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WAR PASSIONS: Children hold up placards criticising President George Bush at an anti-war march in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday. (Right) Playmates autograph photos during the launch of Playboy's Operation Playmate, an e-mail service putting US military personnel stationed in Iraq in touch with Playmate playmates.

CRISIS UPDATE

British troop cut

THE NUMBER of British troops serving in the Gulf could be cut dramatically from 45,000 to 5,000 if the US-led war against Iraq drags on for at least six months, according to a senior government official quoted by a British newspaper on Saturday. "Because of the massive pressures on our boys all over the world we will have to consider our commitment in the Gulf very carefully over the coming weeks," *The Daily Mirror* quoted the source as saying. "If this is dragging on in six months' time I would expect forces to be cut from 45,000 to 5,000. Australia and the US will have to take more of the burden," the source said as the conflict entered its second week.

AFP London

Iraq snubs UN

IRAQ ON Saturday rejected a new Security Council resolution renewing the seven-year-old oil-for-food programme under sole charge of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. "Only Iraq can administer this programme," Information Minister Mohammed Said al-Sahhaf told a Press conference in response to the resolution adopted by the council unanimously on Friday. "They have made a mockery of the (1995) resolution" which paved the way for the launch of the programme on which an estimated 60 per cent of Iraqis now depend for food and medicine, Sahhaf said.

AFP Baghdad

Friendly fire victim

A BRITISH soldier was missing and presumed dead and four others were injured in an apparent friendly fire incident in Iraq, the fifth such casualty since the war began, the British ministry of defence said on Saturday. "An incident has occurred involving a group of British light armoured vehicles belonging to D Squadron of the Blue and Royals of the assault cavalry regiment," a spokesman said of the incident, which took place on Friday. "One British soldier is missing, believed killed and four others injured. The incident is currently being investigated," he said.

AFP London

Protective lotion

THE US government has approved a skin lotion to protect US soldiers from possible chemical attack. "If used in time, this lotion can help prevent the serious burns and deaths that result from exposure to chemical warfare agents," Mark McClellan, the head of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), said in a statement on Friday. The Canadian-made lotion can remove or neutralise agents such as T-2 fungal toxin that may come in contact with the skin. Soldiers must apply the Reactive Skin Decontamination Lotion as soon as possible after exposure to a chemical agent, the FDA said.

AFP Washington

No checks, N Korea refuses to do an Iraq

Seoul, March 29

NORTH KOREA vowed on Saturday to resist all international demands on the Communist state to allow nuclear inspections or agree to disarm, saying Iraq had made this mistake and was now paying the price.

"The DPRK would have met the same fate as Iraq had it compromised its revolutionary principle and accepted the demand raised by the imperialists and its followers for 'nuclear inspection and disarmament'," the ruling party daily *Rodong Sinmun* said in a commentary.

DPRK is an acronym for the state's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Pyeongyang's latest comments came as US commanders running the invasion of Iraq ordered a pause in a northward push toward Baghdad due to stiff resistance and short supplies.

Meanwhile, on the divided Korean peninsula, American and South Korean forces allied against the North conducted field exercises involving mock battles and amphibious landings. "The DPRK will increase its self-defensive capability and fully demonstrate its might under the uplifted banner of the army-based policy," *Rodong Sinmun* said.

A spokesman for South



A North Korean soldier surveys the demilitarised zone dividing the two Koreas at Panmunjom.

Korea's Unification Ministry declined comment.

Earlier on Saturday, South Korea's unification minister sought to calm frayed nerves on the peninsula by assuring a parliamentary committee that the US has no intention to attack North Korea.

"Concerns felt by the (South Korean) public and voiced by the media of a potential US attack on North Korea are not based on facts," another Unification Ministry official quoted Minister Jeong Se-hyun as

telling lawmakers.

"There has been no mention by US government officials of an attack against North Korea," Jeong was quoted as saying.

The latest crisis began in October, when US officials said North Korea had admitted working to develop nuclear arms.

North Korea has embarked on a campaign to force Washington to enter direct talks and negotiate a non-aggression pact.

Meanwhile, top South Korean officials sounded out major powers for a peaceful resolution to Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions.

In Washington, South Korea's Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan met secretary of state Colin Powell and suggested that the United States take the initiative toward North Korea along the lines of Nixon administration's overtures to Communist China in the 1970s.

Powell told reporters after his meeting that Yoon had given him some ideas to deal with North Korea, but Washington still preferred a multilateral forum.

Seoul's Defence Minister Cho Young-ki met his Japanese counterpart Shigeru Ishiba in Seoul on Saturday and reiterated South Korea's policy of dealing with North Korea through talks.

Reuters

War 'partner' says US goofed up

Ljubljana, March 29

THE US had mistakenly named Slovenia as a partner in its war against Iraq and even offered it a share of the money budgeted for the conflict, the tiny Alpine nation said on Thursday.

One day after hundreds of Slovenians hit the streets to protest the inclusion of their nation in the US war budget, Prime Minister Anton Rop said Washington goofed.

"When we asked for an explanation, the state department told us we were named in the document by mistake as we are not a member of the coalition against Iraq," Rop told a news conference.

Slovenia was one of the states named in the \$75 billion US war budget that must be approved by Congress and includes grants to "partners" in the US-led military action.

Slovenia was slated to get \$4.5 million from the budget, which Rop said would not be forthcoming. "We are a part of no such coalition."

Slovenia also said on Thursday it had granted a US request to allow air-planes with humanitarian aid, refugees and wounded fly over the country to and from Iraq. But it stuck to an earlier decision to hold off a US request to transport military equipment through the country, until the UN Security Council authorises force against Iraq.

Reuters

US pilots say bombing Baghdad exhilarating

Aboard USS Abraham Lincoln, March 29

AMERICAN PILOTS who bombed Baghdad on Friday speak of the thrill of a successful attack in the teeth of fierce anti-aircraft fire. "It was exhilarating," Commander Jeff Penfield said after landing his F/A-18E Super Hornet back on the Abraham Lincoln, which is supporting the US-led invasion force from the Gulf.

"It was all calm in the city" he said. "Once those bombs hit all hell broke loose. I bet we saw 15 SAMs (surface-to-air missiles), about three or four up our way so we had to defend a couple of times. It was exhilarating."

Under the bombardment, blasts battered government buildings and pounded the southern outskirts of Baghdad, where US-led forces have been targeting the city's defenders on the ground.

US commanders and the pilots say they are taking great pains to limit civilian casualties in their efforts to overthrow President Saddam Hussein. But Iraqi officials said over 50 were killed by a blast at a busy market during Friday's raids.

It was the second such Iraqi accusation this week. US officials have said they are still looking into those claims. Up in the skies over the Iraqi capital, Penfield led



A woman carries a child past British tanks at a checkpoint on the outskirts of Basra on Saturday.

a "strike package" of three planes that dropped 1,000-pound laser-guided bombs on mobile targets near the city.

Flying through dense anti-aircraft fire, they sought targets with infra-red sensors and night-vision goggles. Baghdad is the most dangerous of destinations: "This is the most demanding, probably the most threatening place you can go. But at the same time you get an element of excitement because that's where the best targets still are and those targets have to go away so the ground forces can go in."

So far, all US pilots have come back to the Lincoln. And on Friday night, they came back buzzing: "I can't sleep yet," said Penfield. "I'll go down and get something to eat, unwind, bask in the glory a little bit."

Reuters

'We had a great day, we killed a lot of people'

Dexter Filkins Iwaniya (Iraq), March 29

AT THE base camp of the Fifth Marine Regiment here, two sharpshooters, Sgt. Eric Schrumphf, 28, and Cpl. Mikael McIntosh, 20, sat on a sand berm and swapped combat tales while their column stood at a halt on the road to Baghdad. For five days this week, the two men rode atop armoured personnel carriers, barreling up Highway 1.

They said Iraqi fighters had often mixed in with civilians from nearby villages, jumping out of houses and cars to shoot at them, and then often running away. The Marines said they had little trouble despatching their foes, most of whom they characterised as ill-trained and cowardly.

"We had a great day," Sergeant Schrumphf said. "We killed a lot of people."

Sergeant Schrumphf said that while most Iraqi soldiers had posed little danger, a small number appeared to be well-trained and calm under fire. Some, he added, wore black suits, described by some Iraqis as the uniform of the Saddam fidayeen, a militia of die-hard loyalists of Saddam Hussein.

Both Marines said they were most frustrated by the practice of some Iraqi soldiers to use unarmed women and children as shields against American bullets. They called the tactic cowardly but agreed that it had been effective. Both Sergeant Schrumphf and Corporal McIntosh said they had declined several times to shoot at Iraqi soldiers out of fear they might hit civilians. Corporal McIntosh said, "If the risks outweigh the losses, then you don't take the shot."

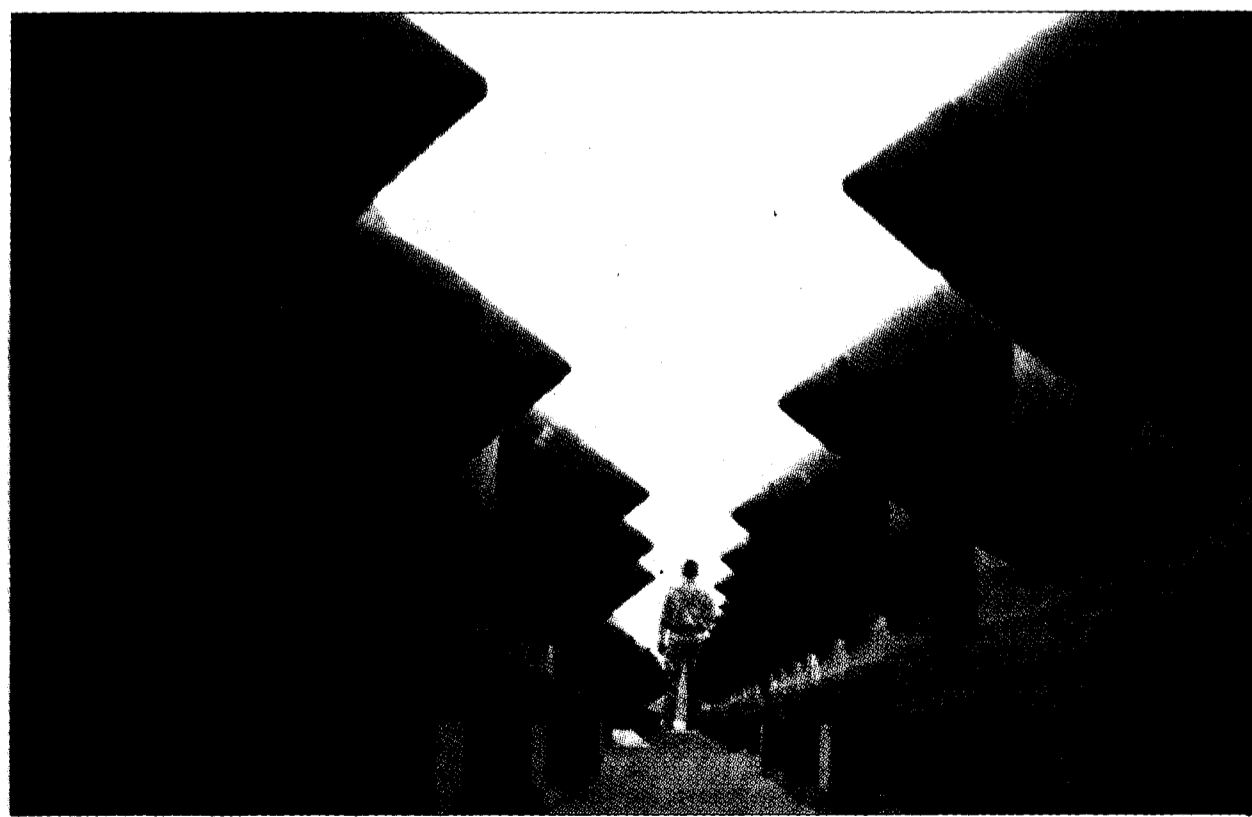
But in the heat of a firefight, both men conceded, when the calculus often warps, a shot not taken in one set of circumstances may suddenly present itself as a life-or-death necessity.

"We dropped a few civilians," Sergeant Schrumphf said, "but what do you do?"

To illustrate, the sergeant offered a pair of examples from earlier in the week.

"There was one Iraqi soldier, and 25 women and children," he said, "I didn't take the shot."

But more than once, Sergeant Schrumphf said, he faced a different choice: one Iraqi soldier standing among two or three civilians. He recalled one such incident, in which he and



HEADHUNTERS: A British weapons technician walks past rows of freefall bombs stacked at the bomb dump in Kuwait on Saturday.

other men in his unit opened fire. He recalled watching one of the women standing near the Iraqi soldier go down.

"I'm sorry," the sergeant said. "But the chick was in the way."

The two Marines recalled their battlefield experiences

as American commanders halted one of the three main columns advancing toward Baghdad on Friday. The commanders said a combi-

nation of tenacious Iraqi resistance and overexposed supply lines had prompted them to catch their breath.

The New York Times

War protester threatens to blow up bank

Lebanon, March 29

A MAN who entered a British bank in Beirut early today with explosives strapped to himself surrendered to police after threatening to blow the branch up because of the US-British-led attacks on Iraq.

The standoff ended after Interior Minister Elias Murr entered a Hong Kong and Shanghai Corporation bank near Beirut's downtown district to negotiate with the man. After 15 minutes, Murr and the man, aged in his 40s, left the bank together.

As part of the deal to end the standoff, the man who was bearded and dressed in black asked to negotiate directly with Murr and read a handwritten statement to reporters outside the bank.

"British interests should be struck in defence of the people of Iraq and the people of Palestine. The Iraqi people are being killed and the Palestinian people too," the unidentified man said before police whisked him away.

Before talking to the man, Murr told reporters the man claimed to have strapped TNT to himself.

AP



Snubbed Blix will step down *Nothing he would say could avert the war*

Edith M. Lederer & Dafna Linzer
United Nations, March 29

HIS INSPECTORS are becoming valuable commodities for the United States but Hans Blix isn't. The chief UN inspector, blamed by the US for hurrying its drive for international support in the run-up to the war, will be stepping down at the end of June.

Blix, a former Swedish Foreign Minister who led the International Atomic Energy Agency from 1981-1997, had said he would like to retire before his 75th birthday in June. "As things look now, certainly I will be very happy to go home in June," he said.

US officials say his departure could make it easier for the Bush administration to include some of the world's top arms experts in their hunt for Iraqi weapons.

At least three members of Blix's staff—two experts in biological weapons and one who specialises in Iraq's missile programs—have been approached by special US military units who will oversee Iraq's disarmament.

It's a sign of recognition that the inspectors are well-trained and their expertise is essential. But the Americans have not made any overtures to their boss.

"We don't believe he was fair in his reports, not to us and not on Iraq's cooperation," said one senior US official.

But the United States went along with his recommendation as a compromise candidate whose credentials as an international lawyer and member of the international arms control community satisfied Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the Security Council.

UN inspectors returned to Iraq for the first time in four years in late November, soon after the Security Council strengthened inspections and gave Baghdad a final opportunity to disarm peacefully. The chief inspector's first report in early December was a tough assessment of Iraq's cooperation and a condemnation of a weapons declaration the Iraqis submitted to inspectors. The United States welcomed it.

But in January, Blix reported Iraq had decided to cooperate on the "process" of inspections, providing good access, though it still needed to provide substantive evidence about its weapons programmes. By February, he reported that Iraq was trying to cooperate more on substance, but still wasn't providing much that was new. France, Russia and Germany be-

lieved that Iraq could be disarmed peacefully, and argued that these reports showed the inspections were working and should continue.

Sometime in late January or early February Blix said the US government "gave up on inspections" and stepped up military preparations. US officials began to criticise inconsistencies in Blix's reports and quietly questioned his motives. Blix's last major report was devastating for US efforts to convince the council that Iraq was a serious threat that needed to be disarmed by force.

The upbeat account not only dealt with Iraq's last-ditch efforts to cooperate with inspectors and destroy missiles they weren't supposed to be producing, but also cast serious doubt on US intelligence that claimed otherwise.

AP

London, March 29

HE WAS an unlikely public figure, a quiet man whose hobbies were preparing Swedish fish dishes and making marmalade—but for a few brief months, the world hung on his every word. So could Hans Blix have done anything to stop the war? Gary Younge asked him.

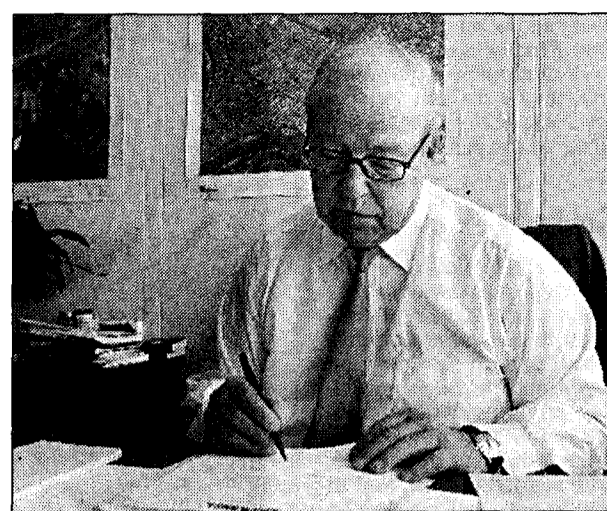
Under Swedish law, anyone who receives a state pension and lives abroad has to present themselves to the Embassy every year to prove that they are still alive. In December last year, just after the UN Security Council had passed a unanimous resolution ordering Iraq to disarm, Hans Blix, the chief UN weapons inspector, turned up at the Swedish consulate in New York.

"What are you doing here?" the consul-general asked the man who was fast becoming one of the most famous faces in the world. "Well, I'm retired, so I have to get my paper that I'm still alive," said Blix, apparently oblivious to the fact that he was by now the owner of one of the most famous names on the planet.

Formal, self-deprecating, proper and precise, Blix has spent the last few months buffeted by the transatlantic diplomatic storms. Offer him a range of adjectives to describe his mood at the breakdown of talks—even as he argued that further inspections could still produce results—and he picks only "sadness" and "disappointment", not "anger" and "frustration".

But time was one thing the Americans would not give him. "From the end of January, beginning of February the Americans were losing patience," he says.

With the British and Americans insisting that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, even if they didn't know where they were, Blix felt that there was little he could do to prove otherwise.



Hans Blix at his office

"The big difference between us and the UK and US was that all the intelligence agencies were convinced that there were weapons of mass destruction, whereas I had not seen evidence."

"We would say, 'Iraq should present any anthrax', while the US and UK were inclined to say, 'Iraq should present the anthrax.'"

Such was Blix's dilemma. Diplomats, soldiers, Iraqi civilians and national governments hung on his every word seeking to discern some nuance, inflection, emphasis or denial that might presage an uncertain future. Markets fell and rose on his every word.

The Americans and the French would seize on various aspects to justify their positions. And throughout it, Blix maintains, he tried to keep his eyes on the prize. "We saw our job all the time as a technical, independent and impartial work that was taking place in a political minefield," he says. "People would say, 'You were playing into the hands of the hawks,' and I would say, 'We aren't playing at all.'"

Only a few weeks ago the Americans accused him of hiding information that would have been helpful to their case regarding drones and cluster bombs.

Here Blix comes the closest he probably gets to being angry. "This was advanced as an argument against us as a battle for votes. But I think it was unfair, unjustified sniping."

At 74, he confesses to living the life of a "monk". His only indulgences are bordaux and oriental carpets; his main hobbies, preparing Scandinavian fish dishes and making his own marmalade.

His office, on the 31st floor of the United Nations, with a striking view of the Chrysler building, is decorated with aerial pictures of Baghdad. Blix believes there was nothing he could have said that would have convinced the Americans not to go to war.

"They would have wanted a clear-cut guarantee that [the Iraqis] did not have weapons of mass destruction," he says. "I could not have given them a guarantee that if they had waited a few months more there would have been results."

Could anyone have given them a guarantee? "Not at this stage. Now we'll see if occupation does it..."

"But we have shown that it was feasible to build up a professional and effective and independent inspection regime... it's just too bad it didn't work."

The Guardian



BOMB BOOTY: Members of Iraq's ruling Baath Party hold up a piece of a US bomb during the shooting of an anti-US video clip in Baghdad on Saturday.

Saddam's bunkers difficult to crack

Berlin, March 29

THE COALITION may pound Baghdad for "as long as it takes" but there's little chance they'll ever pound Saddam's bunkers. A German architect of one of the Iraqi President's main bunkers in Baghdad said nothing short of a direct hit with a nuclear bomb could rip apart its four-foot-thick walls.

"It can withstand the shock wave of a nuclear bomb the size of that dropped on Hiroshima, detonating 250 metres away," said Karl Esser, a security consultant who designed the bunker underneath Saddam's main presidential palace in Baghdad. US-led troops will find it hard even to fight their way in through its three-tonne Swiss doors, Esser said.

Earlier this week, a retired Yugoslav army officer who helped build other bunkers for Saddam said the shelters were impenetrable and could survive an atomic bomb. CNN had reported on Friday that US B-52 bombers dropped a two-tonne "bunker busting" bomb on the capital for the first time in the campaign. The coalition forces have bombed Baghdad for nine days now but it is not clear whether Saddam is using the bunker or is even still alive. London and Washington have insisted they are not convinced that television broadcasts he has made since the war started were live.

"Bunker busting" bombs like the one dropped on Friday would fail to penetrate the bunker because they first have to get through the palace built directly above it, Esser said. Reuters

Pentagon hides bodybags from media

● Toll mounts to 34, 15 still missing ● Confidence dips in US

Washington, March 29

THE PENTAGON is not allowing media access to a US air force base receiving the bodies of soldiers killed in Iraq, a defence department spokeswoman said on Friday. The remains of 18 soldiers killed in the Iraq campaign and six who died in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan have arrived at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware since Tuesday. Each time, a military chaplain has uttered prayers and a guard has carried flag-draped aluminum coffins to waiting vehicles.

In some past conflicts, news cameras and reporters were allowed to record the transfer of soldiers' remains at the Dover base, which houses the US military's largest morgue.

But the defence department spokeswoman said a policy in place since the 1991 Gulf War shields the return of war dead from the media spotlight and encourages family members not to attend. She said the policy was adopted at the urging of soldiers' families. "No major conflict dating back to the Gulf War has permitted media coverage during a remains transfer," she said.

An exception was made in 1996 when the White House requested media coverage after a plane carrying US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and 32 others crashed in Croatia, killing everyone on board. The Pentagon has no plans to deviate from the policy during the war in Iraq.

Dover Air Force Base has been receiving military remains since 1955, including military victims of the September 11 attacks. It also handled remains of astronauts killed in the February 1 crash of Columbia.

This time, Pentagon has to be stricter in allowing media in the air force base be-

cause there is already resentment among sections of American citizens and popular belief that the US is coasting to victory in Iraq has fallen sharply.

Meanwhile, the count of US military personnel killed in Iraq rose to 34 on Saturday after a suicide bombing killed five soldiers near the city of Najaf.

Five US soldiers from the Third Infantry Division died when the driver of a taxi detonated a bomb at a roadblock near the central Iraqi town, US Captain Andrew Valles said.

The new toll since the US-led ground campaign began March 21 was 34 US military personnel dead and 15 missing. Another 104 US military personnel were wounded in action, and seven were listed as prisoners of war.

The Gallup survey for CNN and USA Today said public support for the war remained steady at around 70 per cent, in line with the findings of other opinion polls also released on Friday.

However, the number of Americans who thought the conflict was going "very well" shot down after news reports from the frontlines of US military setbacks and cautions from President Bush against any talk of a quick victory.

Gallup said just 34 per cent of Americans surveyed on Monday and Tuesday thought the war was going very well. That was down from 44 per cent on Sunday, the day Iraqi television broadcast graphic images of killed and captured American soldiers, and from 62 per cent on Saturday. Frustration burst into the open from the Bush administration on Friday that news coverage rather than official pronouncements appeared to be shaping public perceptions. Reuters



FRIENDLY FOE: A US Marine carries away a wounded Iraqi girl from a scene of shooting in central Iraq on Saturday.

Commanders on ground differ with Generals

John M Broder and Eric Schmitt
Camp Saviya, March 29

TOP AMERICAN Generals and their field commanders and their field commanders have begun to give sharply differing accounts of the war in Iraq, sometimes creating an impression that two different wars are being fought.

Commanders on the ground report unexpectedly stiff resistance from Iraqi troops and Baath Party irregulars and say it will take longer to remove the Iraqi government than planned.

"There is an organised pattern of resistance," Brig. Gen. John F Kelly, assistant commander of the First Marine Division, said on Friday of the attacks by Iraqi forces.

"Their determination is somewhat of a surprise to us all." He added: "What we were really hoping was to just go through and everyone would wave flags and stuff."

Field commanders complain of dire shortages of food, fuel and ammunition. They say they have had to adjust their battlefield tactics to handle rear-guard attacks and are rethinking the strategy of bypassing cities in southern Iraq in a race to lay siege to Baghdad.

But the view from the top is very different. Here at Central Command headquarters, where Gen. Tommy R. Franks is overseeing the conduct of the war, officials insist there have been no surprises, no adjustments, no supply problems. The war is going just as they envisioned.

The disparity in views was brought into sharp focus on Friday when word

reached here that Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace, commander of Army forces in the Persian Gulf, said that war planners had not anticipated what he called the "bizarre" behaviour of Iraqi forces. General Wallace said on Thursday that weather and continuing shortages of crucial material because of overextended supply lines would likely lead to a longer war than most strategists had predicted. Asked to respond to the comments today, a senior Central Command official said only, "General Franks believes the plan is on track and on the timeline."

In Washington, Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said he had not read General Wallace's remarks. "I saw the headline," Rumsfeld said. "And I've seen a lot of headlines that don't fit articles." He then added, "I suppose everyone can have their own view."

General Franks has not appeared in the high-tech briefing room here since Monday. Instead, the duty has been assigned to Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, a young West Point graduate who was auditioned and rehearsed for the role by communications aides assigned to Central Command by the White House.

On Thursday, General Brooks opened the briefing by saying, "We remain on plan and we're confident that we will accomplish our objectives."

On Friday he began with, "The coalition is setting the conditions for future operations and we remain focused on the key objective of removing the regime and disarming Iraq."

The New York Times

'EXPOSED SUPPLY LINES, RESISTANCE SLOWING US DOWN' ■ BOMBS RAIN ON IRAQI CAPITAL

Coalition stalls on road to Baghdad



A young protester makes his mind known at a peace rally in Manila on Friday. — AFP

PTI & AP

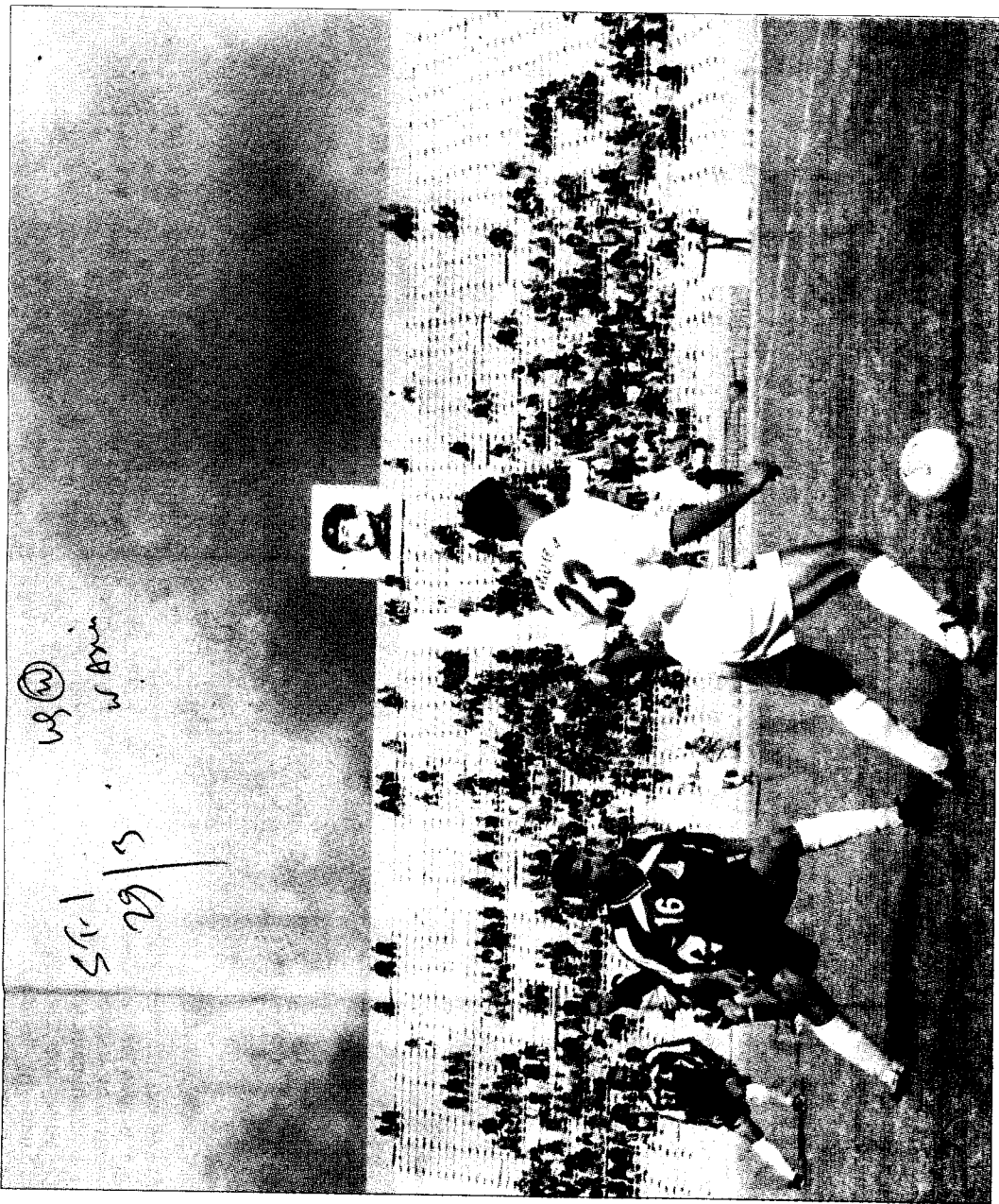
DUBAI/IN THE IRAQI DESERT, March 28. — American and British hopes of a short, sharp, precise war suffered a setback today when the top US ground commander in Iraq suggested that stiff resistance and the extended supply lines of coalition forces had combined to stall the march on Baghdad. As if on cue, given this assessment of a longer-than-expected war, Washington today announced it was sending in 1.2 lakh more troops to boost its forces.

The US Army Senior Ground Commander in Iraq, Gen. William Wallace, told the *Washington Post*: "Tougher-than-expected resistance from Iraqi forces has stalled the US drive towards Baghdad... (our) long supply lines and (their) guerrilla-style tactics have reduced the chances of a swift operation military planners had hoped for... the enemy we're fighting is different from the one we'd war-gamed against."

The massive aerial assault on Baghdad, however, continued, as other coalition commanders and political leaders insisted that the conflict was going as planned. (Brigadier-General Vincent Brooks, reacting to Gen Wallace's comments, claimed: "The campaign is still consistent with our plan." He denied that US war planners had misread the willingness of Iraqi troops to fight. And a Bush administration official added: "The President believes that the war is making progress, the war is on track.")

Two satellite-guided "bunker-buster" bombs devastated a communications centre. One missile struck a market, killing at least 55 people, *Al-Jazeera* reported. One of the city's main telephone exchanges was hit and gutted. And eight Iraqis were killed in the bombings at the Baath Party headquarters, the channel said.

Air strikes hit positions of the Republican Guards in a ring outside the city. Seven people were killed and 92 wounded in the strikes, information minister Mohammed al-Sahhaf said. Twenty-six



BUSINESS AS USUAL: Baghdad's al-Zawraa football club (in white) plays Tikrit's al-Samara in the midst of war. In Baghdad on Friday. — AFP

people have been killed in air strikes in Najaf. Warplanes also bombed Republican Guard positions near Karbala.

Fierce fighting was reported in strategic towns in the south. Outside Basra, Iraqi forces fired mortars and machine guns on a "couple of thousand" Iraqi people trying to leave the besieged city, British officers said. US Marines traded fire with Iraqi forces in Nasiriyah, while others pushed north of the city. At Nasir-

iyah and Diwaniyah to its north, Marines called in *Cobra* helicopters and other aircraft to pound Iraqi ground forces. At least one US soldier was reported killed in the fighting and two died after being run over by their own vehicle.

In the north, Kurd rebels advanced to within 20 km of Kirkuk, after Iraqi government forces abandoned their positions, a commander said today. Patriotic Union of Kurdistan fighters captured Qarah Anjir. But Iraq denied claims that Kurdish militia had seized Qarah Anjir, *Al-Jazeera* reported.

Rumsfeld warns Syria: US defence secretary Mr Donald Rumsfeld asked Syria to stop supplying military equipment to Iraqi forces. Asked if he was threatening action against Syria, he said: "I'm saying exactly what I'm saying."

More war reports on page 3

US opens northern war front

● 1,000 paratroopers land in Kurdish region ● Baghdad bombing continues

Harir/Baghdad: US troops parachuted into Iraqi mountains held by their Kurdish allies on Thursday to open what could be a vital new front in the war to topple President Saddam Hussein's regime.

"This is the beginning of the northern front," a US defence official said after 1,000 paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade jumped into northern Iraq before dawn.

The parachute drop is to be followed by flying in tanks and other armour. It is a new threat for the elite Republican Guard units defending Baghdad, who have been preparing for battle to the south of the city rather than the north.

But the new force is still tiny compared to the tens of thousands of soldiers pushing across the southern desert towards Baghdad. Some US critics have said even those units are too light and that their supply lines are dangerously stretched.

In Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq, about 48 km south of the Turkish border, Rangers and other paratroopers from the army's 173rd Airborne Brigade claimed to have secured an airfield where supplies and support personnel would arrive.

In Baghdad, relentless air attacks shook the city. Several explosions overnight kept the residents on edge. Another round of heavy bombardment hit Baghdad around 1210 GMT (5.40 p.m. IST) on Thursday, and anti-aircraft fire was heard. Iraqi health minister Omeed Medhat Mubarak said 36 Iraqis were killed and 215 injured in the past 24 hours.

The US said it would fly more than 30,000 troops to the Gulf within days to reinforce the 280,000-strong US-British force



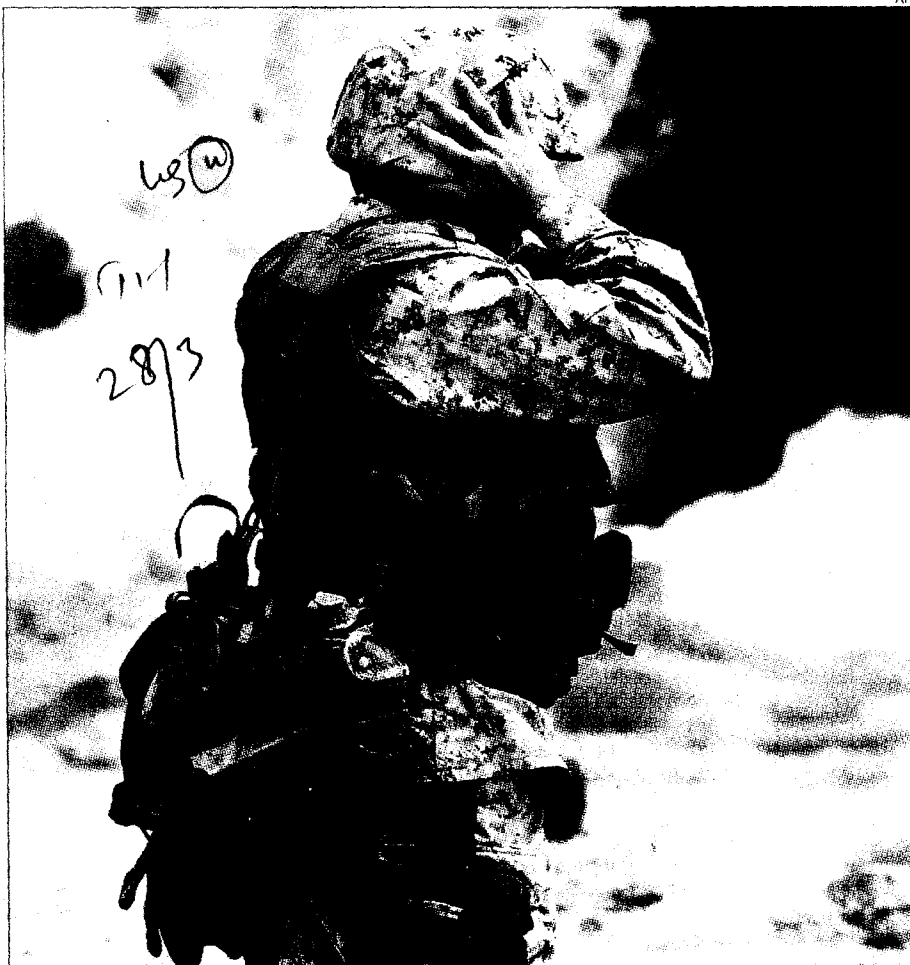
already committed to the campaign.

US armoured columns with tens of thousands of troops tried to press on towards Baghdad. The Pentagon said they were preparing to fight a small Iraqi force heading down to meet them near Karbala, 110 km from the Iraqi capital.

A heavy overnight sandstorm cleared to bring sunny skies at dawn and boosted morale among US troops. "Thank God for that. I was beginning to wonder why we are taking over this country," said Sergeant Brian Crist.

British forces said much of an Iraqi armoured column that tried to break out of Basra in the south was destroyed. US troops fought a fierce battle with Iraqi forces for the control of a bridge over the Euphrates river close to Najaf. In northern Iraq, US warplanes pounded Iraqi positions overlooking Chamchamal.

Near Nasiriya, more than 30 US Marines were injured, two seriously, in an accidental exchange of fire between American units. Two groups of Marines were dispatched during the night to rejoin an Iraqi contingent, but ended up firing at



A US army soldier on patrol walks past the burning North Ramala oilfields in southern Iraq on Thursday. There are reports of Iraqi soldiers exploding the wells before leaving the area.

US fears long, hard war

By Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington: No one is uttering the V-word or invoking Vietnam in public yet, but there is a creeping sense among American war planners that the US venture into Iraq could now last months.

Unnamed American officials are now conceding to the US media that unexpected Iraqi resistance, adverse weather and possible faulty planning and forecast could suck Washington into a longer and costlier war than anticipated. Publicly, the administration is keeping up the stance that everything is going as planned and scheduled.

ago. President George W. Bush and other top US officials insist the war goal—removal of the Saddam Hussein regime—remains unchanged and it will be accomplished come what may.

But the timeline is changing. On board Air Force One taking him to Tampa, Florida, to address US troops on Wednesday, Mr Bush deleted a line from his speech that claimed the war was going ahead of schedule.

US generals and officials meanwhile continued to level a barrage of largely unsubstantiated and unproved charges against Iraq that were amplified by the coalition mouthpieces.

While the sum total of the charges appears to preface a guerrilla war, the US is

28 MAR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

THE ARROGANT **PART**
EMPIRE 4

US must make the world comfortable with
Otherwise the next American century coul

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THE WAY TO BUCK HISTORY

us(u)

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THE
POWER
OF
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In principle, American power is not only good for America, it is good
for the world. Most of the...

INDIAN EXPRESS

28 MAR 2003

THE ARROGANT **EMPIRE** 4

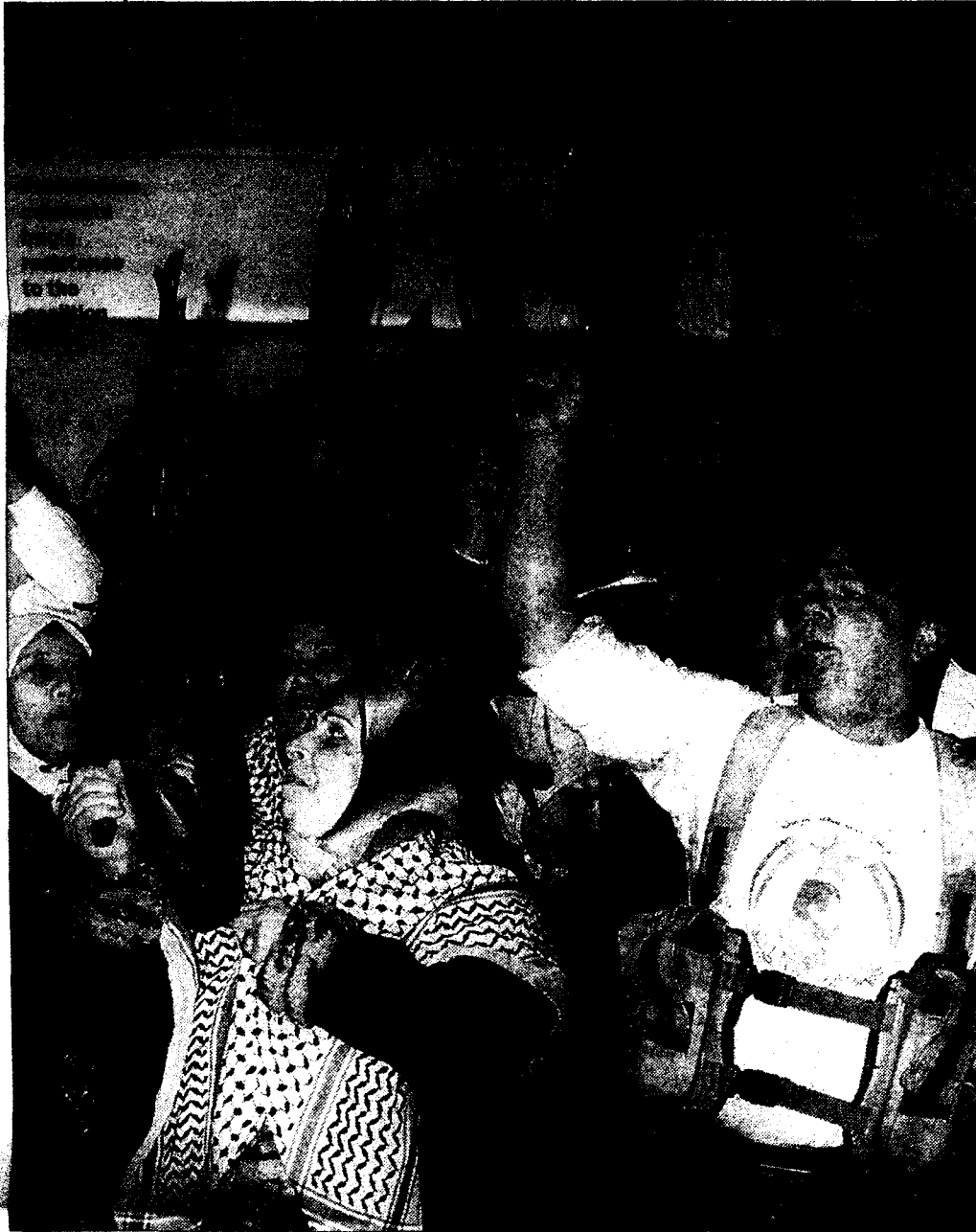
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INDIAN EXPRESS

(u)

25 MAR 2003

World comfortable with its power by leading through consensus.
American century could prove to be lonely, brutish and short

BUCK RY

REUTERS



maintain its hegemony? -

For some in the administration, the answer is obvious: America will act as it chooses to, using what allies it can find in any given situation. As a statement of fact this is sometimes the only approach Washington will be able to employ. But it is not a durable long-term strategy. It would require America to build new alliances and arrangements every time it faced a crisis. More important, operating in a conspicuously unconstrained way, in service of a strategy to maintain primacy, will paradoxically produce the very competition it hopes to avoid. The last two years are surely instructive. The Bush administration's swagger has generated international opposition and active measures to thwart its will. Though countries like France and Russia cannot become great-power competitors simply because they want to — they need economic and military strength — they can use what influence they have to disrupt American policy, as they are doing over Iraq. In fact, the less responsibility we give them, the more freedom smaller powers have to make American goals difficult to achieve.

In many cases the United States simply can't "go it alone". The current crises over North Korea, Iran's nuclear programme and the leakage of fissile materials from Russia are all good examples. And while the United States can act largely by itself in certain special circumstances, such as Iraq, the fewer allies, bases and air rights it has, the higher the costs will be in American lives and treasure. And those costs will become unbearable if the United States has to both wage war and pay for post-war reconstruction on its own.

The war on terror has given the United States a core security interest in the stability of societies. Failed states can become terrorist havens. That means we must focus attention and expenditures on nation-building. For all its flaws, the United Nations is doing on-the-

administration assumed that it could bully or bribe Turkey into giving it basing rights. But Turkey over the last year has become more democratic. The military is less willing to overrule politicians. The new ruling party, AK, is more open to internal debate than Turkey's other parties. It allowed its members to vote freely on the motion to allow America basing rights, only to have it defeated. Since more than 90 per cent of the Turks oppose giving America basing rights, this should not have been surprising. The administration wants democracy in the Middle East. Well, it got it.

As usual, diplomatic style played a role. "The way the US has been conducting the negotiations has been, in general, humiliating," says a retired senior diplomat, Ozdem Sanberk.

The costs of this mishap are real. If Turkey allowed America to open a second front, we could end the war more quickly and with fewer casualties, and the thorny issues relating to Turkish-Kurdish relations

Being pro-US should not be a political liability for our allies. In an increasingly democratic world, American power must be seen as legitimate, not only by other governments but by their people. Does America really want a world in which it gets its way in the face of constant public anger only by offering bribes, twisting arms and allying with dictators?

29 MAR 2003

INDIAN EXPRESS

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Powell rules out role for U.N.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 27. In what is bound to start a debate of sorts in the international community, the U. S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, has argued that his country will not cede control of Iraq to the United Nations when the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, has finally been overthrown.

"We didn't take on this huge burden with our coalition partners not to be able to have a significant dominating control over how it unfolds in the future," Gen. Powell told a Sub-Committee of the House of Representatives.

"We would not support...essentially handing over to the U.N. or someone designated by the U.N. to suddenly become in-charge of this whole operation," Gen. Powell said.

"We have picked on a greater obligation: to make sure there is a functioning Iraqi Government that is supported by the coalition, the centre of gravity remaining with the coalition, military and civilian," Gen. Powell told lawmakers on Wednesday.



The U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, testifies before a House subcommittee in Washington on Wednesday. — AP

The Bush administration has all along been saying that the United Nations should be involved in managing the humanitarian state of affairs in Iraq; and has not even dealt with the other emerging political and economic issues in a very open manner when the hostilities are going on. Gen. Powell maintained that

could not extract a dime on account of the persisting sanctions.

In fact, when Russia, France and China were adamantly opposing the U.S.' objectives in Iraq, the thinking in New York was that these countries had heavily invested in Iraq and were opposed to regime change because of worries of the new regime not honouring the contracts.

In the midst heavy pounding of Baghdad by coalition jets and in the hope within the Bush administration that the days of the Saddam Hussein's regime are numbered, there is the rising clamour in the international community that the new regime should honour existing contracts as that would only be the legal thing to do under international law.

The growing concern is not only on the existing contracts with the Saddam Hussein regime running literally into the billions of dollars, but in a post-war economic reconstruction which the U. S., Britain and other allies might try to corner for the multinationals from their countries. And the small beginnings have indeed been made along these lines.

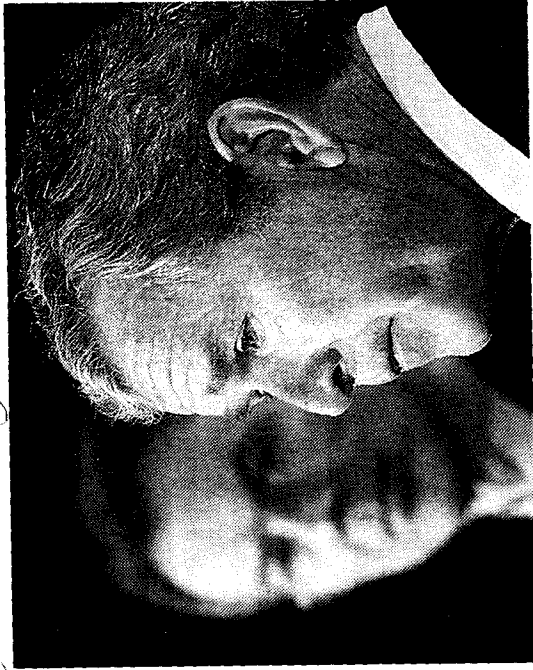
the world body should have a role in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq because it makes it easier for other countries to contribute to reconstruction efforts.

But a sense of unease has come about at the United Nations where major powers like France, Russia and China, who were against the U.S.-led operations against Iraq, now see the Bush administration trying indirectly to have the Security Council legitimise an invasion retroactively.

Further, many are worried that Washington is eyeing the Iraqi oil money now in a United Nations escrow account to pay for humanitarian efforts.

The dominant thinking in New York is that since the U. S. and its 'coalition' started the war, they should be involved in the humanitarian clean up, not the United Nations.

The Secretary of State's rather blunt observations on the role for others in a political post war Iraq is bound to cause a few jitters, especially from those who have invested heavily in oil and related projects during the Saddam Hussein era and



The U.S. President, George Bush, and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, addressing a joint press conference at Camp David on Thursday. — AFP

Not a matter of time, but of victory: Bush

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 27. The U.S. President, George Bush, and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, have said that coalition forces are "advancing by the day" in Iraq and that the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, will be removed from power.

"Iraq will be disarmed of weapons of mass destruction. And the Iraqi people will be freed. That is our commitment", said Mr. Blair at a joint press conference in Camp David, 100 km from the capital.

Mr. Blair arrived at the Catoc-tin Mountain Retreat on Wednesday for talks with Mr. Bush. Both the leaders pushed for immediate restoration of the United Nations' 'oil-for-food programme'. The British Prime Minister said that he and Mr. Bush agreed on the role of U.N. but a "huge amount of details" need to be worked out in post-conflict Iraq and that this could not be done through press conferences or megaphone diplomacy. Mr. Bush was asked

whether the conflict would continue for weeks or months. "However long it takes to win, however long it takes to achieve our objective, it's not a matter of time, it's a matter of victory", he said.

For his part the British leader said: "It is not set by time. It's set by the nature of the job." The two met at Camp David amidst doubts that there are deep divisions between the U.S. and the U.K. on the U.N.'s role in Iraq after the conflict.

The impression here is that Mr. Blair wanted the world body to play an active role, that went beyond managing humanitarian assistance. But Washington does not want the U.N. to be meddling in the political scheme of things; nor does the Bush administration want an administrator for Iraq to be appointed by the Security Council.

The White House has said that the President's judgment should take part but that the "exact role" is something that would have to be discussed.

JASJIT SINGH



WARS by their very nature are waged on the basis of assumptions, and few, if any, plans made according to them survive the first shot. The present Iraq War is no different. The question is whether US assumptions or Iraqi assumptions will bear greater fruit. Its unilateralism and the disjunction between diplomatic and military policy apart, one week into the war, it seems that the United States has based its war plans on assumptions in the employment of military power that, at best, are questionable.

Militarily, the most significant assumption was that smaller, more mobile, more flexible forces would achieve victory more easily, more quickly and at a lesser cost. This ideologically optimistic strategy advocated by Secretary of De-

fence, Donald Rumsfeld, seems to have won out in preference to the more robust strategy of using overwhelming force that Colin Powell, the Secretary of State advocated. Rumsfeld's theory was left with even lesser forces once Turkey refused the use of its territory to allow the 4th Infantry Division and associated forces to attack Iraq from the north.

Sheer geography indicates that the Rumsfeld strategy would result in long stretched out logistic lines of communication if the US decided to go along the road axis from South to North. The going would get tougher once the forces entered the agricultural regions near Najaf and Hilla. US forces already are stretched along a supply line of over 480 kilometres behind the rapid thrust of the 7th Cavalry. US forces in the Iraqi theatre require nearly 60 million litres of fuel per day besides gigantic quantities of water and other supplies.

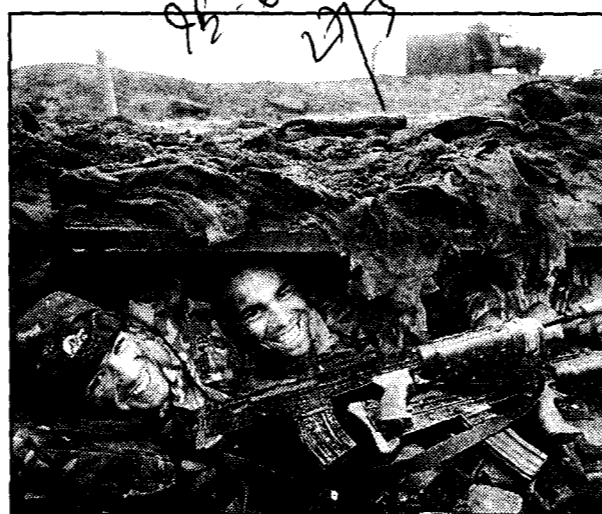
The few towns along the long logistic line, therefore, as-

Waging an uncertain war

sume critical importance. Such supply train might have been tenable in an open sparsely populated terrain or even through populated areas if the population was friendly.

But that is where the second assumption went wrong. Instead of being greeted by flowers and garlands, local population has been, at best, sullen, and at worse, brutally violent. This is obviously a major and costly intelligence failure which is inexplicable in view of US Special Forces and the CIA operating inside Iraq for months before the invasion started. Now not only are the US forces slowed down, but they have to devote additional resources to guard the supply convoys.

Turkey seems to have wittingly or otherwise undermined another assumption in more than one ways. American 4th Infantry Division and elements



Marines squeeze into dug-in position in Al Faw. Reuters

of the armour forces, which were to come through Turkey, stayed on board ships because Ankara did not agree to its territory being used for launching them into Iraq. This reduced the quantum of forces in Iraq

further, besides eliminating the option of a nutcracker thrust on Baghdad from the north which would have split Iraqi defences. Saddam seems to have quickly moved additional forces south. Now the best strategy for the

Anglo-American forces would have been to head out into the western desert and establish bases around the airfields west of Euphrates to threaten Baghdad directly from the west without leaving important cities along exposed supply lines.

Anglo-American strategy also assumed an uprising by Shias in the south and Kurds in the north. One week into the war, there is little sign of that happening. The uprising in 1991 in southern Iraq, encouraged by the US, was possible because the people in that area had suffered heavily during the eight-year war with Iran, and saw that war as one waged by Saddam Hussein against the Shia Islamic state of Iran so soon after the revolution. But the current war is against Iraq itself which is the second-largest Shia majority state. The Kurds would also like to wait

and see who gets the upper hand before coming into the open. Risking current autonomy for an uncertain future, where neighbours could try to exert their influence, would argue for prudence.

