

Bomb kills US soldier, rockets rain on Baghdad

Baghdad: About a dozen rockets and mortar rounds slammed into central Baghdad on Thursday in fresh guerrilla attacks, as the US military said an American soldier was killed by a roadside bomb.

Two hotels used by Westerners and an apartment block were struck, as well as the area where the headquarters of the US-led administration is situated. A residential building next to the German embassy was also hit. A rocket missed the Interior Ministry and landed in a nearby street, witnesses said.

The US military said the American soldier was killed in Baghdad on Wednesday, bringing to 206 the number of US military deaths from hostile fire since Washington an-

nounced the end of major combat in Iraq on May 1. Washington blames the attacks on Saddam Hussein's supporters and foreign Islamic militants.

Officials had warned insurgents would launch spectacular attacks during the Christmas holiday season. The lift area between the eighth and ninth floors of the Ishtar Sheraton Hotel was struck. A manager at the hotel said there were no casualties.

The hotel, where US contractors and western journalists stay, was hit in another attack late on Wednesday, but once again there were no casualties. "This is a regular day for us," said US First Lieutenant Kurt Muniz, as he led



US army soldiers pull a cracker during Christmas lunch in the Multi-National Division headquarters in Basra on Thursday.

several soldiers on a foot patrol in the area. He said the attackers left behind leaflets urging staff at the Ishtar Sheraton to stop working at the hotel. Another rocket hit the Bourj al-Hayat Hotel, also used by the Americans. The hotel was used by UN weapons inspectors before the war. No one was hurt.

At the apartment block, Samar Zeid, 20, said: "We were sleeping when we heard a large explosion. My mother was taken to hospital." The attack damaged his parents' bedroom. A neighbour said he saw a car speeding away from a nearby street immediately after the attack. A US military spokesman said three or four rockets struck in the vicinity of the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority complex in the centre of Baghdad. Reuters

Iraq militants in US net

1-4
29/12

Baghdad, Dec. 23 (Reuters): American soldiers arrested Muslim militants with ties to an Iraqi fugitive near the top of their most wanted list, but the assassination of a senior Iraqi judge highlighted continuing instability in post-war Iraq.

Youssef Khoshi, a chief investigating judge in Mosul, was shot and killed by three men in a car last night. "He was shot six times from behind in the back. He died immediately," the police said today. The slaying was part of a wave of attacks in recent weeks on officials working under Iraq's US administration.

Guerrillas have killed US soldiers and anyone seen cooperating with them.

A bomb was found yesterday in the home of Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, a Shia leader and head of the US-backed Iraqi governing council, but was defused, his son said.

Hakim was in Moscow for debt relief talks, but the bomb underscored fears that Iraq's volatile sectarian mix could explode before the country even

starts rebuilding. American soldiers were hopeful they could close in on one of their most wanted fugitives, Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, after capturing three Muslim militants with ties to Saddam Hussein's former deputy.

"We detained three individuals in the extremist religious organisations with ties to... Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri," Lieutenant-Colonel William Adamson, head of a US task force in Baquba, said. Adamson said raids after Saddam's capture were yielding valuable intelligence which would make it easier to make further arrests of guerrillas, who have killed 202 US troops.

Bahrain alert

The US has warned American citizens in Bahrain about a "terrorist" threat in Bahrain during the Christmas holiday, the US embassy in Bahrain said today.

The warning in pro-western Bahrain, headquarters of the US navy's Fifth Fleet, comes amid a heightened state of alert in the United States ahead of Christmas.

24 DEC 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

24 DEC 2003

autonomous Kurdish region.

US troops raid mosque; ex-Iraqi general held

23/12 11-10
WSW
W.A.M.A

Baghdad: US troops raided a Baghdad mosque overnight and, in a separate operation, arrested a former Iraqi intelligence officer suspected of directing anti-American attacks. US soldiers also warned on Monday that they'll jail black marketeers of gasoline, some of whom are suspected of financing attacks on Americans.

On Sunday night, troops detained ex-army Gen. Muntaz al-Taji at a house in Baqouba, about 50 km north of Baghdad. "Tonight we were on a mission to capture a former Iraqi intelligence service general who we believe is recruiting former military members of the Iraqi army to conduct attacks against US forces," Maj. Paul Owen of the 588th Engineer Battalion told Associated Press Television News.

He is among hundreds of people detained in raids since Saddam Hussein was captured on December 13. Some raids have been based on intelligence gleaned from the arrest of the former dictator. In southern Baghdad

on Sunday, soldiers backed by helicopter gunships surrounded the Atika mosque, ordered everyone out and searched it until early Monday, a worker at the mosque told APTN.

In other towns, troops in tanks, Humvees and Bradley armoured vehicles imposed curfews and roadblocks and went house to house, smashing through doors in the search for guerrillas and weapons.

In Samarra, a 70-year-old man died when US troops put a bag over his head and prepared to detain him on Sunday night, Iraqis said. Neighbours said Mehdi al-Jamal died of a heart attack. A 60-year-old woman was killed on Sunday when soldiers blasted open the reinforced steel door of her home, said Lt. Col. Henry Kievenaar, who was directing the Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment in raids in Rawah.

In northeast Iraq on Monday, thousands of Kurds rallied in Kirkuk to demand that the oil-rich city be made part of an autonomous territory for Kurds. AP

Libya seeks reward for scrapping WMDs

By Salah Sarrar and Bernard Woodall

Tripoli\New York: Libya made clear on Saturday it wanted to come in from the cold after decades as a pariah state and Britain and the United States pledged to reward its decision to abandon its banned weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Muammar Gaddafi's Libya, which Britain said had been close to making an atomic bomb, opened the prospect of an end to sanctions and the possible return of US oil companies with its pledge on Friday to stop seeking weapons of mass destruction.

But some US officials cautioned that Libya's move, the culmination of secret negotiations that began just before the US-led Iraq War and announced less than a week after US forces captured Saddam Hussein, still left it too early to say when and if Washington will lift sanctions.

"Libya wants to solve all problems and we want to focus on development and advancing our country. This programme does not benefit our people or country," foreign minister Mohamed Abderrhmane Chalgam told 'Al Jazeera' Television.

"We want to have ties with America and Britain because this is in the interest of our people," Mr Chalgam said in the first televised comments on Tripoli's move by a top Libyan official.

The Libyan announcement came ahead of Sunday's 15th anniversary of the Christmas bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people. Libya escaped broader UN-imposed international sanctions earlier this year after

accepting responsibility for the attack and paying out billions to the families of victims.

Washington left its sanctions in place, citing suspicions Tripoli was seeking biological and chemical

Sanctions review



- Washington bans most economic activity and bars citizens from travelling to Libya on US passports without the government permission. Washington last month renewed this passport restrictions for a year but said it would review the matter every three months.

- British foreign secretary Jack Straw praised Mr Gaddafi on Saturday, saying on BBC radio: "He needs to be applauded in unqualified terms for what he has done. I believe it is very statesmanlike and courageous."

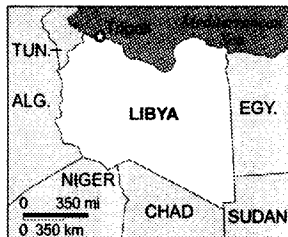
weapons. "We have begun to solve the Lockerbie problems," Mr Chalgam said.

Lifting sanctions could allow US oil companies back into Libya, where US firms were at one time producing more than 1 million barrels per day and where oil facilities could be enhanced to reach 2 million bpd within five years, according to the US department of energy.

A US official said Libya ap-

Libya to stop weapons programmes

Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi has admitted trying to develop weapons of mass destruction but now plans to dismantle all such programmes, President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair said Friday.



Sept. 1, 1969 -

Libyan military deposes the conservative monarchy; Col. Muammar Gaddafi becomes leader and orders U.S. Air Force base to close.

Dec. 2, 1979 - Libyans ransack U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, chanting support for Iran's radical Islamic regime.

Aug. 12, 1981 - President Ronald Reagan, citing alleged Libyan involvement in terrorism, orders attack on targets in Libya.

Dec. 11 - Reagan asks all Americans in Libya to leave.

April 14, 1986 - U.S. bombs hit five targets in Libya in

response to a bombing at a Berlin disco frequented by American military; an estimated 40 Libyans are killed, including Gaddafi's baby daughter.

Dec. 21, 1988 - Pan Am Flight 103 en route to New York explodes over Lockerbie, Scotland; 259, mostly Americans, die along with 11 people on the ground.

April 15, 1992 - U.N. Security Council imposes sanctions on air travel and arms sales to Libya.

April 14, 1999 - Libya surrenders suspects for trial and U.N. suspends sanctions after a trial venue is chosen.

Jan. 31, 2001 -

Scottish court convicts Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi of the Lockerbie bombing and sentences him to life imprisonment. A second Libyan is acquitted.

Aug. 15, 2003 - Libya accepts responsibility for Lockerbie bombing; agrees to pay relatives of each bombing victim at least \$5 million.

Sept. 12 - The Security Council votes to lift the sanctions.

Dec. 19 - Gaddafi agrees to stop weapons programmes and open the country to international weapons inspectors.

SOURCE: Associated Press

AP

proached the United States and Britain in mid-March and this led to visits to weapons sites in October and early December by US and British teams. The official said Libya had acknowledged a chemical weapons programme and an interest in acquiring biological weapons equipment. On Libya's nuclear aims, the official said, "My understanding is that they did have a much further advanced pro-

gramme," than previously thought.

Mr Bush offered the prospect of US assistance for Libya in the future, saying: "As Libya becomes a more peaceful nation it can become a source of stability in Africa and West Asia. Should Libya pursue internal reform, America will be ready to help its people to build a more free and prosperous country."

An official in London said a British team working with the Libyans had been shown "significant quantities of chemical agent" and that Libya had acknowledged that it was developing nuclear material intended to create a weapon. The team saw nuclear projects under way at more than ten sites, including uranium enrichment. It also saw dual-use sites with the potential to support work on biological weapons.

It would be up to Libya to disclose the details of the weapons programmes to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Reuters

Panacea Biotec
In Support of Life

**REQUIRED
READYMADE SOFTWARES**

Panacea Biotec requires Readymade softwares. For further details, visit our Website

www.panacea-biotec.com/software
www.pblintranet.com/software

In case of any inconvenience, please e-mail us at: murali@pblintranet.com

Congress approves \$87-b. Bush package for Iraq

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

OTTAWA, Oct. 18. The United States Congress has overwhelmingly approved the President's supplemental funding request for Iraq giving George W. Bush nearly all of the \$87 billions he had asked for. Members of the Grand Old Party are hoping that the Senate provision of making half of the \$20.3 billions in reconstruction money as loans instead of grants will be off the final version of the Bill before it gets to the White House for signature.

A Conference Committee of the

House and the Senate will have to sit and thrash this issue out early next week. On Friday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the supplemental by a vote of 303 to 125, and the Senate approved it by a margin of 87 to 12. The legislative chambers have given all of the \$66 billions asked for operations primarily in Iraq but also for Afghanistan. But the House and Senate also sought to trim by \$2 billions in the \$20.3 billions reconstruction tab for retooling of the Iraqi oil industry, for the court system and other government-related expenses.

The supplemental request also has money for the rebuilding of Afghanistan; funds for Pakistan, Jordan and other American allies; besides moneys for the capture of Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden.

The passage of the bills may seem easy going by the numbers, but critics on Capitol Hill of the administration's policies in Iraq and supporters of the President insisted on having their say during the debate. "I believe in this President. I believe in this military", argued Senator Ted Stevens, Republican from Alaska. "Those voting against this

bill will be voting against supporting our men and women in the field", he remarked. A staunch opponent of the administration over the Iraq war and a fierce critic of the White House, the Democratic Senator from West Virginia, Robert Byrd, made the point that opposing the bill did not amount to

opposing the men and women on the ground in Iraq; rather, the opposition was on account of the administration going to war and the rationale dished out for it. "Fie on that doctrine of pre-emption. That's a dangerous doctrine. Those who vote against this bill are

voting against that doctrine", Mr. Byrd remarked.

The conservatives in the GOP may be confident of a bill reaching the White House to the likes of the President; and the travelling Bush team in Asia has reminded lawmakers of the seriousness of the issue.

Republicans are of the view that when it comes to the "final" vote after the conference stage, Democrats will be hard pressed to vote "no". Still, there is the question whether Mr. Bush will veto the bill if it reaches his desk in its present form.

19 DEC 2003

THE HINDU

11-14 Tyrant's Trial 16/12

Having got him, the US must figure out what to do with Saddam

The early pictures were calculated to arouse pity rather than awe. When the Americans finally laid their hands on Saddam Hussein, he looked less like a man capable of waging the mother of all guerilla wars and more like a dazed and dishevelled pensioner who'd just been jolted out of a peaceful slumber. It was hard to believe that here was someone who had triggered the greatest manhunt known to history. Yet, raucous western triumphalism apart, it would be all too easy to sentimentalise Saddam. He may have never possessed the so-called weapons of mass destruction that gave George Bush & Co the supposed cause to launch what was an immoral and unjust war. He may have never commanded the technical wherewithal to assemble a world-threatening arsenal of biological and chemical weapons. But make no mistake about it: Saddam was no angel. He was, every inch of him, a ruthless dictator who ran Iraq like a mediaeval fief. During his more than three decades of unchallenged rule, he maimed and killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and put down every vestige of opposition and dissent with a brutality that has few parallels, even in the long history of Third World tyrannies.

Now that Saddam has been hunted down, the all-important question is how to deal with him. In an ideal world, it would be best to leave the trial of Saddam to his victims, the people of Iraq. Unfortunately, that is not possible in a country torn apart by massive civil unrest, and deep ethnic divisions. Besides, Iraq lacks the barest semblance of a legitimate government. The so-called Iraqi Governing Council is widely seen at home as an alien, unrepresentative body, foisted on the vanquished by the victors. As the sole arbiter of Iraqi fate and the self-styled champion of democracy across the world, the onus is clearly on the US to ensure that Saddam gets his desserts. But not without the due process of law. And the only way that can be achieved is for the Americans to entrust Saddam's fate not to a coterie of hand-picked Iraqis but to an international tribunal under the auspices of the United Nations. For far too long, the US has assumed the rôle of judge, jury and executioner in Iraq. Saddam's capture gives it an opportunity to correct that record. Because even a tyrant like Saddam deserves a trial that is not only fair but also seen to be so. Anything less would only compound the tyranny.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

16 DEC 2003

Lion in cage, loose cannons at large

London, Dec. 14 (Reuters): Saddam Hussein's capture will delight most Iraqis and devastate the deposed dictator's loyalists, but even this stunning victory for US forces may not quell the violence they face in Iraq.

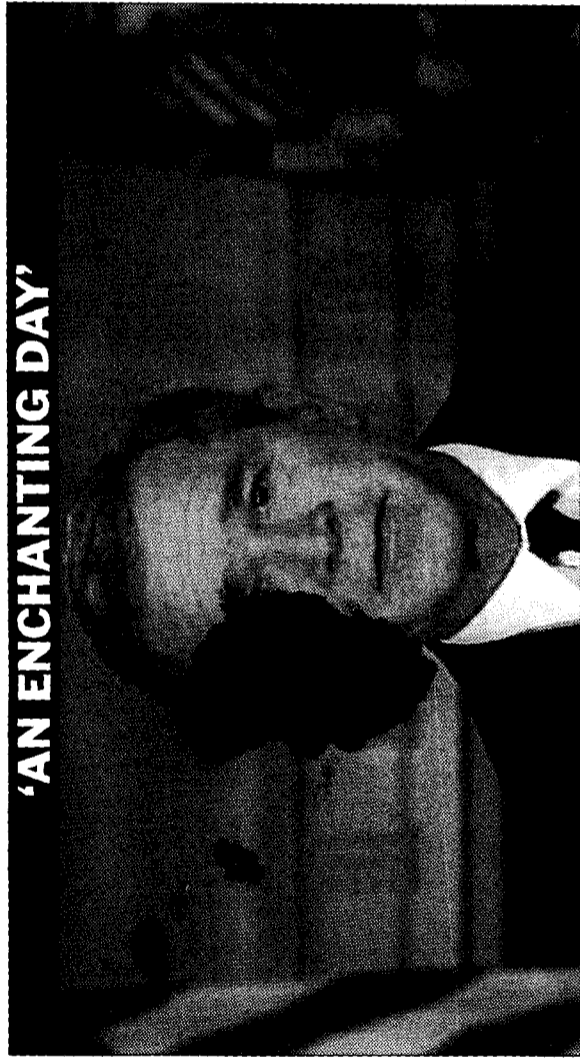
Even as Iraqis took to the streets to rejoice at the seizure of the once feared ruler, analysts said it was premature to assume that resistance to the US-led occupation would crumble.

"There will be a reduction in operations sponsored by former regime loyalists, but this is not the full story because they are not the only group involved," said Mustafa Alami, an Iraq analyst at London's Royal United Services Institute.

"It won't affect those by Iraqi or Arab mujahideen and might increase them as those who did not want to be branded as supporters of Saddam might now join a resistance with a more nationalist dimension," he said.

US officials have blamed Saddam loyalists and foreign militants for unremitting attacks that have killed nearly 200 US soldiers since President George W. Bush declared major combat in Iraq over on May 1.

Saddam had eluded capture for eight months after Baghdad fell on April 9 to US forces, who



'AN ENCHANTING DAY'

President George W. Bush addresses America after the capture of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Earlier, Bush told Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist: "What an enchanting day, a day of relief this is for the Iraqi people." (Reuters)

also failed to find any of the weapons of mass destruction cited by the US and Britain as the main reason for the war.

"It's a huge coup and most Iraqis will be celebrating the tact, financially or strategically, with Saddam Hussein," he said.

Even the commander of US forces in Iraq conceded that Saddam's capture did not necessarily mean resistance would end.

"We do not expect at this point in time that we will have a complete elimination of those attacks," Lieutenant-General Ricardo Sanchez said in Baghdad.

But Iraqi Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani, a member of the Iraqi Governing Council, took a more optimistic view.

W3 (2) N Ag... 15712
 "With the arrest of Saddam, the financial resources feeding terrorists have been destroyed and his arrest will put an end to terrorist acts in Iraq," he told the Iranian news agency IRNA.

Timothy Garden, of Kings College London and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, said Saddam's capture would boost the morale of US-led forces and of the US-appointed governing council, but might not stem the bloodshed.

"It seems most unlikely that Saddam was micro-managing the violence because that would have made him very vulnerable to capture," Garden said.

Several analysts said it was a vital psychological blow that buried lingering Iraqi fears of a comeback by Saddam and opened the way for a trial that could help Iraq deal with its past.

"It really destroys forever the idea of a return to Saddam for many who thought he was a kind of legend capable of resistance and carrying the Iraqi flag again," said Abdel-Monem Said, director of Egypt's Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies.

"Most important it will be an opportunity politically as he was caught alive to put him on trial and all the atrocities

15712
 of this regime will be in the open," he said.

US forces have previously detained or killed 40 of a list of 55 most wanted Iraqis, topped by Saddam. Among them were his two sons Uday and Qusay, killed in a blaze of firepower in July.

Alami said it was a propaganda coup for the Americans to have captured Saddam alive, especially after their galling failure to seize al Qaida chief Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan.

"It's an intelligence prize because they can get information from him about cells working now. And it's a huge victory because he was the head of the regime and not like anyone else on the list of 55 most wanted."

Tracking down Saddam in his hometown of Tikrit could give renewed hope for US efforts to stabilise and rebuild Iraq.

"His capture gives the US a window of opportunity," said Dodge. "If they redouble their efforts and increase their troop commitment, they could contain or even roll back the insurgency. But the temptation of Bush, facing a re-election campaign, will be to call this victory and cut and run. That would be a disaster for Iraq, for West Asia and for the strategic interests of the US in the region and beyond."

US digs Saddam out of his spider hole

Iraqi dictator taken without a shot being fired, moved to secret location

By Chidanand Rajghatta
and Rashmee Z. Ahmed
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington/London: The American war in Iraq turned a decisive corner with the capture on Saturday of the United States' No. 1 enemy Saddam Hussein. US soldiers found Mr Hussein holed up in an underground bunker in a rural farmhouse close to his hometown of Tikrit, 100 miles north of Baghdad.

Not a single shot was fired in Operation Red Dawn, conducted by 600 soldiers of a quick reaction unit of the 4th Infantry Division, and the fugitive dictator reportedly gave himself up without resistance. He had a bushy salt and pepper beard, but was otherwise unaltered in appearance. Soldiers found four AK-47 rifles, a pistol and \$750,000 in cash in his lair.

The soldiers broke out in celebration even as officials tried to contain news of the breakthrough, which happened at 8.30 p.m. Mr Hussein was later shaved and a DNA test was reportedly conducted to verify his identity. "Ladies and gentlemen, we got him," Iraq's American administrator L. Paul Bremer told a news conference convened once the determination had been made.

(AP adds: Mr Hussein was captured based on information from a family member "close to him", Maj. Gen. Raymond Odierno, commander of the 4th Infantry Division, said in Tikrit on Sunday.)

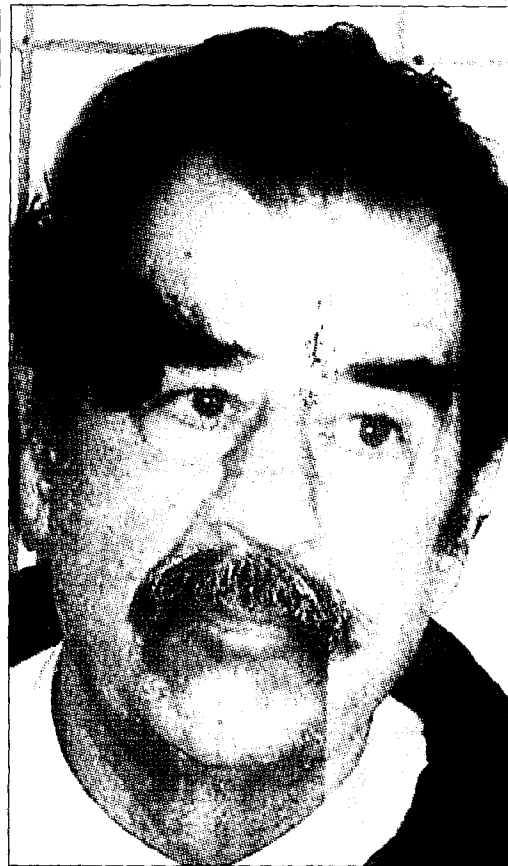
Hailing Mr Hussein's capture as "time for celebration and a time to unify and to reconcile", British Prime Minister Tony Blair scooped the Baghdad-based Coalition Provisional Authority with the triumphal news of the former dictator's ignominious fall into US-UK hands.

Hours before Mr Bremer baldly announced in the Iraqi capital, "We got him", Mr Blair was telling the international media in London that Mr Hussein's capture was "very good news". He said it was time Iraqis put their past behind them.

Soon after Mr Bremer's announcement in Baghdad, US military commander Lt-Gen Ricardo Sanchez showed a video of Mr Hussein in custody. Lt-Gen Sanchez said Mr Hussein, who carried a \$25 million reward on his head, was not injured and had been "talkative and cooperative". He was tired and seemed resigned to his fate.

Some accounts said Mr Hussein dug himself in as the US forces moved in and he had to be extricated using shovels and rakes. The six-foot-by-eight-foot "spider hole" was camouflaged with bricks and dirt and equipped with an exhaust fan, the reports said. The Iraqi dictator has since been moved to an undisclosed location, while Washington ponders what to do next. The new Iraqi dispensation wants to put him on trial in Iraq.

News of Mr Hussein's capture was reportedly conveyed to President George W. Bush by defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld at around 3.15 a.m. Sunday while the President was in Camp David. In a television address at noon from Washington, Mr Bush said the capture meant the Iraqi people would never have to fear Mr Hussein again and could look forward to "sovereignty for your country, dignity for your great culture, and opportunity for every life".



BEFORE AND AFTER: Images released by the US army on Sunday show Saddam Hussein sporting a beard at the time of his capture on Saturday and with his beard shaven.

Gotcha!

Just when it seemed that having won the war in Iraq, the US was losing a troublesome peace—with increasing guerrilla activity and a rising tide of American bodybags going home—the dramatic capture of Saddam Hussein will send George W. Bush's plummeting ratings soaring through the roof again. The iron man of Iraq was literally caught napping, bringing to an end one of the greatest man-hunts in history. With a single lucky stroke, Bush would have silenced his growing band of critics and vindicated Operation Iraq. Considering the many reports of Saddam clones who could act as possible red herrings, the Americans would presumably have done due diligence before making the sensational announcement. Saddam's capture should not only break the back of the guerrilla opposition but also ease America's path in getting wider endorsement and support to set up a bona fide Iraqi administration.

However, dealing with Saddam after his capture could prove as tricky as getting him. Because there is always the risk that any hint of kangaroo-court justice will only make a martyr out of Saddam and rally more jihadis to his admittedly lost cause, Washington's best bet would be to form an international tribunal, under UN auspices, to try Saddam and pronounce suitable sentence. For now, it's two cheers for Dubya. He'll get the third hurrah when he gets Osama, who, if anyone cares to remember, was Bush's original target to begin with.

Gunfire greets fall of chief of Baghdad

Baghdad: Celebratory gunfire rang out across the Iraqi capital, radios played festive music, drivers honked their horns and passengers on buses and trucks chanted, "They got Saddam, they got Saddam," as word of the former dictator's capture spread from car to car and shop to shop on Sunday.

US troops stationed around the country cheered when they heard the news and held back as Iraqis fired their guns in the air.

Iraqi journalists gave US officials a standing ovation and cheered wildly when video of a captured Saddam was shown during a news conference announcing the arrest. Some Iraqi journalists were reported to have chanted, "Death to Saddam."

Shop owners closed their doors,

Impact: Operation Red Dawn

'Ladies and gentlemen, we got him'

- Saddam, 66, was captured alive on Saturday from a six foot-deep hole on a farm near his hometown of Tikrit, north of Baghdad.
- ✦ Saddam, it is said, put up little resistance. His captors said he was talkative and cooperative.

What happens to him now?

