bomblet being air dropped. The UNICEF is particularly concerned that children could get confused with the rations package with the unexploded ordinance.

"These are the same rations that were air dropped in Afghanistan where the military eventually changed the wrapping to blue."

This was done after the U.N. highlighted the dangers of presenting food in the same colour as the ordinance.

Because of their identical colouring, however, children can confuse the ration and unexploded ordinance," the UNICEF has said.

## POST-WAR IRAQ / AFGHAN MODEL SUGGESTED

# 'Bonn-type process will help'

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, APRIL 3. The United States and the United Kingdom should not wield direct authority in the post-war Iraq and must, instead, convene a Bonn-type process that mapped out the political change in Afghanistan.

Highly-placed sources here told this correspondent that the U.S. and the U.K. would be making "a grave mistake" if they decided to retain their security forces in Iraq for the next couple of years.

The assessment in Indian official circles is that if this happened there would be resentment not just in Iraq, but in the Arab world.

Such a security presence would be seen as an "occupying force", they argued.

A close watch is being maintained on the Iraq war.

The march of the "coalition troops" towards Baghdad and the resistance to them are of special interest here.

The sources felt that if the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, was no longer in the scene

then it could make a major difference to the U.S.-U.K. effort.

However, they pointed out that Mr. Hussein was a "wily man" and could still have some surprises up his sleeve.

While supporting a Bonn-type process in Iraq, they made a clear distinction between Iraq and Afghanistan.

With its educated people and long civilisation (as opposed to a bombed-out Afghanistan and a medieval Taliban), there could be little comparison between Iraq and Afghanistan.

The people's expectations from a post-Saddam Iraq would be much more than, say, what people were demanding after the departure of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Referring to the Opposition demand for "condemning" the war against Iraq, the sources said it was very likely that the Iraq issue would be raised in Parliament when it meets on Monday.

The Government, however, would not use the language being demanded by the Opposition.

There had been no support

for the military campaign against Iraq and the Government had clearly said the attack was "unjustified" and "avoidable".

Asked about the link between the Government's position on Iraq and the initial U.S. remarks on prescribing the dialogue path to resolve India-Pakistan tensions, the sources made no secret of the unhappiness with the initial U.S. State Department statement.

They pointed out that Indian displeasure was made plain by the statements issued by the Foreign Office spokesman.

It was following these remarks that a joint statement, which called upon Pakistan to end support for militancy, was issued by the U.S. and the U.K.

The sources made it clear that India's questioning the suggestion for a "dialogue" to deal with Pakistan and the military attack on Iraq and Afghanistan had a clear connection.

More "critical" statements had come from Government Ministers following the "dialogue" prescription, they added.

HINDU

4 APR 2003

WE'LL BE IN BAGHDAD SOON, SAYS U.S.; THEY'RE NOWHERE NEAR: IRAQ

# Blackout as blasts rock Baghdad

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 3.** The Iraqi capital plunged into darkness tonight as loud explosions rocked the city and tracer rounds raced through the sky near the airport. South of Baghdad, U.S. troops surged toward the capital, passing roads littered with combat boots.

The Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, meanwhile, exhorted the Iraqi people to fight back. "Fight them with your hands. God will disgrace them. God is great," he said in a statement the Information Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, read today on Iraqi satellite television.

At a news conference, Mr. al-Sahhaf disputed coalition claims of battle successes. "All this is to cover their disappointment and inability," he said.

"They are not even 160 km away from Baghdad," he said earlier. "They are not anywhere. They are like a snake moving in the desert. They have no foothold in Iraq... They do not even control Umm Qasr," he said, referring to the southern port city held by British forces.

Artillery fire could be heard near the Saddam International Airport, 16 km southwest of downtown Baghdad. Tracer rounds raced through the sky and shells exploded in the air.

The explosions persisted for nearly 15 minutes before the power went off at about 8 p.m. — the first widespread electrical failure in Baghdad since the U.S.-led bombardment began two weeks ago.

The entire city appeared without power. The reason for the loss of power was not immediately clear.

Eight civilians died and five were wounded today by a missile that hit a vegetable market at Nahrawan on the southeastern edge of Baghdad.

Meanwhile, the air assault on Baghdad continued. The site of Baghdad's old airport was struck overnight by coalition aircraft. The target appeared to be a row of tin shelters which stretch for more than a kilometre where the Trade Ministry stores hundreds of imported cars.

U.S.-led forces had made big advances overnight, with troops closing in on the capital from the southwest, crossing the Euphrates river and Marines approaching from the southeast in



**U.S. Army tanks on their way to Baghdad after destroying an Iraqi military vehicle on the outskirts of the city on Thursday. — AP**

a long column along the Tigris river.

One U.S. soldier was killed by friendly fire today in the hours-long skirmish south of Baghdad. Three were wounded by Iraqi fire, and three soldiers collapsed from heat exhaustion.

Paving the way, special forces infiltrated some Iraqi command posts in the Baghdad area. Another group of commandos raided the Thar Thar presiden-

tial palace, in a resort area about 90 km northwest of Baghdad.

"We are getting closer and closer," U.S. Navy Capt. Frank Thorp said at U.S. Central Command in Qatar today afternoon. "We will be in Baghdad within a matter of hours from when we decide to go."

Two U.S. aircraft went down on Wednesday near the city of Karbala, 80 km south of Bagh-

dad — a Navy Hornet and an Army Black Hawk helicopter. U.S. officials said six soldiers aboard the Black Hawk were killed, while the Navy pilot was missing.

After initially reporting that both aircraft were downed by Iraqi fire, officials said on Thursday that the cause in each case was not yet determined.

Despite the successful push toward Baghdad, senior U.S.

commanders sought to lower expectations of an imminent takeover of the capital.

The Americans may soon face a choice between continuing their advance into the city of five million people, with the possibility of costly street fighting, or waiting for reinforcements while giving Iraqis a chance to challenge Mr. Hussein's regime themselves.

A report from Dubai, quoting the Jeddah-based *Arab News*, said two Western journalists were allegedly arrested, beaten up and deprived of food and water in Iraq by U.S. Army personnel.

Luis Castro and Victor Silva, both reporters working for RTP Portuguese Television, were allegedly held for four days and their equipment, vehicle and videotapes confiscated.

The U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, meeting with NATO and European Union members in Brussels today, said the U.S. — not the United Nations — must have the lead role in Iraq's post-war reconstruction. "There will definitely be a United Nations role, but what the exact nature of that role will be remains to be seen," he said. — AP, AFP, PTI

## Saddam's bunker under attack?

**DUBAI, APRIL 3.** U.S. forces claimed today to have targeted the bunker of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, which its designer says can withstand anything short of a hit by a Hiroshima-size bomb.

The U.S. Central Command said yesterday that coalition forces had targeted the presidential bunker and residence in Baghdad's Republican Palace district and the New Presidential Palace in the Al-Khark section west of the Tigris River, using precision-guided munitions in early-morning

raids. Karl Bernd Esser, the German architect who says he designed the bunker buried deep underneath the palace complex, recently told Germany's ZDF television that the walls were three metres thick and could withstand temperatures up to 300 degrees Celsius and survive anything short of a direct hit from a nuclear weapon the size of that which destroyed Hiroshima in 1945. Two underground passages from the bunker lead directly to the Tigris. — AFP

IRAQ / 11 BODIES RECOVERED FROM HOSPITAL

## PoW rescued in U.S. raid

**CAMP AS SALIYAH (QATAR), APRIL 2.** During a raid on an Iraqi hospital, the U.S. commandos rescued an American prisoner of war, Jessica Lynch. They also found 11 bodies during the raid, a military spokesman said on Wednesday.

Navy Capt. Frank Thorp, a U.S. Central Command spokesman said there was "reason to believe" that some of the victims were Americans. Forensic tests were to be carried out on the bodies.

Ms. Lynch (19) was seized after her unit, the 507th Maintenance Company, made a wrong turn on March 23 and was ambushed in the Euphrates river city of Nasiriyah.

A dozen other members of her unit remain unaccounted for, including five listed as prisoners of war.

An intelligence tip led the U.S. special operations forces to the hospital in Nasiriyah where Ms. Lynch was being held, officials said. Capt. Thorp would not confirm reports that troops used a battlefield diversion to slip into the hospital.

He said Ms. Lynch, an army supply clerk, was being treated for her injuries at an American military facility.

No details on her condition or the nature of injuries were available.

"In the same operation we recovered 11 bodies in and around the facility. We don't yet know the identity of those people and forensic experts will determine that," he said.



**The U.S. prisoner of war, Jessica Lynch, shown in this image from video released by the Department of Defence, being carried by U.S. special forces as she is removed from the Saddam Hospital in Nasiriyah, Iraq, on Tuesday. — AP**

The 507th Company was attacked during some of the first fighting in Nasiriyah.

Not long after the ambush, five of Ms. Lynch's comrades showed up in a video on Iraqi television being asked questions by their Iraqi captors.

The video also showed bodies, apparently of U.S. soldiers, which led Pentagon officials to accuse Iraq of executing some of its prisoners.

Officials believe the video was made in the Nasiriyah area.

Ms Lynch, an aspiring teacher, joined the Army to get an education, her family said. She left a farming community with an unemployment rate of 15 per cent, one of the highest in West Virginia.

More than 70 people gathered at Ms Lynch's parents' home in the small farming community after the Pentagon announced the rescue.

"She's safe in a hospital, she's in good health," her father, Greg Lynch Sr., said. — AP

## Victory at hand, says Saddam

**BAGHDAD, APRIL 2.** Declaring that "victory is at hand," the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, issued a new statement urging Iraqis to fight and defend their towns, according to a broadcast on Iraqi television on Wednesday.

In the statement, which was read by an Iraqi news anchor in a military uniform, Mr. Hussein repeatedly called upon his people to fight and said the Iraqi armed forces had not used their full capabilities in the battle.

"Fight them so that Iraq, the bastion of religion and principles, will be secured and our (Islamic) nation will come out of this crisis glorious," the statement said. "Fight them. Victory is at hand, God willing, although we have only utilised a third or less of our army while the criminals have used everything they brought in."

"Their failure was manifested and victory is glowing, God willing," the statement said.

The statement singled out the 11th Division of the Iraqi army and Ba'ath Party members in Nasiriyah and other southern towns who have "exhausted" the coalition forces, and urged Iraqis to follow their example in defending their cities.

The statement, which was monitored in Doha, Qatar, was different from another broadcast on Tuesday night in which Mr. Hussein called for Iraqis to wage jihad, or holy war, against coalition forces. — AP

## U.S. move to lay siege to Baghdad

By Atul Aneja

**MANAMA, APRIL 2.** After two weeks of fighting, U.S. forces advancing towards Baghdad are beginning tactical moves that could result in the siege of the Iraqi capital.

The U.S. troops have reportedly taken control of two key towns — An Numaniyah and Az Zubaydiyah — on the banks of the Tigris. By taking hold of these towns, the invading forces have achieved two key objectives. First, they are beginning to secure the eastern gates of Baghdad. By controlling the bridges across the river and these two locations, the U.S. can now push in more forces and sharpen its attack on Baghdad.

Two columns of U.S. troops have been advancing from Kuwait along the eastern and the western banks of the Tigris since the war began.

At a press briefing this afternoon, the spokesperson of the U.S. Central Command at Doha, Vincent Brookes, said the U.S. forces had already crossed the Tigris. Besides, by holding An Numaniyah and Az Zubaydiyah, the forces can cutoff highway number 10 that connects Baghdad to south-eastern Iraq. U.S. troops in the last 24 hours have also taken control of Al Iskandariyah, which is northwest of Az Zubaydiyah. In doing so, the forces are now in a position to shut out Baghdad from the southern road that heads towards Karbala and Najaf. Meanwhile, the U.S. 101st Airborne Division is trying to block Bag-

dad's access to the west by applying pressure on highway number one, which connect the Iraqi capital to Amman, nearly 1000 km. away.

Military analysts, however, point out that the U.S. forces in their latest advance might have encountered lighter resistance on account of Iraq's deliberate decision, taken a few days ago, to pull back forces on the outskirts and position them in Baghdad. According to Iraqi calculations, a tactical retreat of its forces might be necessary to strengthen the city's defence and for waging street battles inside Baghdad that might lie ahead.

Iraq has said that it has so far committed only one-third of its forces to combat the Anglo-American invasion. Gen. Brookes said that there was increasing evidence to show that the Iraqis were using hospital basements as military command posts and schools as storehouses for weapons. The Iraqis, he said, were also taking provocative steps, such as firing at the U.S. troops from religious sites, such as Imam Ali's mosque in Najaf.

Unlike Baghdad and its surroundings, very little fighting was reported from northern Iraq. Analysts point out that this lull in combat in the north might have been in deference to the visit of the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, to Turkey. Turkey has opposed the advance of the U.S. backed Kurdish fighters towards the northern Iraqi oil cities of Mosul and Kirkuk.

## Russia protests bombing

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, APRIL 2.** Russia has protested to the United States over the bombing of a residential area close to the Russian Embassy in Baghdad. The U.S. Ambassador to Moscow, Alexander Vershbow, was called to the Russian Foreign Ministry on Wednesday to be told that the Russian Embassy staff had been exposed to "immediate danger," when the allied forces on April 2 bombed a residential area where the Russian mission is situated.

Diplomatic sources said bombs fell within 50 metres of the embassy in an area which had no military facilities. The

Russian Foreign Ministry denounced the bombing as "impermissible" and demanded that the U.S. authorities take urgent and exhaustive measures to rule out such dangerous incidents. It is the third protest Russia has lodged with the U.S. in the past 10 days as relations between the two countries grew strained. On Friday Russia accused the U.S. ambassador in Moscow of making "veiled threats" to Russian diplomats in Iraq by warning in an interview that it was "pretty risky" for the diplomats to stay in Baghdad. Russian media reports said the embassy staff included foreign intelligence officers.

## South Korea to send 'non-combat' troops

By P. S. Suryanarayana

**SINGAPORE, APRIL 2.** South Korea's participation in the U.S.-led war in Iraq became a distinct possibility as the National Assembly in Seoul today endorsed a Government-piloted bill to send "non-combat troops" to the battle zone. The controversial move was approved by a vote of 179 for and 68 against. With 256 out of the total of 270 legislators being present, nine among them abstained.

The margin of the vote did not, however, reflect the intensity of popular sentiments over this issue on either side of the argument. The voting, which took place today, was originally scheduled more than a week ago. The postponement was caused by the Roh Moo-hyun administration's decision to allow a detailed debate in the context of popular sentiments against the move. South Korea may

now send "construction engineers" and medical personnel, numbering 70, to operate under the U.S. military command in Iraq.

It is not clear whether this number, made public some time ago, would be augmented later. Though several countries on the Asiatic side of the Asia Pacific Rim support or do not actively oppose the highly controversial U.S. military intervention in Iraq at this time, South Korea is now joining Australia in rushing to Washington's side in a conspicuous fashion. Australia is playing a combat role itself under the U.S. auspices. Even as the political climax over the divisive vote in the National Assembly neared, thousands of anti-war protesters staged rallies near the premises of the legislature in Seoul. According to some civic organisations behind the rallies, the current "U.S. invasion Iraq" was in reality a "one-sided massacre and not a war" in a conven-

tional sense of the term.