But above all, the assumption that virtually seems to have ignored the fighting potential of even the militia, leave alone that of the regular army and Republican Guard, appears to be one of the most expensive ones. The general depreciation of Iraqi fighting quality, the long-cherished belief that a repressive regime would produce a majority that wants its overthrow, and the likely dissipation of the regular army units (with a non-existent navy and a virtually non-effective air force) has turned out to be untested so far. But the ferociousness and cunningness with which the militia have been fighting to at least slow down US forces was probably not visualised. This seems to have been another major intelligence failure since the existence of 60,000-strong

Fedayeen, probably recruited from central Iraq region itself for defence of the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, should have been known for long.

On the other hand, the expectation was that the tribes would rise in revolt against the Tikrit-centred ruling elite.

But all this does not add up to a situation that Iraq can avoid a defeat. The US would win the war, even if it takes longer than what the Pentagon expected. But the challenge would be to sustain an occupation. Every passing day also raises the image of Saddam as the solitary leader to defy and fight the sole superpower. Saddam's Iraq, therefore, does not have to win the war to influence the post-war attitudes in a global environment where the great powers of even the North Atlantic alliance are split.

(Air Commodore (ret'd) Jasjit Singh, editorial consultant to *The Indian Express*, will analyse the war daily. Readers can send their queries to him at jasjitsingh@expressindia.com)

Life becomes even more lonely for Iraqi diplomats

PHILIP PULLELLA
ROME, MARCH 26

BEING an Iraqi diplomat in the West has been a lonely life for the past 12 years, ever since Baghdad was isolated after the 1991 Gulf War.

For some, it has just become even more lonely. Faris All Shooker, Iraqi charge d'affaires in Rome, lost half of his staff on Sunday when Rome expelled four members of Baghdad's interests section at the Sudanese embassy following a request from Washington.

"I have to do the jobs of five people now," he said, sitting next to a big Iraqi flag and under a fading black-and-white picture of a smiling President Saddam Hussein. Among those new chores, carried out in rooms with peeling wallpaper and frayed carpets, are stamping passports himself and typing some of his own letters.

The 49-year-old Shooker cuts a lonely figure on a big couch in Baghdad's embassy to the Vatican, which was not affected by the Italian order. Even before the outbreak of the current war, Iraqi diplomats in Italy were rarely seen on the diplomatic circuit. Now, the winds of war have made it even more difficult to be Baghdad's man in Rome.

"If I'm invited to a reception



A portrait of Saddam Hussein at one of the doors of the Iraqi embassy in Tokyo on Wednesday. Reuters

orsomething I'll have to go with my own car and won't have a place to park. There are a lot of little difficulties," he said.

"I will have to work all day and at night also," he said, joking that the typing classes he took a long time ago at the start of his diplomatic career have now come in handy.

Washington has asked 60 countries to expel diplomats it says are engaged in espionage. Italy, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Greece, the Philippines, Sweden, Australia and Romania have expelled Iraqi diplomats. Other countries, including France and the Netherlands, have refused.

Italy's pro-American gov-

ernment, acting despite criticism from the Opposition, said the four expelled diplomats were a security threat.

And, like them, he defends the man who Washington wants, dead or alive. "Saddam is not a threat. Our President is not a threat," he said, adding that he would not be surprised if Italy decides to close up his little diplomatic shop altogether.

He said he has packed his bags and told his children to be prepared to leave fast if the telephone call should come.

"My family's fate is in Iraq. This is our country. Maybe I will lose my job but that's OK. I'm not afraid of going back."

—Reuters

Amid sandstorm, oil fires; bombs, Iraqis reassert faith in God

ANTHONY SHADID
BAGHDAD, MARCH 26

THE wind's howl buffeted Imad Mohammed's window Tuesday, suffocating the peal of bombs from Baghdad's outskirts.

Across the sky, the black haze of burning oil trenches mixed with desert sand from a savage storm to wrap the city in an otherworldly glow. Paper, bags and cardboard were blown across the street. Traffic lights and palm trees swayed. A soldier hunkered near the Tigris River, a black scarf draped over his head like a veil.

To Mohammed, the relentless sandstorm was foreboding, a portent of divine will. "The storm is from God," he said, looking out his trembling window. "Until the aggression started, never in my life did I see a storm like this. We all believe in God, we all have faith in God. And God is setting obstacles against the Americans."

During six days of war, Baghdad is looking to the heavens for omens have had much to contemplate. A terrifying cascade of US bombs has been followed by the apocalyptic smoke of oil fires lit by Iraqi forces, so dense that cars almost collided. The smoke was joined by Tuesday's storm, which abruptly ended Baghdad's struggle to reclaim ordinary life.

Shops again shuttered and streets were deserted as a sickly yellow cloaked the sun. Weary residents spoke of divine intervention, and in the storm they saw God's determination to aid Iraq. Beneath the clouds were churning emo-



Iraqi soldiers and militia demonstrate their strength against the coalition forces bombardment in Ar Rutba. Reuters

tions—of fear and flight, of fatalism and bravado, of grief and dread. With few exceptions, Iraqis still consider political discussions taboo, especially with a foreign journalist shadowed by an official escort. But the storm seemed to give voice to concerns about a future no one seems willing to predict. "Whatever will be will be," said Adnan Khalid, 28, as he negotiated the \$2 fare for a private taxi to the northern city of Mosul, where he sent his wife before the war.

"What can we do? If we survive, then we go on living." Khalid was leaving Baghdad Tuesday for what he called "a change in atmosphere." Across the parking lot, the winds coated cars, taxis and buses with a veneer of dust. Drivers cried out their destinations: "Tikrit!" "Baiji!" "Mosul!" In one hand, Khalid carried a bag with clothes for three days;

with the other, he dragged on a cigarette. By night, he said, he would be far from Baghdad and its bombs, far from the sandstorms and oil fires, far from what comes next.

When the initial assault proved less devastating than feared, businesses reopened—vegetable vendors, working-class restaurants, cafes and grocery stores. Among them were barber shops.

Yaacoub Ahmed, with a full head of gray hair, plopped down Tuesday in the barber's chair in Sadiya. The cost: about 15 cents. He paid a visit every month, and neither bombs nor storms would keep him from a haircut. "Where's the bombing? Up until now, I don't see it," he said, with a touch of bravado. "All we do is hear it. I don't see it." But he acknowledged sending his wife and five children to what he consid-

ered the safety of Diwaniya, a city in southern Iraq.

Over the clock hung a sign that read "God." In Ahmed's words was a surrender to God's will. "The future is by God," he said. "No one knows the future. We're not fortune tellers." Ali Jassim, the barber, nodded. "There's fear," he said.

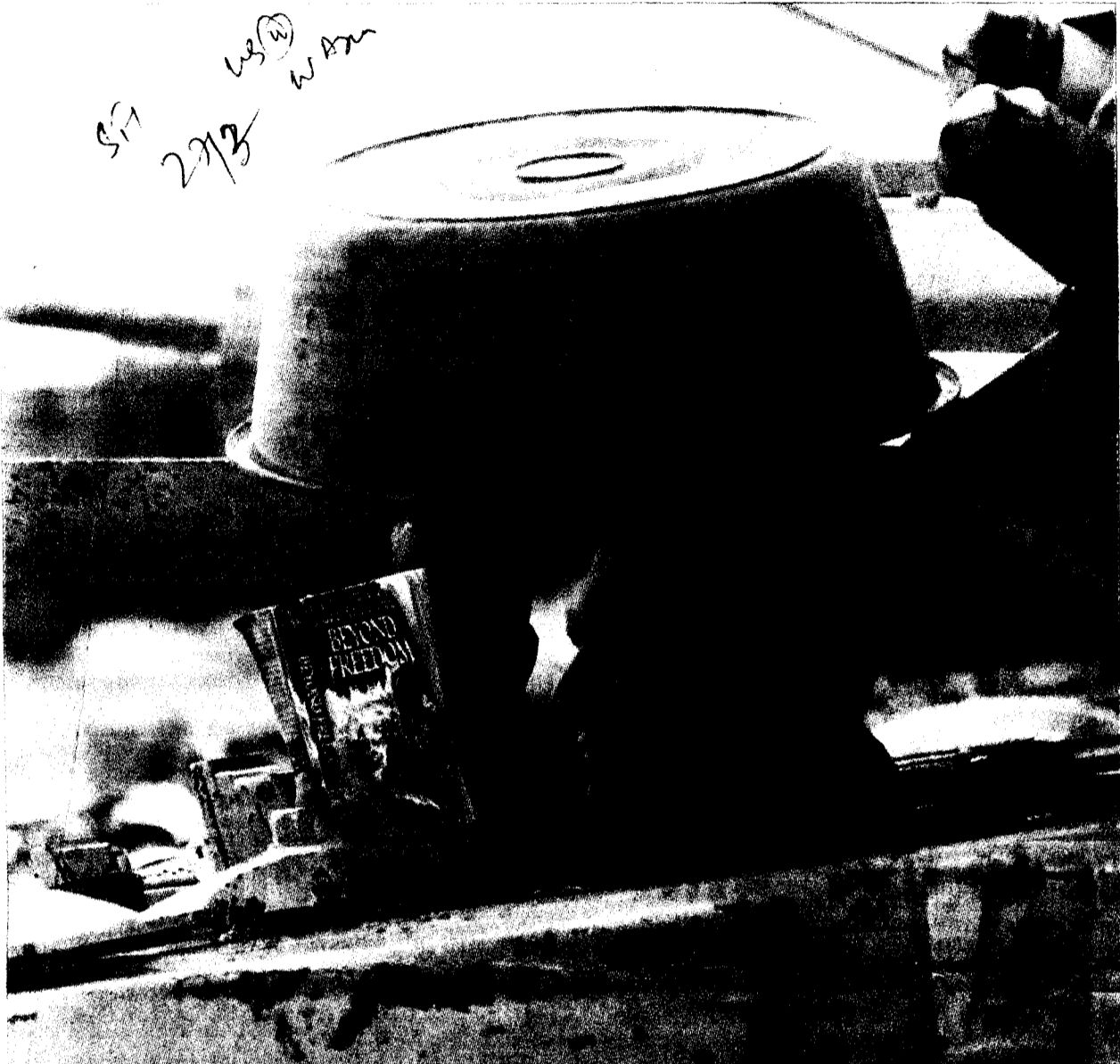
But like Ahmed, he said he was resigned to his fate, a fate that could be decided by either the US or his own government. "It's not in our hands," he said, speaking in a vague vernacular so common to speech in public.

"You can't surrender easily, we should fight," Ahmed said. "Our religion says we should fight for our honour. We're more afraid of God than we're afraid of the Americans."

—LATWP

Missiles hit Baghdad homes

15 CIVILIANS KILLED; FOOD AID REACHES UMM QASR



TIME OUT: A soldier of the British Royal Scots Dragoons reads a book, titled *Beyond Freedom*, beneath his impromptu shelter from the rain atop an armoured vehicle somewhere near Basra on Wednesday. — AFP ■ Iraq War reports on page 3

Agencies

BAGHDAD, March 26. — At least 15

to remove mines from waterways and trying to subdue Iraqi fighters in Basra. Escorted by soldiers, seven large tractor-trailers arrived in Umm Qasr carrying

“The military is making good progress, yet this war is far from over. We will be relentless Day by day Saddam is losing his grip on Iraq.”
Iraq’s information minister Md Said

27 MAR 2003

THE STATESMAN



TIME OUT: A soldier of the British Royal Scots Dragoons reads a book, titled *Beyond Freedom*, beneath his impromptu shelter from the rain atop an armoured vehicle somewhere near Basra on Wednesday. — AFP ■ Iraq War reports on page 3

Agencies

BAGHDAD, March 26. — At least 15 Iraqi civilians were killed and 30 wounded today when at least two missiles struck a residential area in Baghdad, civil defence forces said. The missiles hit a populated neighbourhood in northern Baghdad at 1400 GMT, crashing into private apartments. At least 17 vehicles were incinerated. The USA has denied the missile strikes.

The strike came amid a number of coalition attacks on the Iraqi capital. Hundreds of Iraqis were reported killed today even as the coalition advance on Baghdad was held up by a second day of sandstorms on the seventh day of the war, while air-strikes continued to pound the capital. Air-raids came after US armoured forces clashed with foot-soldiers amidst billowing sandstorms south of Baghdad in which 650 Iraqis were reportedly killed. Coalition planes pummelled Baghdad to soften up the frontlines for the advancing forces. The US 3rd Infantry Division is now reportedly 80 km from Baghdad — "within striking distance". A 1,000-vehicle Republican Guard convoy headed south from Baghdad to join Ba'ath militia engaging the US forces.

At the same time, the first sizeable relief convoy rolled into Iraq from Umm Qasr on the southern front as US and British forces struggled to clear the way for more aid shipments, using dolphins

to remove mines from waterways and trying to subdue Iraqi fighters in Basra. Escorted by soldiers, seven large tractor-trailers arrived in Umm Qasr carrying food and water donated by Kuwaitis. "We planned for 30 trucks but we only got seven loaded because of the sandstorm," said an official of the Humanitarian Operations Center, a joint US-Kuwaiti agency. Hundreds of cases of water were stacked on three of the trucks and the rest carried boxes of tuna, sweets and other food.

As the battle for Baghdad neared a critical stage, the war of words intensified in national capitals. At the Central Command Hq in Florida, President George Bush warned that coalition forces will now face "the most desperate elements of a doomed regime" as they close in on Baghdad, but promised that America would prevail.

Russia warning

MOSCOW, March 26. — Concerned over the "humanitarian and ecological disaster" posed by the attack on Iraq, Russia today said it will ask the UN Security Council to seek an immediate end to the operations.

"If the coalition missile and bomb strikes continue, an environmental, humanitarian and economic disaster will follow in Iraq and in the region," foreign minister Mr Ivanov told the Upper House of Parliament. — PTI

"The military is making good progress, yet this war is far from over. We will be relentless Day by day Saddam is losing his grip on Iraq."

Iraq's information minister Md Said al-Sahhaf, admitting heavy casualties in Najaf (where, a late night report said, over 1,000 Iraqis were killed in the past 72 hours) and Nasiriyah, accused US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld of "having lost his cool and ordered the intensification of bombing".

Britain today reiterated the claim made by a journalist yesterday that an uprising had taken place in Iraq's second capital of Basra overnight. Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair, before leaving for emergency talks with Mr Bush at Camp David today, said in London that there had been a "limited" uprising in Basra, and pledged support for Iraqis who revolt.

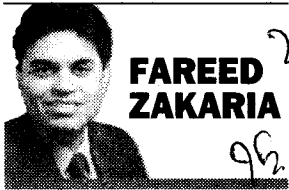
In Nasiriyah, scene of intense fighting since the weekend, more than 500 civilians were wounded and 200 homes destroyed in bombardment today, Mr al-Sahhaf said. He also said the *Fidayeen* had shot down a US copter south of Najaf, but did not elaborate. Iraqi officials termed today's bombing of Nasiriyah as "hysterical", saying innocent civilians were killed by cluster-bombs.

Around Basra, British forces poised to seize the key southern city were fighting on its perimeter against more than 1,000 militiamen. Nine civilians were confirmed killed and 19 wounded in Diyala province north of Baghdad.

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THE STATESMAN

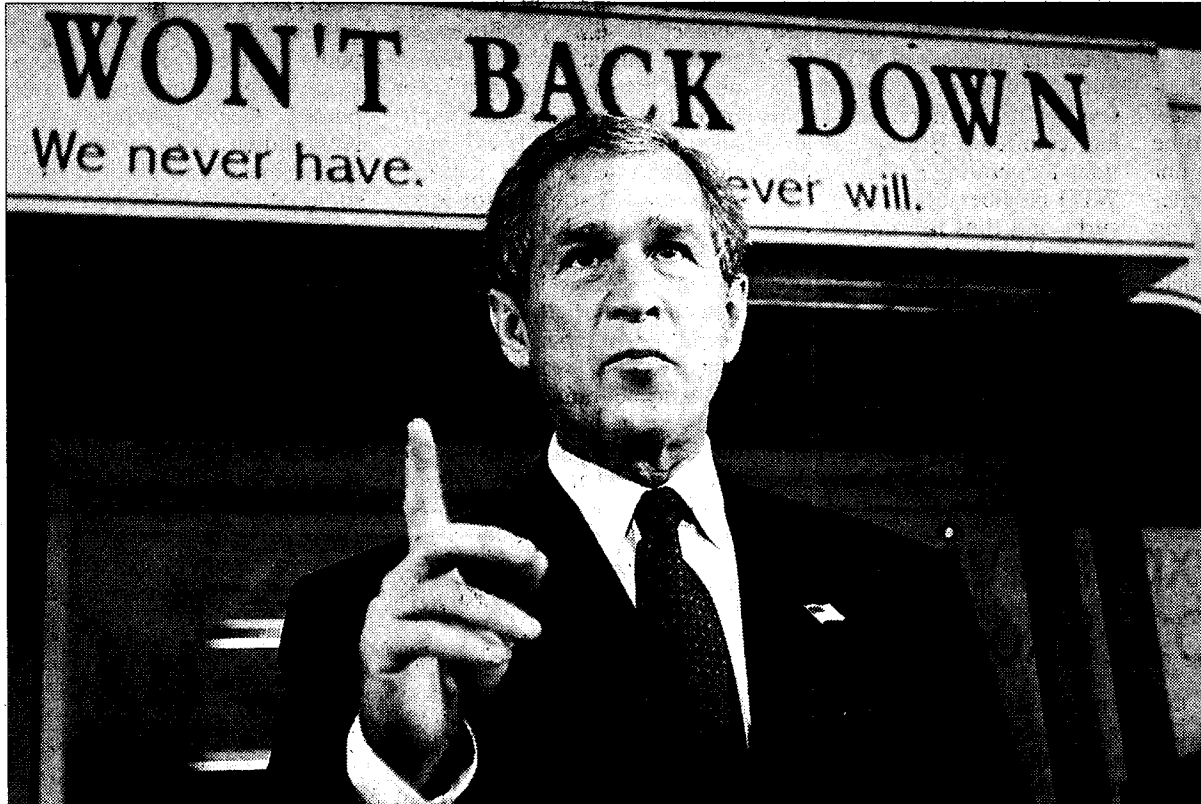


FAREED ZAKARIA

GEORGE W. BUSH came into office with few developed ideas about foreign policy. He didn't seem much interested in the world. During the years that his father was envoy to China, ambassador to the United Nations, director of the CIA and Vice-President, Bush travelled two or three times outside the country. Candidate Bush's vision amounted mostly to carving out positions different from his predecessor. Many conservatives thought the Clinton administration was over-involved in the world, especially in nation-building, and hectoring in its diplomacy. So Bush argued that America should be "a humble nation", scale back its commitments abroad and not involve itself in rebuilding other countries.

Yet other conservatives, a number of whom became powerful within the administration, had a more sweeping agenda. Since the early '90s, they had argued that the global landscape was marked by two realities. One was American power. The post-Cold War world was overwhelmingly unipolar. The other was the spread of new international treaties and laws. The end of the Cold War had given a boost to efforts to create a global consensus on topics like war crimes, landmines and biological weapons. Both observations were accurate. From them, however, these Bush officials drew the strange conclusion that America had little freedom to move in this new world. "The picture it painted in its early months was of a behemoth thrashing about against constraints that only it could see," notes the neo-conservative writer Robert Kagan. For much of the world, it was mystifying to hear the most powerful country in the history of the world speak as though it were a besieged nation, boxed in on all sides.

In its first year, the administration withdrew from five international treaties—and did so as brusquely as it could. It reneged on virtually every diplomatic effort that the Clinton administration had engaged in, from North Korea to the Middle East, often overturning public statements from Colin Powell supporting these efforts. It developed a language and diplomatic style that seemed calculated to offend the world. (President Bush has placed a portrait of Theodore Roosevelt in the White House. R's most famous words of advice are worth recalling: "Speak softly and carry a big stick.") Key figures in the administration rarely travelled, foreign visitors were treated to perfunctory office visits, and state dinners were unheard of. On an annual basis, George W. Bush has visited fewer foreign countries than any President in 40 years. Still, he does better than Dick Cheney,



WHERE BUSH WENT WRONG

Bush's favourite verb is 'expect'. He 'expects' the Palestinians to dump Arafat, 'expects' countries to be with him, 'expects' Turkey to cooperate. It is part of the administration's approach to foreign policy, best described by the phrase used for its war plan — 'shock and awe'. Rumsfeld often quotes a line from Al Capone: 'You will get more with a kind word and a gun than with a kind word alone'. Should the philosophy of the world's leading democracy be the tough talk of a mobster?

who has been abroad only once since becoming Vice-President.

September 11 only added a new layer of assertiveness to Bush's foreign policy. Understandably shocked and searching for responses, the administration decided that it needed total freedom of action. When NATO, for the first time in its history, invoked the self-defense clause and offered America carte-blanche assistance, the administration essentially ignored it. It similarly marginalized NATO in the Afghan War. NATO has its limitations, which

its own core security and even pre-emptively when it needed to. Bush later announced an expansive, vague Wilsonian vision — which has merit — but his style and methods overshadowed its potential promise.

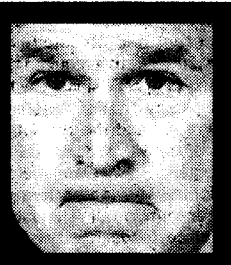
The Bush administration could reasonably point out that it doesn't get enough credit for reaching out to the rest of the world. President Bush has, after all, worked with the United Nations on Iraq, increased foreign aid by 50 per cent, announced a \$15 billion AIDS programme and formally endorsed a Pales-

anti-Americanism in the region as he sought to confront Iraq. Suddenly last week, to gain allies on Iraq and at the insistence of Tony Blair, Bush made a belated gesture toward the peace process. Is it surprising that people are not hailing this last-minute conversion?

Nowhere has this appearance of diplomatic hypocrisy been more striking than on Iraq. The President got high marks for his superb speech at the Security Council last September, urging the United Nations to get serious about enforcing its resolu-

To make matters worse, weeks after the new US-sponsored UN resolution calling for fresh inspections, the administration began large-scale deployments on Iraq's border. Diplomatically, it had promised a good-faith effort to watch how the inspections were going; militarily, it was gearing up for war with troops that could not stay ready in the desert forever. Is it any wonder that other countries, even those that would be willing to endorse a war with Iraq, have felt that the diplomacy was a charade, pursued simply to allow time for mil-

In its first year, the Bush Govt brusquely withdrew from five global treaties...it developed a language that seemed calculated to offend the world. Key figures rarely travelled, foreign visitors were treated to perfunctory office visits. Bush has visited fewer foreign nations than any President in 40 years. Still, he does better than Cheney, who has been abroad only once since becoming Vice-President



were powerfully revealed during the Kosovo campaign, but the signal this sent to our closest allies was that America didn't need them. Thus as seen by the rest of the world, 9/11 had a distressingly paradoxical effect. It produced a mobilization of American power and yet a narrowing of American interests. Suddenly, Washington was more powerful and determined to act. But it would act only for

tinian state. Yet none of these actions seems to earn him any goodwill. The reason for this is plain. In almost every case, the administration comes to multilateralism grudgingly, reluctantly, and with a transparent lack of sincerity. For a year now, President Bush has dismissed the notion that he should make any effort toward a Middle East peace process, even though it would have defused some of the

tions on Iraq and to try inspections one last time. Unfortunately, that appeal had been preceded by speeches by Cheney and comments by Rumsfeld calling inspections a sham—statements that actually contradicted American policy—and making clear that the administration had decided to go to war. The only debate was whether to have the United Nations rubber-stamp this policy.

itary preparations? President Bush's favourite verb is "expect". He announces peremptorily that he "expects" the Palestinians to dump Yasir Arafat, "expects" countries to be with him or against him, "expects" Turkey to cooperate. It is all part of the administration's basic approach toward foreign policy, which is best described by the phrase used for its war plan — "shock and awe". The note

is that the United States needs to intimidate countries with its power and assertiveness, always threatening, always denouncing, never showing weakness. Donald Rumsfeld often quotes a line from Al Capone: "You will get more with a kind word and a gun than with a kind word alone." But should the guiding philosophy of the world's leading democracy really be the tough talk of a Chicago mobster?

In terms of effectiveness, this strategy has been a disaster. It has alienated friends and delighted enemies. Having travelled around the world and met with senior government officials in dozens of countries over the past year, I can report that with the exception of Britain and Israel, every country the administration has dealt with feels humiliated by it. "Most officials in Latin American countries today are not anti-American types," says Jorge Castaneda, the reformist foreign minister of Mexico, who resigned two months ago. "We have studied in the United States or worked there. We like and understand America. But we find it extremely irritating to be treated with utter contempt." Last fall, a senior ambassador to the United Nations, in a speech supporting America's position on Iraq, added an innocuous phrase that could have been seen as deviating from that support. The Bush administration called up his foreign minister and demanded that he be formally reprimanded within an hour. The ambassador now seethes when he talks about US arrogance. Does this really help America's cause in the world? There are dozens of stories like this from every part of the world.

In diplomacy, style is often substance. Consider this fact: the Clinton administration used force on three important occasions — Bosnia, Haiti and Kosovo. In none of them did it take the matter to the United Nations Security Council, and there was little discussion that it needed to do so. Indeed, Kofi Annan later made statements that seemed to justify the action in Kosovo, explaining that state sovereignty should not be used as a cover for humanitarian abuses. Today Annan has (wrongly) announced that American action in Iraq outside the United Nations will be "illegal". While the Clinton administration—or the first Bush administration—was assertive in many ways, people did not seek assurances about its intentions. The Bush administration does not bear all the blame for this dramatic change in attitudes. Because of 9/11, it has had to act forcefully on the world stage and assert American power. But that should have been all the more reason to adopt a posture of consultation and cooperation while doing what needed to be done. The point is to scare our enemies, not terrify the rest of the world.

To be concluded.
Tomorrow: The way to buck history.
Courtesy: Newsweek Inc

ONLY THE BEGINNING

America's War Against Itself

By VLADIMIR SIMONOV

✓ 598 263
America will certainly win the war. One need not be a high-brow military expert to compare figures. A country that spends \$400 billion on armaments will undoubtedly defeat a country with the military budget of \$1.4 billion. The USA, with its stealth bombers and laser bombs, is simply doomed to defeat Iraq, with its rusty Soviet-made weapons.

The USA has launched a new war of the 21st century at a time when it leads the world in terms of military might. But the US administration has launched this war at a time when its political standing at home and abroad is faulty. A small group of people around the US president, convinced of the coming of the "new American age," did not wage a reasonable diplomatic campaign to prepare the world for the strike at Iraq.

"Law of the fist"

Prosecutor America sentenced Defendant Iraq to execution without proving a single charge brought against it. Such "evidence" as the purchase of aluminium pipes and the import of uranium from Nigeria were proved false. The USA failed to win even the so-called moral majority of nine countries in the "jury" — the UN Security Council.

The US "proceedings" against Iraq failed dismally in the eyes of the world. Today the anti-Iraqi coalition consists of 45 countries (15 of them too ashamed to name themselves), but this does not mean that these 40-odd countries do not see that the USA is not playing by the rules or norms of international coexistence. In other words, Washington is trying to replace the established system of international security by "the law of the fist," as President Vladimir Putin described it, and the fragile but real trust of the global community in the USA with unconditional subordination to its economic and military might.

In this sense, the war began not on 20 March but long before that date.

Suffice it to recall the recent

The author is a Ria Novosti political analyst

chronicle of the US ruptures over its might. The Bush administration ignored Europe on the issue of global warming, Russia on the issue of ABM defence, and developing countries on the issue of pharmaceutical deals. It crossed its signature from the agreement on the creation of the International Criminal Tribunal because US troops need to shoot at Afghans and Iraqis without fearing

servatives in the Bush team forget about this.

What they do not understand is that the USA has actually launched a war against itself, against its prestige in the world community and the growth of global sympathy engendered by the 11 September, 2001 tragedy, and against the unity of the counter-terrorist coalition.

A recent poll by the Washing-



prosecution by another Carla del Ponte. This is what the past two years gave us.

There is vast evidence that the aggression against Iraq is only the beginning. After it, no country will feel safe about its sovereignty.

Anti war passions

In August 2002 a respected source in the Bush team told *Newsweek*: Everyone wants to go against Baghdad, but genuine boys would like to go against Teheran. In February 2003 the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* cited Undersecretary of State John Bolton as saying in a conversation with Israeli officials that after routing Iraq the USA would "deal" with Iran, Syria and North Korea. The "axis of evil" does not end in Iraq. And even the most glorious victory in Iraq will not make the neo-con-

ton-based Research Centre for the People and the Press registered an incredible growth of anti-Americanism in nine countries (France, Germany, Russia, Turkey, Poland, Italy, Spain, Britain and the USA). The overwhelming majority of the people do not approve of President Bush's foreign policy and his personal rating, which rose sky-high in Western Europe after the 11 September tragedy, has plummeted, says Centre Director Andrew Kohut.

Anti-Americanism is shifting from a reasonably political plane to a mystically religious one. Common Europeans see the USA nearly as the devil that has risen to steal the world from the forces of good. Already Catholic France, Confucian China, the predominant part of the Muslim world and Christian Russia are protesting

against the US aggression in Iraq. In Russia, 87 per cent denounced the war and only two per cent supported it.

Public opinion has split the USA into approximately equal halves. Observers are shocked by antagonism in modern American society and anti-war passions that have not been in evidence since the Vietnam War. Americans started protesting against the Vietnam War only when it was nearing its end, when lead coffins started arriving in hundreds. Today only the first few dozen of Cruise missiles have been launched against Iraq but America has already expressed its outrage in 400,000-strong manifestations and protests by liberal intelligentsia, scientists and actors.

Pandora's box

Even the red carpet of the Oscar ceremony, the traditional holiday of the rich and beautiful, was rolled down; the audience was dressed modestly and the scenario was cleansed of Steve Martin's jokes.

What will happen to public opinion and reputation of the Bush team after the lightning victory (if it is possible) if the USA has been split in two already now? What will happen when the payday comes, when the USA will have to stop the civil war between the Shias and Sunni, between the Kurds and Arabs, the Bath members and their opponents? Bush will not be able to put the blame on Saddam Hussein.

Can the USA find anyone to take the throne vacated by Saddam who would not be immediately killed by aspirants from a rival tribe? And how would the USA stop the onslaught of international terrorists, who will certainly rush to Iraq just as pilgrims flock to Mecca? What if the quick victory in Baghdad provokes the fall of regimes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which are loyal to the USA, not to mention Pakistan that has nuclear missiles?

At 5:33 a.m. Moscow time on 20 March, America opened not an age of "generous hegemony," as George Bush put it, but a Pandora's box.

Sandstorms test allied steel

Near Karbala\Kuwait: US-led troops, slowed to a crawl by sandstorms, edged closer to Baghdad on Tuesday while British troops, a day after coming under heavy attack, declared that parts of Basra, Iraq's second largest city, were now a "military target".

While Baghdad residents woke to howling winds and the distant crash of artillery, combat missions from two aircraft carriers were called back due to bad weather. At least a dozen planes returned without reaching Iraq. Two army divisions were virtually stalled in a vicious sandstorm that reduced visibility to a few feet.

Iraq often sees sandstorms in the spring, but Tuesday's were an "exceptional storm" for the region, bringing dust and sand from as far away as Egypt and Libya, meteorologists said.

Thousands of marines were trekking toward Baghdad, taking back roads to avoid civilians, but they travelled only about 32 km in five hours with visibility at about ten feet. A traffic jam of military and supply vehicles was buffeted by heavy winds and



blowing sand. The army's 3rd infantry division was within 80 km of the capital. Defences on the outskirts of Baghdad were pounded by waves of air attacks in what appeared to be a major effort to break all opposition to a coalition drive on the Iraqi capital.

A helicopter assault around Baghdad marked the first known engagement between forces in central Iraq, and many of the American craft were hit by Iraqi ground-fire. One went down behind enemy lines—the cause was unknown—and the Pentagon said the two-person crew had been taken prisoners.

Meanwhile, the British Royal Marines said they had changed strategy and would now take Basra by force if necessary. The marine force is now repositioning itself

around Basra, artillery exchanges have taken place and the British force is getting ready to move in.

Until now, coalition forces said they wanted to avoid urban combat in the centre of Basra, where fedayeen militia forces have been operating.

The decision follows an urgent plea by UN secretary general Kofi Annan that Basra faced "a humanitarian crisis" because of the shortage of water and electricity.

Farther south, British and American commanders said they had crushed the last remaining resistance by Iraqi fighters in Umm Qasr, and that aid supplies badly needed by the local people were expected to arrive within 48 hours once waterways leading to the port had been searched and cleared of mines. However, other coalition officials said Iraqi gunmen were still fighting on.

In Baghdad, Iraqi vice-president Taha Yassin Ramadan also dismissed claims that Umm Qasr had been taken, saying,

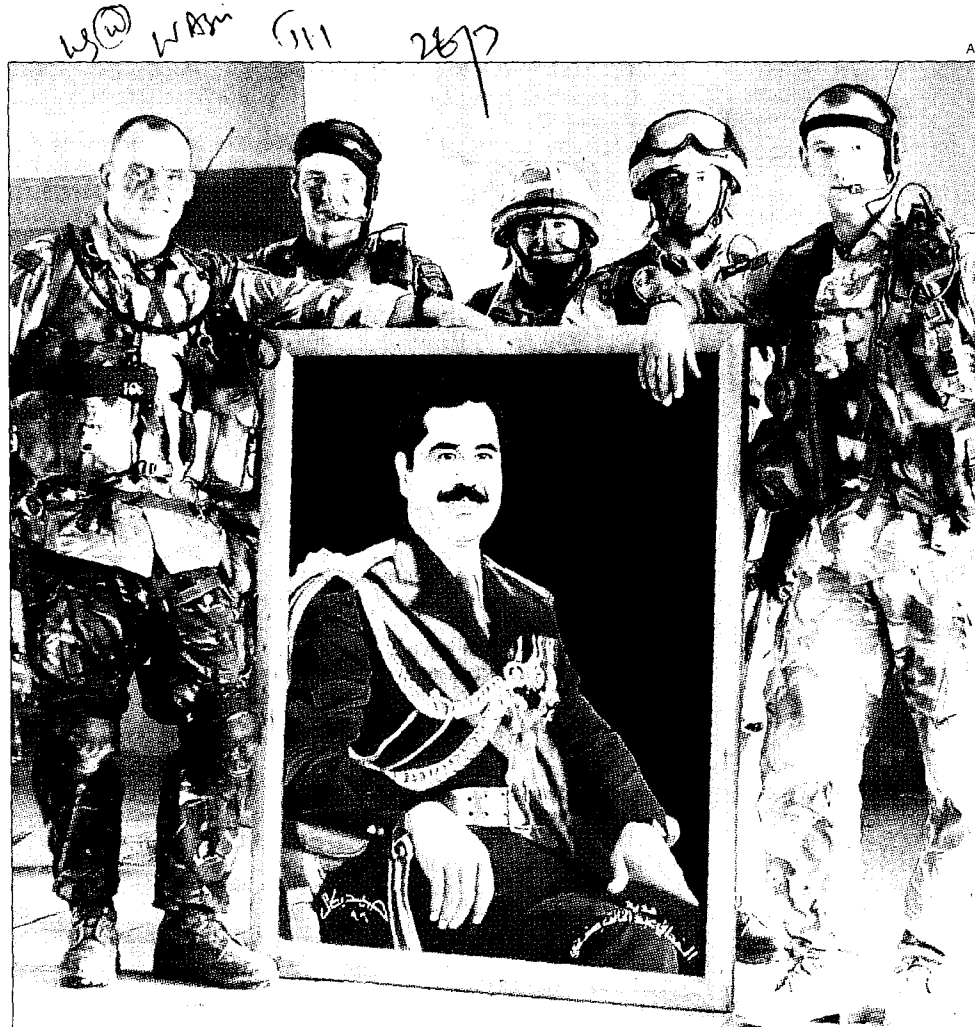
"They hovered around the airport of Umm Qasr but have not entered it." He also denied that coalition troops were closing in on Baghdad. "On the sixth day, they have not entered any Iraqi village."

Other progress was reported at Nasiriyah, north-west of Basra, where US marines finally forced their way across the Euphrates after a fierce street battle that opened up a new line of advance northward toward Baghdad.

More than 100 Iraqi bodies littered the road north from Nasiriyah. It was not clear how many were soldiers or civilians trying to flee the key passageway over the Euphrates.

Meanwhile, a military spokesman claimed in Baghdad that an Iraqi led a suicide attack in the southern region of Fao overnight and destroyed a coalition tank. NYT

News Service and Agencies



A BIRD IN HAND IS WORTH TWO FOR THE BUSH: The Zulu Company of the British 'Desert Rats' Royal Fusiliers pose with a portrait of Saddam Hussein taken from local Baath Party buildings in Basra on Monday.

Coalition of the billing: Bush seeks \$75b

By Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington: The Bush administration expects its war on Iraq to cost upward of \$75 billion. And that is just the beginning, assuming a limited one-month war, not taking into account the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq, a task that could cost \$500 billion in the long run.

President George W. Bush will ask the US Congress for the first tranche of money and also give the bad news to Americans in several public appearances this week. But following White House briefings on Monday of the sums involved and signs of a prolonged war, both the Dow and Nasdaq dropped sharply, and the cost of war and its economic impact leapt to the top of the debate across the country.

According to initial estimates, it has already cost the US \$30 billion to deploy soldiers to the Persian Gulf. It will cost a further \$5 billion a month to keep them there.

That is just the procedural aspect. Washington has already burned up \$1 billion in the last week shooting cruise missiles, and about \$1 billion a day is what it will cost to keep firing.

Incidentally, the \$75 billion Mr Bush has sought from the Congress (equivalent to three years of India's annual defence budget) for the war is apart from the \$379 billion annual military budget the White House submitted to the Congress last month. The 1991 Persian Gulf War waged by Mr Bush's father cost about \$60 billion—about \$76 billion in today's dollar terms after adjusting for inflation. But US allies, mainly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, reimbursed nearly

Investors back gold on fears of long war

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai\New Delhi: Fears of a prolonged US military campaign in Iraq continued to spook markets across the globe on Tuesday as investors continued to favour safer assets like gold, and the US dollar fell against all major currencies.

As a result, the rupee ended the day at an 18-month high against the greenback at 47.62 as worried exporters remitted dollars into India in a hurry, concerned that the US currency would continue falling. On Tuesday, the greenback touched its pre-war level of 1.007 cents against the euro while it fell one per cent against the yen.

Gold traders in Mumbai said that the sharp fall of the dollar against the yen had also sparked a heavier demand for gold. Standard gold with 99.5 purity ended the day at Rs 5,345 per tola, showing a smart rise of Rs 45 over Monday's close of Rs 5,300 in the city, while in London, gold rose by \$4.10 per ounce to \$333.75.

Meanwhile in New Delhi, oil minister Ram Naik on Tuesday allayed fears of supply disruptions either from the Iraq war or the strike by HPCL and BPCL employees even as international crude prices maintained their upward march on fears of a prolonged conflict.

US light crude was up 59 cents to \$29.25 a barrel on Tuesday, extending Monday's \$1.75 jump, but still nowhere close to the \$40-levels seen before the start of the war. The Indian market is tuned much above the current price band, with petrol and diesel prices having risen by Rs 5 since January.

An Indian Oil official, however, said the daily price fluctuations would not affect them much as their purchases were made on a monthly basis.

90 per cent of that expenditure. This time, there is not a penny from any of them.

The prospect of ponying up for American adventurism is already beginning to worry tax-payers. On Monday, Taxpayers for Common Sense, a national budget watchdog organisation, urged the administration to encourage other countries to share the long-term financial burden of Iraq. Considering the almost universal opposition to the war, there is fat chance of any country in the world responding to such a request.

The organisation estimates that the cost of war with Iraq will exceed \$110 billion for 2003 and could exceed \$550 billion during the next ten years. A report issued by the outfit assumes that this year's cost will include a month-long war followed by eight months of occupation and rebuilding.

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2003

HD-10 ✓ THE HARSH REALITIES OF THE WAR ✓

THE UNITED STATES and its main ally, the U.K., appear to have come face to face with the harsh realities of the war much sooner than they or even the rest of the world would have anticipated. Four days into their universally condemned invasion of Iraq, they have enough cause to revise their much proclaimed notion, based on the foundation of their technological superiority, that this war will be easy and cost free. There have been far too many reverses and negative consequences for the complacency to remain. In fact, Americans whose trigger-happy administration launched a "shock and awe" strike against Iraq on Wednesday must be in deep shock seeing the images that have been coming home from the battlefields in the last few days. Never since the 1993 conflict in Somalia on the Horn of Africa has the American public been exposed in such manner to the cruelties of a war. The experience in Mogadishu when the corpses of soldiers were dragged through the streets ensured that the military engagements in other arenas, including Kosovo in the Balkans, were confined to aerial bombardments with few risks to American personnel. Public opinion therefore was unprepared for the inevitable consequences of the ground invasion of Iraq. Compounding the shock of these images of prisoners of war have been the reports, filed by handpicked "embedded" correspondents, of the surprising degree of resistance being put up by Iraq's beleaguered armed forces. If these are a reflection of Saddam Hussein's popularity rather than a vice like grip on his nation, Washington's military top brass may be forced to rethink some of the dates on their calendar for Iraq.

The most startling of the series of developments during the weekend was perhaps the lethal fight inside an American military camp in Kuwait when an American soldier hurled gre-

nades into an officers' tent. It capped a day of perplexing accidents, the most inexplicable ones being the crash of helicopters and the bizarre downing of a Royal Air Force Tornado jet by an American Patriot missile in so-called friendly fire. Similar misidentification of targets in the heat of the battle during the 1991 Gulf war, with the same actors, had raised a public outcry in Britain and promises were made by both sides to ensure against a recurrence. The weekend accident is a measure of the dangers of excessive reliance on technology, best exemplified by the blitzkrieg warfare of "shock and awe".

With another vintage ally of NATO descent, Turkey, displaying a readiness to safeguard its own national interests if they came in conflict with American objectives, the picture is far from encouraging for the planners in Washington and their proxies in London. Turkey's decision not to allow American ground troops to pass through its territory on their way into northern Iraq raised the worrying possibility that the U.S. may not have enough forces and armoury on the ground for the task of coordinating the fight in conjunction with the Kurds whom it trained and armed for the eventual fight against Saddam Hussein. At this hour of action, there are also nagging doubts about the role that Turkey itself may play in trying to consolidate its position along the nebulous border with Iraq. Against the background of the bitterness of the haggling over the price of Turkish military support there are genuine apprehensions that the U.S. may be unable to exercise any control over the actions of the Turks, whose anxiety about the rising influence of the Kurds in the region may force them into actions running counter to Washington's interests. Not the most optimistic of scenarios for George Bush and his allies as they complete a week of warfare.

THE HINDU

25 MAR 2003

Saddam? No. US? Never!

For Iraqis, life is isolation and fear, laced with bitterness that they do not deserve their fate

ANTHONY SHADID
BAGHDAD, MARCH 24

THE melancholy wail sailed across the city and pierced the walls of the middle-class Baghdad home. The sleepless family listened in silence until the mother, her face lined with fear and pain, shook her head. "Siren," she whispered. Her daughter jumped up and threw open the door. She ran for the windows next, fearful the blast would shatter them. The son sprinted outside, hoping to spot a low-flying cruise missile that would send the family huddling, yet again, in a hallway.

While the outside world has grown accustomed to detached images of fire and fury over Baghdad, this rattled family of five in the middle-class neighbourhood has watched war turn life upside down. "We're in a dark, dark tunnel, and we don't see the light at the end of it," the daughter-in-law said.

The family met on Sunday with a journalist, with a promise that their identities would not be published. Over a lunch of Iraqi dishes — pickled mango, kibbe, kofta, chicken cooked with rice, peanuts and raisins — they expressed anger at the US government, which has promised to liberate them. They criticised President Saddam Hussein and his dictatorial rule, but insisted that pride and patriotism prevent them from putting their destiny in the hands of a foreign power.

They spoke most fervently of a longing for routine — the most mundane rituals of going to work, sharing dinner on a quiet night and sleeping at a set hour. They predicted little of that stability ahead. From a bloody battle for the capital, to lawlessness, to the humiliation of an occupation, they braced for a future that hardly anyone in Baghdad dares predict.

"Everything is turned around," the daughter-in-law said. For weeks, she prepare for war. She and her husband hauled a mattress downstairs, setting up their bedroom in the dining room. The family rearranged furniture so they could sprint to open the windows. Sofas and tables were cloaked in dust cloths to protect them from flying glass and debris. Two rifles and bags of am-

munition were propped against the wall. Scattered around the two-story house were supplies of a siege. Two tanks, filled with kerosene. Every pan, kettle and thermos filled with water. In bag after bag: flour, sugar, beans, powdered milk, biscuits, jam, cheese, macaroni, wheat, and rice. "These will last three months," the son said. His wife interrupted: one month, no more. "The men in our family have very big appetites," she said.

"We have 11,000 years of history. I know it sounds facetious, but it gives you resilience," the father said. His son added, "The bark is worse than the bite." But in private moments Sunday, the suffering was close to the surface. Friends, they said, had fled to Syria in January, only to run out of money before the war started. Others had headed north to the city of Mosul, hoping to endure the war with relatives. Those who stayed struggle to ne-

(Inset) A mother takes her child, who suffered burns during the bombing raid, to a local Baghdad hospital; (right) Baghdad residents search for their belongings in house destroyed by a missile; Iraqi soldiers man a rooftop position overlooking Sadoun Street in downtown Baghdad. Reuters and AP/PTI



gotiate the uncertainty.

A pregnant friend of the daughter-in-law was supposed to have a Caesarean section within 10 days. But her doctor has vanished. Hospital after hospital, overwhelmed with the task of preparing for the wounded, has refused to admit her. Another friend who is seven months pregnant has begun taking Valium. A neighbour said she stuffed cotton in the ears of her two young children every night. She fretted about finding diapers and milk.

When it came to the cause of Iraq's predicament, family members pointed to Saddam, describing him as rash. He invaded Iran, trapping them in an eight-year war. He seized Kuwait, bringing on the Persian Gulf War and the devastation of sanctions that largely wiped out Iraq's middle class. But they bitterly denounced the war the US has launched. To this family, the assault is an insult. It is not Saddam under attack, but Iraq, they said.

It is hard to gauge if this is a common sentiment, although it is one heard more often now. "We complain about things, but that doesn't mean cooperating with foreign governments," the father said. "When somebody comes to attack Iraq, we stand up for Iraq. That doesn't mean we love Saddam, but there are priorities."

A friend of the family interrupted. "Bombing for peace?" he asked, shaking his head. "I don't even care about the leadership," the daughter-in-law said. "But someone wants to take away what is yours. What gives them the right to change something that's not theirs in the first place? I don't like your house, so I'm going to bomb it and you can rebuild it again the way I want it, with your money? I feel like it's an insult, really." The family members nodded their heads.

Outside, sounds of ordinary life came from the street. A cart passed by, it had come to collect trash and refill kerosene tanks. As the cart passed, the routine it evoked seemed to anger the son. "I should be able to live like other people are living," he said glumly. "I shouldn't fear bombs falling on my head, I shouldn't be hearing sirens..." Everyone looked to the floor, no one saying a word. —LATWP

Iraq War UPDATE

Saddam promises victory

'The truth will lie exposed'

Reporter's body found

QATAR, March 24. — The body of the ITN reporter missing since Saturday, Terry Lloyd, has been discovered among 50 corpses in a hospital in Basra.

Missile kills 5 Syrians

DAMASCUS, March 24. — Five Syrians were killed and 10 injured when a US missile hit a passenger bus near the Iraqi border, Syria's official news agency reported today.

Two Brits missing

LONDON, March 24. — Two British soldiers were reported missing after an attack on their vehicles in southern Iraq, the British defence ministry said today.

An 'attitude' problem

KUWAIT CITY, March 24. — The US soldier detained in the grenade attack case has been identified as Sergeant Asan Akbar of the 326th Engineer Battalion.



FUELLING THE WAR: A US Marine guards a burning oil well at the Rumaila Oilfields on Sunday. — AFP

Troops for 'order'

TOKYO, March 24. — The USA has asked Japan to send troops to help to maintain order in Iraq after the US-led military campaign there, a Japanese news agency reported.

Amnesty plea on POWs

LONDON, March 24. — Amnesty International has appealed to Iraq to follow the Geneva Convention in its treatment of US POWs and urged the media to ensure their dignity is respected in the use of television images.

Russia says Turks in

MOSCOW, March 24. — Turkish troops crossed the border into northern Iraq two days ago (on Saturday), Russian defence minister Mr Sergei Ivanov said today.

Kiwis warn of terror

WELLINGTON, March 24. — The war in Iraq was putting the world at greater risk of terrorism and undermining international institutions aimed at ensuring a broad-based approach to crises, New Zealand Prime Minister Ms Helen Clark said today. — AP

Chris Ayres with the US Marines in Southern Iraq

FIRST we saw the animals: a few dozen brown and black sheep, their wool matted with dust and dirt. For our US Marine heavy artillery unit, trying to stake out a secure position near the front line in southern Iraq, that meant only one thing: Bedouin tribesmen would be somewhere nearby.

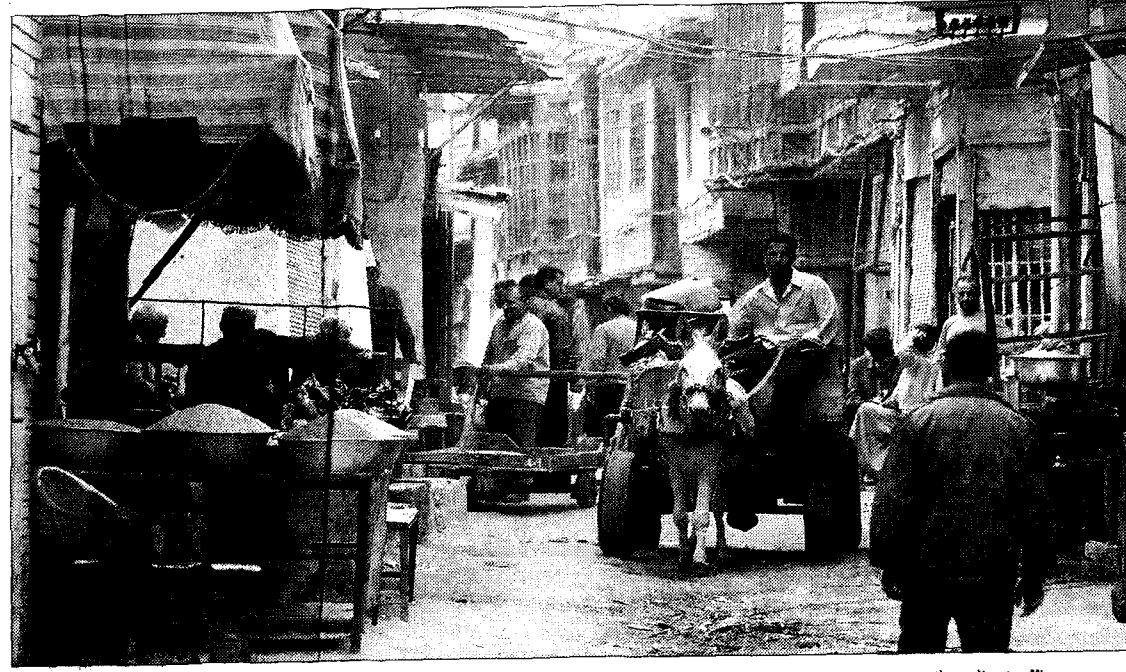
Associated Press

BAGHDAD, March 24. — President Saddam Hussein today vowed to Iraqis that "victory will be ours soon..."

He appeared in full military uniform and seemed calmer than during his last address on Thursday after the first missile attacks on Baghdad. Mr Hussein seemed to be trying to rally his people as coalition forces advanced towards his capital.

Inspiring his troops, he said Iraqi fighters were "causing the enemy to suffer and to lose every day... As time goes by, they'll lose more and they'll not be able to escape lightly from their predicament."

On the Americans and Britons, he said: "These forces entered our lands and where ever they went, they were surrounded by Iraqis..."



ANOTHER DAY TO SURVIVE A street in Baghdad on Monday. Despite the incessant air assault on the city, traffic was heavy in central Baghdad throughout Monday.

In a message to the residents of Basra, Baghdad, Mosul and other cities, he said the enemy would intensify their raids as they suffer casualties on the ground.

patient. God's victory is coming... He also mentioned several units and commanders in speech and hailed them "for their heroic feats in the battlefield".

Protests lose intensity, not spirit

Associated Press

BANGKOK, March 24. — Anti-war protests raged across the world today but were smaller and less intense than previous demonstrations.

"Hatred against America is increasing," said Mr Shahid Hamsi, spokesman for the United Action Forum, a hardline Islamic grouping in Pakistan, where an estimated 100,000 people marched through the eastern city of Lahore yesterday.

In Bangkok, more than 1,000 farmers protested against the war today. Thailand's Prime Minister called for global pressure on the USA and Britain to end the assault on Iraq.

In Canberra, Prime Minister John Howard was repeatedly heckled and abused from the public gallery inside Parliament

Spilling blood against bloodshed

WELLINGTON, March 24. — Protesting against the war in Iraq, a Roman Catholic priest and another religious activist said they used their own blood to make a cross on the carpet of the US consul's office in Auckland today.

Father Peter Murnane and Nicholas Drake, a Catholic activist, had an appointment with US consul Mr Douglas Berry purportedly to read him an anti-war statement.

The US administration was "spilling great quantities of blood on the soil of Iraq," Murnane and Drake said in a statement.

while police outside pushed back hundreds of demonstrators protesting Australia's combat role in Iraq.

Officers linked arms and formed a line that stopped protesters from entering the legislature. Security guards formed a second line behind its closed entrances.

The protesters demanded that 2,000 Australian troops fighting alongside American and British forces be brought home.

opinion from overwhelming opposition to a fairly even divide for and against the war.

While Bangladesh told foreign diplomats to seek police escorts whenever they leave their compounds after a string of anti-war protests, Dhaka reassured today that there have been no reports of violence directed towards diplomats so far.

Blind protest: About 200 blind students in Multan, Pakistan, organised an anti-war demonstration demanding the safety of Iraqi children.

Despite a series of big protests in Australia, the start of hostilities in Iraq seems to have dramatically shifted public

Bush finds support in backyard

Associated Press

NEW YORK, March 24. — A day after massive anti-war rallies attracted thousands across the USA, hundreds of people gathered in Times Square and other cities to show support for the war in Iraq.