- ↳ The US is still to decide what to do next. Iraqi Governing Council member Ahmed Chalabi wants to try him in public.

Will the violence in Iraq end now?

- ✦ Experts say that is doubtful. It's unlikely that Saddam was micro-managing the violence as it would have made him vulnerable to capture. The insurgency has grown beyond Saddam's control. But support to the 15-30 groups operating independently in Iraq may dwindle.

worried that all the shooting would make the streets unsafe.

Earlier in the day, rumours of the capture sent people streaming into the streets of Kirkuk, a northern

Iraqi city, firing guns in the air in celebration. "We are celebrating like it's a wedding," said Kirkuk resident Mustapha Sheriff.

But not everyone was happy and

many said they wanted proof that the man in US custody was the real Saddam Hussein.

"I heard the news, but I'll believe it when I see it," said Mohaned al-Hasaji, a 33-year-old who owns a cosmetics shop on Baghdad's bustling Karada Street. "They need to show us that they really have him."

Outside his shop a paper boy sold copies of the Sunday edition of *Shahed* (Witness), a weekly news-magazine, whose cover story was graced with photos of Saddam and a banner headline that asked "Who's the real Saddam?" Agencies

MORE ON OUR WEBSITE

Live updates
visit

Bush signs Syria sanctions Bill

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13. — The US President has signed a legislation calling for economic penalties against Syria for not doing enough in the fight against terrorism in West Asia and in Iraq.

Mr George W Bush signed the Bill into law with no fanfare before leaving the White House for the Camp David retreat in Maryland. The White House announced the move last evening.

Mr Bush is generally not enthusiastic about such restraints on his diplomatic options and, in a statement, signaled that was the case with this Bill as well. "My approval of the act does not constitute my adoption of the various statements of policy in the act as US foreign policy," he said.

Syria long has been on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism, along with North Korea, Sudan, Cuba, Iran and Libya. But Syria is the only country on that list to have full diplomatic relations with the USA.

The legislation says

14/12
Syria has provided a safe haven for anti-Israel terrorist groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad and is accused of pursuing the development and production of biological and chemical weapons.

It states that Syria must end its support of terrorists, terminate its 27-year military presence in Lebanon, stop efforts to obtain or produce weapons of mass destruction and long-range ballistic missiles and interdict terrorists and weapons from entering Iraq.

If Syria fails to meet those conditions, the President must ban sales of dual-use items, which can have both civilian and military applications.

He also must impose at least two out of a list of six possible penalties:

- A ban on exports to Syria
- Prohibition of US businesses operating in Syria
- Restrictions on Syrian diplomats in the USA
- Limits on Syrian airline flights in the USA
- Reduction of diplomatic contacts
- Freeze on Syrian assets in the USA

Bush calls for refund of Iraq overcharge

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13. — Any firm that overcharges the US government for services in Iraq — as a Halliburton subsidiary allegedly did with petrol — must return that money, the US President has said.

"If there is an overcharge like we think there is, we expect that money to be repaid," Mr George W Bush told reporters yesterday, after Pentagon sources said an audit found that Kellogg, Brown and Root overbilled by up to \$61 million. "I appreciate the Pentagon looking out after the taxpayers' money. They felt like there was an overcharge issue. They put the issue right out there on the table for everybody to see and they're doing good work," he said.

Vice-President Mr Dick Cheney ran Halliburton before taking office and the company's contracts in Iraq have been the source of lingering controversy.

Other violations of Iraq contracts were also found in the Pentagon's audit, the defence officials said. KBR said that the allegation is "not fact".

The Pentagon's probe into the matter "will lay the facts out for everybody to see", Mr Bush promised. "We are going to make sure that, as we spend the money in Iraq, that it's spent well and spent wisely."

The revelations came as Washington faced European anger over its decision to reward its "coalition of the willing" partners with exclusive access to reconstruction contracts funded with some \$18.6 billion.

In November, two contracts were given to the Halliburton subsidiary, the Pentagon source said — one of \$7 billion to restore Iraqi oil and the other to provide logistical support to US troops in West Asia and Central Asia, worth \$8.6 billion.

Irregularities were found "in both contracts".



Mr Bush: 'If there is an overcharge like we think there is, we expect that money to be repaid'

Another official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the prices charged were based on those charged by a Kuwaiti subcontractor. "I don't think it's a systematic problem of overcharging," the official said.

KBR hit back strongly at what it called "inaccurate media reports". It said in a statement that the Defence Contract Audit Agency was "conducting a routine audit and has requested additional information from KBR".

President touts war as 'accomplishment'

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13. — Mr George W Bush today touted Mr Saddam Hussein's ouster as part of a "year of accomplishment", but omitted any mention of the unconventional weapons at the core of his case for war in Iraq.

In a weekly radio address touting his administration's record in 2003, the US President played up positive economic news, the passage of a prescription drug benefit for the elderly, and funding for global efforts to combat AIDS.

He also credited the tax cut he pushed through the US Congress in May for the rapid pace of economic growth in the third quarter, which was the swiftest in two decades, and declared that "our economy is gaining strength."

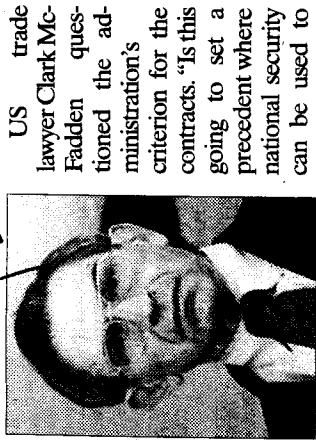
"Our government also took urgent action on every front in the war on terror," he said, citing efforts to help emergency workers to respond to attacks and research into vaccines against biological threats. "Our country stood behind the men and women of our Armed Forces as they liberated Iraq and helped carry out the work of reconstruction there and in Afghanistan." But Mr Bush, whose case for war in Iraq included a warning that Mr Hussein could hand chemical or biological weapons to terrorists on "any given day", did not mention the thus-far fruitless search for that arsenal.

Iraq works: US shuts out France, Germany

SUE PLEMING
WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 10

CITING national security reasons, US Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz has ruled that prime contracts to rebuild Iraq will exclude firms from nations such as France and Germany, that opposed the war.

In a policy document released on Tuesday, Wolfowitz said he was limiting competition for 26 reconstruction contracts, worth up to \$18.6 billion, that will be advertised in coming days. "It is necessary for the protection of the essential security interests of the US to limit competition for the prime contracts of these procurements to companies from the US, Iraq, coalition partners and force contributing nations," Wolfowitz said.



Paul Wolfowitz

working ties with them." Wolfowitz is hoping that excluded companies will put pressure on their governments to join the post-war effort. "Limiting competition for prime contracts will encourage the expansion of international cooperation in Iraq and in future efforts," wrote Wolfowitz.

France and Germany, which opposed the war, reacted quickly. A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said: "We are studying the compatibility of these decisions with international competition law." German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's chief spokesman Bela Anda said that if the reports of such an exclusion were true: "That would not be acceptable for the German government. And it wouldn't be in line with the spirit of looking to the future together and not into the past."

—Reuters

US trade lawyer Clark McCadden questioned the administration's criterion for the contracts. "Is this going to set a precedent where national security can be used to justify limiting competition?" he asked. Procurement specialist Professor Steven Schooner from George Washington University said it was "disingenuous" to use national security as an excuse, and predicted an angry reaction from those nations excluded. But a defence official said NATO partners had known for weeks that they would not get prime Iraq business. "This is not a slight. We still have many agreements with those countries and good those projects."

The contracts cover electricity, communications, public buildings, transportation, public works and security and justice. Additional contracts are also being awarded to oversee those projects.

The move is likely to anger France and Germany, and other traditional allies in NATO and the UN Security Council, who are being blocked out of prime contracts after their opposition to the war. They may bid for sub-contracts. But the decision will placate countries such as Britain, Italy and Spain, which provided troops to Iraq, but whose companies were excluded from the first round of deals that went to US firms.

The contracts cover electricity, communications, public buildings, transportation, public works and security and justice. Additional contracts are also being awarded to oversee those projects.

working ties with them." Wolfowitz is hoping that excluded companies will put pressure on their governments to join the post-war effort. "Limiting competition for prime contracts will encourage the expansion of international cooperation in Iraq and in future efforts," wrote Wolfowitz.

France and Germany, which opposed the war, reacted quickly. A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said: "We are studying the compatibility of these decisions with international competition law." German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's chief spokesman Bela Anda said that if the reports of such an exclusion were true: "That would not be acceptable for the German government. And it wouldn't be in line with the spirit of looking to the future together and not into the past."

—Reuters

SUSAN SACHS
BAGHDAD, DECEMBER 10

WITH the painful discoveries of suspected mass graves this spring still in their minds, Iraq's transitional Governing Council voted on Tuesday to create its own tribunal to judge Saddam Hussein's aides and functionaries on charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

The Governing Council members, including many who say they lost family members to Saddam's campaigns of expulsions, mass executions and political torture, said they wanted all trials to be public so that the world and their Arab neighbours could understand the extent of their suffering. "It will be a noble experiment," said Adnan Pachachi, the elder statesman of the 25-member body appointed by the US-led occupation authority now controlling Iraq. "It shows we want to apply the rule

Tribunal to judge Saddam loyalists

of law and not let the desire for revenge take over." The vote on the tribunal was taken in secret, as all council decisions have been, but Pachachi and other members confirmed that a proposed law setting up the court was approved without any dissent. No copy of the law was made available to the public. But its drafters said the law would create an entire new judicial apparatus, headed by five Iraqi judges and including investigative and prosecutorial sections. Defendants would have the right to legal representation and a right to appeal.

Several human rights groups, which said they were not given the chance to see or comment on the law, said an all-Iraqi tribunal would reflect the US aversion to international courts as well as to involvement by the UN. "It is up to us," said Mowaffak al-Rubaie, a council member. "But we are of course restrained by international standards."

From NYTimes

41 US soldiers hurt in Iraq blast

Talafar (Iraq): A suicide bomber blew up a car packed with explosives at the gates of a military barracks early Tuesday, injuring 41 American troops and six Iraqi civilians. Hours earlier, three soldiers died in a road accident in central Iraq, and three civilians died when a Baghdad mosque was rocketed.

The attack at the army base occurred at 4.45 a.m. local time when a car drove to the gate of the base in the town of Talafar, 50 km west of the northern city of Mosul. Guards at the gate and in a watchtower opened fire on the vehicle and moments later it blew up. The bomb left a large crater at the gate's entryway.

Col. Michael Linnington, commander of the 3rd Brigade which controls the area west of Mosul and all the way to the Syrian border, said

have four soldiers that were evacuated and are being treated for blast injuries. In addition, 37 soldiers have nicks, cuts, bruises and some broken bones," he said.

A base translator also was injured in the blast, which damaged nearby homes. Several other civilians, including a 2-year-old girl, were hurt by flying glass. The early morning blast occurred when most soldiers were still in their barracks, and there was no traffic around the gate. Pieces of the attacker's car were scattered hundreds of metres away from the site of the blast.

In Tokyo, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's cabinet approved a plan on Tuesday to send soldiers to help in the reconstruction of Iraq in the biggest deployment of Japanese troops overseas since World War II. ^{AP}



Iraqis look at a car damaged in an explosion outside a mosque in Baghdad on Tuesday.

the attack was a suicide mission and that the attacker's remains were "all over the compound." "Right now we

U.S. to face labour shortage

NEW DELHI, OCT. 9. A Nasscom-Evalueserve (National Association of Software and Services Companies) report today warned that U.S. economy could lose up to \$2 trillion worth of growth opportunities due to a massive labour shortage by 2010, if it (U.S.) did not take appropriate measures such as outsourcing and immigration to bridge this gap.

Cautioning the U.S. market against "protectionism," in the wake of outcry over outsourcing to low cost destinations like India, the report has forecast a labour shortage of 5.6 million workers by 2010, a large chunk of which would be in high-tech areas.

This gap could be bridged through immigration to the tune of 3.2 million workers, and offshoring to the tune of 1.3 million jobs, the report said, adding that India was strongly positioned to claim over 50 per cent of offshored work on strength of its cost and language (English-speaking) advantages.

"There will be a short term impact on the U.S. labour force. About 1.3 million jobs will move offshore between 2003 and

2010, impacting one million U.S. workers," Marc Vollenweider, CEO of business research and intellectual property service firm, Evalueserve, told reporters here.

The remaining labour gap of 1.1 million workers would have to be bridged with temporary workers.

Forecasts for the U.S. indicate an annual GDP growth of 3.20 per cent, which would lead to an increased demand for labour, the Nasscom report said.

Making a strong case for outsourcing, the report said that for every \$100 of call centre work offshored by U.S. firms, about \$143 was invested back into the U.S. economy in the form of repatriated profits, increased sales of telecom equipment and cost savings.

Similarly the amount invested back into the U.S. economy was \$133 for IT services and \$142 for high-end knowledge services such as equity research, underwriting, tax preparations and risk management.

"Offshoring of IT services has enabled U.S. workers move to specialised and creative roles while moving process oriented programming to offshore loca-

tions. The proportion of specialists in the U.S. IT workforce increased to 74 per cent in 2002 from 38 per cent in 1983," the report said.

It said utilisation of offshore facilities resulted in the growth of the local economies and an increase in the disposable income leading to expansion of the global market for U.S. goods and services.

"For instance, in India, the proportion of the consuming class in overall population expanded from 14 per cent to 30 per cent in the 1990s and is set to reach 40 per cent in 2006-06. The Indian retail sector is expected to grow from \$180 billion in 2003 to \$300 billion in 2010," it said.

The Nasscom report, which highlights how the U.S. economy would see significant benefits from global sourcing, is based on interviews of economists and offshoring experts worldwide to produce the 80 page report.

The report outlines the cost savings and increased flexibility that global sourcing would provide to U.S. companies, thereby keeping them competitive in the global marketplace.

The report said the U.S. economy will benefit significantly from the global sourcing trend and that protectionist action against the offshoring of services will actually hurt the growth of the U.S. economy.

On the impact on the U.S. labour force, it said that "in the worst case, 1.3 million workers will be displaced by offshoring. The reallocation of these workers will, thus, has a limited effect on the U.S. labour market."

Acknowledging that global sourcing of services would transform the way global economies benefited each other, the report noted that while the labour transition problems within U.S. were real, the flexibility and adaptability of the U.S. workforce would ensure that these are temporary in nature.

"Most importantly, the benefits realised through offshoring are significant, and are required to support the growth and competitiveness of the U.S. economy.

Protectionist measures aimed at protecting the U.S. jobs will result in slower economic growth and slower labour demand growth," it pointed out. — PTI

US troops launch 'biggest-ever' operation in Afghanistan

Associated Press SF 2

KABUL, Dec. 8. — The US military today announced its biggest-ever operation against Taliban and Al-Qaida suspects, saying it will mobilise thousands of soldiers in the most dangerous parts of Afghanistan.

Four battalions totalling about 2,000 soldiers are to take part in the operation, dubbed Avalanche, across the south

and east, a US military spokesman said. "This one is the largest we have ever designed," Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty told reporters at the coalition military headquarters at Bagram, north of Kabul.

The area has seen a wave of violence against aid workers, US soldiers and Afghan government officials that has belied American claims that it was winning the war to stabilise the country. The military says

insurgents have begun moving in smaller groups and selecting softer targets such as aid workers after heavy losses in head-on battles with coalition forces earlier this year.

Under the new operation, the enemy "isn't going to know when we hit, he isn't going to know what we're doing," the spokesman said. He didn't elaborate. Two years after the fall of the Taliban, some 11,700 mostly American soldiers are still on

combat missions in Afghanistan against the Taliban and their allies: Al-Qaida remnants and followers of renegade warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

A separate force of around 5,000 NATO-led peacekeepers patrols in the capital, and is preparing to expand into provincial cities.

Search on for Indians

Authorities were today searching for two Indian road workers

kidnapped by heavily armed men in southern Afghanistan, even as two Turkish engineers and an Afghan kidnapper three days ago near Kabul were freed.

The two Indians were abducted on Saturday by three armed men in southern Zabul province. A Taliban official has claimed responsibility, but issued no demands for their release.

The Afghan NGO Security Office, a security group for aid workers which announced that

the two Turks and the Afghan had been released, however, gave no details. Afghan officials said the three men, who were helping dig wells, were taken Friday in connection with a land dispute.

"It would appear that this was a domestic incident deriving from a local dispute and did not involve any of the usual extremist elements," Mr Nick Downie, the head of the security office said in a statement.

IRAQ / RUMSFELD VISITS KIRKUK, BAGHDAD

Chances of capturing Saddam dim: U.S.

WS (W)
WAS
K9-12

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, DEC. 6. The United States Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, who is visiting Iraq, today hinted that the chances of capturing the former Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, and his top functionaries were remote. In an interaction with the press in the northern Iraqi oil city of Kirkuk, Mr. Rumsfeld said, "The chances of us stumbling on one of the top guys are zero." His remarks counter recent reports suggesting that the U.S. occupation forces could be close to capturing Mr. Hussein's right-handman, Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri.

Mr. Rumsfeld later arrived in Baghdad, a day after Iraqi resistance forces triggered an explosion, which killed an American soldier, and four Iraqis travell-

ing in a passing bus. With the Iraqi fighters gaining ground, there have been reports that the U.S. authorities were considering deployment of militias attached to loyal religious and ethnic groups, such as the Kurdish Peshmergas. But Paul Bremer, the U.S. administrator in Iraq, in a television appearance on Friday, denied such a

Debt envoy named

WASHINGTON, DEC. 6. The U.S. President, George W. Bush, has named the former Secretary of State, James Baker, for the task of winning an international agreement on reducing Iraq's \$120 billions in foreign debt.

A senior U.S. official called it significant that Bush said Baker would report directly to him. — Reuters

move. "Quite simply the presence of militias does not fit into the campaign of building an independent Iraq with an army and police," he said.

Faced with the growing Iraqi resistance and reluctance of foreign countries to send troops, the U.S. is working on an "exit strategy" that involves choosing an assembly of Iraqis which will, in turn, form an Iraqi 'transitional' government before elections under a new constitution can be held. But U.S. plans received a setback when the influential Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, who has a mass following among Shias, rejected the move. Instead of selecting a transitional government, he has advocated that holding elections should take precedence, so that an elected body can draft a new constitution.

THE HINDU

7 DEC 2003

✓
Europe welcomes decision

Bush scraps steel tariffs

13
5/12
Washington, Dec. 4 (Reuters): US President George W. Bush scrapped steel tariffs today 16 months ahead of schedule to avert retaliation from Europe and Asia, risking a political backlash in battleground states in next year's election.

The White House said Bush will, however, keep in place a system that helps US steel producers by licensing and tracking steel imports to cut the risk of unexpected surges.

"This safeguard definitely provided the industry and workers with needed breathing space and to its credit, much of the industry has used its time well," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said.

"The bulk of the restructuring that was necessary to make the industry more competitive has now taken place," he said.

The widely expected decision comes 11 days before the EU was set to slap duties on \$2.2 billion of politically sensitive US exports if the tariffs were not lifted.

Japan had also threatened to hike duties on \$458 million of US goods.

European steel lobby Eurofer said today it welcomed Bush's decision to end controversial steel import duties.

"This means that indeed access to the markets becomes normal. This is an excellent thing. We are glad that the President has decided to respect the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO)," said Christian Mari, director of Eurofer. He stressed his reaction was preliminary and said he had not seen the full decision.

Bush set tariffs that ranged

up to 30 per cent on imported steel in March 2002 to help the US steel industry get back on its feet after a string of bankruptcies.

The duties had been scheduled to expire in March 2005.

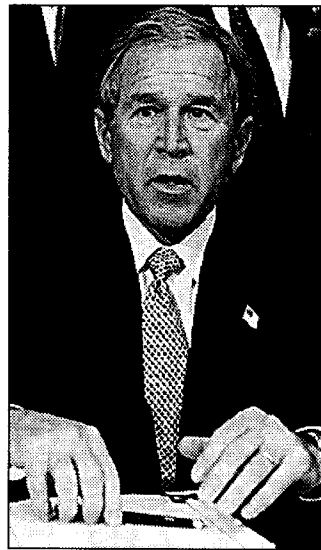
The WTO last month ruled that they violated international trade rules, sparking the retaliation threats.

McClellan said the White House would closely monitor imports and respond to any surge.

European steel firms had complained of losing US market share after the duties were imposed in March 2002.

The EU had threatened sanctions on up to \$2.2 billion of US goods if the duties had remained in place by December 15.

Eurofer members include the world's biggest steel firm, Arcelor, and Anglo-Dutch company Corus.



George W. Bush. (AFP)

Powell's W Asia peace plan draws Israeli fire

Jerusalem, December 3

ISRAEL FUMED over US Secretary of State Colin Powell's plan to meet the authors of a symbolic peace accord despite fierce Israeli objections on Wednesday.

Israel has got into a rare public spat with Washington by chiding Powell's decision to hear out the Geneva Accord architects at talks in Washington likely later this week. "We don't want to argue with Powell," government spokesman Avi Pazner said, a day after Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's deputy warned the secretary of state it would be wrong to give his imprimatur to the alternative initiative.

Pressure has grown on intransigent incumbents on both sides to overcome a long, bloody West Asia stalemate since Israeli opposition doves and Palestinian moderates launched the "Geneva Accord" to international acclaim on Monday.

Palestinian authorities have welcomed the initiative but not endorsed the fine print, while Israel's right-wing government has denounced it as treacherous and mounted assault on West Bank areas after a relative two-month lull.

An Israeli army spokesman said 27 wanted Palestinians were arrested in overnight swoops into Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's West Bank base city of Ramallah and the northern town of Jenin targeting primarily the militant faction Islamic Jihad.

Three Hamas militants and a



REUTERS

Israeli policemen scuffle with Palestinian protesters at the construction site of a new Jewish settlement in Jerusalem on Wednesday.

Palestinian boy of six were killed by Israeli armored forces in an incursion into Ramallah on Monday, hours before the alternative peace deal took the international stage in Geneva.

Palestinian officials said the raid seemed timed to upset the Geneva launch and was counterproductive as it would provoke militants to hit back, spinning anew a cycle of violence prevailing for much of a three-year-old Palestinian uprising for statehood.

Sharon's government said the incursion pre-empted a fresh

wave of suicide attacks and, to reaffirm its case that the symbolic peace pact was dangerous, again accused Palestinian leaders of indulging "terrorism."

Islamic Jihad arrests

Israel on Wednesday arrested 17 members of the hardline Islamic Jihad movement in Jenin on the eve of talks in Cairo designed to persuade armed Palestinian groups to declare a new truce, AFP adds.

Reuters

SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS ON US CONVOYS IN SAMARRA ■ DEADLIEST BATTLE SINCE OFFICIAL END OF WAR

54 Iraqis killed in American strike back

Associated Press.

SAMARRA (Iraq), Dec. 1. — The US military said 54 Iraqis were killed in the northern city of Samarra as American forces used tanks and cannons to fight their way out of simultaneous ambushes. Residents, however, today said the casualty figure was much lower and that the dead were mostly civilians.

By the American account, yesterday's fighting was the bloodiest combat reported since the fall of Mr Saddam Hussein's regime.

The US military said attackers, many wearing uniforms of Mr Hussein's *fidayeen* paramilitary force, struck at two US convoys at opposite sides of Samarra, 100 km north of Baghdad.

Though there was no US military presence in the city centre, the scars



BATTLE SCARRED: Samarra residents protest against the US firing that killed at least 54 civilians. — AFP

of the battle were evident today. About a dozen cars lay destroyed in the streets, many apparently crushed by tanks, and bullet holes pocked many buildings. A rowdy crowd gathered at one spot, chanting pro-Saddam slogans.

One man fired warning shots in the air when journalists arrived at the scene. Shops opened, and residents moved around town.

The US military initially said 46 Iraqi fighters died and five American soldiers were injured. But a statement today raised the Iraqi dead to 54. Residents of Samarra disputed those figures, saying at most eight or nine people died. Three bodies lay in the hospital morgue. There was no way to reconcile the accounts.

The scale of the attack and the apparent coordination of the two operations showed that rebel units retain the ability to conduct synchronised operations despite a massive US offensive this month aimed at crushing the insurgency.

At a news conference at a US military base in Samarra, Col Frederick Rudesheim said the American convoys were on a mission to deliver currency to banks when the coordinated ambushes took place. "That was a given location that they knew we would go to," he said. "This was done in a concerted fashion."

At the US base, half a dozen suspects were seen with bags over their heads and their hands bound by plastic cuffs.

Many residents said Mr Hussein's loyalists attacked the Americans, but that when US forces began firing at random, many civilians got their guns and joined the fight. Many said residents were bitter about recent US raids in the night.



BACK TO BASE: Mr George W Bush chases his dogs Barney and Spot before departing for Washington from Waco airport, Texas, on Sunday. The US President returned to Washington after a surprise visit to troops in Baghdad. — PTI

'No change' in Korean troops plan

Korea Herald/ ANN

SEOUL, Dec. 1. — South Korea will push ahead with its plan to send troops to Iraq despite a deadly attack yesterday in the country that claimed the lives of two South Korean civilians, a top government official said today.

Also today, President Mr Roh Moo-hyun strongly condemned the attack against South Korean civilians as inhumane terrorism against civilians. "This incident is not terror against the military or a public organisation but terror against

civilians," Mr Roh told his aides. "This kind of inhumane activity is intolerable." He added that a further alert would be issued to overseas diplomatic missions advising them to guard against possible attacks.

After a meeting of the National Security Council, the nation's top security committee, foreign minister Mr Yoon Young-kwan told reporters: "We will carry out our troop decision as planned despite the attack"

Other officials also confirmed that the shooting deaths of two South Korean citizens, and the wounding of two oth-

ers, would not hamper Seoul's troop dispatch decision.

"It is inappropriate to link this incident to the dispatch of additional troops," national security adviser Mr Ra Jong-yil told reporters before attending a meeting of senior presidential officials.

Foreign policy adviser to the President, Mr Ban Ki-moon, also said: "This doesn't yet look like a situation that could affect the troop decision. What's important now is to find accurate information on the incident and prepare measures for the safety of our people there."