In their view, any move by South Korea to send even "non-combat troops" to Iraq in these circumstances would make Seoul "an accomplice to (the) invasion".

It was against this background that the South Korean President, Roh Moo-hyun, widened the scope of his argument ahead of today's voting in the National Assembly.

He contended that South Korea could hope to reap a strategic dividend by rushing to help the U.S. in Iraq at this juncture. According to him, any 'solidification' of the U.S.-South Korea ties could help resolve the North Korean nuclear issue in a peaceful manner.

For Mr. Roh, the hard-sell on this issue of a pro-U.S. role in the current Iraq war is a matter of reinterpreting his earlier stand of being cautious about America's long-term strategic and political aims across the world.

APR 2003



## REPORTS OF U.S. BREAKTHROUGH ILLUSIONS: IRAQ

# U.S. forces closing in on Baghdad

NEAR KARBALA (IRAQ), APRIL 2. Approaching within 65 km of Baghdad, U.S. forces seized a bridge over the Tigris and swept past battered Republican Guard units today. One of the key Guard divisions defending the city of Kut "has been destroyed," a U.S. general said.

Farther south, U.S. commanders said Iraqi soldiers were shooting from inside a revered mosque in Najaf and that American soldiers withheld return fire.

The U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division and the U.S. 1st Marine Expeditionary Force launched a two-pronged attack toward Baghdad, and both reported breakthroughs as units entered the so-called "red zone" within range of the guns and missiles defending the capital.

The Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, issued a new statement declaring that "victory is at hand" and urging Iraqis to defend their towns, according to a broadcast today on Iraqi satellite television. Mr. Hussein did not appear in person, and there was no way to verify if any of the statements actually came from the Iraqi leader.

The Information Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, called reports of a U.S. breakthrough near Baghdad "illusions." As for the Tigris crossing, he replied: "We welcome them, but this is not true."

Mr. Al-Sahhaf also told reporters that Americans were bent on destroying Shia shrines in Najaf and Karbala by flying low over them, causing vibrations.

Bombs continued to rain on Baghdad, with telephone exchanges among the targets hit today. Intermittent explosions could be heard at night on the outskirts of the city, with the sound of aircraft overhead more frequent.

U.S. 3rd Infantry units surged past the strategic city of Karbala, targeting an estimated 2,000 paramilitary fighters. Karbala, which sits on the main approach to Baghdad from the southwest, was encircled and hit by night-long bombardment from U.S. artillery and war-



The U.S. Army's 3rd infantry division launches missiles to pound Iraq's Republican Guard, in the suburbs of Karbala, south of Baghdad, on Wednesday. — AP

planes.

To the east, U.S. Marines moved to within 65 km of Baghdad after capturing an important bridge over the Tigris near Kut. U.S. Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks said the Baghdad Division defending Kut, was destroyed. An Iraqi military statement read on Iraqi satellite television denied that the division was destroyed, saying it remained ready to fight.

"What we're seeing is a multi-pronged approach," said Lt. Mark Kitchens, a U.S. Central Command spokesman. "The noose is quickly tightening around the neck of this regime."

In central Iraq, between Diwaniyah and Kut, thousands of U.S. Marines took a route so recently secured that at one spot the bodies of four dead Iraqi soldiers lay around a vehicle that still had its engine running. In northern Iraq, Baghdad's forces shelled a village in the south of the Kurdish autonomous region today, and fighter jets of the U.S.-led coalition streaked overhead targeting Iraqi positions

160 km north of Baghdad.

U.S. soldiers on the front lines and relatives in the United States rejoiced over the rescue of U.S. Pfc. Jessica Lynch from captivity at an Iraqi hospital used as a military command post. The American commandos who freed her also retrieved 11 bodies, some of them believed to be American soldiers.

In Najaf, about 80 km south of Karbala, U.S. forces were being fired on from the Ali mosque, one of the most important Shia Muslim shrines, U.S. Central Command said, adding that coalition forces have tried to minimise damage to religious sites.

### Hospital hit

The International Red Cross, meanwhile, said some of its staff members saw the bodies of dozens of people — including women and children — at a town south of Baghdad. At least 280 injured people were being treated at a hospital in Hillah, the Red Cross said.

Iraqi officials said on Tuesday

that U.S. Apache helicopters attacked a residential neighbourhood in Hillah, killing 33 persons and injuring more than 300. The U.S. Central Command said it was investigating the claim.

A report from As-Saliyah, Qatar, said U.S. forces today dropped "for the first time in combat history" a new version of a cluster bomb that adapts to wind and weather to hit targets more accurately, Central Command said.

Six CBU-105 Wind Corrected Munitions Dispensers were dropped by B-52 bombers in central Iraq "to stop an Iraqi tank column from continuing on its route towards coalition troops," said a statement.

New York-based Human Rights Watch, in a report days ahead of the start of the current conflict, said cluster munitions dropped in the 1991 Gulf war were to blame for the deaths or injuries of more than 4,000 civilians after the fighting ended.— AP, AFP

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## WAR ON IRAQ

# Berlin spectre in Baghdad battle

## Bloody conflict stirs vision of World War II

As Sayliya camp, Qatar, April 1 (Reuters): The last time an invading army tried to capture a city the size of Baghdad, more than 120,000 Soviet soldiers and Germans were left dead in the streets of Berlin.

No one yet dares imagine that the looming battle for Baghdad will be a replay of the battle for the German capital in 1945.

But with President Saddam Hussein and his loyalist fighters promising to battle the US-led invasion force street by street, the Iraqi capital — with its five million people — could be the biggest urban battlefield since World War II.

US war planners are already preparing the public for the sort of bloodshed their troops have not faced in a generation.

"We're prepared to pay a very high price because we are not going to do anything other than ensure that this regime goes away," one senior official at the US Central Command in Qatar said on Monday, speaking under condition of anonymity.

"If that means there will be a lot of casualties, then there will be a lot of casualties."

The pattern of urban warfare over the past few decades has been of overconfident attackers underestimating the scale of the task. Cities limit an attacker's technological advantage, and favour the defender who knows the streets.

On New Year's Eve, 1994, Russian tanks rolled into the Chechen capital of Grozny, led by commanders who were convinced they would easily "liberate" the city of 400,000.

Lightly armed rebels caught the tanks at intersections and destroyed them with rocket-propelled grenades. Hundreds of Russian soldiers died in a single night.

To take Grozny, the Russians razed it, block by block, over two months. No one knows how many thousands of civilians died. "The defenders of Grozny, who were very motivated, finally gave up after a month of bombing and the total destruction of the city. They said they just couldn't go on anymore, they had to stop," said retired Colonel Jean-Louis Dufour, author of *War, the City and the Soldier*.

"I wonder whether the Amer-

ican strategy won't be similar. A bit less brutal, because they can't destroy all of Baghdad, but they can harass it permanently, with bombs so (the defenders) are exhausted."

Lancaster University defence expert Tim Ripley drew comparisons with the unexpectedly dogged resistance Israel faced in its assault on the Lebanese capital in 1982 to curb the influence of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

"The best analogy is Beirut," he said, predicting that US and British forces will face stiff opposition in Baghdad.

From the outset, the US and British war planners, keen to win Iraqi hearts and minds in the war that has divided world opinion, have underlined a desire to avoid an all-out urban assault.

"Militarily, it would be feasible but I think it would be disastrous politically," said William Hopkinson, an analyst at the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

"You can imagine it — starving children, disease breaking out, and this going on for weeks. It would inflame the world and recruit lots of terrorists for (Osama) Bin Laden," he said, referring to the suspected mastermind of the attacks on the US on September 11.

But if the Iraqi leadership is able to make a stand in the city, the alternative could be a long siege. "It is difficult to say what will happen when the hospitals fill up with wounded and the food supplies start to run down," said Vladimir Kuzar of the Russian defence ministry newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda*.

Taking Baghdad street by street would require a major force experienced in such warfare. Americans have little or no experience of urban warfare since they took the city of Hue in central Vietnam in a battle in 1968. "Street fighting is extraordinarily difficult. It needs very well-trained troops, which is not the case of the whole of the American army," Dufour said.

War planners have signalled that the British operation around the southern Iraqi city of Basra will be a rehearsal of their tactics for Baghdad.

## 'COLLATERAL' DAMAGE: MOUNTING BY THE DAY



A wounded girl who was found near her dead mother in central Iraq by US Marines. (Reuters)

### Civilian deaths in the Iraq war

• **March 20:** Jordanian taxi driver killed in first US missile strike on Baghdad

• **March 23:** Allied aircraft bomb a bus carrying Syrian workers back home from Iraq, while attacking a bridge near the Syrian border. Five people are killed and an unspecified number injured. Washington later expresses regret for the accident

• **March 26:** At least 15 people die and 30 are wounded in what Iraq describes as US air strike on a residential and commercial street in Baghdad's al-Shaab district. The US military says that the neighbourhood was not targeted

• **March 28:** Iraqi officials say at least 62 people are killed and 49 wounded in an air raid on a Baghdad market in the city's impoverished al-Shula neighbourhood.

US and Britain say civilian deaths in the March 26 and March 28 incidents may have been caused by Iraqi anti-aircraft missiles missing their targets and falling back on the city. Iraq insists Western bombing was responsible

• **March 28:** Iraq says US and British

bombing killed 75 civilians and wounded 290 overnight around the country.

It also said that since the war began, 116 civilians had been killed and 659 wounded in Basra province, and 230 killed with 800 wounded in Dhi Qar province, containing the city of An Nasiriyah

• **March 29:** Iraqi family of four is caught in crossfire between US Marines and Iraqi soldiers; mother is killed and four-year-old girl is hit in the eye, stomach and shoulder

• **March 31:** Seven women and children are killed when US troops open fire on a van packed with 13 women and children when it fails to stop at a checkpoint in the desert near Najaf, 160 km south of Baghdad. Marine Corps General Peter Pace said the soldiers who shot at the van "absolutely did the right thing", because they thought their lives were threatened

• **April 1:** US Marines kill an unarmed Iraqi man who drove his pickup truck at speed towards a checkpoint outside the southern town of Shatra. His passenger is badly wounded. One Marine says he feared a suicide bomb

## Fuming Arabs see revenge for 9/11

Cairo, April 1 (Reuters): The killing of seven women and children by US troops in Iraq has enraged Arabs, already incensed by what they see as a Western war on Arabs and Muslims.

"The ugliest part of any war is this," said Sameh Nabil, a 25-year-old vendor selling books in central Cairo.

"Every day, the newspapers are publishing pictures of little Iraqi children wounded or dead. That makes me furious."

US Central Command said US troops fired at a van on Monday which failed to stop at a desert checkpoint, even after warning shots were fired, killing seven of the 13 women and children and injuring two.

A *Washington Post* journalist travelling with the US troops said a total of 10 people were killed and quoted the US captain at the intersection as saying his forward platoon had failed to

give the van ample notice it would be shelled.

"It was a deliberate act in cold blood to avenge September 11. I hope Bush, Blair and their families are pleased," said Hamza Abdulrahman, an Omani civil servant. "The world should not accept any apology from this action and the coalition forces must put the murderers on trial," said an Omani foreign ministry official, who did not want to be identified.

The US insists it does not target civilians in the war it launched on March 20 over allegations that Iraq was hiding weapons of mass destruction. Baghdad denies having them.

The killings, part of a mounting civilian death toll in the US-led war, have increased anger in the Arab world against the US and Britain. Iraq says about 600 civilians have been killed so far. Many said the checkpoint



SAY NO TO WAR: A protester flashes a peace sign at a rally in Boston. (Reuters)

killings demonstrated the US-led forces were not trying to liberate Iraq, but were trying to occupy it. "They indicate that American soldiers are afraid and that they

have clear orders to kill," said Hamed Abdu, 35, a Gaza taxi driver.

"The Americans are just acting like the Jews here — they kill Palestinians and then look for excuses," he added, referring to Israel's crackdown on the Palestinian uprising for independence.

Ibrahim al-Farzat, owner of a Yemen grocery shop, said the civilian deaths at the checkpoint were "proof that Americans came to occupy us, and of course the occupier has no humanity and we have no choice except 'jihad'."

Arab newspapers have reflected the outrage felt by people on the street, splashing reports of civilian deaths across pages. "Invaders commit massacre in the al-Ameen area...26 martyred including 11 children," said a frontpage headline of *Akhbar al-Khaleej* newspaper in Bahrain,

home of the US Fifth Fleet.

In Cairo, the semi-official *al-Gomhuria* wrote in a banner headline: "The invading forces commit three ugly massacres in Baghdad and Najaf." A picture of a wounded Iraqi girl was an inset with another picture of an Iraqi man dazed in a hospital bed.

A Lebanese political science student said the US-led forces would "lose the war politically" over such deaths.

"These incidents will become a big problem for the Americans because they cannot control the civilians, which means more of them will die," the student said. Mohammed Mahmoud, a 45-year-old Egyptian company employee said the war had changed his mind about the US.

"In the past, I used to think of America as the centre of technology, education and freedom. I loved America. But now, I think it is a country of murderers."

## Giggles in quiet corner of Iraq

New Delhi, April 1 (Reuters): There are pictures of Saddam Hussein all over but this is still a relatively quiet corner of Iraq.

The only sound that can be heard at the Iraqi school in the Indian capital is the giggling of children and the chanting of the Quran in a religion class.

"We're used to war. This is not the first time we've been bombed," said Badria Alruka, an English teacher at the Iraqi school tucked away in a leafy neighbourhood in Delhi, which also teaches children from other Arab nations.

"Also, the children have to take their exams next month," she sighed, standing near a picture of a young Saddam Hussein with his little daughter in his lap.

It may be business as usual but most of the 55 Iraqi students in the school worry about their families at home.

"I spoke to my sister a day before the war began. Since then there's been no contact. What can we do? There are no phones, no communications," said Mohammad Abbas, a class 12 student who plans to go to a medical college in Baghdad after school.

"We can't concentrate on our studies. We keep watching TV at home."

In many ways, the school, housed in a residential building, mirrors the state of Iraq after years of economic sanctions: it has no modern gear and the students use worn desks and chairs.

The biggest concern of the

16 teachers, who wear traditional Islamic headdress, and 150 students who come from nations such as Yemen and Sudan besides Iraq, is the annual exam.

Some of the children at the 30-year-old school, whose parents are diplomats or students in Indian universities, say they are at a critical stage in their lives when they need to focus on planning their careers instead of the war.

Principal Saad M. Jassin said the students gathered in his office to watch TV the day the war began but have returned to their normal routine since.

"The children are naturally disturbed but the school is carrying on as usual," he said, seated before an Iraqi flag and a portrait of Saddam Hussein in his office.