About 600 people waved American flags and chanted "U-S-A! U-S-A!" at the Times Square demonstration.

Near Richmond, Virginia, today, police said more than 5,000 people showed up to show their support for the war — something war veteran Mr Terry Steer said they could have used during Vietnam.

Conservatives' push: The neo-Conservatives, who all along favoured Mr Saddam Hussein's ouster, were instrumental in bringing his expulsion on top of Mr Bush's agenda, a report said here.

Fire kills... both foes and friends

The Times, London

CENTRAL COMMAND (Qatar), March 24. — A senior American general on Sunday blamed the "fog of war" for the deaths of two RAF airmen when their Tornado was blown apart by a US Patriot missile on the Kuwaiti border.

The aircraft was hit despite being fitted with the latest computer technology designed to prevent a repeat of "friendly fire" deaths which claimed nine British lives in the last Gulf War.

The families of the dead pilot and navigator were being informed by colleagues from their base at RAF Marham in Norfolk as wreckage was recovered from the crash site just inside Kuwait.

Dozens of coalition aircraft were in the air when the plane was struck on its descent towards the Ali al-Salaam airbase after a bombing mission in Iraq on Saturday.

The missile travels at mach 3.

The jet would have been at less than mach 1. A joint RAF/US investigation will focus on why the Tornado's Identification Friend or Foe system failed to save it.

"The fog of war, the risk and pace of our operations — it remains a very dangerous business," a US Air Force spokesman said.

Mr Geoff Hoon, British Defence Secretary, said an enormous amount of effort had been spent on fitting the best possible protection. "But there is no single technological solution to this problem. It is about having a whole set of procedures in place... Sadly on this occasion they have not worked and we are conducting urgent reviews."

British military sources admitted that morale had taken a dent from the third fatal flying accident in the first three days, claiming 16 British and five American lives.

"It is a gritty start and we have got to pick ourselves up and get

going," a source said. "It is the worst start you could have and, yes, there will be a slight undermining of confidence on behalf of the guys. But at the end of the day you have to go out there and do your job."

Air Marshal Brian Burridge, chief of British forces, insisted that liaison between the British and Americans was "the most intimate alliance you can imagine".

Every Tornado is fitted with the Mark 4 IFF system and each aircraft beams its own encrypted code to coalition air traffic control. A cockpit light in the central panel tells the pilot that the system is working.

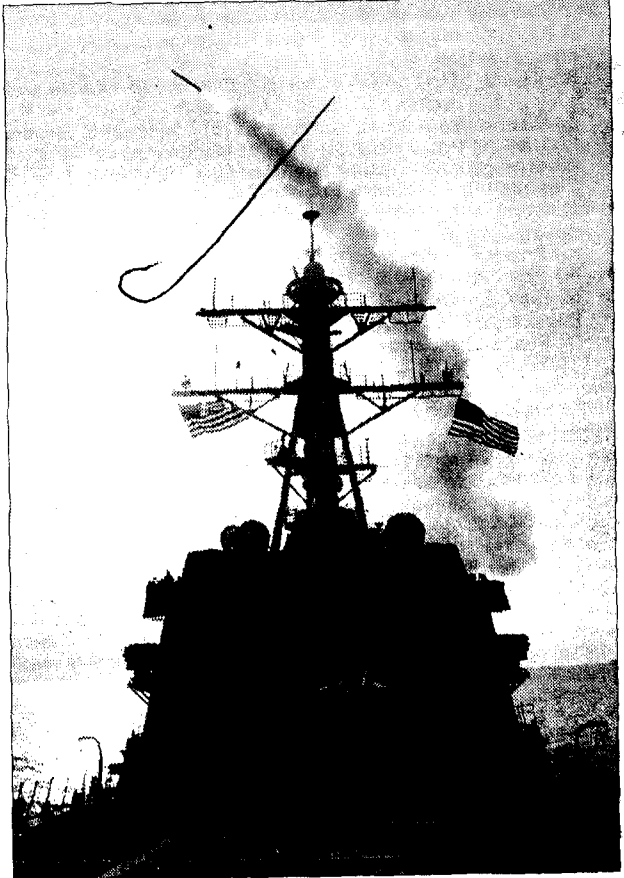
"If the IFF failed on the mission, the pilot would be on the radio, talking to AWACs, making sure they knew he was coming through. He would be screaming."

Iraq fires 3 more missiles at Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, March 24. — Air raid sirens sounded repeatedly in Kuwait with three faint explosions heard in the city before confirmation that a second Iraqi missile had been intercepted today over the emirate.

The sirens sounded around 1.35 p.m., the fourth time in the day, before the blasts were heard. The all-clear was given only for another warning minutes later.

A Kuwaiti government spokesman said two missiles had been fired during the earlier back-to-back alerts, but only one was shot down. That was the second time today that an Iraqi missile had been intercepted by Patriots. The first missile was shot down at 1 a.m. — AFP



KILLING WATERS: A Tomahawk missile being launched from USS Winston S Churchill on Sunday. — AFP

Close encounters of the Bedouin kind



IN A FOREIGN LAND: Marines in Nasiriyah on Monday. — AFP

The mission then was to destroy the Republican Guard's communications and mobile Scud missile launchers. But the special forces' positions were repeatedly discovered by the apparently friendly Bedouins. Although the SAS decided against killing the goat

herders, they later suspected that the nomads had alerted the Iraqis to their presence.

The Bravo Two Zero mission ended in disaster; three men died, four were captured and one escaped into Syria. One of the captured men, Andy McNab, later wrote a

bestselling account of the botched mission. Sergeant Chuck Hessler was the first member of our unit to come face-to-face with the Bedouin sheep herders, who were only yards away from our planned position.

Sergeant Hessler, his standard-issue Beretta pistol in hand, approached one of them while our driver covered his position with his rifle.

In a surreal scene, the US Marine and the Iraqi nomad faced each other across the desert and communicated in the tried and tested way: by hand signal.

Sergeant Hessler pointed at the Bedouin and saluted, then looked at him questioningly. The nomad, dressed in traditional hooded grey robes, understood that he was being asked if he was a soldier. He responded by shaking his head and cupping his hands towards his mouth: he wanted fresh water.

They fear that by handing out the bright-yellow packs of food rations to healthy-looking Iraqis wearing smart civilian clothes they'll attract an unmanageable number of opportunists and run out of food supplies for the people who really need them. — The Times, London

HD-10
29/3

A diminished America

By Pratap Bhanu Mehta

American prestige is diminished because the very basis on which it acquired authority, its own commitment to freedom and a vibrant democracy at least of its citizens, seems oddly compromised in the conduct of this war.

WHATEVER THE outcome of the war in Iraq, there is a palpable sense in which America seems set to emerge as a more diminished nation from this experience. The fallout of the war on America's external standing is clearly evident. For the first time perhaps America has discovered that the mere possession of power will not secure the support of allies. This war will almost certainly result in a greater anti-Americanism around the world and may even occasion a more concerted effort to build coalitions to challenge American hegemony. It is true that in terms of sheer military power and economic might, America will continue to dominate the world for the foreseeable future. But the one thing 9/11 taught is that you don't need that much power to produce far-reaching changes in a society even as powerful as America. Many Americans have since then been trying to compensate for their vulnerability by trying to reassert the myth of American invincibility. But invincibility in even the mightiest empire is a myth.

But the circumstances under which this war has been initiated has thrown America's own internal disarray into much sharper relief. It is not for the first time that America will be embarking on a military crusade, the consequences of which are, at best, uncertain and at worst dangerous. It is not for the first time that American power risks overreaching its proper capacities. It will not be for the first time that many will come to hate America if the cost of the war is too high, or resent it, if it is too successful. And it will not be for the first time that the rest of the world will think that America is putting so much in jeopardy for what might ultimately be venial interests in oil. What is new is that this is an undertaking, the relationship of which to America's identity as a nation is entirely unclear. America was reluctantly drawn into the two World Wars, but when it entered them, the ideological mission was clear. For all its horrific excesses, the

conduct of war during the heyday of the Cold War at least had a plausible ideological halo about it. At least it could legitimise itself in the guise of defeating an expansionist imperial power such as the Soviet Union. To many outside America, claims of defending freedom may not have been more than an ideological veneer, but at least it had some plausible connection to the story America told itself about its place in history and its mission in the world. Even the sordid compromises with all kinds of dictators could be placed in terms of this larger narrative.

Its post-Cold War interventions — the Gulf War, Kosovo or Afghanistan — also had a plausible basis and connection to its identity. In each case, there was a plausible cause, the pushing back of Saddam Hussein's attack on another country, the prevention of ethnic cleansing, or the dismantling of a horrendous regime that had harboured those who attacked America directly. And in at least two of the three cases, America had the courtesy of not being a judge in its own cause; it honoured its own democratic ideals by at least winning world public opinion to its side. Some may doubt whether support for America was genuine or was coerced by the fear of American power; some may plausibly insist that these interventions were unjustified. But at least the cause was plausible and not entirely incompatible with American ideals. And public opinion came around.

Iraq is different, not only because world public opinion is against it, but because its connection to any purposes America might have as a nation are not clear. As John Mearshimer and Steve Walt, two respected strategic thinkers who are, by no

means, doves, recently argued, Mr. Hussein was not a threat to America, and the extent to which he posed a threat could have been easily dealt with. Bringing about freedom and democracy in the Middle East might be a plausible American cause. But there is no sense in which it is clear that America is actually committed to that goal. Even if, for a moment, we grant that it is possible to successfully carry out this goal, it is not clear that this is George Bush's intention. It is not a cause he can carry with any degree of conviction; nor does he have the stature to convince the rest of the world that something grand and momentous is at stake. Nor does it appear that sacrifice for the cause of rebuilding Iraq or the Middle East is the cause that is rallying the American people.

Mr. Bush may have his own motives for this war: it could be oil or it could be genuine self-righteousness. But it is not clear that the American people share either of these motives. In all likelihood, this war has been allowed to get under way because there is still a post-9/11 stupor over American politics, a combination of fear and patriotism that has stifled genuine political debate. Watching the American and British debates from this distance, one has to say at least this: the British have a sophisticated and genuine debate on the subject. The U.S. Senate, on the other hand, seems to be not the deliberative chamber of a great democracy tackling the great issues at stake but a house stifled by fear and inhibition. With a few exceptions, the American media seems to be following suit. This war lacks a clear articulation of both American interests and its ideals.

In one of those oddly revealing moments, a radio announcer on one

of Delhi's FM programmes that caters to the teenage middle class that probably aspires to be more American than anyone else, was aghast that American radio stations, because of allegedly derogatory remarks they had made about Mr. Bush, were boycotting the group, Dixie Chicks. This announcer, for many of whose audience this might be the most significant event in this war, after reporting this news added, "thank god we are not in America".

Even for someone who might be an unabashed admirer of America, this thought seemed, at this juncture, oddly revealing and resonant. It is revealing of the ways in which the trajectory of politics within post-9/11 America has diminished its lustre as an icon of a free society. A great democracy can commit great crimes because of an error of judgment, it may even make inexcusable mistakes and it may even flaunt its own power. But the idea that an open political society should sleepwalk its way into so momentous an undertaking may, in the long run, be the most distressing thing about the Iraq episode. And American prestige is diminished because the very basis on which it acquired authority, its own commitment to freedom and a vibrant democracy at least of its citizens, seems oddly compromised in the conduct of this war. We know from history that undertaking war can be a symptom of fear as much as it can be a symptom of strength. And we also know that wars undertaken when they have no clear relation either to a nation's interests or its ideals can corrode the internal life of nations or at least reveal their weaknesses. The real price of Iraq may not only be the human costs or the shifts in geo-politics it brings about. It may be the ominous things it reveals about American democracy itself; how its prestige stands diminished.

(The writer is Professor of Philosophy and of Law and Governance, JNU.)

SEE FINDU

20 MAR 2003

WAR ON IRAQ

FURY OF FRIENDLY FIRE

SUJAN DUTTA

Kuwait, March 23: The body count breaks out in Iraq and, shockingly for the coalition, in its rearguard in Kuwait. A soldier of the US' crack 101 Airborne Division rolled three grenades into a tent where the force is camped in north Kuwait, killed a comrade and injured at least 13 others.

The Coalition Land Forces Component Command office here confirmed an incident had taken place at 1.30 on Saturday night. The soldier had been detained and investigations were on.

Not far from the tragedy in the US camp, a British Tornado Jet said to be returning from a mission in Iraq was shot by a US anti-missile battery with Patriots. Britain's Royal Air Force Group Captain Jon Fynes confirmed the incident.

The British have lost 21 personnel in "Operation Iraqi Freedom" so far. These include casualties when two Seaking helicopters collided before landing on a carrier in the Persian Gulf on Saturday and possibly also three journalists of a network.

There are at least two, possibly more, journalists embedded with the 101 Airborne Division in "Camp Pennsylvania". Sky News correspondent Stuart Ramsay saw the soldier, an engineer, held by troops.

The 101 Airborne Division "Screaming Eagles" is known to be the only exclusively air assault formation among the militaries of the world. Nearly 20,000 troops have been camping in North Kuwait since the second week of this month. The division has three battalions, nearly 270 Chinook helicopters and Apache Attack Helicopters. Special forces of other armies hold the 101 Airborne in high esteem for their ability to parachute or move

deep into enemy territory and break out through rings of fire.

Details on the shooting down of the Royal Air Force fighter were not immediately available. The fighter was definitely shot near the Kuwait-Iraq border and Patriot anti-missile batteries ring the area around defences to intercept Iraqi flying objects. But it is not known if it was in Iraqi airspace or Kuwaiti.

Airspace in Kuwait-Iraq is minutely "mapped" not only in the immediate preparation lead-

The Telegraph

**IRAQ
EXCLUSIVE**



ing to the war but also because of "Operation Southern Watch", which monitored the Iraqi Southern no-fly zone for over a decade. US and British fighters have regularly flown out of and flown into the Ali Al Salem and Ahmed Al Jaber airbases in Kuwait in thousands of sorties.

Since October last year, the number of sorties had grown rapidly as "Operation Southern Watch" also combined sorties to prepare the battleground by reg-

ularly degrading Iraqi defences south of the 33rd parallel. In the run-up to the war, squadrons and air assault units at these bases moved gear from "Operation Southern Watch" to "Operation 10-03 Victory".

The shooting of a coalition aircraft by its own forces is a disaster when seen in this background.

A Tornado is a ground attack aircraft with a crew of two.

British forces spokesman Group Captain Al Lockwood expressed his regrets and added: "In the end, we have to get on with the job. It has been tragic and there is a great deal of sorrow for those concerned and their families and friends."

But the sympathy and reassurance will be cold comfort to either US or British forces fighting in Iraq or the families and friends of the missing airmen.

Government ministers and senior officers pledged to improve the systems designed to prevent misidentification of targets in the heat of battle.

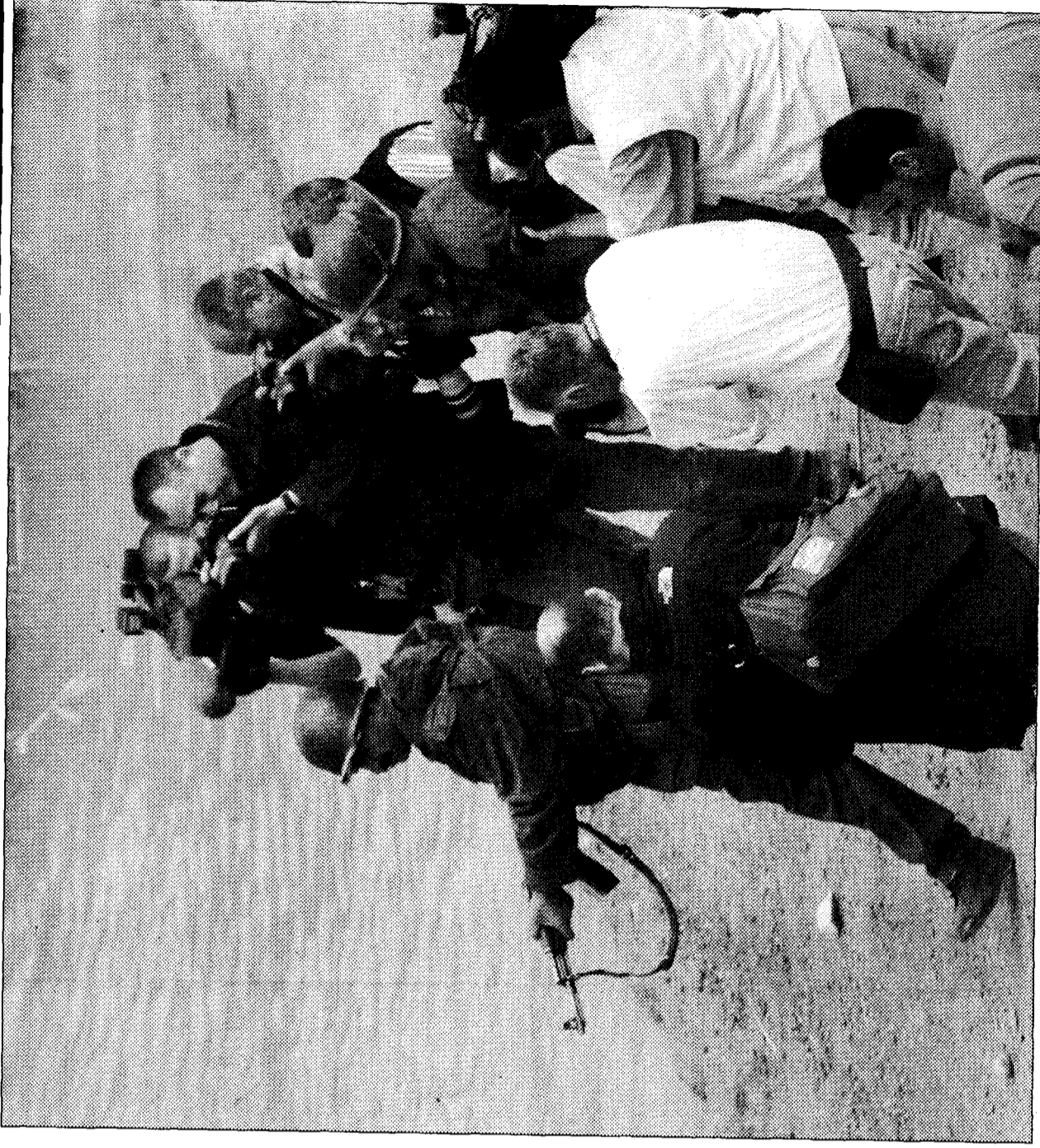
Warplanes have transponders that emit a special code identifying them as "friendly" when challenged by their own side.

British defence minister Geoff Hoon said he deeply regretted Sunday's incident, but that no system was completely foolproof.

"Air, land and sea combat is very risky business. They will never be perfect," US Air Force Major General Daniel P Leaf said. The USAF Major General is director, air component coordination of the coalition land forces.

"The Shock air forces since combat began 96 hours ago have targeted WMD sites, and targets for regime change." He said about 120 low-lift aircraft were ready to fly humanitarian aid into Iraq.

ON THE HUNT, CHASED BY CAMERAS



Press photographers follow an Iraqi Republican Guard firing in the Tigris river during a search for coalition aircrew believed to have been shot down over Baghdad on Sunday. (AFP)

CAMPAIGN / USE OF SMART BOMBS

Debilitating strikes on the cards

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 22. Amid conflicting reports on whether or not Turkey has sent troops and commandos into northern Iraq, the U.S. is keeping up with the escalation in the aerial bombardment of Iraq — Baghdad especially — with the intensity of the sorties left to the war commander in the field, Tommy Franks.

Gen. Franks will be deciding the calibration of intensity — he has been given the authority to decide when the air campaign could get into "full throttle". And in the absence of a forward movement in terms of the Iraqi leadership caving in, the campaign of "shock and awe" will be moving into this critical and final phase of debilitating strikes, it is said.

The Pentagon here is saying that hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of Iraqi soldiers are surrendering; and the top civilian brass in the military seem to be confident that the punishing strikes from the air and ground are making a difference on the leadership in Iraq.

"They're beginning to realise, I suspect, that the regime is history. And as the realisation sets in, their behaviour is likely to begin to tip and to change. Those close to Saddam Hussein will likely begin searching for a way to save themselves," the Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, remarked.

Assurances

The Defence Secretary has said that while there is no direct talk going on between the Pentagon and members of the Iraqi leadership, contacts on the mechanics of surrender had intensified with the individual units. There have been reports that the U.S. is in communication in a variety of ways with some Ira-

qi military commanders, their associates and relatives. *The Washington Post*, for instance, is reporting, that the U.S. military and intelligence officials have received assurances from some Iraqi commanders that they will not use chemical weapons against advancing British and American troops.

The U.S. is especially watching a Republican Guard unit assigned to Baghdad which has supposedly been issued chemical artillery shells. One assessment here is that in the first 24-hour period of the "shock and awe" campaign unleashed by the Pentagon, close to 1500 targets would have been hit by precision guided bombs, missiles and Tomahawk cruise missiles.

With five aircraft carriers, scores of ships and submarines in and around the Persian Gulf, land bases in neighbouring countries and from Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, the U.S. on Friday started a withering campaign against Iraq.

Apart from Baghdad, the Iraqi cities assaulted from the air included Kirkuk, Mosul and Tikrit. What is being stressed here is that most, if not all, of the bombs dropped in the intensified air campaign were 'smart' bombs or missiles, as opposed to 'dumb' bombs that were guided only by gravity. By contrast in the 1991 Gulf War, only 10 per cent of the bombs dropped were in the 'smart' category.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration is paying very close attention to the developing situation in Northern Iraq where there have been conflicting reports on the movement of Turkish forces into northern Iraq with a view to creating a buffer zone and in the process complicating the agenda of Washington.



The U.S. President, George W. Bush and Laura Bush, leaving for Camp David, the President's weekend retreat, on Friday. — Reuters



A woman, wounded when an explosion rocked her house, seeks help from British soldiers manning a checkpoint near the southern Iraqi town of Safwan, near the border with Kuwait, on Saturday. — Reuters

U.S. War Council to take stock of campaign

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 22. Prior to leaving for Camp David on Friday, the United States President, George W. Bush, watched television footages of the massive air assault on Baghdad, the White House has said. However, nothing was said on what Mr. Bush's reaction was to the blistering attacks that have devastated large parts of the Iraqi capital.

The White House said the President watched television briefly with his Chief of Staff, Andrew Card, in a private study adjoining the Oval Office. After this, Mr. Bush left for Camp David for the weekend with his wife, Laura Bush. At the facility in the Catoctin Mountains of Maryland, the President has been joined by his top foreign and national security aides, now come to be formally known as the War Council. Among those in this group are the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, the Defence Secretary,

Donald Rumsfeld, the National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, and the head of the Central Intelligence Agency, George Tenet. The President's agenda over the weekend will not just be focussing on the military developments in Iraq or be confined to the specifics of the air assault. There are any number of military, diplomatic and political tasks for the immediate and for the longer terms. The U.S., by many accounts, is preparing itself for the post-conflict phase in Iraq and the kind of role the United Nations would be playing.

The U.S. has said that it is for the U.N. to play a role in Iraq in the post-conflict stage, but has been emphasising that this will be limited to humanitarian and reconstruction roles. Dr. Rice is expected to travel to New York shortly to discuss with the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, the future plans on Iraq and the extent of involvement of the world body. As determined as Paris and Moscow are that the U.S. will not be al-

lowed to "legitimise" its course of action in Iraq at the Security Council, Washington appears to be equally adamant in insisting that those nations which were not a part of the war coalition could not expect to have a role in the political affairs in the post-conflict phase in Iraq.

'No half measures'

Earlier, in his weekly radio broadcast, Mr. Bush cautioned Americans that the military campaign could be "longer and more difficult than some have predicted" but stressed that this campaign will not be one of "half measures".

"A campaign on harsh terrain in a vast country could be longer and more difficult than some have predicted. And helping Iraqis achieve a united, stable and free country will require our sustained commitment. Yet, whatever is required of us, we will carry out all the duties we have accepted", the President said.

MASSIVE AERIAL ATTACKS ON BAGHDAD ■ GROUND TROOPS 160 KM INSIDE IRAQ

USA tries bombing Saddam out

Agencies

WASHINGTON/LONDON/DUBAI, March 21. — American-led forces launched a massive air attack late tonight on Baghdad in what was described as a ratcheting up of the precision attacks on specific targets and an exhibition of the overwhelming force at the command of the coalition. Simultaneously, a major push by US and British ground troops towards the Iraqi capital saw them advance 160 kilometres into the country meeting little resistance save in a few pockets.

The spokesman for British forces in the Persian Gulf had earlier said that coalition troops would be in Baghdad "within three or four days."

The aim of this new phase of the military campaign, US secretary for defence Donald Rumsfeld indicated at a Pentagon press briefing in the early hours of Saturday (IST), was to emphasise that there was "no escape" for President Saddam Hussein and the senior Iraqi leadership. And that it's "too late for them to try and stay in power."

The battle to bomb Mr Hussein out of Baghdad has begun. Mr Hussein's main presidential palace — the seat of government, as it were — was amongst the many buildings in central Baghdad that



ON THE ROAD TO BAGHDAD: US Marines head into Iraq on Friday. — AFP (More reports, photographs on pages 3, 4 and 5)

took direct hits. Huge flames licked the night sky and loud explosions could be heard all over.

TV reports quoted unnamed American officials as having

termed this massive aerial bombing as "A-Day" and hinted that the intensity of the aerial attack on Baghdad would increase or decrease depending on the

progress in surrender negotiations. Mr Rumsfeld said: "Now, the aerial attack has begun." He added that Bush administration was in touch with senior officials

of the Iraqi administration in this connection. He also said that the Iraqi leadership was losing control of the country and cited Iraq's denial that the border town of

Umm-Qasr had fallen to coalition forces as an example of the breakdown in communication between Baghdad and the provinces.

The northern town of Mosul also came under heavy attack and an American-British formation was on the outskirts of the port of the crucial southern port city of Basra. Reports of demoralised Iraqi troops surrendering in droves to the coalition forces were coming in, though there were pockets of fierce resistance by Iraqi forces to the coalition's march on Baghdad. Six hundred Iraqis have so far been taken prisoner.

The US-led forces' sweep through southern Iraq has led to the capture of strategic oil fields in western Iraq but the first combat casualties for the coalition forces also came on Friday — two US Marines were killed in skirmishes in southern Iraq.

Coalition forces also suffered casualties when an American helicopter crashed in Kuwait killing all 12 soldiers on board — eight British and four Americans. There was no indication that hostile fire brought down the helicopter, according to the Pentagon. But, Iraq insisted that it shot down a coalition fighter and that the aircraft had crashed in Kuwait.

Editorial: Fuel's paradise, page 6

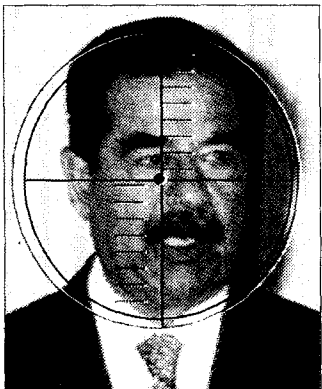
Address known, whereabouts unknown

Agencies

WASHINGTON/DUBAI, March 21. — The White House admits it, if grudgingly, the Iraqis are shouting it from the rooftops — "Saddam", or "our great leader President Saddam Hussein", depending on which side you are on, is very much in Baghdad. Yet, no one is saying where he is — and in what condition — though the claims, including in the press, are many.

America today said that it had no "concrete information" on Mr Hussein's fate, even as ABC TV reported that he may have been injured in the first night of US bombing on Baghdad — witnesses apparently saw Saddam being carried away with an oxygen mask on his face. Iraqi authorities, for their part, acknowledged that one of Mr Hussein's homes was hit but said the President and his family were safe.

US intelligence officials, however, said on Friday it was almost certainly Mr Hussein, not a look-alike, who ap-



peared on Iraqi TV a few hours after he was targeted on Thursday. It is unclear, however, said officials, whether the message was recorded before or after. The CIA and military analysts were reported to be "reviewing" the tape and other clues to Mr Hussein's whereabouts and condition, but officials cautioned that they didn't know whether "Saddam or his sons are alive."

American intelligence believes they were in the residential compound bombarded and officials examining a request for medical attention made from the bombed compound on Thursday that indicated that Mr Hussein or a top Iraqi leader was injured. Others, however, said there was nothing definitive: "It isn't clear exactly on whose behalf medical attention was summoned," a US official said.

But lack of authentic information on Mr Hussein's whereabouts or his condition has not prevented the Bush administration from urging him leave the country, a call reiterated by Mr Ari Fleischer today.

Iraq torches oil wells

LONDON/KUWAIT CITY, March 21. — British defence secretary Mr Geoff Hoon today said Iraqi forces had set fire to some oil wells in southern Iraq.

In Kuwait, head of the national environmental agency, Md al-Sarawi, confirmed the news, but no details were available about the number of the wells set ablaze. According to the BBC, the number is less than the initially reported 30 oil wells.

The incident seemed to have no effect on crude prices, which fell today. Assurances from the International Energy Agency that global supplies were adequate and the capture of oil installations on Iraq's al-Faw peninsula helped allay market concerns. May contracts of North Sea Brent, Europe's benchmark price for crude, fell 65 cents a barrel, to \$24.85, by late afternoon.

Iran today criticised the Opec secretary-general for promising that the cartel would pump in more oil to make up for any disruption in crude supplies, saying any overproduction would violate Opec accord. The British Marines have established a beachhead on Fao Peninsula in Iraq and have taken over key pumping equipment. — AP/AFP

Stars & Stripes shouldn't fly over Baghdad: Chirac

Associated Press

BRUSSELS, March 21. — European Union leaders today failed to cover up their differences over Iraq at the EU summit, with French President Mr Jacques Chirac threatening to block any UN resolution that would allow American or British forces to administer the country.

"France has the right to criticise this war," Mr Chirac said, adding that Paris "would not accept" any resolution to "legitimise the military intervention (and)... give the belligerents the powers to administer Iraq".

Adding more power to Mr Chirac's elbow, a British Member of Parliament, Mr Crispin Blunt (Conservative), today expressed "deep concern" over the raising of the Stars and Stripes in Iraq by US Marines. The British defence secretary Mr Geoff Hoon promised to discuss the matter with American officials after Mr Blunt said that the raising of the flag "sends out an unfortunate signal about the nature of the operation. I think it would be singularly unfortunate if the Stars and Stripes was to be planted over the Parliament building in Baghdad at a future stage of these operations."

British Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair had earlier urged leaders at the summit to support a new UN resolution to authorise a "post-Saddam civil authority in Iraq".

EU leaders resumed talks at the two-day summit today hoping to concentrate on boosting reform of the 15-member bloc's embattled economy.

The Iraq war clouded the first evening of the summit yesterday, which ended with a joint declaration papering over cracks by pledging to provide humanitarian assistance and reaffirming the central post-war role of the UN.

Despite Mr Chirac's evident anger at the US-British attack on Iraq, he joined Mr Blair and other EU leaders in trying to settle their differences on the ongoing war and focus on how Europe could help Iraqi civilians.

"I have no doubt that the EU will get back together and look to the future and continue to work in a positive manner to make the world a better place," said EU foreign policy chief Mr Javier Solana. The leaders agreed on the need for urgent humanitarian aid and supported the creation of representative Iraqi government after the war.

They issued a statement yesterday saying the UN be given a "central role during and after the current crisis".

Although they backed the need to rush food, medicine and shelter to Iraqi civilians, there was no agreement on EU playing the role of prime paymaster in the rebuilding of Iraq, as it had done after recent conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan.

CONFLICT IN IRAQ

WJW
S-6
2/3

First Step Towards An Occupation Regime?

By SERGEI ROGOV

It is beyond doubt that America is at the height of its power now. It has not had equal rivals since the end of the Cold War. The USA accounts for \$400 billion of the \$800 billion allocated on military expenditures in the world. This unique position of the United States tempts it to demonstrate to the whole world that there is no point "playing against its rules" and simultaneously formalise the unipolar system of the world. Now it has an opportunity to achieve its goal by dealing a military blow at Iraq.

However, Iraq is the weakest link in "the axis of evil" modelled by Washington. Its leader — Saddam Hussein — cannot unleash a big war. His task, and of his country, for that matter, is to survive.

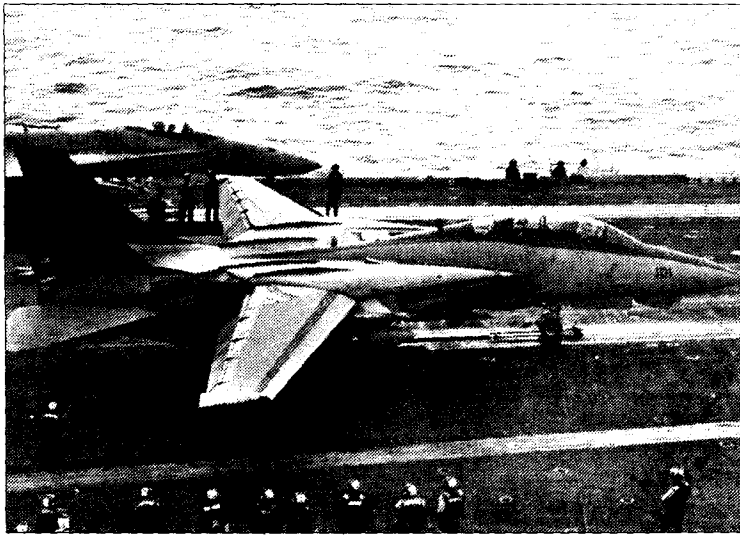
Isolation

It is safe to say that politically the strategy of George Bush has suffered a fiasco even before the beginning of full-scale combat actions. The United States has practically found itself in isolation. While international terrorism has been recognised as a common enemy by virtually the whole international community, not only Russia, China and the Islamic countries but also many western allies of the USA do not consider Iraq to be a threat to international security. Even in those European countries whose authorities back the USA — Spain, Italy, Poland — the overwhelming majority of

The author is associated with Ria Novosti

the population is against a war against Iraq.

The Bush administration is forging ahead, so to speak. It has started a war even when the United States has not gathered in the UN Security Council the necessary number of votes in support of its resolution on Iraq.



The 250,000-strong group of US forces concentrated in the area of future combat actions is no doubt strong enough to gain a lightning victory. What's next? Establishment of an occupation regime?

Democratic regime

This would be a difficult task. Will the USA be able to stabilise the situation in Iraq after the end of hostilities? Will it be able to prevent chaos, crime growth,

epidemics, hunger, a flow of refugees?

A change of the dictatorial regime, which existed in this country for many years, will become a sharp turn for the local population. Lastly, will the Americans want to exert great efforts to establish a democratic regime in

Baghdad which, in the opinion of Washington, is to safeguard their country. Despite the USA's experience and skill in "introducing" democracy, this would require much effort and money.

The situation in Iraq makes Russia, too, face a hard choice. The Russian leaders, after the terrorist acts in New York and Washington, backed the USA, taking the course for rapproche-

ment. As a result, Russian-US relations have undergone serious positive changes. In actual fact, pre-requisites for partnership between Russia and the USA have appeared. In some directions, it has already formed, say, in jointly combating terrorism. Along other lines, it has only been declared yet. In other words, the relations between the two countries are fragile yet. Meanwhile, these are a key factor for Russia, which is striving to join the community of democratic states with market economies. This is possible only if Moscow has good relations with the USA. Having just good relations with the European Union and European states is not enough to implement the vital task.

Right tactic

In this situation, the Iraq crisis creates a dilemma for Russia. Will the hopes for establishing partnership in Russian-US relations be preserved? Will we not return to confrontation? It seems to me that the Russian leaders have chosen the right tactic. Russia does not back the US course in relation to Iraq, considers it to be erroneous and bluntly says that there are possibilities for a peaceful solution of the Iraq problem. At the same time, Moscow is avoiding a showdown. What is special about the current situation is that the USA's western allies — France and Germany — are acting as its main opponents.

Nevertheless, time will come when Russia will have to decide. The slightest nuances determine very many things.

The people of USA and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with WMDs. — President George W Bush, announcing the military action in Iraq.

I don't have to repeat what should be and what must be done to defend the dear nation and everything that is sacred but I will say, each one of us in the family of the faithful, patient, oppressed Iraq...must remember and not forget that these days will add to earning you the glory you deserve before God. — Mr Saddam Hussein after the USA launched attacks on Iraq.

Americans have to be prepared for loss of life. Americans have to be prepared for the importance of disarming Saddam Hussein to protect the peace. — Mr Ari Fleischer, White House spokesman.

There is no proposal pending either before the BJP or the NDA to bring ahead the schedule of the general elections to 2003,

although there is a rumour. They will be held according to the schedule. — Mr Venkaiah Naidu, BJP president.

I have every right to visit Anantapur. I am wondering whether I am living in Pakistan or Hindustan. Chandrababu Naidu should clarify whether only Muslims have voting right in the state or Hindus also form part of the electorate. — Mr Praveen Togadia, demanding an apology from Mr Chandrababu Naidu for trying to prevent him from entering Andhra Pradesh.

Let me assure the misguided KLO youth the government will help them to start a normal life if they give up violence. It will not help matters if they continue to hide in jungles and roam with firearms. — Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee.

Self-determination in the contemporary context of a pluralistic society like India could only mean internal self-

governance within the overall constitutional framework. — Mr Yashwant Sinha, denouncing Pakistan's locus standi on Jammu and Kashmir.

This government is of the view that over the last few decades, the Indian federation has become overcentralised and there is a clear case for devolution of powers to the states. Some states like J&K and Nagaland have a special history which needs to be recognised. — Mr LK Advani.

Even before the last Assembly polls, attempts were made to defame the Left Front. Similar conspiracies cannot be ruled out this time before the ensuing panchayat polls. The objectives of the conspirators are to malign the Left Front in general and the CPM in particular. More such conspiracies may be in store. — Mr Biman Bose, Left Front chairman.

Of our revenue, 50 per cent is swallowed by payment of interest

on govt debt. Another 20 per cent goes on subsidies and 25 per cent on defence. What am I left with? So, I had to borrow. — Mr Jaswant Singh, Union finance minister.

We will only be day-dreaming if we think the Budget will be able to realise the eight per cent growth target set out in the 10th Plan. — Mr Manmohan Singh.

We don't believe in removing religion from the social space. But the whole business of Hindutva is an illusion, it was never the Congress policy. The meeting on March 12 was quite an important gathering and unusual in the Congress. Primarily it was a reaffirmation of our traditional position. — Mr Salman Khurshid.

I don't think I have been sacked on the back of the World Cup. I have been a captain who tried his best to lead from the front, but that obviously is not the style of leadership they want. — Shaun Pollock, after being dropped as South Africa's cricket captain.

on
RECORD



A B-52 bomber takes off from RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, England, on Friday for operations in Iraq. (Reuters)

US' first catch: prize oil fields

Saudis rake in oil moolah

Riyadh, March 21: Saudi Arabia, with the world's biggest oil reserves and greatest excess pumping capacity of all oil-producing nations, is often lauded for dampening rising oil prices during periods of strife by increasing its crude oil output. But the often ignored flip side of that action is a crescendo of cash.

Elevated oil prices and expanded production as a result of the Iraqi conflict are already pouring as much as a billion extra dollars a week into Saudi Arabia's coffers and could double the government's oil revenues this year. "They're raking it in," said a Western oil executive here in the kingdom's capital. And this in a country that is deeply opposed to the war that is responsible for its windfall.

Since late last year, members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) have been ratcheting up output as anxiety over a war with Iraq, heightened US demand during an unusually cold winter and interrupted Venezuelan production pushed oil prices steadily higher. Saudi Arabia, which is normally limited by Opec quotas to producing just over 7 million barrels a day, is now pumping 9 million barrels a day. That output could surge as high as 10.5 million barrels a day — its full capacity — if the country makes up for lost Iraqi production during the war.

Rumours have circulated for weeks that Saddam Hussein was rigging Iraq's oil wells with explosives in hopes of slowing an invasion and raising the cost of reconstruction for any new government. Iraq set fire to Kuwaiti oil fields during the first Persian Gulf war in 1991, and some southern Iraqi oil fields were reported to be on fire, possibly sabotaged by Iraqi troops.

There are also fears that the terrorist network al Qaeda will try to disrupt global oil supplies by attacking pipelines or other facilities. Al Qaeda followers attacked a French oil tanker off the coast of Yemen last year.

The Saudi oil minister, Ali al-Naimi, pledged yesterday to work with fellow Opec members to maintain market stability. Saudi officials often complain that they are underappreciated for their role in keeping the world's oil reasonably priced and readily available. The boon is a welcome one for a country whose economy, despite images of bejewelled princes, has been in the doldrums for years.

Saudi Arabia's excess capacity, while providing a valuable mechanism for stabilising oil prices and protecting the US and other heavily oil-dependent economies from energy shocks, is the result of a huge miscalculation in the early 1980s, when the global demand for oil was expected to keep rising.

The kingdom invested billions in new wells, pumping stations and pipelines only to have demand slacken and oil prices plunge. The government tumbled deep into debt, and the economy fell into a slump from which it has yet to emerge.

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

Dubai, March 21 (Reuters): US-led allied troops moved swiftly today to secure Iraq's vital oil facilities and snuff out oil-field fires on day two of a war Washington says is not about capturing the country's vast petroleum wealth.

The US has vowed to take over the giant fields of Kirkuk in the north and Rumaila in the south to protect Iraq's resources from sabotage and return crude exports to world markets as quickly as possible.

Washington has advanced on its targets, capturing the Faw peninsula on Iraq's southern tip, leaving British marines in control of crucial oil installations.

"All our targets were successfully captured," said Colonel Steve Cox, commander of the landing force.

"The main thing now is sorting the mess out in the daylight, make sure all the sites are protected and assess the local situation."

A spokesman announced over the public address system of the British flagship carrier that the first marine units were successful in securing their three main targets — an oil metering station and two pipeline outlets.

Those outlets are thought to be the UN-authorized oil terminal of Mina al-Bakr and Khor al-Amaya, recently put to use by Baghdad for illicit smuggling.

Iraq exports some one million bpd of Basra Light crude from Mina al-Bakr in the south and about 700,000 bpd from the other UN-approved outlet via a pipeline to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan.

British forces are now aiming to take Iraq's second city Basra, close to the country's big southern oilfields in a bid to thwart any sabotage attempts by Iraqi forces, who torched more than 700 Kuwait oil wells in the 1991 Gulf War.

"The US Marines are moving well into the Rumaila oilfields and it seems like we will be able to seize much of the oil structure intact," Col Chris Vernon said.

The forces will need to move rapidly in order to control fires which are already blazing in Iraq's southern oilfields.

Britain said up to 30 oil wells had been deliberately set alight in southern Iraq, a fraction of the 400 wells in the Rumaila

fields — the workhorses of the southern oil region capable of pumping more than one million barrels per day (bpd).

"Several of the oil heads have been set on fire by (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein's forces in an attempt to deflect us from the task," British forces spokesman Group Captain Al Lockwood said in an interview in Doha.

The picture in northern Iraq was less clear amid unconfirmed reports US special forces had secured the giant oilfields around Kirkuk, the biggest of Iraq's 15 operational fields.

A US official said earlier this month that Iraq had placed explosives at the Kirkuk oilfields to prevent them being captured in the event of a US invasion.

The pipeline that supplies Iraqi oil from the Kirkuk fields to Turkey's Mediterranean port of Ceyhan is still open and carrying crude but no tankers are waiting to be loaded.

Without tanker liftings, storage tanks are likely to be full by tomorrow, forcing a halt to pumping. The pipeline is now the only outlet for Iraqi crude exports after UN oil inspectors were evacuated ahead of the US-led attack. Iraq's three main oil refineries at Basra in the south, Doura near Baghdad and Baiji near Saddam's birthplace of Tikrit are also on the allied list of oil targets.

Extra spice

British military officers in the rearguard of the US-led war against Iraq had some extra spice for dinner on the terrace of a beachside luxury hotel.

An Iraqi missile flew past last night before burying itself in the sand a few kilometres from the Hilton, the base for US and British military media operations in Kuwait.

"It went by as we were sitting outside eating dinner. We heard it going overhead," said a Royal Air Force officer, who asked not to be identified. "We could not have been toast." It did not seem the diners were the target. "We don't know what they were aiming at," the officer said.

Kuwaiti officials said the missile landed near the Fahheel fish market. One possible target was the nearby oil refinery.



Iraqi soldiers surrender to British Royal Marines in southern Iraq on Friday. (AP/PTI)

No easy ride into port city

Umm Qasr (Iraq), March 21 (Reuters): Two Iraqis in civilian clothes lay dead near blazing vehicles on the road into this southern Iraqi port attacked by US Marines today.

Blood dripped from a wounded Iraqi sitting nearby. Women flagged down Marine medics who stopped to help.

The Marines had expected an easy ride into Umm Qasr, just across the border from Kuwait. But an Iraqi battalion reinforced the border to protect the route to the key port earlier this week, US officers said.

The Iraqis pinned down the advancing Marines for two hours with a barrage of anti-tank missiles and machineguns until British artillery smashed buildings where the Iraqis were dug in. "We have come here to liberate them and they want to fight us?" joked one Marine as he took shelter from the fire.

The Marines, part of an invasion the Pentagon has dubbed "Operation Iraqi Freedom", later raised the Stars and Stripes over Umm Qasr's new port compound, pulling down the Iraqi flag.

Bullets riddled the wall around a huge canvas portrait of President Saddam Hussein at the entrance of Aluboor Marine Terminal. Marines later cut down the picture as a souvenir. Six port workers emerged from the relatively undamaged installation with their hands up. The old port of Umm Qasr, about 1.5 km away, had not yet been taken.

About 30 Iraqi soldiers surrendered on the outskirts of Umm Qasr, which the Marines said would be used as an entry point for humanitarian supplies into Iraq once it is secured.

Elsewhere, US and British forces poured into Iraq almost unopposed, less than 24 hours after the US unleashed war with a Baghdad missile strike



A boy offers cigarettes to US Marines in southern Iraq on Friday. (Reuters)

targeting Saddam.

Reuters correspondent Luke Baker, with the US 3rd Infantry Division, said over 2,000 tanks, armoured vehicles, Humvees, trucks, fuel carriers and artillery had lumbered into Iraq from Kuwait before sunrise, meeting little opposition.

As the invasion raced ahead, officers predicted a swift victory. A British military spokesman forecast British and American forces would be in Baghdad in three to four days.

British Marine commandos seized the Faw peninsula and its vital oil terminals in an airborne and amphibious assault as US armoured columns set off on a desert dash to Baghdad.

A 12-hour artillery barrage heralded the offensive and large explosions lit up the night sky in the direction of Iraq's second city of Basra — an early target in the land campaign.

Turkey delays opening airspace

Ankara, March 21 (Reuters): Turkey delayed opening airspace to US aircraft as war raged in neighbouring Iraq today, demanding close control of overflights and greater freedom to dispatch its own troops over the border, sources said.

Parliament held a long-awaited vote yesterday, granting permission for US warplanes to cross Turkish territory for operations in northern Iraq.

But missions Washington hoped could go ahead immediately, easing pressure on a main invasion force pressing up from the south, became bogged down in all-night talks over terms.

"We've taken a break in talks with the US because there are snags both concerning airspace use and movement of Turkish troops into north Iraq," a Turkish foreign ministry source said.

Washington opposes any unilateral dispatch of Turkish troops to northern Iraq, fearing a "war within a war" — clashes between Turkish troops and local Kurds and disruption of the US war campaign. Ankara sees the region as of strategic importance and seeks freer action beyond the US-led command. Three weeks ago Turkish deputies rejected a motion allowing 62,000 US troops to be deployed on Turkish soil as a launchpad for operations into northern Iraq.

Turkey thus forfeited a multi-billion dollar US financial aid package to guard a frail economy against the impact of war. Yesterday's vote appeared to have finally sealed some form of cooperation with Washington, however limited, and raised hopes on markets for broader military agreements and financial aid.

But news of the snags over airspace helped drive down the Istanbul stock market by up to 7 per cent as well as depressing the Turkish lira and bond prices.

Diplomatic sources said Turkey was demanding detailed information of every overflight, its timing and nature of the aircraft and its load. The US considered the degree of detail went beyond the demands of safety.

Other diplomats said Turkey wanted a joint memorandum of understanding linking the overflights to broad Turkish freedom to operate in northern Iraq. Ankara expected a reply from Washington today.

France firm on envoys

France and The Netherlands turned down a US request that it expel Iraqi diplomats based in Paris because it concerned a question of French sovereignty, a foreign ministry spokesman said today.

"We have been asked to expel Iraqi diplomats in Paris. Such a decision concerns our sovereignty. There is no reason to do so," he told journalists.

Officials said US ambassador to France Howard Leach, had approached the foreign ministry with the request. The US said yesterday it was expelling three Iraqi diplomats based in Washington and appealed to other countries to close down Iraqi embassies on their territory.



An anti-war protester in San Diego on Thursday. (Reuters)

San Francisco, March 21 (Reuters): Police arrested more than 1,000 people in San Francisco yesterday — the most taken into custody on a single day in the city in decades — as tens of thousands protested across America against the US war in Iraq.

"If this was happening in every city, there would either be martial law or an end to war," said one Berkeley student who chained himself to 16 others on a major San Francisco street.

Protests took place in other cities across the US as well as in European capitals. During morning rush hour in Washington D.C., more than 100 demonstrators temporarily shut down the Key Bridge, a major route from Virginia into Washington's Georgetown neighbourhood and three were arrested.

About 100 protesters later gathered in pouring rain on the streets near the White House, and about 350 demonstrators blocked evening rush hour traffic on a main Washington thoroughfare.

In New York, which bore the brunt of the September 11, 2001, attacks that President George W. Bush has repeatedly cited as an example of the threat to America, "September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows" condemned what they called an illegal and immoral US war.

Anti-war demonstrators overflowed police barriers during rush hour in Times

MANY ARRESTED IN SAN FRANCISCO

America wages a war within

Square, completely shutting New York's Broadway for two blocks below 42nd Street. Police said they arrested 21 people. "A year-and-a-half ago you were heroes," one onlooker shouted as police forcibly led away one demonstrator. "Don't become our enemies."

Under sunny skies, San Francisco protesters started early and continued into the night yesterday with actions aimed at choking off traffic across the city.

Police in riot gear made between 1,300 and 1,400 arrests, a spokeswoman for the San Francisco sheriff's department said.

"I've been around for 30 years, and there have never been more people arrested at a protest in one day," acting police chief Alex Fagan said.

Many towns in America displayed support for the troops, although in a quieter way. Towns like Waxahachie, Texas, south of Dallas, put up yellow ribbons in

support of US troops.

At a pro-war demonstration in Lincoln, Nebraska, participants sang *My Country 'Tis of Thee*, and waved homemade signs that read "Go Marines," "Send Saddam to Martyrdumb" and "Nebraskans for War."

Debbie Petee, a Bush supporter in San Francisco, said the anti-war protesters "are nothing but traitors. This does nothing but give aid and support to the enemy."

Protesters across that nation said opposing war was not at odds with American patriotism.

"It's not like we're burning flags," said Danielle Geroux, a student at an anti-war rally at Florida's capital, Tallahassee. "We just don't want people to die." Vietnam veteran Mike Ward, 56, who participated in protest marches in the 1960s, wore his combat ribbons in San Francisco so that no one would question his patriotism.

Students gathered at campuses across the nation, including at Harvard University, where hundreds walked out of classes at noon and at least 1,500 people gathered at a rally.

Students at the University of California's Berkeley campus, a hotbed of dissent against the Vietnam War in the 1960s and early 1970s, occupied the main administration building for several hours before 120 were arrested. Police in Pittsburgh fought with some protesters and arrested about 50 people, some as young as age 14.

Chicago police in riot gear and thousands of largely peaceful protesters played cat-and-mouse, with marchers clogging several major streets and a key highway.

"People are just upset. They don't want this war and Bush won't listen," protester Margaret Jackson said. Late yesterday, police corralled remnants of the demonstration near the city's historic Water Tower and arrested hundreds.

Some in the crowd flew Iraqi, Palestinian and French flags. Sparks flew as officials sawed through chains linking protesters. Some of the city's fabled cable cars were halted. In Madison, Wisconsin, a traditional hotbed of protest, police investigated vandalism at the state Republican party headquarters on Wednesday night in which a half-dozen windows were broken and paint bombs were thrown.

Bush's war for imperial hegemony is unjust, illegal and an affront to world opinion

Machinehead

BY PRAFUL BIDWAI

Mr 6
2/3

IF GEORGE W. Bush wanted to kick the United Nations in the teeth and flagrantly offend the will of the international community while endangering its security, he couldn't have done so more viciously than by launching a manifestly unjust war on Iraq. Not only is this a war without a rationale (*casus belli*), it violates the explicit intention of the Security Council, which was set to reject the US-UK-Spain-sponsored 'second resolution' — and not because of hostile vetoes alone.

This is not the first time in history that the US has launched an unjust war or bypassed the Security Council. It has done the first repeatedly, as in Vietnam and Grenada, and the second too, most recently in Kosovo. But this is the first time that America has invoked a new 'doctrine' (of 'pre-emption'). Never before did it face so much civil society opposition worldwide. And never before did it take such an issue to the UN — only to withdraw it in a cowardly manner.

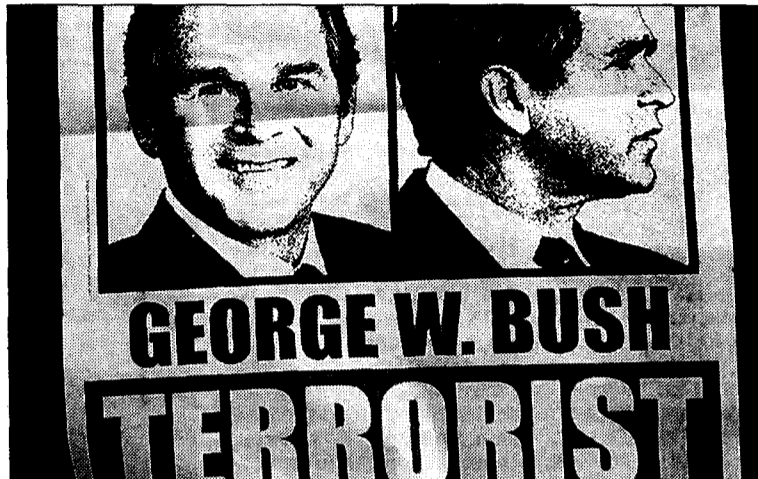
This historically unpopular war begins in *failure*: of the world's sole superpower to muster even halfway respectable support for its claim that Iraq's so-far-unproved mass-destruction capability poses a grave threat to world — and American! — security, and that Iraq cannot be peacefully disarmed.