Envoy deaths leave Japan jittery

TOKYO, Dec. 1. — Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi's support is plunging as Japan grows increasingly afraid his plan to send non-combat troops to Iraq will draw terrorist attacks, according to a poll by a newspaper here today.

The survey by the *Mainichi* came as Japan mourned the death of two diplomats ambushed just outside of the northern Iraq city of Tikrit.

The poll said 79 per cent of respondents maintained that sending troops to help rebuild Iraq would make Japan a greater target of terrorism. It also said that support for Mr Koizumi, who

has vowed to press on with the troop plans despite the attack, had fallen 14 percentage points from last month.

The poll was conducted as news broke early yesterday of the murder of the two envoys, one of whom left behind a pregnant wife. Roughly a quarter of the responses came after the news had broken, but the *Mainichi* provided no breakdown of how the later responses differed from the earlier ones.

Senior officials held an emergency meeting today to coordinate information on the ambush and the government was still investigating who carried it out and why. — AP



IN MEMORIAL: A man prays before pictures of two Japanese diplomats killed in Iraq on an altar at the foreign ministry in Tokyo on Monday. — AFP

US allies pay a heavy price in Iraq

Japan diplomats, Koreans killed

Reuters and AP
Baghdad, November 30

SERIAL AMBUSHES killed two Japanese diplomats, two South Korean electrical workers and a Colombian businessman in Iraq on Saturday night and Sunday. Coming within hours of the massacre of seven Spanish intelligence agents, the bloodbath sparked fresh debate in countries allied to the US on the risks of joining the Iraq mission.

The two diplomats are the first Japanese killed in Iraq since the US-led invasion, and could have a severe impact on Tokyo's plans to send non-combat troops to help the reconstruction of that country. Coupled with the killing of the Korean contractors, it is also likely to increase opposition to Seoul's plans to commit more soldiers.

In Tokyo, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said Japan remained undaunted about sending troops to Iraq. "This incident is unforgivable," Kawaguchi said. "There is no wavering in our country's basic stance to actively carry out reconstruction aid for Iraq without giving in to terrorism." But political analysts said Koizumi risks a serious blow to his popularity if troops are sent to Iraq and deaths occur, an especially unwelcome prospect with an

election for Parliament's Upper House set for next July.

In Spain, where public opinion was generally against the war, the killing of the seven agents reignited longstanding doubts about the role of around 1,300 Spanish troops helping to control south-central Iraq. "Spain pays a high price," the left-leaning newspaper *El Pais* said in an editorial. The *El Mundo* daily described the killings as: "Deaths which require explanations and reflection."

Witnesses said a crowd descended on the crippled vehicles after the ambush, kicking the Spaniards' corpses and shouting slogans in support of Saddam Hussein. On Sunday morning, youths were jumping on the wreckage and pulling apart one burned-out car. "We're happy about what happened," said 20-year-old Abdul Qader, a student. "We don't like the Americans or the Spanish." The Koreans were ambushed near Tikrit, and the Colombian contractor near Balad, north of Baghdad. Another four men were injured in the attacks.

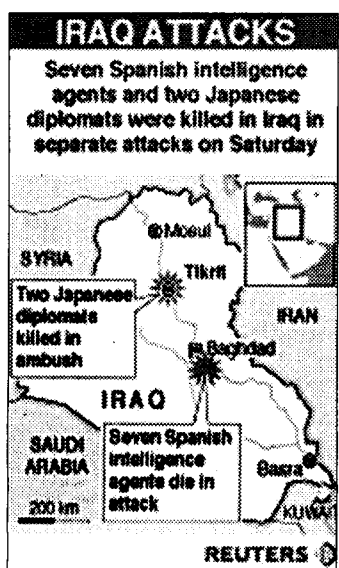
A US army spokesman said the Japanese diplomats were attacked along with their driver when they stopped at a roadside stall on their way to a seminar on reconstruction in Tikrit. "The three had stopped to buy food and drink when attackers fired small calibre weapons at them," he said.

Katsuhiko Oku, 45, had been sent to Iraq from his normal posting in London. Masamori Inoue, 30, was assigned to the embassy in Baghdad. Japan has passed a special law to enable it to send troops to Iraq, but in line with the nation's pacifist constitution, they can only be sent to "non-combat zones" and must take part only in reconstruction and humanitarian work.

Japan's plans to send troops were put on hold earlier this month after a suicide attack on an Italian base in the southern Iraqi town of Nassiriya killed 19 Italians and nine Iraqis in the deadliest attack so far on multinational forces in Iraq. After the bombing, Japan sent a fact-finding team to southern Iraq, where the Japanese would be based.



Iraqis celebrate near the remains of a car in which seven Spanish Intelligence agents were charred to death in an ambush on Saturday.



How British charity's voice was silenced

Kevin Maguire
London, November 30

ONE OF Britain's most high-profile charities was ordered to end criticism of military action in Iraq by its powerful US wing to avoid jeopardising financial support from Washington and corporate donors, a *Guardian* investigation has discovered.

Internal emails reveal how 'Save the Children UK' came under enormous pressure after it accused coalition forces of breaching the Geneva Convention by blocking humanitarian aid.

Senior figures at Save the Children US, based in Westport, Con-

necticut, demanded the withdrawal of the criticism and an effective veto on any future statements blaming the invasion for the plight of Iraqi civilians suffering malnourishment and shortage of medical supplies. Uncovered documents expose tensions within an alliance that describes itself as "the world's largest independent global organisation for children", but is heavily reliant on governments and big business for cash.

Save the Children UK, which had an income of £122m in 2002-03, boasts the Queen as patron and Princess Anne as president, plus a phalanx of the great and the good lending their titles and time.

The row over Iraq erupted in April when the London statement said coalition forces had gone back on an earlier agreement to allow a relief plane, packed with emergency food and medical supplies for 40,000 people, to land in northern Iraq. Rob MacGillivray, the UK wing's emergency programme manager, released a statement that stated "lack of cooperation from coalition forces is a breach of the Geneva Convention and its protocols, but more importantly the time now being wasted is costing children their lives".

Within hours of the statement appearing, the US wing was de-

manding its withdrawal. Emails sent to staff in Britain by Dianne Sherman, associate vice-president for public affairs and communications in Connecticut, expressed dismay and censured the UK operation.

Sherman said the Americans were "really astonished at the release, which went out without our prior knowledge". Her email went on: "This is undermining all the great work we've done, much of it in collaboration with you. We'll have to see the consequences of how this plays out — including affecting our future funding from the government."

The Guardian

A SPECTRAL sight: the speeding armoured limousines dashing down the Mall, empty of people, with President Bush on his way to deliver a talk on democracy and freedom to a specially invited audience of VIPs. The great ceremonial way, designed for cheering throngs, populated only by police in fluorescent jackets, with the star-shaped leaves of London plane trees impressed on the traffic-free roadway; a democracy of ghosts.

It was like a funeral cortege; a fitting symbol, with its macabre battlefield accompaniments – the mobile operating theatre and blood bank, the weaponry; evidence, if it were needed, that the world is scarcely the “safer place” which Bush and Blair declare it to have become thanks to their intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq. The bombs in Istanbul which disrupted the scenario of the visit reinforced the growing sense of insecurity in the world. It is one of the many paradoxes of the war leaders that they take precisely the opposite lesson; and Bush stated that in Iraq we have made progress, and Blair said that our will to defend “what we believe in” is stronger than theirs. This is a doubtful proposition in the presence of suicide bombers, whose weapon is their own lives: how you defeat the already dead is a question he did not care to answer. As terrorism becomes more widespread, the rhetoric becomes more abstract and etherealised: Blair managed to sound even more evangelical than Bush, in his denunciation of evil, fanaticism and inhumanity.

London’s absent crowds in the vicinity of George Bush aptly symbolised the emptiness of this State visit. The pomp and ceremonial welcome by the Queen and the assembled dignitaries and notables, the ornamental nonentities who can be trusted not to insult the most powerful individual on earth, projected into the empty eye of TV cameras, defeat its purpose. The newspapers dwelt on the menu – halibut with herbs, and vanilla praline served on “Manchester Sevres” china dating from 1760, while the seating

arrangements for the supernumeraries of pageantry were carefully analysed. The music programme included the theme from *Titanic*, a selection from *South Pacific* and *O Sole Mio*.

Bush’s speech at Whitehall Palace echoed Tony Blair’s address to Congress last summer, and although in somewhat less decorative style than Blair’s prose, it nevertheless mirrored the same themes and preoccupations. He started by praising the freedom of speech which was to permit protesters to walk through the streets of their own city, adding that this right had now also been won for the people of Baghdad. Not that so much as a whisper of the free speech for which Mr Bush stands for reached his delicate ears. The five-inch thick car doors, the non-exposure to daylight – as though he were an invalid fearful of the “sweet airs that give delight but hurt not” – ensured that everything focussed only upon the intense theatricality of his “performance”.

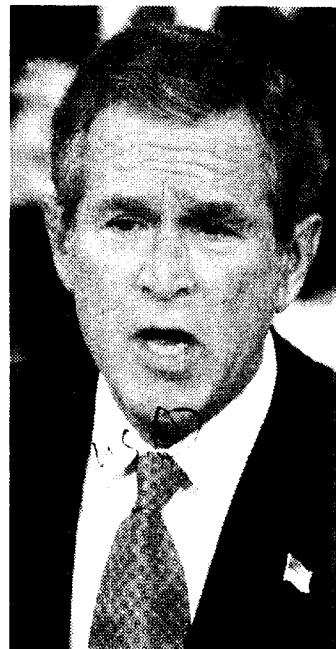
It was full of familiar occult imperialist declarations. “Great responsibilities fall once again to the great democracies.” A sense of destiny, of a reluctant duty which we will nonetheless not shirk. The three pillars on which our policy rests: respect for international organisations as long as they live up to the policy of multilateralism (which means comply with our wishes); restraint of aggression and evil by force; support to those who help fight terror and “the global expansion of democracy”.

The significant word here is “expansion”, for it suggests the incontinence of power, its desire to “extend”, “spread”, “diffuse”, “grow” and bring its truths to the world. The USA “will not retreat” from the democratisation of Iraq or other countries “because of a band of thugs and assassins.”

This is the key to the insight of George Bush, the Manichean and simple division of the world into good and evil. (Manicheism, so-called after the name of its originator, Mani, developed in Persian-controlled Iraq in the third century. It believed that Evil was not a corruption of Good, but

A State visit

519 23/11
The work of the allies ‘to set post-war Germany on the path to democracy’ which he equates with the work the Americans and British are trying to do in Iraq, shows a pathological incapacity to distinguish between different contexts, histories and customs



an alternative form of matter; and both battled for supremacy over the earth. Mr Bush’s debt to Iraq is incalculable: what was regarded by Christians as heresy for centuries appears to have become the animating force of the evangelical Christians of this age.) “It is the nature of terrorists and the cruelty of a few to bring grief and loss to the many.”

George W Bush is not the know-nothing cowboy as he is sometimes – snobbishly – portrayed. He has all the astuteness which has made the solidarity of the rich so much more effective in the world than that of those who have nothing.

The United States and Great Britain, he went on, share a mission beyond the balance of power and the simple pursuit of interest. “We seek the advance of freedom and the peace that freedom brings.” Religion and colonialism remain entwined, their roots inextricable, the urge to spread their version of universalism far beyond their borders. “Together our nations are striving and sacrificing for this high goal in a distant land at this very hour.”

Wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set. The measured use of force “is all that protects us from a chaotic world ruled by force.” Our great democracies should oppose tyranny wherever it is found.

The insistence on democracy is significant for two reasons. It refers to the “political” and not the economic self-determination of peoples.

Democracy is invoked to such uplifting effect only now that it has been established that there is no democracy in the global economy; and this, by another strange irony, is the very reason why increasing numbers of people in the richest countries on earth are defaulting in their democratic duty – only 52 per cent of people in Japan voted in the re-election of Koizumi, 59 per cent in the election that returned Tony Blair in his second triumph, and barely 50 per cent in the USA, where the Supreme Court, rather than the voters decided who was President. It has already been established in Iraq that its assets are on sale in the global market. No democratic sovereignty over resources – this is

the version of democracy from which no demur or dissent is now acceptable. “Our alliance of conviction and might” has brought “so much good” to the world.

It is *this* democracy which will succeed in Iraq, “because our will is firm and our word is good. The Iraqi people will not surrender their freedom”; except, of course, their economic freedom, which, it was announced in Doha, at a meeting of the G-7 in September, was up for auction, at – literally – fire-sale prices.

Significantly, invoking a precedent for operations in Iraq, Bush referred to the reconstruction of Germany and Japan after 1945. He spoke of the substantial progress in Iraq, saying that “much of it has succeeded faster than previous efforts in Germany and Japan.” This demonstrates a breathtaking manipulation of history: the expansionism and militarism of Japan and Germany were on a scale such as Saddam could not even think of. Much was made of the similarities between 9/11 and Pearl Harbor; that Saddam was not involved in the attack on the USA is a mere detail in the grand plan for the elimination of terror. In any case, the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki – the first time weapons of mass destruction were dropped on civilian populations, and the fire-bombing of Dresden and other German cities, the millions of Russian and allied dead – left Europe in ruins. The use of this example by Bush shows his inflated desire for self-aggrandisement in making the comparison, and suggests that the work of the allies “to set post-war Germany on the path to democracy” which he equates with the work the Americans and British are trying to do in Iraq, shows a pathological incapacity to distinguish between different contexts, histories and customs. Nowhere is the imperial temper more clearly on display: we will give (or impose) upon everyone the benefits of those truths uniquely vouchsafed us.

Although banished from the presidential sight, the people had not gone away. The demonstration against the war was

a different kind of pageant from the official celebrations; but it brought together a wide range of the British population – schoolchildren truanting in order to express their revulsion at the world they are going to inherit, middle-aged and elderly CNDers, veterans of a hundred marches with their woolly caps and greying beards and rainbow scarves, the disciplined sobriety of Muslim youth, families with young children, anarchists, socialists and greens, people with disabilities protected in their wheelchairs by a cordon of Stop the War Coalition stewards. Although more sombre, and more heavily policed than the anti-war rally last February, the touches of humour are as characteristic of Britain as the hollow pomp and substanceless circumstance of its official representatives – Fighting for Peace is like F***ing for Virginity; Everybody Needs an Occupation; Operation Iraqi Liberation (OIL), Empty Warhead, with a picture of a decapitated Bush. To the tune of yellow Submarine, the marchers sang “We all live in a terrorist regime.” The felling of a papier-mache statue of George Bush mocked the toppling of the tyrant of Baghdad, that image which was endlessly re-played on TV during the taking of Iraq.

Mr Bush was, by this time, safely back in the Palace, among the gilt and crystal, the shining napery and constipated formality of royal protocol. Whatever may be taking place outside, in the streets unvisited by the President, the “success” of the visit is assured. He has appeared in the citadel of one of one of his outlying provinces, to mark out to the world that there are at least some places in which his disingenuously simplified view of the world is accepted, at least by his vice-regal subordinates, if not by the people.

(The author lives in Britain. He has written plays for the stage, TV and radio, made TV documentaries, published more than 30 books and contributed to leading journals around the world.)

email:yrn63@dial.pipex.com

Jindal loses but makes history

Indo-Asian News Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 16. — The Republican, Mr Bobby Jindal, whose roots lie in Punjab, lost the Louisiana governor's race but made history by giving a tough fight for the top post in a US state known for white supremacists.

The 32-year-old Rhodes scholar finished a close second to the Democratic contender, Ms Kathleen Blanco, a 60-year-old veteran, who became the first woman governor of Louisiana.

Perhaps Ms Blanco's vast experience helped. She was part of the old guard and in a better position to collect the disparate but Democrat voting citizenry. She polled just two per cent more votes than Mr Jindal, who said



Mr Bobby Jindal concedes defeat in New Orleans. — AFP

after the results: "I would like to offer my congratulations to Governor-elect Kathleen Blanco on her victory. The response from people across Louisiana has been amazing over the past few months and I look forward to continue working to make Louisiana a better place to live."

For Mr Jindal, the former assistant secretary for health in the Bush administration, it was a tough

and often acrimonious battle against Ms Blanco. And for Louisianans, it was a confusing choice as both candidates differed little on their conservative platform.

Many had thought Mr Jindal, whose parents came to the USA from India in 1971, would win because recent polls had shown him in the lead, with only 12 per cent of the voting public undecided before the polling.

The last poll showed Mr Jindal with 46 per cent and Ms Blanco with 42 per cent, with a sampling error at plus or minus four per cent. Ms Blanco, a politician for 20 years with a relatively uncontroversial career, bagged 51.7 per cent of the votes to Mr Jindal's nearly 48.3 per cent.

Another report on page 2

Jindal loses in close Louisiana governor race

By Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington: Bobby Jindal's attempt to become the first Indian-origin governor of an American state has been nixed by the voters of Louisiana. They preferred his Democratic rival Kathleen Blanco by a 52 per cent to 48 per cent margin in a close race on Saturday.

Although several opinion polls ahead of the election showed Mr Jindal marginally in front, a decisive segment of the 16 per cent undecided voters appear to have gone with Ms Blanco. The margin of victory was only around 54,000 votes with Ms Blanco getting 730,747 votes (52 per cent) against Mr Jindal's 676,180 votes.

Local commentators said the race turned in the last 48 hours, as Ms Blanco launched a blistering attack on Mr Jindal's spotty record as secretary of health in the state in the mid 1990s. There were also suggestions that in

some ways racism won over sexism, the voters preferring a white Democrat female to a brown Republican male.

Some of the analyses also implied that Mr Jindal was probably too sharp and savvy for voters who preferred the more down-to-earth Ms Blanco. Ms Blanco, 60, who is Cajun American (descendant of French settlers) had previously served as the state's Lieutenant Governor with modest success compared to Mr Jindal's meteoric rise as a fast-talking policy wonk.

Nevertheless, despite rejecting the Indian-American, the state still kept its date with history since it and indeed the Deep South — has never elected a female governor.

The result also came as a face-saver for the Democratic Party, which had lost several gubernatorial elections in recent weeks, including California, Kentucky and Mississippi. The party has also lost Georgia, South Carolina and

Reuters



Louisiana Republican gubernatorial candidate Bobby Jindal (centre) concedes defeat at his election headquarters in New Orleans on Saturday.

Alabama in a southern rout that began in November 2002.

Mr Jindal conceded defeat even before the final tally came in when it became apparent that Ms Blanco had established an insurmountable lead. Appearing before his cheering supporters with daughter Selia Elizabeth in his arms, he said, "I am disappointed, but not discouraged, by the result. I am proud to be a Louisianian, proud to be an American, proud to represent thousands of people in this state."

Mr Jindal, who stepped down as assistant secretary of health and human services in the Bush administration to run for this office, now has the task of reviving his political career. That should not be a problem.

Credit Suisse chairman's nomination marks change in priorities

Bush opts for top economist as envoy

PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Nov. 14: US President George W. Bush has appointed economist David Campbell Mulford new ambassador to India, indicating that more emphasis will now be placed on improving bilateral economic and trade ties.

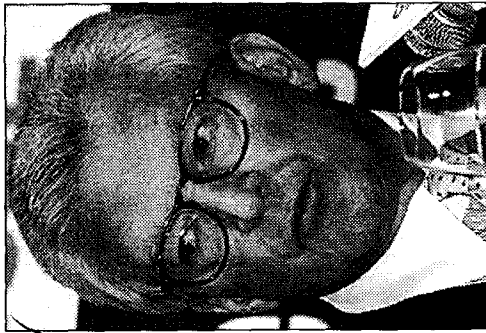
"The President intends to nominate David Campbell Mulford of Illinois to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to India," said a statement issued by the White House this morning.

Even though Bush has nominated Mulford - international chairman of Credit Suisse First Boston - the US Senate is yet to approve his candidature. Only then can the economist take up his new assignment.

The US ambassador's post has been lying vacant since July when Robert Blackwill left to join the National Security Council as strategic advisor to the national security adviser Condoleezza Rice.

It is not clear how soon Mulford will be able to take up his new job. Sources said unless his name is approved before Senate goes into recess on November 21, Mulford might not be able to come to Delhi before January. The appointment would still need to be approved by the Senate.

Mulford, a member of the



Mulford

CSFB executive board in London, earlier served as chairman and chief executive officer (Euro) for the same corporation. He has also served as treasury undersecretary for international affairs and was assistant secretary for international affairs at the same department.

The economist holds a Ph.D. from Oxford University, earned his master's degree from Boston University and graduated from Lawrence University, Wisconsin in 1959.

India has not yet officially reacted to news of Mulford's nomination. South Block officials said by nominating an economist for the post Washington wished to signal that it wanted to give a push to economic cooperation with India.

But though his credentials as an economist are impeccable, it is unclear how important a political role Mulford would be able to play.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India had banned the local brokerage operation of CSFB for two years in 2001 for alleged manipulation of the stock market. The ban expired in April.

Brown Bobby bridges south's colour divide

LEE HOCKSTADER

Lafayette, Louisiana, Nov. 14: The Republican candidate for governor in Louisiana is Bobby Jindal, a wonderkind son of Indian immigrants, dark-complexioned Rhodes scholar and health policy expert. The Democrat is Lt Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, a soothing grandmother easily flustered in debates.

What's a Bubba (a conservative white male commoner of the south) to do?

"Listen, man, we're looking at a guy who's not even from this country! And then we're looking at a woman!" said Jubal Vallo, 38, a handyman in Lafayette sporting tattoo-spangled forearms, a Chevy pickup truck and a fist-size clump of keys at his belt.

He hooted and shook his head at the outlandishness of the selection. "I go to church, I believe in the good Lord and this 'n' that. I never ever dreamed in my whole life - I been right here in Louisiana - that I'd be in this kind of dilemma."

Vallo's dilemma is to pick from a pair of untainted, nearly equally conservative candidates in Saturday's election.

A victory for the 32-year-old Jindal - most polls show him leading - will crown one of the most improbable political sagas in memory and, say analysts, thrust Jindal instantly into the Republican orbit of rising stars.

With shrewd use of media and his own youth, vigour and command of policy, analysts say, Jindal has fashioned an unlikely coalition that includes moderate



Jindal

Republican suburbanites, some urban blacks and Democrats, and socially conservative rural whites - Bubbas.

He has been aided by a general sense of despair and longing for change in a state which ranks among the bottom 10 states in many indicators of prosperity.

But analysts say Jindal has also capitalised on a double-barrelled media strategy in which he courts conservatives in radio ads that deride liberals, Hollywood and gun control while appealing to moderates in television commercials that portray him as a pragmatic "problem solver". He also emphasises his faith; he is a devout Catholic.

Blanco, 60, is a political veteran who has managed to ruffle few feathers in her long career in public office. She has thumped Jindal as a young, inexperienced and callous bureaucrat who was heedless to the human suffering he caused as a budget-cutting chief of the state's health system in the mid-1990s.

Though a Democrat, she is hardly less conservative than Jindal. Blanco opposes new taxes, abortion and an increase in the minimum wage and embraces Catholicism and gun owners' rights.

The fact that there is little to divide them ideologically has apparently helped Jindal with black voters, who make up about 30 per cent of the electorate, analysts say. Recent polls show Jindal with the support of more than 10 per cent of black voters - at least twice the usual total for a Republican candidate here.

"If you close eyes and you didn't see the 'D' or the 'R', how would you determine which one belongs to which party?" said Donald Cravins, a black state senator from Lafayette who cannot remember ever supporting a Republican for statewide office.

At the same time, Jindal has managed to appeal to deeply conservative Louisianans like Vallo, who twice voted for a white supremacist in the '90s. "It's hard to believe I'm even going to look at this man - at first he almost looked to me like an Iraqi," Vallo said, speaking of Jindal. "But I tell you, he talks so smart, and he's hitting the hammer right on the nailhead."

In fact, Jindal is not from another country; he was born in Baton Rouge shortly after his parents, originally from Punjab, immigrated to the US. Named Piyush by his parents, Jindal, when barely a toddler, changed his name to Bobby.

LOS ANGELES TIMES- WASHINGTON POST

Senate votes for curbs on Syria

Washington: The Senate agreed to broad new economic and trade sanctions on Syria, citing Syria's long history of sheltering terrorists and its more recent failure to muzzle forces hostile to US actions in Iraq.

The Senate measure, passed 89-4 on Tuesday, mirrors legislation the House of Representatives passed last month by 398-4. The only difference is an amendment that gives the president greater authority to waive sanctions for national security reasons. The White House, which in principle opposes moves by Congress to restrict diplomatic relations in dealing with problematic relations, has gone from opposing the Syria bill to accepting it as inevitable.

The Senate bill now goes back to the House for approval before proceeding to the president for his signature making it law. "We cannot have relationships with Syria and close our eyes to the truth, and the truth is that they are in fact supporting terrorism in ways that are very, very clear," said Senator Bar-

Bara Boxer of California.

A group of US lawmakers travelling in West Asia met on Tuesday with Syrian President Bashar Assad and told him the sanctions were an expression of the frustration of Americans with countries that don't cooperate in the war on terrorism, said the delegation leader, Congressman Jim Kolbe. Mr Assad told the lawmakers that Syria was doing more to secure its border with Iraq and "does promise to continue to work with US on that," Mr Kolbe said.

The US has long complained that Syria gives sanctuary to leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two Palestinian groups designated as terrorist organisations by the US State Department. The bill states that Syria must end its support for terrorism, terminate its 13-year military occupation of Lebanon, stop efforts to obtain or produce weapons of mass destruction and long-range ballistic missiles and stop terrorists and weapons from entering Iraq. AP

50 Jessica Lynch disputes army account of rescue

NEW YORK, NOV. 8. In her first public statements since her rescue in Iraq, Jessica Lynch criticised the military for exaggerating accounts of her rescue and recasting her ordeal as a patriotic fable.

Asked by the ABC News anchor, Diane Sawyer, if the military's portrayal of the rescue bothered her, Ms. Lynch said: "Yeah, it does. It does that they used me as a way to symbolise all this stuff. Yeah, it's wrong," according to a partial transcript of the interview to be broadcast on Tuesday.