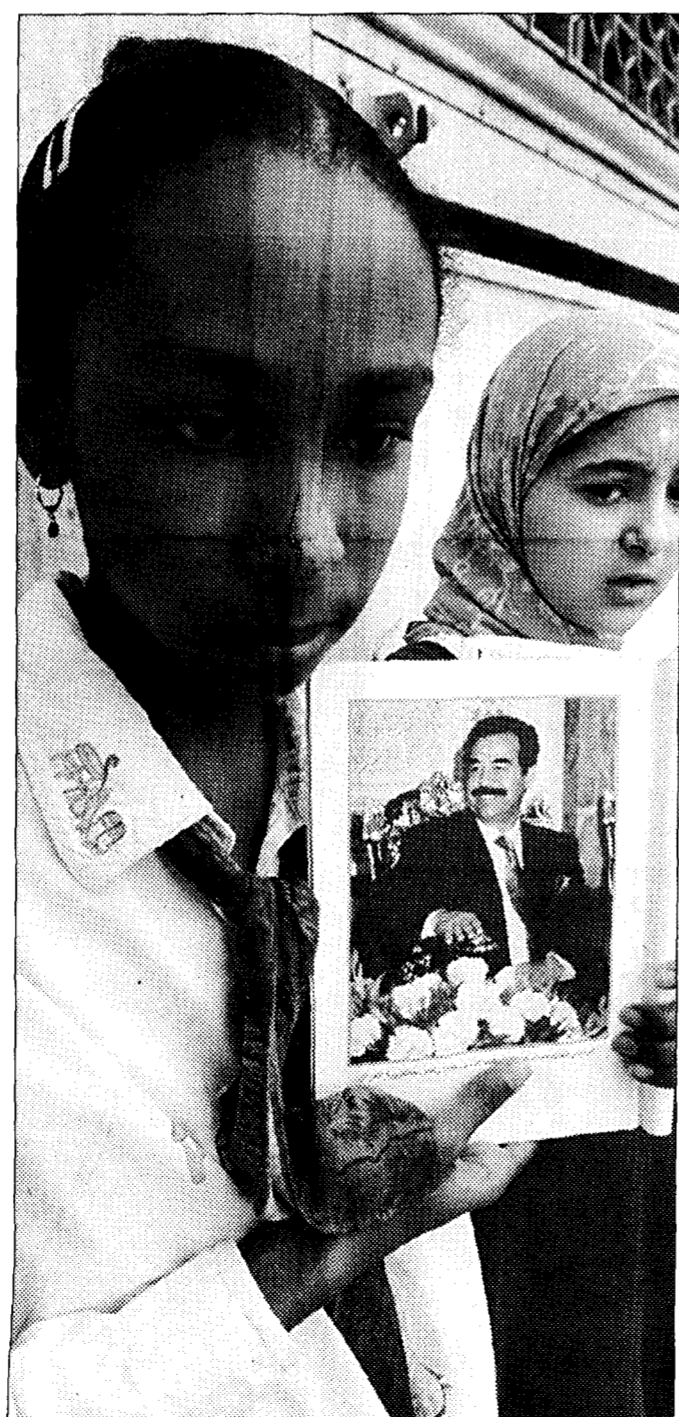
It is tough for the students to fully erase their feelings of anxiety and anger.

Seema, a 17-year-old student, says she is worried about her sister in Iraq who is seven months pregnant, but cannot do anything for her.

"There is no way of getting in touch with her. But I have faith in God," she said. Mohammad Abbas, too, is stoic about the war but he is also angry.

"So many people have been killed and so many Iraqis are refugees," he said.

"The British and the Americans thought the Iraqis would cheer and welcome them with flags and flowers but they were wrong."



AWAY FROM HOME: A student holds up a picture of Saddam Hussein at the Iraqi school in New Delhi. (Reuters)

## Hero to zero to hero for telling it like it is

### AMITROY

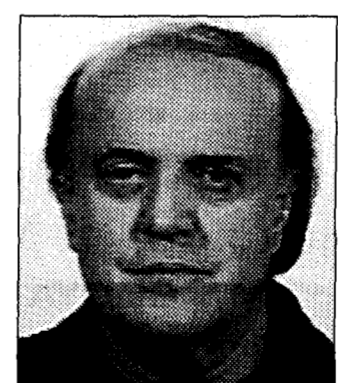
London, April 1: Twenty-four hours is a long time in war journalism, as Peter Arnett has discovered. Sacked yesterday by America's NBC network for giving a sympathetic interview to Iraqi TV, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Arnett, a veteran of Vietnam coverage, was gleefully scooped up by Britain's mass circulation *Mirror* newspaper.

What happens to Arnett is a distraction from the main business of covering the bloody conflict on the battle ground, but in reality the media war has become a crucial aspect of the British and US attempts to win "the hearts and minds" of Iraqis.

In all this, the efforts of Arnett, 68, have been distinctly unhelpful so far as the governments in Washington and London are concerned. Arnett's point is that US soldiers are targeting Iraqi hearts but only in the anatomical sense. Within a day he has gone from hero to zero to hero.

As an NBC journalist, he must have been paid a fair whack but Fleet Street rates being even more generous than American newspaper payments, it would indeed be surprising if the *Daily Mirror* does not give him at least £2,000 per despatch, plus lavish expenses.

But for the New Zealand-born Arnett, money is not the sole object. He wants to be held up as the fearless reporter who wants to tell it like it is. This is excessively naive in the present climate when his responsibility, so far as Washington and London see it, is to do nothing that would provide succour and comfort to the enemy.



Arnett: Trying times

Arnett can claim to be the man who put CNN on the world map. During the 1991 Gulf war, his live reports from Baghdad when American bombs blitzed the city were watched all round the world. Now all this has become so mundane, so quickly that networks and radio stations in Britain are already returning to some of their normal schedule.

Arnett's mistake was to give an interview to Iraqi TV in which he indicated that the Americans were not having things all their own way.

What he said was: "The first war plan has failed because of Iraqi resistance. Now they are trying to write another war plan. Clearly, the war planners misjudged the determination of the Iraqi forces. In my TV commentaries I'd tell the Americans about the Iraqi forces and their willingness to fight. President Bush says he is concerned about the Iraqi people. But if Iraqi people are dying in numbers, then American policy will be challenged very strongly. Our reports about civilian casualties here, about

the resistance of the Iraqi forces, are going back to the US. It helps those who oppose the war when you challenge the policy."

NBC at first backed him, but cowed by the howls of protest in the US, sacked him.

He stepped the *Mirror* today, with its front page announcing its prize catch: "The reporter sacked by American TV for telling the truth about the war is joining the *Daily Mirror*."

Arnett must have asked when he should begin. "How about today?" the *Mirror* editor would have told him.

So, Arnett's first report is in the *Mirror* today. He begins: "I am still in shock and awe at being fired. There is enormous sensitivity within the US government to reports coming out from Baghdad. They don't want credible news organisations reporting from here because it presents them with enormous problems."

He goes on: "I reported on the original bombing for NBC and we were half a mile away from those massive explosions. Now I am really shocked that I am no longer reporting this story for the US and awed by the fact that it actually happened. That overnight my successful NBC reporting career was turned to ashes. And why?"

One assumes this question is rhetorical. He provides his own explanation: "Because I stated the obvious to Iraqi television; that the US war timetable has fallen by the wayside. I have made those comments to television stations around the world and now I'm making them again in the *Daily Mirror*. I'm not angry. I'm not crying. But I'm also awed by this media phenomenon."

### WAR BRIEFS

#### Saddam topples Hitler

Washington, April 1 (Reuters): Forget Stalin or Hitler. The worst ruler in world history is Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the Pentagon said on Monday.

"The Iraqi people will be free of decades and decades of torture and oppression the likes of which I think the world has not ever seen before," Pentagon spokeswoman Victoria Clarke said.

Clarke's comment was in line with a mounting stream of comments from Washington that have decried the Iraqi leader as "US and British troops now look as if they may take longer than expected in removing him from power."

Saddam has been condemned for his exceptional brutality against his own people but historians generally agree that the Nazi dictator and the Soviet leader were responsible for killing more people than any other dictators in world history.

#### Channel choice

Baghdad (Reuters): An Iranian-based Arabic television news station opposed to the Iraq war is drawing viewers in Baghdad where it offers residents an alternative to the government's propaganda machine. *Al-Alam* or "The World" is a 24-hour news channel, which broadcasts on terrestrial airwaves, allowing Iraqis to tune in to watch the latest news. Satellite dishes are banned in Iraq. "I am selling these like bread," said one man selling aerials, that improve reception of the station, as buyers line up at his kiosk in downtown Baghdad.

#### Marines drown

As Sayliya Camp, Qatar (Reuters): A US tank carrying four US Marines plunged from a bridge into the Euphrates last week after the driver was killed in combat, apparently causing the other three crewmen to drown, US military officials said on Monday. The incident occurred on March 27 near An Nasiriyah, but the tank and the dead Marines were not pulled from the river until Sunday, US Central Command said in a statement. It said the tank driver was shot and killed while crossing a bridge and the M1A1 tank toppled into the river.

#### Aussie navy

Canberra (Reuters): Australia said on Tuesday it would scale back its naval contribution to the war on Iraq by one frigate later this month, as there was a reduced workload in the Gulf. However, six Australian air force intelligence specialists are to be added to the US-led forces to help assess battle and bomb damage, said defence minister Roboos Hill. The frigates *HMAS Anzac* and *HMAS Darwin*, have been in the Gulf since October. Hill said they would leave for Australia by the end of April, to be replaced by one frigate, the *HMAS Sydney*. A supply ship would remain in the Gulf.

#### Song support

Toronto (Reuters): Canadian baseball fans stood and sang "God Bless America" during the seventh inning stretch of the major league season opener between the Toronto Blue Jays and New York Yankees on Monday, in a show of support for the US war effort in Iraq. Ordered by Major League Baseball to play "God Bless America" instead of the traditional "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" during all team home openers, it had been feared the song might trigger booring like that heard at a recent NHL hockey game in Montreal.



Saddam

# US gets ready for Baghdad bloodbath



**HELP!** An American soldier carries an Iraqi boy who was injured during a heavy battle between the US army and Iraqi forces near Basra on Tuesday.

Peter Graff  
As Sayliya Camp, April 1

THE LAST time an invading army tried to capture a city the size of Baghdad, more than 120,000 Soviet soldiers and Germans were left dead in the streets of Berlin.

No one yet dares imagine that the looming battle for Baghdad will be a replay of the battle for the German capital in 1945.

But with President Saddam Hussein and his loyalists promising to battle the US-led invaders street by street, the Iraqi capital — with its five million people — could be the biggest urban battlefield since World War II.

US war planners are already preparing the public for the sort of bloodshed their troops have not faced in a generation.

"We're prepared to pay a very high price because we are going to ensure that this regime goes away," a senior official at the US Central Command in Qatar said on Monday, speaking under condition of anonymity.

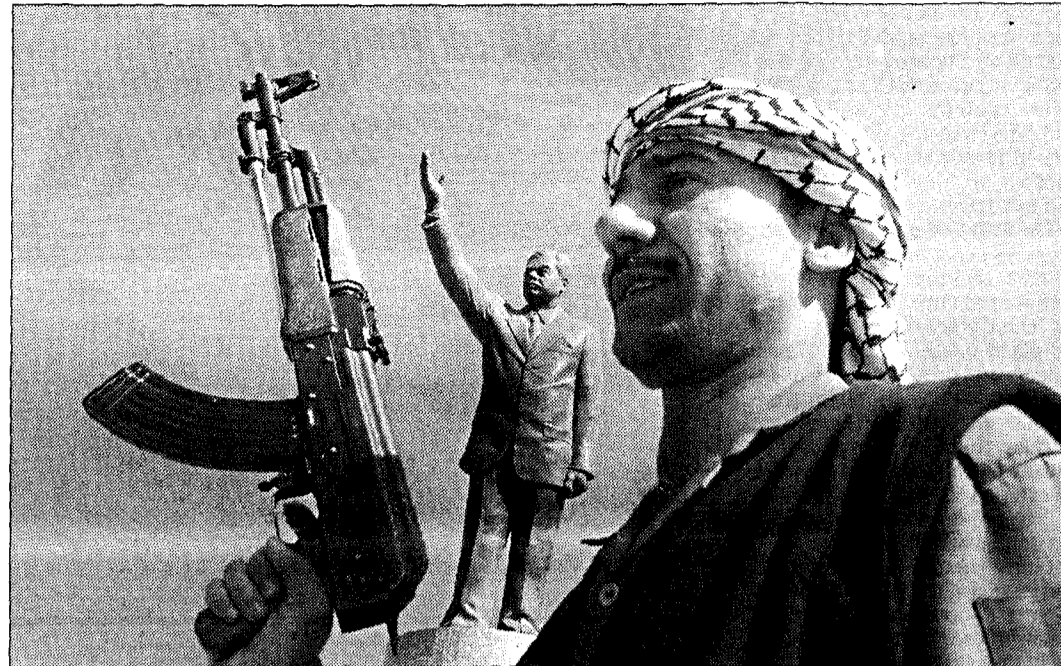
"If that means there will be a lot of casualties, it will be so."

On New Year's Eve 1994, Russian tanks rolled into the Chechen capital of Grozny, led by commanders who were convinced they would easily "liberate" the city of 400,000.

To take Grozny, the Russians razed it, block by block, over two months. No one knows how many thousands died.

"The defenders of Grozny finally gave up after a month of bombing and the total destruction of the city. They said they just couldn't go on anymore," said retired Colonel Jean-Louis Dufour, author of *War, the City and the Soldier*.

"I wonder whether the American strategy won't be similar. A bit less brutal, because they can't destroy all of Baghdad, but



A member of the Baath Party stands in front of a statue of President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad on Tuesday.

they can harass it permanently with bombs so (the defenders) are exhausted."

From the outset, US and British war planners, keen to win Iraqi hearts and minds in a war that has divided world opinion, have underlined a desire to avoid an all-out urban assault.

"Militarily it would be feasible but I think it would be disastrous politically," said William Hopkinson, an analyst at the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

"You can imagine it — starving children, disease breaking out, and this going on for weeks. It would inflame the world and recruit lots of terrorists for (Osama) bin Laden," he said.

But if the Iraqi leadership is able to make a stand in the city, the alternative could be a long siege. "It is difficult to say what

will happen when the hospitals fill up with wounded and the food supplies get over," said Vladimir Kuzar of the Russian Defence Ministry newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda*.

Taking Baghdad street by street would require a major force experienced in such warfare. Americans have little or no experience of urban warfare since they took the Vietnamese city of Hue in 1968.

War planners have signalled that the British operation around Basra will be a rehearsal of their tactics for Baghdad.

"They've been surrounding Basra for two weeks, and it still hasn't fallen," said Lancaster University defence expert Tim Ripley, who is following the war at US Central Command in Qatar. "Baghdad is a city five

times the size, with far more people loyal to the regime. You can do the maths."

Even optimists talk of "bloody street fighting". "The battle of Baghdad will be quick," declared Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in a *New York Times* article.