The US, and its sole effective ally, Britain, even tried to establish a false link between Saddam Hussein and 9/11 by cooking up and forging 'evidence' of Iraq's uranium deal with Niger, and its global terrorist 'network' (by doctoring a journal article).

The US used every trick in the book — bribery, shady political deals and outright arm-twisting — to garner votes, but until last week, it couldn't win over even one of the council's 'Middle Six', all vulnerable third world States.

America's global political isolation couldn't be more complete. Today, the US-led coalition has barely a third of the 90 States which supported it in the 1991 war. A majority of them are 'directionless, poorly governed NATO aspirants, and client regimes like Afghanistan and Uzbekistan.

The road to this war is already paved with wanton destruction. The US stands in clear violation of the UN charter, which forbids the use of armed force without the Security Council's *prior* authorisation — except under the 'self-defence' Article 51, after the exercise of which the Security Council must take charge.



Nobody sane can believe the US is acting in 'self-defence'. Through its recklessness, the US has gravely undermined the trans-Atlantic alliance and created serious rifts in the European Union.

America's horrendous double standards now stand exposed: the *proven* stocks of 9,000 nuclear weapons and countless quantities of other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are fine in its own hands (or those of another seven countries), but the mere conjecture that Iraq may have WMD warrants a massive, crushing, hi-tech war.

There should be no illusion that this 'Shock and Awe' war will be 'gentle' on the Iraqi people because the US aims to 'liberate' them, make friends with them and hence, 'minimise' civilian casualties. According to Russian military expert Vladimir Slipchenko, who has proved remarkably accurate on civilian tolls in recent wars (Iraq-1991, Kosovo, Afghanistan), the casualties could be a staggering 500,000!

Even if the actual figure is lower, lakhs of Iraqis will die (beyond those directly killed in that ugly phenomenon, 'collateral damage') from collapse of water and food supply and healthcare systems. (These factors, traceable to the post-1991 sanctions, have caused over *one million* deaths.)

Equally harmful will be America's 'non-lethal' armaments: microwave pulse-bombs and 'e-weapons'. Such pulse-bombs release powerful electro-magnetic radiation which instantly 'fries' all electronic circuits in radars, computers, radios, hospital machinery, ambulances, water-pumps, even hearing-aids and pacemakers.

Why is America bent on this horrific, cruel, hi-tech war? The answer

goes beyond Iraq's oil, whose reserves are being upgraded in global industry estimates from 112 to 200-300 billion barrels — compared to Saudi Arabia's 260. Undoubtedly, the Middle East's oil (70 per cent of the world's) is vitally important for America's ambition to control global energy stocks, flows and prices, finance its own huge trade deficit, and beat down the euro.

However, the authors of US policy are inspired by an even grander vision — of establishing 'full-spectrum' global dominance — to the point of discouraging even "advanced industrial nations from challenging our leadership or even aspiring to a larger regional or global role". Most of them come from an ultra-Right think-tank, the Project for a New American Century. Its members include powerful figures like Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Jeb Bush, Lewis Libby, Elliott Abrams and Zalmay Khalilzad.

As early as 1998, this group *actually* urged Bill Clinton to enunciate "a new strategy" by removing Saddam from power. September 11 was a godsend to these fanatical advocates of Empire. Bush has since implemented some of their critical recommendations, including raising military spending, sanctioning Ballistic Missile Defence, etc.

This war, then, has been a foretellable, fore-ordained event. The US approached the UN only to get its rubber-stamp and to placate/help Tony Blair. But at the UN, it couldn't sell the line of 'automaticity': its ambassador admitted that Resolution 1441 "contains no hidden triggers and no automaticity with respect to use of force".

America has, disgracefully, gone back on its ambassador's word, to

pursue a hegemonic project that will leave the world — and its own citizens — more insecure. This war's *generalised* unpopularity will intensify anti-American sentiments everywhere, especially in the Muslim world, and particularly Iraq's neighbourhood. It is certain to *strengthen* fundamentalism, besides legitimising insensate force as the preferred means of resolving conflicts. Among the countries likely to be most affected are Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, three of them in our neighbourhood.

Globally, the US today threatens not just the UN, but the entire multilateral system — "the largest and most effective web of international relationships the world has ever known", as US career diplomat John Brady Kiesling put it while resigning his job in protest. It has taken the world many decades to evolve this system — by diluting the 'absolute sovereignty' principle of the Treaty of Westphalia, and reconciling Nation-States' disparate interests with the legal framework furnished by the UN charter and international treaties and conventions. America is about to dismantle all this.

America must be stopped. This *can* be done by convening an emergency session of the UN General Assembly under the 'Uniting for Peace' precedent set during the Suez crisis (Resolution 377) which allows the assembly to intervene when the Security Council is paralysed. The GA must condemn the US and ask the International Court of Justice to opine on the legality of the war.

To do this, the UN needs strong support from global public opinion — the world's second superpower. A powerful peace movement has become absolutely imperative. All public-spirited citizens must join it.

In India, the Iraq debate has been muddied by the vacillating, pusillanimous attitude of the government — which astonishingly blamed the Security Council, and not the US, for failure to evolve a consensus on Iraq, and has since issued one of the weakest statements anywhere, weaker than even Pakistan's. Added to this the gratuitous advice of bogus 'realists' who see new national 'opportunities' in the destruction of multilateralism, total US hegemony and the emergence of law of the jungle.

We must reject such claptrap and focus unwaveringly on the principles of peace, healthy multilateralism, equity, and above all, justice. That way lie both wisdom and realisable hopes for a better world.

Strategic fallout

Consequences of an Iraq war for Delhi

Now that war in Iraq has started, New Delhi will have to brace itself for the strategic fallout of a conflict that will have global consequences. It is likely that the US-led war will be successful in terms of its short-term goal of toppling President Saddam Hussein but less successful in the long-term objective of stabilising a post-Saddam Iraq. Hussein is concentrating his defences on Baghdad and making a stand in the city, which suggests means that he has already given up on much of the rest of Iraq. He has called upon his countrymen to resist the invasion with "daggers, swords and sticks if other arms are scarce", which will not be terribly effective against the latest concentration of American high-tech weaponry ever assembled. For those who think Hussein may be able to stage a Vietnam-like resistance to the Americans, there are two factors to consider. The technological gap is much wider now than with the Vietnamese, who were supplied with the latest Soviet and Chinese weaponry; besides the information technology revolution in warfare has happened. Secondly, Hussein has concentrated power in his tribe and sect and even his family; his regime is not exactly popular inside Iraq and may not be able to rally significant resistance.

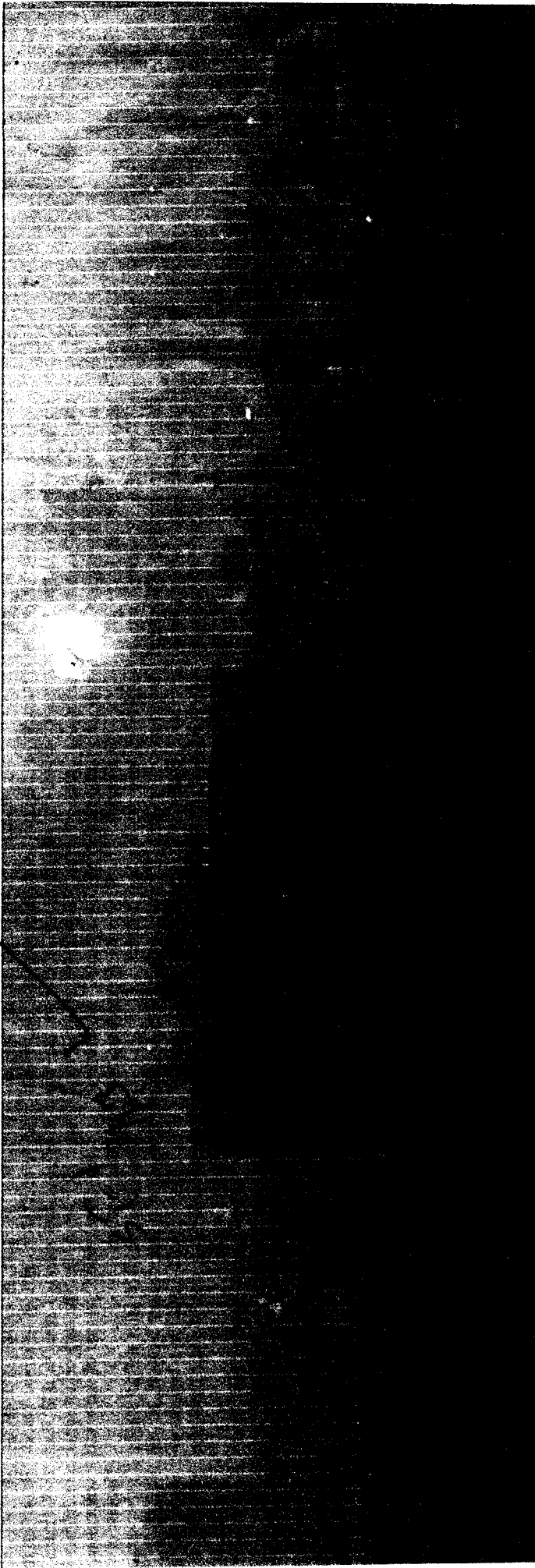
What will pose a greater threat to American designs is what should happen after Hussein is toppled. The destruction caused will spawn attacks on global American interests as the Al Qaida is gifted a handy rallying cry. A powerful anti-American bloc which includes the French, the Germans, the Russians and the Chinese is shaping up. In addition, Washington will be sucked into Iraqi politics as contending factions vie for power — the Kurds, the Iraqi National Congress, the pro-Iranian Shia majority which was hitherto repressed and kept out of power by Hussein. All this will have the effect of weakening Washington's hand internationally. That, however, is not necessarily a good thing from India's point of view. The only force that can restrain Beijing from continuing to make nuclear transfers to Islamabad is not India nor Europe but the US. Beijing is keeping quiet in this area since September 11, but with Washington diverted elsewhere, and Pyongyang's escalating brinkmanship gifting China an additional bargaining lever, Beijing could get up to games again, and Islamabad could feel encouraged to step up the *jehadi* influx into Kashmir. It is in those areas that New Delhi must look out for the consequences of Washington's misguided Iraq campaign.

2 1 MAR 2003

THE STATESMAN

AMERICA ATTACKS IRAQ

US (27) ID TROOPS BEGIN GROUND OFFENSIVE, CAPTURE IRAQI TOWN ■ SADDAM 'SCUDS' KUWAIT



ION IRAQ FREEDOM BEGINS: The Baghdad skyline after American Tomahawks targeted Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi brass in the early hours of Thursday. — AFP ■ More war reports on pages 3, 4, 6 & 11

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with PTI/AP

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Iraq border with self-propelled
howitzers and multiple-launch roc-
ket systems. This was the precursor
to pushing the infantry in. Artillery
shells were fired and the explo-
sions could be heard inside Iraq. In
Baghdad, it was all screaming air-
raid sirens as the bombs fell.

US Navy F-18 *Hornet* fighters
from the carrier *Abrah-
ham Lincoln* on the
Red Sea have also
been dropping bombs
on unspecified Iraqi
targets, even as US
ground troops inva-
ded late on Thursday.
Earlier, America had
launched its attack to
disarm President Sad-
dam Hussein on or-

leave the country or face war. (A
later report put the toll at five).
This so-called decapitation str-
ike, an unscripted prelude to the
start of war, however, came a
cropper. For, though it was un-
clear if any top leaders were hit in
the raid, Mr Hussein, who is be-
lieved to have several doubles, ap-
peared on television
three hours after the
bombing, signaling he
survived the attack
and pledge to fight
against "junior Bush"
to the end.

And it didn't take
long for the defiant
Iraqi leader to retali-
ate — Scuds rained

opened hostilities.
Iraqi information minister Md
Saeed al Sahhaf said that one ci-
vilian (a Jordanian national) was
killed when USA launched its at-
tack on Saura in western Bagh-
dad, 95 minutes after the expiry of
the deadline President Bush gave
to Mr Hussein and his two sons to



The reckless criminal little Bush...
insane Bush... and his accomplices
committed this crime against
humanity. For the sake of our
glorious nation, jihad and
religion... unsheathe the your
sword. Let satan bear witness.
The enemy is smouldering.

U.S. launches attack on Iraq

BAGHDAD, MARCH 20. The United States President, George W. Bush, unleashed a war to topple Saddam Hussein today with air strikes on Baghdad but the Iraqi leader responded defiantly, denouncing the "criminal Bush" and firing missiles at Kuwait.

In Kuwait, U.S. military officers with the 1st Marine Division said three oil wells "have been torched" in southern Iraq but they gave no further details.

Artillery barrage

Later in the day, U.S. forces launched intense artillery barrages near the Iraq-Kuwait border today and explosions were reported in the direction of the Iraqi city of Basra, Reuters eye-witnesses said.

"There has been another intense barrage," said a Reuters correspondent from near the border. "The first lot of big explosions came from the direction of Basra and then there were more to west of that direction."

Other Reuters correspondents reported similar U.S. artillery attacks, with one reporting several artillery flashes.

Announcing the start of a campaign to oust Mr. Hussein and disarm Iraq, Mr. Bush said: "Selected targets" were hit. But U.S. officials said an all-out offensive might be days away.

"These are the opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign," Mr. Bush said in a televised address about two hours after the expiry of a U.S. ultimatum to Iraq.

He said the U.S. military would seek a swift victory while trying to avoid civilian casualties. But he warned that the conflict could be "longer and

more difficult than some predict".

Oil prices tumbled to three-month lows as dealers bet on a swift U.S. victory with little disruption to West Asia supply.

Meanwhile, in a significant decision, the Turkish Parliament voted to allow the U.S. military to use Turkish airspace for the war against Iraq. The Government-backed proposal was passed by a vote of 332 to 202 with one abstention, the Parliament Speaker, Bulent Arinc, said.

sassinate" Mr. Hussein had failed.

The spokesman did not name the officials, but the *Washington Post* reported that the raid was ordered after the CIA had located where Mr. Hussein was meeting aides in a private residence.

U.S. officials said the aim of the raids was to "decapitate" the Iraqi Government, but television appearances by Mr. Hussein and two aides suggested key figures had survived.

Three hours after the raids



An Iraqi child, injured in the U.S. airstrikes on Baghdad on Thursday, in hospital. — AFP

The Iraqi Information Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, said the U.S. strikes hit mostly empty media and customs buildings and civilian districts. One civilian was killed and several were wounded, he said.

'Assassination bid'

A British military spokesman said some Cruise missiles targeted a meeting of five Iraqi officials in Baghdad. An Iraqi Minister said a U.S. bid to "as-

Reuters correspondents in Baghdad heard the first explosions about 90 minutes after the expiry of the U.S. ultimatum to Mr. Hussein and his sons, Uday and Qusay, to leave Iraq. Jets roared over the Iraqi capital, amid anti-aircraft fire and wailing sirens.

Black smoke billowed from one eastern district as a cloudy dawn broke. Explosions later erupted in the city centre.

The U.S. military appeared to take over the main frequency of Iraqi state radio, saying Mr. Hussein's rule was under attack. "This is the day we have been waiting for," the radio said.

Mr. Bush and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, have accused Iraq of hiding banned weapons, but they failed to win a Security Council approval for military action.

Kurds take to caves

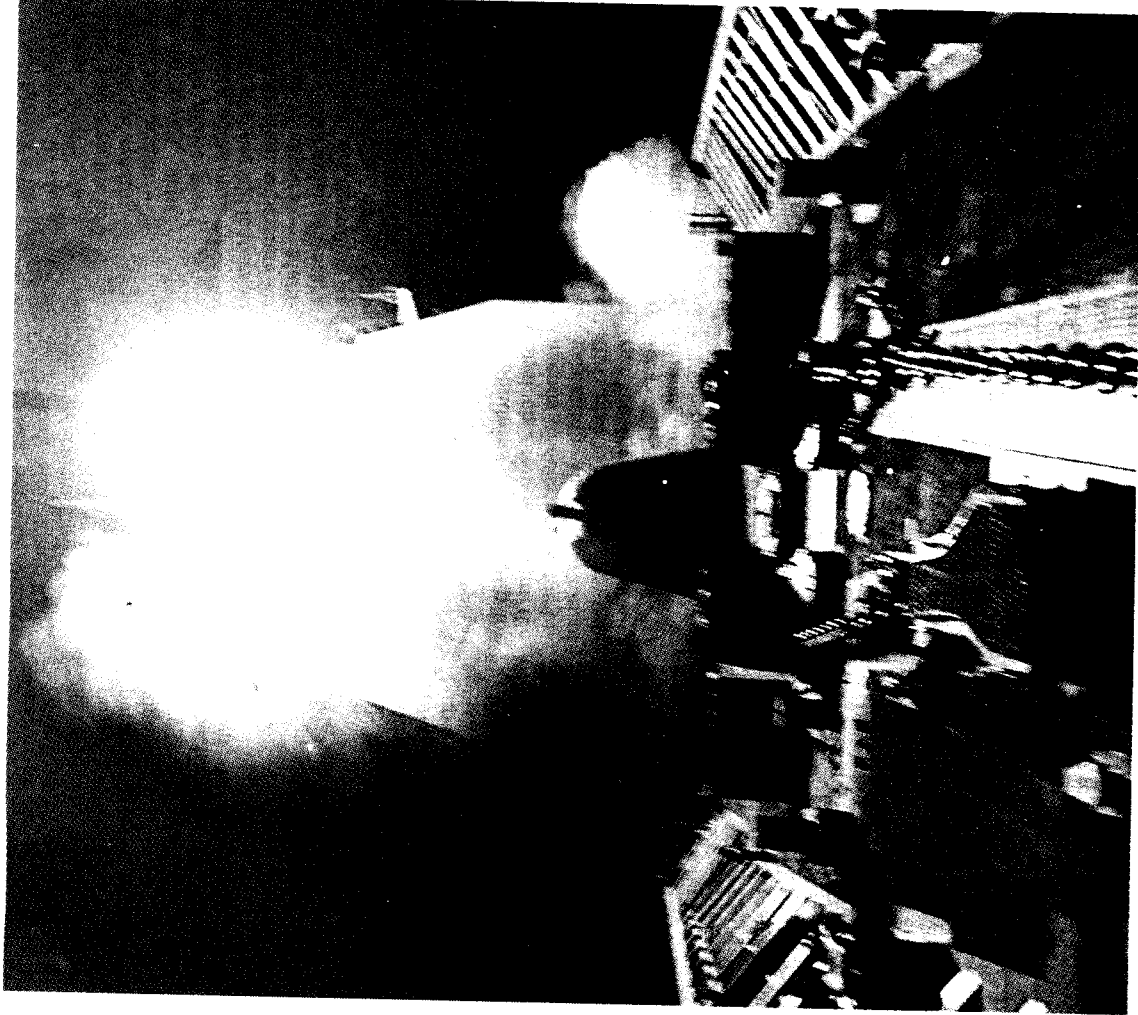
With no money to run and nowhere better to hide, dozens of Iraqi Kurds were sheltering from war in caves today in the vulnerable no-man's land between the Kurdish and Iraqi government front lines.

Most had fled the cities of northern Iraq and flocked to the mountains, almost all citing fear of a repeat of Mr. Hussein's 1988 chemical bomb attacks that killed thousands, most famously in the town of Halabja.

"We haven't got any cars, any money, nothing. How can we go anywhere?" said one man heaving sacks of clothes down through a slit into a dimly-lit underground cave. — Reuters

U.S. warns against setting oil wells on fire: Page 11

More reports on Pages 14,15



A Tomahawk missile being fired from the deck of the guided missile cruiser, USS Bunker Hill, to strike military targets in Iraq on Thursday. — AP

IRAQ CAMPAIGN / 'NOTHING LESS THAN A FULL VICTORY'

10-11

A long, difficult war ahead: Bush

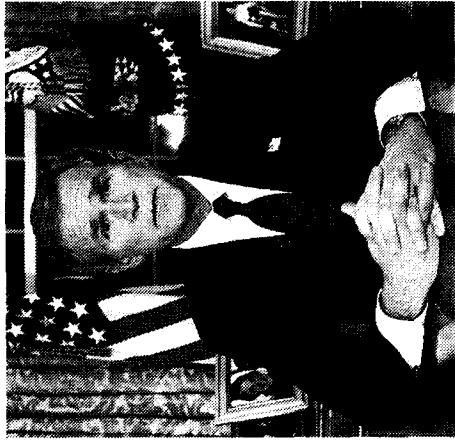
By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 20. Less than two hours after the 8 pm deadline on Wednesday, the first missiles landed in Baghdad, the set of weapons supposedly pursuing a "target of opportunity."

The U.S. President, George W. Bush, while addressing the nation from the White House said that the military campaign would not be one of half measures and that the U.S. would accept nothing less than a full victory.

"I want Americans and all the world to know that coalition forces will make every effort to spare innocent civilians from harm. A campaign on the harsh terrain of a nation as large as California could be longer and more difficult than some predict. And helping Iraqis achieve a united, stable and free country will require our sustained commitment. Our nation enters this conflict reluctantly, yet our purpose is sure. The people of the U.S. and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder," Mr. Bush said.

At a time when expectations were all-out air offensive at the expiry of the deadline, American military planners sprang a surprise of sorts by limiting the first batch of Tomahawk cruise missiles and precision guided bombs. Some 40 missiles were fired from ships in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea and two Nighthawk F-117A Stealth jets unloaded 2000-pound precision-guided bombs. The Pentagon said the first limited



The U.S. President, George Bush, addressing the nation on Wednesday night. — AP

offensive was against a "target of opportunity" which had been later translated into going after the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, directly.

Intelligence assessment

Apparently the President gave this go-ahead based on an intelligence assessment and finding on the whereabouts of the Iraqi leader and his inner circle of advisors. There are specific domestic laws against assassinating foreign leaders; but officials are making the point that in a military conflict situation, going after Mr. Hussein is fair

Draw swords against invaders: Saddam



BAGHDAD, MARCH 20. A subdued Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, appeared on the State-run television on Thursday after the U.S. air strike on Baghdad, urging his people to 'draw your sword' against the invaders and promising victory.

Mr. Hussein, appearing in full military dress, accused the United States and Britain of shameful crimes and referred to the American President as "little, evil Bush. They will face a bitter defeat, God willing," he said. "You will be able to achieve glory and your despicable infidel enemies will be defeated."

The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, addressing the nation after the U.S. launched attacks, — Reuters

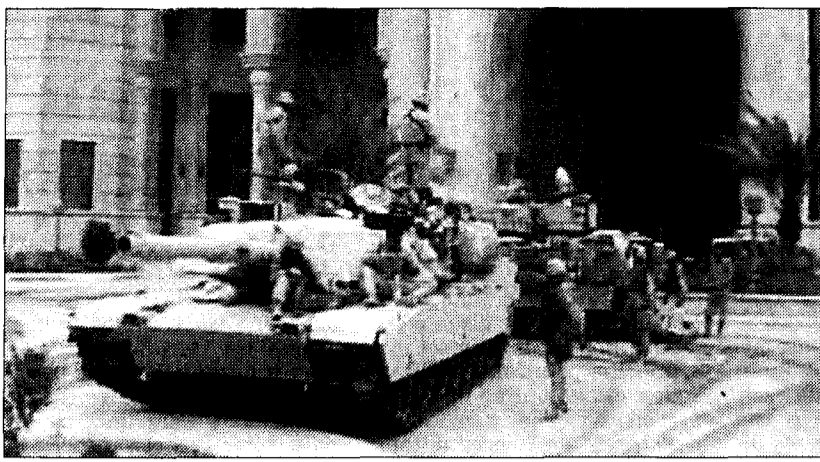
There was no way to determine whether the speech was taped before the attack — a barrage of cruise missiles and precision-guided bombs designed to take out Mr. Hussein himself and other Iraqi leaders.

The attack set air sirens blating in the Iraqi capital and anti-aircraft tracers streaking through the sky. Hundreds of armed members of Mr. Hussein's Baath Party and security forces took up positions in Baghdad after the sirens went off. The capital fell still after about 30 minutes until a mosque's muezzin issued the call for dawn Islamic prayers.

The streets were mostly empty of civilians — and of regular army troops or armour.

Most of the explosions seemed to come from locations outside the city, but one was followed by a ball of fire toward the southern part of the capital.

Many people had already streamed out of Baghdad a day earlier for the relative safety of the countryside. Nearly every store was shut, and many people taped their windows. — AP



TROOPS TRAIL: Soldiers take up positions in front of one of Saddam Hussein's palaces in Baghdad on Monday. (Centre) A young Iraqi hugs a member of the US Navy in Umm Qasr on Sunday. (Right) Marines rest in Saddam's palace in Basra on Monday. PHOTOS: AP

CRISIS UPDATE

Iraqi captors treated US photographer well

US freelance photographer Molly Bingham said on Monday she was treated well by Iraqi authorities who arrested her at her Baghdad hotel and held her in prison for more than a week. Bingham, along with two *Newsday* journalists, said she was taken by seven Iraqi troops from her hotel late at night. The three were blindfolded and led to a Baghdad prison where she was questioned. "I've paid for worse hotel rooms in Africa," Bingham said of her cellphone on NBC's *Today* show. "It was decent it was a clean cell. I slept on a cement floor with two wool blankets. I was given three meals a day and had access to a bathroom."

Reuters, Washington

Reporter says sorry

FOX NEWS reporter Gerald Rivera apologised on Sunday for breaking military rules last week when he revealed US troop movements in Iraq. Military officials denounced Rivera for disclosing unauthorised information after a report in which he squatted in the desert and outlined military movements in the dirt. In an interview Sunday on Fox, Rivera said, he "should have been more careful." "I'm sorry that it happened and I assure you that it was inadvertent. Nobody was hurt by what I said. No mission was compromised."

AP, New York

Scribe in friendly fire

THE BBC's veteran war reporter John Simpson is recovering from injuries sustained when a US "friendly fire" incident killed 18 people. Describing the incident, Simpson said he saw a red and white bomb being released from an American F15 plane, which dropped 10 to 12 yards from him. He said he counted at least 15 dead and saw bodies "burning to death in front of me." Simpson admitted that had he not been wearing his flak jacket, which was riddled by pieces of shrapnel, he would have been hit in the spine. His producer also escaped serious injury although a "one inch piece of shrapnel" was taken out of his foot.

The Guardian, London

Rubber bullets fired

POLICE FIRED rubber bullets on Monday against hundreds of anti-war protesters blocking a road near Oakland's port, witnesses and officials said. Local media reported several longshoremen were injured in what is believed to be the first police use of rubber bullets against demonstrators since President George Bush launched the war. Demonstrators were seeking to block access to American President Lines, a shipping company they claimed was profiting from the war in Iraq. Police said they used rubber bullets to disperse about 750 protesters.

Reuters, California

'I'll die if I don't get a pair of hands'

Samia Nakhoul
Baghdad, April 7

ALI ISMAIL Abbas, 12, was fast asleep when war shattered his life. A missile obliterated his home and most of his family, leaving him orphaned, badly burned and blowing off both his arms. "It was midnight when the missile fell on us. My father, my mother and my brother died. My mother was five months pregnant," said the traumatised boy at Baghdad's Kindi hospital. "Our neighbours pulled me out and brought me here. I was unconscious," he said on Sunday.

In addition to the tragedy of losing his parents, he faces the horror of living handicapped. Thinking about his uncertain future he timidly asked whether he could get artificial arms. "Can you help get my arms back? Do you think the doctors can get me another pair of hands?" Abbas asked. "If I

don't get a pair of hands I will commit suicide," he said with tears spilling down his cheeks.

His aunt, three cousins and three other relatives staying with them were also killed in this week's missile strikes on their house in Dila Bridge district east of Baghdad. "We didn't want war. I was scared of this war," said Abbas. "Our house was just a poor shack, why did they want to bomb us?" said the young boy, unaware that the area in which he lived was surrounded by military installations.

With a childhood lost and a future clouded by disaster and disability, Abbas poured his heart out as he lay in bed with an improvised wooden cage over his chest to stop his burned flesh touching the bed covers.

"I wanted to become an army officer when I grow up, but not anymore. Now I want to become a doctor, but how can I? I don't have hands," he said. His aunt, Jamila Abbas, 53, looked after him, feed-



Ali Ismail Abbas in a Baghdad hospital. REUTERS

ing him, washing him, comforting him with prayers and repeatedly telling him his parents had gone to heaven.

Abbas' suffering offered one snapshot of the daily horrors afflicting Iraqi civilians in the devastating US-led war to remove President Saddam Hussein. At the Kindi hospital, staff were overwhelmed by the sharp rise in casualties

since US ground troops moved north to Baghdad on Thursday and intensified their aerial assault. Ambulance after ambulance raced in with casualties from around the capital. Victim after victim was rushed in, many carried in bed sheets after the stretchers ran out. Doctors struggled to find them beds.

Staff had no time even to clean the blood from trolleys. Patients' screams and parents' cries echoed across the ward. With many staff unable to reach the hospital due to the bombing, doctors worked round the clock performing surgery, taking blood, giving injections and ferrying the wounded.

Doctor Osama Saleh al-Duleimi, an orthopedic surgeon and assistant director at Kindi, said they were overloaded and suffering shortages of anaesthesia, pain killers and staff.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been touring hospitals to provide first aid and surgery

kits. "So far hospitals had equipment and medicines to cope but were overwhelmed by the sheer number of casualties coming in at the same time. During fierce bombardment, hospitals received up to 100 casualties per hour," ICRC spokesman Roland Huguenin-Benjamin said on Sunday.

Doctors who treated Iraqi victims of two previous wars say they are taken aback by the injuries they have seen. Most suffered massive trauma and fatal wounds, including head, abdominal and limb injuries from lethal weapons, they said. "I've been a doctor for 25 years and this is the worst I've seen in terms of the number of casualties and fatal wounds," said Duleimi, 48, who witnessed the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War and the 1991 Gulf War over Kuwait.

"This is a disaster because they're attacking civilians. We are receiving a lot of civilian casualties," he added. REUTERS



TIME OUT: Coalition soldiers watch a Mel Gibson movie at Camp As Sayliyah in Doha, Qatar, late on Sunday.

Bush sends aide to repair ties with Russia

Moscow, April 7

PRESIDENT GEORGE Bush's top national security aide met Russian officials on Monday to try to repair ties with Moscow, badly shaken by the war in Iraq. With Moscow smarting over an attack on a convoy of Russian diplomats in Iraq — so far unexplained — US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice held talks with Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and other officials.

"We (Russia and the US) have been through some difficult times and differences over Iraq have strained the relationship. We look forward to exchanging views on how to move forward," a US embassy spokesman said.

Russia sought to dissuade the US and Britain from going to war to topple Saddam Hussein, arguing for a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

President Vladimir Putin, with an eye on long-term ties with Washington and Russia's future economic interests in Iraq, has since softened this criticism and says a US military defeat would not be in Russia's interests.

But Moscow officially admonished Washington over United States air attacks on Baghdad last week, which it said struck uncomfortably close to the Russian embassy there. Though it was not clear which side was responsible for the attack on a Russian diplomatic convoy on Sunday in which a diplomat was badly wounded, the incident seemed to inject some emotion into Rice's meetings with senior Russian officials.

Gunfire raked the convoy of Russian diplomats and journalists as it left Baghdad. REUTERS

US plans long stay in Baghdad

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, April 7

THE US has disclosed that it is preparing for an extended stay in Iraq. Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz has gone public with the assertion that installation of a new Iraqi government will take well over six months after the Saddam Hussein regime is ousted and full control established.

The void is to be filled by the interim authority that the US will establish along with its coalition partners and Iraqi Opposition leaders. Retired General Jay Garner, hand-picked by Pentagon to run Iraq's civilian administration, is ready for the take over. He has been camping in Kuwait.

According to reports here, Garner's Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance will dispatch its team of American specialists and Iraqi exiles to help run the country and pave the way for an eventual Iraqi interim government.

Garner's office will set up liaison offices with Iraq's 23 ministries. Its first job will be to get rid of all Saddam loyalists and replace them by locally available technocrats. For at least three months, the country's administrative regions will be overseen by top US military officials in order to "put out any security fires".

Wolfowitz, reckoned to be one of the key architects of the anti-Saddam operation, told TV talk shows that the interim authority would act as a "bridge" between the US-led civ-

il administration and the eventual government that the Iraqis fashion.

Amid signs of a rift between the Pentagon and the State Department on the Iraqi composition in the interim phase, Wolfowitz was at pains to explain that the US goal was not to install any particular group as the new leaders of Iraq.

There is no clarity yet on the role that the US visualises for the UN in post-war Iraq. As of now, in the White House's scheme of things, the UN should essentially be playing a supporting role.

The contours of this contentious issue are expected to become clearer by the time President George Bush's meeting with British Prime Minister Tony Blair concludes at Belfast on Tuesday.

Tough buildings stand tall after airstrikes



RUINED: An American soldier searches one of Saddam Hussein's palaces. AP

Washington, April 7

THE NIGHTLY ritual of screaming bombs and billowing smoke in Baghdad is followed by this day-break reality: Buildings at ground zero still standing, sometimes looking remarkably intact.

A \$600,000 Tomahawk cruise missile punches a hole the size of a pickup truck in its target's roof, the damage inside unseen. Another, going astray, damages two houses only.

Over 14,000 precision-guided bombs and missiles have fallen on Iraq, including more than 700 cruise missiles — close to one-quarter of the Tomahawks ever made.

Obliteration happens. But appearances are often deceiving. Buildings are tough, reinforced ones are tougher and the trade-off for some precision weapons is a

limited punch meant to take out something — or someone — very specific, and little else.

There is a method in the chaos of a bomb slamming into a building and it's known as Bug Splats.

That's the Pentagon's nickname for a mathematical process that predicts the effects of a bomb on the target and surrounding area. The size, direction and angle of the munition are taken into account.

In a recent attack, allied warplanes dropped nearly 40 powerful JDAM bombs on one storage building in the al-Karkh district of Baghdad, but even that facility could not be written off right away.

Allies turned heavily to the JDAM, or Joint Direct Attack Munition, after Tomahawks softened Iraqi air defences. They still use both. A JDAM with a 2,000-pound warhead can carve a 20-foot crater,

spewing metal fragments that claw concrete apart while shooting out a terrible fireball and shock wave.

By allied accounts, the cumulative results of the bombing have been devastating if not yet conclusive. Iraq's command and control structure is reeling, they say. Yet palaces keep taking hits, communication links keep getting knocked out only to come back and the Information Ministry keeps pumping out the Iraqi side of the story on television.

"Modern engineering and design improvements mean that most large buildings constructed since World War II are resilient to the blast effects of bomb and artillery attack," it says. "Even though modern buildings may burn easily, they often retain their structural integrity and remain standing." AP

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT : 67 BATTALION BORDER SECURITY FORCE PANJIPARA, WEST BENGAL AUCTION NOTICE

A public auction of the unserviceable clothing / Misc / Tentage / Training / Defence / Ration PM / Signal Misc store / welfare store etc. will be held on 21st and 24th Apr 2003 at Panjipara BSF Campus at 1100 Hrs.

- All the authorized bidders can bid the auction.
- All the bidders will have to deposit a sum of Rs. 2,000/- in the form of cash as caution money before conducting bid of action, which will be refundable / adjustable on finalization of auction.
- The final bidders will have to deposit the cost of the stores on the spot and will lift the stores on his own arrangement after the auction.
- In case the successful bidder fails to deposit the cost of stores on the spot his earnest money will be forfeited.
- No Government transport will be provided to lift the auctioned stores from the auction place.
- The stores being auctioned will be laid out for inspection of the bidders on the auction day at 0900 hrs.
- The Commandant, 67 BN BSF reserves right to reject or accept the final bid without assigning any reason.

COMMANDANT
67 BN BSF
davp 3105(1199) 2002

EASTERN RAILWAY WASHING CONTRACT (MALDA DIVISION)

Tender Notice No. 39/Comm/2003-04/Washing Contract. The tender forms can be collected from the Divisional Commercial Manager/Eastern Railway/Malda Town Office on any working day from 09.04.2003 to 09.04.2003 within 13.00 hrs. on production of Money Receipt for the cost of Tender form (not refundable) deposited with Divisional Cashier/Eastern Railway/Malda Town or Chief Cashier/Eastern Railway/Kolkata. The tender complete in all respect will be received in sealed tender Box at Divisional Commercial Manager/Eastern Railway/Malda Town Office up to 15.00 hrs. on 08.05.2003 and will be opened at 15.30 hrs. on the same day. If the office closed on the scheduled date of opening due to reasons beyond control, then tender will be received and opened on the next working day. Particulars of work are given below : (1) Name of works : Washing contract for washing of the Licens of the Retiring Room, Dormitories, TTEs Rest Room of Malda Town Station and Bed Roll Licens of AC-2 & 3-tier 3454/3453 Gour Express & AC-2 tier of 3483/3484-3413/3414 Farakka Express for the period from 01.06.2003 to 31.05.2004 (one year). Cost of tender form : Rs. 1,000/-. Approx. cost of works : Rs. 13,41,596/-. Earnest money : Rs. 20,000/-. Venue of opening of tender : DCM office/E. Ry/Malda Town. Earnest money as mentioned above and the current I.T.C.C. should accompany the tender complete in all respect, otherwise tenders will be rejected. Earnest money should be deposited in cash with Divisional Cashier/Eastern Railway/Malda Town or Chief Cashier/Eastern Railway/Kolkata or in the form of deposited receipt, pay order, demand draft or granted bond in favour of FA & CAO/Eastern Railway/Kolkata executed by SBI or any Nationalized Bank by a Scheduled Bank. If the tender papers are required to be sent by post the cost of tender form along with postal charges @50/- each should be deposited with the Divisional Cashier/Eastern Railway/Malda Town or Chief Cashier/Eastern Railway/Kolkata. The Railway will not take any responsibility of delay/loss/non-receipt of tender documents by post.

(MLD-02/2003-04)
24/3

BUNDELKHAND UNIVERSITY, JHANSI TENDER NOTICE

Tender No.01/2003 Institute of Engineering and Technology, Bundelkhand University, Jhansi invites sealed tender form from reputed and experienced manufacturers OR their authorized dealers/distributors for supply of items as given below.

Category/S.No.	Item	EMD
A	1. Centre Lathe	8,000/-
	2. Universal Milling Machine	
	3. Shaper 12" stroke	
	4. Universal Testing Machine' 20 ton'	
B	1. Pendulum Type Impact Testing Machine	3,000/-
	2. Hardness Testing Machine (Rockwell cum Brinell)	
	3. Vicker Hardness Testing Machines	
C	1. Rice Polisher	3,000/-
	2. Paddy Dehuller	
D	1. Pulper Machine (max. Capacity 100Kg/hr)	3,000/-
	2. Can Reforming Machine	
	3. Can Flanging Machine	
	4. Flange Rectifier Machine	
	5. Ice Cream Maker	

Tender documents non-transferable along with detail specifications of instruments, terms and conditions may be purchased by the interested bidder form the cash counter of the University on payment of non-refundable fee of Rs. 1000/- in the form of bank draft in the favour of Finance Officer, Bundelkhand University Jhansi, on the working days, in person. The institute reserves the right to accept or reject any bid or part of it without assigning any reason.

Date of commencement of sale of Tender document: 9th April 2003
Date of sale of Tender Document: 29th April 2003
Last date and time of submission of Tender document: 29th April 2003 (1:00pm)
Date and time of opening of tender: 29th April 2003 (3:00pm)
(V.K. Sinha) Registrar

A war to enforce disarmament?

By V. S. Mani

THE U.S. President, George W. Bush, in a televised address to his nation on March 17 declared: "Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours. Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict commencing at a time of our choosing."

This ultimatum was the U.S. response to its failure to get a U.S.-U.K.-Spanish draft resolution through the U.N. Security Council. (It was withdrawn in the face of staunch opposition.) Tabled ten days in advance of an arbitrary deadline of March 17, the draft resolution wanted the Council to decide that "Iraq will have failed to take the final opportunity afforded by resolution 1441 (2002)." Such a decision was in fact anticipated by resolution 1441 which provided for a variety of reports from Iraq, the U.N. Inspectors, and the U.N. Secretary-General within various time-limits and anticipated decision(s) by the Council on "the need for compliance with all of the relevant Council resolutions in order to secure international peace and security".

According to the U.S. and the U.K., the previous Council resolutions on Iraq, including 661 and 678 (1990) and 687 (1991), already embodied adequate legal basis for any use of force against Iraq. Evidently, they did not want to give the Council an opportunity to specify what action it would take, as that would have deprived them of their so-called 'right' to unilateral military action. The Bush ultimatum specifically invokes resolutions 678 and 687.

Resolution 661 reaffirmed "the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence, in response to the armed attack by Iraq against Kuwait, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter" and asked all states "to take appropriate measures to protect assets of the legitimate Government of Kuwait." Resolution 678 authorised "Member-States cooperating with the Government of Kuwait" — a euphemism for the then U.S.-led 28-nation multinational force — "to use all necessary means to uphold and implement" Security Council resolutions and "to restore international peace and security in the area". Both

Legitimation of the so-called right of pre-emptive attack would be a free licence for unrestrained and whimsical unilateral use of force by the mighty against the weak.

resolutions 661 and 678 of 1990 were adopted specifically for the purpose of securing Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and upon withdrawal the use of force authorisation ceased to exist. The Council did not, constitutionally could not, issue any such authorisation for all time to come. Also, there is a view that the initial authorisation itself was of doubtful legality. Resolution 687, adopted after the Iraqi withdrawal, imposed on Baghdad a broad range of devastating disarmament obligations, with the Council opting "to remain seized of the matter and to take such further steps as may be required for the implementation of this resolution and to secure peace and security in the area". Thus the constitutional prerogative to enforce its previous resolutions remains exclusively with the Council.

The numerous statements emanating from the U.S. Government since late last year and in particular in the recent weeks as also the Bush ultimatum have thrown up a wide range of justifications for unilateral use of force. They include a right of collective self-defence, a right of individual self-defence, a right or a duty to enforce international sanctions, a right of action to prevent and combat international terrorism, and a right to humanitarian intervention.

The right of collective self-defence of Kuwait was specifically recognised by a Security Council resolution of 1990. But this right cannot continue to exist so long, merely on the basis of the alleged violations by Iraq of the obligations imposed on it by the Council through its various resolutions. Under Article 51 of the Charter, the right of collective self-defence had long ceased to have its legal basis, once the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was vacated in March-April 1991 and once the Council steps in.

The right of individual self-defence of the U.S. is probably based on

three grounds. One, the attempted attack on Bush Senior. But the right of self-defence is only available against an 'armed attack' and the response has to be sufficiently 'immediate', leaving no choice of other means and as short a time as the context allows for deliberation. A second ground would be the suspected linkages of Iraq with Al-Qaeda, an international terrorist organisation that was behind the September 11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. This ground of self-defence against Iraq will only be tenable on proof — not just allegations — of definite connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda in relation to the September 11 attacks. A third possible justification of self-defence offered is the so-called right of pre-emptive attack. The American argument is that Iraq has deadly weapons of mass destruction, delivery systems, and subsystems and these will be deployed against the U.S. and that it has a right to take pre-emptive action to prevent this eventuality. The issue of WMD has been central to the work of the U.N. inspectors led by Hans Blix and ElBaradei and tangible results were being achieved and reported to the Council. At any rate, the argument of a 'possible Pearl Harbour' does not fit in with scenario of a right of self-defence against an armed attack. Legitimation of the so-called right of pre-emptive attack would be a free licence for unrestrained and whimsical unilateral use of force by the mighty against the weak, and does violence to the U.N. Charter scheme of international community action through the instrumentality of the Security Council.

Enforcement of international sanctions for compliance with disarmament obligations does not justify unrestrained unilateral resort to armed force against an obligation-breaking state by individual countries, much less any unilateralism at

all by the latter, unless they are individually and directly affected by the breach of sanctions (in which case the retaliatory action must be generally proportionate to the adverse effects of the breach). Breach of obligations imposed by the international community must be dealt with by the international community institutions, and if they are not well equipped for the task, the members of the international community should pool their resources to enable these institutions to act in each case. The ban on unilateral use of force in international relations under Article 2(4) of the Charter is absolute and near total, except in case of self-defence. No state can claim a unilateral right to use force against another state on the pretext of combating terrorism either, unless it acts in self-defence, in which case the conditions of the right of self-defence apply.

The so-called right of humanitarian intervention against Iraq offers a range of justifications. But, any action against gross violations of human rights must come from competent international institutions such as the Security Council reflecting international community consensus, not based on unilateral and selective judgments by a mighty power. The more so when it involves core issues of national self-determination, such as regime change.

Finally, the Bush statement claims with impunity: "The United States of America has the sovereign authority to use force in assuring its own national security." The sovereignty argument is the hallmark of bankruptcy of international legality and legitimacy. Anything can be 'justified' on ground of sovereignty, unless one recognises — and the U.S. does not — that national sovereignty is subject to law. And this is not the first time the U.S. has raised it on the international plane.

The second Bush war, like the first, will be based on neither the rule of law nor the rule of international legitimacy, but driven by pure greed and caprice over the natural resources of a developing country.

(The writer teaches international law at the JNU.)

THE HINDU

20 MAR 2003

10 Bush 273 meets war council

WASHINGTON, MARCH 19. The U.S. President, George W. Bush, met his war council on Wednesday and the White House sent Congress formal notification of justification for war with Iraq as the deadline neared for President Saddam Hussein to flee.

The White House said the war would be as short as possible but Americans must be prepared for loss of life.

In two separate documents for lawmakers, Mr. Bush said diplomacy had failed to protect America's security, linked Saddam's regime with the Al-Qaeda network and — laying out a new rationale for war — said captured Iraqi official could identify terrorists living in the United States.

"The president of the United States has the authority — indeed, given the dangers involved, the duty — to use force against Iraq to protect the security of the American people and to compel compliance with United Nations resolutions," said a seven-page report sent to Congress with a brief letter from Mr. Bush.

Mr. Bush met on Wednesday morning the Vice-President, Dick Cheney, the Defence Secretary, Donald H. Rumsfeld, the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, the National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, and other members of his foreign policy team. He also talked by telephone to Prime Minister, Tony Blair, his staunchest foreign ally.

Later, the President met the New York Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, who made a pitch for more money to help his city prevent a terrorist attack and respond to any that occurs. The President warned on Monday that terrorists might retaliate for a U.S. attack on Iraq. — AP

20 MAR 2003

BEHIND

If Saddam doesn't leave it will be his final mistake: U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 19. As war clouds are nearing Iraq, Americans and the world at large are now in a waiting mode and in the process speculating when the United States President, George W. Bush, will make the final call.

In giving the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, and his two sons 48 hours (starting Monday 8 p.m. local time) to leave his country, Mr. Bush has stressed that military offensive would start at a time of "our choosing".

But there is disagreement on whether the U.S. has given Mr. Hussein a full two-day window to get out of the country. Some officials do not link the start of military operations to the 48-hour deadline. The White House sees a difference between Mr. Bush's deadline and a reference to the start of the offensive.

"I remind you that the President's words in his speech was 'a time of our choosing'. That's how the President expressed it. He also talked about 48 hours for Saddam Hussein to leave the country to avoid military conflict," the White House

spokesman, Ari Fleischer, said on Tuesday. By refusing to leave the country, Saddam Hussein would be making his final mistake, ... As Saddam Hussein has led Iraq to many mistakes in the past, principally by developing weapons of mass destruction, Saddam Hussein, if he doesn't leave the country, will make his final mistake. The President continues to hope he will," Mr. Fleischer said.

As the final preparations are being made for the start of hostilities, the U.S. is claiming that as many as 30 countries are in the so-called "Coalition of the Willing" even if most nations have refused to send troops to fight a war against Iraq. But the Bush administration is refusing to label all those nations who have refused to join the "coalition" as being in the "Coalition of the Unwilling".

"... I don't think (it is) a fair characterisation of other nations to say that they are in a coalition of the unwilling. Not every nation has the ability to contribute, not every nation is in an area that is geographically advantageous concerning military operations or over-flight or basing. So, I think it

depends significantly on the ability of these nations to contribute to a coalition," Mr. Fleischer said. Top Republicans meanwhile have turned their ire on the Democratic leader, Tom Daschle, for his criticism of Mr. Bush, for the failure of diplomacy leading to a war situation. "Is Tom Daschle the official Democrat hatchet man or just a tax-payer-funded pundit," asked the House Majority Leader, Tom DeLay, a Republican from Texas.

On Monday, Mr. Daschle said he was "... saddened that this President failed so miserably at diplomacy that we're now forced to war". That prompted some Republicans to question the substance of the Senate Minority Leader's views.

"I think Senator Daschle clearly articulated the French position," remarked a Republican Senator. Mr. Daschle has rejected calls to withdraw his comments. "As a veteran, I always support the troops", he said.

The Senator, from South Dakota, served as an intelligence officer for the Air Force during the Vietnam War.

20 MAR 2003

THE HINDU

T-9 20/3 ✓

DOWN IN IRAQ

Sign occupation of Basra

Just 40 miles south of the city is a key to Iraq's oil region. Not all of us suggest that it will seek Saddam appointed notorious member of circle, Ali Hassan al-direc the defence of Iraq. Known as "Chemical" been accused of war or his use of mustard gases against the Kur-lation in northern Iraq

ican officials are not whether Saddam ap-lajid, a close relative, to at the restive Shias of Iraq remained loyal to or whether Majid has usted with executing a strategy devised to undermine the Ameri-sh invasion. fully recognise his his track record," a

military official said. One fear is that Saddam, by appearing to expose Basra to easy occupation, is preparing to surprise American and British forces by attacking them with chemical or biological weapons.

"All I can tell you is that the Marines will be wearing their chem suits," the official added, referring to the protective clothing and gas masks designed to protect troops from attacks with chemical or biological weapons.

The fate of Basra is viewed as critical. "The first image of this war will define the conflict," said Maj. Chris Hughes, a Marine Corps spokesman.

Military officials said the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, under the command of the British Royal Marines, had been designated to take Basra.

An early success, if secured, would inoculate the military to some extent against any setbacks that occur in Baghdad, where a powerful American

army of tanks, mobile artillery and infantry will face down Saddam's most loyal and best armed Republican Guard divisions. The willingness of these Guard divisions to fight will determine in greatest measure the human cost of the war, military officials say.

If Basra falls, American and British officials are planning to organise relief convoys of food and other aid that can roll into the city from depots positioned here and in Iranian cities that lie just east of Basra across the Shatt-al-Arab waterway.

Soldiers will carry packets of food to pass out to children, and medics will provide care to Iraqis in need as the occupation forces roll in, military officials said.

To speed the relief work, the Pentagon has dispatched a 60-member disaster response team that will enter the city with British and American troops.

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE



A US soldier cleans his M-16 assault rifle at Camp Udayri, northern Kuwait. (AFP)

MOVE TO ISOLATE FRANCE

USA mending fences with Russia, China

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, March 19. — After earning the ire of many world leaders with his ultimatum to President Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq, US President George W Bush is now mending fences with the Russians and Chinese despite their joining the French to thwart Washington's plans to secure a second resolution authorising war in the Security Council. White House Press Secretary Mr Ari Fleischer said Mr Bush telephoned Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday and discussed the Iraq situation. "They underscored the importance of bilateral cooperation, despite the disagreements the USA and Russia have over the situation in Iraq," he said.

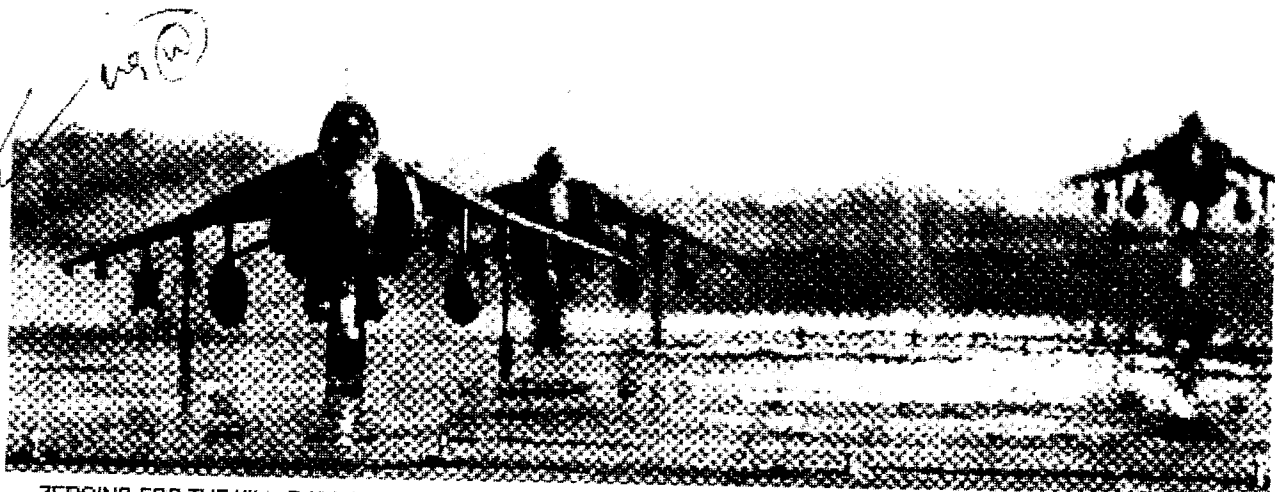
"Mr Putin reiterated to Mr Bush his invitation to visit St. Petersburg at the end of May."

Bush also called the new Chinese President Hu Jintao and both stressed the importance of good US-China relations for the advancement of bilateral interests and international peace and stability. China is also opposed to war against Iraq.

"The Presidents shared views on Iraq and North Korea. Mr Bush expressed appreciation for Beijing's efforts to help resolve the North Korean issue peacefully. President Bush also reiterated his Administration's commitment to a one China policy," Mr Fleischer said.

In striking contrast to the warmth Mr Fleischer displayed towards the Russians and Chinese, when asked about the French Ambassador's offer of his country's help to the invading US troops if Mr Hussein uses chemical or biological weapons, he said: "I think it is a notable statement. Let us hope it never has to come to pass."

While Washington has displayed warmth for Moscow and Beijing, it brushed aside Paris' concern as just 'a notable statement'



ZERDING FOR THE KILL: British Harrier G7s taxi in their base in Kuwait prior to their mission over southern Iraq on Tuesday. — AFP

Washington shows off its allies

A list of countries the US State Department says are members with the USA of a "Coalition for the Immediate Disarmament of Iraq".