After months of retreating from the news media, Ms. Lynch will be a ubiquitous presence next week. In addition to her appearance on ABC's "Primetime," she will be on the cover of *Time* magazine, and NBC will broadcast a movie based on an Iraqi's account of her ordeal.

On Tuesday, the book publisher Knopf will release an account of her experience, "I Am a Soldier, Too," written with her cooperation by a former reporter for *The New York Times*, Rick Bragg.

The book has already added another lurid indignity to the public accounts of her capture. The book reports that Ms. Lynch's military doctors found injuries consistent with sexual assault but unlikely to have resulted from the Humvee crash that caused for her other wounds, suggesting that she was raped after her capture.

Ms. Lynch, who was unconscious immediately after the Humvee crash and her capture, does not remember any such assault, according to people who have talked to her and read the book.

Those details of the book's contents were first reported on Thursday in *The New York Daily*



The U.S. Army PFC, Jessica Lynch, being carried by special forces after being removed from the Saddam Hospital in Nasirya, Iraq, in this April 1, 2003, file photo.

News. Nancy Gibbs, a writer for *Time* magazine, said that she had independently confirmed the doctors' description of Ms. Lynch's injuries.

In the book and in the interviews, Ms. Lynch says others' accounts of her heroism often left her feeling hurt and ashamed because of what she says was overstatement.

First, a U.S. military spokesman in Iraq told journalists that soldiers exchanged fire during her rescue, without adding that Iraqi soldiers had already abandoned the hospital, and the military released a green-tinted

night-vision film of the mission, adding to the drama.

Then news organisations began repeating reports that she heroically resisted capture, emptying her gun as she fired at her attackers. Finally, an Iraqi lawyer who provided information leading to her rescue, told journalists that he had seen her mistreated and slapped by her captors, and he sold the rights to a book about her experience based on his account.

But subsequent disclosures have cast doubt on all those details. Ms. Lynch was injured by the crash of her vehicle, her

weapon jammed before she could fire, the Iraqi doctors treated her kindly, and the hospital was already in friendly hands when her rescuers arrived.

Asked how she felt about the reports of her heroism, Ms. Lynch told Sawyer: "It hurt in a way that people would make up stories that they had no truth about. Only I would have been able to know that, because the other four people on my vehicle aren't here to tell the story. So I would have been the only one able to say, Yeah, I went down shooting. But I didn't."

Asked about claims that the military exaggerated the danger of the rescue mission, Ms. Lynch said, "Yeah, I don't think it happened quite like that," although she added that in that context anybody would have approached the hospital well-armed. She continued: "I don't know why they filmed it, or why they say the things they, you know, all I know was that I was in that hospital hurting. I needed help."

Lt. Col. Rivers Johnson, a spokesman for the Department of Defence, declined to comment on Ms. Lynch's views. But he said, "Essentially, the mission to rescue Jessica Lynch demonstrated America's resolve to account for all of its missing service members."

He added that the rescue had been conducted under the appropriate procedures for a fluid situation like the war in Iraq. "You always plan for the worst."

Ms. Lynch also disputed statements by Mohammed Odeh al-Rehaief, the Iraqi lawyer, that he saw her captors slap her.

"From the time I woke up in that hospital, no one beat me, no one slapped me, no one, nothing," Ms. Lynch told Sawyer, adding, "I'm so thankful for those people, because that's why I'm alive today."

Jeff Coplon, who helped Mr. Rehaief write his book, "Because Each Life Is Precious," said it was possible that both he and Ms. Lynch were telling the truth in their divergent accounts.

"One of the questions that could arise in the wake of this kind of trauma is that someone could believe they remember everything and their memory could still be incomplete," Mr. Coplon said. — *New York Times*

Republicans win two Governorships

WSI
89-13

NEW YORK, NOV. 5. With a Presidential campaign only months away, Republicans got a lift by picking up two Governorships in the South, ousting Mississippi's Democratic incumbent and seizing Kentucky's top job for the first time in 32 years.

Washington lobbyist, Haley Barbour, unseated Mississippi's one-term Democratic Governor, Ronnie Musgrove, while in Kentucky, three-term Republican Representative, Ernie Fletcher, defeated Democratic Attorney General, Ben Chandler.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush, loomed large in both campaigns, and he's sure to claim a boost from the victories. He stumped for both Republican candidates, while Democrats in Kentucky tied their opponent to Bush's economic policies and Mr. Musgrove dismissed his challenger as a "Washington insider."

Mr. Barbour, a former head of the Republican National Committee who said his connections would help Mississippi, told a crowd of supporters: "Get ready to accentuate the positive."

With 92 per cent of precincts reporting, Mr. Barbour got 53 per cent, or 441,188 votes, to Musgrove's 45 per cent, or 378,260 votes. Mr. Fletcher polled 55 per cent, or 593,508 votes, to

Mr. Chandler's 45 per cent, or 484,938 votes.

With Kentucky Governor, Paul Patton, tarnished by scandal, Mr. Fletcher campaigned on a promise to "clean up the mess in Frankfort."

"We will take this mandate tonight and move this state forward," Mr. Fletcher told a gleeful victory party crowd in Lexington.

Democrats saw a few bright spots. Philadelphia's Democratic Mayor, John Street, handily defeated Republican businessman, Sam Katz, 59 per cent to 41 per cent. And Democrats took control of the New Jersey Legislature, breaking a 20-20 tie in the State Senate and defeating the Republicans' top Senate leader.

But in the Kentucky and Mississippi races, campaigns tried out strategies that could play out in next year's presidential race. And Republicans were already crowing.

"The Democrat strategy was negative attacks and tying Ernie Fletcher to President Bush and making this race a referendum on the president's economic policies," Republican National Chairman, Ed Gillespie, said. "The Democrats had their referendum and got their answer."

In Kentucky, party activists argued that a vote for Mr. Chandler would tell the White House its economic policy is a failure. — AP

Soldier killed, Senate approves \$87.5 b for Iraq rebuilding

Baghdad: One soldier was killed and one wounded in a bomb attack in Baghdad on Tuesday, one day after the US Senate approved President George W. Bush's request for \$87.5 billion to finance Iraq's occupation and reconstruction. Congress sent Mr Bush the bill, which gives him almost everything he sought to fund operations in Iraq and Afghanistan through much of next year, the day after 16 US soldiers were killed in the worst single attack since the US invasion.

Faced with a mounting military and civilian death toll and stiffening guerrilla resistance, Mr Bush vowed on Monday that the US would not run from its "vital" mission in Iraq. "The enemy in Iraq believes America will run. That's why they're willing to kill innocent civilians, relief workers, coalition troops. America will never run," Mr Bush said, despite falling approval ratings in the US over the war. "The mission in Iraq is vital," he added.

Mr Bush's comments



Iranian filmmaker Saeed Aboutaleb flashes a victory sign after arriving at Mehrabad airport in Teheran on Monday. He is one of the two Iranian filmmakers who received a hero's welcome when he returned to Teheran after being held by US-led coalition forces in Iraq since July on suspicion of spying.

were his first since the 16 soldiers were killed when guerrillas shot down their CH-47 Chinook helicopter on Sunday. A US army spokeswoman in Baghdad said the nationality of the soldier who was killed in a roadside bomb attack on Tuesday was not yet known. The overwhelming majority of troops in the US-led occu-

pation force in and around Baghdad are Americans.

Mr Bush said in a statement that the bill's passage "underscores that America and the world are united to prevail in the central front in the war on terror by helping build a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous Iraq." He said the US was "being tested" by forces who "want

America and its coalition partners to run so the terrorists can reclaim control."

Meanwhile, Spain said on Tuesday it was withdrawing much of its diplomatic staff from Iraq for security reasons, becoming the third coalition country in recent weeks to downgrade its presence in Baghdad or leave altogether. The Spanish embassy will remain open but with minimal staffing. A significant number of the 29-member diplomatic staff will be pulled out, a foreign ministry official said.

Occupation troops face daily attacks in Baghdad and areas to the north and west of the city. The lethal resistance has also forced most foreign aid workers to leave. In New York, the United Nations has put its head of security on leave after an independent panel blamed senior officials for sloppy safety precautions before the August suicide bombing of the UN offices in Baghdad that killed 22 staff members and visitors, diplomats said. Reuters

Pak-Americans campaign ^{was} against Jindal ¹¹⁻¹²

By Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington: Carrying domestic and regional vitriol overseas, Pakistani-Americans have jumped into the US gubernatorial fray with gusto by opposing Indian-American Republican candidate Bobby Jindal because he could be a future threat for Pakistani interests in the US.

The Pakistani American Congress (PAC) and an organisation calling itself Patriot Muslim Americans (PMA) have asked its supporters to back Jindal's Democratic opponent Kathleen Blanco, a friend of our cause, in the November 15 election for the governorship of Louisiana.

"Ms Blanco is a close friend of the Pakistani community. She is in favour of immigrants, opposes discrimination in any form or fashion, is against profiling on the basis of religion, looks or ethnicity," PAC president Ashraf Abbasi said in an appeal. He described Mr Jindal, and American of Indian origin who is himself son of first generation immigrants, as a highly prejudiced person.

Mr Abbasi claimed the PAC has raised \$50,000 for Ms Blanco's campaign in Lake Charles "in just one hour", according to an account on a Pakistani website. Pakistani-Americans had put up 15,000 highway signs in the south and set up calling booths in four major cities, he added.

Mr Jindal, although widely described as a Christian conservative, has no record of espousing anti-immigration, anti-Pakistani, or anti-Muslim causes. In fact, Pakistan or India is not even on the radar screen in an election that is being fought mostly on issues pertaining to Louisiana, a state that has only a smattering of people from the sub-continent.

Latest polls from Louisiana show Mr Jindal and Ms Blanco locked in a statistical tie with around 42 per cent votes each.

... exploded near the hotel ...

HD. 14
5/11

IRAQ / GUNMEN KILL MOSUL JUDGE

Interim Govt. seeks more powers

BAGHDAD, NOV. 4. Iraq's interim authority today urged the United States to provide a greater role for Iraqis in the defence of their country, saying they were better able than Americans to combat the resistance.

The call was made in a message of condolence to the President, George W. Bush, from the Governing Council for Iraq after resistance fighters shot down a U.S. Army Chinook helicopter on Sunday, killing 16 Americans and injuring 20 others.

The statement, signed by the current Council President, Jalal Talabani, urged American officials to transfer more power to the U.S.-appointed body, especially in security affairs. "We believe that Iraqis are more capable than others in being in charge of this area since they are aware of the situation in Iraq and the nature of Saddam

Hussein's terrorist regime," the statement said.

"We call upon you, Mr. President, to transfer more power to Iraqis in order for them to be able to run the affairs of their country and fight the forces of evil that are trying to destabilise Iraq and hinder the setting up of a democratic and pluralist regime that we are all trying to establish."

In continuing violence, gunmen shot dead a prominent Iraqi judge outside his home in the northern city of Mosul today, a day after another judge was kidnapped and killed in the south of the country, police said.

A witness said a car with tinted windows pulled up outside the home of Ismail Youssef, a judge in Mosul's appeals court, and men got out and shot him several times in the chest and side, police said.

In other incident, resistance fighters attacked a hotel in Mosul used by American soldiers with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire today but caused no damage or casualties, the U.S. military said. The attack occurred at the Mosul Hotel, according to a military policeman attached to the 101 Airborne Division.

Diplomats withdrawn

Spain said on Tuesday it was temporarily withdrawing most of its diplomatic staff from Iraq for security reasons, becoming the third coalition country in recent weeks to downgrade its presence in Baghdad or leave altogether.

The Spanish embassy will remain open and all but four of the 29-member staff will be pulled out, the Foreign Minister, Ana Palacio, said. — AP

Bobby Jindal: Indian star in US politics

The 32-year-old is the first shot of the diaspora at Governor, lately the surest stepping stone to the US Presidency

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, DC

IT WAS a week when all eyes were on California and Arnold Schwarzenegger's "termination" of Governor Gray Davis. Few seemed to know or care that a gubernatorial race was on in another corner of the US. Here was a young Indian American making waves in Louisiana — a conservative southern state where white supremacists of the Ku Klux Klan brand held sway 10 years ago.

Bobby Jindal has not made it to the national TV screens yet, but that does not detract from his spectac-

ular success. In a predominantly Democratic state, this Republican newcomer confounded pundits by topping the primary. He pipped 16 rivals (nine of them Democrats) to the post by a long way; he captured 33 per cent of the votes while his nearest Democratic rival, Kathleen Blanco, trailed with a mere 18 per cent.

But then, the 32-year-old whizkid has cleared only the first hurdle. The real test is the November 15 runoff, which will be a different ballgame altogether. The imponderables: a Democratic consolidation, now that the primary is out of the way, and the 30 per cent black vote which has traditionally gone the Democrat way.

Indeed, the first runoff poll this week points to a dead heat: 42 per cent for Blanco, 41 per cent for Jindal and the balance undecided.

Jindal was quick with a reaction: "This poll shows what we have known all along, this is going to be a close race. Since this poll was taken, my campaign has been overwhelmed with new supporters, contributors and volunteers."

A camp follower admits it will require a fresh burst of

and what makes him tick? Born and raised in Baton Rouge, Jindal is a promising young man in a tearing hurry. A Rhodes scholar and an Ivy Leaguer, Jindal earned his spurs, as a technocrat when he turned around Louisiana's Medicaid system that was deep in the red. From a \$400 million deficit, the institution chalked up a surplus of \$220 million. That was in 1995, when he was barely 24.

Jindal had gone to Governor Mike Foster with his plan to reform Medicaid. An initially sceptical Foster ended up offering him the post of deputy secretary. But Jindal would not rest content with anything less than the secretary's post. And Foster yielded. Jindal ordered a shake-up. He cracked down on fraud and abuse, cut spending by \$1 billion and recovered some \$30 million in fraudulent payments.

Soon enough, Jindal became Foster's blue-eyed boy. The Medicaid overhaul caught national attention and Jindal was invited to Washington to join a federal commission. He came up with measures to strengthen the \$210 billion health care programme for the old

and the disabled. That done, Jindal returned home to head the University of Louisiana system. His new mission was to raise graduation and retention rates in the state universities.

By 2001, Jindal's fame as a policy wonk had spread in Republican circles and President Bush appointed him assistant secretary for planning and evaluation in the Department of Health and Human Affairs. He thereby became the first Indian American to occupy a sub-cabinet position in the US administration. Foster wanted him to continue in Louisiana, but Jindal did not want to miss the Washington opportunity.

He, however, quit the post in February this year. And, as later events were to show, the surprise resignation was at Foster's bidding. Foster, in the terminal year of his final term, wanted Jindal to run for the post. After a little deliberation, Jindal decided to throw his hat into the ring, knowing full well the disadvantages he was up against, not the least of which was his ethnicity.

But then, Jindal enjoyed other credentials to enthuse the state's Christian majority. Added to his strong conservative positions on issues is the fact that he became a Christian during his high school years while his parents remained staunch Hindus. Years before, he opted for Bobby as his first name instead of Piyush, the name given by his parents. His wife, Supriya, whom he married five years ago, also became a Catholic.

The conversion, however, is a sore point with sections of the Indian American community.

It is reckoned to be the main reason why the community is somewhat divided in its support for him. Some e-mails doing the rounds have raised fears that Jindal, if elected Governor, may resort to anti-Hindu policies in order to pander to his constituents. Jindal has dismissed this contention, saying: "I think there are a lot of rumours



"My campaign has been overwhelmed with new supporters, contributors and volunteers."
— Bobby Jindal

the ingenuity and doggedness that Jindal brought into play from the time he quit his key post in the Bush administration and headed for Louisiana. He was initially written off as an over-ambitious also-ran. But Jindal ignored the sniggers. He devised a conservative agenda with a strong economic content that has appealed to large sections of the Louisiana populace.

Just who is Bobby Jindal

Other Indian-Americans who have joined the Great American Political Bandwagon



KUMAR BARVE: The 44-year-old CFO of an environmental company is a member of the Maryland Assembly. A second generation Indian-American



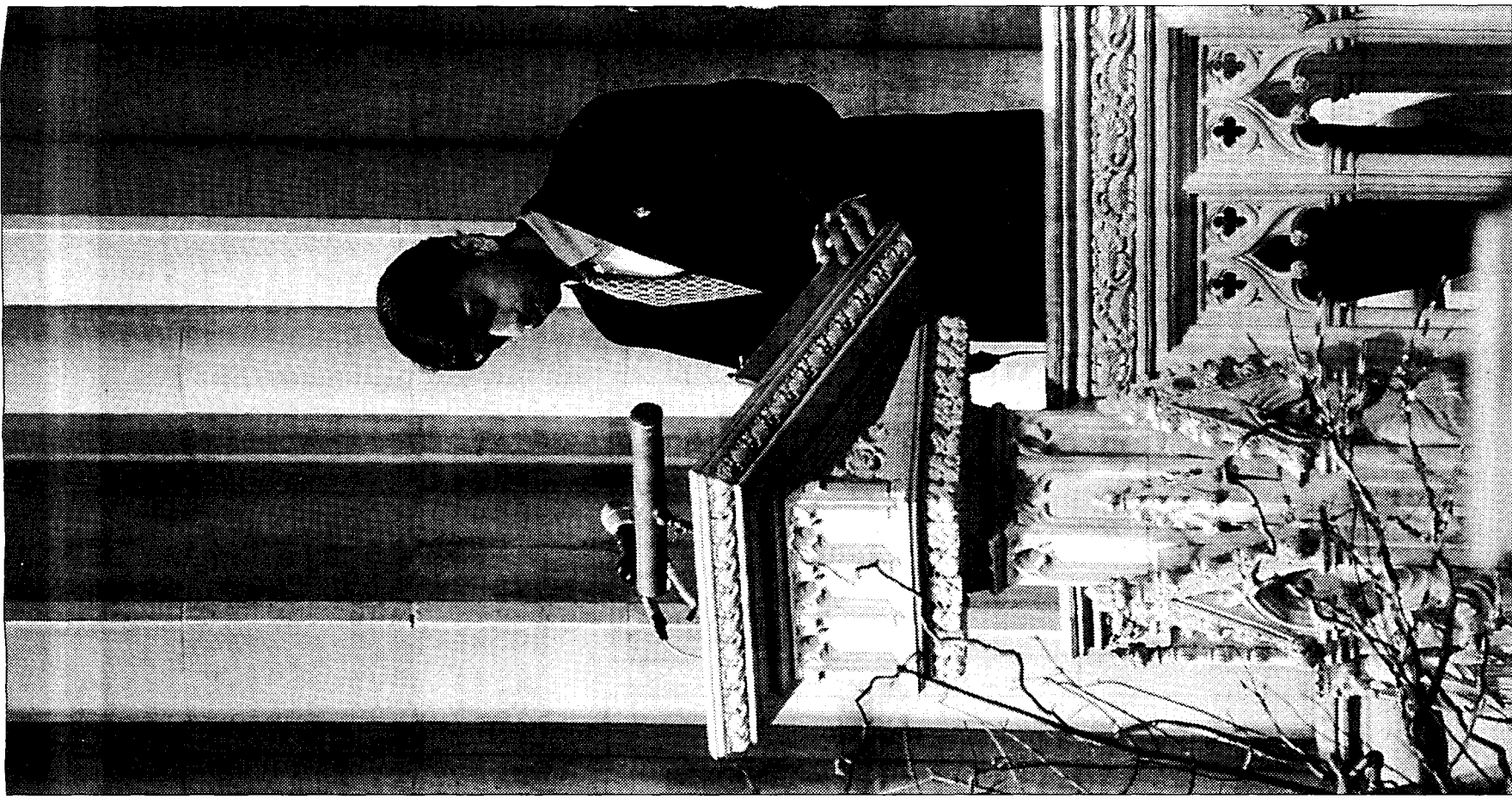
UPENDRA CHIVUKULA: This 53-year-old came to the US for graduate studies in electrical engineering and is now a member of the New Jersey Assembly



SATVEER CHAUDHARY: The 33-year-old Indian-American was born in the USA and is the youngest member of the Minnesota state Senate



SWATI DANEKAR: The 51-year-old is the first Indian woman to be an elected representative in the US. She is a member of the Lower House



out there and they don't match the realities."

Nor does he believe that the community's support for him is lukewarm. Some 20 per cent of the nearly 1.5 million that he has raised has come from Indian Americans. The Indian population in Louisiana itself is far too small to influence Jindal's election either way.

the Ten Commandments.

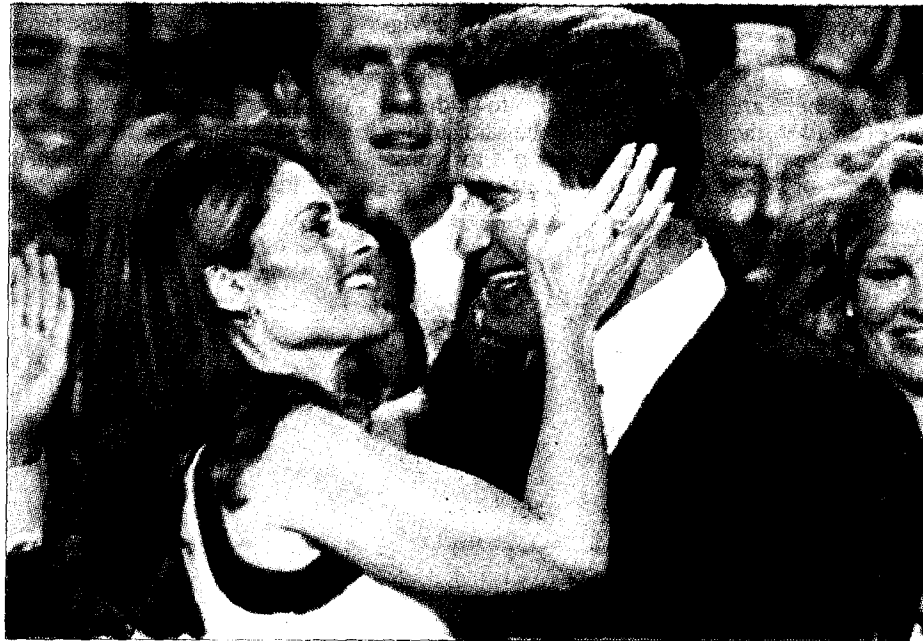
If Jindal does emerge victorious on November 15, he will be the first-ever Indian American to have risen to such heights in the US political system. He would have come a long way from Dalip Singh Saund, who, in the 1950s, made it to the US House of Representatives from California.

GOVERNOR GRAY DAVIS VOTED OUT BY 55 PER CENT, ARNOLD RAKES IN 40 PER CENT SUPPORT

WST
5-3
9/10

Schwarzenegger wins California

'GRADUATION CEREMONY'



Mrs Maria Shriver congratulates her husband, Mr Arnold Schwarzenegger, at his victory party in the gubernatorial recall election in a Los Angeles hotel on Tuesday. — AFP

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, Oct. 8. — Mr Arnold Schwarzenegger has graduated from a Hollywood action star to becoming the newest California Governor.

Mr Schwarzenegger, whose campaign was marred by allegations of sexual harassment against him and his admiration for Adolf Hitler, today ousted the Democratic incumbent, Mr Gray Davis, in California's unprecedented

ed recall election.

In a typical Hollywood ending, the 56-year-old Austrian immigrant was chosen to replace Mr Davis who was just 11 months into his second term. Mr Davis was ousted by 55 per cent of votes against 45 in polls, while Mr Schwarzenegger was chosen to replace with 40 per cent of votes against 32 for deputy governor Mr Cruz Bustamante.

Reflecting a sense of anger against Mr Davis, about 2.1 million voters

chose to oust him against 1.7 million who voted against the recall.

Shortly after his election, Mr Schwarzenegger, who graduated from a bodybuilder to a Hollywood superstar and now Republican politician, said: "I will not fail you, I will not disappoint you, and I will not let you down."

Flanked by his wife Mrs Maria Shriver and most of the Shriver branch of the Democratic Kennedy clan, the actor thanked the voters for electing him and

said: "I came here with absolutely nothing and California has given me absolutely everything. And today California has given me the greatest thing of all, you have given me your trust by voting for me."

Conceding his defeat, Mr Davis said: "The voters did decide its time for someone else to serve, and I accept their judgement. I am calling on everyone to put the chaos and division of the recall behind us and do what's right for this great state of California."

Mr Schwarzenegger survived the allegations towards the end of the campaign that he groped women and that as a young man he had expressed admiration for Hitler.

A day before the election, the Los Angeles Times published allegations of six women that the actor groped them or made unwanted sexual advances. By election day, a total of 16 women complained against the actor.

Though Mr Schwarzenegger acknowledged that he had "behaved badly sometimes" he also criticised the newspaper.

The Hollywood hero would now be in-charge of the nation's most populated state with an economy surpassed by only five countries. He would take office as soon as the election results are certified.

The Republican candi-

date has promised to get the state, beset by massive budget problems and riven by deep political divisions back on the track.

The recall movement against Mr Davis was launched in February by activists angered by tripling of the state license fees and an increase in student and college fees — which was done to close a \$38-billion trade deficit.

The last Governor to be recalled in the USA was North Dakota's Mr Lynn Frazier in 1921.

Austria ecstatic

Mr Arnold Schwarzenegger's victory in California was cheered today as a uniquely American political triumph with more drama and suspense than a Hollywood script in his hometown of Graz in Austria, adds AFP.

After partying the night away, Austrian dignitaries and admirers in Mr Schwarzenegger's home region celebrated his win by claiming him anew as one of their own.

In a local bar, dozens mingled over a breakfast of scrambled eggs and coffee, breaking into cheers and applause when Mr Schwarzenegger's victory speech — dubbed over into German — was broadcast live on big-screen TVs.

"He's one of us," Mr Waltraud Klasnic, the governor of Schwarzenegger's

TOTAL RECALL



(Top) California Governor Mr Gray Davis arrives to concede the election to Mr Arnold Schwarzenegger at the Baltimore Hotel in Los Angeles on Tuesday. And the others who 'also ran' (from left) Larry Flynt, publisher of *Hustler* magazine, Mary Carey, adult film star and Mr Cruz Bustamante, Lieutenant-Governor of California. — AFP

home province of Styria told reporters. "And this is going to push us a little bit more into the foreground on the international stage..."