"The coalition won't enter Baghdad in a plodding fashion and then take it block by block. Instead, it will gradually learn where Iraqi forces have set up provisional headquarters and strong points, and then seize them in a night-time operation akin to an urban blitzkrieg."

"There will be bloody street fighting, but with Iraq's command centres fractured, the opposition forces will be piecemeal and isolated," he wrote.

Reuters

## Mirror scoops sacked Arnett

London, April 1

PETER ARNETT, the veteran reporter sacked on Monday by NBC after he claimed that American war plans misjudged the determination of the Iraqi forces, has been hired by *The Daily Mirror*.

In a scathing double-page spread on Tuesday, Arnett said he was still in shock at the treatment meted out to him for "telling the truth" in an impromptu interview with Iraqi TV on Monday.

He blamed the "Rightwing media and politicians" and complained that America no longer tolerated "credible news organisations" because of the problems it caused for the war effort.

"Fired by America for telling the truth. Hired by *The Daily Mirror* to carry on telling it," declared the paper, which scooped up the former CNN man just hours after he was unceremoniously dumped by the giant US network. He is expected to carry on writing frontline reports from Baghdad, where he has been stationed since the war began.

"I am still in shock and awe at being fired. There is enormous sensitivity within the US government to reports coming out from Baghdad. They don't want credible news organisations reporting from here because it presents them with enormous problems," he said in Tuesday's paper.

"Overnight my successful NBC reporting career was turned to ashes. And why? Because I stated the obvious to Iraqi television, that the United States war timetable has fallen by the wayside."

The Guardian

# Devastation on road to the capital

Jim Dwyer  
With the 101st Airborne Division near Hilla (central Iraq), April 1

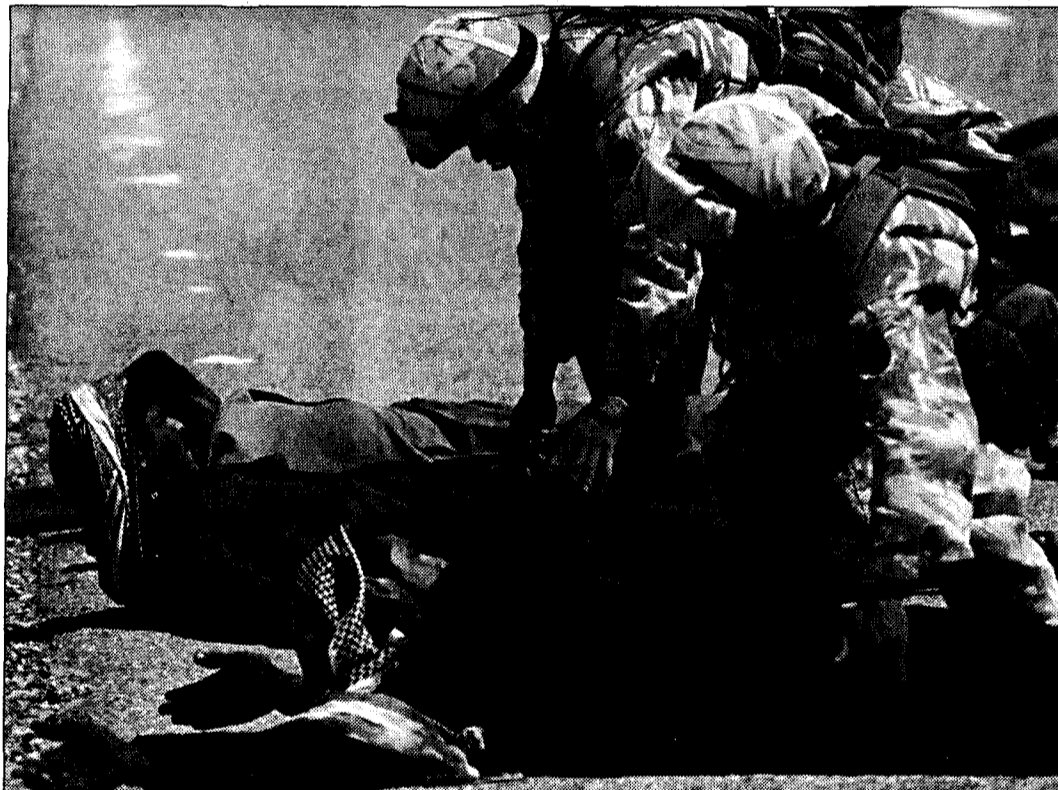
IT WAS possible on Monday to drive 30 miles north from Najaf toward Baghdad and not see a single living person other than American soldiers.

The roads were littered with the hulks of pickup trucks and taxi cabs that had been fired on by American forces. As for the occupants of several of those cars — singled out as members of paramilitary forces loyal to President Saddam Hussein — their bodies were sprawled on the ground nearby.

So it was that a swath of the Iraqi countryside along the Euphrates, about 60 miles from Baghdad, was all but devoid of ordinary life on this beautiful spring day, as American troops from the 101st Airborne Division hunted down Iraqi soldiers and guerrillas in a relentless show of force. The battle for Najaf, 85 miles south of Baghdad, is not yet over, even as American forces have advanced northward.

On Monday, the Americans launched a blizzard of shells, bombs and bullets, flushing out soldiers of an Iraqi artillery unit near Hilla, north of Najaf on the road to Baghdad. The Iraqis once again combined artillery with small arms fire to shoot up helicopters, damaging five. One American soldier was killed by gunfire, officers said.

Najaf has much value in the American campaign. It sits along a major supply route needed for invading American and British troops headed to Baghdad, and some American officers feel that its capture would



**SWOOP:** Soldiers hold Iraqi men for questioning after their vehicle was intercepted west of Basra on Tuesday.

send a message to other Shia cities that Hussein's government is doomed.

Outside Najaf, soldiers from the 101st Airborne seized an airfield and a power plant. American military officials hope within the next several days to be able to turn over control of Najaf to leaders of the Shia community, the major ethnic group.

Shias had been widely expected to rise up against Saddam Hussein. But a combination of

fear and uncertainty among the Shia community appears to have led them to a more cautious approach.

So, with each day of the war, the Americans have used more and more military power to carry out their missions, often inside Shia-dominated towns, making for some grim realities in a part of the country where there had been little expectation of strong resistance.

Outside Najaf, major roads

were closed off as the military enforced a blockade in response to a suicide car bombing on Saturday that killed four American soldiers. Entire towns were shut.

It was near Najaf on Monday, the American Central Command said, that seven women and children were killed this afternoon by American soldiers. The military said that the vehicle they were riding in failed to stop when Third Infantry Division soldiers waved them down and

fired warning shots.

The 101st Division's artillery strikes gave the air an odd feel, almost like the skin of a drum, as hundreds of rounds pounded off the clear, cloudless sky.

"I've got 30 cannons, and I'm shooting them all," said Lt. Col. Bill Bennett, commander of the 101st Division's artillery unit. "I never shot so much in my life. I need some more bullets."

The Americans swapped artillery rounds with the Iraqis, who were able to place some of their shells close enough to drive back a line of American vehicles on the road. Later, the American side supplemented the ground attacks with raids by Apache helicopters and Air Force jets.

Near the end of the day, Bradley fighting vehicles carried American infantrymen directly to bunkers occupied by Iraqi soldiers, which were stocked with rocket-propelled grenades and other munitions. At close quarters, some surrendered, and others were killed, said Sgt. Benjamin Johnson, an infantry soldier. A group of five Iraqis came out with their hands up; another man was killed while hiding in a bunker.

The prisoners were led to the side of the road, hands cuffed behind their backs, and their heads were covered with sacks.

If the Americans capture Najaf, it will help to send a message to other Shia cities, said Brig. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, the assistant division commander.

"We want the oppressed to feel hopeful, and the oppressors to feel hopelessness," he said. "Hope can put bravery in the hearts of men."

The New York Times

## CRISIS UPDATE

### Reporter expelled

IRAQI AUTHORITIES have expelled an Australian journalist covering the war from Baghdad, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* reported on Tuesday. Ian McPhedran, a reporter for the News Limited group of newspapers which includes the *Daily Telegraph*, was ordered to leave the Iraqi capital on Monday, the organisation said. He told the newspaper Iraqi officials accused him of breaking regulations by travelling from his hotel to the information ministry building in Baghdad.

AFP, Sydney

### Medals from Saddam

PRESIDENT SADDAM Hussein has decided to decorate soldiers who have put up stiff resistance against US and British troops in the south of the country. Iraqi satellite television said on Tuesday two medals — the Decoration of Umm al-Maarek or the Mother of All Battles and the Wisam al-Rafidain, or Order of the Two Rivers — would be awarded to the entire 45th Brigade, which defended Umm Qasr. Medals for bravery would also be awarded to fighters confronting coalition troops in Nassiriya.

AFP, Baghdad

### 15 of a family killed

FIFTEEN MEMBERS of a family were killed when their pickup was blown up by a rocket from an Apache helicopter near Hilla south of Baghdad, the sole survivor of the attack told AFP on Tuesday. The family was fleeing fighting between Iraqi forces and the US-led coalition in Nassiriya, 350 km south of Baghdad, when the US helicopter fired on the jeep in Haidariya at 3 pm GMT.

AFP, Hilla

# American soldiers learn from Israeli experience

James Bennet  
Jerusalem, April 1

AS THEY prepared for war in Iraq, American military officers studied Israel's use of helicopters, tanks and armoured bulldozers to fight in the claustrophobic quarters of Palestinian refugee camps.

But Israeli veterans and other experts said the Americans might also learn from the political dimensions of Israel's war in Lebanon and its occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip: how hard it can be to sift civilians for potential threats without enraging a society and alienating world opinion; how inspiring it can seem to face up to an enemy and to try to improve the lives of its victims — and how agonising it can be to sustain, or to end, an occupation.

"We also think that we are very, very moral," Martin van Creveld, professor of military history and strategy at Hebrew University, said of Israelis. "And we wonder why they hate us so much." Professor van Creveld briefed officers of the Marine Corps in North Carolina in September.

Israeli officials who are usually quick to draw parallels between the American and Israeli experiences have been reticent to do so recently — even after a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself apart and wounded dozens of people outside a cafe in an Israeli city on Sunday, the day after an Iraqi bomber killed four American soldiers at a checkpoint.

But to any Israeli — and any Palestinian — the parallels are inescapable. "I have a déjà vu feeling," said Yoni

Fighel, a colonel in the Israeli reserves who served as an intelligence officer in the Lebanon war and later as a military governor in the West Bank.

He said the Iraqis also appeared to have studied the Israeli experience. "I do believe that some conclusions from Lebanon, and from the West Bank and Gaza, were adopted by the Iraqi regime," said Fighel, now a researcher at the International Policy Institute for Counterterrorism.

He called suicide bombing and guerrilla warfare "an excellent tool to build a fence" between the American and British soldiers and the Iraqi civilians they hope to win over.

The military tactics on both sides in Iraq, and their political effects, may change quickly, as they already have. But the soldiers who are setting up

checkpoints in Iraq, demanding identification, frisking men and examining even the most innocent-seeming bundles, are doing what Israeli soldiers do daily in the West Bank.

Like the Israelis, the Americans and British are now relying on intelligence gleaned from collaborators and prisoners to storm homes in pursuit of wanted men, weapons and more intelligence. Like the Israelis, they are bulldozing trees and houses to improve their lines of fire. They are opening fire on people who move into off-limits areas.

Like the Israelis, they say they have no choice. They say their enemy is deliberately drawing fire toward civilians to darken the outsiders' image.

"Similar?" was the headline in the newspaper *Maariv* recently, with a picture of Iraqis standing in the concrete

rubble left by a bomb in Baghdad and a picture of Palestinians doing the same thing in Gaza.

The newspaper ran a series of compare-and-contrast pictures: of soldiers guarding prisoners with their hands on their heads, of soldiers in battle gear standing by children, of soldiers napping in newly occupied buildings.

American consultations with Israeli experts have been part of a broad review of army strategy for fighting in cities that preceded the war on Iraq.

Marines trained on mock cities in Guam and in Southern California as the armed forces tried to extract and instill lessons from many sources, including American combat in Mogadishu, Somalia, and Russian fighting in Grozny, the capital of Chechnya.

The New York Times



A painting shows George Bush on an unsteady footbridge, followed by a blind and injured Tony Blair. Saddam Hussein is reflected in the water like a phantom.

W. Brin  
from

# Key battle on for Al-Hindiyah

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, APRIL 1. The U.S. forces aiming to seal the western approaches to Baghdad are fighting a crucial battle with Iraqi forces at Al-Hindiyah, a town straddling the Euphrates river. Both sides are locked in battle over the control over a strategic bridge across the Euphrates. In case the U.S. forces manage to overrun the Iraqi defences in this area, they would be in a position to launch a bi-directional attack on Baghdad, which is only 90 km away.

The U.S. troops, by consolidating in Al-Hindiyah, could fancy their chances of challenging the Saddam international airport on the outskirts of Baghdad. Simultaneously, they could advance towards Fallujah, west of the Iraqi capital. In doing so, they could cut-off the express highway that links Baghdad to the Jordanian capital of Amman across a nearly 1000 km long western desert stretch. In other words, by gaining ground at Al-Hindiyah, the U.S. forces could begin laying the groundwork for a siege around Baghdad, starting from the city's western side.

The advance could also serve three other crucial objectives. The U.S. domination would mean that it would be in a position to drive a wedge between the mutually reinforcing troops of Iraq's Special Republican Guards' Hamourabi division and the Al Medina division. While the Hamourabi division has been deployed around Baghdad, the Al Medina division has been moved along the Euphrates in the direction of Karbala, less than 100 km away. Besides, by controlling Al-Hindiyah, the U.S. troops could switch their movements laterally to the other theatre of war around the Tigris river in the direction of Al Amarah.

Military analysts, however, point out that the U.S. plans could run into serious difficulties. First, the Iraqis could mount stiff resistance, which could stall the U.S. advance. Second, the Iraqis could exercise the option of pulling back their troops in order to consolidate the defences around Baghdad. In fact, there are some indications that the Iraqi military command might have re-deployed their Adnan division from the north towards Tikrit, close to Baghdad.

The Nebunchandnezzar division may also now have been positioned around Fallujah. Third, Iraq could also stall the U.S. advance by breaching a part of the embankments along key section of the rivers



U.S. soldiers run for cover near the Euphrates river in Al-Hindiyah, Iraq, on Monday. — AP

Tigris and Euphrates and cause floods.

In other words, the Iraqi regime could use controlled releases of water, possibly along a dike near Hindiyah and another along the Tigris river north of Al Amarah, as a weapon of war. In advancing towards Baghdad, the U.S. forces have been issued instructions to respect and spare from attack the holy Islamic sites that they might have to cross, especially at Najaf and Karbala.

"We are very aware of reducing and avoiding damage to the religious and his-

torical sites," a spokesperson of the U.S. Central Command, Vincent Brooks, said today at Doha. Indicating that the Kurdish militia will not be allowed to takeover the oil fields of Mosul and Kirkuk on their own, Gen. Brooks said that U.S. forces in northern Iraq would ensure that the Kurds were prevented from taking any 'unilateral' action.