- Bahrain — Sent a frigate and troops under Gulf Cooperation Council mission to defend Kuwait. Allowing use of bases for US troop buildup.
- Belgium — Allowed movement of troops and material from US bases in Germany to port of Antwerp en route to Gulf. Will permit overflights.
- Bulgaria — Approved US use of military airport and 150-member Bulgarian non-combat unit. Stationing of up to 18 coalition aircraft and 400 U.S. troops, and use of airspace.
- Canada — Will not join military action without UN backing. A destroyer and two frigates patrolling in the Gulf area as part of war on terrorism could be reassigned, but Prime Minister Jean Chretien suggested Monday they will not do so.
- Croatia — Will allow refueling stops by US transport aircraft.
- Egypt — Keeping Suez Canal open to US and allied warships en route to Gulf.
- France — Allowing use of its airspace under treaty

obligations, but no direct participation.

- Germany — Ruled out any participation, but pledge unhindered use of its airspace and access to US and British bases.
- Greece — US naval base in Crete serves US Sixth Fleet and supports Navy and Air Force intelligence-gathering planes. Allowing use of airspace under NATO and bilateral defense agreements, but will not send troops.
- Jordan — "Several hundred" or more U.S. troops are stationed in Jordan near the Iraqi border manning anti-missile batteries in case Iraq fires missiles at Israel.
- Kuwait — Estimated 200,000 U.S. and British troop training in the Kuwaiti desert in preparation for a possible invasion of Iraq.
- Portugal — Granted U.S. permission to use Lajes Field air base in the Azores Islands, a traditional eastern Atlantic refueling stop.
- Qatar — U.S. Central Command mobile headquarters at Camp As Sayliyah. Al Udeid air base opened for in-flight refueling squadron, F15 fighter wing, and maintenance hangars.
- Saudi Arabia — Won't participate directly in an military action.

20 MAR 2003

THE STATESMAN

Troops battle sandstorm

Visibility down to a few yards, could delay ground assault

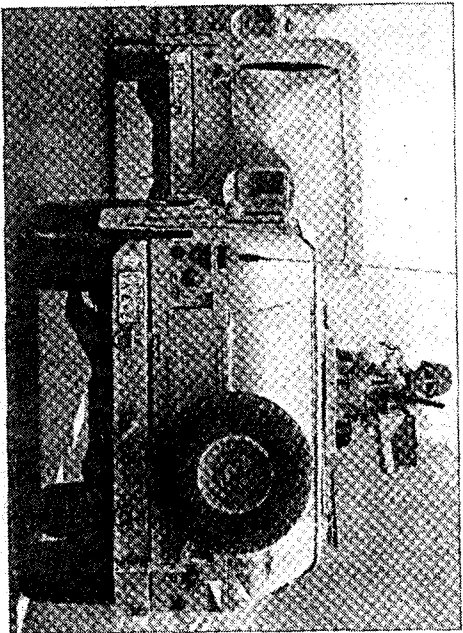
Northern Kuwait, March 19

A FIERCE sandstorm in parts of the Kuwaiti desert cut visibility to a few yards on Wednesday but a US commander said the dust would not disrupt plans for an imminent invasion of Iraq.

In other parts of the assembly zones for tens of thousands of US and British troops, visibility was cut to 200 yards. Three hundred miles to the northwest, Baghdad was also shrouded in dust. "It's not going to have any impact other than making everybody dirty and uncomfortable," US Maj. Gen. Buford Blount, commander of the Third Infantry Division in northern Kuwait, told reporters.

Visibility improved to a few tens of metres for Blount's troops, in a giant convoy of vehicles strung out across the desert, by early afternoon from only a few earlier as winds eased. And lighter winds were forecast for coming days.

The sun was still invisible



A Kuwaiti military convoy rides through a sandstorm on the outskirts of Kuwait City on Wednesday.

AP

behind by the swirling dust.

By cutting visibility and driving grit into soldiers' eyes and high-tech equipment, a sandstorm could delay a ground assault, US officers say. A more powerful storm hit the tent camps across Kuwait last week.

On the other hand, it has benefits for attackers, blind-

ing defenders and cooling

the desert heat for troops moving forward in shilling chemical protection suits.

At night, dust would dim the moon, which is almost full, and so help attackers' hide.

"I think I ate a whole cup of sand out there this morning," said Captain Chris McKinney of the 101st Air-

borne Division after the storm interrupted a training drill.

The sandstorm — known as a *shamal* in Arabic — blew up as the clocked ticked toward a Thursday 4:15 am (8:15 pm EST Wednesday) US deadline for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to leave the country or face invasion.

Fresh sandstorms over Baghdad would limit the ability of pilots to bomb accurately — but would have little effect on the satellite-guided missiles and bombs which now make up the bulk of the US arsenal.

Blount said he was contemplating preparations for war. "The division is in the process of repositioning forces closer to the border for future offensive operations if required," he said.

Kuwait security sources said that US-led forces had moved into the demilitarised zone that straddles the Iraq-Kuwait border, apparently in preparation for an imminent attack.

The storm delayed the unloading of equipment, ranging from vehicles to artillery pieces, from a ship in the port of Kuwait.

In Baghdad and Kuwait, temperatures were cooler than the spring heat of recent days. A Reuters correspondent with the US marines said winds of up to 35 mph whipped up the desert sand.

Kuwait Airport's website forecast that winds would drop to 8 mph to 21 mph until Sunday with maximum temperatures of 80 degrees Fahrenheit and a chance of cloud and even rain at the weekend.

On Tuesday night, Reuters correspondents saw huge convoys driving toward the frontier. Most infantrymen in one column stared ahead, expressionless, as their slow convoy made its way north. Behind them followed dozens of military ambulances, emblazoned with a red cross.

Reuters

Power And Peril

Growing unilateralism in the conduct of US foreign policy has never been as sharply in evidence as in the ultimatum issued by President George Bush to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to leave his country or face imminent military attack. A nation that has always prided itself as the custodian of democratic values is now displaying many of the less appealing characteristics of a 19th century imperial power. America's pre-eminence in today's uni-polar world has emboldened it to demonstrate its hyper-power status in conflict after conflict since Gulf War-I in 1991—the campaign against Serbia in Kosovo in 1999, against Afghanistan in 2001 and now Iraq. While George Bush Sr managed to forge a remarkable coalition of allies under the UN umbrella in Gulf War-I, the US has since tended to give short shrift to international norms in the name of advancing democracy. Under the current administration, this trend towards unilateralism has become markedly pronounced. Soon after assuming office, President Bush rejected the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, refused to submit to the authority of the International Criminal Court and increased duties on imported steel in apparent violation of WTO rules. In the field of arms control, Washington has pressed ahead with the development of the National Missile Defense system by abrogating the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty with Russia and pulled out of international discussions aimed at effectively monitoring the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention.

Given current political realities, a unilateralist foreign policy approach may not prove too costly for the US in the short run. But in the long term, the arrogance of power, which has already begun to undermine the effectiveness of multilateral institutions, will erode US credibility. This in turn will stoke anti-American sentiment, already widespread in several parts of the world, and encourage the very forces of extremism which the Bush administration valiantly seeks to counter. Aggressive unilateralism could also place the US at risk of over-extending itself on the international stage. On the matter of Iraq, the US undoubtedly has more than the requisite military power to pull down the Saddam Hussein regime. However, in a post-war scenario, Washington will have to wrestle with the bitter ethnic and sectarian divisions in Iraq, not to mention the differing politico-strategic objectives of its neighbours. President Bush may thus end up winning the war but losing the peace.

20 MAR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

US cocks guns for battle of Baghdad

Baghdad/Kuwait City: US-led forces were poised on Wednesday to storm Iraq, possibly within hours, as a defiant Baghdad again flatly rejected Washington's ultimatum for President Saddam Hussein to flee or face war.

The US threatened to invade even if the Iraqi President and his two sons fled into exile by the deadline (6.30 a.m. IST on Thursday), warning that the rejection of the ultimatum was his "final mistake".

The US also snubbed the UN, with Secretary of State Colin Powell announcing that he would not attend a Security Council session in which Hans Blix, the chief weapons inspector, was to present information on Iraq's remaining disarmament "tasks".

At the UN, promising that the organisation would do everything possible to help the Iraqis during a conflict, secretary-general Kofi Annan told the US that it would be its responsibility to ensure the welfare of citizens during the time American troops occupied that country.

Caught in a sandstorm swirling across the northern Kuwaiti desert, thousands of US marines have taken up battle positions even as Iraqi officials warned Mr Bush that he was sending his troops to certain death. Legislators meeting at an emergency session of parliament pledged to shed their blood to defend the man who has led them since 1979.

"History will recall how the people of Iraq under the glorious leadership of Saddam Hussein inflicted a lesson on the worthless," the parliamentarians said.

While panicked residents of Baghdad were fleeing or stocking up on basic supplies to bunker down for what will be their third war since 1980, in Moscow, in a display of anger at the US, parliament put off a vote on ratifying the so-called Moscow Treaty with the United States, which would reduce nuclear arsenals.

France, which infuriated the US with its adamant opposition to the idea of an immediate war, shifted slightly on Wednesday, saying it could assist an American-led military coalition if Iraq used biological or chemical weapons against US troops. The White House largely ig-

The US said it had the backing of a 45-nation "coalition of the willing" although several key allies, including Italy, Spain and Saudi Arabia said they would not be lending military backing for war.

The claim followed just hours after artillery fire echoed through the Iraqi border region on Tuesday night and Iran's state television showed video of explosions from airstrikes in and around the Iraqi port of Basra. US army and marine divisions rolled toward the Iraqi frontier and formed a broad arc of thousands of vehicles, shoulder to shoulder in a sprawling phalanx facing north and visible to journalists scouting the area.

Across 5,000 square miles of Kuwaiti desert, a full moon illuminated an army of 130,000 American and British soldiers arrayed with a host of M1A1 Abrams tanks, armored vehicles of every description, ubiquitous Humvees and humble troop transports, many of them short of equipment spares and tires as quartermasters scrambled to catch up.

The sky in northern Kuwait was so thick with assault and transport helicopters on Tuesday night that meteorologists trying to track an advancing sandstorm were forbidden to launch their weather balloons.

Out in the Persian Gulf, the commander of American and British naval forces, Rear Admiral John M. Kelly, expressed concern that Iraq was preparing attacks on coalition warships. On Monday night, Iraqi troops had despatched a large number of fishing vessels from coastal ports and moorings and sent them into waters where aircraft carriers, destroyers and submarines were standing by to launch aircraft and cruise missiles against targets in Iraq. Military intelligence monitoring also detected the preparation of missile launching sites that could be directed at naval targets, he said.

Admiral Kelly said the concern now was that the Iraqi leaders "may be more inclined to act" against allied warships. Speaking aboard the carrier Abraham Lincoln, he added, "The game could begin at any

THE TIMES OF INDIA

20 MAR 2003

To have any meaning, the UN must limit the absolutism of the US

The ideo of March

PARTHA CHATTERJEE

There is a gnawing sense of inevitability in the way things are moving. The flood is rising inch by inch; the only question is when like will burst. Except, this is not a moral disaster waiting to happen. These are events fully under the control of world leaders playing for high stakes. Why is the world being pushed to the precipice?

To begin with, let us set aside the resounding moral reasons for going to war with Iraq. Not even their proponents believe in them, except as rhetorical instruments for pushing a diplomatic point. Not only are these moral reasons applied selectively — North Korea; Iraq, not Saudi Arabia; Pakistan; Iraq, not Israel — but they are also changed to suit the requirements of the diplomatic game. We were first told that the real goal of military action would be to overthrow the regime and liberate Iraq. Then when it became necessary to seek support in the United Nations, the objective was changed to the disarmament of Iraq. Now, when UN support looks unlikely, the moral case is once again the removal of Saddam Hussein and the liberation of Iraq. Who will believe that these moral arguments are anything more than instrumental devices — dressed-up language designed to secure other ends?

What then are the real objectives? There is little doubt that the current chain of events was suddenly set in motion by President Bush in August 2002. We have heard a lot in recent days of the world having waited for twelve long years to see Iraq disarmed. If the UN did indeed fail to act during this time, then surely the United States of America must share the responsibility for it along with the other key members of the UN. The fact is that there was a general consensus among the world powers that Iraq was being effectively contained. The only dispute was whether the sanctions that the UN had imposed should be lifted. The sudden clamour raised by Bush over Iraq in August last year took the world diplomatic community by complete surprise.

Why did the US administration decide to turn its sights on Iraq? It is known that sometime last year, the most influential group within the administration, consisting of associates of the senior

much a crisis as a new opportunity for the US. The global war against terrorism and the worldwide sympathy for the US could be turned into a moment for recasting the entire world order and inaugurating "the American century". Instead of containment and de-

rallying cry. Imperial America, driven by a new zeal and purpose, would bring peace to the world.

Moral bigots often acquire a chilling self-confidence that persuades them that all means, no matter how questionable or unpopular, are justi-



terrence, the US should assert overwhelming military superiority and the right of pre-emptive strike against any perceived threat. Instead of letting the world's rogue regimes and trouble spots fester under the cloak of national sovereignty, the US should intervene forcefully to change the political map of the globe and fulfil America's true destiny as benevolent master of a new world empire.

West Asia was the theatre where this imperial vision could be most dramatically revealed. Get rid of Saddam Hussein and establish a permanent American military presence in Iraq. They had set up a pliant Iraqi adminis-

‘ Bush was apparently persuaded by Tony Blair and Colin Powell to take the UN route to secure international legitimacy for military action ’

tried in reaching their ends. The US administration today is led by a right-wing clique whose attitudes and ambitions make it the most reactionary

tion. Now that the attempt has become a diplomatic disaster, the UN has become the target of American criticism. Unrestrained abuse is heaped in the American media only on France, but on an international body that allows countries like Guinea and Angola, full of impoverished and illiterate people, to exercise judgment over American foreign policy. What this reveals about the arrogance and barely concealed racism of American commentators is unimpressive. What is new is the significance of such views for the future of the world order as we have known it.

That is what makes March 2003 such a defining moment. It is the reason why France, China, Germany and so many members of the security council resisted the so-called second invasion. It is not because they stand by supporting Saddam Hussein. If anything, they will probably be flouting the will of the US. They will certainly not be inviting a feast of the vultures after the conflict is over in Iraq. The reason for their resistance is their unwillingness to let the mantle of the multilateral and democratic world body that was built up after decolonization and to replace a new structure of global hegemony.

What the US is really demanding is that in the new American century, the world should have the right to decide over the US. In other words, the UN should function as a world body that should be effectively the only body with a veto. The debate over the UN has thrown the challenge to all to decide whether they are prepared to approve that scheme of things. Now, most have refused. The UN is large part emboldened to do so against the war all round the world. The UN, the world's highest authoritative body, refused to be co-opted into approving a timetable for war. American military planners

The war will now be launched on Iraq without UN approval. Saddam Hussein will be removed and the country will be reformed. History will not end there. The world can quest for unchallenged American power. It may be consistent with the contribution of military and economic power in the world. But it is contrary to the democratic principles of the world.

18 MAR 2003

THE HINDU

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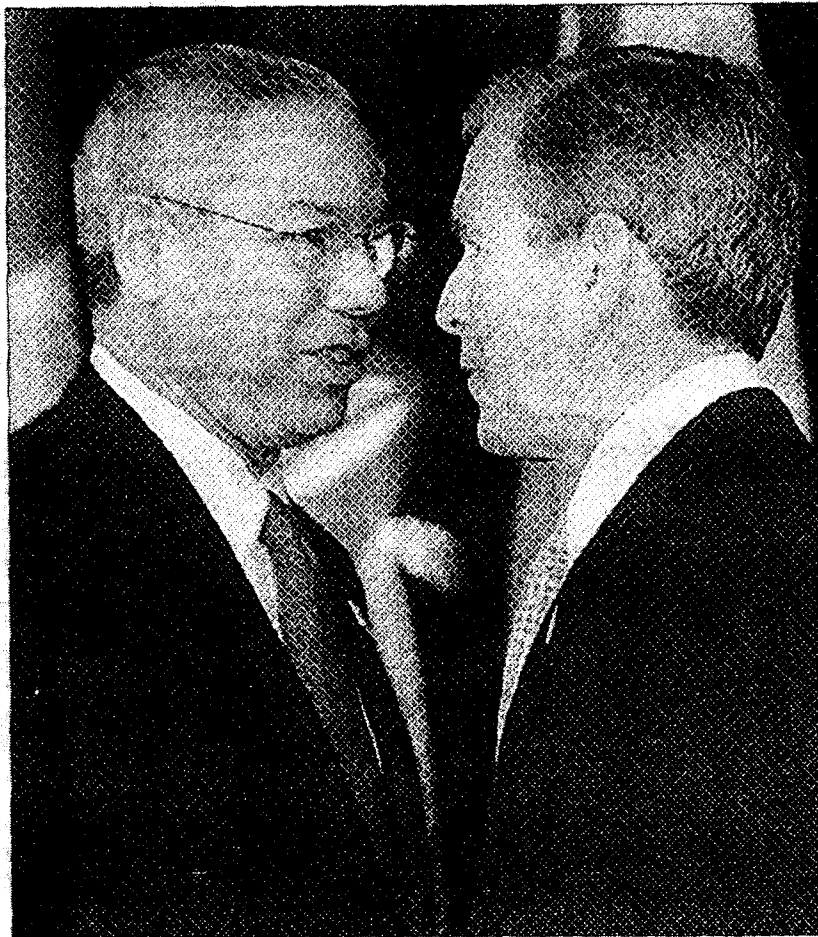
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What the US is really demanding is that in the new American century the world should have the right to function as a world body should be effectively the only veto. The debate over whether to throw the challenge to all nations to decide whether they are prepared to approve that scheme of things now, most have refused. They have been large part emboldened to do so by an unprecedented popular mobilization against the war all around the world. The UN, the world's highest representative body, refused to be coerced into approving a timetable for war that was already decided several months ago by American military planners.

THE TELEGRAPH

18 MAR 2003

War within days as diplom

P. NAYAR & REUTERS

York/Baghdad, March 18
War looked only days away as President George W. Bush prepared to issue a final ultimatum to Saddam Hussein to either disarm Iraq or face the might of a 100,000-strong force. UN weapons inspectors begged to be allowed to return to Iraq and the UN asked all its aid workers to leave as well, as the diplomatic effort to avoid a war had this morning. Britain's permanent representative to

the UN, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, announced that his country, along with the US and Spain, had decided not to put a second Security Council resolution authorising war to vote.

Jean-Marie de la Sabliere, his French counterpart, countered that a "huge majority" of Security Council members were against the second resolution.

After the diplomatic effort collapsed, the White House announced that Bush will address the American people at 8 pm (6.30 am IST).

"He will say that to avoid mil-

itary conflict, Saddam Hussein must leave the country," said White House spokesman Ari Fleischer. "The next move will be up to Saddam Hussein."

Iraq rejected any suggestion of Saddam stepping down, saying Bush should be the one to leave office.

"The only option (to secure peace) is the departure of the warmonger number one in the world, the failing President Bush who made his country a joke," foreign minister Naji Sabri said.

Bush was expected to give Saddam 48 or 72 hours to leave.

US secretary of state Colin Powell said in addition to Saddam, his immediate family members and unspecified others must depart as well. "And if somebody in Baghdad wishes to know the names, I'm sure we can be able to provide them," he said.

Ahead of his address, Bush will meet Congressional leaders at the White House, who are likely to be told about his timetable for an attack on Iraq.

"Baghdad is not a safe place to be," Fleischer said.

In a last-minute bid to avert a US invasion, Saddam admitted

that Iraq had in the past weapons of mass destruction but reiterated that it no longer had such weapons. But he remained defiant in the face of Washington military threats, saying it would be defeated if it attacked Iraq.

"We are not collectors of weapons, but we had these weapons to defend ourselves when we were at war with Iran for eight years and when the Zionist entity was threatening us," Iraq state television quoted him as telling Tunisian foreign minister Habib ben Yahia.

"Saddam Hussein cannot s-

Heart of U.S. 11:00 Escapes; 1:30 Report the Bush 4:00 PM

War within days as diplomacy fails

LETERS

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"Saddam Hussein cannot say

that we don't have banned weapons if we have such weapons. I confirm here that we do not have weapons of mass destruction."

Several UN weapons inspectors checked out of their hotels in Baghdad, witnesses said, ahead of evacuation, possibly tomorrow morning. The last time UN weapons inspectors pulled out of Iraq, in December 1998, Washington and London launched military strikes some 12 hours later.

The US urged all its citizens in Kuwait to leave immediately, suggesting that they faced the risk of a chemical or biological

weapons attack. The state department asked all family members and non-emergency staff at its embassies in Kuwait, Syria and Israel to leave their posts.

German diplomats shut their mission in Baghdad today and China began evacuating its embassy. Several other embassies have already shut down.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair suffered the first domestic jolt over Iraq when former foreign secretary Robin Cook resigned as leader of the House of Commons.

See Page 4

18 MAR 2003

NEWS EXPRESS

US tells UN agencies to pull out of Iraq

ARCH 17 13 24

THE head of the UN nuclear watchdog agency said on Monday that the States government had ordered him to pull all his staff from Iraq. Germany closed its embassy in Baghdad, Russia its citizens to leave and the United States department ordered initial diplomats out of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem

and Paris. The last night I was advised by the United States to pull out our staff from Baghdad. Since then I have been given to the International Atomic Energy Agency Chief



Iraqi employees wave goodbye to German Embassy staff as they leave Baghdad on Monday. Reuters

Mohamed ElBaradei told a meeting of the agency's board of governors in a text prepared for delivery on Monday. He said that he had immediately informed the President of the UN Security Council and asked for guidance. He also informed



US President George W. Bush said on Sunday, after a summit with British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, that the United Nations had only one more day to find a diplomatic end to the Iraq crisis before the United States moved to a war footing. "In connection with a worsening in the situation surrounding Iraq, the Russian Foreign Ministry recommends that Russian citizens leave Iraq, and avoid making trips to the region," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman

Alexander Yakovenko said in a statement.

The State Department also warned American citizens against travelling to Israel, Kuwait and Syria, and it cited the possibility that Iraq or "terrorist organisations" in the region could use chemical or biological weapons should war break out.

"In the event of military action in Iraq, there is a risk that Iraq or terrorist organisations may use chemical and/or biological materials which could affect the region," it said in each of three statements announcing the decisions.

The State Department urged US citizens who remained in the three countries to exercise caution and said there was a possibility of "commercial flight disruptions" in the event of war.

JS tells UN agencies to pull out of Iraq

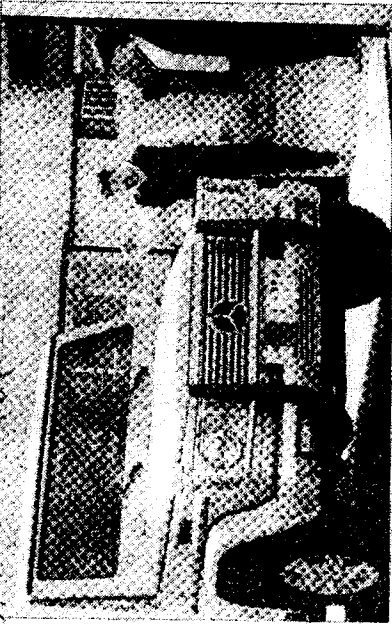
UTERS

NNA, MARCH 17

THE head of the UN nuclear watchdog agency said on Monday that the United States government had advised him to pull all his inspectors from Iraq.

With the threat of war looming, Germany closed its embassy in Baghdad, Russia advised its citizens to leave Iraq and the United States State Department ordered its essential diplomats out of Kuwait, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Damascus.

"Late last night I was advised by the United States government to pull out our inspectors from Baghdad. Similar advice has been given to INMVIC," International Atomic Energy Agency Chief



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United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. UNMVIC is a UN agency looking for weapons of mass destruction. About 135 inspectors remain in Iraq at the present time, a United Nations source said on condition of anonymity.

FBI plans to mobilise agents against terrorists

WASHINGTON: If US forces invade Iraq, the FBI has plans to mobilise as many as 5,000 agents to guard against terrorist attacks, monitor suspected militants and interview thousands of Iraqis in the US, according to officials.

The FBI operation is a reflection of widespread fears that the risk of attack will increase dramatically in the event of war. At the start of a war, FBI headquarters and all 56 field offices would immediately staff 24-hour command centres, in conjunction with 66 joint terrorism task forces around the country, authorities said. Working from an initial list of some 50,000 Iraqi nationals living in the United States, the FBI has winnowed that number to about 11,000 who would be targeted for interviews in the event of a war, a senior FBI official said.

—LATMP

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18 MAR 2003

INDIAN EXPRESS

us ① west side

From page 1

IRAQ: 582

The crucial announcements at the UN, ahead of closed-door talks on the Iraq crisis, came less than 24 hours after Mr Bush declared at the Azores summit last night that today would be the last day for diplomacy short of war. Weeks of diplomacy and pressure from the Bush Administration have still failed to convince a majority of the Security Council's 15 members that the time for war had come.

In Moscow, a top diplomat said the council would not approve the US-backed resolution. "This draft has no chances for passage," deputy foreign minister Mr Yuri Fedotov told Interfax. Ending weeks of silence, Russian President Mr Vladimir Putin today also condemned military action, saying war would be a mistake that could imperil world security and "fraught with the toughest consequences leading to victims and global destabilisation as a whole". His foreign minister Mr Igor Ivanov is flying to New York for Tuesday's Security Council session.

In Beijing, China reiterated its stand pressing for a political solution to the Iraq crisis and asked America to stop short of war.

French foreign minister Mr Dominique de Villepin told *Radio Europe 1* in Paris earlier today that France could not accept a second

UN resolution that includes an ultimatum and reiterated the threat to use its veto to block such a resolution. French President Mr Jacques Chirac had said late last night that he was willing to accept a one-month or even two-month deadline for Iraq to disarm, provided the move was endorsed by the chief UN weapons inspectors. France also called for an emergency UN ministerial meeting for tomorrow to establish a timetable for peaceful disarmament.

But US Vice-President Mr Dick Cheney dismissed the French proposals saying "it's difficult to take the French seriously", and Germany opposed it, saying it wanted no ultimatum, though Chancellor Mr Gerhard Schroeder said he would continue to fight for peaceful disarmament.

The USA has already started clearing the decks for an early strike on Iraq and towards this end issued an advisory to its allies to withdraw their nationals from that country. Several countries have joined the queue to close embassies and foreign scribes have started leaving.

A dozen cruisers and destroyers were steaming ahead to the Red Sea theatre till reports last came in. With five already in position including the *USS Sar Jacinto*, which is armed with Aegis anti-aircraft system that can destroy more than 100 targets simultaneously.

18 MAR 2003

THE STATESMAN

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149-1
BUSH MAY SET TIME-FRAME FOR SADDAM TO LEAVE IRAQ (2) 4 2003 (3) UN

U.S., allies withdraw resolution

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 17. The United States, Britain and Spain today decided not to put their resolution to a vote in the United Nations Security Council and placed the blame on France for its threatened use of veto, a stance that has further infuriated Paris.

The diplomatic window, it would seem on the surface, has been formally closed. (A U.N. datelined agency report today said France had called for an emergency ministerial-level meeting of the Council

tomorrow.)

The White House has announced that the U.S. President, George W. Bush, will be addressing the nation later tonight.

It is speculated that Mr. Bush would give the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, a small time frame for himself and his immediate family members to leave the country to avoid war.

"We have had to conclude that Council consensus will not be possible," the British Ambassador, Jeremy Greenstock, said. "We regret that in the face of an explicit threat to veto, the vote

counting became a secondary consideration," the top American envoy, John Negroponte, remarked.

At the U.S. State Department, the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, maintained that a judgment had been made that "no further purpose would be served" by continuing with the tabled resolution.

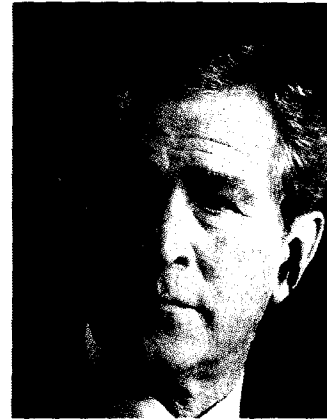
But he stressed that Iraq was in clear material breach even as early as late last year when it turned in a False Declaration.

"...We have been debating this particular draft resolution and despite best efforts to see whether or not language could be adjusted to make it more acceptable to the Council members, it is clear that there are some permanent members of the Council that would veto any such resolution or any resolution resembling the one that the British tabled the Friday before last at the United Nations.

As a result of this, the United Kingdom, the United States and Spain decided to not call for a vote on this Resolution," Gen. Powell maintained.

The senior administration official, however, maintained that the resolution would "die anyway, because it had a built-in date of 17 March within the Resolution, which has not been modified".

According to Gen. Powell, there may have been some improvements in the "process" or perhaps even some "grudging movement" by Iraq but that this was "not the kind of compliance that Resolution 1441 required". He said the U.S. actions were supported by international law and provisions existed in Reso-



lutions 1441, 687 and 678 for the use of force against Iraq for non-compliance.

U.N. to pull out inspectors

Even before the "final day" of diplomacy could run its course, the Bush administration has asked the U.N. to pull its weapons inspectors out of Iraq in what seems to be the clearest signal till now that war is round the corner.

The U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has announced that all the weapons inspectors will be pulled out of Iraq and that the Security Council has been so informed.

Mr. Annan, in remarks after the Council meeting, said U.N. efforts in Iraq such as running the Oil-for-Food programmes would also be suspended in the wake of withdrawal of personnel.

The final moment at the U.N. unfolded in a quick fashion with the British Ambassador to the world body, Jeremy Greenstock, making the announcement of withdrawal of

the resolution on behalf of the sponsors. Mr. Greenstock, taking a direct jibe at France, argued that Paris had rejected the terms of the proposals even before Baghdad had. France insisted that a majority of the Council members did not want the use of force.

According to one report there are at least 135 weapons inspectors in Iraq. They are in two teams — one overseeing the programmes of chemical, biological weapons and missiles; and the other involved with nuclear weapons and issues.

If the regime in Baghdad allows the inspectors to leave by air, they could pack their bags and be out in one day. But it could be a road journey.

"Late last night I was advised by the U.S. Government to pull out our inspectors from Baghdad.

Similar advice has been given to UNMOVIC," the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohammad ElBaradei, said.

UNMOVIC is the acronym for the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspections Commission which is headed by Hans Blix. In fact the U.N. had already shipped five of its helicopters to Cyprus after insurance companies refused cover for continued operations.

The U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, is having a series of meetings with his top advisors, including Dr. Blix and is expected to confer with the Council members.

Saddam hopes there will be no war

BAGHDAD, MARCH 17. The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, said today that he hoped there would be no war against his country even as he renewed his pledge to defeat the United States if it attacked, Iraqi television reported.

"We hope that the war will not take place, thanks be to God, because we do not need to test the resistance and courage of our people," he was quoted as saying by state television, after receiving the Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia.

"We are ready to sacrifice our souls, our children and our families so as not to give up Iraq. We say this so no one will think that America is capable of breaking the will of the Iraqis with its weapons," he said. "If the evil (the war) were to come, we would defeat (the U.S.)."

Mr. Hussein's comments came as the U.S. declared that diplomacy on the Iraq crisis was over, clearing the way to apparently imminent military action. — AFP



ONE HINDU

18 MAR 2003

IRAQ GETS INTO WAR MODE

Bush sets Monday deadline

US (2)
W. Aznar (1)

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574

Associated Press & AFP

LAJES (Azores Islands)/ BAGHDAD, March 16. — Mr George Bush and allied leaders tonight agreed on one final attempt tomorrow to win world support for swift disarmament of Mr Saddam Hussein. "Tomorrow is a moment of truth for the world," Mr Bush said at the summit with leaders of Britain, Spain and Portugal. Mr Tony Blair echoed him, saying "now we make a final appeal to make a strong, unified message on behalf of the world community".

Mr Bush urged nations to support "the immediate and unconditional disarmament" of the Iraqi leader, though France, Germany and Russia have already opposed another UN resolution on an ultimatum to Iraq. On the UN, he said "we hope tomorrow it will do its job."

The four leaders met at a US airbase in the Azores, a Portuguese territory on the Atlantic, even as over 250,000 allied troops are poised on the brink of war in the Gulf. But the world at large still remained uneasy about war, and several hundred anti-war demonstrators blocked the road to the entrance of the base just 100 metres from where the leaders met.

Spanish PM Mr Jose Maria Aznar said tonight's agreement marked "a last chance to reach the greatest possible consensus among ourselves". Portuguese PM Mr Jose Barroso called it "the last chance of a political solution ... only one in a million".

Mr Bush sounded like he didn't

expect reluctant countries to change their minds. "Iraq's liberation would be the beginning, not the end, of our commitment to the Iraqi people," he said at a news conference with the four leaders by his side. Mr Blair said that on account of no ultimatum being given to Mr Hussein, "the Iraqi leader is playing a game he has played for 12 years. Disarmament never happens ... instead the world community is drawn into perpetual negotiation. Now we reach the point of decision."

In Washington, Vice-President Mr Dick Cheney said "there's no question we're close to the end of diplomatic efforts" on Iraq. The only way to avert war, he added, was for Mr Hussein to disarm and step down.

While the war clock ticked, in Baghdad Mr Hussein put Iraq on a virtual war mode today, dividing the country into four military zones while sending urgent invitations to UN disarmament chiefs to visit in a last-ditch bid to avoid an offensive.

The military zoning announced overnight by the ruling Revolutionary Command Council was intended as a "means to rebuff and destroy any aggression if the villains carried it out", the state news agency said.

The military build-up in Iraq that continued throughout Sunday put the central region around the capital and Mr Hussein's hometown of Tikrit under the command of his younger son Qusay — who heads the elite Revolutionary Guards — and his deputy, defence minister Sultan Hashem Ahmed.

US plans lightning strikes, page 2

17 MAR 2003

THE STATESMAN

U.S., allies open summit; may give Saddam days to leave

110-1
17/3
LAJES (AZORES ISLANDS), MARCH 16. The United States President, George W. Bush, opened an emergency summit here today with his British and Spanish allies, expected to give the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, just days to leave power in Iraq or face war.

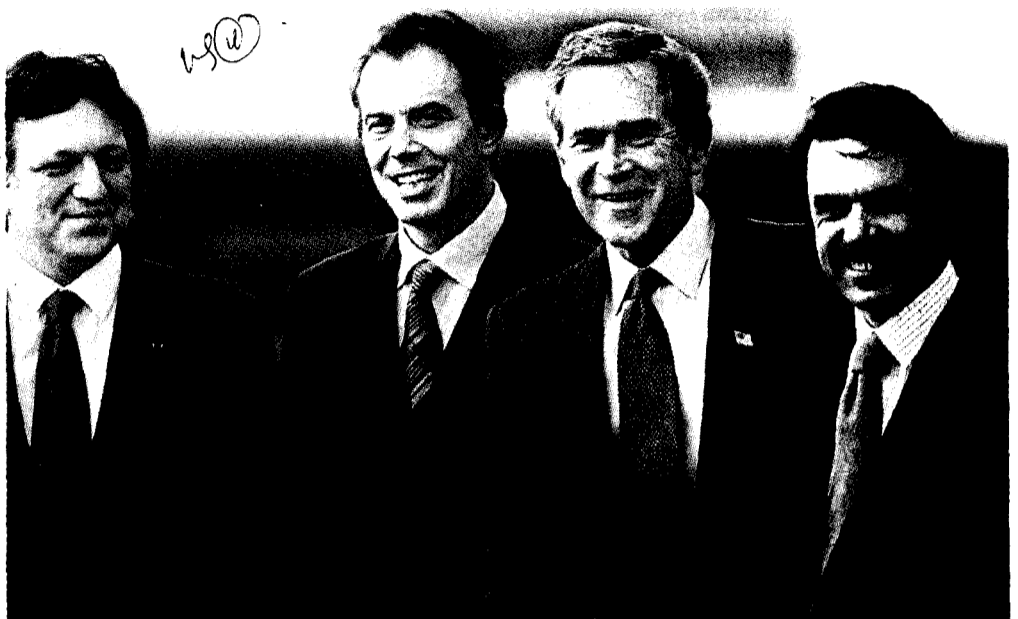
Washington has denied that the meeting is a war council, but officials insisted that months of diplomacy were in their final hours, and that the Iraqi President would have to quit Baghdad and go into exile to stave off a second Gulf war.

Mr. Bush began talks with the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and his Spanish counterpart, Jose Maria Aznar, his closest allies on Iraq, at a U.S. military base on the remote Portuguese islands of the Azores to mull the next step in the months-long crisis. The three leaders began one hour of talks, also attended by their host, the Portuguese Prime Minister, Jose Manuel Durao Barroso. — AFP

Iraq on war alert

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), MARCH 16. Iraq put its forces on war alert hours before the United States President, George W. Bush, met the Prime Ministers of Britain and Spain at Azores for an emergency summit that could clear the decks for an invasion.



The United States President, George W. Bush, with (left to right) the Prime Ministers of Portugal, Britain and Spain, Jose Manuel Durao Barroso, Tony Blair and Jose Maria Aznar on arrival at an air force base in the Azores on Sunday to discuss the Iraq crisis. — AP

The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, has divided his country into four military districts to face a possible U.S. and British assault, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported. Mr. Hussein's younger son, Qusay, has been entrusted with the defence of the capital, Baghdad.

Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council ordered the four newly established military districts to "take the necessary

steps to repulse and destroy any foreign aggression". Mr. Hussein has assumed sole authority to use aircraft and surface-to-surface missiles against the invaders, the INA added.

The decision is significant as it means that Mr. Hussein has assumed direct control over all possible means of delivering weapons of mass destruction.

Meanwhile, Iraq is continuing with the destruction of its

Al Samoud 2 missiles under the supervision of the U.N. weapons inspectors. "Two missile teams went today and destruction of Al-Samoud missiles continues," a spokesman for the U.N. Monitoring Verification and Inspection Commission in Baghdad said. Iraq, on Saturday, also invited the Chief U.N. weapons inspector and his deputy, Mohammad ElBaradei, to visit Baghdad.

17 MAR 2003

THE HINDU

HD-124
16/3

IRAQ / BOMBING IN NO-FLY ZONE STEPPED UP

'U.S. campaign a prelude to war'

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, MARCH 15. In yet another indication that war in Iraq may begin soon, the United States, for the first time, on Friday used its heavy B-1 plane for bombing sites in southern Iraq.

Military analysts view it as a definite escalation of the ongoing U.S. air campaign in Iraq under the cover of protecting the no-fly zones. Heavy bombing in the Iraqi southern oil rich areas can be a prelude to a ground offensive in this zone.

British forces have reportedly been entrusted with the task of taking early control over the oil-bearing areas around Basra, 32 km from the Kuwaiti border. Specifically, the British troops will be looking at establishing rapid control over the Rumaila oil complex west of Basra, diplomatic sources say. The speed of these operations will be vital as the U.S. and British forces are working on plans to deny the Iraqi forces sufficient time to possibly blow up the key oil fields in southern and northern Iraq.

Special attention is also being paid to repairing damage to a large number of oil outlets and pumping stations at the Al Faw peninsula at the southern tip of Iraq, which is adjacent to the narrow waterway access to the Persian Gulf.

Signalling that it was unwilling to wait any longer, the U.S. has moved some of its

warships into the Red Sea from the Mediterranean. The move is seen as a response to the delay by Turkey to permit the U.S. forces to station and transit through its territory to open a second front against Iraq. Besides, a positive Turkish decision would be necessary for the U.S. warships to launch Tomahawk missiles through Turkish airspace before they reach their targets in Iraq.

By positioning warships in the Red Sea, the U.S. can fire the missiles without intruding into Turkish air space.

Turkey, meanwhile, continued to go through its mandatory motions before formally considering the U.S. request to open a second front.

Turkey's leader, Recep Erdogan, who was formally appointed Prime Minister on Friday, is unlikely to re-introduce a motion in Parliament that would consider Washington's request before a week, sources observed.

Analysts point out that despite re-manoeuvring its warships, the U.S. was expected to launch a full-scale air and ground offensive against Iraq only after obtaining Ankara's clearance for opening a northern front.

French moves

As the possibility of a war increases, France has begun a fresh effort to engage the pro-U.S. political and military leader-

ships in the Persian Gulf. France's Defence Minister, Michele Alliot-Marie, has begun a weekend visit to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). She is likely to deliver a letter from the French President, Jacques Chirac, to the leaders of the three countries.

With the war clouds on Iraq thickening, there are reports that the U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan, is preparing to pull out U.N. inspectors from Iraq in the next couple of days.

Shia Muslim groups, who are in a majority in Iraq, meanwhile, are engaged in a heated debate in anticipation of a war.

The Lebanon-based influential Shia leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, who is also the secretary-general of the militant group, Hizbullah, told around 150,000 people on Thursday that the U.S. troops will be met with "martyrdom" operations, a reference to suicide attacks if they attacked Iraq.

But unlike the Hizbullah, which has faced attacks from pro-U.S. Israel for several years, Iraqi Shia groups, who have suffered at the hands of the President, Saddam Hussein, disagree with the anti-American line. According to a Shia group called the "Followers of Ali al-Beit (Prophet Mohammed's immediate family) in Iraq," the Hizbullah, should, instead of targeting Washington, be seeking Mr. Hussein's ouster to avenge the killings of Iraqi Shias in the past.

16 MAR 2003

THE HINDU

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Bush plans summit to win U.N. backing

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 14. In what is being billed as "an effort to pursue every last bit of diplomacy", the United States President, George W. Bush, is travelling this Sunday to the Island of Azores to meet with the Prime Ministers of Britain and Spain, Tony Blair and Jose Maria Aznar. It will be a one-day summit with Mr. Bush departing on Sunday morning.

The Azores belongs to Portugal which is backing the U.S. in the showdown with Iraq by offering logistical support in the event of war. Portugal has also granted permission to the U.S. for the use of the Lajes Field Air Base in the island chain. The three leaders will be discussing ways to win United Nations backing for disarming Saddam Hussein, with a resolution sponsored by the three nations floundering in the Security Council.

The Bush administration is now saying that it will pursue the resolution next week. Officials are also making it known that the Azores summit will not be discussing detailed military plans of the U.S. in the event of a showdown with Iraq. But Sunday's meeting could see discussions on a post-war political Iraq.

Some of Mr. Bush's advisers are apparently of the view that the administration should cut

its losses and pull out the resolution. The impression is that if the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, wishes to have one final diplomatic push, Mr. Bush will agree to this idea. But the clear signals are that even if the U.S. did not press for the vote in New York, military operations are very much on the cards.

"The day of reckoning is fast approaching", the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, told lawmakers on Capitol Hill. The administration did not just have the problem of the U.N. vote on Thursday.

Another setback came from Turkey which did not readily agree to the use of facilities in the event of a military showdown. In the aftermath of high-level conversations, the indications are that by the time Turkey makes up its mind, it might just be too late for American calculations.

The U.S., which has been maintaining that it did not need another resolution authorising the use of force, is going ahead with the final preparations for a military strike.

Several Stealth bombers left their base for Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. They will be the first line of an expected punishing air campaign that Washington will be unleashing in the event of a war with Iraq.

Meanwhile in New York, the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, is said to be studying the

possibility of a summit of world leaders, not just nations represented on the Security Council, with a view to finding a compromise over the current crisis. Recently, France suggested a meeting of the leaders represented in the Council, but the Bush administration brushed aside the idea very quickly.

Interestingly, Mr. Bush said nothing this morning about Iraq or the upcoming summit meeting in the Azores when he, along with his Secretary of State, Colin Powell, came to the Rose Garden to make a short announcement on why there was the delay in the West Asia plan.

There was a lot of interest on what Mr. Bush might say about Iraq and in the future game plan of the U.S. at the United Nations and elsewhere.

But Mr. Bush merely read a statement and took no questions. At the Rose Garden, Mr. Bush argued that his administration would unveil the peace plan which has the goal of a Palestinian state when the Palestinians confirm their new Prime Minister.

"Immediately upon confirmation, the road map to peace will be given to the Palestinians and the Israelis."

Mr. Bush further stressed that as progress "is being made toward peace, settlement activity in the occupied territories must end".

15 MAR 2003

THE HINDU

U.S. reimposes sanctions on Iran

WASHINGTON, MARCH 14. The U.S. President, George W. Bush, has renewed sanctions barring U.S. firms and citizens from oil dealings with Iran, citing the "unusual and extraordinary threat" posed by Teheran, the White House announced.

In a decree on Wednesday, Mr. Bush accused Iran of "support for international terrorism, efforts to undermine the West Asia peace process, and acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them." The U.S. leader's action — which extends by one year sanctions initially imposed by then-President, Bill Clinton, on March 15, 1995 — comes amid fresh tensions between Washington and Teheran over Iran's nuclear programme.

Testifying before a Congressional panel, the Secretary of

State, Colin Powell, repeated the U.S. concerns that Iran is masking a covert nuclear weapons programme under the guise of civilian atomic energy projects.

"We are deeply concerned about Iran's efforts to not only have nuclear power but to use that nuclear power infrastructure to develop the capability to produce nuclear weapons," Gen. Powell told a House budget sub-committee.

He said the U.S. had not given any kind of ultimatum to Iran to halt its activities but said Teheran was well aware of the concerns.

"We've made it clear to the Iranians and to those who support Iranian nuclear efforts and missile developments that we find this to be irresponsible action in their part," he said.

— AFP

15 MAR 2003

THE HINDU

IRAQ / BLAIR TALKS TO CHIRAC

Allies to hold crisis meet

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, MARCH 14. The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, on Friday stepped up diplomatic efforts to build a consensus on Iraq amid reports that the leaders from Britain, the U.S. and Spain will hold a summit meeting to discuss the crisis.

The Prime Minister's spokesman was quoted as saying that details had not been finalised but Mr Blair was willing to travel to any place for a meeting. Reports said the summit might be held in a "fourth" country on Sunday, ahead of a possible vote on a second resolution in the U.N. Security Council.

Meanwhile, after a day of acrimonious exchanges, London and Paris were on Friday trying to cool the tempers. Mr Blair had a "good-natured" telephone conversation with the French President, Jacques Chirac, and though both apparently reiterated their "firmly held" views the fact that the two spoke to each other was seen as a sign of a thaw.

Earlier, on Thursday, the



A U.S. Air Force cargo plane taking off from Incirlik, southeastern Turkey, recently.

French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, spoke to his British counterpart, Jack Straw, in what was interpreted as a bid to contain the diplomatic row between the two countries after Britain accused France of "poisoning" the atmosphere by threatening to ve-

to a second resolution.

Meanwhile, Mr. Straw insisted that a compromise over Iraq was still possible even as prospects of Britain and the U.S. being able to get enough support for a second resolution looked increasingly bleak.

15 MAR 2003

SEE HINDU

US talks peace on N Korean front

Press Trust of India US

WASHINGTON, March 13.

— In sharp contrast to its war rhetoric against Iraq, the USA has said it wants a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the North Korean nuclear crisis while retaining the military option.

"President Bush has repeatedly said we seek a peaceful, diplomatic solution with North Korea, even though he has taken no op-

tion off the table," assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Mr James A Kelly, said during a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Mr Bush has also stressed that "USA will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of North Korea and that it will not use food as a weapon," he said. USA had recently announced an initial contribution of 40,000 tons of food

to the Pyongyang through World Food Programme, he said. Mr Kelly's statement assumes significance in the wake of criticism of the US at the NAM summit in Kuala Lumpur last month about the "double standards" adopted by Washington in dealing with Pyongyang and Baghdad.

In a separate incident, China today said the UN should not meddle in the North Korean nuclear issue

and restated its demand for direct talks between Washington and Pyongyang.

"At present, it is not appropriate for the United Nations to be involved in resolving the nuclear issue of North Korea," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Mr Kong Quan said.

He confirmed that a discussion on North Korean nuclear issue took place among specialists at the United Nations.



US hints at attacking Iraq without Britain

Washington: Hinting that the US may attack Iraq without Britain as premier Tony Blair is facing enormous opposition from his country's anti-war forces, Washington has said UK's role in a military conflict is "unclear" at this time, but asserted that London will help in reconstruction process in the post-war period.

"This is a matter that most of the senior officials in the government discuss with the UK on a daily or every-other-day basis," defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld told a Pentagon press conference on Tuesday.

"And I had a good visit with the minister of defence of the UK about an hour ago.

Their situation is distinctive to their country, and they have a government that deals with parliament in their way, distinctive way. And what ultimately will be decided is unclear as to their role, that is to say their role in the event that a decision is made to use force," he said.

He said, "There is the second issue of their (UK's) role in a post-Saddam reconstruction process or stabilisation process, which would be a different matter. And I think until we know what



US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld during a press briefing at the Pentagon on Tuesday.

the resolution is, we won't know the answer as to what their role will be and to the extent they are able to participate in the event the president decides to use force; that (British participation) would obviously be welcomed." Later, after reports that UK officials were surprised by his comments, Mr Rumsfeld said in a statement that the main point of his press conference was that "obtaining a second UN Security Council resolution is important to UK."

"In the event a decision to use force is made, we have every reason to believe there

will be a significant military contribution from UK," the statement said.

The defence secretary attributed the hesitation of some of the UN Security Council members to authorise the use of force to the fact that unlike the US, they did not have the experience of September 11 terror attacks.

Meanwhile, America's envoy to Russia, in blunt comments published on Wednesday, warned Moscow to think twice about the consequences of using its UN veto to block US military action against Iraq.

And in a further sign of deteriorating US-Russia relations over the Iraq crisis, a top Russian foreign policy official said Washington's bellicose stance could push a key nuclear arms pact into deep freeze. Russia, despite its new warm ties with Washington, has threatened to use its right to veto in the UN Security Council to block a new resolution.

"It makes a big difference whether Russia decides to use its veto or abstain," US ambassador Alexander Vershbow told Russia's widely read 'Izvestia' daily. "Russia should carefully weigh all the consequences," he said. Agencies

13 MAR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

USA tests mother of all bombs

Press Trust of India

NEW YORK, March 12. — Beating on the war drums, and warning Iraq of the deadly firepower they possess, the US military today tested "the mother of all bombs" — a 21,000-pound device — whose explosion can be heard as far as 30 km away.

The bomb, in development since last year, has the biggest explosive power in the non-nuclear category and may be used for the first time in Iraq if the USA finally decides on military action.

A video broadcast by television channels showed the bomb falling through the air, bursting into a fireball, rattling building in nearby areas and sending cloud of smoke rising hundreds of feet.

The new Massive Ordnance Aerial Bomb (MOAB), as it is officially known, tested at Eglin Air Force base in Florida was also part of the psychological warfare being conducted by Pentagon.

The bomb is expected to be used against critical targets on the surface and underground in case of a war. This was the third test for the bomb but first with live ammunition. "The goal is to have the pressure so great that Saddam Hussein cooperates," US defence secretary Mr Donald Rumsfeld said.

MOAB carries 18,000 pounds of tritonal

U-2 flights suspended

UNHQ, March 12. — In the first incident of its kind, reconnaissance flights by US U-2 spy planes over Iraq have been suspended owing to security reasons.

As per the understanding with United Nations weapons inspectors, Baghdad said, only one U-2 plane is expected to fly through its airspace. But simultaneous flights by two such aircraft constituted a hostile action. "I can confirm that two U-2 reconnaissance aircraft operating on behalf of the UN operated in Iraqi airspace this morning," Mr Ewen Buchanan, spokesman UNMOVIC said yesterday.

After Baghdad's complaint, inspectors cancelled the flights apparently to ensure that the incident does not blow into a major problem and confrontation between US and Iraq. — PTI

explosives, which have an indefinite shelf life. It replaces the Vietnam-era "Daisy Cutter," a 15,000-pound bomb with 12,600 pounds of the less-powerful GSX explosives. The MOAB, CNN said, is deployed on a pallet from a C-130 aircraft. It initially has a parachute, but as it deploys, the Inertial Navigation System and Global Positioning System take over.