Many people in the world — and in America — now know where Styria is."

Mr Schwarzenegger's victory led the main morn-

ing news programmes in Russia, where the news broke as Muscovites were waking up and heading for work.

'Terminator' is voted governor of California

By Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington: California's political circus found a Hollywood ending on Tuesday. Voters in the largest and most diverse American state chose as governor an Austria-born bodybuilder-turned-movie star in a landmark election that recalled an incumbent for only the second time in the nation's history.

Republican candidate Arnold Schwarzenegger, he of 'Terminator' fame, ended the disastrous rule of Democrat Gray Davis, a man so dull that even his neighbours called him a cold fish. Californians voted to recall Mr Davis by a 54 per cent to 46 per cent margin after he was widely perceived to have plunged the state which has the world's fifth largest economy—from a \$70 billion budget surplus to a \$38 billion deficit.

But it is the fall-out of the elections on the rest of the country and the political system that has the pundits startled. Some of them called the results a political earthquake measuring 10 on the political Richter scale. Mr Schwarzenegger overcame charges of pawing women and having Nazi sympathies to win the colourful election that saw 135 contestants on the ballot, including a former child actor and a porn star.

9 OCT 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

9 OCT 2003

Leak puts Ashcroft in a spot

ELISABETH BUMILLER
AND ERIC LICHTBLAU

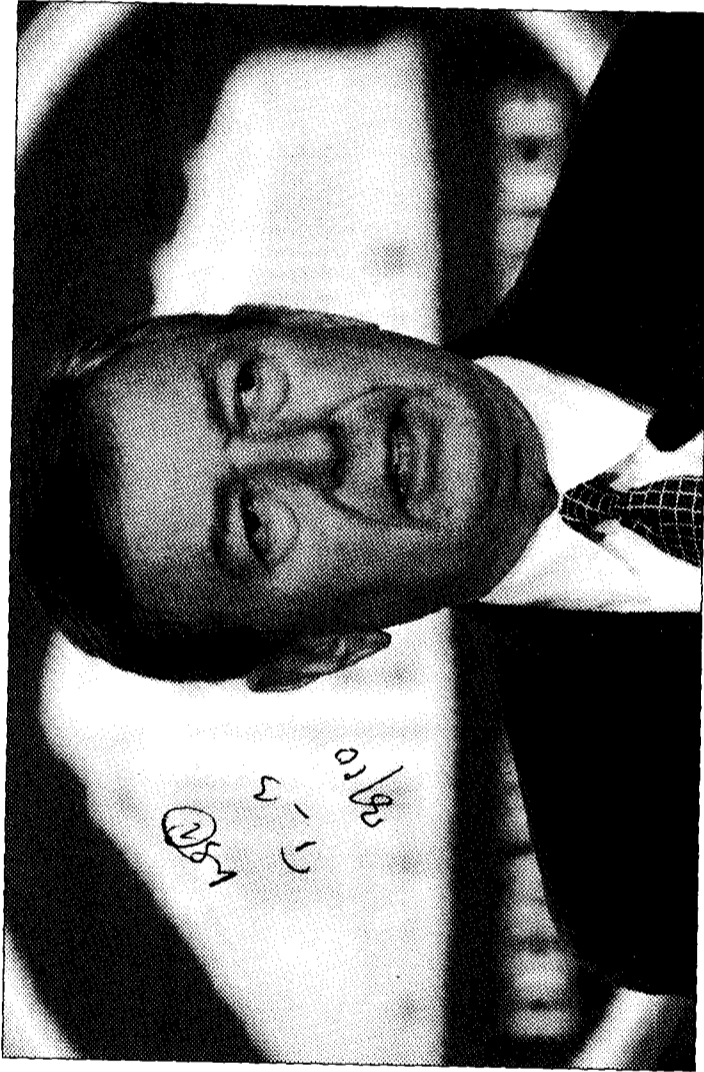
Washington, Oct. 2: Deep political ties between the White House and the justice department have thrust attorney general John Ashcroft into a delicate position as his agency begins a full investigation into whether administration officials illegally disclosed the name of an undercover CIA officer to journalists.

Karl Rove, President Bush's top political adviser who has been swept into the leak controversy, was a paid consultant to three of Ashcroft's campaigns in Missouri, for governor and US senator, in the 1980s and 1990s, an associate of Rove said yesterday. Jack Oliver, the deputy finance chairman of Bush's 2004 re-election campaign, was the director of Ashcroft's 1994 Senate campaign, and later worked as Ashcroft's deputy chief of staff.

Those connections led Democrats yesterday to assert that Rove's connections to Ashcroft amounted to a clear conflict of interest and undermined the integrity of the investigation. The disclosures have also emboldened Democrats who have called for the appointment of an outside counsel.

Ashcroft's predicament is reminiscent of the back-and-forth contest between Bill Clinton and Janet Reno, the president and the attorney general. They were barely on speaking terms. But Bush meets with Ashcroft almost daily — and the ties between Ashcroft and Bush's political aides go back a decade or more.

At the very least, the relationships have given new grist to the Democrats. "This is not like: 'Oh, yeah, they're both Republicans, they've been in the same room



US attorney general John Ashcroft

together," said Roy Temple, the former executive director of the Missouri Democratic Party and the former deputy chief of staff to Governor Mel Carnahan. "Karl Rove was once part of John Ashcroft's political strategic team. You have both the actual conflict, and the appearance of conflict. It doesn't matter what's in the deep, dark recesses of their hearts. It stinks."

Nancy Pelosi, the House Democratic leader, said that she is particularly concerned about the past campaign work that Rove did for Ashcroft. "Given allegations about the involvement of senior White House officials and the past close association between the attorney general and those officials, the investigation should be headed by a person in-

dependent of the administration," she said.

Yesterday, justice department officials would not rule out the possibility of Ashcroft appointing a special counsel, or recusing himself from the case.

"He's going to have to recuse himself, don't you think?" said the associate of Rove.

Bush himself salvaged Ashcroft's political career by selecting him as attorney general after Ashcroft lost his Senate race in 2000 to a man who died just before the election, Carnahan.

In 2001, Ashcroft recused himself from an investigation into alleged ethical improprieties by then-Senator Robert Torricelli because Torricelli had campaigned against his Senate

date the officer's husband, Joseph C. Wilson, a former diplomat who has been critical of the administration's use of intelligence to justify the war in Iraq. Wilson initially charged that Rove was behind the leak, but he has since backtracked, saying that he only suspects Rove is the source. Justice Department officials said that it is too early to say which administration officials will be subjects of their investigation.

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

campaign in Missouri. "We're leaving all legal options open," said Mark Corallo, a justice department spokesman.

Bush and Ashcroft say that the justice department will be fair and thorough, and justice officials say that the investigation will be handled independently by attorneys in the criminal division's counter-espionage section. "Career professionals with decades of experience in these kinds of cases are fully capable of conducting a thorough and complete investigation," said a senior justice department official.

On Monday, the White House dismissed as "ridiculous" the suggestion that Rove had illegally disclosed the identity of the CIA officer in an effort to intimi-

Indians dodge Bush visa axe

K.P. NAYAR

Washington, Oct. 2: The deep cut of over 66 per cent in H1-B visas, which went into effect yesterday, will not have any significant impact on Indian computer professionals seeking work in the US.

But as the presidential and Congressional elections approach in 2004, the cut will assuage a constituency in America which was becoming a thorn in the side of President George W. Bush, who is increasingly being identified with three million job losses in the US since he replaced Bill Clinton.

Tom Tancredo, a Republican Congressman from Colorado, who introduced a bill in July to abolish H1-B visas, said yesterday that American employers se-

eking foreign workers had "found a new visa category, L-1, which is even better. There's no cap on L-1 visas and few restrictions. It's good for seven years, and there's no way to determine if they (foreign workers) are coming here to replace US workers."

In an interview published in *Computerworld*, he said: "We have seen a 58 per cent increase in L-1 visas in the last year while we have seen a corresponding decrease in H1-B."

Tancredo may well be right. According to the US Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, only 56,986 H1-B applications had been approved as of the third quarter of 2003, although the ceiling for such visas was approximately three times that figure.

The Congressman lashed out

at Indians in his interview and stopped short of accusing Bush of giving in to lobbies favouring the inflow of H1-B workers because the information technology sector was liberal with election funding.

"The President came out against my bill. The President was at a fund-raiser in Jackson, Mississippi, a little while ago and was asked about my bill by Indian IT workers there.

"He said he opposed my bill. He raised \$1.5 million at this fund-raiser and the only place we found out about it was in an Indian newspaper. The industry will fight it like crazy, but we have established the goal line further down the field so they have at least stopped going for an increase."

Meanwhile, John Mica, a Re-

publican Congressman from Florida, has introduced a bill to restrict L-1 visas. A similar bill was introduced in July by another lawmaker, Rosa DeLauro, a Democrat from Connecticut.

But Tancredo compared the effort in these bills to "trying to stop a flood with a sieve. It is true we have a global economy, and it is going to be a difficult thing to control.... We cannot simply move all the jobs to India. I am sure there is going to be plenty of opposition. The President has not said what he is going to do regarding these two bills".

L-1 visas are used primarily for intra-company transfers — that is, if a firm operating in the US has resources abroad, it could bring in those foreign workers for their expertise, training or for beefing up the management.

Democrats for independent probe in CIA spy case

Washington, October 1

DEMOCRATS PUSHING for an independent probe to find out if someone in the current Bush Administration unmasked a CIA operative on Tuesday quoted President Bush's father, who once denounced security leakers as "traitors".

On Tuesday, the Justice Department had launched a probe into who leaked the name of a clandestine CIA officer, Valerie Plame, wife of a former US ambassador to Gabon, who was an undercover operative specialising in WMDs.

They said if such an incident had occurred during the presidency of Democrat Bill Clinton, Republicans who control Congress, would be calling for hearings and issuing subpoenas. Instead, they complained, the Republicans have been relatively silent, content

to let the Justice Department, headed by Bush appointee Attorney-General John Ashcroft, handle it. "There is real concern about objectivity," said Senator Tom Daschle, a South Dakota Democrat. Senate Minority Whip Harry Reid, a Nevada Democrat said, "To have John Ashcroft ... carrying on the probe simply won't sell."

Sen. Charles Schumer, a New York Democrat, made the call for a special counsel in non-binding resolution offered as an amendment to a spending Bill. But Republicans who control the Senate blocked it.

"This is being investigated by the FBI, who I have a lot of confidence in as very independent," Sen. Judd Gregg, a Republican, said as he moved to block the resolution and sought to answer Democrats' concerns.

The FBI is part of the Jus-

tice Department.

The case centres on the disclosure that the wife of former diplomat Joseph Wilson was an undercover CIA operative specialising in weapons of mass destruction. In July, syndicated columnist Robert Novak cited two unidentified senior administration officials as having told him her identity.

Wilson has said he believes the disclosure was made in an effort to discredit him or get revenge after he accused the White House of exaggerating the arms threat in Iraq.

Democrats charged that the leak placed in jeopardy Wilson's wife as well as her contacts and nation's security.

They quoted Bush Senior as having said in 1999, "I have nothing but contempt for those who betray the trust by exposing the names of our sources."

Reuters

White House probed for exposing spy

Washington, September 30

THE US Justice Department on Tuesday launched a criminal investigation into who leaked the name of a clandestine CIA officer, and to this end President Bush has directed his White House staff to cooperate fully. The President's request comes a day after his spokesman denied any White House involvement in the leak.

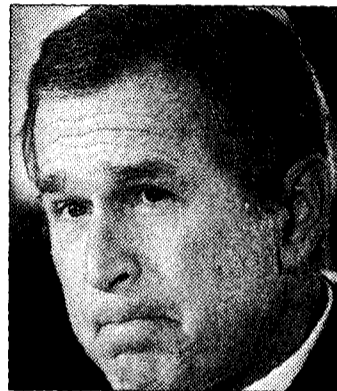
The controversy centres on the disclosure that Valerie Plame — wife of Joseph Wilson, former US ambassador to Gabon — was an undercover CIA operative specialising in weapons of mass destruction. Wilson believes his wife's cover was blown by administration officials seeking to discredit him or get revenge after he accused the White House of exaggerating the threat from Iraq.

White House staff was notified of the investigation by e-mail after the Justice Department decided late on Monday night to move from a preliminary investigation into a full probe. White House staff has been directed to preserve all material that may be related to the investigation, presidential spokesman Scott McClellan said. Presumably that would include telephone logs, e-mails, notes and other documents.

Justice Department lawyers notified the White House counsel's office on Monday night that it had begun an investigation into "possible unauthorised disclosures concerning the identity of an undercover CIA employee".

The controversy has rocked the White House, which is already on the defensive over the jobless rate and the difficult aftermath of the war in Iraq. McClellan denied White House involvement during two contentious briefings with reporters Monday.

The flap began on July 14, when a columnist identified Valerie Plame as Wilson's wife and as a CIA officer. Wilson had written in *The New York Times* that



George Bush
Under a cloud

Bush relied on dubious intelligence when he said Iraq had tried to buy uranium for nuclear weapons from Niger. Wilson had been sent to Africa by the CIA to investigate the intelligence, and his conclusions raised questions about the credibility of Bush's justification for the war.

The columnist wrote that "two administration officials" told him Wilson got the assignment through his wife's CIA connections. Wilson has said he believes that Karl Rove, Bush's top political adviser, condoned the leak. McClellan termed this "ridiculous".

Leaking classified information and identifying an undercover CIA operative are felonies with a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and \$50,000 in fines.

On Monday, the columnist Robert Novak added a new wrinkle to the story saying "nobody in the Bush Administration called me to leak this". He said on CNN's *Crossfire* that Plame's name came up during an interview with a senior Administration official, and another official later repeated that Wilson's trip to Africa was "inspired by his wife". Novak dismissed the firestorm as "pure Bush-bashing". Novak also said while the CIA asked him not to use Plame's name, the agency "never indicated it would endanger her or anybody else".

USA Today

Blair leak nemesis catches up with Bush

Business link to White House

DOUGLAS JEHL

Washington, Sept. 30: A group of businessmen linked by their close ties to President Bush, his family and his administration have set up a consulting firm to advise companies that want to do business in Iraq, including those seeking pieces of taxpayer-financed reconstruction projects.

The firm, New Bridge Strategies, is headed by Joe M. Allbaugh, Bush's campaign manager in 2000 and the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency until March. Other directors include Edward M. Rogers Jr, vice-chairman, and Lanny Griffith, lobbyists who were assistants to the first President George Bush and now have close ties to the White House.

At a time when the administration seeks Congressional approval for \$20.3 billion to rebuild Iraq, part of an \$87 billion package for military and other spending in Iraq and Afghanistan, the

company's website, www.newbridgestrategies.com says: "The opportunities evolving in Iraq today are of such an unprecedented nature and scope that no other existing firm has the necessary skills and experience to be effective both in Washington, DC, and on the ground in Iraq."

The site calls attention to the links between the company's directors and the two Bush administrations by noting, for example, that Allbaugh, the chairman, was "chief of staff to then-governor Bush of Texas and was the national campaign manager for the Bush-Cheney 2000 presidential campaign."

The president of the company, John Howland, said in a telephone interview that it did not intend to seek any US government contracts itself, but might be a middleman to advise other companies that seek taxpayer-financed business.

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

Sept. 30 (Reuters): President George W. Bush and his British ally Tony Blair felt renewed heat today over their war on Iraq, with critics homing in on damaging leaks on both sides of the Atlantic.

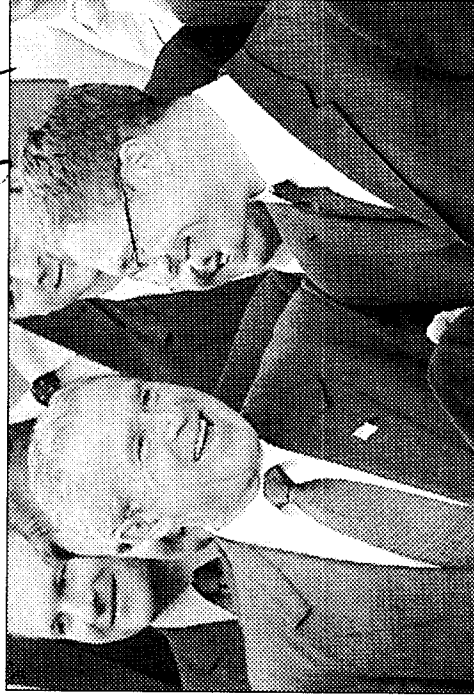
The US Justice Department said it had opened a criminal investigation into the leak of a CIA agent's identity allegedly to try to deflect criticism of the war, a case very similar to one that has shaken British Prime Minister Blair.

Bush said after meeting business leaders in Chicago he wanted anyone with information about the leak to come forward.

"If anybody's got any information inside our administration or outside our administration, it would be helpful if they came forward," Bush said in his first public comment on the issue.

In Britain, Blair defended his position on the Iraq war, which he acknowledged had divided the nation and the world.

The speech aimed to repair damage done by the British leak of the identity of a government expert in Iraqi weapons of mass destruction who had anonymously questioned the handling of pre-war intelligence to a journalist. A judicial inquiry was launched after the expert com-



President George W. Bush with players from the ice hockey team New Jersey Devils at the White House. (AFP)

mitted suicide.

Party leaders have headed off a full-scale debate on Iraq at the Labour conference, but anti-war dissidents hope to get in their challenge when Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and defence secretary Geoff Hoon address the gathering on Wednesday.

Bush's spokesman said the White House had ordered staff to cooperate fully with the US investigation into what Justice Department lawyers termed "possible unauthorised disclosures concerning the identity of an

undercover CIA employee".

The controversy centres on the disclosure that Valerie Plame — the wife of Joseph Wilson, a former US ambassador to Gabon — was an undercover CIA operative specialising in weapons of mass destruction.

Wilson, a critic of pre-war intelligence on Iraq, says his wife's cover was blown by administration officials looking to discredit him.

Disclosing the identity of a clandestine US intelligence officer is a federal crime as

is leaking classified information to the media.

Justice Department lawyers notified the White House counsel's office on Monday night that they had begun a probe into "possible unauthorised disclosures concerning the identity of an undercover CIA employee," according to a memo sent to White House staff by counsel Alberto Gonzales.

Attorney General John Ashcroft said the Justice Department had requested the White House preserve all documents that might be relevant and made a similar request of the CIA.

Wilson wrote in The New York Times in July that he went to Niger early in 2002 at the CIA's request to assess a report that Iraq sought to buy uranium from that country. He found the allegation highly doubtful and the International Atomic Energy Agency later dismissed it as based on forged documents.

Nevertheless, the charge found its way into Bush's State of the Union speech in January as part of the US case against Saddam. Only after Wilson went public did the White House admit Bush should not have included it, blaming the CIA.

Democrats demanded an independent counsel investigate the leak.

Osama tape delivers warrior image

Singapore, Sept. 11 (Reuters): Two middle-aged Arabs walking down a rock-strewn hillside leaning on canes may appear harmless. When the pair are Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri, the stroll is no less than a renewed declaration of war.

The two top leaders of the al Qaida network that is blamed for the September 11, 2001, strikes on New York and Washington appear in a rare tape obtained by al Jazeera descending a rocky mountainside as they steadied themselves with walking sticks, automatic rifles slung over their shoulders.

Accompanying the video was a recorded call to arms from the Saudi-born bin Laden and a declaration from his Egyptian aide urging fighters to turn Iraq into a graveyard for US troops.

The video, breathing al Qaida defiance and taunting US President George W. Bush and his war on terror, is the first sighting of bin Laden since December 2001 and while apparently filmed in April or May shows he remains alive, analysts said.

"The timing is obviously significant and is designed to do several things," said David Wright-Neville, former terrorism adviser to Australia's office of National Assessments, equivalent of the US National Security Agency.

"First, they want to continue to foster the fear of the unknown. One of the principal objectives of terrorism is to prey on that fear," said Wright-Neville, now at the Monash Global Terrorism Research Unit in Melbourne, Australia. "They have assessed, quite correctly, that there is an ongoing fear of terrorism and they want to perpetuate and feed that," he said.

The al Qaida leaders, who walk beside white spring flowers and pick their way among tufts of long verdant grass in what could be mountains in northern Pakistan or Afghanistan, take a great risk in showing themselves and giving a hint to US hunters as to their whereabouts, say counter-terrorist experts.

But if their aim is to maintain their mystique, to propagate their message and to prove to



A relative of a victim breaks down during a visit to Ground Zero in New York. (Reuters)

their followers that they remain a force with which the US must reckon, then they need to make such risky — if rare — appearances, they say.

Forty-seven-year-old bin Laden, believed to have been wounded in the left shoulder or arm during the Tora Bora campaign in eastern Afghanistan in late 2001, has clearly healed.

"He is looking in pretty good fettle... alive and well," said Peter Bergen, author of *Holy War, Inc: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden*.

While the release of a tape to coincide with the September 11

anniversary surprised few security experts who had expected an audio message at the very least, the appearance of bin Laden astonished some.

"The thing that surprised was the video," said Bergen. "The reason they wouldn't want to release this is because they do not want to reveal their whereabouts. 'The catch 22 is that to remain effective they have to keep putting out these tapes,' he said. "On the other hand, it's the most obvious way to lead back to them. It's a risk."

In his last appearance on video in December 2001, bin

Laden appeared grey-faced and tired, unable to move his left side. In this video he appears spry and moves with ease, bending down to sling a Kalashnikov rifle over his shoulder before making his way, sure-footed, down the hillside with al-Zawahri.

"This feeds the image of Osama bin Laden as the indestructible warrior for Islam," said Wright-Neville. "He depends on his charismatic status among disenfranchised Muslims around the world and he needs to send a message that he is well."

Experts said it was impossible to say whether the audiotapes from bin Laden and al-Zawahri, 52, contained some coded message, but most agreed that it sufficed to issue the call to "devour" US forces in Iraq and to urge Pakistanis to rise up to defeat US ally, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf.

Neither could a message be ruled out. "It sounds like an indication to operatives to carry out whatever plans had been put into effect," said Andrew Tan, security expert at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies in Singapore.

Pak hunting al Qaida militants, says Pervez

Islamabad, Sept. 11 (Reuters): President Pervez Musharraf, a key player in the "war on terror" since the September 11 attacks in 2001, said today Pakistan was hunting down al Qaida, Taliban and other extremists who remain a threat.

His comments coincided with the airing of a videotape featuring Osama bin Laden and right-hand man Ayman al-Zawahri, both widely believed to be hiding in remote and rugged terrain along the Afghan-Pakistan border.

A voice purportedly that of Zawahri singled out Musharraf, accusing him of "treason" for handing over militants to Washington. Pakistan says it has arrested over 450 militants, many of them Afghans and Arabs, in the last two years.

"We are operating against al Qaida, we are operating against Taliban and we are also operating against sectarian and religious extremism in Pakistan," Musharraf said in an interview on BBC's website.

He acknowledged the difficulty in tracking down suspects along the porous border with Afghanistan, and said no government could stamp out sectarian violence completely.

"On both sides of the border, there are places which can be utilised as a sanctuary by extremists," Musharraf said.

"I do admit that the border is extremely porous... I cannot at all claim that I can seal the entire border where one individual cannot come across the border."

Afghanistan has been hit by the worst wave of violence since the fall of the Taliban late in 2001, and many of the fighters are believed to be crossing from Pakistan. Sectarian bloodshed in Pakistan is also on the rise, with 53 people dying in a single attack on a Shia mosque.

9/11: Tears and fears linger in New York

By N. R. Kleinfield
and Marjorie Connelly

New York: In the second year of living with the memory, the simmering disquiet persists, a lengthening shadow that won't leave.

A 'New York Times' poll of 976 adult New Yorkers, taken last week, underscores how much lasting damage 9/11 inflicted on the city's psyche. Two-thirds of the people questioned said they were very concerned about another attack in New York, slightly more than felt that way a year ago.

In measure after measure, the sampling found New Yorkers trapped in the same state of queasy normalcy that they found themselves in in the more immediate aftermath. There continues to be a minority of people who avoid the subway, stay away from skyscrapers, sleep fitfully, find new solace in religion. Many people still

get teary-eyed at the memory.

A core group of people—nearly one-third of those questioned—said that their lives have still not returned to normal, as they continue to wrestle with the imprint of that day.

Flora Muca, 37, who lives in Brooklyn and does the bookkeeping for her family's plumbing business, says she basically functions fine, but the fear won't lift. "Honestly, I think it's going to happen again," she said. "My idea is they wait until it slows down and everyone falls asleep again."

For anyone in the city, September no longer arrives the same way. The month has been given a new signpost. It is no longer simply the month when the sedate rhythms of summer wind down and the hazy heat of August yields to the impeccable weather of fall. It is no longer the month of Labour Day picnics and the return of school buses as

ceremonial conclusions to the season. It is the month of 9/11.

As the second anniversary approaches, much has happened to sort through—two wars, continuing job losses, a blackout, car payments, kids going off to college, all the confusing exigencies of life—and something important did not happen, a second attack on the city. So it can be hard to untangle the precise forces that shape this mood. Many New Yorkers, in fact, feel renewed and intensely devoted to the city.

In the poll, conducted by telephone from August 31 to September 4, a new question was asked: How many people felt that the changes wrought by 9/11 would have a permanent effect on New York? Roughly 60 per cent felt there would be an enduring impact, and just as many felt it would be negative as felt it would be positive. NYT News Service

THE TIMES OF INDIA

11 SEP 2003

US PRESIDENT PLEADS FOR FUNDS, TROOPS FOR IRAQ

Bush seeks \$87 billion to terminate terror

AP & PTI

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8. — Four days before the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the US President said he will seek \$87 billion to fight terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan and “engage the enemy where he lives”.

In an 18-minute address last night, Mr George W Bush said: “We are fighting that enemy in Iraq and Afghanistan today so that we do not meet him again on our own streets, in our own cities.”

Mr Bush also appealed for troops and money for security and reconstruction from other countries, even those who opposed the US-led war.