According to the U.S. official, coalition forces had arrested an Iraqi General during operations and had smashed a Fidayeen training center near Najaf.

## Quit, Riyadh tells Saddam

WASHINGTON, APRIL 1. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal, has said that the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, should make a war-ending "sacrifice" by stepping aside.

"Since he has asked his people to sacrifice for the country, he should be the first to sacrifice for his country," Prince Saud told ABC News in an interview.

"If his staying in power (is) the only thing that brings problems to his country, we expect that he would respond to a sacrifice for his country, as he requires any citizen there to sacrifice for his country."

He made the comments to the correspondent, Barbara Walters, who asked him whether the Iraqi leader had to be removed from power. Prince Saud, whose country strongly opposes the war even though it is a key U.S. ally, repeated earlier calls for a halt to the fighting to make room for more diplomacy.

"This war can only lead to strife, to bloodshed and to increased hatred, and increased anxieties in the region," he said. "Perhaps, this is a good time to stop, take a breath, and allow for diplomacy to work." The United States, he added, "has to do some reckoning for the advice that it has had." — Reuters

## Syria pours scorn on U.S.

D AMASCUS, APRIL 1. Ratcheting up the war of words with Washington, Syria on Tuesday called the U.S.-British invasion of Iraq a 'fiasco' and suggested American officials be tried for crimes against humanity.

The English-language *Syria Times* — one of several state-run newspapers — said in an editorial that the invasion had proven to be a 'major embarrassment' for the U.S. military and had led to anti-U.S. sentiments reaching 'unprecedented levels.'

"The only way out is to stop the war immediately and hold those responsible for it 'accountable' for their crimes against humanity," the newspaper said. In a speech on Sunday, the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said "Syria now faces a critical choice" of whether to continue supporting terrorism

'in the dying days' of Saddam Hussein's regime, suggesting it would face grave consequences.

A Syrian Foreign Ministry official responded on Monday by saying Syria "has chosen to stand by the Iraqi people who are facing an illegitimate and unjustified invasion."

Commenting on Mr. Powell's warning, the paper said Mr. Powell had a choice of his own to make: "He can continue direct support for the military in the invasion of Iraq, or he can embark on a different and more hopeful course and quit. ..."

"U.S. officials must accept full responsibility for the aggression fiasco," it said. Another Syrian newspaper, the *Baath* daily, said Syria "does not need (U.S.) advice. Syria is standing by itself and its nation by rejecting another aggression in the region," it said. — AP

## Rau rebukes Bush

BERLIN, APRIL 1. The German President, Johannes Rau, bluntly criticised the U.S. President, George W. Bush, telling a television interviewer that the American leader was under an "immense misunderstanding" when he claimed a "divine mission".

Speaking on Germany's N-TV television channel on Monday, Mr. Rau criticised Mr. Bush for claiming God's blessing in the war in Iraq, saying, "This is an utterly one-sided message by George Bush. I don't believe one nation receives a divine instruction to liberate another nation."

He told the interviewer that there was no passage in the Bible that had ever called for crusades. Mr. Bush's views were not binding on Christians, he said, contrasting the U.S. leader's remarks to the strictly anti-war stance of Pope John Paul II. "It's rather the Pope who speaks with the voice of the whole of humanity," said Mr. Rau, who is a leading lay figure in the Rheinland Evangelical Church and is the son of a revivalist preacher. "There are situations in which war is unavoidable, but this was not the case in Iraq." — DPA

## Arab League chief warns of war fallout

ATHENS, APRIL 1. The secretary-general of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, said on Monday that a spillover of war from Iraq to its neighbours could cause havoc across a region already "engulfed in extreme anger."

Mr. Moussa's remarks follow a stern warning by the United States that Syria is helping Iraq militarily and supporting terrorism. "The situation is already

serious with the war in Iraq, so you can just imagine how serious it will be, and how dangerous it will be, if it spills over to other places".

Mr. Moussa was in Greece for a one-day visit and meetings with the Premier, Costas Simitis, and the Foreign Minister, George Papandreou. "The region is already engulfed in extreme anger and agitation

because of what's going on in Iraq and what is going on in Palestine. More than that, it will sow havoc across the region," Mr. Moussa said.

"At the same time, any spread of the conflict... would affect the security in the Mediterranean."

On Friday, the U.S. Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, accused Syria of sending military equipment, including night-vi-

sion goggles, to Iraqi forces. Mr. Rumsfeld's remarks were followed up by the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, who said Iran must stop its drive for weapons of mass destruction and Syria must end its support for terrorism. Mr. Moussa, a former Egyptian Foreign Minister, is an outspoken critic of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. — AP

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2003

## THE BATTLE FOR BAGHDAD

W. A. H. 9/20/03 10

A FEW STARK truths have emerged as the war on Iraq nears the end of its second week and as the U.S.-led forces inch closer to Baghdad. First, the likelihood of getting rid of Saddam Hussein and concluding the battle on a quick and relatively tidy note has considerably diminished. Second, the push for the Iraqi Capital is going to entail even higher casualties of soldiers and innocent civilians. Finally, the battle for Baghdad is unlikely to be won without messy street fighting and the so-called coalition forces may have to contend with a difficult mix of guerrilla warfare and suicide bomb attacks. Wars rarely go exactly according to plan, but the script that the U.S. and Britain had written for 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' did not read this way at all. There was never any doubt about who would win this war. But the questions are the very same that were raised at the beginning of this unjust and unnecessary war — by what means and at what cost? After Iraq has been blitzed by thousands of precision-guided munitions and hundreds of Tomahawk cruise missiles, the questions have assumed an even greater urgency.

Ever since it entered Iraq through Kuwait, the U.S.' third infantry division has advanced extremely rapidly and is now on the outskirts of Baghdad. If a major ground attack against the Capital has not commenced yet, it is probably because the final assault on it will be carried out after the fourth infantry division reaches the city's northern borders. Originally intended to be deployed from Turkey, which eventually refused to admit U.S. ground forces, this division's movement southwards has been delayed, thus allowing Saddam Hussein the luxury of not splitting his defences and letting him focus on the threat from the southern flank. The U.S. strongly denies there has been an "operational pause" in the campaign but the repeated assertion that everything is on schedule is now beginning to wear a little thin. Continuing Iraqi resistance and the fear of suffering casualties have resulted in a situation where the final push for Baghdad will commence probably only some days from now,

after the city has been softened up even more by further rounds of merciless bombing and when the coalition forces are at both its southern and northern gates.

Having realised he is in no position to challenge his powerful enemy head on, Saddam Hussein's strategy has been to take up defensive positions around Baghdad and induce the enemy into close-quarter battles that inflict the maximum amount of damage on U.S. and British forces and delay the victory for as long as possible. Unconventional tactics may not stop with fighting in plainclothes or merging with the civilian population. The single suicide attack, which was carried out by an Iraqi non-commissioned officer and which killed four members of the third infantry division at an army checkpoint north of Najaf, has raised fears of Baghdad pressing soldiers into suicide missions. The Iraqi claim that as many as 4,000 Arab volunteers have arrived in the country to carry out suicide bombings against U.S. and British forces is probably an exaggeration, but with the Najaf attack the threat of using suicide attacks to thwart the invaders cannot be discounted.

That the coalition forces are already unsettled by the threat of unconventional warfare is evident from the recent incident when tense and edgy U.S. soldiers fired into the passenger compartment of a van, killing seven women and children, when the vehicle reportedly failed to heed warning shots to stop. The U.S. and Britain have repeatedly accused the Iraqi regime of using civilians as a shield but what such accusations really reflect is an enormous dilemma for the coalition forces. In the existing circumstances, bringing the war to a quick end may require an even more brutal and unfeeling approach; minimising collateral damage could mean delaying victory. As the troops mass around Baghdad and as the Iraqis offer unexpected resistance, the fate of thousands of innocent civilians depend on how Messrs Bush and Blair resolve this dilemma of their own making.

THE HINDS

2 APR 2003

IRAQI WOMEN, CHILDREN KILLED AS AMERICAN TROOPS OPEN FIRE

# U.S. Marines come under heavy fire

IN SOUTH-CENTRAL IRAQ, APRIL 1. Iraqi forces fired artillery, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades at the United States forces in and around Diwaniyah, 120 km southeast of the capital, Baghdad, amid a fierce fire-fight with U.S. Marines on Tuesday, according to field reports.

At least 75 Iraqis were killed in fighting on Diwaniyah's outskirts and at least 44 soldiers, including some Republican Guard officers, were taken pris-

## Saddam 'calls' for jihad

BAGHDAD, APRIL 1. The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, in a message to his people said today that 'jihad' (holy war) was a religious duty and urged them to fight the invading U.S. and British troops, wherever they found them.

"Jihad is a duty. Whoever dies will be rewarded by heaven ... This is what God requested of you," said Saddam's message, which was read out on the State television by the Information Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf.

"Hit them, fight them... Fight them everywhere," the message said. — Reuters

oner. There were no reports of American casualties. Northeast of Diwaniyah, there was heavy bombing near Kut to clear the way for ground forces, a Marine intelligence analyst said. Marine ground forces have also secured an airbase at Qalat Sukkar, southeast of Kut, a staging ground.

Overnight, warplanes struck at Iraqi positions around Karbala and Hindiyah, about 80 km from Baghdad, in a U.S. effort to open the way for the invasion of Baghdad.

In Baghdad, the Iraqi Information Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, said 56 persons were killed and 268

wounded overnight, including 24 dead in Baghdad. He said nine children, including an infant, were killed on Tuesday morning in the town of Hillah, about 80 km south of the capital. "They are racist. So they are indiscriminately killing people," Mr. al-Sahaf said. "Hillah is my hometown. It is a civilian place. Iraqis are resisting the mercenaries of the occupation by all means, through fideen action, martyrdom, ambushes and direct confrontation by all means possible."

Late on Monday night, American soldiers shot and killed at least seven Iraqi women and children travelling in a van at a checkpoint along Route 9, near Najaf, in southern Iraq. A U.S. general expressed regret over the incident but said civilian deaths were "unavoidable" in war. The U.S. military said the soldiers, from the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division, opened fire when the driver of the van failed to stop as ordered. A *Washington Post* reporter at the scene said 10 Iraqis in all were killed, including five young children.

Elsewhere, 15 members of a family were killed when their pickup was blown up by a rocket from an Apache helicopter near Hilla, south of Baghdad, the sole survivor of the attack told AFP today.

The family was fleeing fighting between the Iraqi forces and the U.S.-led coalition in An Nasiriyah, 350 km south of Baghdad, when the U.S. helicopter fired on the jeep. Razek al-Kazem al-Khafaj showed an AFP photographer the coffins he said held the bodies of his wife, his six children, his father, mother and three brothers and their wives. "Which one of them should I cry on," he asked before throwing sand in his face "so I don't have to see" the remains of his 15 relatives before him.

Briefing reporters at the Central Command headquarters in Qatar, the U.S. Brigadier-General, Vincent Brooks, said the coa-



An Iraqi grieves over the body of his mother in Hillah in the southern province of Babylon on Tuesday. He lost 15 members (including six children) of his family as his car was bombed by coalition helicopters while fleeing al-Haidariyah towards Babylon. — AFP

lition forces had to maintain a state of heightened alert after the suicide attack that killed four Americans.

"In all cases in checkpoints and otherwise we maintain the right to self-defence." "While we regret the loss of civilian lives, they remain unavoidable," he said.

In Riyadh, the Saudi Foreign Minister said the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, should make the sacrifice of stepping down if it would end the war. The remark provoked a sharp rebuke from Iraq.

At a news conference in Baghdad, the Iraqi Vice-Presi-

dent, Taha Yassin Ramadan, responded with a rebuke directed at Prince Saud: "Go to hell."

## Bush blames it on Saddam

In Washington, the U.S. President, George W. Bush, regretted the deaths of Iraqi civilians, but placed the blame for such tragedies squarely on the shoulders of Saddam Hussein and his regime, according to the White House.

"The President always regrets any innocent loss of life. And he recognises that most innocents have been lost in this war at the hands of Saddam Hussein and

his henchmen," said the spokesman, Ari Fleischer. "That's who is to blame for the loss of innocent lives."

Mr. Fleischer declined to comment on an incident a day earlier in which U.S. troops killed seven women and children when they opened fire on a civilian vehicle at a checkpoint.

"The specific point that you're raising, about the checkpoint, that is a matter that DOD (the Department of Defence) is looking into, and the President knows that," he told reporters. — AP, AFP

More reports on Pages 11, 14 and 15

2 APR 2003

SEE HINDO

# Conflict theatre may widen

By Atul Aneja

**MANAMA, MARCH 31.** As the war in Iraq begins to prolong, the first signs that the conflict could spill into other parts of the region are beginning to show. Hoping to protect their supply lines, the United States and British invading forces have begun to encircle, and in some cases, move into, key towns and cities in search of Iraqi fedayeen irregular forces that have launched a guerilla war against them.

U.S. troops, moving along the Euphrates river, but still around 100 km short of Baghdad, have entered Hindiyah, in search of the Ba'ath party "minders" of the fedayeen units. The spokesperson for the U.S. Central Command, Vincent Brooks, however, denied that the U.S. forces were encountering "street fighting" in Hindiyah — a town situated between the sacred city of Karbala and the ruins of ancient Babylon. Fighting has also been reported around An-Nasiriyah, a key flashpoint along the Euphrates where 20 U.S. soldiers had lost their lives last Sunday.

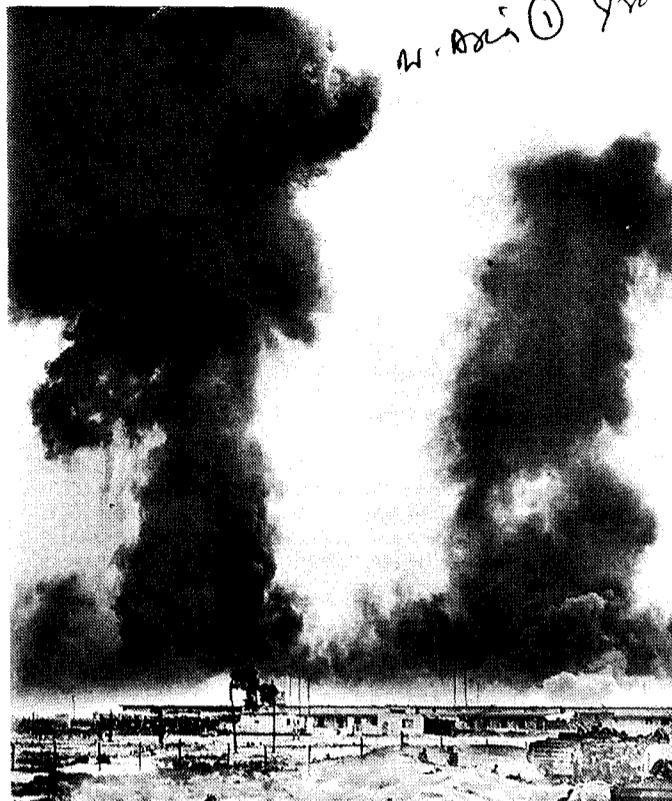
In a pre-dawn raid on Monday, U.S. helicopters, tanks and ground troops attacked Shatra, north of An-Nasiriyah, targeting senior Iraqi officials, including the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein's cousin, Ali

Hassan al-Majid. Most significantly, the U.S. troops are standing on the gates of Najaf, a holy site to Shias all over the world.