আরবদুনিয়ায় মার্কিন-মিত্রেরাও দ্বিমত, বিশ্ব উত্তাল

কায়রো, ২০ মার্চ— ইরাকে মার্কিন হানার পরে আরব দেশগুলির মধ্যে তীব্র প্রতিক্রিয়া শুরু হয়েছে। আজ ভোররাতে বাগদাদে হানা শুরু হয়ে যাওয়ার পরে এখনও পর্যন্ত আরব দেশগুলি থেকে যে-টুকু সরকারি প্রতিক্রিয়া পাওয়া গিয়েছে, তাতে স্পষ্ট হয়ে গিয়েছে যে, আরব দুনিয়ায় মার্কিন-মিত্র দেশগুলির মধ্যেই যুদ্ধকে সমর্থন করা নিয়ে দ্বিমত রয়েছে। স্বৈরাচারী সাদ্দামকে হটাতে এক তরফা মার্কিন সামরিক অভিযানকে অনেকেই সমর্থন করছে না। আরব দুনিয়ার আমজনতা অবশ্য সরাসরি পাশে দাঁড়াচ্ছেন ইরাকের জনগণের। তাঁদের মতে, সাদ্দাম যদি অন্যায় করেও থাকেন, তার জন্য নিরীহ মানুষকে যে-ভাবে মাসুল গুলতে হচ্ছে, তা মোটেই সমর্থনযোগ্য নয়। এ দিকে, ইরাকে সামরিক অভিযান শুরু হয়ে যাওয়ার পরে আজও বিশ্বের নানা প্রান্তে যুদ্ধ-বিরোধী বিক্ষোভ হয়েছে। খোদ ওয়াশিংটনের রাস্তায় মার্কিন প্রতিরক্ষাসচিব ডোনাল্ড রামসফেল্ডের বাড়ির কাছে যুদ্ধের

সিদ্ধান্তের বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিবাদ জানাতে গিয়ে গ্রেফতার হয়েছেন বেশ কিছু মানুষ। এখানে যুদ্ধ-বিরোধী সমাবেশে সামিল হয়েছিল স্কুল ছাত্রেরাও। ইরাকে হানার কিছুক্ষণের মধ্যেই প্রতিবাদের ঝড় উঠেছে মার্কিন-মিত্র অস্ট্রেলিয়ার বিভিন্ন শহরে। সুইজারল্যান্ড, সাইপ্রাস, রাশিয়াতে মার্কিন আগ্রাসনের বিরুদ্ধে আওয়াজ উঠেছে। আরব দুনিয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে ইসলামি দুনিয়ায় মালয়েশিয়া, ইন্দোনেশিয়ার মতো দেশ ইরাকে আক্রমণের নিন্দা করেছে। চিন, ফ্রান্স, জার্মানি, রাশিয়া, পাকিস্তান, তুরস্ক সরকারি ভাবে মার্কিন হানার কড়া সমালোচনা করেছে। যুদ্ধের পক্ষে আছে দক্ষিণ কোরিয়া, স্পেন ও ইতালি।

সাদ্দাম হুসেনকে গদিচ্যুত করতে বুশের সামরিক অভিযান প্রসঙ্গে বাহরিনের রাজা হামাদ বিন ইসা আল-খলিফা বলেছেন, তিনি বিশ্বাস করেন, কুটনীতির সাহায্যে যুদ্ধ পরিহার করা যেত। তাঁর মতে, যুদ্ধে জিতবে শুধু একটি পক্ষ। কিন্তু শান্তির পথে হটলে সব পক্ষেরই সুবিধা

হত। প্রসঙ্গত, বাহরিনেই আমেরিকার পঞ্চম নৌবহরের ঘাঁটি রয়েছে। প্যালেস্তাইনের মন্ত্রী সায়েব ইরেকাত আশঙ্কা প্রকাশ করেছেন, যুদ্ধ পরিস্থিতির সুযোগ নিয়ে ইজরায়েল প্যালেস্তাইনি বিদ্রোহীদের দমন করার চেষ্টা করতে পারে। কারণ এই সময় সকলেরই নজর থাকবে ইরাকের ঘটনাবলির দিকে। প্যালেস্তাইনি জঙ্গি সংগঠন হামাস-এর নেতা আব্দেল আজিজ আল-রানতিসি এই সুযোগে মার্কিন আগ্রাসনের বিরুদ্ধে ইসলামি জেহাদের ডাক দিয়েছেন।

সাদ্দামের জন্য সহানুভূতি থাকুক আর না-থাকুক, বেশির ভাগ দেশেই সাধারণ মানুষ মনে করেন নিরীহ জনতার উপরে যুদ্ধ চাপিয়ে দেওয়া অন্যায়। কায়রোয় ট্যান্ড্রি চালক ইউসেফ যেমন বলেন, “এই যুদ্ধ তো পাপ, কারণ ইরাকের নিরীহ মানুষের এতে ক্ষতি হবে।” চিকিৎসক মোয়াতাজের মতে, “আমরা ইরাকের মানুষের পাশে আছি।” সৌদি আরবে বহু মানুষ বলেছেন, আমেরিকা বলে আসছিল,

তার ইরাকি প্রেসিডেন্টের বিরুদ্ধে। কিন্তু এখন দেখা যাচ্ছে, আমেরিকা তো ইরাকের সাধারণ মানুষেরও বিরুদ্ধে। বোমা ফেললে তো নিরীহ মানুষেরই প্রাণ যাবে। আশির দশকে যারা ইরাকের সঙ্গে আট বছর যুদ্ধে লিপ্ত ছিল, সেই ইরানেও ইরাকের প্রতি সহানুভূতি এবং ওয়াশিংটনের জন্য নিন্দা বর্ধিত হয়েছে। ইরানে অনেকেই মনে করেন, “বুশ রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের বৈধতা সম্পর্কেই প্রশ্নচিহ্ন ঝুলিয়ে দিয়েছেন এবং বিশ্ব জনমতকে অস্বীকার করেছেন। সাদ্দামেরও দোষ আছে। দেশের মানুষের স্বার্থে তাঁর ক্ষমতা ছেড়ে দেওয়া উচিত ছিল।”

সামান্য খুশির হাওয়া কুয়েতে। সকালের প্রার্থনার শেষে আহমেদ হুসেন আহমেদ বলেন, “বুশ সত্যিকারের পুরুষ মানুষ। বুশের বাবা কুয়েতকে বারো বছর আগে মুক্ত করেছিলেন, এ বারে জুনিয়র বুশ আমাদের মুক্ত করবেন।” তবে ইউরোপের বিভিন্ন দেশে যুদ্ধ-বিরোধী হাওয়া। সপ্তাহান্তে বিক্ষোভ আরও বাড়বে বলেই মনে করা হচ্ছে। — রয়টার্স

THE HINDU

1 2 MAR 2003

An attack on Iraq will mark the revival of an era one had thought was over

Baghdad and Hiroshima

BY A.G. NOORANI

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IN THE annals of the infamy, the US's attack on Iraq will rank with its dropping of the atom bomb on Japan. Gar Alperovitz documented in his work, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*, the sordid considerations that inspired it; how "Truman lied — directly, repeatedly". Bob Woodward reveals that the idea of attacking Iraq was brought up at a National Security Council meeting a day after 9/11 by Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Vice-President Dick Cheney said, "If we go after Saddam Hussein, we lose our rightful place as good guy". It would seem, he said, that "we were an imperialist power... taking down governments". By August 2002, he was pressing for a war.

Secretary of State Colin Powell was opposed to it from the start. Marginalised, he sought a meeting with George W. Bush on August 5, 2002, and presented his case after a thorough preparation. "The entire region would be destabilised... it would suck the oxygen out of just everything the US was doing" — the war on terrorism, defence and intelligence relationship. "The economic implications could be staggering" in a time of economic slump. "How would success be defined?" To aides he said, "Jeez, what a fixation about Iraq."

None of the fundamental considerations he stated has lost validity. Only, the survivor has lost his self-respect. Glenn Kessler reported in *The Washington Post* on January 12, 2003, that on September 17, 2001 (the day Bush said he did not have the evidence to attack Iraq), the US president had signed a plan for war in Afghanistan. That also ordered planning military options for a war on Iraq. It was concealed from Powell and other opponents of the war. Ray McGovern, who served the CIA for 40 years, has listed "the dissembling" by Bush and his aides on Iraq with anguish. It reminded one of the folly of the Vietnam war and the lies told to cover it up.

All for one target. Powell said, on February 20, that if Saddam Hussein "leaves the country tomorrow, there will be no war". He said on February 19 that "a military commander will initially be in charge". He will "transfer real authority to a civilian leadership, perhaps initially of an international nature... conducted. He said some



ship", comprising the feuding exiles. The country will be torn apart between Arab and Kurd, and Arab and Arab. This replay of British occupation in 1919 will inflict on the Arab psyche a wound which centuries will not erase. Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed's remarks show that the entire Muslim world will resent an Iraq's humiliation.

As in Japan, a new Constitution will be imposed on Iraq. The laws will be revised. Commander of US Central Command General Tommy Franks will be General MacArthur in Baghdad. He will be assisted by 'advisory committees' made up of Iraqi exiles and other collaborators with the occupying power. "The officials differed on whether the occupation would last two years or more," an analyst noted. As the French say, nothing lasts longer than the temporary, especially since Iraq has oil. He aptly remarked that these men sound like "babes in the woods discussing the gingerbread house they are going to rebuild after knocking it down". The Afghan precedent suggests that the US will be none too generous in meeting the enormous costs of rehabilitation.

The overriding aim is not merely Iraq's occupation; it is the restructuring of West Asia. The Chairman of the House of Representatives International Relations Committee, Henry Hyde, candidly said on February 12: "This peril also contains... a great opportunity... to recast the politics of a turbulent region." Ariel Sharon will be helped to impose his will on the Palestini-

No tears need be shed for that irrelevance, NATO. But the EU has been wantonly split. The UN will be damaged and the entire structure of international relations — both, law and morality, however frayed — will be undermined. As Dag Hammarskjöld said on October 2, 1960: "[it is not any] big powers who need the UN for their protection; it is all the others. In this sense, the organisation is first of all their organisation". An attack on Iraq will signify the revival of an era one had thought was over.

The global renunciation of war in the Kellogg-Briand Pact prompted British Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain to warn the US ambassador on May 19, 1928: "I should remind your excellency that there are certain regions of the world the welfare and integrity of which constitute a special and vital interest for our peace and safety... It must be clearly understood that His Majesty's Government in Great Britain accepts the new treaty upon the distinct understanding that it does not prejudice their freedom of action in this respect. The Government of the United States has comparable interests, any disregard of which by a foreign power they have declared that they would regard as an unfriendly act". The UN charter is, thus, being torn up.

But far more consequential and lasting will be the destruction of the legitimacy of the present world order. Underlying the brave and determined Franco-German opposition to US plans is a considered refusal to accept redrawing of that order unilaterally by the lone superpower. The NDA government, he laterally by the lone superpower. The NDA government, he laterally by the lone superpower. The NDA government, he laterally by the lone superpower.

On March 7, both in his brilliant speech in the Security council and in the press conference outside. French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin made plain that the issue is how do we want the world to be ruled; what kind of a world order do we want. This is a concern that is deeply felt by France, Germany, Russia and China. It is a concern that India should also have.

Henry Kissinger's politics beclouded his fine intellectual achievements. One consistent theme in the writings of this arch realist is that of the legitimacy of the international order. "It implies the acceptance of the framework of the international order by all the major powers... the desire of one power for absolute security means absolute insecurity for all the others," he wrote in 1957.

In an essay on Bismarck, Kissinger amplified: "Security presupposes a balance of power which makes it difficult for any State or group of States to impose its will on the remainder. Too great a disproportion of strength undermines self-restraint in the powerful... Also essential is a 'moral consensus' on what is 'just or reasonable'." In *Does America Need A Foreign Policy?*, he noted that "for much of the 90s, America's Atlantic policies oscillated between imperiousness and indifference, between treating Europe as an auxiliary and as a photo opportunity". A serious strategic dialogue didn't materialise. Russia and China hate these trends.

The post-Iraq war international order will lack all legitimacy. So will the regime imposed on Iraq. The Vietnamese hated Diem. But his forcible ouster "affected every tier of civil administration down to the village level". History teaches us — and Kissinger warns — that the more extensive the eradication of existing authority, the more its successor must rely on naked power to establish themselves. For, in the end, legitimacy involves an acceptance of authority without compulsions.

It makes one sad to think that the US, a great and lovable country, is ruled by men so utterly devoid of sense and morality. Their zest for war reminds one of Robert Walpole's remark on the declaration of war with Spain in 1739: "They now ring the bells, but they will soon wring their hands."

Blair's misery

WFO
5/10
Now facing a revolt from his party 17/3

Prime Minister Tony Blair is having a hard time facing a revolt from the ranks of his own party. There was unprecedented cross-voting in the House of Commons when Blair placed his case for sending British troops to Iraq — it was supported by Iain Duncan Smith, the Conservative leader, while 121 Labour MPs defied a party whip by voting for an amendment which said that the case for war was unproven. The resignation of Andy Reed, assistant to a minister, might seem a relatively minor blow, but the outspokenness of high-profile international development secretary Clare Short raises the stakes. In an interview to a radio channel, she threatens to resign if Britain goes to war without a UN mandate. With Washington and London steadily losing the propaganda war to Baghdad, such a mandate looks very unlikely. That puts Blair out on a limb, since only 15 per cent of the British public approve sending soldiers to Iraq without UN authorization.

The general unpopularity of an Iraq war is leading to dissensions within his own party — Robin Cook, its Commons leader, is said to be considering resigning. Neo-conservatives in Washington had argued against taking the case for war against Iraq to the UN; one of the reasons President Bush did so was to bail out Blair, who desperately needs a UN endorsement to rally public opinion at home. He now appears to have lost that battle, and his political weakness is indicated by his inability to do much about his deputy's exhortation to the party faithful to revolt. Blair will be unable to head off another debate in Parliament should a resolution endorsing war be vetoed at the UN, and the London *Times* reports that as many as 170 Labour MPs may vote against war next time, in which case he may need to be bailed out by the Tories. Blair, who had looked unassailable until now, may well depend on whether the war is short and sharp, or whether it is long drawn out and leads to mass civilian casualties. In the latter case, a lack of regime change in Baghdad may well trigger one in London.

1 2 MAR 2003

THE STATESMAN

US dismisses Teheran's 'N-plan for power' claim

Washington: Stating that Iran's nuclear programme was a "matter of great concern," US has rejected Teheran's claim that it was pursuing a 'nuke fuel cycle' only for power generation, and said the country had enough oil-gas supplies to meet its energy requirements. "We completely reject Iran's claim that it is doing so (pursuing a nuclear fuel cycle for power generation) for peaceful purposes," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said on Monday.

"After all, Iran has been in possession of a great amount of energy of a non-nuclear nature as a result of their gas and oil supplies," he said.

Iran, he said, attempted to

construct a uranium enrichment plant and a heavy water plant in secret. The first could be used to produce enriched uranium for weapons while the second could support a reactor for producing weapons-grade plutonium. Iran admitted the existence of these facilities only when they had been made public by an Iranian oppn group, Mr Fleischer added. Mr Fleischer said that despite the best efforts of the international community— in this case the International Atomic Energy Agency— to verify that they had a nuclear weapons programme, Iran was far ahead of where they were believed to be in its development. PTI

1 2 MAR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Vote for the UN

For bad things to happen, all it takes is for good people to look the other way and do nothing. Consider the imminent American invasion of Iraq. It is hardly a secret that New Delhi is quite concerned about the legality as well as the consequences of such a war. From Atalji to many of his worthy cabinet colleagues, official India has made periodic noises against unilateral American action. But these statements have been in the nature of off-the-cuff remarks, made in non-official forums — from election rallies to journalistic get-togethers. In Parliament — which, incidentally, is currently in session — the NDA government has maintained a conspicuous silence on the issue. The impression has therefore gained ground that New Delhi is somehow hoping to avoid taking an official 'line' on the war and thereby not risk antagonising the world's only super power. On Monday, in a belated move to evolve a political consensus on the matter, the prime minister convened an all-party meeting. But as with everything else in our democracy, the meeting, instead of arriving at a considered position, degenerated into an arena for partisan political rhetoric, with the opposition accusing the government of not having courage to stand up to the US.

Not that the principal ruling party did any better. In a late night appearance on television, party spokesperson V K Malhotra sought to get even with the government's critics by insinuating that the opposition to the war was confined to "Christian" rather than "Muslim" countries. Hence, there was no need for India to take a strong stand. This dangerously myopic religious worldview apart, the government's strategy of keeping the war off the official agenda, inexplicable to begin with, is even less valid now. A debate on the issue in Parliament can no longer be put off. Indeed, there is a good case for passing a parliamentary resolution that unambiguously clarifies India's stand on this war. Given the strategic and sensitive nature of the issue, however, one must hope that the debate does not degenerate into mindless anti-American rhetoric and moral grandstanding. Without naming names, our law-makers should spell out the dangers of unilateralism in a world where almost none of the major global challenges — from terrorism to environment — can be fought alone. In other words, the thrust of our parliamentary debate and the resolution that follows it ought to be a vote for the UN, rather than a vote against the US.

UNite for Peace

The US and the UK have time and again warned the United Nations not to put its credibility to test by vacillating on allowing military action against Iraq. The rationale for this is that over a period of 12 years, Iraq had violated every single UN directive to disarm. The same argument has been made by security experts across the world. Ironically, the UN Security Council has rarely acted with conviction. For close to 45 years, it was deadlocked by the Cold War rivalry between the US and the USSR. The military action against Iraq to liberate Kuwait was perhaps the first instance of the Security Council acting unitedly. The bombing of Iraq in 1998 and the consequent withdrawal of UNSCOM inspectors on the ground of Iraqi non-cooperation was a unilateral act by the US, supported by the UK. When Iraq acquired weapons of mass destruction and used them against Iran, the former was in fact shielded by the US and its allies in the Security Council. The Council did nothing during the genocide in Rwanda and the bombing of Kosovo was carried out without its formal approval. In other words, the UN does not need to sanction a war in order to redeem itself.

If anything, it is unilateral action by the US that threatens the UN's already dented credibility. As Kofi Annan said recently, any such action would be in violation of the UN charter. Does this mean that there is no way out of the impasse? No. It is possible for a deadlocked issue to be transferred to the UN General Assembly under the 'uniting for peace' resolution procedure. This was invoked during the Korean war, and again in the aftermath of the Israeli-Arab conflict of 1967. Many NGOs have now proposed that the General Assembly should be convened under the 'uniting for peace' procedure to consider the Iraqi issue. There is a distinct danger that war will have already commenced by the time formalities required to convene the General Assembly can be completed. Nonetheless, it might still be a worthwhile attempt. First, an official protest against the US action will have been formally lodged in the UN. Second, it could pre-empt possible unilateral US plans to deal with the post-war dispensation in Iraq. And finally, the General Assembly is more representative of the world than the Security Council. New Delhi, which has opposed unilateral use of force, should consider taking the initiative to convene the General Assembly session under this procedure.



KOFI A. ANNAN

THE Charter of the United Nations is categorical. "In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations," it confers on the Security Council "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security." That responsibility can seldom have weighed more heavily on the members of the council than it does this week.

Within the next day or two, they have to make a momentous choice.

The context of that choice is an issue whose importance is by no means confined to Iraq; the threat posed to all humanity by weapons of mass destruction. The whole international community needs to act together to curb the proliferation of these terrible weapons, wherever it may be happening.

But the immediate and most urgent aspect of that task is to ensure that Iraq no longer has such weapons. Why? Because Iraq has actually used them in the past, and because it has twice, under its present leadership, committed aggression against its neighbours — against Iran in 1980, and against Kuwait in 1990.

That is why the Security Council is determined to disarm Iraq of these weapons, and has passed successive resolutions

They fear that it will lead to regional instability and economic crises; and that it may — as war so often does — have unintended consequences that produce new dangers. Will it make the fight against terrorism, or the search for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, even harder? Will it sow deep divisions between nations and peoples of different faiths? Will it compromise our ability to work together in addressing other common concerns in the future?

Those are serious questions, and the answers must be carefully considered.

Sometimes it may be necessary to use force to deal with threats to the peace — and the charter makes provision for that. But war must always be a last resort. It should be used only when every reasonable alternative has been tried — in the present case, only if we are sure that every

peaceful means of achieving Iraq's disarmament has been exhausted. The United Nations, founded to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of a war", has a duty to search for a peaceful solution until the last possible moment.

Has that moment arrived? That is the decision that the members of the Security Council now face. It is a grave decision indeed. If they fail to agree on a common position, and some of them then take action without the council's authority, the legitimacy of that action will be widely questioned, and it will not gain the political support needed to ensure its long-term success, after its military phase.

If, on the other hand, the members of the council can come together, even at this late hour, and ensure compliance with their earlier resolutions by agreeing on a common course of action, then the council's authority will be en-

Maintain UN unity at all costs

If the Security Council fails to agree on a common position, and some members take action without the council's authority, the legitimacy of that action will be widely questioned, and it will not gain the political support needed to ensure its long-term success, after its military phase. On the other hand, if they agree on a common course of action, the council's authority will be enhanced and the world will be a safer place

hanced, and the world will be a safer place.

Let's remember that the crisis in Iraq does not exist in a vacuum. What happens there will have a profound impact on other issues of great importance. The broader our consensus on how to deal with Iraq, the better the chance that we can come together again and deal effectively with other burning conflicts in the world, starting with the one between Israelis and Palestinians. We all know that only a just resolution of that conflict can bring any real hope of lasting stability in the region.

Beyond the Middle East, the success or failure of the international community in dealing with Iraq will crucially affect its ability to deal with the no less worrying developments on the Korean peninsula. And it will affect our work to resolve the conflicts that are causing so much suffering in Africa, setting back the prospects

for stability and development that that continent so badly needs.

Nor is war the only scourge that the world has to face.

Whether they are protecting themselves against terrorism or struggling against the grim triad of poverty, ignorance and disease, nations need to work together, and they can do so through the United Nations. However this conflict is resolved, the UN will remain as central as it is today. We should do everything we can to maintain its unity.

All around the world these last few months, we have seen what an immense significance not only states, but their peoples, attach to the legitimacy provided by the UN, and by the Security Council, as the common framework for securing peace. As they approach their momentous decision this week, I hope the members of the Council will be mindful of this sacred trust that the world's peoples have placed in them, and will show themselves worthy of it.

— The writer is Secretary-General of the UN

Blow to UN as Cyprus talks fail

MICHELE KAMBAS
THE HAGUE, MARCH 11

CYPRUS peace talks collapsed on Tuesday and the United Nations announced the end of its long efforts to reunite Greek and Turkish Cypriots before the island accedes to the European Union next month.

In a bitter personal blow to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and a major setback for Turkey's own hopes of joining the EU, the talks mainly foundered on the opposition of minority Turkish Cypriots to land and population movements they were asked to make in the deal.

"Regrettably these (peace) efforts were not a success. We have reached the end of the road," said a statement by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

NATO allies Greece and Turkey, whose support of their communities on the island has pushed them close to war in the past, vowed to overcome the setback. "The Secretary-General said there

was no agreement but he did not completely close the doors," Turkish Prime Minister Abdullah Gul told reporters in Ankara.

In Athens, Greek Foreign Ministry spokesman Panos Beglitis said: "The political will for peace from our side remains alive."

But Annan's statement, read by his Cyprus envoy Alvaro de Soto after marathon talks by the Secretary-General with Greek Cypriot leader Tassos Papadopoulos and veteran Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash, left little room for optimism.

Annan had hoped to persuade Denkash and Papadopoulos to hold referendums on the plan on March 30 so that a united Cyprus could sign an April 16 EU accession treaty.

A peace deal was crucial for Turkey's hopes of joining the European Union as the Greek Cypriot part of the island will join the bloc in May 2004, with or without the Turkish Cypriot side.

—Reuters

12 MAR 2003

INDIAN EXPRESS

Bush echoes father's UN speech

DANA MILBANK

WASHINGTON, MARCH 10

THE President promised that US troops would not remain in West Asia "for one day longer than is necessary" and he said the coming war with Iraq provides opportunities "to settle the conflicts that divide the Arabs from Israel."

Sounds like President Bush's February 26 speech to the American Enterprise Institute? Well, yes. But the quotes are actually from President George H.W. Bush's address to the UN on October 1, 1990.

The current President has been recycling some of the arguments and phrases his father used. In particular, the younger Bush's speech on February 26 outlining the future of Iraq had striking similarities to the elder Bush's address to the 45th



General Assembly of the UN. Back in 1990, the 41st president said: "We seek no advantage for ourselves, nor do we seek to maintain our military forces in Saudi Arabia for one day longer than is necessary." Bush the 43rd said: "We will remain in Iraq as long as necessary, and not a day more."

The elder Bush told the UN: "I truly believe there may be opportunities for Iraq and Kuwait to settle their differences permanently, for the states of the Gulf themselves to build new arrangements for stability, and for all the states

and the peoples of the region to settle the conflicts that divide the Arabs from Israel."

The younger Bush revived his father's unfulfilled forecast by calling the mission "an opportunity" for peace: "Success in Iraq could also begin a new phase for peace in West Asia, and set in motion progress towards a truly democratic Palestinian state." Coincidence? Yes and no.

Presidential speech writers routinely use the words of previous presidents for inspiration. Bush, speaking after the space shuttle Columbia disaster and at a US military cemetery in France, closely imitated speeches given by Reagan at similar occasions. Also, Bush has studied his father's presidency, and aides routinely talk about emulating its successes and avoiding its mistakes.

A senior Bush aide who was involved in drafting the AEI speech said nobody had reviewed the 12-year-old UN address, but allowed that "there are similar ideas, similar historical circumstances, also some similar conventions of speechwriting." "Clearly, there's a relevance here, because the UN did find its voice in that crisis," the official said.

The President said last week that the situation is different now. "The mission will be complete disarmament, which will mean regime change," he said. "That was not the mission in 1991." It is therefore surprising that, given the vastly different nature of the conflict, Bush would use many of the same arguments to justify his action that his father used to justify an entirely different action a dozen years ago. —LATWP

11 MAR 2003

INDIAN EXPRESS

USA firm on 17 March deadline

9 MAR 2003

AGENCIES

UNHQ, March 8. — USA, Britain and Spain have proposed to the UN Security Council to give Iraq an ultimatum to cooperate fully and unconditionally with its disarmament demands by 17 March or face war.

But France and Germany promptly rejected this "logic of war" with Paris threatening to veto the revised British draft resolution containing the ultimatum circulated today, if pressed for vote. Russia, too, criticised the amended draft and said the 17 March deadline was as "an unnecessary and unjustified ultimatum".

The sponsors, however, asserted they would put the resolution to vote to see where each member stands even though indications are that it has slim chance of getting requisite number of nine votes in the 15-member Security Council.

Washington has gone so far as to state that the UN was not the only source of international action and if it failed in disarming Iraq, the task would be completed by another international organisation.

"As President Bush has said, if the UN will not disarm the Iraqi President, there will be another international organisation... it will be a coalition of the willing that will be made up of numerous nations that will disarm Mr Hussein," White House spokesman Mr Ari Fleischer said.

The new draft, sponsored by USA, Britain and Spain, states that Iraq "will have failed" to take the "final opportunity" under its 1441 resolution unless the Security Council finds on or before 17 March that Baghdad

USA 9/13

WHERE THE SECURITY COUNCIL STANDS ON IRAQ DRAFT



USA and Britain have the support of only Spain and Bulgaria for the revised draft. Russia, France and China are opposed to the draft. Four non-permanent members — Mexico, Guinea, Cameroon and Angola — are sitting on the fence. Pakistan and Chile are stressing on peaceful resolution and therefore may abstain from voting. Nine votes and no veto are needed for any resolution to be adopted by the 15-member Security Council. If the resolution is unable to get the nine votes, the permanent members opposing it — Russia, France and China — could simply abstain.

US Secretary of State Gen. Colin Powell shot down the idea, saying the heads of government and state are in touch with one another and no useful purpose would be served by such meeting.

Chief arms inspector Mr Hans Blix described Iraq agreeing to and starting destroying its Al Samoud 2 missiles as a "substantial measure of disarmament". Mr Blix, however, criticized the rate at which Baghdad was handing over documents concerning its weapons of mass destruction programme. "Iraq's initiatives to resolve disarmament issues can be seen as active or even proactive... But these initiatives three to four months into the new

US Secretary of State Gen. Colin Powell shot down the idea, saying the heads of government and state are in touch with one another and no useful purpose would be served by such meeting.

resolution (1441) cannot be said to constitute immediate cooperation as required by the Security Council, especially to substantiate it claims about destroying such weapons unilaterally in 1991."

'War will backfire'

Iraq's UN ambassador told the Security Council that while a war to force Iraq to give up banned weapons seemed inevitable, it would backfire. "War against Iraq will not unearth any weapons of mass destruction," Mohammed al-Douri said. "But it will reap destruction, for a very simple reason: There are no such weapons, except in the imagination of some..."

Six more missiles destroyed: Iraq destroyed six more banned Al Samoud 2 missiles today, resuming a process chief UN weapons inspector Mr Hans Blix described as Baghdad's first "substantial disarmament" measure since the mid-1990s, a report adds from Baghdad. It raised to 40 the number of the missiles scrapped since the operation — the most tangible sign of Iraqi cooperation with the inspectors probing its alleged programme of weapons of destruction — began a week ago.

Iraq media hails Blix: The newspaper run by Mr Saddam Hussein's elder son today lauded the work of weapons inspectors Mr Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei as "fair" and accused Washington of leading the world to the "abyss", adds a report from Baghdad.

Editorial: Bush's frustration, page 6

BUSH'S FRUSTRATION

Blix Report checkmates America

THE Chief Weapons Inspector for Iraq, appointed by the Security Council, Hans Blix reports that Baghdad is carrying out substantial disarmament and there is no proof of hiding banned weapons in mobile laboratories. Irked by the insistence of the United States to use any pretext to justify war and force a change of guard upon Iraq, Blix says — *we are not watching the destruction of toothpicks*. The UN atomic energy chief, El Baradei echoes Blix — inspections have revealed no sign of any prohibited activity. A substantial number of missiles have been destroyed and the programme is for real. Clearly the inspections are working and Bush has come to realize, however reluctantly, that his plan to wreak death and destruction on Baghdad for no better reason than *trying to kill my Dad in 1992* is making him the laughing stock of the world. Colin Powell, trying to reiterate Bush's position by debunking whatever Blix and El Baradei are saying only invites pity; his feeling that he should stay in the Administration for whatever sobering effect he can provide on his boss may be true but there are limits beyond which it is difficult to make excuses for a fine soldier and Secretary of State.

Tony Blair claims credit for holding Bush in check for as long as he has but here too there are limits. A third of his Parliamentary Party is in revolt; his effort to portray himself as some kind of latter day Winston Churchill standing firm, promising only blood, toil, tears and sweat, is not getting off the ground and he is left with no alternative but to point out to Bush how it would look if Germany, France and Russia between them cast three vetoes where one would suffice to stop the megalomaniac President of the United States in his tracks.

The pressure on Turkey to provide bases to make an attack on Iraq both convenient and cheap can be imagined. Thirty billion dollars in guarantees and another ten billion dollars in cash here and now is not chicken feed. Accustomed to get his way, Bush must wonder what manner of men are Turks who resist such a fortune and prefer to stand aloof. For a man accustomed to believe that what is good for America is, ex hypothesi, good for the world, coupled with the belief held with a religious faith that everything and everyone has a price, it must be a shattering blow to his pride. And yet it is better that Bush's pride be hurt rather than watch the world plunge into unimagined chaos and destruction.

The cold calculation in Bush's plans must not be missed. There is first the problem of re-election. A quick ruthless war with ten times the destruction in the first day than was caused in the entire Gulf war, as Bush has threatened is cheap at the price to ensure another four years. Besides there will be plenty of cheap oil for his Texan friends who have invested so heavily in him. Then there is the lunatic fringe, which wants the Iraqi desert to populate surplus Palestinians and ease the pressure on Israel. Whatever the motive it is clear that it is unworthy. It is not the business of the world to come to the aid of George Bush.

Force will be used if need be, says Bush

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

NEW YORK, MARCH 8. The United States President, George W. Bush, has once again said that while the use of military force against Iraq is the last resort, the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, will be disarmed by force if he did not disarm peacefully.

"We will not wait to see what terrorists or terror states could do with weapons of mass destruction. We are determined to confront threats wherever they arise. And, as a last resort, we must be willing to use military force. We are doing everything we can to avoid war in Iraq. But if Saddam Hussein does not disarm peacefully, he will be disarmed by force," he said in his weekly radio broadcast. Mr. Bush did not take note of the upbeat assessment of the chief weapons inspector at the Security Council on Friday — rather he merely acknowledged the fact that the inspector "reported" on the efforts to verify Iraq's compliance with Resolution 1441.

"Unfortunately it is clear that Saddam Hussein is still violating the demands of the United Nations by refusing to disarm,"

Mr. Bush said going on to stress again that American intelligence showed that even as Baghdad was destroying "a few" prohibited missiles, Saddam Hussein had ordered the continued production of the very same type of missiles.

"These are not actions of a regime that is disarming. These are the actions of a regime engaged in a wilful charade. If the Iraqi regime were disarming, we would know it — because we would see it."

"Saddam Hussein has a long history of reckless aggression and terrible crimes. He possesses weapons of terror. He provides funding and training and safe haven to terrorists who would willingly deliver weapons of mass destruction against America and other peace-loving countries."

Mr. Bush called on people of "goodwill" to recognise that allowing a dangerous dictator to defy the world and build weapons of mass destruction was not peace. "... it is pretence. The cause of peace will be advanced only when terrorists lose a wealthy patron and protector and when the dictator is fully and finally disarmed."

SEE FINDER

9 MAR 2003

We will drive Saddam out, even without U.N. backing: Bush

ND-14
8/3
By Sridhar Krishnaswami

NEW YORK, MARCH 7. In preparing the nation for war with Iraq that could only be a few days away, the United States President, George W. Bush, has put the United Nations on notice saying that if it comes to it the U.S. will drive the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, out of power with or without the backing of the United Nations Security Council.

"I will not leave the American people at the mercy of the Iraqi dictator and his weapons," Mr. Bush said during a rare prime time press conference at the White House on Thursday night. "...when it comes to our security, if we need to act, we will act. And we really don't need the United Nations approval to do so...When it comes to our security, we really don't need anybody's permission".

And for those who have been saying that the administration will not press for a vote on a second resolution if the outcome was certain to be doomed, Mr. Bush said that he would do so even if the resolution failed. "No matter what the whip count is, we are calling for the vote. We want to see people stand up and say what their opinion is about Saddam Hussein and the utility of the United Nations Security Council."

"It's time for people to show their cards and let the people know where they stand in relation to Saddam," Mr. Bush said. He left no one in doubt that while he had not decided on whether or not to militarily attack Iraq, war was certainly on the

horizon; and if it really came to it he was quite willing and capable to give the go-ahead to American and other allied forces in and around the Persian Gulf.

Mr. Hussein, in the view of Mr. Bush, is a threat to America, his neighbours in West Asia and to the world and hence the international community should not be reluctant to disarm him by force. "If we have to use our troops, we will."

The mood may have been sombre at the White House but Mr. Bush took the opportunity to ratchet up the rhetoric against Mr. Hussein whom he referred to as "this cancer" inside Iraq; in another context Mr. Bush referred to the Iraqi regime as "Saddam and his group of killers".

At the same time, he said he hoped Mr. Hussein would leave the country. "I hear a lot of talk from different nations around where Saddam Hussein might be exiled. That would be fine with me."

Before taking questions in the East Room, Mr. Bush read a short statement laying out the case against Iraq and its weapons of mass destruction. "Saddam Hussein is not disarming.

This is a fact.

If the world fails to confront the threat posed by the Iraqi regime, refusing to use force even as a last resort, free nations would assume immense and unacceptable risks."

The debate at the U.N. starting today could be the "last phase of diplomacy". But he stressed that inaction was a risk that he would not take for the American people.

THE HINDU

8 MAR 2003

Saddam Hussein gets 10 days to disarm

US forced to give Iraq more time

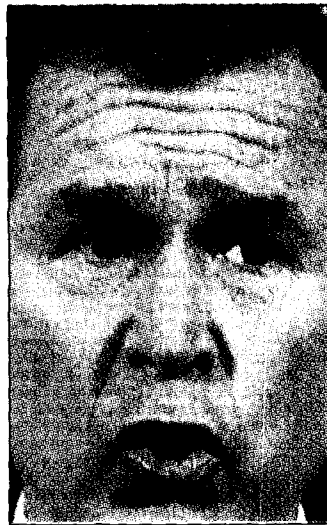
K.P. NAYAR

New York, March 7: Pressured by a Tony Blair under siege and hamstrung by largely positive reports by UN weapons inspectors about Saddam Hussein's compliance with disarmament, a reluctant US today appeared to have postponed the decision to go to war against Iraq — but only by a few days.

In hectic behind-the-scenes consultations right up to the convening of a momentous UN Security Council meeting here today, Britain persuaded America to amend their joint draft resolution circulated among council members to give Iraq 10 more days till March 17 to disarm or face a military invasion.

With a majority of the council members unwilling to support the US and the UK in their rush to war, a deadline for Saddam appeared to be their only option to try to win over council members in support of a new resolution paving the way for a US-led attack on Iraq. British foreign secretary Jack Straw announced the resolution.

But France, which has Security Council veto power, rejected it. Foreign minister Dominique de Villepin said: "Behind his (Straw's) presentation there is the idea of an ultimatum, the 17th of March. This is the logic of war. We don't accept this



Bush: Alone (AP)

logic," he said.

Chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix was today openly derisive in his report of the American position that nothing that has been done by Baghdad was enough to avoid war.

"We are not watching the destruction of toothpicks," Blix said of Iraq's compliance last week of UN orders to destroy its Al Samoud-II missiles.

"Lethal weapons are being destroyed... The destruction undertaken constitutes a substantial measure of disarmament," Blix told the council.

His colleague and director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mo-

hamed El Baradei, had a dig at US intelligence when he rejected Washington's contention that aluminium tubes imported by Baghdad were for uranium enrichment in Iraq's suspected nuclear weapons programme.

Neither Blix nor El Baradei, however, gave Iraq a clean chit on the issue of possessing weapons of mass destruction.

With UN weapons inspectors belatedly receiving "proactive cooperation" from the regime in Baghdad, Blix said: "It will not take years, nor weeks, but months" for the inspectors to complete their job.

The foreign ministers of France, Russia, Germany and China stood together in the Security Council and seized on the reports by Blix and El Baradei to demand more time for inspections instead of adopting a second resolution which would pave the way for war.

US secretary of state Colin Powell was virtually alone in demanding a closure, suggesting that the time had come to use force to get Saddam to comply with earlier Security Council resolutions.

Addressing a news conference last night, President George W. Bush had said the US was getting ready to wind up its act in the UN and ready for military action irrespective of the outcome of the disarmament process in the world body.

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8 MAR 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

Blix to present key report to UN on Iraq

United Nations: As windows for diplomatic resolution of the Iraqi crisis appeared to close, the 15-member UN security council on Friday prepared to hear reports by weapons inspectors and reactions by 11 foreign ministers, including a deputy foreign minister and three ambassadors.

Discussions and political manoeuvring intensified as American President George W. Bush said he would press for vote on the second resolution sponsored by the US, UK and Spain which says that Iraq has missed its "final opportunity" to disarm. He, however, also made it clear that he would not be bound by the council decision in case it decided against attacking Iraq.

Britain is still negotiating with the council members on amending the resolution that would give some more time to President Saddam Hussein but Russia, which is opposing it, says it is only a "cosmetic change."

The second resolution says Iraq has not complied with the council resolution 1441 which gave one last chance to Baghdad to come clean with its programmes for weapons of mass destruction.

Russia, China, France and Germany, who vehemently oppose use of force and question the necessity of the second resolution at this stage, want inspectors to be given another four months to do their job.

Reuters



British soldiers from the 1st Battalion Royal Irish Regiment congregate in the Kuwaiti desert near Iraq's border before a visit by chief of staff of the British armed forces, General Sir Mike Jackson, on Friday.

A resolution in the 15-member Security Council needs a minimum of nine votes and no veto from its five permanent members—which include France, Russia and China. But so far the draft resolution, sponsored by the United States, Britain and Spain, falls short of the nine votes.

Reports from Mr Blix and his colleague Mohamed ElBaradei, in charge of nuclear arms teams, are expected to be more positive than Washington would like. Mr Blix has already praised Iraq for increased substantial cooperation and Mr ElBaradei doubts it has nuclear

weapons. Mr Blix also will distribute "outstanding issues" his inspection commission wants Iraq to address. But while the unresolved issues are damning for Baghdad, the work programme he outlines gives ammunition to France and Russia who argue that inspections are working and must continue.

But this 167-page report disputes Iraq's claim to have destroyed 21,000 litres (5,500 gallons) of biological warfare agents, including anthrax, 12 years ago. Iraq had declared 8,445 litres (2,230 gallons) of anthrax but the report estimates that 21,000 litres of germ agents stored in bulk during the 1991 Gulf War included about 10,000 litres (2,600 gallons) of anthrax.

The report, obtained by Reuters, also says Iraq may be developing new banned missiles, calls on Baghdad to surrender any remaining biological, chemical or Scud missiles, and asks it to account for aerial bombs and chemical warfare agents.

Despite Mr Bush's headline stance, the United States was working behind the scenes on a compromise and British foreign secretary Jack Straw said they may amend the resolution. The proposal would give Iraq three or seven days to disarm after adoption of the resolution and before it would go into effect.

Agencies

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যুদ্ধনীতির বিরুদ্ধে ইস্তফা দুই মার্কিন কূটনীতিকের

সীমা সিরোহি ● ওয়াশিংটন

১১ মার্চ: ইরাক নিয়ে যুদ্ধ-নীতির খেসারত দেওয়া শুরু করল আমেরিকা। বুশের যুদ্ধনীতির বিরোধিতায় ইতিমধ্যেই দু'জন মার্কিন কূটনীতিক প্রকাশ্যে প্রতিবাদ জানিয়ে ইস্তফা দিয়েছেন। গ্রিসে মার্কিন দূতাবাসের পলিটিকাল কাউন্সেলর জেমস ব্র্যাডি কিসলিং গত মাসেই ইস্তফা দিয়েছেন। গতকাল ইস্তফা দিয়েছেন আর একজন কূটনীতিক, জন ব্রাউন। তিনি আগে লন্ডন, গ্রাগ, মস্কো ও বেলগ্রেভে ছিলেন; বর্তমানে বিদেশমন্ত্রকের সদর দফতরের সপ্তেই যুক্ত। দুই প্রবীণ কূটনীতিকই পদত্যাগের কারণ হিসাবে বুশের বিদেশনীতিকে অনৈতিক এবং মার্কিন জনগণ ও বিশ্বের পক্ষে ক্ষতিকর বলে অভিযোগ করেছেন। জন ব্রাউন বলেছেন, বুশের বিদেশনীতি বর্তমান শতাব্দীকে 'মার্কিন-বিরোধী শতাব্দী'তে পরিণত করবে। ইরাকের বিরুদ্ধে যুদ্ধের যে নীতি বুশ প্রশাসন আঁকড়ে ধরেছে, তাতে

আন্তর্জাতিক দুনিয়ার কাছে আমেরিকার বিদেশনীতি বিধতা হারাচ্ছে বলে তাঁরা ক্ষোভ প্রকাশ করেছেন। মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কলিন পাওয়েলের কাছে পাঠানো পদত্যাগপত্রে কিসলিং বলেছেন, আমেরিকা যে ভাবে আন্তর্জাতিক বাবস্থাগুলিকেই উড়িয়ে দিয়ে একতরফা কাজ করে চলেছে তাতে আমেরিকার বন্ধুরাও এখন উদ্বিগ্ন।

আমেরিকার মিত্র দেশেও ইরাক-নীতির প্রতিক্রিয়ায় ইস্তফার ঘটনা ঘটেছে শুরু করেছে। ব্রিটেনে তো প্রধানমন্ত্রী টনি ব্ল্যারের মন্ত্রিসভার এক সদস্য পদত্যাগের হুমকি দিয়েছেন। অস্ট্রেলিয়ার প্রধানমন্ত্রীর গ্যোয়েন্স-বিষয়ক উপদেষ্টা অ্যান্ড্রু উইলকি ইস্তফা দিয়ে বলেছেন, সবরকম উপায় যাচাই না-করেই যুদ্ধের পথে যাওয়ার এই নীতি খুবই খারাপ। যুগোশ্লাভিয়া সঙ্কটের সময়েও বিদেশনীতির সমালোচনা করে দু'জন মার্কিন কূটনীতিক ইস্তফা দেন।

মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কলিন পাওয়েলকে পাঠানো কিসলিংয়ের পদত্যাগপত্রটি বিভিন্ন

মার্কিন সংবাদপত্রে ছাপা হয়েছে। কিসলিং বলেছেন, আমেরিকার অবশ্যই চিন্তা করা উচিত, বিশ্বের বেশির ভাগ মানুষকে ইরাক আক্রমণের যথার্থতা বা যুদ্ধের পক্ষে যুক্তিগুলো কোথাকো সে ব্যর্থ হল কেন। ৪৫ বছর বয়সী কিসলিং-এর ঝলিতে বিশ্বের বহু দেশে কাজ করার অভিজ্ঞতা রয়েছে। ১৯৯৪ থেকে ১৯৯৬ তিনি মার্কিন বিদেশ দফতরে ভারত সংক্রান্ত দায়িত্বেও ছিলেন। বহু ভারতীয় কূটনীতিকের কাছে তিনি একজন 'চিন্তাশীল' মানুষ হিসাবে পরিচিত। তাঁর পদত্যাগে দুঃখকাশ করেছেন উর্ধ্বতন আমলাারাও। কিসলিং বলেছেন, "ইরাকের বিরুদ্ধে যুদ্ধের জন্য আমাদের এই অতিরিক্ত আগ্রহ আন্তর্জাতিক স্তরে আমেরিকার গ্রহণযোগ্যতা নষ্ট করছে। অর্থাৎ এই গ্রহণযোগ্যতাই এত দিন আমেরিকার সবচেয়ে মোক্ষম অস্ত্র ছিল। আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক ঘিরে আমেরিকার সব সাফল্য, সব ঐতিহ্যকে নষ্ট করার জন্য আমরা যেন উঠে-পড়ে লেগেছি। আমাদের এই চেপ্টা

কোনও নিরাপত্তা আনতে পারবে না, উপরন্তু অস্থিরতার জন্ম দেবে।" এই প্রসঙ্গে কিসলিং জানিয়েছেন, বর্তমান জন্মানয় মার্কিন বিদেশনীতি যে ভাবে তার নৈতিক অবস্থান থেকে সরতে শুরু করেছে, তা মার্কিন জনগণের স্বার্থবিরোধী। বিদেশসচিব কলিন পাওয়েলকেও সমালোচনা করতে ছাড়েনি তিনি। তাঁর কটাক্ষ, পাওয়েলের প্রেসিডেন্ট-প্রীতি একটু যেন বেশিই।

জন ব্রাউন খোলাখুলি সমর্থন করেছেন কিসলিংকে, "পদত্যাগ করে আমি আমার সহকর্মী কিসলিং-এর সঙ্গেই হাত মেলাচ্ছি।"

১৯৮১ সালে দেশপ্রেমের তাগিদেই সরকারি কাজে যোগ দেন ব্রাউন। তিনি তাঁর চিঠিতে লিখেছেন এ কথা। এ-ও জানিয়েছেন, সেই একই দেশপ্রেমের কারণে তিনি এই কাজে ছেদ টানছেন, "সারা পৃথিবীতে যত জায়গায় ক্ষমতার অপব্যবহার করা হচ্ছে, সর্বত্রই আমেরিকা তার সঙ্গে জড়িয়ে পড়ছে।"

THE HINDU

6 MAR 2003

Big Three gang up against US to block war



Iraqi policemen during a parade in Baghdad on Wednesday. REUTERS

Paris/Washington, March 5

FRANCE, GERMANY and Russia teamed up on Wednesday to block a US-British draft resolution for a war to disarm Iraq, saying they will not allow it to be passed in the United Nations Security Council.

Flanked by his counterparts from Russia and Germany, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin said: "We will not allow the passage of a planned resolution which would authorise the use of force."

The three ministers held a strategy session in Paris a day after the US said it was confident of securing the nine votes needed at the 15-member Security Council to pass the resolution.

President Bush seemed under-terred by the trio and pressed on with consulting allies and leaders about the UN draft resolution, which could be pushed to a vote next week. "He (Bush) is confident in the end of the ultimate outcome here," said White House spokesman Ari Fleischer. Some media had reported that London and Washington may back off from a United Nations vote next week if they think they will not win. Blair squashed that speculation. "If (Saddam) is not complying, there will undoubtedly be a resolution put to a vote," he told Parliament. "We

Man arrested for wearing peace T-shirt

A MAN was charged with trespassing in a mall after he refused to take off a T-shirt that said Peace on Earth and Give peace a chance.

Mall security approached Stephen Downs (61) and his 31-year-old son Roger on Monday night after they were spotted wearing the T-shirts at Crossgates Mall in a suburb of Albany, the men said. The two said they were asked to re-

AP, New York

move the shirts, or leave the mall. They refused. The guards returned with a police officer who repeated the ultimatum. The son took his T-shirt off, but the father refused. "I said, 'All right then, arrest me if you have to,'" Downs said. "So that's what they did. They put the handcuffs on and took me away."

cording to Stephane Dujarric, a spokesman in the office of the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. "The Secretary-General has appointed a small working group in case there is a conflict, which we still don't believe is inevitable. The group would look at any role of the UN in postwar reconstruction beyond immediate humanitarian relief," Dujarric said.

The report was put together by a Pakistani UN official, Rafeuddin Ahmed, and the whole postwar project is being overseen by Annan's Canadian deputy, Louise Frechette.

Dujarric denied a report in the *Times* that the UN could be breaching its charter and inter-

UN plan to take over Iraq

The United Nations has drawn up confidential contingency plans for a postwar role in Iraq, even before a security council vote on whether to back the forcible ousting of Saddam Hussein, UN staff and diplomatic sources said on Tuesday night.

The planning began more than a month ago, in tandem with the bitter security council debate on a US-led campaign to force a regime change in Baghdad, and a panel of experts has produced a preliminary report on postwar reconstruction, ac-

fering in a member state's internal affairs by contemplating the aftermath of the removal of the Iraq government. "We are not assuming anything. There is no assumption of war," he insisted.

Plan to shock Baghdad

America's top military officer said on Wednesday that the Pentagon's war plan for Iraq entailed shocking the Iraqi leadership into submission quickly with an attack "much, much, much different" from the 43-day Persian Gulf war in 1991.

General Richard B. Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declined to give details. But other military officials have said the plan calls for unleashing 3,000 precision-guided bombs and missiles in the first 48 hours of a short air campaign, to be followed quickly by ground operations.

Turkey army backs US

Turkey's powerful armed forces are backing a tentative government move to submit a fresh motion to Parliament allowing US troops to open a "northern front" against Iraq from Turkey. Chief of the General Staff Hilmi Ozkok said on Wednesday Turkey would be better off in any war than out of it.

Agencies

US repositions bombers near North Korea

Washington, March 5

THE US is basing more heavy bombers near North Korea and will formally protest the Communist nation's "reckless actions" in using MiG fighters to intercept a US surveillance plane, officials said.

Shifting the aircraft toward north-east Asia was described "as a prudent gesture to bolster our defence posture and as a deterrent" by Defence Department spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Davis on Tuesday.

Other Pentagon officials said the deployment includes sending B-52 bombers to the US Pacific territory of Guam. The order was issued on Friday, well before Sunday's incident in which North Korean jets came within 50 feet of a US RC-135S surveillance plane over the Sea of Japan, they said.

"These (US) moves are not aggressive in nature," Davis said.

Military officials said on Tuesday the United States was reviewing its options in light of the gravity of Sunday's incident, one of the most dangerous military provocations in the standoff over North Korea's nuclear weapons programme.

Those options could in-

clude having US fighter jets escort similar flights, a senior military official said. The US has not suspended the flights and does not plan to, officials said.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said President George Bush would consult with allies to determine the best way to protest the incident. Fleischer said Bush believes the North Korean standoff can be solved through diplomacy.

"North Korea continues to engage in provocative and now reckless actions," Fleischer said. "And North Korea engages in these actions as a way of saying, 'Pay me.' That will not happen."

During Sunday's incident, four North Korean fighters neared the Air Force plane, which was flying 150 miles off the Korean coast, the Pentagon said. The North Korean fighters scanned the unarmed US plane with targeting radar, Davis said.

The North Korean fighters were carrying heat-seeking missiles that did not require radar locks to hit their targets, a military official said Tuesday. That means the MiGs could have fired on the US plane without further warning.

AP

6 MAR 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

US sends new troops despite talk of war delay

Baghdad, Washington, March 4

THE US ordered 60,000 more troops to the Gulf, despite signs that a war on Iraq might be delayed until April, as big powers and ally Turkey persisted on Tuesday in complicating its military plans.

Iraq showed both cooperation and defiance in its efforts to head off a US-led invasion that Washington says will rid it of banned weapons. It scrapped more Al Samoud 2 missiles, but President Saddam Hussein forecast victory in any war and branded President Bush the "despot of the century".

Ankara's surprise decision not to let US troops launch an attack on neighbouring Iraq from Turkey has upset plans for a mid-March invasion, but Ankara indicated a new parliamentary vote could be held.

US defence officials announced the despatch of the fresh troops to join a more than 250,000-strong US and British force as a divided UN Security Council considered whether to approve a new draft resolution authorising war.

Washington has signalled it will push the resolution to a vote next week despite misgivings in the 15-member Council. Big powers France, Russia and China say UN arms inspectors in Iraq must be given more time, and Moscow threatened to use its veto in the Council.

"Russia has this right and if the situation so demands, Russia will of course use its right of veto — as an extreme measure — to avoid the worst development of the situation," Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said, according to a translated version of an interview in Lon-



REUTERS
US Air Force personnel from the 38th Rescue Squadron jump from a C-130 for a high-altitude, low-opening free fall drop in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

don. "Russia would not support any decision that would directly or indirectly lead to a war with Iraq," he added.

Invasion delay

Whatever the outcome of a vote, US officials and defence experts say Turkey's opposition to up to 60,000 US troops launching a "northern front"

against Iraq from its territory could delay an attack until late March or early April.

They say Saturday's decision by Turkey's Parliament could also spark problems over control of northern Iraq's oil fields, which could be destroyed by Iraq or seized by Kurds in the Kurdish-controlled region.

Turkish Foreign Minister Yasar Yakis, whose country

stands to lose up to \$30 billion in grants and loan guarantees offered by Washington in return for support in any war, indicated on Tuesday the government was considering a new parliamentary motion on the US troops, although he gave no date.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said Turkey had made the situation "more complicated". Analysts say the delay could stretch for two weeks or more, possibly into April after the new moon that would increase the US advantage in night fighting.

If Ankara still says "no", US forces designated for Turkey might have to go instead to Kuwait for a march northward. Iraq, striving to head off any invasion, has been destroying Al Samoud 2 missiles.

The UN said Iraq destroyed three more of the missiles on Tuesday, bringing to 19 the number scrapped since Baghdad began on Saturday to junk its 120-missile arsenal.

Saddam voiced defiance on Tuesday. "You the Iraqi people will be victorious, armed with faith, and the despots will be defeated and arrogance will not benefit them," Saddam said in a message to mark the Islamic New Year, read by a presenter on Iraqi television.

Referendum plan

Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi called for a UN-supervised referendum to effect a power transition in Iraq. Saddam has dismissed any proposal that he give up power, including Arab suggestions that he go into exile.

Reuters

America's image consultant quits

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, March 4

THE IMAGE problem that the US is currently facing abroad in the run-up to the war against Iraq has taken its toll at home: a top-notch ad executive drafted to boost the US's image abroad, particularly in the Muslim world, has quit her post of undersecretary of state for public diplomacy.

The sudden resignation of Charlotte Beers was attributed to "health reasons", but it came within days of her candid and somewhat controversial remarks while testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Beers, the Madison Avenue executive with the rare distinction of having been the chairman of two top agencies Ogilvy & Mather and J. Walter Thompson, had told the committee on Thursday that she found her job of selling US policies to the Islamic world an uphill struggle.

"The gap between who we are and how we wish to be seen, and how we are in fact seen, is frighteningly wide," Beers said.