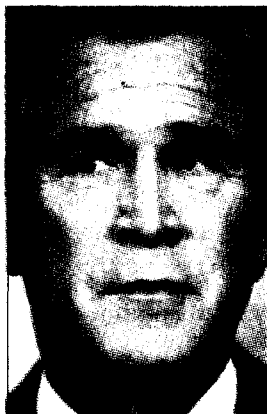
The President, speaking from the Cabinet Room in a nationally broadcast speech, said the USA would not be intimidated into retreat by violence. “The terrorists have cited the examples of Beirut and Somalia, claiming that if you inflict harm on Americans we will run from a challenge,” he said, referring to US withdrawals after the loss of American lives. “In this they are mistaken.”

It was Mr Bush’s first major speech on Iraq since 1 May when he stood on the deck of the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln and declared an end to major combat operations. Since then, more Americans have died in Iraq —

149 since 1 May — than were killed during the war.

The President described Iraq as the central front in the war against terror and said: “Enemies of freedom are making a desperate stand there (Iraq), and they must be defeated.

“This will take time and require sacrifice,” he said. “Yet we will do what is necessary, we will spend what



‘We will do what is necessary, we will spend what is necessary, to achieve the essential victory in the war on terror’

is necessary, to achieve this essential victory in the war on terror, to promote freedom and to make our own nation more secure.”

Mr Bush said the current number of US troops in Iraq — 130,000 — is sufficient but that more foreign troops are needed. Seeking a broader UN

role in Iraq, Mr Bush has appealed to opponents of war to contribute troops and money for security and reconstruction.

Some countries, Mr Bush said without naming them, have requested an explicit authorisation of the UN Security Council before committing troops to Iraq. He said he has directed Secretary of State Gen. Colin Powell to introduce a new Security Council resolution, which would authorise the creation of a multinational force in Iraq, led by America.

Referring to France, Germany and Russia, he admitted that not all of “America’s friends agreed with our decision to remove Mr Saddam Hussein from power”. He, however, added: “We cannot let past differences interfere with present duties. Terrorists in Iraq have attacked representatives of the civilised world, and opposing them must be the cause of the civilised world.”

Mr Bush said: “Our strategy in Iraq has three objectives — destroying the terrorists, enlisting the support of other nations for a free Iraq, and helping Iraqis assume responsibility for their own defence and their own future.”

The USA, he said, is committed to expanding international cooperation in the reconstruction and security of Iraq, just as in Afghanistan.

Media, allies unmoved by speech

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8. — Mr George W Bush’s rallying call to other countries to join the fight on “the central front of terrorism” in Iraq is “a blunt bow to postwar realities”, US media said today.

“The war in Iraq that the President described last night is a far cry from the shock-and-awe power of the spring offensive that drove Mr Saddam Hussein from power in little more than a month,” the *Washington Post* said.

Meanwhile, Britain today announced it was sending more troops to Iraq. British defence secretary Mr Geoff Hoon said he would deploy two more battalions — totaling some 1,200 troops — in addition to the 11,000 British servicemen already in Iraq. But other US allies today reacted cautiously to the US President’s call for money to help fund his Iraq policy.

Japan, normally a backer of Washington, offered a lukewarm response. Germany, which opposed the war, said it was considering a variety of options, including a suggestion to train new Iraqi soldiers and policemen, but insisted it would send no troops.

'Bush lied, our soldiers died'

Nilova Roy Chaudhury
in New York

Sept. 22. — Sharply critical graffiti on lamp posts along New York's posh and politically conservative Park Avenue is an indication that faith in the American President, Mr George W Bush, is on the wane.

"Bush lied, our soldiers died" stares the visitor at various points along this centre of conservative American commerce. And while New York, even at the height of the post-9/11 trauma, was a little sceptical of the US President, the body of opinion on campuses across the country seems to be veering towards radical opposition to the President's Iraq policy.

With Mr Bush set to address the UN General Assembly on Tuesday and make a serious pitch for greater international (read UN) involvement in Iraq, in the form of sending more troops to bail out American soldiers, there is scepticism on campuses.

At New York's Columbia Univer-



Mr Bush: against the tide

sity where Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee will deliver an address on Wednesday, there was scathing criticism, among a few faculty members and students, of the "snakepit" that the USA has got itself into in Iraq. People were not willing to speak on record.

Other colleges, including one in the state where 22 of the 47 faculty members in the business studies department were recently laid off, were equally critical. Even campuses in conservative Virginia were questioning the logic behind sending US

23/9
soldiers to Iraq. "Maybe they'll blame Hurricane Isabel on Saddam next," a faculty member said, indicative of the reception to Mr Bush's statements.

Two years after 9/11, there are few takers for the connection between Saddam Hussein and the Al Qaida. There have been questions why the weapons of mass destruction in North Korea and Pakistan have not been disarmed the way Saddam Hussein was.

According to observers, even the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant heartland, feels the President was "economical with the truth" while sending troops to Iraq. But the problem is that the body of opposition has no particular rallying point, either in the Democratic Party or elsewhere. The race for the candidacy for President in the Democratic Party is too wide open for critical opinion to crystallise against Mr Bush just yet, but he has reasons to be worried, observers said.

Another report on page 4

W/ 110.10

POWER CUTS AND HOT SPELLS ^{WES} ²⁰⁰⁸

THE DEVELOPING WORLD will react with understanding and even sympathy to the type of problems some rich nations are facing just now — and apparently not coping with remarkably well. Unannounced power outages, sweltering heat, medical emergencies and overflowing wards in hospitals are taken for granted in India and many other developing countries. But are not the highly advanced Western nations better equipped to face such trials? Confronted with one such emergency, the eastern seaboard in the United States and Canada appears to be coping bravely while, faced with another, large parts of Western Europe have been panicking. The power collapse last Thursday evening left nearly 50 million people, from New York to Toronto, in total darkness, embroiling the U.S and its northern neighbour in an undiplomatic tangle over who was originally responsible for the massive blackout. As they sort it out, the example and experience of New York stand out. After the trauma of September 11 and the unofficial state of alert in the months since, the people of New York are clearly better equipped to face such emergencies, from the unblinking traffic lights to dead cellular phones and the immobilised underground. The Spirit of Nine Eleven was in impressive evidence as people preferred the safety of wide open spaces and fended for themselves as volunteers took charge of extra duties on the Big Apple's empty, dark streets. For the megalopolis, it was a stark contrast to the experience of the 1977 blackout when large-scale rioting and looting broke out after the lights went out. But will it be similar or different for the New Yorker on another interesting matter? A survey conducted of hospitals nine months after the 1977 blackout revealed, believe it or not, a temporary baby boom in the metropolis.

While American and Canadian cities were

grappling successfully with the fallout, across the Atlantic a region where summer is treated as a reward following the rigours of winter is experiencing an extended summer and suffering on account of it. Soaring temperatures have for the past month paralysed the Continent, notably France. A summer of 35 degrees Centigrade plus, benign by Indian summer standards, provoked a scramble for umbrellas and air conditioners in Paris a week ago. Small wonder that the current 'hot spell' is cutting a wide swath, causing much more damage in human terms than floods caused two years ago in the historic cities of Prague and Dresden. More than 3,000 deaths, especially of senior citizens, from heat wave conditions have been reported in France. The hot conditions have also ignited fires and devastated forests in the Iberian Peninsula. Clearly, even as the less-developed world suffers from an inadequate application of technology, the developed world is seeing the downside of an overdependence on technology, which lets it down occasionally. Reports in the U.S. suggest that the power grid built to supply electricity uniformly across the region tripped when one power station in the chain broke down. However, the problems that Europe faces are much more fundamental, underlining the need for people to adapt themselves to changing weather conditions. The record-breaking heat wave has caused dangerously high ozone levels and reinforced concerns over long-term climate change. Experts have cited the example of tropical, hotter countries where people learn, in various ingenious ways, to keep themselves hydrated and cool. Europe has yet to realise that summers may be becoming increasingly oppressive, demanding changes in lifestyle. The unconscionably high level of deaths of the past month in France is a warning that perhaps the worst is yet to come.

Blackwill appointed Deputy Assistant to Bush

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, AUG. 16. The White House has formally announced the appointment of the former United States Ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill, as Deputy Assistant to the President, George W. Bush, and Coordinator for Strategic Planning to the National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice.

A statement issued by the press secretary said that Dr. Rice announced the appointment of Mr. Blackwill, who would "work with Government-wide policy planning operations to help develop and coordinate the mid and long term direction of the American foreign policy".

Prior to his diplomatic post-

ing in New Delhi, Mr. Blackwill was for 14 years at Harvard including as Belfer Lecturer in International Security at the University's John F Kennedy School of Government. His tenure in Government included being the Special Assistant and Senior Director for European and Soviet Affairs on the staff of the National Security Council between 1989 and 1990.

The impression is that Mr. Blackwill would be focussed on Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran at a time when the Republican administration is facing considerable pressure domestically and internationally on the goings on in that part of the world.

With the political campaigning for the presidential election of November 2004 gaining mo-

mentum, he could play a major role in formulating and presenting the Bush campaign's foreign policy and the national security agenda.

It may be recalled that Mr. Blackwill belonged to a small group of foreign policy advisers — known as the Vulcans — to George W. Bush when he was running for the Presidency in 2000.

There is a feeling that Mr. Blackwill's presence at the White House, though not formally dealing with issues of direct interest and concern of South Asia, would be beneficial to New Delhi in many ways.

For instance, he is known to have tough and sharp views on terrorism, especially pertaining to the subcontinent.

Blackout affected 50 million in Canada, U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, AUG. 16. The United States and Canada have agreed to form a Joint Task Force to find out what went wrong in the historic North America blackout of Thursday and determine the steps to prevent its recurrence.

The White House has said that the force will be headed by the Energy Secretary, Spencer Abraham, and Canada's Minister for Natural Resources, Herb Dhaliwal. All agents at the centre, state and local levels as also private sector electricity suppliers have been invited to contribute to its work.

The blackout affected nearly 50 million people spread across eight States in the United States and Southern Canada to include Ottawa and Toronto. The system is said to be slowly coming back with the subway system in New York City back to nearly 100 per cent functioning. All major airports that saw se-

vere curtailment of departures and arrivals in the city are now slowly getting back to the normal mode.

Two days into the historic power outage, there are very few clues as to what went wrong; but there is a strong suspicion that the 'culprit' may have been the so-called Lake Erie Loop, a massive system that encircles Lake Erie from New York to Detroit, into Canada and then back again to New York. According to an agency report, technicians had noticed something quite stunning on the northern leg of the Loop — some 300 megawatts of electricity that was moving east suddenly reversed course and within seconds some 500 megawatts of power was moving west.

Not impressed

But the Governor of New York is not impressed with all this. George Pataki has taken

the position if the problem was in Ohio or Michigan, that should not have reached Manhattan in New York for the grid is supposed to isolate such problems. "That just did not happen," he said.

While firm clues have not been identified, several of the theories that were floated around, especially in Canada, have been thrown out — there was no lightning hits on a facility on the American side at the Niagara Falls and that there was no fire at power facilities in New York City or Pennsylvania that triggered the grid collapse.

Officials say more than 100 power plants including 22 nuclear reactors in the U.S. and Canada were shut down, most of them automatically, as protection against power surges.

If there is one thing that has been ruled out emphatically by one and all including the U.S. President, George W Bush, it is terrorism.

SEE FINDO

17 AUG 2003

Superpower-less US trips

Terror strike ruled out, antiquated grid triggers blackout

By Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington: Niagara, in one native American language, means 'at the neck'. And much of north-eastern United States had its jugular pressed after a power grid breakdown in the Niagara region cut off electricity to six states and to southern Canada in the most monumental infrastructure collapse in American history.

Some 30 million people in nearly a million square miles from New York to Cleveland and Detroit to Toronto were victims of the blackout. (AFP reported late on Friday night that power was restored in one-third of New York City.)

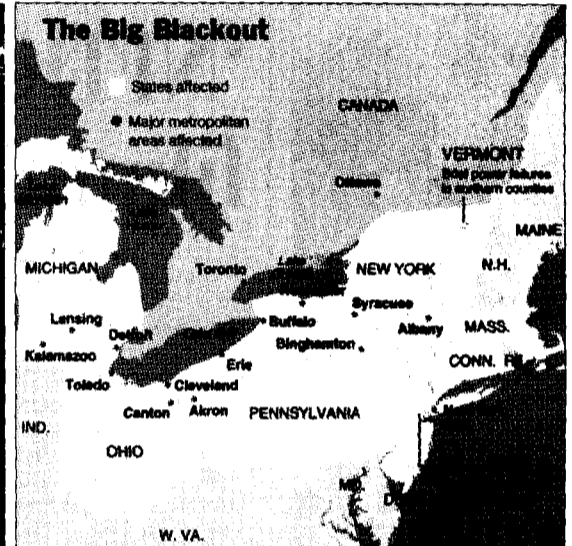
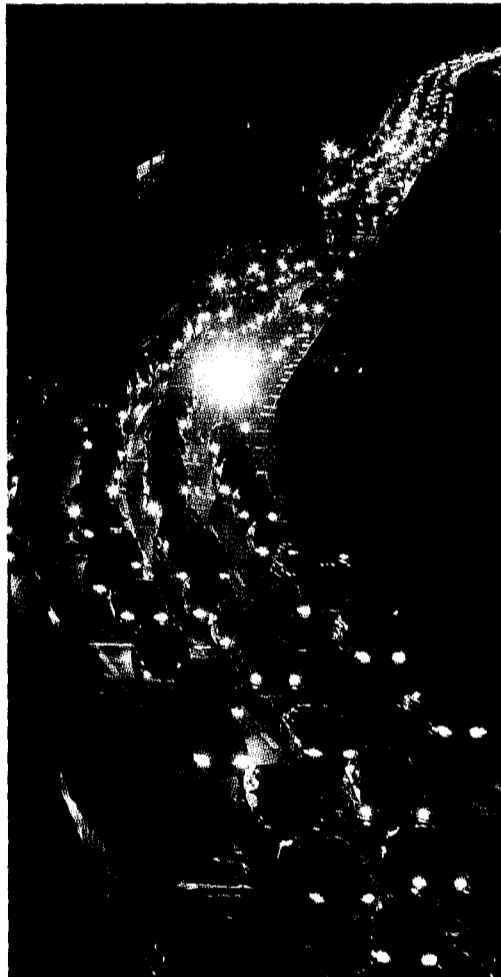
Elevators stopped mid-shaft, subway trains stalled mid-tunnel, traffic lights turned off, and whole systems ground to a halt shortly after 4 p.m. on a busy Thursday evening in arguably the most industrialised region on the planet.

Primed by 9\11, everyone's first thoughts turned to terrorism and Washington ordered F-16s to air patrol, but within the hour it was announced that the outage was not terrorist-related. The trigger for the collapse was said to be a power plant in the Niagara area bordering US and Canada where some of the basic technology dates back to the time of Thomas Edison who, having electrified the world with the first light bulb in 1878, engineered the first transmission of electricity in the region in the 1880s.

Canadian authorities said that the blackout was caused by a lightning strike on a power plant but US officials contested the explanation, saying there was no adverse weather in the region, and a more plausible explanation was the

Where were you when the bytes went off?

Reuters/NYT



DOWNLOADING IN THE BIG APPLE: Traffic snakes down the FDR Drive in New York after the city was plunged into darkness on Thursday. Map highlights indicate states or provinces that have been affected by power outages. Stranded commuters nap at the entrance of Grand Central Station on Friday morning.

sheer antiquity of the system.

Incidentally, the same General Electric company of Edison that built the plants around Niagara was commissioned in 1902 to install one of the first hydro-electric power stations in India at Sivasamudram on the Cauvery river to illu-

minate the Kolar Gold Fields.

There was no particular spike in demand (temperatures were only about 33° C) to explain this great American power collapse that dwarfed similar breakdowns in 1965 and 1977.

But unlike in 1977, when the

blackouts led to widespread chaos and looting, Americans, especially New Yorkers, showed the best side of human nature, facing the crisis stoically and soberly.

- A-1 passengers stranded, Page 13
- See Edit: Area of Darkness, Page 12

1 6 AUG 2003

Hispanic vote may hurt Terminator

The Times, London
& AFP

Big-screen saver!

WASHINGTON, Aug. 14. — The campaign by Arnold Schwarzenegger to become the Governor of California suffered a setback on Wednesday.

The frontrunner faces a backlash from the state's influential Hispanic voters after details of his political past and current campaign emerged.

He shuffled his campaign team to bring in aides of the controversial former Republican Governor Mr Pete Wilson. The move highlighted his close links with Mr Wilson, a controversial and polarising figure in California politics. It also underlined Schwarzenegger's support for an anti-immigration law passed in 1994 when Mr Wilson was in the governor's mansion.

The initiative, known as Proposition 187, denied many public services to illegal immigrants, and enraged the state's large Hispanic community. It led to a surge of voter registration among Hispanics and has remained a touchstone issue for them.

Mr Wilson, a co-chairman of the Schwarzenegger campaign, revealed at the weekend that the Hollywood star had supported the initiative, complicating his efforts to win the support of Hispanics. Those efforts are likely to be made more difficult after he drafted in two of Mr Wilson's most senior aides to take over the running of his campaign.

The switch came after his wife Ms Maria Shriver, a journalist and member of the Kennedy clan, criti-



Although his image is on newspaper front pages and news channels, California fans will be unable to see the musclemans films before polling day. TV channels have been told that under election law, if they screen a Schwarzenegger film they will have to offer the other 150 candidates equal air time. Perish the thought, seems to be the prevailing view among the channels, and who can blame them? — The Times

cised the way that his aides had opened his campaign.

Meanwhile, the action star has named billionaire businessman Mr Warren Buffett as his chief economic adviser, adding heavy-weight muscle to his election campaign.

Schwarzenegger's coup yesterday in enlisting one of the world's top investment wizards came as he took flak from critics for failing to lay out plans to tackle the state's financial morass if he wins the 7 October polls.

Democrats step up pressure over report

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, AUG. 5. Even as the United States is getting ready to interview afresh the Saudi national, Omar al-Bayoumi, for his knowledge of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration is coming under intense pressure from Congressional Democrats on at least two fronts.

First, many Democrats on Capitol Hill want a new investigation on the substance of those 28 classified pages out of a 900-page Congressional Panel Inquiry report. This section of the report is said to cover the involvement of foreign nations and sources in the 9/11 incidents; and unnamed officials and those who have supposedly read this classified section say that much of this pertains to Saudi Arabia.

Second, Democrats want that Saudi nationals to be quizzed in the United States; or at the very least, only by American investigative and intelligence agencies and without the presence of Saudi officials.

Very recently, the Saudi Foreign Minister air-dashed to Washington and had a meeting with the President, George W. Bush, in which he is said to have asked for declassification of the secret section. Mr. Bush rejected the request saying that it made "no sense" to do so at the time of ongoing investigations;

and declassifying will only help the "enemy". For its part, Saudi Arabia has expressed outrage at any suggestion that the Kingdom was even indirectly involved in the terror attacks.

Now, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency are getting ready to quiz Mr. Al Bayoumi all over again on the events leading up to 9/11. The FBI is said to have sent a team to Saudi Arabia over the weekend for the purpose; and the questioning is expected to start soon.

Over the weekend, Mr. Al Bayoumi has said that while he is ready to talk to the FBI or the CIA, this would have to be done in the presence of Saudi officials and in Saudi Arabia — a proposition that has come under fire from senior Democrats. The senior Senator from New York, Charles Schumer, has written to the Attorney General asking him to reject the conditions.

"Accepting these conditions, especially since Bayoumi appears to be a conduit through which Saudi officials were involved in 9/11, would show that the Bush administration continues to coddle the Saudi regime about its links to terrorism", Mr. Schumer said.

All that the White House is saying is that the U.S. is looking forward to having "access" to Mr. Al Bayoumi and "questioning" him; and that there is cooperation from Saudi Arabia.

SEE FINDS

6 AUG 2003

Divisions over terror report

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JULY 25. Senior Republicans and Democrats continue to be divided on whether or not the United States could have been spared of the terror attacks of 2001 as a Congressional inquiry into those tragic events shows major lapses on the part of the intelligence agencies, especially in a reluctance to share information and notes.

The Congressional Inquiry panel drawn from the intelligence committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives has also raised questions about the kind of involvement the former President, Bill Clinton, and the President, George W. Bush, may have had in the realm of counter-terrorism in the pre-9/11 period.

"Significant pieces of information in the vast stream of data being collected were overlooked, some were not recognised as potentially significant at the time and therefore not disseminated and some required additional action on the part of foreign governments before a direct connection to the hijackers could have been established," the report says.

"For all those reasons, the intelligence community failed to fully capitalise on available and potentially important information," the report said.

One of the major assessments has been that the various intelligence agencies did in fact have "a great deal" of valuable information on Osama bin Laden, at the same time none of this had anything specific on what was being planned for September 11, 2001.

The assessment has been made that starting at least in 1994 and into the summer of 2001, intelligence had been coming in that terrorists were contemplating the use of aircraft as a means of attack. But

WFO - FD - 16 26 J
this by itself did not generate any collective meeting of the intelligence agencies' mind, it has been pointed out.

For instance, intelligence agencies might be aware of suspected personnel taking flight training in the U.S., but this was passed off in part due to the fact that fees were low in the country and in a belief that Osama was getting people trained in flying with a view to moving men and material on planes he had purchased.

The information presented in the Congressional report also speaks of the specific failings of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Central Intelligence Agency and the U.S. military. For instance, the report faults the FBI for not acting enough on a tip from an informant that he knew two of what would be future hijackers.

The FBI field office in San Diego was not aware that the two named by the informant were linked to the Al-Qaeda. The report faults the CIA, for instance, for failing to take seriously an intelligence evaluation in early 2001 that the mastermind of 9/11, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, was seeking people to travel to the U.S.

"The attacks of September 11 could have been prevented if the right combination of skill, cooperation, creativity and

some good luck had been brought to task," remarked Senator Bob Graham, Senior Democrat and candidate for Presidency in November 2004 and one who co-chaired the investigation panel. But the other co-chair, Peter Goss, Republican Congressman was not so sure. "I can tell you right now that I don't know exactly how the plot was hatched on 9/11", he said. The Congressional Inquiry was not without its divisions, especially in the last phase of how much material should be made available to the public.

In fact, there is strong criticism that the 28-page reference to foreign support to the terrorists has been almost taken out. In particular, many wanted to know the precise role played by Saudi Arabia as it pertained to any funding of Al-Qaeda terrorists in the U. S. — a charge that has been rejected by that country.

The decision to leave out many portions of the report out of public has not gone down well among Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill. According to the Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, the classification must protect sources and methods "but it should not be used to protect reputations".

Riyadh dismisses report

RIYADH, JULY 25. A Saudi official today dismissed a U.S. Congressional report implying that Riyadh had a role in the September 11, 2001 attacks, saying the claims were motivated by domestic electoral concerns.

The official blamed the report's criticism on Democrat Congressmen seeking to discredit the U.S. President, Ge-

orge W. Bush's administration ahead of the presidential election in 2004.

"It is individuals with grudges against their own Government. They are running for elections," said the official.

"Most of the comments are from Democrats running for elections and we're an easy target for them." — Reuters

WMD: Democrats step up attacks on Bush

17/7
11/11

Washington: Democrats sharpened their attacks on the George W. Bush administration on Tuesday, emboldened by persistent questions over pre-war intelligence on Iraq's pursuit of nuclear, biological and chemical arms.



George Bush

US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director George Tenet has taken the blame for President Bush's January claim that Iraq had tried to buy nuclear material from Africa.

In a surprise statement last week, Mr Tenet said the reference—based on information from Britain—should not have been included in the President's January 28 state of the Union address because it had not been corroborated by US intelligence.

The White House has said that as far as they are concerned, the issue is over and done with, but Democrats refused to let the matter die, with the party's biggest guns taking to the floor of the Senate, holding news conferences, and taking to the airwaves to keep the controversy alive.

One leading Democrat accused the White House of a broad pattern of dissemblance in making its case for waging a war on Iraq.

"The misleading statement about African uranium is not an isolated incident. There is a significant amount of troubling evidence that it

was part of a pattern of exaggerations and misleading statements," Senator Carl Levin of Michigan said on the floor of the Senate. "It was not inadvertent. It was not a slip ... It

'10 kg of uranium missing from Iraq'

United Nations: At least 10 kilograms of uranium compounds could be missing from a looted Iraqi plant, but UN nuclear inspectors have said in a report that the material could not be used to make nuclear weapons.

The report from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and obtained by the Associated Press on Tuesday, could put to rest concerns that looters specifically went after uranium to possibly use for weapons, or that it fell into the wrong hands.

The report confirmed that the vast majority of uranium, feared stolen from Iraq's largest nuclear research facility at Tuwait-ha had been recovered, though it gave no figure. AP

was calculated. It was misleading."

Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy, one of the most senior Democrats in Congress, decried what he called a "bankrupt" US policy to-

ward Iraq. In a break with the Bush administration, the Republican-led House of Representatives is moving to scale back a nuclear weapons development plan that includes research into new "bunker-busting" nuclear warheads.

The appropriations committee approved a spending bill on Tuesday that excluded \$51 million the energy department has considered essential for the new nuclear weapons research programmes for the fiscal year beginning October 1.

The money had been stripped from the legislation by a subcommittee, and no effort was made on Tuesday to restore it as part of a \$27.1 billion bill to provide money for the energy department and other programmes.

Meanwhile, a senior British government adviser and weapons expert denied in London on Wednesday that he was the source of a disputed BBC report which alleged that a dossier on Iraq was "sexed up" by 10 Downing Street. The report, aired in late May on BBC radio, raised questions as to the way Prime Minister Tony Blair and his staff used intelligence in the run-up to the Iraq war.

"I believe I am not the main source," said David Kelly, a former weapons inspector, who was grilled before the House of Commons' foreign affairs committee. Agencies

WFO
5-2
7
1677

US House mulls sanctions on Myanmar

WASHINGTON, July 15. — The House of Representatives is today expected to pass a legislation to punish the Myanmar junta for its latest acts of repression by imposing economic sanctions and freezing the government's assets in the USA.