In case the U.S. forces enter Najaf to counter the Ba'ath party activists and fedayeen, who are reportedly positioned in strength there, it could lead to extremely serious consequences. Najaf is the site of one of the most sacred Islamic shrines where Prophet Mohammad's son-in-law, Ali, lies buried. Other Muslim holy figures are also buried there and at the huge Wadi es-Salaam cemetery in the city.

Any damage to these sites due to U.S. military action is likely to inflame Muslim passions, and will especially affect the international Shia community.

Iran, which has a predominantly Shia population, has already fired warning shots in anticipation of trouble in Najaf. In a telephone conversation with the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, on Sunday, the Iranian Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharrazi, said the Shia holy sites in Iraq must be respected and safeguarded. Meanwhile, in yet another signal that the conflict in Iraq may be spreading, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad has confirmed that the first wave of suicide bombers that it had dis-



Clouds of smoke rise after U.S. Marine engineers blow up the artillery abandoned at an Iraqi military base in the deserts near An-Nasiriyah on Monday. — AP

patched to fight the U.S. and British forces had arrived in Iraq. A statement by the armed wing of the Islamic Jihad said that the Arabs were fighting "one war from Najaf to Tulka-rem and from Jenin to Baghdad."

## Syria, Teheran on U.S. radar?

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

**NEW YORK, MARCH 31.** Two days after the U.S. Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, sharply criticised Syria and Iran for complicating American war efforts in Iraq, the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, has stepped up pressure on the two countries — warning Teheran that it should stop its drive to acquire weapons of mass destruction; and Syria must end its support to terrorism.

In a tough message that came by way of a speech to a pro-Israel lobby, Gen. Powell placed Iran and Syria in the same category with Iraq and warned them of grave consequences should they continue to promote terrorism. Syria, he said, "faces a critical choice" on whether it continues "direct support for terrorism in the dying days" of the regime of Saddam Hussein; and Gen. Powell demanded that Iran should stop "its terrorism against Israel".

Last Friday, the Defence Secretary pointedly warned Syria and Iran for complicating the coalition war objectives in Iraq saying that Damascus was selling military equipment to the Saddam Hussein regime that included night vision goggles; and Iran was inserting or allowing the Badr Brigade comprising anti-regime Iraqi exiles back into the country. But Washington has not said if and how the Badr Brigade has come directly in the way of coalition forces. But Gen. Powell is seen to have gone a step further in bringing in terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

The sharp observations against Syria and Iran in recent days have prompted apprehensions here and elsewhere that the U.S. may be getting ready to take on these two countries once the Iraqi conflict is out of the way. The apprehension is that the Bush administration may be intent on picking up additional fights along the borders of Iraq. Washington has been quite insistent that it is aware of clandestine arms shipments to Iraq to assist the Saddam Hussein regime to hang on to power.

Last week the President, George W Bush, is said to have taken up with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, the involvement of a Russian firm in arms shipment to Iraq that included an assortment of weapons. The U.S. has been particularly worried that the Russian firm may have supplied jamming equipment for the GPS that could come in the way of precision guided missiles and munitions dropped by U.S. jets over Iraq. Moscow has flatly denied that any arms deal is taking place. Washington and Moscow continue to disagree on this.

## Forces closing in on Baghdad: U.S. General

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

**NEW YORK, MARCH 31.** Brushing aside criticism that the administration may not have fully understood what was in store by way of Iraqi resistance, top military planners are insisting that the war plans are proceeding on plan and that the final assault on Baghdad will be at a time of United States' choosing.

"It will not be a siege that people have thought about before. We have plans for several different contingencies", remarked the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard Myers. "We have the power to be patient on this, and we're not going to do anything before we're ready. We'll just continue to draw the noose tighter and tighter", he argued on Sunday. The top military official maintained that the coalition forces were closing in on Baghdad from the

south, north and the west. One of the important things that Gen. Myers sought to convey is that the aerial bombardment of the Republican Guards has brought down this elite unit's capacity to less than 50 per cent. And military strategists are making the point that in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the Republican Guard's capacity was down to 60 per cent or so before the U.S.-led ground assault started.

Senior military and civilian officials of the Pentagon are also saying that the U.S. commanders have a "target percentage" of the Republican Guards' capacity in mind, but will not divulge what this is. "Their fighting capability is going down minute by minute, hour by hour. There's not going to be much left to fight with", Gen. Myers maintained. The pounding of the Republican Guard units in and around Baghdad has been going

on for the last several days, from land inside Iraq, from air and from the decks of aircraft carriers in and around the Persian Gulf.

It is said that of the 800 strikes carried out on Sunday, nearly 60 per cent were focussed on the Republican Guards. The U.S. military is further saying that there have been signs that reinforcements are being sent to Saddam Hussein's elite forces even as there are indications that many of the units are being pulled back to Baghdad.

Meanwhile, questions are being posed on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction that this military conflict was supposed to be all about. Thus far, coalition forces have not stumbled on any weapons type chemical munitions or factories that are producing them. Yet, top military officials are not ruling out the possibility of Iraq resorting to the use of chemical and

biological weapons. "There's no doubt they have chemical weapons, that they have weaponised them, they have them in artillery shells. They probably have other means of delivery", Gen. Myers insisted, going on to stress the discovery by coalition forces of protective gear issued to Iraqi forces.

The Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, spent a portion of his Sunday talk shows debunking charges that he underestimated the troop strength and armour required to take on Iraq.

The known hawk in the Republican administration insisted that the war plan started with Gen. Tommy Franks and moved up the chain all the way to the President. "What you're seeing is fiction. You're seeing second guessers out there", Mr. Rumsfeld argued, making the point that it is "too early to write history".

## Cook backtracks

**LONDON, MARCH 31.** A day after demanding that British troops be withdrawn before more of them are killed, Robin Cook made a somersault saying he did not favour abandoning the battle or "letting Saddam off the hook".

Mr. Cook, who had put in his papers disagreeing with the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair's decision to go ahead with the war without a second U.N. resolution, had called in an article in the *Sunday Mirror* for British troops to be brought home from this "bloody and unnecessary war". The Home Secretary, David Blunkett, who was dispatched by Mr. Blair to stamp on Mr. Cook, took to the airwaves to mount an attack, questioning the former Foreign Secretary's patriotism. — PTI

# Baghdad homes bombed

**BAGHDAD, MARCH 31.** Six Iraqi civilians were killed and dozens wounded by a U.S.-led coalition bombing in a residential neighbourhood here today. And a low-flying plane launched two missiles that crashed into the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein's Republican palace compound in the capital. The attack was the first such in broad daylight. No anti-aircraft fire was heard.

In southern Iraq, three U.S. troops were wounded, one seriously, when Iraqi soldiers fired at them from a Red Crescent ambulance.

U.S. Marines stormed Shatra north of An Nasiriyah today and searched the key city's southern outskirts block by block to weed out Iraqi resistance in what military sources called a change of tactics.

The decision to raid Shatra and send reinforcements to help the Marines carry out risky searches in An Nasiriyah signalled a shift in policy to secure vital supply lines around the strategic city after Iraqi ambushes. The Marines, who had been heading north towards Kut and Baghdad after storming through An Nasiriya which was under fire from paramilitaries, were diverted back south to raid Shatra, 35 km north of the city, supported by helicopter gunships, tanks and warplanes dropping precision-guided bombs.

Meanwhile, coalition soldiers inched towards Baghdad, capturing or killing paramilitary and Republican Guard defenders.



**Smoke billows after an explosion in the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein's guest palace bombed during a coalition air raid on Monday. — AFP**

U.S. troops killed about 100 paramilitary fighters in and around the Shia holy city of Najaf and seized several dozen elite soldiers of the Republican Guard in Hindiyah, south of Baghdad.

The dawn assault on Hindiyah clinched control of the closest known point in the U.S.-led advance on Baghdad, where a

battle with the Republican Guard looms. At least 15 Iraqi troops were reported killed in the town on the banks of the Euphrates. Troops had also cleared the towns of Afak, Hajil and Buda'ayr in the region.

A Marine UH-1 Huey helicopter crashed on Sunday at a forward supply and refuelling point in southern Iraq, killing three

persons aboard.

The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Naji Sabri, on Monday questioned the legitimacy of the U.S.-led attacks and called on coalition soldiers to surrender.

"America and Britain have no choice but to surrender and withdraw," said Mr. Sabri, speaking at a Baghdad press conference. The U.S. military spokesman, Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, also struck a defiant posture.

"There is no future for the regime or anyone that supports it." "Will they fight to the death? Probably. We're seeing that in a number of places," he said.

On the 12th day of the war, questions have arisen about the pace and impact of the U.S.-led campaign. Despite claims of success, coalition forces appear to be bogged down in the south where an anticipated uprising by the Shias to welcome U.S. forces has not occurred. Closer to Baghdad, Mr. Hussein's defence appears more resilient than the U.S. war planners had anticipated. — AFP, Reuters, AP

## Remarks on Iraqi TV cost NBC journalist his job

**WASHINGTON, MARCH 31.** News correspondent Peter Arnett, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the Vietnam War for the Associated Press, has been sacked by NBC after he suggested on Iraqi television that the U.S. war plan had failed.

On its "Today's Show" morning news broadcast, NBC read a statement from network officials announcing that the New Zealand-born Arnett, had been canned.

"It was wrong for Mr. Arnett to grant an interview to state-controlled Iraqi TV,

especially during war," it said.

"And it was wrong for him to discuss personal observations and opinions in that interview." Therefore," the statement concluded, "Peter Arnett will no longer be reporting for NBC News and MSNBC."

On the same broadcast today, Mr. Arnett offered apologies to NBC and to the U.S. public, saying he was "embarrassed" by the controversy that had erupted following his comments. — AFP

1 APR 2003

THE HINDO



## WAR ON IRAQ

## Artillery joins Baghdad battle

## WAR BRIEFS

## French split over support

■ Paris, March 31 (Reuters): French people overwhelmingly oppose war in Iraq but 53 per cent still want the US to emerge victors, according to a poll released today.

However, a third of the nearly 1,000 people interviewed by pollster Ipsos for *Le Monde* newspaper said they did not want the US and close ally Britain to triumph. Conducted by telephone late last week, the Ipsos survey shows a people split between its conviction that President Jacques Chirac was right to oppose war and a sense of allegiance to their traditional Western allies.

Seventy-eight per cent said they disapproved of US-British action in Iraq, with almost as many saying Chirac had been right to oppose war in the UN Security Council.

## UN aid hope

■ London (Reuters): The United Nations food aid agency has expressed optimism that it can avert a major crisis in feeding the people of Iraq. "We have enough supplies. We will be able to meet the needs," James Morris, executive director of the UN World Food Programme, said in London. The WFP has appealed for \$1.3 billion to fund a vast food aid operation in response to the Iraq war. This is part of an overall \$2.2 billion appeal for humanitarian assistance for Iraq in the next six months launched by the United Nations last week.

## 100 bin Ladens

■ Cairo (Reuters): Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said on Monday the US-led war on Iraq would produce "one hundred new bin Ladens", driving more Muslims to anti-Western militancy. "When it is over, if it is over, this war will have horrible consequences," Mubarak told Egyptian soldiers in the city of Suez. "Instead of having one (Osama) bin Laden, we will have 100 bin Ladens," he added.

## 'Live' lie row

■ Mbabane (Reuters): Listeners to Swaziland's state-run radio station thought they had their own correspondent in Baghdad covering the war — until legislators spotted him in Parliament at the weekend. "Why are they lying to the nation that the man is in Iraq, when he is here in Swaziland, broadcasting out of a broom closet?" MP Jojo Dlamini demanded of information minister Mntomzima Dlamini in the House of Assembly on Monday. The minister said he would investigate the matter. Announcer Phelesia Dube gave "live reports" purportedly from Baghdad last week. Programme host Moses Masebula frequently expressed concerns about Dube's well-being and once advised him to "find a cave somewhere to be safe from missiles".

## No defections

■ London (Reuters): British defence secretary Geoff Hoon said on Monday that no senior Iraqi politicians or soldiers had yet defected, despite pre-war efforts to persuade them not to resist. "There have been as yet no defections of very senior politicians or very senior military commanders but that is certainly not to say there have not been significant surrenders," Hoon told Parliament. "We currently hold around 8,000 prisoners of war, many of whom in fact have surrendered and many of whom were pleased to surrender," he said.

Baghdad, March 31 (Reuters): US forces battled Republican Guards on the southern approaches to Baghdad today and colossal air strikes pounded the Iraqi capital, ratcheting up the pressure on President Saddam Hussein.

The strikes came after what sounded like a big artillery barrage on the city's southern edge. Jets screamed low through anti-aircraft fire. Explosions echoed from the south and west.

"The artillery fire is suddenly very intense. We can hear it coming from the south. It's unusual," said Reuters correspondent Samia Nakhoul. "There's a new air raid on. I've heard six very loud explosions in the city."

Reuters correspondent Nadim Ladki said the sound of explosions also seemed to be coming from the west of the city, from the direction of Sad-

dam International Airport.

With fighting raging near the site of ancient Babylon and at various other points along the Euphrates river, advance units of the US and British invasion army were 80 km from Baghdad — their closest point to Saddam's powerbase.

"We're coming. Where the regime is, we're coming," Brigadier General Vincent Brooks said at US Central Command in Qatar, adding that some elite Iraqi units were in serious difficulty.

US commanders appeared determined to take the fight to Iraqi militiamen harrying their advance, while hitting regular troops and Republican Guard units blocking routes to Baghdad.

A night missile strike on the information ministry knocked local television briefly off the air a day after America's top soldier

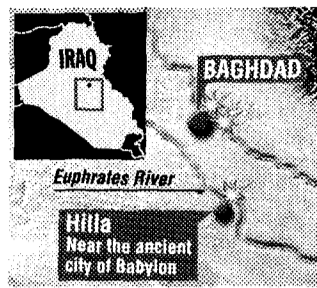
vowed to "draw the noose tighter" around Baghdad.

But General Richard Myers, head of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said there was no rush to storm the city. "We'll be patient," he said in Washington.

Iraq remained defiant and Saddam appeared on television alongside his two sons. It was the first time that his eldest son Uday had been seen on video since the war opened on March 20, but it was not clear when the footage was taken.

An array of missiles and bombs rained down on targets around Baghdad in an effort to wear down its defences ahead of an eventual assault by US divisions moving up through the desert.

Three huge explosions shook the city centre in the afternoon. One hit a presidential palace used by Saddam's second son



Quasay, who commands the Republican Guard, sending a mushroom of white smoke from the battered complex.