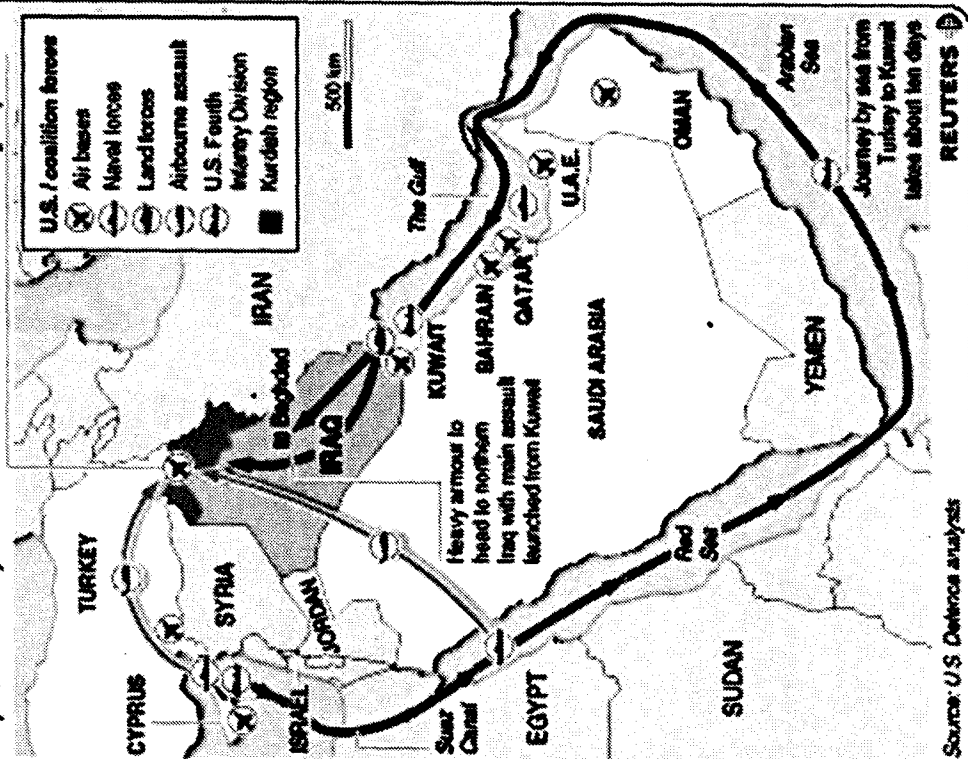
She went on to disclose that a series of mini-documentaries about the way Muslims live in the US had to be pulled back as they would have appeared "too exaggerated".

Beers was sore that not all wings of the administration recognised the importance of her job. "Above all, we need an agreement in all the parts of the government that this is a crucial job," she told the committee.

WAR IN IRAQ - PLAN B

Turkey's decision not to allow 62,000 U.S. troops to use the country as a launch pad for the invasion of Iraq has forced planners to rethink operations to secure the Kurdish region of northern Iraq. Kuwait has offered to accommodate U.S. forces waiting to deploy in Turkey in addition to the 120,000 personnel already stationed in Kuwait.

U.S. Fourth Infantry Division arrived with heavy armour to sail from its position off Turkey to Kuwait. Airborne assault launched from aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean or Red Seas overruns an existing Iraqi base.



Source: U.S. Defence analysis

REUTERS

U.K. in 'war' mode

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, MARCH 4. Britain has gone into the 'war' mode with the arrival of eight American B52 bombers at an RAF base in Gloucestershire in a replay of the 1991 Gulf conflict when the same base was used by U.S. bombers to target Iraq.

The British Government has allowed the RAF station to be used by Americans ignoring protests from peace activists who stormed the U.S. facilities last week, and have threatened more demonstrations. The first batch of B52s landed on the British soil as MPs expressed concern over reports of a significant increase in British and U.S. attacks in the Iraqi 'no-fly' zones and accused the two countries of having already embarked on an undeclared and unauthorised war.

While the Defence Secretary, Geoff Hoon, claimed that there had been "no substantial" change in the operation of the 'no-fly' zones, MPs insisted that the sharp rise in the number and pattern of raids amounted to rushing into a war through the 'backdoor'. Even the Tories, who are supporting the British Government's Iraq policy, said it constituted "opening shots" in a war that

had not been formally declared.

Labour MPs demanded an 'emergency' statement amid reports that at least two Cabinet Ministers could resign if Britain decided to back a U.S.-led war without a second UN resolution. The leader of the Commons, Robin Cook, and the International Development Secretary, Clare Short, were said to be among the leading 'doves' in the Cabinet even as the rebellion among backbench MPs was reported to be intensifying.

Significantly, the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, who arrived here today, took the initiative of meeting a group of MPs before holding talks with the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw. Meanwhile, the British Government announced emergency plans to deal with a possible terrorist attack on London. The Home Secretary, David Blunkett, said the Government would stage an operation "simulating a catastrophic incident" fuelling fears of an attack on the city because of Britain's involvement in the Iraq crisis.

The Times reported that "emergency bases" for the Prime Minister and his team were being set up outside London to "keep Britain running in the event of a big terrorist attack in the Capital".

THE HINDU

5 MAR 2003

Al Qaida kingpin shifted to US custody

DAVID BRUNNSTROM

Islamabad, March 3 (Reuters): Suspected September 11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was in US custody today, a US official said, and was expected to be questioned on details of planned al Qaida attacks after his weekend capture.

Mohammed's interrogators would also be hoping for leads to the world's most wanted man, Osama bin Laden, analysts said, as Mohammed spent a third day in custody.

The US official said in Washington that Mohammed had been taken out of Pakistan to an undisclosed location for interrogation after his capture with two other al Qaida suspects.

Mohammed was solely in US custody, the official said.

Pakistani interior minister Faisal Saleh Hayat and Presidential spokesman Rashid Qureshi had earlier insisted Mohammed was still in Pakistan, being jointly interrogated by Pakistani and US agents.

Hayat said one of the men arrested with Mohammed, previously identified by an intelligence source as an Egyptian, was Somali, but gave no other details. A Pakistani, Ahmed Qudus, was also arrested in the raid. Military sources said a fourth man, an army major related to Qudus, was detained for questioning about his links to the arrested men.

Ahmed's sister Qudsia Khanum said the major, their

al Qaida who planned its operations and vetted all its recruits.

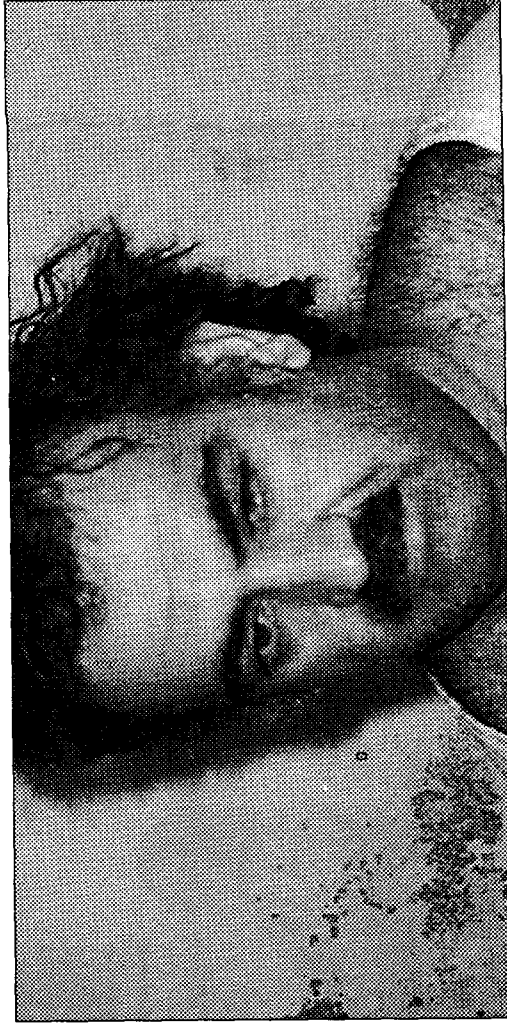
The US, under criticism for failing to arrest the top leaders of al Qaida while focusing on a possible war on Iraq, was elated by news of Mohammed's arrest, describing him as "a key al Qaida planner and the mastermind of the September 11 attacks".

The White House said today that President George W. Bush had expressed his "deep appreciation and gratitude" to Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf for Mohammed's capture.

"This is a very serious development, a blow to al Qaida," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said.

The chairman of the US House of Representatives intelligence committee, Porter Goss, said it would result in "other very successful activities soon" and suggested US operatives were already acting on information seized when Mohammed was arrested.

Some analysts have questioned whether Mohammed was actually arrested on Saturday and speculated he might have been held for some time and the news made public when it suited the interests of the US and Pakistan. The family of Qudus, said he was the only person seized when 20 to 25 armed security men raided their home in the middle-class Rawalpindi district of Westridge before dawn on Saturday. Washington had put a \$25 million price on Mohammed.



Khalid Sheikh Mohammed after his arrest during a raid in Rawalpindi on Saturday. (AP/PTI)

brother Adil, had not been allowed to leave the north-western town of Kohat, but had not been arrested.

State-run Pakistan Television quoted information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed as telling reporters Mohammed was traced through an intercept of a satellite phone call he made from the western city of Quetta, where another al Qaida suspect was detained in mid-February.

Analysts said interrogators would aim to extract information from Mohammed on planned al Qaida attacks which prompted recent security alerts in Europe and the US, as well as the whereabouts of al Qaida leader bin Laden.

"The need is to forestall any possible attacks in Europe and the US which were being organised by Mohammed," said author and political analyst Ahmed Rashid, an expert on al Qaida and its Taliban allies in Afghanistan.

"There have been alerts recently and these were probably related to attacks in the planning stages by Mohammed," he said.

"This is the major business," Rashid said, adding that al Qaida cells planning such attacks would probably have started to scatter after learning of Mohammed's arrest.

Security analyst Shaukat Qadir, a retired brigadier, said he believed interrogators would use torture to get information. "I would be surprised if they

don't," he said.

Qadir said Kuwaiti-born Mohammed's arrest was likely to lead to more arrests, but not necessarily to bin Laden. "I am sure they will interrogate him about where Osama is, but I am sure he does not know," he said.

Amin Saikal, head of the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies at the Australian National University, said bin Laden would probably have fled soon after Mohammed's arrest was announced.

"This is an opportunity for Osama bin Laden to move on. If the US is certain he is still alive and want to capture him then they should not have announced his." Analysts have described Mohammed as a pivotal figure in

Osama prefers death to disguise

Singapore, March 3 (Reuters): Bearded and of towering stature, the world's most wanted man is unlikely to stoop to radical disguise to escape capture by the agents who netted his operations chief, say some who have met Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden may have to shift hiding places, but would prefer to die a martyr rather than face arrest or shave his trademark luxuriant beard grown in keeping with Islamic practice, Pakistani Afghan expert Rahimullah Yusufzai said.

Bin Laden must be nervous after the weekend arrest of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the suspected mastermind of the September 11 attacks, captured when Pakistani security agents with Kalashnikovs burst into the house in a middle-class area of the teeming central Pakistani city of Rawalpindi where he was sleeping.

"The arrest of Mohammed is definitely going to give us a better fix on Osama bin Laden," said Uday Bhaskar, deputy director of the Institute of Defence Studies in New Delhi.

"Whether, first of all, he is alive or not; if alive, is he hurt,

does he pose the threat or danger that is perceived?" Bin Laden is not the only person who will be worried by Mohammed's arrest. For Pakistan, it may be a mixed blessing.

"The Pakistan authorities will now be very concerned that the leaders (of al Qaida) are spread out over the country," said Yusufzai. "The fact that the top three al Qaeda to be arrested were all found in urban areas of Pakistan means there will be more pressure on Pakistan to find others."

Yusufzai, among the few journalists to interview bin Laden, places the elusive leader of the al Qaida network and the man blamed as the inspiration for the attacks of September 11, 2001, on New York and Washington, somewhere in Pakistan's heartland. President Pervez Musharraf dismisses such suggestions, saying bin Laden is in Afghanistan and would have been tracked down or turned in for the \$25 million reward on his head if in Pakistan. "I am not at all sure that he is in Afghanistan," said Amin Saikal, head of the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies in Australia.

USA to go ahead despite Turkey jolt

Agence France Presse

STUTTGART, March 3. — The US forces' chief commander in Europe, Gen James L Jones, today said Turkey's refusal to allow 62,000 US troops to launch an invasion on Baghdad from its territory will not derail war plans in Iraq.

"Any military planner will like to have options," Gen Jones, who is also Nato's top commander in Europe, said at the US European Command headquarters in Stuttgart.

"But I don't think it will be a show-stopper," he said.

Gen Jones said that moving from positions north of Iraq will "definitely have a military advantage" in any attack, adding that the USA would aim to confront Iraqi forces on a number of fronts. He added that Washington will plan to maintain a military presence in northern Iraq even after a war.

Gen Jones said top-level US diplomats were engaged in talks with officials in Ankara. Washington has put intense pressure on Turkey to comply with its plans, offering up to Euros 6 billion in aid. A US defence department source said Sunday no "other decision" had been made regarding war plans in light of the Turkish vote, but US media has reported details of a "Plan B" that would be "more costly and less militarily advantageous."

4 MAR 2003

THE STATESMAN

Frenzied hunt for terrorists

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 3. Officials of the Central Intelligence Agency are said to be working overtime to get to the bottom of what Khalid Sheik Mohammad knows, in particular if the Al-Qaeda has been planning more terrorist attacks against America at home or abroad. Further there are reports that the arrest of Mohammad and his quick spiriting out of Pakistan on Saturday has led to some kind of a frenzied hunt for members of the terror outfit, both inside the U.S. and overseas.

Officials of the CIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation who were involved in the Rawalpindi Raid on Friday night are said to have e-mailed several names and information of what had been gleaned from documents and computer files taken away from the home of Mohammad, the *USA Today* is reporting. "We have lots of names and lots of information", a senior intelligence officer has told the paper making the point that at this time there is a "mad scramble going on" to track and arrest members of the Al-Qaeda.

The U.S. Government has been particularly concerned about overseas installations in such countries as Kuwait and Qatar. Intelligence and law enforcement officials in this country have been making the point that Mohammad, who went to college

here in the early 1980s, is the highest ranking leader of Osama's terror outfit who possess deep knowledge of the organisation's operations and future plans.

Mohammad, according to authorities here, was very much involved in the 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania and the attack on the USS Cole in Yemen three years ago. Mohammad has not been officially named in the September 11, 2001 terror attacks but he is believed to be the master-planner.

According to one piece of information, Mohammad has been taken to an overseas facility for questioning and this could be one of the detention centres run by the CIA in Jordan, Uzbekistan or Diego Garcia. Domestic laws prohibit torture as a way of obtaining confessions or information which is one reason why the government here would not mind interrogations at foreign locations if that is going to "break down" or "wear down" a suspect. "Allies" of the U. S. are not exactly known for their straightforward interrogations.

What is being pointed out at this stage is that anything that Mohammad says can be cross checked with other Al-Qaeda top operatives now in custody.

But the bottom line is that investigators and intelligence operatives wish to get "inside" the mind of Mohammad with a view to learning more, not just about future plans but about the Al-Qaeda itself. One assess-

ment has been that while the Rawalpindi Raid has made a major dent into the Al-Qaeda, that outfit is far from being finished.

The raid in Pakistan and its first implications has brought rave reviews from senior law makers in the House of Representatives and in the Senate, especially from those members of Congress who oversee Intelligence matters. "This is equal to the liberation of Paris in the second world war", remarked Porter Goss, the Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee. "This is a giant step backward for the Al-Qaeda", said Senator Pat Roberts, Chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Meanwhile *The Washington Times* is reporting that terrorists linked to the Al-Qaeda have targeted American naval facilities in Pearl Harbour that would include attacks on nuclear powered submarines and ships. Unnamed intelligence officials have told *The Times* that the Al-Qaeda is planning to attack Pearl Harbour because of its symbolic value and because the military facilities are open from the air. The attacks would be carried out of airplanes hijacked from the Honolulu Airport and flown in suicide missions, officials have told the paper. The report of Al-Qaeda's plan for Pearl Harbour was one of the reasons for the recent heightened security alert which has since been lowered.

4 MAR 2002

Destruction of missiles not enough: U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 1. The Bush administration has dismissed the Iraqi claim of destruction of some Al Samoud missiles saying that now full disarmament coupled with a regime change was what the United States would be satisfied with. Calling Baghdad's pledge on getting rid of the missiles as "propaganda wrapped in a lie inside a falsehood", the White House spokesman argued that this move fell far short of the demands of the United Nations. "That's the problem with Saddam Hussein. Every time he's under pressure, he tries to relieve the pressure by disarming just a touch, just a little, playing the game, playing the deception", Ari Fleischer remarked.

The reaction of the White House is in stark contrast to the mood at the United Nations where the top weapons inspector, Hans Blix, has described the Iraqi move as a "significant piece of real disarmament".

Dr. Blix has argued in New York

that Iraq, at this time, is "very active" but has also said that it was still too early to say what all this meant. The top weapons inspector has also been making the point to the Security Council and to the media that the Iraqi action on the missiles would be reflected in his next report on March 7.

At the same time Dr. Blix in his quarterly assessment to the Council on February 28 has said that overall Iraqi disarmament efforts have been "very limited so far". On March 7 the expectation is that Dr. Blix's report to the Council will once again be a mixed bag of sorts — praising Baghdad on the Al Samoud and at the same time listing several instances of non-cooperation with the inspectors and the inspections regime.

The decision of Iraq on the destruction of the Al Samouds, the comments of Dr. Blix and the sharp response of the White House are setting the tone and environment at the United Nations where the United States is seeking — rather desperately —

nine votes to get a Resolution through perhaps in the next 10 days and at the same time ensuring that no permanent member casts its veto.

Russia has now joined France in saying that it might veto a Resolution that came anywhere near authorising the use of force. The Russian threat of veto has not deterred the Bush administration as it goes about the twin task of getting nine on board and in making sure that France, Russia and China abstain. The lobbying is being done by the President, his Secretary of State and the National Security Advisor. In the aftermath of the passing of Resolution 1441 last November, Washington boasted of the unanimity of the Council. This time around, the administration concedes it is a different ballgame and in many ways is pinning its hopes on just nine votes and no veto. The Bush administration's shifting rationales for the ongoing military show-down against Iraq has irritated many of America's allies and friends.

THE HINDU

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Baghdad playing games on missiles, says Washington

Iraq to obey UN orders ¹¹³

NADIM LADKI

Baghdad, Feb. 28 (Reuters): Iraq said today it would obey UN orders to destroy its ballistic missiles and could start doing so tomorrow, but the US and allies accused Baghdad of playing games over disarmament.

The US intensified its military build-up in the Gulf region, and President George W. Bush said Iraq would never give up its weapons voluntarily and would have to be disarmed by force.

In Baghdad, Iraqi sources said the government had told chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix it would obey his order to destroy its al Samoud 2 ballistic missiles and could start dismantling them tomorrow — the deadline he had set.

UN inspectors in Baghdad said they would hold technical talks with Iraq today, after which the destruction of the missiles could begin.

The UN says the missiles are

illegal because their 150 km range exceeds limits set in 1991 UN resolutions.

Blix, however, in a crucial report to the UN Security Council, criticised Iraq for giving a “very limited” response to its disarmament obligations.

In a leaked draft of his report, Blix said the results of three months of inspections had been problematic. “Iraq could have made greater efforts to find any remaining proscribed items or provide credible evidence showing the absence of such items,” he wrote. “The results in terms of disarmament have been very limited so far.”

Security Council members argued bitterly on whether to approve a war on Iraq, with veto-wielding permanent members deeply divided and smaller nations — under mounting pressure from both sides — urging them to seek unity.

Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov, visiting Beijing,

said Moscow would not support any resolution that opened the way for the use of force in Iraq and would use its veto “if necessary, in the interest of international stability.”

Egypt, due to host an Arab League summit on Iraq, welcomed the Iraqi decision to destroy its missiles but urged Baghdad to do more to avoid a US-led war.

But Bush told the newspaper *USA Today*: “My attitude about (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein is that, if he had any intention of disarming, he would have disarmed.”

“We will disarm him now,” he declared.

“We’re still a battlefield,” said Bush, speaking of his view that Saddam is a threat to the US and the world. “Part of that war is dealing with a dictator who can serve as an arsenal and/or training ground for terrorist networks.”

US Navy officials said earlier

that the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS Nimitz* would head for the Gulf region on Monday, joining five other US carriers and their battle groups already in the Gulf and the Mediterranean.

The Pentagon said several long-range, radar-evading B-2 stealth bombers were expected soon to head for the region, where the US already has hundreds of Air Force and Navy planes and some 200,000 ground troops ready for war.

In Madrid, British Prime Minister Tony Blair dismissed Iraq’s pledge to begin dismantling its missiles. “The moment I heard earlier in the week that Saddam Hussein was saying he would not destroy the missiles was the moment I knew that later in the week he would announce, just before Dr Blix reported, that he would indeed destroy these missiles,” Blair said.

1 MAR 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

Trials of an isolated superpower

In a uncentric world order, US must be sensitive to the interests of other countries, says Harold A. Gould

IF anything has signified that the flickering embers of the strategic structure which characterised the Cold War have finally been extinguished, it is the treatment accorded to US Secretary of State Colin Powell at the hands of the UN Security Council, by America's traditional NATO allies, Germany and France, and by its two post-Cold War great-power "friends", Russia and China. Their unwillingness to short-circuit the inspection process and participate in a preemptive juggernaut against Iraq has effectively left the world's only superpower diplomatically isolated as perhaps never before since World War II. Clearly, this is a foreign policy fiasco of enormous proportions.

A February 12th speech by elder statesman, Robert Byrd, before the US Senate aptly characterised the situation: "This administration has turned the patient art of diplomacy into threats and name calling... which will have consequences for years to come... There are huge cracks in our time-honoured alliances, and US intentions are suddenly subject to damaging worldwide mistrust."

There is an axiom in physics which states that "nature abhors a vacuum". It applies in international politics as well. In this case, the vacuum has arisen following the demise of the bipolar structure of power that facilitated a stable, if at times tremulous, political balance in the international arena for nearly half a century. Call it a "balance of terror", if you will, managed by the two superpow-

ers — the Soviet Union and the US — but it kept in line a host of political lesser-lights, who might have disrupted the status quo. Their dominance left no vacuums into which potential trouble-makers could rush and challenge the all-encompassing power structure.

During the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union were most of the time able to discipline their subalterns because en bloc collective security was deemed to be the only alternative to obliteration. Yes, there were exceptions, like Charles de Gaulle within the Western Bloc, and Tito and Mao Zedong within the Eastern. But the perils of carrying dissidence too far were never lost.

Generally speaking, it is understood that the "good old days" ended with the collapse of the Soviet imperium. A "uncentric" structure of power has taken its place, based upon the political and military paramountcy of the US, the last remaining superpower. What many in the present US administration are having trouble coping with, however, is the irony of the situation — that political omnipotence does not guarantee absolute military and economic supremacy. The new configuration is actually far more loosely integrated, or "pluralistic", than was its predecessor. As a result, interdependence has become a greater, rather than a lesser, aspect of how strategic relationships must be formulated and managed. Two superpowers could control events better than one, as long as they strategically un-

derstood one another. The unfolding events make it clear that superpowerdom in itself does not enable the solitary superpower at the top of the pyramid to bully subalterns with the same degree of equanimity as a superpower dyad could.

The sole remaining superpower, in short, finds that it has limited capacity to manage the multilateral complexity that is now out there. Secretary of State Powell and President Bush are learning this lesson the hard way even as we speak.



Technically, the US may have the physical wherewithal to annihilate anyone who stands in its way. Iraq would not last long against the full measure of American military might. Nor would any other state that elected to directly challenge it. But the constraints on employing this might are no less compelling than was the threat of mutually assured destruction during the Cold War. In many respects, they are actually more. Because now the constraints are as much moral as tactical.

In the absence of the "threat factor" posed by a rival super-

power, the US has found it impossible either to compel "obedience" to its policies by alliance partners, nor subservience to them by states that have other reasons for being beholden to the American condominium. There are no longer penalties credible enough to deter dissidence since ultimate force has been morally excluded from the power equation.

The Germans and French are leading the pack in their defiance of American dictates. The Chinese, Russians, Saudis, Egyptians, Pakistanis are standing aloof from the American crusade. India is mum. Their resistance has compelled the US to puckishly turn its case over to

Bush administration to grasp because superpowerdom is such an exhilarating aphrodisiac. If you are the only 600 pound gorilla on the block, then it's easy to feel you have an unlimited right to throw your weight around. In the arcane world of multilateral global politics, it is exasperating to discover that muscle power alone fails to get you everything!

As already suggested, in the emergent post-Cold War international system, viable moral constraints on the carte blanche exercise of military power mean that now there are many endaves of regional power able to act autonomously without fear of decisive US retaliation. In

Moreover, the nuclear sabre-rattling of North Korea introduces still another crucial variable. It shows that counter-threats of such magnitude can be mounted that there is not much the US can do about it except agree to bargain under conditions that amount to virtual political blackmail.

Finally, Turkey is demonstrating that the limitations inherent in the new unipolar structure of world power can compel the sole remaining superpower to pay a very high premium in treasure and political deference to persuade anyone to agree to join its camp.

What must the US do to restore its prestige and authority so that it does not comport itself, as today, like a petulant, crippled giant? First, it must accept the fact that its rise to exclusive superpowerdom has made the world more rather than less interdependent; more rather than less hostage to dialogue and consensus. The safety and survival of the world community has more than ever come to depend on how rapidly and effectively the US, the last remaining superpower, can acquire the maturity and self-discipline to craft political and military policies that are sensitive, even deferential, to the interests of all segments of the international community. This is a tall order for the world's 600 pound gorilla, but the only one that will demonstrate US entitlement to lead.

— The writer is a visiting scholar at the Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Virginia

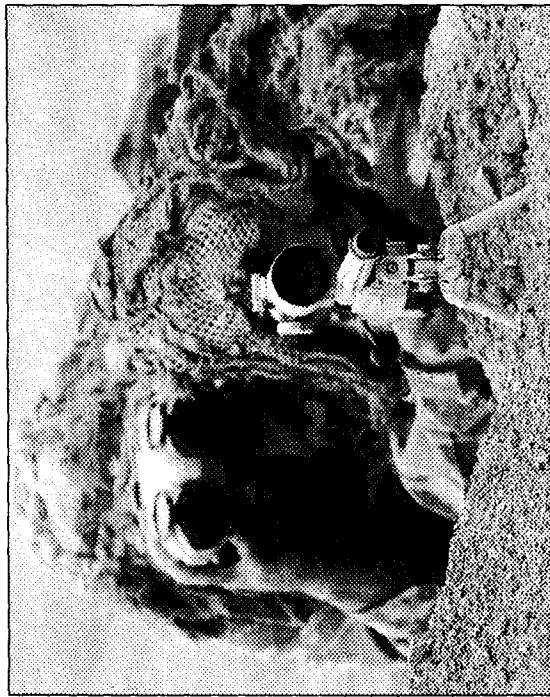
Superpowerdom is an exhilarating aphrodisiac. If you are the only 600 pound gorilla on the block, it's easy to feel you have a right to throw your weight around. In the arcane world of multilateral global politics, it is exasperating to discover that muscle power alone fails to get you everything!

the UN and other deliberative forums where it is hoped that persuasion will turn the tide.

As C. Raja Mohan said in *The Hindu* (Feb 13), "Alliances are built on shared threat perceptions and a commitment to fight them collectively." Unfortunately, however, "the US and key European players no longer agree that they have a common threat, therefore they find it impossible to deal with them together." All that is left is consensual politics which the world's last superpower finds discomfiting. This emergent political fact of life is proving hard for the

part, of course, this is because governments want to make it clear that their sovereignty matters; that they don't want to be intimidated by 600 pound gorillas. It is also becoming increasingly clear that in this brave new world, collective dissidence in the morally constrained, multilateral environment of uncentric politics can effectively limit and restrain American superpowerdom. The informal French-German-Belgian-Russian-Chinese coalition that is currently dominating the UN debate on what to do about Iraq well illustrates this point.

US-Britain resolution to set stage for war



Royal marines during an exercise in the northern Kuwaiti desert on Monday. (Reuters)

**EVELYN LEOPOLD AND
IRWIN ARIEFF**

United Nations, Feb. 24
(Reuters): The US and Britain said they would bring a new resolution to a reluctant UN Security Council today that would set the stage for war in Iraq by declaring Baghdad in violation of its UN obligations.

The 12-paragraph resolution will not have a deadline nor speak of "serious consequences," envoys of the two countries said. It would say simply that Iraq has failed to take advantage of its last chance to disarm provided in Security Council resolution 1441 passed on November 8.

British foreign secretary Jack Straw said in Brussels the key paragraph would say "that the Iraqi regime has failed to take its final opportunity to com-

ply with the UN Security Council" afforded to it by resolution 1441.

Britain's UN ambassador, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, will make the formal introduction, which the US and Spain will co-sponsor. A spokesman for Prime Minister Tony Blair said he hoped the measure would be put to a vote by mid-March, a signal there would be no invasion of Iraq before that time.

France, which has led the anti-war opposition that has strong support throughout the world, announced it would circulate a rival proposal, meant to strengthen UN weapons inspections with the aim of disarming Iraq peacefully.

Washington and London face an uphill task to get approval for their resolution in the face of opposition from France, Russia

and China, who have veto power on the 15-member council.

So far the only members who openly support the US and Britain are Spain and Bulgaria. Others have spoken in favour of France's position for continuing arms inspections or are uncomfortable in having to make a decision.

Before the resolution is adopted or rejected Iraqi President Saddam Hussein faces a test on whether or not he will destroy dozens of missiles by March 1 as ordered on Friday by chief UN inspector Hans Blix.

Destruction of the Al-Samoud 2 missiles, which have a range that exceeds UN limits, would be a blow to Iraq as it prepares for a possible invasion by US forces.

If it does not destroy them, the S and Britain could use this

as proof Iraq is not cooperating with the UN, showing that war is justified. Today, Blix knocked down Iraqi hopes for a continuing dialogue with the UN on the missiles. "We have set a date for the commencement of the destruction of these missiles and we expect that to be respected," he said. Iraq had asked for another meeting with the inspectors on the issue.

In Baghdad today, Gen. Amer al-Saadi, a top adviser to President Saddam Hussein, said: "This is a technical issue and it is not actually considered a hurdle. If the goal is to continue on the legal path, which is through the Security Council, Iraq has no objections to deal with the issue realistically."

Blix said earlier Iraq's al-Samoud 2 missiles exceeded by 33 km the 150 km range set by the

UN Security Council in a 1991 resolution.

He ordered Iraq to destroy not only the missiles, but their SA-2 engines, auto-pilots, guidance and control systems, launchers, fuel, oxidizer, casting chambers, equipment and components designed for production and testing as well as software and research used to construct the missiles.

In Brussels, foreign minister Dominique de Villepin said France's UN proposal would suggest specific deadlines and time frames for Iraq to rid itself of nuclear, chemical, biological and missile programmes.

France earlier this month circulated proposals to Security Council members calling for a tripling of inspectors and UN guards to "freeze" suspected weapons sites.

Important precedents being set

By Achin Vanaik

WS (W) 110-10 29/12

IT DOES not matter what U.N. Resolution the U.S. gets. It is going to attack Iraq. Henry Kissinger spelt out the reason clearly enough. The U.S. credibility is at stake. After mobilising some 200,000 troops it cannot now call things off and bring them back home. The repercussions of such a 'failure' according to these geopolitical masterminds would be disastrous and therefore cannot be allowed to happen. The argument is the same as that made by the former Clinton administration while justifying the assault on Serbia, not just through the rhetoric of helping Kosovars, but, more importantly, to preserve the 'credibility of NATO' led by and obedient to the U.S. Compared to the importance of maintaining 'credibility', other considerations such as the morality or otherwise of the proposed war, the possible deaths and injuries to enemy civilians or even to U.S. soldiers, are of no consequence.

Of course, as anyone willing to look beyond the surface explanations regarding 'Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)' or the 'authoritarian character of the Saddam Hussein regime' understands, there are deeper strategic considerations behind the U.S. determination to attack Iraq. These range from the politics of oil control to broader U.S. geopolitical concerns to position itself to redraw the map of the region in a way never attempted before but with the promise (if successful) of ensuring a depth and scale of dominance never witnessed before. But the issue of credibility comes in because the dynamic of preparations now established makes it virtually impossible for the U.S. to postpone the implementation of its geo-strategic plans to some later period.

In all cases of U.S. armed intervention since 1991 there has always been a clear disjunction between official justifications and actual reasons where the latter have always been strategic in character. Before the U.S. launched its ground invasion and air attack on Iraq in 1991, there were genuine opportunities of bringing about a peaceful diplomatic solution involving Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Thus, the Moscow proposal for

securing a peaceful withdrawal which had elicited Baghdad's support a week before the ground invasion was contemptuously rebuffed by Washington because it would have enormously enhanced Russia's political prestige in the region when one of the U.S.' crucial strategic aims has always been to exclude any other major country outside the area, friend or foe, from exercising significant influence there. Similarly, when Baghdad

erage vis-a-vis Western Europe since Eastern Europe is politically and militarily closer to the U.S. than to the rest of the E.U.

It was Condoleezza Rice who immediately articulated the real strategic meaning of September 11, 2001. She likened it to the initiation of the Cold War. That is to say, the U.S. had now secured a 'long-term enemy', the 'war against global terrorism' akin to the 'communist threat to the free world'

The U.S. is claiming the right to militarily attack and forcibly disarm a country on the grounds that it suspects that nation of possessing weapons of mass destruction.

declared it would withdraw if an international conference to discuss Israeli occupation of Palestine were held since exactly the same principles that were being applied to condemn its occupation of Kuwait also applied to the Israeli occupation, it was rejected by the U.S. Although such a conference would only be a talking shop, an Iraqi withdrawal on such grounds would have greatly enhanced Iraq's prestige when another strategic purpose of the U.S. was to prevent any local power from becoming too important or influential — the same reason why earlier the U.S. had backed Iraq in its war against the post-Shah revolutionary Iran.

In the Balkans, the U.S. interventions in Bosnia (now effectively a protectorate of the U.S. mediated via various 'international' institutions) and in Serbia were both determined by deeper strategic considerations on the part of the U.S. to retain and reassert NATO as the lynchpin of the post-Cold War security architecture in Europe. The only other alternative security arrangement would have meant enhanced French, German and Russian importance in Europe and a correspondingly diminished role for the U.S. Though Slobodan Milosevic was ultimately quelled only with Russian help, NATO established its eminence in the Balkans and NATO's eastwards expansion served the dual purpose of strengthening U.S. political-military containment vis-a-vis Russia and of giving it greater lev-

that had earlier served so well as the principal cover for the U.S.' imperial ambitions and behaviour. Since any war, on terrorism or otherwise, means one is free to carry out surprise or pre-emptive attacks in one's own defence, while other governments were busy doing special pleading for why the war on Afghanistan was justified, the U.S. was busy claiming why its wider global war on terrorism was a just war project in which it was entitled to take all necessary protection measures. There is a direct line of continuity between this ideological justification immediately after September 11 and the subsequent articulation explicitly of justifiable pre-emptive wars in the U.S.' National Security Strategy doctrine unveiled one year later.

In these last three cases the main cover for strategically motivated intervention was 'human rights' or some variant thereof, like the war on a selectively defined terrorism. But it is important that one also looks at the officially declared justifications for U.S. behaviour. In Serbia, a crucial precedent was set for the future. For the first time since the formation of the U.N., a permanent member of the Security Council whose own security was not at risk (and therefore no question of self-defence could even remotely be raised) bypassed the U.N. Security Council to militarily attack a legitimately elected Government involved in an intra-national conflict on the basis of declared hu-

manitarian concern. It then secured *post-facto* sanction from the U.N. The precedent set by the U.S.' 'war on global terrorism' in the wake of the September 11 attack has already been pointed out. Today, the U.S. is on the verge of establishing yet another important precedent. It is claiming the right to militarily attack and forcibly disarm a country on the grounds that it suspects that nation of possessing WMDs.

Again, the issue is not just the U.S.' obvious hypocrisy. It ignores, nay, shields Israel where the weight of evidence about it having a hidden but massive nuclear arsenal is overwhelming. The U.S. has itself used chemical and biological agents against Vietnam and Cuba. But in soon setting this new precedent it is sending a message to others such as Iran, North Korea and also Pakistan and India. To the first two the message is obvious — what it believed it had to do to Iraq can be done to them as well, though the North Korean case is tricky because it may already have a couple of bombs and can seriously threaten South Korea. A negotiated settlement between Pyongyang and Washington may well be the better option there.

To Pakistan and India the message is different. The U.S. is in effect saying we accept your being *de facto* nuclear powers for unlike the others you are our allies. But there is no *carte blanche* for you to do as you wish on the nuclear front. Keep your ambitions small and settle for operating under our hegemonic umbrella. Though neither the Indian Government nor its supporting chorus in the 'strategic establishment' will oppose the U.S. assault on Iraq (even if they are unable to hide behind an appropriate U.N. Resolution) at least some sections are privately uneasy about both this new precedent and its possible implications as well as about an American power even more unrestrained by international norms or checks of any kind than ever before. And of course, there will also be those (not just the likes of Praveen Togadia) having no such reservations and more enthusiastic than ever about lining India up behind a U.S. out to reshape West Asia.

24 FEB 2003

THE HINDU

Bush sure of Council clearing second resolution on Iraq

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, FEB. 23. Even as the United States is literally counting its votes at the United Nations Security Council, still not sure of picking up nine votes and no vetoes, the President, George W. Bush, is confident of a second resolution being cleared by the Council.

At his ranch in Crawford, Texas, playing host to the Prime Minister of Spain, Mr. Bush argued that Saddam Hussein "has no intention of disarming"; and maintained that a sceptical Council would eventually see things in the right perspective.

Apart from the U.S. and Britain, only Spain and Bulgaria are seen supportive of another resolution at the Security Council. "...The clarity of vision that took place four months ago, I'm confident will be in place after the Security Council takes a good look at the facts," Mr. Bush said.

He said that all talk of insufficient support for disarming Saddam "sounded vaguely familiar" — a reference to the pre-November feeling last year

prior to the unanimous passing of Resolution 1441.

The Bush administration has long been maintaining that Iraq had no intention of disarming or complying with any Council resolution and was only interested in playing "games" or having the issue strung out into an indefinite time in the future.

There is a major diplomatic push under way by the administration to win over both the permanent and non-permanent members of the Council.

But various reports have it that Washington had not made any major headway even among the non-permanent members.

Allied with the U.S. at the Security Council, the Prime Minister of Spain, Jose Maria Aznar, has been quite careful in how this support translated into action.

For example, the Spanish leader was careful in Crawford about military action as a way to solve the crisis in Iraq.

24 FEB 2003

Powell sets timetable

HASSAN HAFIDH

Baghdad, Feb. 23 (Reuters): The US warned today it was deadline time for Iraq to disarm or face war as Baghdad said it was seriously considering UN demands to begin destroying its *Al-Samoud 2* missiles by March 1.

US secretary of state Colin Powell dropped heavy hints about Washington's timetable for war as he went on a diplomatic swing through Japan and China to drum up support, saying the UN should take vital decisions soon after an inspectors' report expected on March 7.

"We are reaching that point where serious consequences must flow," said Powell, using Washington's language for war as the missiles became a major test of Iraqi compliance with the UN.

Powell, a driving force behind a new US and British resolution on Iraq to be presented to the Security Council as early as tomorrow, said it was clear Baghdad had breached UN demands to come clean over any

weapons of mass destruction.

France, a veto-wielding member of the Council, signalled the Americans and British faced a tough task in winning over the 15-nation panel.

Syria, one of the 10 temporary Council members Washington must woo, said it had already turned down flat a request from Powell that it back the resolution, on grounds that it would be exploited as a pretext to attack Iraq whatever it said.

Powell told reporters in Tokyo he expected the Security Council to make a judgement on the new resolution being presented by the US and Britain soon after the March 7 report.

"Time is drawing to a close when... the Security Council must show its relevance by insisting that Iraq disarm or that Iraq be disarmed by a coalition of forces that will...do it," he said.

The US military is anxious to act before April, when temperatures in Iraq begin to soar and could make fighting tough for soldiers if they have to wear sti-

fling protective suits and masks against the threat of chemical or biological weapons.

In its first comment since chief UN arms inspector Hans Blix set the March 1 deadline, Iraq said it hoped to settle the missiles issue through "cooperation and agreement".

Putin emissary

Former Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov left Baghdad after a brief and unexpected mission for President Vladimir Putin. Primakov, a long-time friend of Saddam Hussein, met senior aides to the Iraqi President and conveyed a message.

Primakov did not appear in public in Baghdad and the official media did not report news or show footage on his visit. Sources said Primakov's meetings in the Iraqi capital had lasted several hours.

Primakov had travelled to Baghdad twice in 1990 as part of efforts by the then Soviet Union to avert a US-led operation to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait.

■ See Page 4

US outlines Iraq war plan

ARSHAD MOHAMMED &
HASSAN HAFIDH
TOKYO/BAGHDAD, FEB 23

US SECRETARY of State Colin Powell dropped heavy hints about Washington's timetable for war in Iraq on Sunday, saying the UN should take vital decisions soon after a weapons inspectors' report expected on March 7.

Powell told a news conference in Tokyo he expected the UN Security Council to make a judgment about a new resolution on Iraq — to be presented by the United States and Britain early next week — soon after the inspectors' report.

"It isn't going to be a long period of time from the tabling of the resolution until a judgment is made as to whether the resolution is ready to be voted on or not," Powell said.

"Iraq is still not complying and time is drawing to a close when...the Security Council, must show its relevance by insisting that Iraq disarm or that Iraq be disarmed by a coalition of forces that will go in and do it," he added.

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Thursday excited speculation about the timing of an attack on Iraq by saying the Western forces already massed in the Gulf



US Secretary of State Colin Powell (L) is welcomed by US Ambassador to China Clark Randt upon his arrival in Beijing on Sunday. Reuters

Primakov in Baghdad, to meet Iraqi officials

■ BAGHDAD: Former Russian PM Yevgeny Primakov was in Baghdad on Sunday on an unexpected mission for President Vladimir Putin. Primakov, a West Asia expert and a long-time friend of Saddam, arrived late on Saturday and was expected to meet senior Iraqi officials before leaving later on Sunday.

Russia says it sees no need to use force against Baghdad.

Deal with US close, says Turkish Foreign Minister

■ ISTANBUL: Turkey's Foreign Minister Yasar Yakis said on Sunday a deal to let United States' troops use the country as a base for any attack on Iraq was close, but issues such as control of northern Iraqi cities and oil fields needed agreement.

Yakis said there was a 'high probability' that a deal could be reached in time for a Parliamentary vote on Tuesday. —Reuters

were "ample" for the task.

The US military is believed to be anxious to act by April, when temperatures in Iraq begin to soar. The US is mounting a diplomatic effort to win over the 10 rotating Council

members to back a resolution paving for war and to persuade France, Russia and China not to veto it. China, like France and Russia, has said UN inspectors should be given more time. —Reuters

You can't eat plutonium: Powell tells North Korea

REUTERS
TOKYO, FEBRUARY 23

US Secretary of State Colin Powell, on his four-day East Asia tour, met Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on pursuing a "multilateral" diplomatic approach to persuade North Korea to give up its suspected nuclear weapons programme.

The tour is also to muster support for the stand taken by the United States and Britain on disarming Iraq. Powell was likely to find both issues a harder sell when he travels to Beijing later on Sunday, where he will try to urge sceptical Chinese leaders not to veto a new UN resolution on Iraq and to take a more active role in persuading North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions.

Powell spoke shortly before flying to Beijing, the second stop on his four-day East Asia tour. China and South Korea have both said they would like the North Korean nuclear issue to be addressed through direct, bilateral talks between Washington and Pyongyang, something the US has resisted in favour of a multilateral push.

Powell said that the US remained open to giving North Korea aid but only after it abandons suspected nuclear weapons ambitions.

"You can't eat plutonium. You can't eat enriched uranium," Powell said.

Powell's final tour stop is South Korea, where he will attend the inauguration of President-elect Roh Moo-Hyun, whose government has voiced differences with US policy on North Korea. He returns to Washington on Tuesday.

Peaceniks to block war cargo

REUTERS
ROME/MADRID, FEBRUARY 23

ANTI-WAR protesters on Sunday vowed to block all movement of US arms by rail between American bases in Italy, dubbing the convoys "trains of death", while dock workers pledged to stop handling US war cargo.

A day after demonstrators squatted on rail tracks and forced long delays in two shipments, protest organisers said

that they were gearing up for a full assault on similar convoys next week.

"The government should be ashamed that preparations for an American war on Iraq are being made on Italian soil," anti-war protest leader Luca Casarini said on Sunday.

"We're taking matters into our own hands. We're taking stock of all shipments between US bases planned this week and we're going to try and block them all."

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has been one of Washington's staunchest allies in the Iraq crisis, but polls show 70 percent of Italians oppose war, even if sanctioned by the United Nations.

In Madrid, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar came under renewed pressure on Sunday with his popularity slipping over Iraq and thousands of people protesting once again on the streets of the capital.

25 FEB 2003

INDIAN EXPRESS

'Unhappy' U.S. issues ultimatum to Ankara

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, FEB. 19. In an indication that it is not giving up on its plans to attack, the U.S. has given a virtual ultimatum to Turkey to decide whether it is ready to open its territory for a U.S.-led attack on northern Iraq.

Diplomatic sources said the U.S. had been unhappy with the Turkish delay in passing a legislation that will enable it to position its forces in Turkey and use the Turkish territory to transit troops into northern Iraq. By pushing in its forces quickly, the U.S. is keen to establish control over the northern Iraqi oil fields spread out around the oil cities of Mosul and Kirkuk soon. Reports about Iraqi plans to blow up oil fields in this area ahead of a U.S. attack appear to have

added a sense of urgency to Washington's war plans in this area.

Sources said that Turkey might have around 48 hours to decide whether or not it will allow its territory to be used as a staging post for the U.S. attack on northern Iraq. Otherwise, the U.S. will consider contingency plans to position its forces into northern Iraq from an alternative location.

Turkey has reportedly demanded a \$30 billion package as the price for allowing the U.S. forces to operate from its soil. This is nearly twice the aid package that the two sides had been discussing in recent weeks. Turkish authorities have been pointing out that this amount is necessary to offset Turkey's perceived losses in case the U.S. attacks Iraq. Without such a hefty package, Turkey does

not feel inclined to be dragged into a war which 94 per cent of its population opposes. Besides, the Turks had to face a raging insurgency in the last Persian Gulf war, which was engineered by a section of Kurdish refugees that fled from Iraq during that war.

The Turks, however, may find it difficult to flout the U.S. deadline for making up its mind. In case, it does so, there is a possibility that Turkey may be marginalised from shaping developments that are likely to affect it deeply in the future.

For instance, by not cooperating with the U.S., Ankara is likely to lose an opportunity to position some of its own forces in northern Iraq that may be necessary to safeguard some of its vital interests. Without its own troops, Turkey would lose any direct leverage on pre-

venting the pro-U.S. Kurdish groups — the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) from establishing influence over Mosul and Kirkuk.

In fact, aware of the Turkish concerns, the U.S. has already agreed to the Turkish proposal to push its forces in considerable depth into northern Iraq. Besides, the U.S. has also agreed to the Turkish demand of not posting its forces in northern Iraq under a U.S.-led coalition command. Both sides are believed to have agreed on opening a joint command centre at Diyarbakir on the Turkey-Iraq border.

While trying to extract maximum mileage during negotiations, the Turkish authorities may, nevertheless, be getting ready to finalise a deal with the U.S.

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APC

THE HINDU

23 FEB 2003

Diplomacy on Iraq over: U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WS (W) from

UNITED NATIONS, FEB. 17. The Bush administration has once again warned the United Nations Security Council that diplomacy over Iraq is nearly over; and with a military confrontation looming, the United States is all set, along with Britain, to present what is being dubbed as a "last ditch resolution" sometime this week.

"We are in a diplomatic window but one that can't stay open much longer", the President's National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, said on Sunday. Dr. Rice was making the argument that it was becoming increasingly clear that the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, is not going to disarm and that the United Nations was allowing him to get away with this. "Continuing to talk about more time and more time and more time is simply going to relieve pressures on the Iraqis to do what they must do", Dr. Rice argued.

to id 1872

She said Washington may ask the United Nations to take up a new resolution authorising the use of force even while stressing that such action had already been sanctioned under a previous resolution. "We have not drafted the resolution. We are working it with different parties, with our friends", she said.

Dr. Rice once again repeated the administration line that while the U.S. was ready for military strike against Iraq with or without the backing of the U.N., "sooner or later, we believe sooner, the Security Council is going to have to say that he (meaning Saddam Hussein) has not taken that final opportunity to comply, and the Security Council is going to have to act, or the United States will have to act with a coalition of the willing". While at present the objective is one of pressuring the world body to go along, Dr. Rice insisted that "putting this thing off is not an option".

1 8 FEB 2003

THE HINDU

I'm not anti-US, says Madonna

Los Angeles, February 15

MADONNA MAY be anti-war, but don't call her anti-American. The Michigan-born Material Girl, who made headlines with reports that a music video for her latest song, *American Life*, carries a strong anti-war message, said it should not be interpreted as critical of her homeland or President Bush.

"I feel lucky to be an American citizen for many reasons, one of which is the right to express myself freely," Madonna said in a statement on her website



Madonna
Clears stand

(www.madonna.com).

"I am not anti-Bush. I am

not pro-Iraq," she said. "I am pro-peace. I have created a video which expresses my feelings about our culture and values and illusions of what many people believe is the American dream — the perfect life."

The 44-year-old entertainer added that she hopes the video will provoke "thought and dialogue" and does not expect everyone to agree with her point of view. "I am grateful to have the freedom to express these feelings and that's how I honour my country," she said. According to Madonna's spokeswoman, Liz Rosenberg, the

video opens at a fashion show then "escalates into a mad frenzy depicting the catastrophic repercussions and horror of war."

Hollywood celebrities have lined up to oppose a threatened war with Iraq and many of them, including actors George Clooney, Ed Harris and Dustin Hoffman as well as director Spike Lee, have slammed Bush. Madonna's ex-husband, Sean Penn, visited Iraq on his own "fact-finding" mission and said after returning that the Bush administration was "misguided."

Reuters

US mulls another crack at diplomacy

Blair tastes mass fury

AMIT ROY AND
SUMAN BHUCHAR

London, Feb. 16: Tariq Ali, the former Pakistani student leader turned grey-haired, middle-aged and respectably middle class author and broadcaster, received thunderous applause in Hyde Park yesterday when he concluded his fiery anti-war speech with a simple rallying call to the British masses: "Bring Blair down!"

And he began his speech on an equally uncompromising note: "If there's one country that needs a regime change, it's Britain."

He argued that the British government had lost its authority to speak on behalf of the British people, and that if Saddam Hussein possessed chemical weapons, it was because the Iraqi leader had been sold the stuff by Donald Rumsfeld, the US defence secretary, and by Tory and Labour governments in Britain. "He was more dangerous when he was ally of the West than he is today," he said. This is a point of view with which many people in Britain might agree.

Yesterday's demonstration was unquestionably historic. Anything between a million and two million people turned up in London in what is being described as the biggest peacetime demonstration witnessed in Britain.

Tariq Ali, photogenic yesterday in a bright red bomber jacket and a flowing white scarf could be reliving the heady days of 1968 when he was a young Oxford student leading the anti-Vietnam demo in front of the US embassy in Grosvenor Square. Yesterday, the massive police turnout ensured that the embassy, a few minutes walk from Hyde Park, was off limits to the demonstrators.

Although there were many disaffected folk yesterday, who would turn up for any demo whatever the cause, a large proportion, possibly even a majority

were people who had never before carried a banner or turned out for a protest.

The targets of the demonstration were clearly Bush and Blair. "Bush and Blair Wanted for Murder", read the placard widely distributed by the extreme left Socialist Workers' Party.

One of the most popular said: "Make tea not war". "Not in my name," probably best summed up popular sentiment.

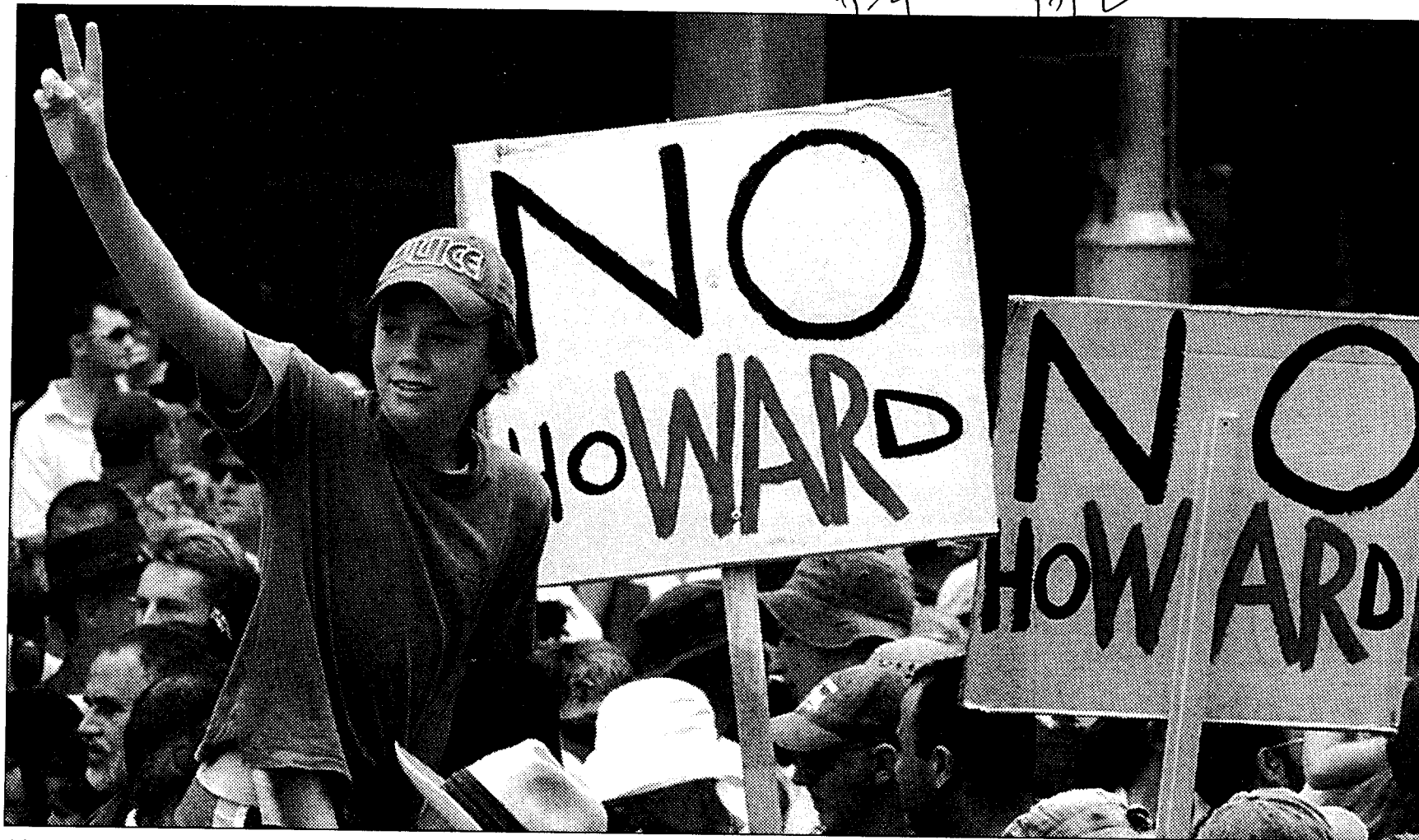
The signals this morning are that while British people don't want military action, Tony Blair does and whatever the threat to his prime ministership, he is committed to executing the war against Saddam Hussein alongside George Bush.