The legislation would expand the current ban on visits to the USA by Myanmar leaders and codifies the current policy of opposing new international loans or technical assistance to the country. 1677

The Senate on 11 June, passed a similar Bill by a 97-1 vote. The two measures must be reconciled before the legislation can be sent to President George W Bush, who is expected to sign it into law. — AP

US & Britain split over Iraq intelligence

W. UK is (C) by
H/T 13
WAZIN (C) 14/7

London, July 13

BRITAIN AND America suffered a complete breakdown in relations over vital evidence against Saddam Hussein and weapons of mass destruction, refusing to share information and keeping each other in the dark over key elements of the case against the Iraqi dictator.

In a letter released on Saturday night, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw reveals a catalogue of disputes between the two countries, lending more ammunition to critics of the war and exerting fresh pressure on Prime Minister Tony Blair.

The letter to the Foreign Affairs Committee, which investigated the case for war against Iraq, reveals that Britain ignored a request from the CIA to remove claims that Saddam was trying to buy nuclear material from Niger, despite concerns that the allegations were bogus. It also details a government decision to block information going to the CIA because it was too sensitive.

As diplomatic relations between America and Britain become increasingly strained over Iraq's WMD, Straw said that the government had separate evidence of the Niger link, which it has not shared with the US.

The British government, however, has tried to brush off reports of a serious rift with Washington over its intelligence on Saddam Hussein's nuclear ambitions used by the two allies to justify invading Iraq.

"All this stuff about rifts and rows doesn't hold water," a spokesman for Blair said on

Sunday, insisting that the CIA had not called into question the intelligence UK had relied on.

The revelations come just four days before Blair travels to America for his toughest visit there since he came to power in 1997. As well as WMD, the Prime Minister will also raise Britain's "serious concerns" over the treatment of British citizens held at Guantanamo Bay.

Straw's letter reveals:

■ That evidence given to the CIA by the former US ambassador to Gabon, Joseph Wilson — that Niger officials had denied any link — was never shared with the British.

■ That Foreign Office officials were left to read reports of Wilson's findings in the press only days before they were raised as part of the committee's inquiry into the war.

■ That when the CIA, having seen a draft of the September dossier on Iraq's WMD, demanded that the Niger claim be removed, it was ignored because the agency did not back it up with "any explanation".

On Saturday, Downing Street and Foreign Office sources said that "they would not blink" over the Niger claims.

War crime law scrapped

Belgium said Saturday it has decided to scrap a controversial war crimes law which has seen cases launched against President Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Belgian Premier Guy Verhofstadt said his new government has decided to scrap the law.

Agencies

US warns of 200 N Korean missiles pointing at Japan

AGENCIES
TOKYO/SEOUL, JULY 13

THE US government has warned Japan that North Korea has positioned 200 medium-range *Rodong* missiles to target Japan, a report said today, quoting a foreign ministry official here.

Washington had earlier told Tokyo that Pyongyang already possessed small nuclear warheads that could be mounted in ballistic missiles, the *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* said. The *Rodong* has an estimated range of 1,300 kilometres, which makes it capable of hitting anywhere in Japan.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported today that North Korea had told the United States it had completed reprocessing spent fuel rods to extract plutonium for nuclear weapons.

The agency also reported that North Korea has reprocessed all 8,000 spent fuel rods stored at its Yongbyong nuclear complex, giving the Communist state the means to make more atomic weapons.

According to the Yonhap, Chang Sung-Min, a top intelligence aide to former South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung, said UN-based North Korean diplomats had told US officials

that the operation had just been completed. "North Korean delegates told US officials in an unofficial meeting in New York on July 8 that the reprocessing of spent fuel rods was completed on June 30," Chang was quoted as saying.

Officials from South Korea's presidential office and the Unification Ministry had no immediate comment on the report.

Washington and Seoul are trying to draw North Korea into talks aimed at negotiating an end to its plans to acquire nuclear weapons. Intelligence reports have estimated that the isolated, impoverished state has already built one or

two such weapons.

If confirmed, the latest Yonhap report would show the North Koreans had made more progress than previously suspected in stockpiling the raw material for making nuclear arms. South Korea's intelligence agency told Parliament last week it estimated that the North had recently reprocessed a small number of the 8,000 spent fuel rods stored at Yongbyon, a city 75 km north of Pyongyang.

The rods were part of a plutonium-based nuclear weapons programme that was frozen under a 1994 nuclear agreement between North Korea and the US.

The pact unravelled earlier this year after US revelations of a covert N Korean scheme to enrich uranium for bomb-making.

The latest Yonhap report follows one by Japan's Kyodo news agency on Saturday, citing US sources as saying air samples taken close to Yongbyon had shown traces of krypton 85, a reprocessing by-product.

Citing Chang, now a US-based academic, Yonhap said that the North Koreans in New York had also repeated Pyongyang's insistence that the US agree to direct one-to-one talks to resolve the nuclear standoff.

—Reuters

US move to scrap H1-B visas

WASHINGTON, July 12. — A move is afoot in the US Congress to do away with the H1-B visa that has benefited countries such as India, particularly its software exports and IT professionals.

A Republican Congressman from Colorado, Mr Tom Tancredo, has introduced a 15-line Bill proposing to end all visas under the H1-B category, created in 1952 to provide the US economy with skilled foreign workers. The Bill comes at a time of a slump in the US economy and unemployment, resulting in an outcry against H1-B visas.

Mr Tancredo, chairman of the Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus, had earlier tried to limit H1-B visas without success. Terming Mr Tancredo's latest Bill "an anti-immigration, anti-tech move disguised as an economic stimulus", Mr Gopal Raju, chairman of the Indian American Centre for Political Awareness, said: "Congressman Tancredo has argued that current unemployment levels in the US warrant an outright cancellation of the H1-B programme in order to save those jobs for American engineers and programmers. The move will undercut the American hi-tech industry's ability to be a global leader." — IANS

13 JUL 2003

Democrats to push for open debate

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JUNE 14. Democrats on Capitol Hill are pushing for open hearings on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction even as they are mapping out a strategy that would serve this purpose and yet come away looking as if they were not pursuing a partisan agenda. Both in the Senate and in the House of Representatives, Democrats are looking for a way to push the issue a little harder knowing that Republicans who are in charge of Committees are clearly for closed door hearings.

"We can only authorise an investigation by a vote. If the majority holds together, the majority will prevail," a Congressional aide has been quoted. In fact, senior Democrats on the Hill have been saying that they are going to rely on the friendships with the Republican law makers to see if the hearings could be made open and are making the point that politics should not be seen as the reason behind the push.

"I am not political," remarked West Virginia Democrat, John Rockefeller IV, a ranking member of the Senate Intelligence Committee whose Chair recently decided to have closed door hearings on Iraq and its banned weapons.

15/6
HD-12
130

But there is a difference within the Democrats itself on Capitol Hill — the rhetoric on the subject is sharper among those who are in the fray for the Presidential elections of 2004. Candidates in the run for the big event of next November have not hesitated to lash out at the Bush administration, some even questioning the basic sincerity of the President, George W. Bush. In fact, former Governor of Vermont, Howard Dean, has gone to the extent of likening this Iraq's weapons of mass destruction controversy to the Watergate Scandal that eventually led to the downfall and resignation in disgrace of the former Republican President, Richard Nixon. "I never thought I'd hear this question raised in my lifetime again... But the question really is now going to become, What did the President know and when did he know it," Mr. Dean remarked recently.

Other Democrats running for the Presidency in 2004 have been far more critical of the administration foreign policy with the Congressman from Ohio, Dennis Kucinich, calling it 'fraudulent,' and Senator, Bob Graham, maintaining that the President 'lied' in that he did not tell the "whole truth."

At the heart of this ongoing debate on

Iraq is the perceived intelligence failure on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The administration is not admitting it, but is acutely embarrassed in coming up with virtually nothing on proscribed weapons more than two months after the 'liberation' of Iraq from Saddam Hussein. The existence of weapons of mass destruction was the chief rationale for going to war against Iraq. Even more embarrassing to this Republican administration is that it is now asking for "more time" to unearth the banned weapons — the same thing that United Nations weapons inspectors wanted in March but were derisively laughed out of court.

The debate on Iraq is bound to pit the intelligence community against the administration; and even at the outset, much of the focus is on George Tenet and the Central Intelligence Agency.

In the beginning stages of the debate, very few knowledgeable people are talking about any 'bungling' by the CIA.

Rather, many want to know what was the assessment of the CIA and how much of this was stretched by this administration to justify its objectives. On a different level, some law makers wanted to know what it was that the CIA told the U.N. weapons inspectors.

Rumsfeld snubs US army generals

Roland watson/ The Times, london

WASHINGTON, June 12. — Mr Donald Rumsfeld has delivered a spectacular snub to the US Army's high command, naming a retired general from a rival service to be its next chief.

The US Defence Secretary's choice of Peter Schoomaker, a four-star general and former commander of the secretive special operations unit Delta Force, highlights his deep unhappiness with the army's top brass. It follows the recent decision by Mr Rumsfeld to hand the political leadership of the army to James Roche, the former Air Force Secretary.

The bypassing of the army's mainstream list of candidates is unprecedented. It also

underlines Mr Rumsfeld's determination to shake up the US military's oldest and largest armed service, transforming it into the more agile and flexible fighting force that he has been pushing for since before the 11 September attacks.

The unprecedented move underlines Mr Rumsfeld's determination to transform the military's oldest and largest armed service into a more agile and flexible fighting force

General Schoomaker's background shows him as being very much of a mind with Mr Rumsfeld. Even before the start of the War on Terror, the 57-year-old

general was talking of a future in which there would be fewer "wars" and more "conflicts" — language that the White House has since adopted.

After training as an armour officer in the early 1970s, General Schoomaker moved to special forces in the late 1970s, holding a range of top posts. He was a company commander at the time of the failed attempt to rescue American hostages in Teheran in 1980, and retired in 2000 after commanding the 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment, Delta Force, one of whose main roles is counter-terrorism.

Mr Rumsfeld has struggled to win over the army's senior uniformed officers to his vision of a transformed service and his years at the Pentagon have been marked by internal wrangling.

13 JUN 2003

THE STATESMAN

Ashcroft seeks tougher laws

 7/6

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JUNE 6. At a time when there is considerable concern over the manner in which the Justice Department has been going about exercising its anti-terrorism powers, the Attorney General, John Ashcroft, is calling upon Congress to expand the present provisions in a way that would allow the Government to detain more suspects for an indefinite period of time as well to extend the death penalty to more persons accused of terrorist crimes.

The country's top law enforcement officer has also argued that he would like to address the attitude of some courts which have taken the position that persons taking training and joining up with terrorist groups abroad could not be charged in this country under the material support statute. "We need the law to make it clear that it's as much a conspiracy to aid and assist the terrorists, to join them for fighting purposes as it is to carry them a lunch or to provide them with a weapon", Mr. Ashcroft told a House of Representatives Committee.

Critical

House Democrats have been especially critical of the manner in which the Bush administration has gone about in administering the anti-terrorism laws

generally, making the point that rights of persons are being trampled upon. In fact, a recent report of the Justice Department's Inspector General found "significant problems" in the action of the administration toward 762 foreigners held on immigration violations in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Only one person has been charged in the United States and 505 have been deported. And many of those detained — some to as many as eight months — have complained of abuse.

But Mr. Ashcroft maintained that his Department policy is to detain people in this country who are illegal and for as long a time as necessary to clear them before deportation.

This, according to the Attorney General, is a policy "for which we do not apologise". The top law enforcement officer argued that he would investigate all abuse allegations. "We do not stand for abuse", he remarked. Sceptical lawmakers on Capitol Hill are not quite sure of adding to the existing powers of enforcement with many pointedly worried of the rights of people under the First and Fourth Amendment protections.

"My fear is that we may go to the point of changing the culture of America, the First Amendment protections and

the Fourth Amendment protections", said Sheila Lee Jackson, Democrat from Texas. "Some of us find that the collateral damage is greater than it needs to be in the conduct of this war", maintained Howard Berman, Democrat from California.

Even while taking note of the criticism of how the administration has gone about since the terror attacks of September 2001, Mr. Ashcroft has argued that things would have been "more difficult" in the U.S. without the provisions of the Patriot Act.

"It has been the key weapon used across America in successful counter-terrorist operations to protect innocent Americans from the deadly plans of terrorists", the Attorney General told lawmakers.

Supportive

House Republicans are generally supportive of the administration's response in the aftermath of Sept. 11, but senior members of the Grand Old Party have also made it clear that they are not going to blindly sign on dotted lines. "I believe the Department and Congress must be vigilant toward short-term gains which ultimately may cause long-term harm to the spirit of liberty and equality which animate the American character", the House Judiciary Committee Chair, James Sensenbrenner, remarked.

US ① - West Asia

WMDs and the 'missing link'

WALTER PINCUS &
DANA PRIEST
WASHINGTON, JUNE 5

VICE President Dick Cheney and his most senior aide made multiple trips to the CIA over the past year to question analysts studying Iraq's weapons programmes and alleged links to Al Qaeda, creating an environment in which some analysts felt they were being pressured to make their assessments fit with the Bush administration's policy objectives, according to senior US intelligence officials.

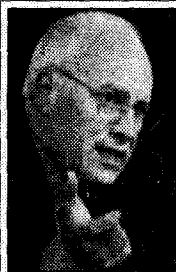
With Cheney taking the lead in the administration last August in advocating military action against Iraq by claiming it had weapons of mass destruction, the visits by the vice president and his chief of staff, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, "sent signals, intended or otherwise, that a certain output was desired from here," one senior agency official said on Wednesday.

Other agency officials said they were not influenced by the visits from the vice president's office, and some said they welcomed them.

But the disclosure of Cheney's unusual hands-on role comes on the heels of mounting concern from intelligence officials and members of Congress that administration may have exaggerated intelligence they received about Iraq to build a case for war.

While visits to CIA headquarters by a sitting vice president are not unprecedented, they are unusual, according to intelligence officials.

The exact number of trips by Cheney to the CIA could not be learned, but one agency official described them as "multiple." They were taken in addition to Cheney's regular attendance at President



Cheney paid a number of visits to CIA HQ.

Analysts say it could have forced agency to fall in line with govt view on WMDs

SPECIAL FROM
THE WASHINGTON POST

Bush's regular morning intelligence briefings and the special briefings the vice president receives when he is at an undisclosed location for security reasons.

A spokeswoman for Cheney would not discuss the matter on Wednesday. "The vice president values the hard work of the intelligence community but his office has a practice of declining to comment on the specifics of his intelligence briefings," said Cathie Martin, the vice president's public affairs director.

Concern over the administration's pre-war claims about Iraq has been growing in Congress and among intelligence officials as a result of the failure to uncover any weapons of mass destruction two months after the collapse of the Iraqi government. The CIA, has however, denied the charges.

Government sources said CIA analysts were not the only ones who felt pressure from their superiors to support public statements about the threat posed by Saddam by President Bush, Defence Secretary Don-

ald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and others.

Former and current intelligence officials said they felt a continual drumbeat, not only from Cheney and Libby, but also from Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, Feith, and less so from CIA Director George Tenet, to find information or write reports in a way that would help the administration make the case that going into Iraq was urgent.

"They were the browbeaters," said a former defence intelligence official who attended some of the meetings in which Wolfowitz and others pressed for a different approach to the assessments they were receiving. "In inter-agency meetings," he said, "Wolfowitz treated the analysts' work with contempt."

Others saw the intervention of senior officials as more responsible. Cheney was described by one senior analyst as "an avid consumer of intelligence and the asker of many questions".

Such visits permitted Cheney and Libby to have direct exchanges with analysts, rather than asking questions of the daily briefers who task others to prepare responses that result in additional papers, senior administration sources said. Their goal was to have a free flow of information and not to intimidate the analysts — although some may well have misinterpreted questions as directives, said some sources sympathetic to their approach.

A senior defence official also defended Wolfowitz's questioning: "Does he ask hard questions?"

Absolutely. I don't think he was trying to get people to come up with answers that weren't true. He's looking for data and answers and he gets frustrated with a lack of answers and diligence and with things that can't be defended."

Blair ready to assist House on Iraq probe

MARC CHAMPION
LONDON, JUNE 5

BRITISH PM Tony Blair on Wednesday promised to cooperate with a closed inquiry by Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee amid accusations he distorted intelligence information to build a pretext for going to war in Iraq.

The UK Parliament launched two inquiries into the issue, encouraged by the announcement of similar inquiries in the US, where questions are also being raised about the integrity of the intelligence that the Bush administration used to justify the war.

As politicians from his own party and opposition parties demanded a public, independent inquiry into the charges in Parliament on Wednesday, Blair fought back, challenging them to produce evidence to back their claims.

Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee will hold a separate public inquiry, but the committee head, Donald Anderson said his inquiry may not have access to the witnesses and documents it needs. The committees report to Blair. The PM promised to publish its findings, which would otherwise been kept a secret. —WSJ

6 JUN 2003

INDIAN EXPRESS

The intelligence of US and them

DURING the Cold War, Russo-American rivalry gave Central Intelligence Agency's mission a focus and unity — a standard by which resources were prioritised and operational goals and risks weighed and evaluated.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union has left US intelligence without a monolithic enemy and exposed its inadequacies. The world today faces an array of diverse security threats — terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, endemic ethnic grievances and conflicting nationalisms, religious fundamentalism and international drug trade and related criminal regimes, etc. The change in the threat spectrum has resulted in a tactical failure to develop real-time intelligence capabilities to combat the unconventional enemies.

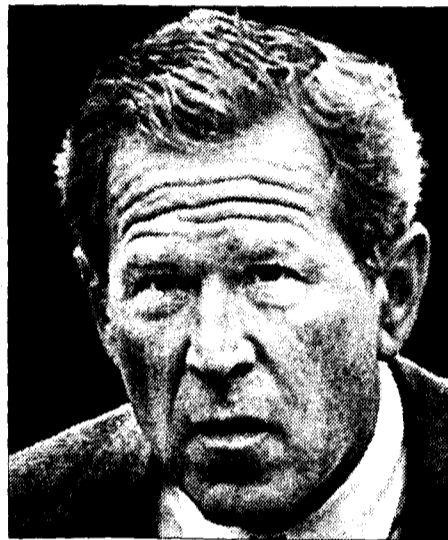
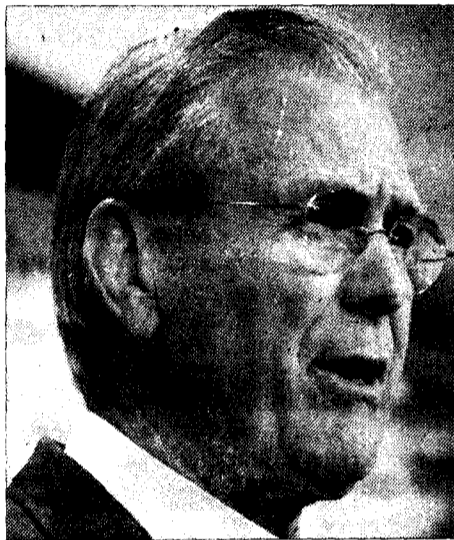
Moreover, the dramatic change in what Alvin and Heidi Toffler call the "knowledge terrain" of the world — the explosion of information capabilities in the private sector — has deprived the intelligence community of the information "high ground" and left it adrift in a sea of information and information resources.

At this defining moment in the history of the US intelligence, policymakers' assorted foreign intelligence requirements are rising steadily, but their vision, direction and leadership are woefully inadequate. Shifting security focus from containment to engagement to pre-emption has compounded the post-Cold War drift in US foreign policy. This has caused "an identity crisis at Langley (CIA headquarters)." In the absence of a prioritised global political context, CIA has been unable to prioritise its intelligence efforts — confidently, consistently and consensually.

During the Clinton years, adverse White House reactions to rediscovered Cold War abuses led to operational restrictions that eroded intelligence officers' morale and left the agency's Directorate of Operations skittish and defensive. Also, the national foreign policy fog has fuelled the growth of bureaucracy in CIA that is dominated at all levels today by "risk-averse conservers". Consequently, CIA is now primarily concerned with internal procedures and processes, with lots of people doing a lot many things, rather than a focused few concentrating on achieving top priority targets.

No wonder, the agency's performance has fallen. Its image has taken a severe beating because of its failure to effectively monitor the changing international security environ-

^{20/5} BIBHUTI BHUSAN NANDY on ways to beat the slough of despond resulting from the CIA's failure to monitor the changing international security environment



(Left) Donald Rumsfeld and (right) George Bush: Their shifting security focus from containment to engagement to pre-emption has compounded the post-Cold War drift in US foreign policy. This has caused 'an identity crisis at the CIA headquarters at Langley'.

ment and forewarn about major developments like India's 1998 nuclear tests and Al Qaida conspiracies leading to the attacks of 11 September 2001. Hence, CIA has become the media's and Capitol Hill's whipping boy.

CIA director George Tenet has, since 1998, taken steps to streamline the agency's internal management system and shape a sharper and clearer national vision of US intelligence interests and priorities. His efforts seemed to be bearing fruit, but cynical manipulation of the agency's analyses and assessments by Bush administration hawks to further their policy of pre-emptive strike on Iraq has deepened its identity crisis and raised disturbing questions about its future.

The US decision to invade Iraq hinged on the administration's oil-driven fixation for regime change and not on any hard-headed intelligence assessment of enemy strengths and weaknesses, and the geo-political ramifications of the war for Iraq and the rest of West Asia.

As the shrill Bush-Rumsfeld propaganda campaign depicting Baghdad as a seat of evil went on apace, the CIA knew full well that two decades of war, sanctions and arms inspection had reduced Saddam's Iraq to a to-

tering paper tiger. So, in his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on 19 March 2002, Tenet "neither singled out the Iraqi threat, nor described it with particular urgency". And during the Iraq debate in the Congress in October, he told the lawmakers: "The Iraqi President is unlikely to strike the US unless provoked."

But, as documented by part of the US media, Rumsfeld and Pentagon's other civilian bigwigs intensely pressured CIA analysts "to tailor their assessments of the Iraqi threat to help build a case against Saddam Hussain." Many CIA officials vented outrage at these brazen attempts to "politicise" and "contaminate" intelligence, but the agency finally gave in, providing hesitant and tentative support. It reported in ambivalent terms that Hussain "may have retained the capability to deliver" biological and chemical weapons "using modified aircraft or other... aerial vehicles", and that Baghdad "has had contacts" with Al Qaida and tactical cooperation was "possible."

The USA won quickly on Rumsfeld's strategy — a strategy built not so much on firepower as on information and the willingness to take risks. He pushed the Special Opera-

tions Forces to the central stage and gave military intelligence a much higher operational profile than ever before. A new military intelligence unit, codenamed Gray Fox, reporting directly to the secretary of defence, carried out large-scale "deep-penetration missions," tapping communications and laying the groundwork for overt military operations.

The US victory has enhanced Rumsfeld's standing enormously. He would now play a crucial role in defining the USA's defence, foreign and intelligence policies and priorities. He may now divert even more resources from CIA to strengthen Gray Fox and to promote his other military intelligence projects. Henceforth, sensitive special operations to influence events and policies could become the responsibility of military intelligence, with CIA playing second fiddle. More disconcerting for the agency is the possibility that its customers would now demand its analyses and assessments to be shaded or slanted to suit policy requirements.

CIA's current predicament has lessons for India's external intelligence outfit. Thanks to its non-performing image, the Research and Analysis Wing is getting increasingly marginalised. In the post-Kargil intelligence restructuring process, the government has transferred its counter-intelligence responsibility for the "near abroad" (neighbouring countries) to IB, and the newly created Defence Intelligence Agency now shares with it the onus to collect strategic military intelligence.

The *raison d'être* of RAW's existence will be questioned seriously if it fails to contribute towards containing cross-border terrorism and other external threats. New RAW chief's reported move to end the endemic factionalism in the organisation is welcome, but other more substantive remedies needed to overcome the crisis are:

- Give clear direction and re-focus national intelligence priorities on matters and areas truly important,
- Stem the drift and bureaucratic sclerosis, and the concomitant problem of personal and organisational risk aversion,
- Chop the dead wood and promote the talented and the energetic,
- Stop misuse of secret service funds that have exceeded all limits lately.

(The author is former Additional Secretary, Research and Analysis Wing, Cabinet Secretariat, retired Director-General, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, and former National Security Advisor Government of Mauritius.)

Ari Fleischer to quit

WASHINGTON, MAY 19. Ari Fleischer, White House spokesman, today announced that he was quitting and cited the pressure arising out of the September 11, 2001 attacks and Iraq and Afghanistan wars as main reasons behind his decision. He said he would resign in July to enter the private sector.



He would not speculate on who would take his place, but Presidential aides said the Deputy Press Secretary, Scott McClellan, was the likely successor. •

"I love this job," Mr. Fleischer told reporters at his informal Monday morning briefing. "I believe deeply about the President, George W. Bush, as a man and I believe deeply in his policies, but it's my time to go."

Mr. Fleischer said he wanted to leave the hard-driving job before Mr. Bush's re-election campaign geared up. "I want to do something more relaxing — like dismantling live nuclear weapons." Mr. Fleischer, 42, said he wanted to go on the speaking circuit and, maybe, do some writing. — PTI

20 MAY 2003

THE HINDO

Stability: U.S. plans deployment of global force in Iraq

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 3. The United States is planning an International Stabilisation Force for Iraq with the contingent coming from at least six European countries. According to one version, the force is going to be in three regions with Poland, the U.S. and Britain in charge of one region each.

The Bush administration has not come out with the specifics of the proposals which are still being worked out in Washington and European capitals. The U.S. and Britain, at the same time, are also working on a Security Council resolution that gives the world forum a say in humanitarian affairs but nothing on the peacekeeping front.

U.N. officials have said that some of its functional agencies are inside Iraq handling humanitarian issues; and that the forum has little to no interest in the policing of Iraq. The Bush administration has made no effort in hiding its opposition to any expanded role for the U.N., over and beyond on the humanitarian front. For the record, the U.S. is still maintaining that the U.N. will play a 'role' but what this role could be is yet to be openly formulated. And there

about 20,000 troops with the strength of the other two sectors to be in the control of Britain and Poland yet to be determined. Further, it is said that Italy, Spain, Ukraine, Denmark, The Netherlands and Bulgaria will also be contributing troops.