US officers said Iraqi militia and Republican Guard units suffered heavy losses in fierce fighting near the towns of Hindiya and Hilla on the approaches to Baghdad. At least one American soldier died in the day-long clashes.

Iraqi foreign minister Najj Sabri hurled insults at the US

and British "mercenaries", saying they would die in the desert. "With every passing day, they are sinking deeper into the mud of defeat and their losses are increasing," he declared.

In the north, US planes bombed targets in and around the city of Mosul. Elsewhere, Brooks said US special forces were "denying freedom of movement throughout the western desert".

South of Baghdad, US troops called in air strikes to try to smash the resolve of the Iraqi defenders, who hit back with tanks, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades.

At Hindiya, Iraqi prisoners taken in fighting included an officer who said he was from the Nebuchadnezzar Division of the Republican Guard, thought to have been based much further north. Brooks said this might in-

dicate that the Iraqis were bringing in reinforcements or replacing losses.

The death of a US soldier near Hilla raised the American toll in the war to at least 46 with another 17 missing. Britain has lost 25 soldiers, one more than in the 1991 Gulf War. Only five have been killed in action, while 15 have died in accidents and five by "friendly fire".

Iraq has said nearly 600 Iraqi civilians have been killed and over 4,500 wounded. It has not listed military casualties.

US troops raced towards Baghdad early in the war, but left behind towns where Iraqi paramilitaries have tried to disrupt supply lines that stretch up to 375 km from Kuwait. Some US units have now turned back south to try to quell the resistance, which has proved stronger than expected.

As US and British troops labour to overcome forces loyal to Saddam across the southern half of Iraq, Western planes enjoyed complete control of the skies.

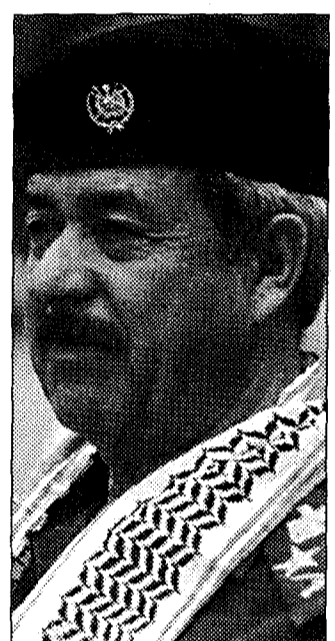
Long-range B-1, B-2 and B-52 bombers joined forces in the early hours today to hit communication and command centres, shaking buildings across Baghdad as their bombs struck home.

Air raids have increased in intensity over the past 48 hours. US Central Command described the overnight air raids as a "historic bomber package" — the first time the three aircraft had been used to strike the same area at the same time.

Worries that a long war in Iraq could derail the global economy hit stocks on Monday, with the Dow Jones Industrial average tumbling 2.5 per cent in early New York trade.



US 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit Fox Company 'Raiders' drive past Iraqi bedouin herding sheep south of Nasiriyah. (Reuters)



Revolution Command Council member Ali Hassan al-Majid, who belongs to Saddam Hussein's inner circle and is nicknamed Chemical Ali. (AFP)

## Roar today, red face tomorrow

London, March 31 (Reuters): Almost every day, Britain and the US have rowed back from triumphal claims in Iraq after jumping the gun in the propaganda war.

Scrambling for positive news in the battle against President Saddam Hussein, the two allies have announced a string of successes, only to back away from them later after realising they were inaccurate or even outright wrong.

In the latest example, today, British forces retracted a claim that they had captured an Iraqi general in clashes with paramilitaries in southern Iraq yesterday, saying they had misidentified an Iraqi officer.

Just 12 days into the war, the list of inaccuracies ranges from Iraqi uprisings to the premature fall of Iraq's second city of Basra, as Britain and the US attempt to vindicate their controversial decision to go to war.

But why do they repeatedly fall into the same trap?

Part of the problem is Britain and the US are under pressure politically to make the war a success but have an unclear strategy for psychological warfare, say analysts. That comes against the backdrop of needing to keep up with the furious pace of media covering minute-by-minute developments in the conflict on 24-hour television news.

"It's not that authorities are trying to create disinformation. In this media-ubiquitous world, they have learned that doesn't work," said Michael Clarke, director of the International Policy Institute at Kings College, London.

"They are just trying to influence a fast-moving news agenda and they are moving faster than they can or should".

At a news conference with US President George W. Bush last week, British premier Tony Blair said two dead British soldiers shown on Arab TV network Al Jazeera had been "executed" by Iraq.

The British government later backed away from the accusation after a relative of one of the soldiers told a British newspaper that she had been told the soldier had died in action.

In what would have been a key breakthrough last week, various media separately cited military sources as saying a mass uprising was taking place in Basra. Iraq dismissed the reports as "hallucinations" while Arab television channels showed images of quiet Basra streets. Blair later said there was only a "limited uprising".

"There's a compelling need to be relentlessly upbeat and optimistic," said Jamie Cowling, research fellow at the Institute of Public Policy Research in London.

## Arms haul

East of Basra, March 31 (Reuters): British troops have discovered a huge cache of munitions in cases marked "Jordan Armed Forces" just outside Basra.

A Reuters team filmed and photographed the cache, around 5 km east of Iraq's second biggest city and today British bomb disposal experts prepared to blow it up.

## Finally, the magic words but no Chemical Ali

Shatra, March 31 (Reuters): Hundreds of Iraqis shouting "Welcome to Iraq" greeted US Marines who entered the town of Shatra today after storming it with planes, tanks and helicopter gunships.

A foot patrol picked its way through the small southern town, 35 km north of the city of Nasiriyah, after being beckoned in by a crowd of people. "There's no problem here. We are happy to see Americans," one young man shouted.

The welcome was a tonic for soldiers who have not always received the warm reception they expected after US and British leaders told them the Iraqi people were waiting to be freed from repression under President Saddam Hussein. "It's not every day you get to liberate people," said one delighted Marine.

As they searched the town, the Marines pushed back the excited crowd. An interpreter urged local people through a loudspeaker on a Humvee

not to hinder their movements.

But as night approached with the town not fully under their control, the Marines pulled back.

It had been a day of mixed fortunes. It began with a pre-dawn raid to try to kill senior Iraqi officials believed to be directing guerrilla attacks on US troops and their supply convoys.

The ambushes have slowed the advance on Baghdad. This Marine unit retraced its steps back south down Highway 7 to Shatra after bypassing the Iraqi forces there in their rapid advance last week.

Planes dropped precision-guided bombs on four targets during the morning raid. Tanks and armoured personnel carriers then moved to the edge of the town and helicopter gunships raked the rubble-strewn target sites with heavy machinegun fire. The targets were the local Baath party headquarters and "associated planning sites", Marine officers said.

Having entered the town, the Marines searched without success for the body of a colleague who was killed last week and whose corpse was believed to be in a hospital in the town. They tramped over the ruins of a local headquarters of Saddam's Baath party.

Another Baath party building across the street had been set ablaze by looters who carried away sofas from inside.

Intelligence reports had suggested that Ali Hassan al-Majeed, or "Chemical Ali", the cousin whom Saddam has put in charge of the southern front, was in the town. But Majeed, who earned his nickname for overseeing the use of poison gas against Kurdish villagers in 1988, was nowhere to be seen.

The Marines had also received intelligence reports that an Iraqi general was holed up inside the town but arrived just too late to capture him, military officials said.

"He got away just before we got here," said company commander Cap-

tain Mike Martin. "We believe there are about 200 to 300 Baath party loyalists and Saddam Fidayeen irregulars in the town," he added. But the Fidayeen paramilitary forces had also fled. Marines found a light still on and the telephone ringing when they entered what was thought to be their headquarters.

## Strategy shift

Before the Marines stormed the town, they searched the city's southern outskirts block by block to weed out Iraqi resistance in what military sources called a change of tactics.

The decision to raid Shatra and send reinforcements to help the Marines carry out the risky searches in southern Nasiriyah signalled a shift in policy to secure vital supply lines around the strategic city after Iraqi ambushes, the sources said.

"We are going in to go block by block and we are going to weed out all enemy personnel," said Captain Rick Crevier,

commander of Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st US Marines. Crevier dismissed talk of a change of tactics but a military source said: "This is a change of policy, a new phase."

Nasiriyah, on the Euphrates, is a key city because two main highways here are vital for getting supplies to invading troops further north on the way to Baghdad and for bringing in humanitarian supplies for Iraqi civilians.

The Iraqis have staged several ambushes in the area, including one in which at least seven Marines were killed.

US officers say that bypassing towns and cities had given local people no chance to revolt and that civilians have been forced to remain loyal to Saddam. Iraq denies such charges.

Revolts against Saddam that were encouraged by the US in the 1991 Gulf War were ruthlessly suppressed, leaving many Iraqis cautious about embracing the invaders this time.

## Good news for parched south

Kuwait, March 31 (Reuters): British troops began pumping water to thirsty southern Iraq today in a rare piece of good news for civilians bereft of help from the world's key aid agencies.

Civilian aid workers gathering in Kuwait say they are still blocked from entering neighbouring Iraq to address shortages of water and medicines because neither side in the war has given them guarantees of safe passage.

Officials of UN agencies and non-government charities welcomed the opening of the cross-border pipeline from Kuwait by the British Royal Engineers. But they said it could not be a substitute for a fully-fledged aid effort to quickly restore the country's dilapidated water and sanitation system.

"The water is flowing fast and thick," British military spokeswoman Col Debbie Noble said. She was speaking over phone from the border where Kuwait's chief humanitarian offi-

cial, retired general Ali al-Mumin, presided over a ceremony at which water was piped into Iraqi trucks from the eight inch diameter heavy plastic pipe.

"At the moment, this is the only guaranteed potable water supply in southern Iraq," said Major Hugh Ward.

He said the pipe would supply two million litres a day and added that the operation estimated that consumption would run at about seven litres per person a day — indicating the flow will be sufficient for more than a quarter of a million people.

Ward said the water would only be trucked to areas under secure control where 100,000 people live, including Umm Qasr and nearby town of Umm Khayy.

The British military, which has the main responsibility for operations around Basra, says most sewage plants in Iraq are defective or not operating at all, meaning that the main rivers act as open sewers.



An Iraqi boy patrols with his AK-47 near Baghdad. (Reuters)

## Delhi moves away from middle path

PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, March 31: India has indirectly said "truth" is not with the Americans in their war on Iraq and raised serious doubts whether the US sophisticated weapons are enough to dictate the outcome of the war in Washington's favour.

Over the past few days, Delhi was showing signs of breaking away from its "middle path" on the US-led military action in Iraq. The country's harshest criticism yet of the US role came this afternoon from deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani.

"Some countries who have the most sophisticated equipment think they can win a war in one or two weeks, but if truth is not with them, the conflict could be prolonged and one never knows what would be the consequence," he said.

The reference was oblique as the US was not mentioned. But it was clear which country Advani had in mind.

The shift in Delhi's position

has come about when the Bush administration is showing signs of praising or rewarding Pakistan. It also follows the massacre of 24 Kashmiri Punjits in Nadimarg by Islamabad-backed militants.

At yesterday's National Democratic Alliance meeting here, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee reportedly said Delhi's "soft" line on the Iraq war was to ensure Pakistan did not get an edge over it in dealing with the US.

But the Indian leadership has realised over the past few days that the US administration, despite its critical statements about Pakistan for its role in Kashmir, was in no mood to dump Pervez Musharraf, at least not for now.

When the US state department asked the South Asian neighbours to resume their stalled dialogue, India asked Washington why it did not pursue the same policy with Saddam Hussein.

Delhi's sharp reaction

prompted a US statement urging Pakistan to stop infiltration across the Line of Control.

But shortly after Washington asked Islamabad to stop all violence against India and respect the LoC, the US decided to reward the Musharraf regime with a financial aid package of \$500 million — which may go up to \$1 billion — for its support to Iraq war and the fight against global terrorism.

The proposed aid constitutes part of US President George W. Bush's wartime supplemental request to the Congress for \$75 billion to deal with the Iraq situation and continue the fight against global terrorism.

Earlier this month, the Bush administration had decided to lift all remaining US sanctions on Pakistan and indicated an aid package of \$250 million. The decision also opened the way for full-scale cooperation in sectors such as military sales and a long-term bilateral strategic alliance.

WAR ON IRAQ

# The awful and ugly face of conflict

War brings back sense of siege in US capital

ELISABETH BUMILLER

Washington, March 31: For weeks now, the war in Iraq has brought back the sense of siege to Washington that the city felt most acutely after the September 11 attacks.

Barricades and the secret service ring an expanded security perimeter at the White House, where pedestrians are barred from the Pennsylvania Avenue sidewalk that was a favourite spot for pictures in front of the presidential residence.

Surveillance is up at bridges and tunnels, a suburban hospital boasts of its portable decontamination shower, and 24-hour military air patrols again circle the capital, keeping people up at night. And yet the invasion of Iraq has also brought a wartime buzz to Washington. The news briefings of Ari Fleischer, the White House press secretary, are now standing room only, including his early off-camera briefing, known as the "gaggle," which on slow days was often a snore.

Journalists, television talking heads, Pentagon brass and anti-war protesters have never been busier. On Friday at noon, Paul D. Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defence, was defending the administration's Iraq battle plan at a packed gathering at the Foreign Press Center, while three blocks away protesters in Lafayette Park sang peace songs in the rain. Historians say that the last time Washington felt such a sense of siege — and excitement — was during the Civil War, when the capital risked attack by Confederate forces and President Abraham Lincoln feared there might have to be a mass evacuation. Washington at that time was a filthy, disease-ridden city, crowded with soldiers, ringed by forts and filled with hospitals. The dying flooded in after the bloodiest battles.

"It was grim at a time like Chancellorsville or Fredericksburg, when huge numbers of wounded were brought into the hospitals," Shelby Foote, the Civil War historian, said in a recent interview.

"But people had a strong sense of living in an exciting and dangerous time. A wartime capital, whether it's London or Paris or Washington, is always an exciting place."

James M. McPherson, the Civil War historian who wrote *Battle Cry of Freedom*, said in an interview last week that what most struck him about the similarities between Washington then and now was the sense of unease.

"The most apt comparison would be a kind of edginess, and a lack of calm and repose," said McPherson, a Princeton professor who visited Washington during the build-up to war in February. "Up until 1861, Washington had been a fairly sleepy place except when Congress was in session. During the Civil War, it was the opposite of sleepy."

The city back then, McPherson said, was thick with prostitutes and Confederate spies. "I would say that probably three-quarters of the information that existed in Washington was rumour and disinformation," he said.

News was exchanged at Willard's Bar, a favourite hang-out of Union officers, in what is still the Willard Hotel, a few blocks from the White House.

There was also plenty of entertainment, said Harold Holzer, who has written and edited 21 books on Lincoln and the Civil War. "In the midst of all of this militarism and fear and suspicion and disease, there was this incredible night life," said Holzer, spokesman for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The underlying sense of dread was shouldered most heavily by Lincoln, historians say, particularly in early 1861, when he was most about a Confederate attack on the capital.

"He was petrified that Washington would be overrun," Holzer said.

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

ANTHONY SHADID

Baghdad, March 31: On a cold, concrete slab, a mosque caretaker washed the body of 14-year-old Arkan Daif for the last time.

With a cotton swab dipped in water, he ran his hand across Daif's corpse, dead for three hours but still glowing with life. He blotted the rose-red shrapnel wounds on the soft skin of Daif's right arm and right ankle with the poise of practice. Then he scrubbed his face scabbed with blood, left by a cavity torn in the back of Daif's skull.

The men in the Imam Ali mosque stood somberly waiting to bury a boy who, in the words of his father, was "like a flower." Haider Kathim, the caretaker, asked, "What's the sin of the children? What have they done?"

In the rituals of burial, the men and their families tried, futilely, to escape the questions that have enveloped so many lives here in fear and uncertainty. Beyond some neighbours, family, and a visitor, there were no witnesses; the funeral went unnoticed by a government that has eagerly escorted journalists to other wartime tragedies. Instead, Daif and two cousins were buried in the solitude of a poor, Shia neighbourhood near the city limits.

The boys were killed at 11 am yesterday when, as another relative recalled, "the sky exploded." Daif had been digging a trench in front of the family's concrete shack that could serve as a shelter during the bombing campaign that continues day and night. He had been working with Sabah Hassan, 16, and Jalal Talib, 14. The white-hot shrapnel cut down all three. Seven other boys were wounded.

The explosion left no crater, and residents of the Rahmaniya neighbourhood struggled to pinpoint the source of the destruction. Many insisted they saw an airplane. Some suggested Iraqi anti-aircraft fire had detonated a cruise missile in the air. Others suggested rounds from anti-aircraft guns had fallen back to earth and onto their homes.

Whoever caused the explosion, the residents assigned blame to the US, insisting that without a war, they would be safe. "Who else could be responsible except the Americans?" asked Mohsin Hattab, a 32-year-old uncle of Daif.

"This war is evil. It's an un-



A girl leaves Basra across one of the bridges manned by British soldiers. (Reuters)

just war," said Imad Hussein, a driver and uncle of Hassan. "They have no right to make war against us. Until now, we were sitting in our homes, comfortable and safe."

As he spoke, the wails of mourners pouring forth from homes drowned out his words. He winced, turning his head to the side. Then he continued, "God will save us," he said softly. At the mosque, hours after the blast, Kadhim and another caretaker prepared Daif's body for burial — before sundown, as is Islamic custom.

Bathed in the soft colours of turquoise tiles, the room was hushed, as the caretakers finished the washing. They wrapped his head, his gaze fixed, in a red and yellow plastic bag, tying it with a string around his neck. They rolled the corpse in plastic sheeting, fastening it with four pieces of white gauze — one at each end, one around his knees and one around his chest. Kadhim worked delicately,

his gestures an attempt to bring dignity to the corpse. He turned Daif's body to the side and wrapped it in a white sheet, secured with four more pieces of gauze. Under their breaths, men muttered prayers, breaking the suffocating silence that had descended. They then moved toward the concrete slab and hoisted the limp body into a coffin.

"It's very difficult," said Kadhim, as the men closed the coffin. On Friday, he had gone to another mosque, Imam Moussa Kadhim, to help bury dozens killed when a blast ripped through a teeming market in the nearby neighbourhood of Shuala.

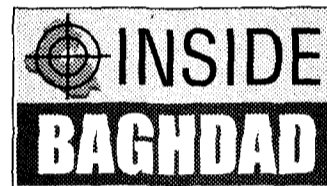
The memories haunted him. He remembered the severed hands and heads that arrived at the Shia mosque. He recalled bodies, even that of an infant, with gaping holes.

"It was awful and ugly," he said. "This is the first time I've ever seen anything like this."

In an open-air courtyard, the

men set the coffin down on the stone floor of a mosque still under construction. In two rows, they lined up behind it, their shoes removed before them. Their lips moved in prayers practiced thousands of times.

"God is greatest," they repeated, their palms facing upward in supplication.



In the background, men discussed the war. In the repression and isolation that reigns in Iraq, rumours often serve as news, and the talk yesterday was of carnage unleashed on a convoy taking the body of an 80-year-old woman to be buried in the southern city of Najaf, where US forces are confronting Iraqi irregulars and soldiers.

For Shias, Najaf is among their most sacred cities, housing the tomb of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, whom Shias regard as his rightful heir. Tradition has it that the dying Ali asked his followers to place his body on a camel and bury him wherever it first knelt; Najaf was the site.

Millions of pilgrims visit each year, and devout Shias never made it. Residents said US forces attacked three cars, one carrying her body. It was another ignominy visited on the city, the men agreed.

They insisted that infidels would never enter the city by force of arms. The US siege of the city — its severity accentuated as rumours circulated — was an act of humiliation.

"There is no god but God," one man chanted. "There is no god but God," the pallbearers answered. Bombing on the horizon provided a refrain. The men

words of others. "They didn't come to liberate Iraq, they came to occupy it," he said.

In his words was a fear that strikes deep in the Iraqi psyche. Many worry the US invasion is a threat to their culture and traditions. They wonder if an occupation would obliterate what they held dear, imposing an alien culture by force on a society that, in large part, remains deeply conservative and insulated.

"We don't want the Americans or British here. Our food is better than their food, our water is better than theirs," he said.

With the prayers over, the men hoisted Daif's coffin over their heads. They left through the mosque's grey, steel gates and ventured into the desolate, dirt streets awash in trash. Some were barefoot and others wore sandals.

"There is no god but God," one man chanted. "There is no god but God," the pallbearers answered. Bombing on the horizon provided a refrain. The men

crossed the street, past concrete and brick hovels, the Shia flags of solid black, green, red and white flying overhead.

As they approached Daif's house, its door emblazoned with the names Muhammad and Ali, they were greeted with wails of women covered by black chadors. They screamed, waving their hands and shaking their heads.

The cries drowned out the chants, as the coffin disappeared indoors. The despair poured out of the home, its windows shattered by the blast that killed Daif.

"My son! My son!" his mother, Zeineb Hussein, cried out. "Where are you now? I want to see your face!"

The men in Daif's family embraced each other, sobbing uncontrollably on their shoulders. Others cried into their hands. From within the house came the drumbeat of women methodically beating their chests in grief.

LOS ANGELES TIMES-WASHINGTON POST NEWS SERVICE

## Cook article opens up UK fault lines

AMITROY

London, March 31: No prisoners are being taken — in the political war in Britain.

Robin Cook, who is emerging as a dangerous threat to Prime Minister Tony Blair, has attracted blistering enemy fire from his former colleagues in the Labour Cabinet for declaring in a weekend newspaper article: "I have already had my fill of this bloody and unnecessary war. I want our troops home and I want them home before more of them are killed."

The ministry of defence announced today that two more British soldiers, from the 40 Commando and the 212 Signal Squadron, respectively, had been killed in the latest fighting south of Basra. This brings the tally of British servicemen who have died so far in the conflict to 26, which is disproportionately high when compared with the 39 Americans who have been killed, given the US has deployed five times as many fighting men and women.

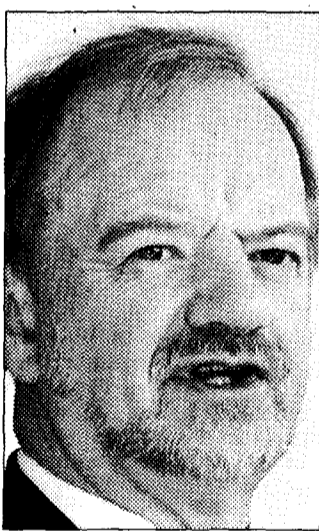
The issue of British casualties is an extremely sensitive subject, not because the figures are likely to embarrass Blair, but

because the country is traditionally proud of servicemen who die in the battlefield.

Since Cook has served both as foreign secretary and leader of the House of Commons before resigning from the government over the war, his words carry a great deal of authority. In an article in the *Sunday Mirror*, Cook had a go at President George W. Bush: "It is OK for Bush to say the war will go on for as long as it takes. He is sitting pretty in the comfort of Camp David protected by scores of security men to keep him safe."

And also at Donald Rumsfeld, the US defence secretary, who is demoralised in Britain as the leading hawk in the Bush administration: "We were told the Iraqi army would be so joyful to be attacked that it would not fight. A close colleague of US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld predicted the march to Baghdad would be 'a cakewalk'. We were told Saddam's troops would surrender. Personally, I would like to volunteer Rumsfeld, Cheney and Wolfowitz to be 'embedded' alongside the journalists with the forward units."

Commenting on the absence of a speedy victory, Cook wrote:



Robin Cook

"It was not meant to be like this. By the time we got to Baghdad, Saddam was supposed to have crumpled. A few days before I resigned I was assured that Saddam would be overthrown by his associates to save their own skins. But they would only do it at 5 minutes past midnight. It is now long past that time and Saddam is still there. To compensate, yesterday we blew up a statue of Saddam in Basra. A statue! It is not the statue that terrifies local people but the man himself and they know Saddam is still in control of Baghdad."

Cook concluded: "Last week President Bush promised that 'Iraqi will see the great compassion of the US'. They certainly do not see it now. They don't see it in Baghdad. What they see are women and children killed when missiles fall on market places. They don't see it in Basra. What they see is the suffering of their families with no water, precious little food, and no power to cook. There will be a long-term legacy of hatred for the West if Iraqis continue to suffer from the effects of the war we started."

Cook's article opened up fault lines in the government. He was attacked by David Blunkett, the home secretary, who said: "Robin resigned with great dignity, put his argument with great force. But it's hard to retain that dignity or force if you advocate capitulation after just 10 days."

The *Sun* put the boot in more effectively when it said today in an editorial: "Robin Cook describes the war as 'bloody and unnecessary'. Taking out the word 'and' gives you a good description of him. Cook reckons he might be the man to take on Gordon Brown for the leadership. Don't waste your time, Robin. There's not going to be a vacancy."

Defence secretary Geoff Hoon, who is Rumsfeld's counterpart but altogether more sophisticated, and Dr John Reid, the Labour Party chairman, accused Cook of "undermining" the confidence of the Iraqi people that Saddam Hussein would be overthrown.

The *Mirror's* columnist, Paul Routledge, took the opposite view when he said today: "Robin Cook is a spot on."

In a radio interview, Cook appeared to backtrack when he explained: "I am not in favour of abandoning the battlefield and that is not my position. There can be no question at this stage of letting Saddam off the hook."

He added: "I wasn't in favour of starting this war, but having started this war, it's important to win it. The worst possible outcome will be one which left Saddam there."

Cook's fortune is linked to the war. The worse it goes, the better it is for him. That is both his strength and his weakness.



Iraqi actress Amira Jawad dances during the shooting of an anti-US video clip for Iraqi TV in Baghdad on Monday. (AFP)

## The playgrounds of the Arab super-rich are empty

ELAINE SCIOLINO

Cannes, March 31: Adnan Khashoggi, the billionaire wheeler-dealer from Saudi Arabia, was en route from Cannes to Monte Carlo in his chauffeur-driven Mercedes on Thursday when he got a call on his cell phone from a businessman friend in Moscow.

The friend was seeking quick advice on a potential sewage and water treatment scheme for post-war Iraq. "Let's talk in a week or so," Khashoggi told him. "Let's wait and see how this war goes."

When he ended the call, Khashoggi explained his caution. "There is so much hunger to go to Iraq," he said. "But are the Americans really going to take over Baghdad and get rid of Saddam? Or is Saddam going to drive them crazy? Even the Americans don't know!"

Uncertainty is the enemy of investment, and the war in Iraq has left Arab bankers, investors and dealmakers throughout Europe unwilling to bet their fortunes on the future of the country.

While the US is already soliciting bids from American corporations on reconstruction projects for Iraq, and European governments are trying to squeeze themselves into the game, many members of the moneyed class from West Asia are watching — horrified and anxious, frustrated and bemused — from the sidelines.

This is not a time of celebration. Arab tourism to Europe has been shaken by the September 11 attacks; rich Persian Gulf Arabs who seek a break now head to Lebanon or Egypt. In fact, there are reports of Iraqis leaving Europe and heading home — to resettle or even to fight.

It is off-season at the casinos and ski resorts, which are nearly empty. The gaming tables of the private, high-stakes salon in the Casino de Monte Carlo have few players, and the atmosphere is as sombre as an Italian funeral. Marbella, Spain, is not what it was after the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990 and the war that followed. Then, it was vacation time and those wealthy Kuwaitis who were not already out of the country fled their homes for an extended stay in the palatial holiday villas dotting the hillside above this seaside resort. This time around, the casino is almost empty; the mansions are shuttered and the Ferraris are being driven by Westerners.

The handsome King Abdulaziz al-Saud mosque in Marbella, a stone's throw from King Fahd's palace and the splendid Casa al-Riyadh villa that belongs to his brother, is almost empty

for weekday prayers, with only a few Moroccans attending.

Only the richest and the bravest are willing to discuss politics on the record, some citing concern for relatives living in West Asia, others emphasising the need for discretion in their business dealings.

One Damascus-born investor flips between state-run Iraqi television and Fox News in the bar of his opulent apartment overlooking Paris. He divides his time among Paris, London, the Cote d'Azur and Washington, and a photo of him with President Bush and the First Lady hangs on one wall.

But he described himself as stunned that the Bush administration did not seem to know that no one in President Saddam Hussein's inner circle would betray him and that the Iraqi people would not rush to welcome the invaders.

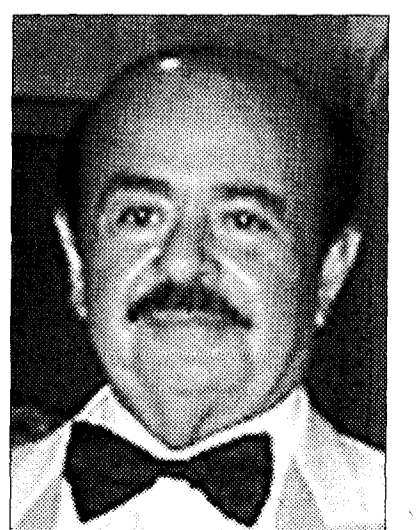
"It's significant that not one member of Saddam's inner circle left, that there wasn't an Alger Hiss in the whole team," he said. "The early signs are that people are resisting foreign occupation and that the regime has been given a certain amount of legitimacy because of the war," he said. "I feel like we're in the first hour of a long day, I'm feeling shocked, but not yet awed."

One major Arab investor who has homes in Paris, Monaco, Beirut, Lebanon, and Amman, Jordan, called the war "a complete quagmire, a complete mess."

A Paris-based Lebanese banker asked: "Where is the rice and the flowers the Americans thought they will be walking into?"

There is no panic and no major divestments or transfers, but no major investment either.

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE



Adnan Khashoggi