The overall charge for the stabilisation force for Iraq will be Gen. Tommy Franks. The U.S. would like to bring down its troop strength in Iraq and with this the kind of visibility that is now there. The force is intended not to replace the coalition forces but to augment their presence and take over the functions of providing security and stability. This will then free up the American troops to look for remnants of the Saddam Hussein regime.

The full-fledged stabilisation force for Iraq could take some time as planning is said to be extensive and one that involves many more nations than the major troop contributors or the six European nations.

In fact, many in the Asia Pacific and the Arab world are keen on being a part of the exercise in Iraq in a variety of ways including in the setting up of hospitals and donating money even if some are reluctant to send in troops for reasons of politics and religion.



U.S. soldiers search the bag of an Iraq employee returning to her job at the Archaeological Museum in Baghdad on Saturday. — AFP

are those like France, Germany and Russia who were totally opposed to the American war in Iraq and now do not wish to see Washington having a free run in the post conflict phase. As far as the international stabilisation force for Iraq, one thinking is that the American contribution could be in the neighbourhood of one division which is

THE HINDU

MAY 3

The US mass media are simply echoing the war cry of the Bush administration

Target practice

DIPLOMACY

K.P. NAYAR

It had to be heard to be believed! Jonathan Carl, a CNN correspondent who was standing in for a regular programme anchor, was commenting on American reaction to North Korea since Pyongyang embarked on a course of outright confrontation with the United States of America on the nuclear issue.

He named the North Korean leader as King Jong the second! How could it be? North Korea was so much in the news and how could a CNN correspondent who handled important beats in Washington get it wrong? But once again, Carl said it in his report: Kim Jong II.

Then it dawned on the more discriminating viewers. This CNN correspondent who was authoritatively commenting on the developing crisis between the US and North Korea did not have a clue to the name of the man who rules the world's only remaining Stalinist state. Perhaps, he had heard that North Korea is a communist dynasty? That Koreans, for a good part, are all Kims? That the founder of the North Korean state was a Kim too? Then surely, in the Marxist dynasty, his son and successor must be King Jong the second?

One of the more dangerous aspects of the current countdown to war with Iraq is the role of the US media.

With rare exceptions, American television has taken upon itself the task of selling president George W Bush's war against Saddam Hussein.

In this propaganda effort for the White House, it does not offer readers any adequate choice of views or news. It openly dismisses those who speak up against the coming conflict even on the few occasions when they are called to appear on television screens. It long ago gave up the pretence that as a free media, it was offering viewers enough balance and variety so that they could independently make up their minds on the question of overthrowing Saddam Hussein through an invasion.

The role of the print media in the US has been slightly better, but not significantly different as to claim that its coverage of Iraq-related developments is truly free.

The countdown to the second Gulf war led by the US is a fascinating story of diplomacy. Whether the US invasion of Iraq takes place or not, it will have ramifications which will dominate the rest of this decade because of the diplomacy which has attended the progress of the war preparations. It is clear now that even if war is avoided in Iraq without a regime change, Saddam Hussein will never again be Saddam Hussein — as Iraqis and the rest of the world knew this cruel dictator, who, without doubt, has been the worst enemy of his people. It

bigotry and xenophobia. It has led to mass hysteria.

On Monday, 21 people died and 57 others were injured in a stampede in a night club in Chicago. The stampede was caused by panic after security guards at the club used pepper spray to separate a group of brawling women. As the pepper spray spread, someone shouted that the club was under a terrorist attack, which in turn, triggered the exodus.

In the last fortnight, America's media has readily gone along with theories by the Bush administration that their country is under threat of an imminent terrorist attack, possibly on the scale of the destruction of the World Trade Centre's twin towers.

The administration has encouraged people to buy duct tape, plastic sheets and the like and prepare "safe" rooms in their houses in the event of a biological weapons attack. The recent track record of American intelligence does not lend any credence to these alarmist warnings. Indians may remember that during their preparations for the 1998 nuclear tests, they outwitted both US satellites and human intelligence.

A terrorist attack may well occur in the US if Bush invades Iraq, but that does not require any intelligence. It only requires the application of logic. But the American media, which takes pride in having brought down a president over Watergate, has been unwilling to investigate the hysteria whipped up by the state, presumably because it suits the administration's war plans.

Because America's mass media, by and large, has abdicated the responsibility to report the truth and gone along willingly with the administration's plans for war, there is confusion in the minds of Americans what the conflict with Iraq is all about.

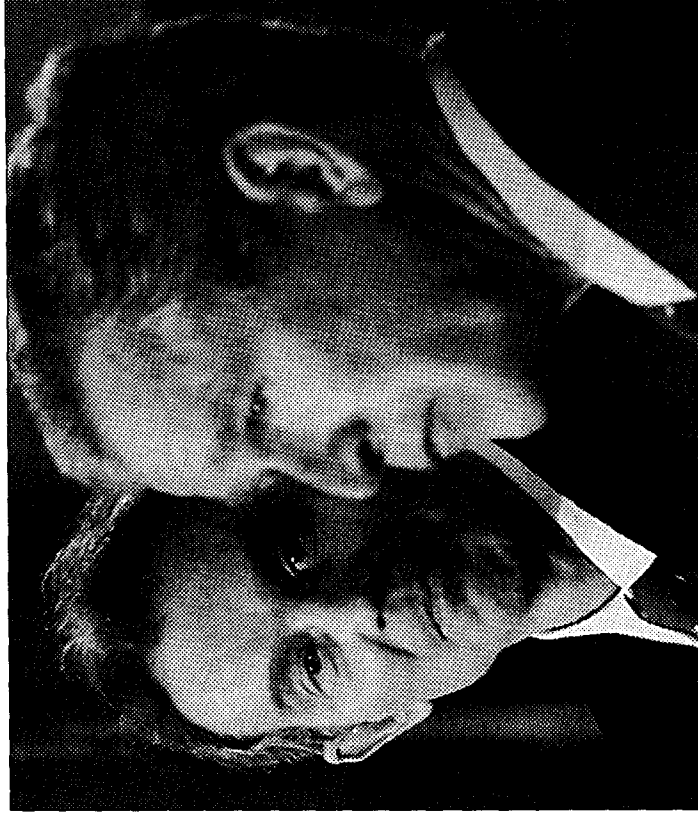
It is not unusual to find Americans who equate Saddam Hussein with al Qaeda. Or those who believe that Iraqi citizens were at the controls of hijacked planes which slammed into the WTC and the Pentagon. If it were not for such confusion, Bush would have been in the same boat as Blair whose people are now beginning to question the legitimacy of his policies.

Bush is more vulnerable in some ways than Blair because the White House has an additional worry: the state of the US economy. Last year, after a joint press conference with China's president Jiang Zemin, Bush joked that he wished he could deal with the American media the way Jiang treated China's captive media. Little did America's 43rd president know that his wish would be granted so soon, at least on the policy challenge of dealing with Iraq.

envoy like Amman at their summit, but not those states which were lining up behind Washington for war.

That the idea of a single Europe, which was to formally unite both its former communist East and the democratic West had receded, at least in the

to pass through its soil. Nor would it allow any US plane to use its air space as part of the war preparations. Austria is geographically crucial for these preparations because the Alpine passes are the quickest route for the large number of US troops stationed in Ger-



Bush might have been in the same boat as Blair, whose people are now questioning the legitimacy of his policies

short run, became apparent when the French president, Jacques Chirac, warned East Europeans that they were not yet in the "family" and may find it difficult to be accepted if their beacon was Washington and they had no hesitation about splitting Europe to serve America's objectives.

It is futile to look for all this news or analysis on TV, which is the main source of news for most Americans. Or in the bulk of the American print media. Instead of incisive comment or intelligent analysis, what is dished out in the name of news and current affairs, with rare exceptions, is a mixture of militaristic innuendo,

many to be moved east, if and when necessary.

When an EU summit was held on Monday, it became clear that Tony Blair's efforts on behalf of Washington to drum up support in Europe for regime change in Baghdad by force had changed the politics of Europe, at least for the foreseeable future.

On Wednesday last week, when EU ambassadors met in Brussels, Britain and Denmark suggested that 13 candidate countries for EU membership should be invited for Monday's summit. Most of them have signed one or the other of the two European statements claimed by Washington as evidence of the continent's support for Bush.

The Greek presidency of EU shot down the proposal on the ground that they were outsiders yet and had no place at the summit. However, Greece and the majority of EU members favoured the presence of the United Nations secretary-general, Kofi Annan, at the meeting.

The message, therefore, was that it was all right for the EU to have a peace

would be futile to look for any of this in the US media.

A recurring theme in the American media — including the print media — these days is that the majority of European nations supports the war against Iraq and that France and Germany are isolated on the Continent. This assessment is based on the letter written by Britain's Tony Blair and seven other European leaders which was published last month in *The Times* of the United Kingdom, *The Wall Street Journal* and some other European newspapers. This letter, which is being quoted *ad nauseum* on American TV and print media as being supportive of Bush, was followed by a second statement on similar lines signed by leaders of 10 former Communist states of Europe.

A very large section of the US media may be given the benefit of doubt for trumpeting the alleged isolation of France and Germany because a majority of American newspaper editors and TV anchors, in-sular as they are, would not be able to tell themselves or their staff, without consulting an atlas or an almanac, that Europe has 46 sovereign states.

After all, many viewers watched in disbelief when CNN's Darryn Kagan asked her correspondent in Europe why the Libyan accused of bombing a Pan Am flight was not sentenced to death when the verdict in the case was delivered. She did not know that the European Union states do not have the death penalty.

But when learned and experienced columnists from the academia, the strategic community and diplomacy are given space in print or time on the screen to create the myth that Europe — except France and Germany — is lining up behind Bush, the reality that is being ignored is that in spite of the two separate statements by leaders of Europe, 28 of the continent's 46 heads of state or government are unwilling to say anything at all supporting the White House on Iraq.

Or take the EU. It has 15 members of whom Britain, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Portugal and the Netherlands are backing Bush. They make only two fifths of the EU states. A majority of nine members of the group, including France and Germany, is opposed to the war which the White House is contemplating.

One geographically crucial EU member, Austria, told the Americans last week that it would not allow US troops proceeding to Iraq for an attack

NASA 'removed' 5 experts who warned about shuttles

NEW YORK, FEB. 4. The U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) removed five members of a nine-person panel and two of its consultants after they warned it last year that its shuttles faced safety troubles and urged an increase in the budget to correct the problem.

A sixth member, retired three-star Admiral Bernard M. Kauderer, was so upset at the sackings that he quit the group.

The panel, an advisory body comprising a group of industry and academic experts, is charged with monitoring safety at the NASA.

Successive administrations reduced the budget and several safety concerns were swept under the carpet.

Rather than looking for more, the NASA was looking for less, an expert told a television network.

Problems with the tiles that protect the shuttle body from searing heat as it re-enters the earth were known for long but ignored, critics say. It is these tiles that are now the main focus of inquiry in the Columbia break-up as it was re-entering the earth's atmosphere, killing

seven astronauts, including India-born Kalpana Chawla.

Some of the sacked experts now say the agency was trying to "suppress" their criticisms.

NASA denial

The NASA denies that they were fired for raising safety concerns and said it changed the charter of the group so that new members, younger and more skilled, could be added.

"It had nothing to do with shooting the messenger," Sonja Alexander, a spokeswoman at the NASA headquarters in Washington, said.

The New York Times quoted members of Congress who heard testimony from the panel last spring as saying that they would re-examine whether budget constraints had undermined safety, but several said they doubted it. — PTI

Leaders to pay tributes to Kalpana

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, FEB. 4. Leaders will pay tributes to the India-born astronaut, Kalpana Chawla, at a condolence meeting to be held in the Parliament House Annexe tomorrow evening.

Organised at the suggestion of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, the meeting will be attended by the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, and the Lok Sabha Speaker, Manohar Joshi, besides other political leaders.

The meeting is being organised by the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry and would be telecast live, a spokesman of the Prime Minister's Office said here.

The ISRO Chairman, K. Kasturirangan, would also participate in the function as a special invitee.

INDU

HUMAN PARTS AMONG SPACE SHUTTLE DEBRIS

Three panels to probe Columbia disaster

WS ①
HD 1

3/2

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, FEB. 2. A stunned, grieving United States has started looking for answers to the horrific accident that burned up the space shuttle, Columbia, over Texas on Saturday, resulting in the loss of seven astronauts, including an Indian-American and an Israeli national.

"The Columbia is lost; there are no survivors," a mournful President, George W. Bush, said at the White House.

Nothing could have captured the tragic moment better. "The same creator who names the stars also knows the names of

the seven souls we mourn today. The crew of shuttle Columbia did not return safely to earth; yet we can pray that all are safely home." But Mr. Bush left no one in doubt of what the future held. "The cause in which they died continues. Mankind is led into the darkness beyond our world by the inspiration of discovery and the longing to understand. Our journey into space will go on."

Three independent panels will probe the disaster. A panel of experts from the United States Air Force and the Navy, officials from the Transportation Department and other Federal Agencies will constitute one panel.

A second will be from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration itself and the third from the U.S. Congress — the Science Committee of the House of Representatives.

The shuttle debris is strewn on the ground, over an area of about 120 miles and at least across two States. There were reports of human remains having been recovered in east Texas. A hospital employee was reported to have found a charred torso, thighbone and skull. Two young boys also reportedly found a charred human leg in their farm. Several pieces of the spacecraft, including one which was as big as a compact car, were also found on the Texas-Louisiana line.

The NASA officials have started looking into every possible clue in an exercise that will possibly take several months to

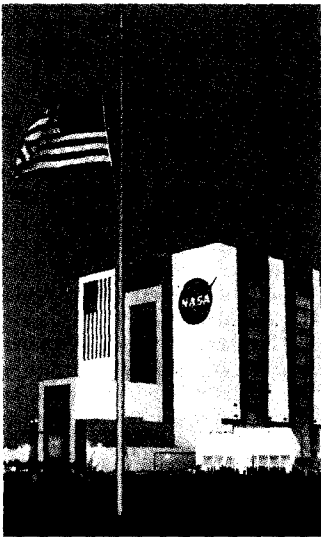


A helmet, believed to be from the space shuttle Columbia, found in Nacogdoches, Texas on Sunday. — AP

conclude. They are talking about at least three possibilities: damage from foam insulation to the left wing of the shuttle at the time of launch on January 16; structural failure; and a terrific heat build-up in the shuttle in the aftermath of the loss of the heat shield tiles leading to a total failure of the controls. A fourth factor that is also being looked into is the age of the shuttle; but NASA quickly dismissed it on the ground that space vehicles were kept in "pristine shape."

Many times in the past, the tiles are known to have come off during takeoff; and in each instance, a determination was made on the kind of impact this could have upon re-entry and landing. In Columbia's case, an

assessment of the damage from foam insulation to the left wing had been made. It was concluded on January 16 that the damage was "minor" and that it posed no safety hazard.



The U.S. flag flies at half-mast at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, on Sunday. — AP

THE HINDU

— 3 7 0 7 0 0

COLUMBIA / NASA LEFT WITH THREE SHUTTLES

U.S. space missions on hold

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, FEB. 2. The three independent panels that will take up the investigation of the crash of the space shuttle Columbia on Saturday will look into all aspects of the tragedy, including the information collected by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in the final minutes of the descent that saw the spacecraft breaking up at a height of 200,000 feet over the State of Texas. According to officials of the NASA, the data under tight scrutiny, will include transmissions from the crew and the analysis of debris and data collected by various Government agencies including the military.

"We will be poring over that data 24 hours a day for the foreseeable future", remarked the project director of the shuttle, Ron Dittemore.

The losses of the Challenger in 1986 and the Columbia yesterday leaves the NASA with only three more shuttles — the Atlantis, Discovery and Endeavour.

NASA is saying that while there will be a "hold" on future shuttle flights, this is going to be only a temporary phenomenon. "We're going to get together and fix this problem. We are going to launch satellites again", Mr. Dittemore remarked.

In the aftermath of the 1986 disaster of the Challenger, shut-



NASA Headquarters personnel ponder over the loss of the space shuttle Columbia, in Washington on Saturday. — AP

tle launches were shut down for almost three years. What is being pointed out is that in the aftermath of the Challenger disaster, the then President, Ronald Reagan, had appointed a 13-member Commission headed by the former Secretary of State, William Rogers, to investigate the accident.

The Commission, after four months of study, came to the conclusion that an O-ring seal leaked in the right booster rocket and this had ruptured the shuttle tank, leading to the fiery end seconds after take-off.

In the context of the disintegration of the Columbia on Saturday, NASA is saying that all avenues will be pursued even as the first attention is on the heat

shields protecting the shuttle. A piece of the insulating foam had hit the left wing of the shuttle, but at the time of the launch this was determined to be minor without any consequences upon re-entry of the spacecraft into the earth's atmosphere and safe landing.

Over the last two days, one of the themes constantly heard in the media and elsewhere is that Columbia was 22 years old and was just about to complete its 28th mission when it failed with disastrous consequences.

Columbia's first mission was on April 12, 1981; and apart from the routine inspections and maintenance schedules, the shuttle had undergone a major retrofitting in 1999-2000.

THE HINDU

Columbia falls apart just before touchdown

US officials rule out terrorist hand

Washington: US Space Shuttle Columbia carrying Indian-American astronaut Kalpana Chawla and six others burst into flames and disintegrated into pieces at a height of 63,000 metres minutes before it was to land at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida on Saturday. The possibility of any survivor appears to be remote.

People in North Texas reported hearing a "big bang" and television channels showed what appeared to be burning debris falling around the same time its communication with the mission control room was lost at 7.30 p.m. (IST), about 16 minutes before its landing time.

Although NASA is yet to declare whether the shuttle had exploded, broken up or crashed, it has lowered the flag near its countdown clock to half mast, indicating that it fears the worst. Images aired on CNN showed several white trails emanating from the shuttle, suggesting that Columbia may have disintegrated as it re-entered the atmosphere.

The Karnal-born 42-year-old Chawla was on her second space mission in five years. In New Delhi, Chawla's relatives, including her brother, went into a state of shock after hearing about the tragedy.

"We are not in a position to say anything. We are too

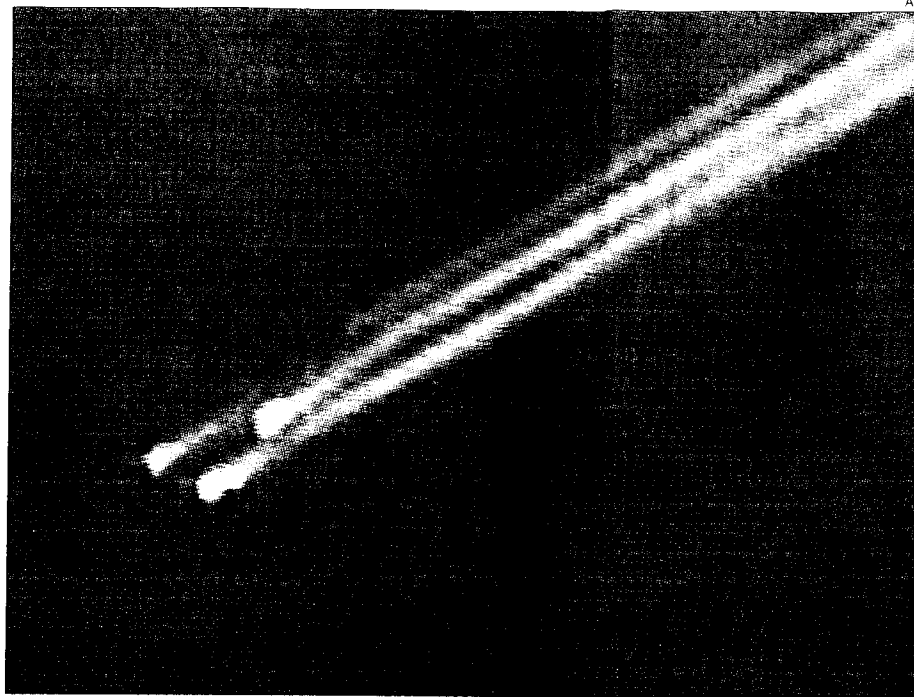
shocked," a relative said when asked about her brother Sanjay Chawla's whereabouts.

Columbia was returning to Earth after a 16-day mission and was cruising at a speed of over 20,000 km per hour; several times the speed of the sound. It was due to land at 7.46 p.m. (IST).

There is no possibility that the the space shuttle could have made a successful emergency landing from the high altitude at which it was travelling when it lost contact with NASA, the US space agency said. "I'm afraid that is not really an option at this altitude," NASA spokesman Kyle Herring told CNN.

With the worst feared, NASA immediately mobilised search and rescue teams and declared an emergency. "A contingency for the space shuttle has been declared," the mission control room said. NASA also asked people to avoid coming in contact with the debris.

US officials said there were no signs at this point that terrorism was involved. Security had been tight for the mission because of the presence of Ilan Ramon, the first Israeli astronaut. The presence of Ramon, a colonel in Israel's air force and former fighter pilot, resulted in an increase in security, not only for Columbia's launch, but also for its planned landing. Agencies



EMBERS AND THE GRIM REAPER ACROSS THE BLUE SKIES OF TEXAS: A contrail from the disintegrating Space Shuttle Columbia scythes through the sky in this image taken from television on Saturday

President Kalam expresses concern

New Delhi: President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam on Saturday night expressed deep concern over the fate of the space shuttle Columbia with seven astronauts, including Indian-American Kalpana Chawla on board.

"The president is very concerned over this and he is closely following the developments," a Rashtrapati Bhavan spokesman said.

Nuclear scientist and former Atomic Energy Commission chief R. Chidambaram said he was very sorry to hear about the sad news about Kalpana Chawla and other astronauts in the space mishap. "I would not be able to comment any more now as I am awaiting details," the principal scientific secretary to the government of India said. The crash of the space shuttle was a "big tragedy," chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation K. Kasturirangan said.

He said he had communicated with Chawla and that "she was an accomplished astronaut". NASA would sort out the problem and spring back, he said. PTI

'The whole universe is my native land'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: "I was not born for one corner," said astronomer Kalpana Chawla quoting philosopher Seneca. "The whole universe is my native land."



Kalpana Chawla

only India but her hometown Karnal on the

space map, leading many jubilant locals to point out the similarity between Karnal and Canaveral. Her school even named its science room Kalpana Vigyan Kaksh.

She came from a conservative family, but, according to her mother Sanyogita, she was always "different". She cut her own hair, never wore ironed clothes, learnt karate and had pictures of space shuttles on her walls. She made up for her 'tomboyishness' by excelling at academics and topped her career with a Ph.D in aerospace engineering from the University of Colorado. Her love affair with the skies extended to her personal life and she married freelance flying instructor Jean-

Pierre Harrison. On her first mission, Kalpana Chawla travelled 6.5 million miles in 252 orbits of the Earth and logged 376 hours and 34 minutes in space.

"I want to go out in the blue yonder," she once said. And it was out there in the blue yonder that the end came. On the NASA website, Kalpana Chawla's bio-data is meticulously detailed. The last entry says January 2003, an entry that was supposed to carry details of her space mission but will now carry the details of her death. For the Punjabi girl who dreamed of spreading her wings in space, it is terribly ironic that the sky should have turned into a graveyard.

3 FEB 2003

2 FEB 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Muslim immigrants rush to meet U.S. deadline

LOS ANGELES, JAN. 11. Facing a deadline, thousands of men from 13 mostly Arab or Muslim countries lined up to register with U.S. immigration authorities under a post-Sept. 11 crackdown that has alarmed civil liberties groups and stirred fears of mass arrests.

Lisa Hinks, a British executive, clutched her baby and wept as she arrived at the INS office here with her Tunisian-born husband. She said she learned about Friday's deadline watching television.

"Nobody told us about it, nobody," she said. "Immigration has our details. It makes us feel like criminals."

Rakya Ahmed, who arrived with an 18-year-old friend from Yemen holding an expired tourist visa, added: "We don't know what they are going to do with him. I expect anything after what happened after Sept. 11."

Civil liberties advocates say the programme is an inefficient way to find terrorists and will alienate people who could help the Government.

Allegations that innocent people were arrested during the first phase of the programme in

December have led to demands for a Justice Department investigation.

About 7,200 men aged 16 or older were expected to check in with Immigration and Naturalisation Service offices around the country. The programme was publicised nationally on radio, TV and the INS's web site, according to an agency spokesman in New Jersey.

While few problems were reported, 200 protesters in San Francisco chanted, "Being Middle Eastern is not a crime," and 100 people stood behind police barricades outside an INS building in New York.

Adam Carroll, a member of the advocacy group, Islamic Circle, called the registration a form of ethnic profiling. "Terrorism is not just a Muslim manifestation," he said.

Last month, some 400 immigrants were arrested — mostly in Southern California — when they came forward to be photographed, fingerprinted and questioned. Most have been released on bail, but activists said the names and whereabouts of dozens more remain unclear.

"I think the INS has really ac-

knowledgeed that lots of mistakes were made," said Ramona Ripston, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California. "There were many flaws. They are saying that anyone who is here legally will not be detained." An INS spokesman said steps were being taken to avoid large-scale detentions like those last month.

The arrests may have frightened immigrants and led to a lower-than-expected turnout on Friday. At times, there were more activists outside the Federal building in Los Angeles than people lining up to register. Some 24,200 men aged 16 or older from 20 countries are required to register by next month.

Around 3,000 men from Iraq, Iran, Libya, Sudan and Syria had to register by Dec. 16.

Another 7,200 from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Lebanon, Morocco, N.Korea, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Tunisia, the UAE and Yemen had to sign up by Friday. An estimated 14,000 visitors from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have time until Feb. 21. — AP



Hundreds of protesters gather at the Immigration and Naturalization office in downtown San Francisco on Friday, as citizens of many countries line up to register under a security programme that has sparked a civil rights lawsuit alleging illegal arrests. — AP