Too many men and too much hardware have been sent to the Gulf for the tide to be reversed. However, the gap between the British Prime Minister and the British public is widening day by day. No one knows precisely how many people turned up in yesterday's demonstration in London. The organisers claimed a figure of two million. The police, which usually underestimates the size of any anti-establishment turnout, suggested 750,000.

Amartya Sen protest

Amartya Sen's sentiments about the gathering war against Iraq were couched in academic language but there are no doubts about how the Nobel Prize winner feels. He has revealed that he is against the war in Iraq during comments made in London at a seminar organised by Ahimsa, a new group set up by Indian and Pakistani women in London in the wake of the Gujarat riots with the aim of fighting communalism.

Professor Sen, the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, was addressing a packed audience at the School of Oriental and African Studies, where the seminar was discussing "Militancy, Nationalisms and the Bomb: the Indian Subcontinent".



A boy flashes the peace sign as hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of Sydney on Sunday to show their opposition to a possible war against Iraq. (AP/PTI)

NADIM LADKI AND
SAUL HUDSON

Baghdad/Washington, Feb. 16 (Reuters): The US and Britain considered giving diplomacy more time today in the face of resistance at the UN to their plans for war to disarm Iraq and vast weekend peace protests around the world.

Among more than six million people who marched in a wave of global protest not seen since the Vietnam War, some of the largest crowds were in countries whose leaders have echoed the hawkish stance taken by US President George W. Bush.

There was little sign that the demonstrations had put off pro-war leaders, who say Baghdad is hiding illegal weapons that pose a global threat.

Indeed Nato, its credibility rocked by a bitter internal row

over Iraq, was working on a compromise that would allow it to prepare measures to protect Turkey in the event of a war.

But diplomatic splits persisted, complicating efforts by Washington and London to win UN backing for military action to disarm Iraq and oust President Saddam Hussein, who denies concealing banned weapons from UN inspectors.

Turkey, which would be in the front line in any conflict, warned Washington not to expect immediate permission to deploy tens of thousands of troops on its territory.

France, which won applause on Friday at the UN Security Council by insisting inspectors needed more time to investigate Iraq, repeated its call today, drawing criticism from Washington which said Paris was easing the pressure on Saddam.

Babel, newspaper of Saddam's eldest son Uday, said the protests and Friday's relatively positive report by UN weapons inspectors meant US had suffered a decisive defeat.

Bush's national security adviser Condoleezza Rice said, however, that Washington was still working on winning support at the UN for a new resolution on Iraq.

A senior British diplomatic source said the US was prepared to spend more time to bring key UN Security Council members round after a showdown on Friday at which there appeared to be no majority for military action. "If that takes another couple of weeks, that time will have to be found," the source said, stressing that there would have to be a defined deadline for the UN inspection process to produce results. "It's

got to be clearly time-limited."

French President Jacques Chirac told *Time* magazine that the UN weapons inspectors should be given more time and resources to ensure the peaceful disarmament of Iraq, warning that a conflict could "create a large number of little (Osama) bin Ladens".

But he left the door open to UN backing for military action. "If Iraq doesn't cooperate and the inspectors say this isn't working, it could be war," he said in a lengthy interview.

The British diplomatic source said a French request for another ministerial meeting of the Security Council on March 14 might be acceptable if it resulted in a clear-cut decision. "But not if it's just buying another four weeks."

In Washington, Rice said calls to give inspectors more

time only took pressure off Saddam. "It's time for this to end. Enough is enough," she told NBC. But she also said Washington was still seeking a new Security Council resolution authorising force.

UN weapons inspectors took a close look at Baghdad's al Samoud short-range missiles, found to exceed the range allowed under UN resolutions.

Arab leaders, especially those whose countries host US troops, are anxious to limit popular backlash over a war against Iraq they might not be able to prevent.

Witnesses said riot police in Tunisia, a staunch ally of Washington, baton-charged anti-war demonstrators on Sunday, injuring at least 18, while in Oman, about 200 women held an unprecedented all-female demonstration.

No Convincing Evidence That Iraq Is Guilty; US, UK Adamant; Russia, France, China Still Against War

Banned weapons still unaccounted for, says Blix

Evelyn Leopold

UNITED NATIONS 14 FEBRUARY

Chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix, giving a report which could be crucial to whether war is waged on Iraq, said on Friday that banned Iraqi weapons were still unaccounted for and Baghdad must detail the status of anthrax and VX stocks and long-range missiles. Blix also told a tense meeting of the UN Security Council that two versions of Iraq's al Samoud 2 missile exceed the maximum range of 93 miles set by the United Nations.

"The issues of anthrax, the nerve agent VX and long-range missiles (are) ... perhaps the most important problem we are facing. Iraq itself must squarely tackle this task and avoid belittling the questions," he said.

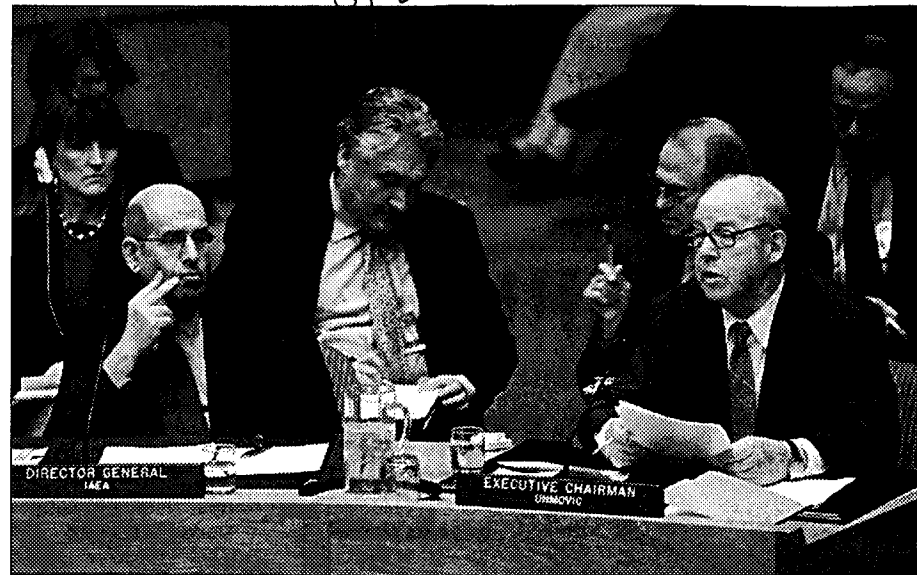
But Blix, reporting to the council on the progress his inspectors have made in Iraq since last November, said he had no convincing evidence that Iraq had advance knowledge that the inspectors were coming and that his teams were "effectively helping to bridge the gap in knowledge." Just hours before the report was delivered, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein decreed a

ban on importing or making weapons of mass destruction, in at least a symbolic gesture to meet one of the demands that Blix and nuclear weapons inspector Mohamed El Baradei made when they visited Baghdad in mid-January. "Individuals and companies in private and mixed sectors are banned from importing and producing chemical, biological and nuclear weapons," the presidential decree read. Saddam also reiterated that Iraq was free of any such weapons, a claim the United States rejects.

One of the demands of the Council, and more recently Blix and El Baradei, was for Iraq to adopt national legislation banning anyone from working on weapons of mass destruction.

As the inspectors were submitting their report, the US military said aircraft taking part in US-British patrols attacked Iraqi missile systems in the southern "no-fly" zone on Friday, the fifth strike on Iraqi targets in a week. The strikes came as US and British forces massed in the Gulf region for a possible invasion of Iraq.

After inspectors had examined evidence found in the search for chemical and biological weapons, including analysing earth samples from some sites,



THOUGHT SHOP: International Atomic Energy Agency director general Mohamed El Baradei (left) listens to chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix (right) as he addresses the United Nations Security Council on the situation in Iraq on Friday. — AFP

Blix said in his report: "The results to date been consistent with Iraqi declarations."

But he said Iraqi cooperation "means more than opening doors" and Baghdad was obliged to actively present "convincing evidence" that they have eliminated all biological and chemical

weapons programs and materials. Iraq had accepted an offer by South Africa to send a group of experts for further talks on how to disarm, Blix said.

At issue is whether the United States and Britain can follow up Friday's meeting with a fresh UN resolution explicitly or implicitly

authorising war amid deepening rifts not only on the Security Council, but also within Nato and the European Union.

Millions of people were expected to take to the streets of towns and cities around the world at the weekend to demonstrate against a looming US-led

war on Iraq in the biggest peace protests since the Vietnam war. More than 1,00,000 anti-war activists turned out in Melbourne to kick off the protests.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, at odds with major European partners France and Germany and in danger of alienating many within his own ruling Labour Party, is anxious to give any use of military force international legitimacy.

France, Russia and China, who also wield a veto on the 15-member Council, as well as Germany, Syria and other members, want to beef up inspections, triple the number of arms experts and send in UN security guards to "freeze" suspected sites. UN inspectors, meanwhile, pushed ahead in their three-month-old hunt for banned weapons, traveling to at least four military and industrial installations outside Baghdad, Iraqi officials said.

Iraq said earlier it hoped the Blix and El Baradei reports would not serve as ammunition for Washington to drive ahead with military action. "What they will say has dangerous consequences. America is waiting to seize and exaggerate the negative to serve its plans and belligerent goals," said the al-Thawra newspaper, a

mouthpiece of Saddam's ruling Baath party.

Iraq's deputy prime minister Tareq Aziz made his case against war in a meeting with Pope John Paul at the Vatican on Friday and delivered a personal message from Saddam to the leader of the world's one billion Roman Catholics. Aziz, a Christian, assured the Pope that Iraq would cooperate over disarmament, the Vatican said. The Pope said Iraq had to "faithfully respect" UN resolutions and international law.

A French official attached to Blix's UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspections Commission (UNMOVIC), said she had expected Blix to highlight some progress in Iraqi cooperation.

"Hans Blix considers there is regular progress on all matters relating to procedures, but on disarmament itself progress is extraordinarily weak," Therese Delpech told Europe 1 radio on Friday.

Much will hinge on the interpretation Council members give to what Blix and El Baradei say. The US and Britain hope to get the minimum nine votes in favor of a fresh resolution, while France is lobbying to ensure Washington will not achieve the minimum votes and spare it having to use its veto. — Reuters

Keep off, Pyongyang tells U.S.

149-15
By P. S. Suryanarayana
1572

SINGAPORE, FEB. 14. South Korea on Friday indicated that there had been no discussions with the United States so far about its intention, if any, to scale down the latter's military presence in the southern part of the Korean peninsula.

There are at present 37,000 American military personnel in South Korea, and Seoul's statement acquires importance in the context of the escalating crisis over North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons programme.

The U.S. military's "forward presence" in the Asia-Pacific region has come under intense spotlight in the evolving context of the North Korean nuclear brinkmanship.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North) reaffirmed once again that the only way out of the crisis was to pursue its proposal for a non-aggression pact between

Washington and Pyongyang.

Maintaining the tempo of the recent sabre-rattling, the DPRK said it would not tolerate any attempt by the U.S. to overthrow the Kim Jong-il regime in Pyongyang.

On a related front, China said it would not like the U.N. Security Council to take cognisance of the North Korean nuclear issue at the present juncture.

In saying this and calling for dialogue among all the parties concerned, China maintained that its action of supporting the move by the International Atomic Energy Agency to refer the issue to the Security Council should be seen in this light.

Japan, another East Asian power concerned over the DPRK's nuclear profile, has not only taken note of the IAEA's move but also undertaken some strategic planning so as to meet the possibility, as seen from Tokyo, that Pyongyang might seek to lend substance

to its sabre-rattling by launching ballistic missile tests.

On Iraq, China kept its counsel to itself as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, ahead of the IAEA's second report on Baghdad.

Japan, on the other hand, called for a definitive new resolution if the U.S. were to contemplate military action against Iraq to disarm it of its suspected capabilities to make and deploy weapons of mass destruction.

The Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, told mediapersons in Tokyo that it was "desirable" that a new resolution of the U.N. Security Council authorise any military strike against Iraq in the present circumstances.

He also called for international unity on this issue, even as Japan expressed itself against the notion of any nuclear strike against Iraq and issued a travel advisory to its citizens to leave the potential danger spots in West Asia.

U.S. not for sanctions against N. Korea

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

UNITED NATIONS, FEB. 14. At a time when the permanent members of the Security Council are at loggerheads with the United States over Iraq, there is relief that the Bush administration is not pushing for sanctions against North Korea.

Pyongyang has said that it would consider sanctions as an act of war. A U.S. envoy here said sanctions were "not an issue right now" and that the Bush administration was keen on pursuing a diplomatic solution. "We'll deal with it in a systematic manner and diplomatically and we're pleased the IAEA acted and we look forward to discussing and

working the issue diplomatically here as the U.S. has been doing in the region for many weeks now," said the U.S. Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations, Richard Williamson.

With the Security Council now almost totally preoccupied with the Iraqi crisis, the U.S. said it would discuss with other members of the Council on when to bring up North Korea. North Korea has been meriting considerable attention of the Bush administration in the last few days with the Director of the CIA telling Congress that Pyongyang had an untested ballistic missile that could reach parts of the U.S.

Senior officials have also been telling law makers that

North Korea wants to have it both ways — keep its nuclear programme going even as it looks to the U.S. for improved ties and economic assistance. The trouble with North Korea began last October when a Bush administration official said that Pyongyang had admitted of pursuing a clandestine nuclear programme. And recently the IAEA declared North Korea to be in violation of its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

China and Russia have reacted rather favourably to the Bush administration's decision of not wanting to pursue the sanctions route. "It will not work. It will only make the situation more worse," the top

Chinese diplomat to the U.N. has been quoted.

"It could only be settled through direct dialogue," China's Ambassador, Wang Yingfan, has told the Associated Press.

The Bush administration is to some extent banking on China to deal with the problem in North Korea; but for the time being it is not clear if Washington has ruled out any direct dialogue with Pyongyang.

For now, the Republican administration is leaning on the Security Council to deal with the issue, to underscore the point that the matter was not a bilateral dispute between Washington and Pyongyang, but an international one.

15 FEB 2003

We will use every ounce of our power: Bush

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

UNITED NATIONS, FEB. 14. The United States President, George W. Bush, has once again asked the United Nations to show resolve and warned that in the event of a military showdown with Iraq, Washington would use "every ounce of our power."

"Today, the greatest danger in the war on terror, the greatest danger facing America and the world is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror, mass murder. That's why we're going to use every ounce of our power to defeat..." Mr. Bush said, addressing troops at a naval station in Florida.

"The United Nations Security Council can now decide whether or not it has the resolve to enforce its resolutions. I am op-

timistic that free nations will show backbone and courage in the face of true threats to peace and freedom," he said.

The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, "is not disarming, he's deceiving," Mr. Bush maintained. The setting at the naval station — home to the aircraft carrier, USS John F. Kennedy — was intended to convey the strength of the American military might; and Mr. Bush's address to reiterate that if the Security Council did not rally behind it, Washington would go along with the so-called "coalition of the willing."

Mr. Bush's tough talk came on the day the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, told the Security Council the extent to which the world body was planning for contingencies in the event of a military showdown with Iraq, especially as it related to humanitarian aspects.

A task force had been set up to draw up contingency plans to deal with the devastation.

The task force would be headed by a Pakistani national, Rafeuddin Ahmed, who has been associated with the United Nations Development Programme in the past.

According to a UNDP estimate, rebuilding Iraq could involve \$30 billions in the first three years, rising to \$100 billions. Of the 27 million Iraqis, 4.5 million to 9.5 million would immediately need outside food to survive.

The Centre for Economic and Social Rights has estimated that 30 per cent of Iraqi children under the age of five would be at risk of malnutrition. Worse, in the event of a military conflict, the U.N. will bring to a halt the oil-for-food programme on which nearly 15 million Iraqis depend for their survival.

'Iraq not a threat'

VATICAN CITY, FEB. 14. The Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, on Friday promised Pope John Paul II that his Government would co-operate with the U.N. weapons inspectors, the Vatican said in a statement.

The statement, issued after a private meeting between Mr. Aziz and the Pope, an outspoken opponent of war against Iraq, also said the pontiff had told Mr. Aziz that Iraq must "faithfully respect with concrete commitments" U.N. resolutions.

Mr. Aziz, the roving ambassador of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, had a 30-minute audience with the pontiff, followed by a longer meeting with the Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano.

A short Vatican statement said, "The Holy See insisted on the necessity on Iraq to faithful-

ly respect, and give concrete commitments to resolutions of the U.N. Security Council, which is the guarantor of international law."

It added that Aziz "had wanted" to give his assurances about "the wish of the Iraqi Government to cooperate with the international community, notably on disarmament."

However, the Vatican reiterated its opposition to a U.S.-led war, saying military intervention would "worsen the suffering of a population already tested by long years of embargo." The Pope has said a war with Iraq would be a "defeat for humanity."

Mr. Aziz denied claims that Iraq has a missile system with a longer range than allowed under U.N. limits. "We aren't a threat to anyone," he said.

— AP, AFP

NATO decides against holding new talks

BRUSSELS, FEB. 14. Still deadlocked over Iraq, NATO envoys have decided not to reconvene for another round of talks on Turkish defence guarantees, diplomats said today.

"We are not expecting a meeting of the NATO Council," said an Alliance spokesman.

France, Germany and Belgium are opposing the U.S. demands that the Alliance should start contingency planning for Turkey's security.

After weeks of trying to change the three countries' minds, diplomats said the NATO Secretary-General, George Robertson, had decided to wait until after the U.N. Security Council debate on Iraq. — DPA

France, Russia seek Arab nations' support

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, FEB. 14. Keen to keep the war option on hold and expand the "peace camp", France and Russia have stepped up efforts to get Arab support behind a tri-nation statement that advocates that United Nations inspections in Iraq should be given more time.

France is going the extra mile to break common ground with Syria — the only Arab country in the present 15-member U.N. Security Council. Lebanon, which currently chairs the Arab League, has also been the focus of European exertions. France, backed by Germany and Russia, is considering introducing a new resolution in the U.N. Security Council next week, supporting continuation of inspections in Iraq. By introducing such a resolution, the three countries would effectively put on hold a possible U.N. move by the United States and Britain to authorise the use of force against Iraq.

Analysts point out that in case Britain or the U.S. vetoes the tripartite initiative, it could paralyse the Security Council and pose an existential threat to the world body. Aware of the stakes involved, ambassadors of France and Russia met the Lebanese Foreign Minister, Mahmoud Hammond, on Thursday, ahead of a meeting on Sunday of Arab League Foreign Ministers in Cairo.

France is seeking an Arab League backing for

the tripartite statement that Paris, Berlin and Moscow have authored recently, so as to position, what would appear to be an evolving Euro-Arab anti-war front on Iraq. But, despite considerable support for the French-led initiative to avert war among the Arab intelligentsia, this effort may not cut much ice as leaderships in Iraq's neighbourhood, with the exception of Syria, Lebanon and Iran, appear to be lining up behind the U.S. Jordan and Kuwait are expected to serve as launch pads for an attack on Iraq from the west and the south, while the six Persian Gulf states, apart from giving base facilities to the U.S., are also contributing troops to defend Kuwait.

Keeping consultations alive along the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, the French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, spoke to his Syrian counterpart, Farouk Al Shara, on Wednesday while the French President, Jacques Chirac, telephoned the Syrian President, Bashar Al Assad, on Tuesday to discuss the Franco-German initiative. Mr. Chirac also met the Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri, who concluded his stay in Paris after recovering from a minor surgery. Mr. Hariri, after his meeting with Mr. Chirac, said the stands of the two countries on Iraq were "completely identical."

In a related development, Qatar is making efforts to convene a meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference to discuss Iraq.

Pak. in a bind over Iraq?

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 14 Amid reports that the U.S. and the U.K. are pushing for a second resolution on Iraq, the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, and the Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, attended a special meeting at the Foreign Office here today.

There is little doubt that Pakistan's joy of joining the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member has proved to be short-lived. Islamabad is seriously worried over prospects of war in Iraq and it dreads a scenario where it is called upon to vote in the Council.

An official statement said, on the extraordinary meeting where both Gen. Musharraf and Mr. Jamali were present, that the Foreign Minister, Khurshid

maintained that the crisis should be resolved peacefully but at the same time said a "heavy responsibility" was on the shoulders of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussain, to ensure implementation of the U.N. resolutions.

As a frontline ally of the U.S.-led coalition in the so called war against terrorism and the mounting criticism by the religious parties of the government support to the U.S., the Pakistan Government is caught in a dilemma. Joining the Council for a two-year period beginning January 1 has only accentuated the difficulty.

This was best illustrated in the projection of the ongoing Gulf tour of the Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali. Senior functionaries of the Government kept redefining the objectives of his visit.

Osama tape fuels American war cry

Washington, February 12

AN AUDIO tape of an address supposedly by Osama bin Laden has now taken centre-stage in the Iraq crisis with its call to Muslims worldwide to help Baghdad defend itself against the US.

American intelligence officials said they had not yet conducted advanced voice authentication tests on the tape, but believed the voice was that of Laden.

The voice urged Iraqis to launch suicide attacks against the US and its allies. In an apparent warning to the governments of Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Yemen, it said any cooperation with Washington by a Muslim would be anti-Islamic.

Eager to bolster support for its war campaign, America lost no time in portraying the audiotape broadcast by al-Jazeera on Tuesday as "evidence" that Iraq and al-Qaida are in cahoots. Secretary of State Colin Powell and the CIA Director George J Tenet promptly linked Iraq with al-Qaida.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said: "They are bound by a common hatred. That

is what brought them together and I think that's really what has been confirmed in this tape."

The tape, however, condemned Saddam as an infidel but added that this didn't matter as Muslims' interests coincided with those of the Iraqi government in "the war against Crusaders".

It also urged Muslims to liberate themselves from "oppressive, unjust, apostate ruling governments, which in turn are enslaved by America... The most eligible for liberation are Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen."

The tapes reinforced fears of a new terror attack in the US, which deployed anti-aircraft missiles around Washington. Citizens were advised to keep tape and plastic sheets available so that they could seal off a "safe room" against radiation, deadly germs or chemical gas.

US stocks swung lower after market jitters resurfaced following the tape's release. While Dow Jones industrials slumped 81.25 points (1.03 per cent), Nasdaq shed 1.29 points (0.10 per cent).

Agencies

13 FEB 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

How should India position itself in the impending US-led war against Iraq?

Arms and the man

By J.N. DIXIT

US SECRETARY of State Colin Powell made an hour-long presentation of evidence about Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction to the UN Security Council on February 5. His presentation followed the report of the UN chief weapons inspectors, Hans Blix and Mohamed El-Baradei, to the council on January 27. The reports of the two inspectors on the work done by them since October last were inconclusive. While stating that Iraq was generally cooperating, they said they were unable to come to any definite conclusions about Iraq's culpability or otherwise.

There is a clear contradiction between the politico-military postures on the ground adopted by the US and Britain and the declaratory aspect of international policy that Iraq is being given an opportunity to prove its innocence. Developments confirming this contradiction are:

- Even as the inspectors proceeded for inspections, senior government officials declared that they would not be inclined to accept the conclusions reached by the inspectors if they give Iraq a clean chit.

- Though the US-sponsored inspection and reporting exercise under Resolution 1441 was time-bound, accusations continue about Iraq hiding its stockpiles of WMD.

- Iraq's denials have been branded as mendacities.

- Even before the first phase of inspections was underway, Bush had categorically affirmed that Hussein's removal and regime change were the US's policy objectives. Powell invited Hussein to go into exile if he wanted to save himself.

- Bush also declared that the US would use nuclear weapons against Iraq if Baghdad used any WMD against the US and its allies in the eventuality of a military conflict.

- There has been a steady military build-up by the central command of the US in the Gulf since late November.

- Forward operational bases have been established in Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman.

- Ships from the US's 5th and 7th fleet with enormous striking capacities are located in the Gulf and the northern reaches of the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. British forces are part of these build-ups.

- By end-January, nearly 100,000 eastern coalition troops stood assembled at 'launching points'.

- Official American sources have affirmed that US special force and paramilitary cadres of the CIA have



infiltrated into northern Iraq.

- Various agencies of the US government are in negotiations with anti-Hussein Iraqi groups in Europe and North America to establish an alternative government after the dictator's overthrow. There are even reports of Bush considering a panel of senior US military officials from which a US military governor general of Iraq will be chosen to manage the interim phase after the defeat of Hussein.

Back-room planners of the US government are reportedly considering the option of bifurcation and, if necessary, trifurcation of Iraq between areas inhabited by the Kurds, Sunnis and Shias. While west European countries generally endorse the UN resolution sanctioning inspections and possible punitive action, France and Germany are advocates of restraint.

Meanwhile, Hussein still denies having nuclear weapons. He has rejected suggestions that he will relinquish power and go into exile. In his public pronouncements since mid-December, he has reaffirmed that he will respond to any military operation against Iraq firmly.

It is in this context that one makes an assessment of the evidence presented by Powell. The evidence can be summed up as follows:

- Satellite and clandestine photographs of chemical and biological weapons, storage sites with some equipment were shown. Photos of metal tubes that can be utilised to engineer gas centrifuges were in Iraq's possession.

- Iraq continues to have large stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons. These were not destroyed by the Iraqis after the Gulf War. Hussein refuses to give credible information about the whereabouts of these toxic weapons. Hussein has

not given up his nuclear weaponisation programme. He continues to clandestinely collect the necessary raw material and equipment for this purpose (about which some more photographs were shown).

- Hussein has had links with Al-Qaeda since the mid-Nineties. Iraq, with Hussein's support, is home to the radical Islamic group Ansar-Allah which has links with Al-Qaeda.

- Hussein's human rights record is deplorable. His political and military strategy vis-a-vis Iraq's neighbours includes unhesitating use of WMD, weapons which he used against his own people in the past.

- Powell said the sources of all this evidence are high altitude satellites and airborne photography (signal intelligence), human intelligence based on information given by defecting Iraqi civil and military officers and scientists, clandestine interviews and intercepted telephone and other categories of messages.

The overall reaction of the members of the Security Council was that the evidence presented by Powell was mainly circumstantial. There was a unanimity in the views of three permanent members of the Security Council — China, Russia and France — that the inspectors should be given further time to examine the accuracy of the evidence presented by Powell and to confront Hussein with this evidence. They also agreed that any action against Iraq should be within the framework of the UN.

Powell, however, indicated that the next report from Blix and Baradei is due on February 14 after which the US might take action — with or without support from the international community.

India's reactions should be based on two considerations. First, how the impending attack on Iraq affects

Indian interests and regional politics. Second, the implications of this attack for the world order. India's opposition to the US cannot be a preventive. It can, however, have a negative impact on India's relations with the US. Whatever the past record of positive relations with Hussein, it can't be denied that the dictator has been a destabilising factor in regional politics.

His removal is more or less inevitable. India should prepare the ground to have a good equation with the future dispensation in Iraq. A working relationship with such a regime would serve India's interest in the context of our concerns about religious extremism and violence. There would be temporary dislocation for Indians working in Iraq and oil supplies from Iraq, but things could come back to normal within six months or a year of the intended anti-Hussein campaign.

There would be criticism from Indian Muslims against the US military campaign. The campaign will also polarise international politics at the people's level between Muslims and non-Muslims. On balance, therefore, India's stand should be practical and rooted in the principles of international law. India could make the following points:

- Powell's evidence merits detailed scrutiny and assessment. UN inspectors should, thus, be given sufficient time for verification and necessary remedial action.

- The military option should be the last resort. The aim should be to resolve the issue politically.

- India should emphasise that the military option will primarily cause sufferings to the people of Iraq and not to the Saddam Hussein regime.

- It should be further underlined that military campaign will generate long-term antagonisms between Muslims and non-Muslims.

- Whatever action is taken should be within the framework of the UN. Further steps should be considered by the Security Council only after considering the inspectors' report.

- It must be pointed out that whatever the immediate justification for a military campaign, it will create a dangerous precedent questioning the sovereignty of Nation-State relations, marginalising the UN, eroding the stability of national governments.

- Our approach need not be confrontationalist against the US, but it should remain firm about the basic principles of international law and inter-State relations.

3 FEB 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

US says it's ready after N. Korea warns of attack

Seoul/Washington: The United States said it was ready for any contingency after North Korea issued threats of pre-emptive attack and suggested it was poised to restart an atomic reactor central to its suspected drive for nuclear arms.

But as Washington warned Pyongyang it was only isolating itself with its sabre-rattling, there were growing signs the United States was moving toward talks over the second nuclear crisis provoked by the communist state in a decade.

North Korea's state media kept up a stream of alarmist statements on Friday after a senior diplomat told British reporters in Pyongyang that "pre-emptive attacks are not the exclusive right of the US" Pyongyang portrayed US contingency plans to beef up forces in the western Pacific during any Iraq hostilities as actual deployments that foreshadowed an attack.

"If the US moves to bolster aggression troops are unchecked, the whole land of Korea will be reduced to ashes and the Koreans will not escape horrible nuclear disasters," said the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland. Reuters

8 FEB 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2003

40-10 82 **INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE** W3 W AM

THE U.S. SECRETARY of State, Colin Powell's assertion — that there is irrefutable and undeniable proof that Iraq still possesses a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capability — has been contradicted by the chief of the United Nations Monitoring Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), Hans Blix, who has stated that such evidence has not been unearthed so far. Although Mr. Blix, whose team of weapons inspectors has been given the mandate to trace and erase Iraq's chemical and biological weapons programme, has left open the possibility that such evidence could be discovered, his initial conclusion would buttress the view of a largely sceptical global community that Washington has yet to make its case. In fact, the evidence that the U.S. administration did agree to share with the U.N. Security Council could not, of itself, be considered to have the irrefutable and undeniable quality that Gen. Powell claimed it had. Part of the evidence that Gen. Powell presented consisted of audiotapes of conversations between Iraqi officials that were clandestinely recorded on two occasions, in late 2002 and early this year. In these tapes, the Iraqi officials were purportedly discussing the removal of WMD-related material and documents from sites that the U.N. teams were preparing to inspect. As Baghdad has pointed out, such recordings are not tamper-proof and could not therefore be regarded as conclusive evidence. The U.S. administration has also chosen to share information, received from sources unknown, that Iraq had dispersed biological weapons in its western territories and that it possessed at least 18 mobile biological weapons laboratories. Although the sources of these bits of information have not been identified, it is highly probable that they emanated from human intelligence and are therefore suspect. Since the persons desirous of passing on information to Washington are very likely to be inimical to the regime in Baghdad, it is difficult to go by their word without further corroboration. Gen. Powell also presented the Security Council with satellite images of munition bunkers, alleging that some of them con-

tained chemical weapons. This presentation poses two different sets of problems. First, satellite technology is apparently not so advanced that it is able to see through concrete bunkers and, second, if satellites could spot bunkers then they should surely have been able to get some trace of the mobile laboratories thus turning up corroboration of the information from human intelligence sources.

While Washington insists that it has further information in its possession, and cites the need for maintaining confidentiality of the sources as the reason for not making a fuller disclosure, the evidence produced thus far would appear to have actually undermined Washington's attempt to win the support of the global community. Even before Mr. Blix issued his statement, those permanent members of the Security Council who have been opposed to the initiation of military action against Iraq had reiterated their position, that the weapons inspection programme should be persisted with so that the elimination of Iraq's WMD potential could be achieved through peaceful means. In a direct comment on the material presented by Gen. Powell, Russia's Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, has stressed that it needed to be further studied and analysed — a not so subtle rejoinder that he did not consider the evidence to be as clinching as his U.S. counterpart thought it was. Any hopes that the U.S. might have entertained, that the rest of the global community would meekly agree that the evidence presented proved Iraq to be in material breach of its disarmament obligations, are likely to be belied.

If the U.S. efforts to prove that Iraq has a WMD capability have been less than successful, so too has its attempt to establish that Baghdad has the intent to use them. In these circumstances, no other conclusion is possible than that Iraq does not pose an imminent threat of the sort that would justify the launch of a military strike against it. That being the situation, there is no need as yet to discontinue the process that is aimed at ridding Iraq of its WMD potential through peaceful means.

8 FEB 2003

Powell tries hard!

51-8
✓
No compelling case on Iraq

The presentation by Secretary of State Colin Powell of the American case against Iraq, to the Security Council was sober, professional and was as persuasive as he could make it in terms of style and tone, but it made no compelling case. Indeed the effort, thinly disguised, was to have something for everyone. The Russians were tempted with a link between Iraq and Chechen rebels who are causing President Putin such headaches, links between Al Queda and Iraq were sought to be established by alleging that some Al Queda operative had spent an unspecified amount of time in Baghdad and could not have failed to meet Saddam Hussein. The French were complimented for apprehending some suspicious characters in Paris and gently warned that the threat would not recede until Saddam Hussein was sent into exile. The Chinese have a problem with Islamic fundamentalism, which Powell did not fail to exploit. Saddam was held to be hiding weapons of mass destruction because he was mixing 18 trucks capable of carrying prohibited weapons among thousands of normal vehicles and it was held to be axiomatic that it was beyond the ability of the weapons inspectors to pick these 18 out of the rest. There were a lot of satellite pictures, but it needed American labels to tell us what they were being used for; there was no independent verification. Generally, dates were peppered about to make allegations but most of them go back to before the Gulf War.

Violation of human rights was pleaded forgetting that this was not the subject of the proceedings; that Saddam Hussein is alleged to have killed thousands of his own people, especially the Kurds, was more suited to proceedings before the International Court of Justice. The effect was irresistible that everything in sight and other charges not visible were being hurled against Iraq in the hope that something would stick. Not an object lesson in the art of argument but pressure from the paranoid Bush was palpable. The Americans could not be pleased that as Colin Powell finished his marathon performance — some 75 minutes — the Chinese, the French and the Russians unequivocally pleaded for sufficient time to be given to the UN weapons inspectors to complete their work and all three have a veto in the Security Council. All that can be said for Powell's effort was that it was more bearable than the rabble rousing and emotional approach to which, we have been treated repeatedly in the past, by George W Bush, President of the United States of America.

Never before has evidence and argument been held hostage to a single country's obsessions, more correctly a single individual's paranoia, aided and abetted by a small coterie of advisors who have made up their minds that war is the way to gain access to Iraqi oil, to *lebensraum* in the Iraqi desert for the hapless Palestinians and perhaps significant in its own way, to thoughts of vengeance for having tried, so we are told, to kill the President's father. There is no real proof for any of these assumptions but they are plausible and the alternative is to conclude that the American President needs treatment to wash out the poison he has imbibed without anyone's encouragement — unlike the pitiable youth who committed suicide in full view of others who egged him on for no better reason than to watch him die — assuming that advances in medical science are sufficient to help provide a solution.

Of course a dramatic improvement in the President's condition can come about from another but potent source — if the popularity ratings fall below acceptable levels — they are moving that way already!

Powell presents 'irrefutable proof' against Iraq in U.N.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

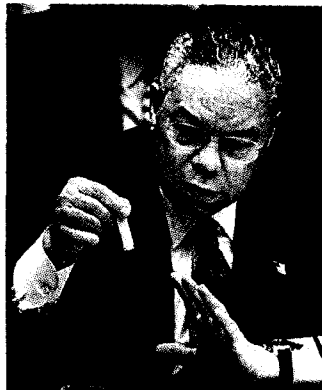
WASHINGTON, FEB. 5. Making a strong case against the Iraq President, Saddam Hussein, the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, told the United Nations Security Council today that the evidence that he presented constituted "irrefutable and undeniable" evidence that the Iraqi leader was indeed concealing weapons and programmes of mass destruction.

Dismissing the repeated denials of Iraq that it has no weapons of mass destruction as nothing more than a "web of lies", Gen. Powell cautioned the Council that Iraq was in "deeper" material breach and would face more serious consequences, stressing that Resolution 1441 was Iraq's "one last chance" to come away clean on its obligations.

At the end of the Secretary of State's lengthy presentation, which lasted more than an hour, other Council members spoke; and the comments were along expected lines. The British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, argued that Gen. Powell had made the "most powerful and authoritative case" against Iraq, and that what has been happening in Iraq in the name of weapons inspections was nothing more than a "charade".

The Iraqi Declaration of December 7, 2002, Mr. Straw argued, was "long on repetition, short on facts". But China's Tang Jiaxuan, who spoke after Gen. Powell made the case for continuing weapons inspections. "As long as there is still the slightest hope for political settlement, we should exert our utmost effort to achieve that," the Chinese Minister observed.

Russia's Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, said the U.S. weapons inspections "must be continued". He said that there needed to be more analysis and study of the evidence presented by Gen. Powell. The French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, said the inspections should continue, if necessary expand the number of inspectors. War should be the last resort. Gen. Powell warned the Council members that Iraq continued with a policy of "evasion and deception" that went back more than a decade. Referring to the scope of Resolution 1441, he said, "No Council member present...had any illusion...what serious consequences meant." But the focus of Gen. Powell was in the additional material and intelligence he had brought with him to the Chamber, including satellite photos that were "cleared" minutes before the presentation.



The U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, holds up a vial that he said was the size that could be used to hold anthrax that shut down the U.S. Senate in 2001.

UNSCOM estimated that Iraq could have produced 25,000 litres of anthrax. — AFP

Telling the Council that the material before it came from a "variety" of sources, he stressed, "I cannot tell you everything I know." Gen. Powell started with playbacks of two audiotapes, the first one of which was monitored on Nov. 26, 2002, a day before the U.N. weapons inspectors were getting into Iraq. The second conversation was recorded by the United States last week, on January 30, 2003.

Analysing the conversation of top military officials, he said both related to a determined attempt on Iraq's part to "clean up the area" pertaining to weapons and programmes of mass destruction, before the inspectors got there. "I am worried you all have something left," one official of the Special Republican Guard unit is heard on the tape. "We evacuated everything. We don't have anything left," the other voice replies.

He also cited informants that the Iraqis were dispersing rockets with biological weapons in Western Iraq and that there were at least 18 mobile biological weapons labs. He played an intercepted conversation between two commanders of the Republican Guard, one of whom is instructing the other to remove a reference to "nerve agents" from the written instructions. He also presented satellite photos of munitions bunkers, with the charge that some of them had active chemical weapons inside. Diplomats here and in New York are saying that Gen. Powell's presentation was a mere beginning of a new and intensive process by the United States to get something definitive and conclusive from the Security Council.

See also Page 14

THE HINDU

- 6 FEB 2003

Powell presents case for war on Saddam

UPI Wg (u) W Bm 6/2
United Nations, February 5

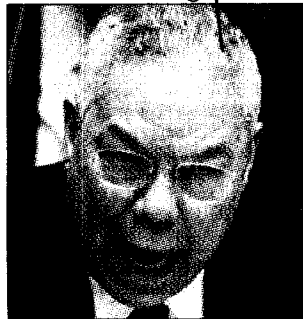
US SECRETARY of State Colin Powell, making his case that Iraq had defied all demands that it disarm, presented what he described as "irrefutable and undeniable" evidence that Saddam Hussein was concealing weapons of mass destruction.

Powell offered the following "proofs" of how Baghdad was deceiving the UN weapons inspectors:

- He asserted with the help of satellite images that Iraq "bulldozed to conceal chemical weapons evidence" at a chemical complex in 2002.
- Powell played an audio tape where Iraqi military officers were purportedly discussing hiding banned vehicles from UN inspectors. He said the tape was an intercepted conversation between officers in Saddam's Republican Guard.

The voices were discussing a modified vehicle one of them had that was made by an Iraqi company, which Powell said was a weapons manufacturer.

"We have this modified vehicle," one of them said as the two discussed a pending visit



AFP

Powell at the UN meeting on Wednesday.

by a UN weapons inspector.

"I'm worried you all have something left," the second voice said. "We evacuated everything. We don't have anything left," the other replied.

- Powell played a tape recording of an intercepted conversation between two commanders in the Republican Guard. Powell said they discussed removing a reference to nerve agents from written instructions.

Powell also said some followers of a senior lieutenant of Osama bin Laden are currently in the Iraqi capital, with the approval of Saddam.

Related report on P15

Pressure mounts on Iraq as Powell plans to give proof

Washington/Baghdad:



Colin Powell

Pressure mounted on a defiant Iraq on Tuesday, with US secretary of state Colin Powell pledging to provide "sober and compelling proof" that Baghdad was hiding banned weapons from UN arms inspectors.

In Baghdad, President Saddam Hussein's chief scientific adviser, Amir al-Saadi, said the "so-called evidence" would not show a "smoking gun", because if the United States had credible facts, it would have given them to UN weapons inspectors on the ground.

Mr Powell wrote in a 'Wall Street Journal' opinion piece before his speech on Wednesday to the UN Security Council that although there was still no "smoking gun", the world must recognise Iraq had flouted the will of the international community.

US officials said later he would use satellite photos and intercepted conversations among Iraqi officials to make his case that Iraq was pursuing weapons of mass destruction.

One official, who asked not to be identified, said Mr Powell was expected to discuss and possibly to display images of what are believed to be suspected mobile biological weapons laboratories in his presentation to the Security Council.

In Vienna, one of the two top inspectors, International Atomic Agency chief Mo-

hammad ElBaradei, said the world was losing patience with Iraq and Baghdad needed to begin cooperating more with the inspectors.

The other chief inspector, Hans Blix, told reporters at the UN in New York that he had received no new information from Iraq ahead of a weekend trip to Baghdad and hoped Mr Powell would provide more data on suspected arms sites.

Asked by reporters about his upcoming trip on Saturday and Sunday, Mr Blix said there were no assurances yet on any of the actions he and ElBaradei had requested before they went to Baghdad.

They had urged Iraq to guarantee the safety of U-2 overflights without conditions and allow private interviews with scientists before the trip. During the visit they said they expected Iraq to account for missing data in its major arms declaration, submitted on Dec. 7, which Mr Blix has sharply criticised.

"There are no guarantees," Mr Blix said. "We have simply indicated the issues which should be easy," such as the U-2 flights and the private interviews.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said a second Security Council resolution might be necessary if the UN inspectors were obstructed in performing their duties. He said force was a last resort.

Senior Bush administration officials said the US had not made a decision on whether to seek a second resolution authorising military force. Reuters

Saddam Hussein is Terror's Exhibit A

If war's the only way Iraq will rid itself of weapons of mass destruction, so be it, says the US Secretary of State



COLIN L. POWELL

PRESIDENT Bush warned in his State of the Union address that "the gravest danger facing US and the world is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical and biological weapons." Exhibit A is Saddam Hussein's Iraq. As the president said, we need only look at how Saddam has terrorised, oppressed and murdered his own people to understand his methods. And, perhaps most critically, the president confirmed that Iraq has open channels and ties to terrorist organisations, including al Qaeda.

Last November, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441, giving Iraq one last chance to disarm peacefully or "face serious consequences." However, Iraq has responded to Resolution 1441 with empty claims, empty declarations and empty gestures. Just a week ago, UN chief weapons inspector Hans Blix told the Security Council that "Iraq appears not

to have come to a genuine acceptance, not even today, of the disarmament that was demanded of it."

Indeed, the Iraqi regime is going to great lengths to conceal its weapons of mass destruction. It has removed material from sites it knew were to be inspected. The regime also has a programme of coaching scientists before they talk to inspectors and only permits interviews when minders are present. On top of that, thousands of pages of sensitive weapons-related documents have been found in private homes.

Resolution 1441 established two key tests: a full and accurate disclosure of Iraq's weaponry and a requirement to cooperate immediately, unconditionally with the inspectors. Iraq has failed both tests. Iraq's declaration of its weapons holdings is incomplete and inaccurate and provides no substantive information on the disposition of its weapons of mass destruction.

Not surprisingly, the UN inspectors have found it woefully deficient. In his report to the Security Council, Mr Blix noted that Iraq has failed to account for its production of the deadly nerve agent VX, some 6,500 chemical bombs, and about 1,000 metric tons of chemical agent. Iraq also previously ac-

quired the materials to make much more anthrax than it declared.

In their inspections, the UN team discovered a number of chemical warheads not previously acknowledged. Iraq also continues to acquire banned equipment, with proscribed imports arriving as recently as last month. The inspectors also reported that Iraqi activity is severely hampering their work. For



example, Iraq has refused the inspectors' use a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft, a critical tool. Inspectors are accompanied everywhere by Iraqi minders, are slandered by

Iraqi officials as spies, and face harassment and disturbing protests.

On Wednesday, I will present to the Security Council US intelligence showing further evidence of Iraq's pattern of deception. Our evidence will reinforce what the inspectors told the Security Council last week—that they are not getting the cooperation they need, that their requests are being blocked, and that their questions are going unanswered. While there will be no "smoking gun," we will provide evidence concerning the weapons programs that Iraq is working so hard to hide. We will, in sum, offer a straightforward, sober and compelling demonstration that Saddam is concealing the evidence of his weapons of mass destruction, while preserving the weapons themselves. The world must now recognise that Iraq has not complied with the will of the international community as expressed in Resolution 1441. Iraq has failed the resolution's two tests—in a disclose and to cooperate—in a manner that constitutes a further material breach of the resolution.

In response, the US will begin a new round of full and open consultation with our allies about next steps. Much has been made of the friction between the US and some

of its traditional partners over how to proceed with Iraq. We will work to bridge our differences, building on the bedrock of our shared values and long history of acting together to meet common challenges. The fruits of our partnership are evident all around the globe, from Western Europe to Japan, Korea, Bosnia and Afghanistan.

Together we must face the facts brought to us by the UN inspectors and reputable intelligence sources. Iraq continues to conceal deadly weapons and their components, and to use denial, deception and subterfuge in order to retain them. Iraq has ties to and has supported terrorist groups. Iraq has had no compunction about using weapons of mass destruction against its own people and against its neighbours.

The President eloquently and persuasively set forth the US position at the UN on Sept 12. A peaceful outcome to this situation is possible if Iraq cooperates with the UN and disarms. Unfortunately, Saddam seems to be leading his nation down another path. The US seeks Iraq's peaceful disarmament. But we will not shrink from war if that is the only way to rid Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction.

(The Wall Street Journal)

IRAQ / U.S. AGREES FOR SECOND U.N. RESOLUTION

Disarmament must take place soon: Bush

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, FEB. 1. The U.S. President, George W. Bush, has said that he would welcome a second United Nations resolution on Iraq but has warned the international community that this is directly linked to prompt disarmament and that any attempt to drag the process out for months will be 'resisted' by the U.S. "This is a matter of weeks not months. Any attempt to delay the process for months would be resisted by the United States," Mr. Bush remarked at the White House after meeting the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, his staunchest ally in this ongoing crisis in the Persian Gulf.

"Saddam Hussein is not disarming. He is a danger to the world," Mr. Bush said. The fact that Mr. Bush is willing to go for a second resolution though he and his administration strongly believe that this is unnecessary given the context and substance of resolution 1441 is intended to give additional political leverage and cover to Mr. Blair who is under strong pressure domestically and in Europe for his unflinching support to Washington.

"This issue will come to a head in a matter of weeks, not months," Mr. Bush declared. The Bush-Blair meeting or "war council" was first set at Camp David but due bad weather there the venue was shifted to

the Oval Office and in the private quarters of the President. Mr. Blair left for London after an early dinner with Mr. Bush. The focus right now in Washington, New York and elsewhere is undoubtedly on February 5 when the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, is due to give the U.N. additional information and intelligence on Iraqi weapons and programmes of mass destruction.

Further, Gen. Powell is expected to show some evidence as well on the links between Baghdad and terror outfits like the Al-Qaeda. But many permanent and non-permanent members are quite wary of the new information that is going to be presented, the argument being that if the Bush administration really wanted to impress the Council, it would have done so by bringing the 'evidence' much earlier and in a closed door session.

From the U.S. point of view, February 5 is just the start of some critical decision making time at the U.N. for after the presentation of Gen. Powell, the jockeying will begin in the Council. With Britain just making it plain that it is keen on a second resolution specifically authorising the use of force and the U.S. agreeable to the idea, the two will have to convince the other members — permanent and non-permanent — to go along. The sentiments earlier this week were that 11 out of 15



The U.S. President, George W. Bush (right), with the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, at the White House on Friday. — Reuters

members in the Council were in favour of giving weapons inspectors "more time".

For a resolution to pass the Council, it requires nine votes with no vetoes. The thinking is

that when the push comes to shove, 13 members will vote for the second resolution with Germany and Syria standing out.

In that event, the resolution will pass as these two are non-

permanent members. "This needs to be resolved quickly. Should the United Nations decide to pass a second resolution, it would be welcomed if it is another signal that we are intent on disarming Saddam Hussein. Saddam must understand, if he does not disarm for the sake of peace, we along with other will go along and disarm Saddam Hussein," said Mr. Bush. What no one in the administration has defined is the word 'quickly' — the interpretation in the media for the start of military action against Iraq ranges from two to six weeks after February 5.

Meanwhile, at the U.N. the top weapons inspectors have indicated that they would reject an invitation from Iraq to visit the country on February 10 unless Baghdad accepted a series of conditions that showed its commitment to disarm.

According to Hans Blix of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and Mohammad ElBaradei of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Baghdad must come to terms with private interview of scientists and for U-2 surveillance flights. The Bush administration has said that the Iraqi invitation is yet another gimmick to distract world attention. "We certainly don't see anything new in this invitation," remarked the top American envoy to the U.N., John Negroponte.

WITH MIY Kc

North Korea demands no-war pact with US

Beijing: North Korea on Friday insisted that a binding non-aggression treaty was the only way to solve the ongoing nuclear crisis and said it had no interest in holding multilateral talks on the issue.

"The only way to solve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is the conclusion of a non-aggression treaty which will have binding force after going through (the US) Congress," Pyongyang's ambassador in Beijing Choe Jin-Su said at a press conference. "We are not only opposed to any attempt to internationalise the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula but also we will never participate in any form of multilateral talks."

Mr Choe called the Bush administration as an "untrustworthy, rogue group." Washington has rejected Pyongyang's demands, insisting the North must first dismantle its nuclear threat.

The crisis was triggered last October when US envoy James Kelly confronted the North during a visit to Pyongyang with US claims that it had launched an enriched uranium programme in violation of a 1994 anti-nuclear deal with Washington.

Despite North Korea's denials, the US suspended fuel aid to Pyongyang, which responded late last year by reactivating the mothballed Yongbyon plutonium-producing nuclear complex and expelling UN monitors.

Washington and its allies are insisting that Pyongyang reverse its decision this month to pull out of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. AFP

1 FEB 2003

THE STATESMAN

8 European nations back America

By Rashmee Z. Ahmed
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

31/1
GK
London: In a remarkably public split between the 'old' and 'new' halves of Europe, eight European nations have declared solidarity with America on Iraq and implicitly rebuked France and Germany.

The joint declaration signed by the leaders of Britain, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Poland, Denmark and the Czech Republic, appeared on Thursday in *The Times*, London, and other newspapers in mainland Europe.

The hard-hitting statement said the Iraqi President was "a clear threat to world security" and Iraq must not be allowed to violate UN resolutions. It offered robust support to the "transatlantic relationship as a guarantee of our freedom". It recalled Europe's "shared values" with the US and said "these values crossed the Atlantic with those who sailed from Europe to help create the USA".

It paid obeisance to America's support in ridding the continent of "two forms of 20th century tyranny, Nazism and Communism". And it declared that Europe's relationship with America should not become a "casualty" of the Iraqi problem.

The statement from the eight leaders is seen to create a damaging public divide between European Union big-hitters France and Germany and the UK-led group com-



Tony Blair



George Bush



Saddam Hussein

posed of Spain, Italy, Portugal, Denmark and future EU members Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Without naming names, it reminds Paris and Berlin that they too offered unanimous support to UN Security Council Resolution 1441, requiring Saddam Hussein to disarm and allow unfettered access to UN weapons inspectors. The statement is being seen as concrete proof of the existing divide between older and newer European members of Nato. The divide was identified with unprecedented rudeness by US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld last week, when he derided anti-war France and Germany as "old Europe".

Meanwhile, Tony Blair ended a week of intense diplomatic activity ahead of a council of war at Camp David.

31 JAN 2003

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Seven nations declare support to U.S. 3/11

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, JAN 30. Britain was today able to claim that it was not isolated in Europe over its pronounced pro-United States Iraq policy after seven European leaders defied Germany and France to throw their weight behind Washington, saying the trans-Atlantic alliance must not become a "casualty" of the Iraq crisis.

In a joint appeal in *The Times*, hours before the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, prepared to meet the U.S. President, George W. Bush, in Washington, the leaders of Italy, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Denmark supported the American campaign to disarm the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, by force if necessary.

The appeal, described by *The Times* as a "calculated rebuff" to the moderate Franco-German position, said the U.N. Security Council resolution 1441, which had the backing of all of Europe, was Mr. Hussein's "last chance to disarm using peaceful means."

"The opportunity to avoid greater confrontation rests with him," the leaders said, arguing that the Security Council would lose its "credibility and world peace will suffer as a result" if Iraq was allowed to "systematically" violate its resolutions.

Mr. Blair also signed the appeal whose other signatories included Jose Maria Aznar (Spain), Silvio Berlusconi (Italy), Vaclav Havel (Czech Republic), Jose Manuel Durao Barroso (Portu-

gal), Peter Medgyessy (Hungary), Leszek Miller (Poland) and Anders Fogh Rasmussen (Denmark). In an unprecedented tribute to America, which only last week contemptuously dismissed its European critics as belonging to an antiquated "old Europe," they said it was "thanks in large parts to American bravery, generosity and far-sightedness (that) Europe was set free from the two forms of tyranny that devastated our continent in the 20th century: Nazism and Communism." They called for "unity and cohesion" to protect the shared trans-Atlantic values allegedly threatened by Iraq.

"The combination of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism is a threat of incalculable consequences. It is one at which all of us should feel concerned," the appeal said and added, "We must remain united in insisting that his (Saddam's) regime is disarmed."

Mr. Blair, who has launched a fresh diplomatic campaign to rally support for American war aims, is seen to be emerging as a cheerleader for smaller European nations as they break ranks with Germany and France to get closer to Washington. At home, however, the opposition to his Iraq policy continued to grow with the Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, again warning against a pre-emptive action in Iraq.

"We should deal with it in a way that minimises any risk of further suffering for the people of Iraq," she said as Labour MPs insisted that he must seek a vote in Parliament before plunging the country into a war.

Bush vows to disarm Saddam

US to present new evidence to security council on February 5

Washington: Warning Iraq that the world cannot wait, President George W. Bush on Wednesday almost declared war on Baghdad, saying if Saddam Hussein failed to disarm "we will lead a coalition to disarm him".



George W. Bush

In his annual State of the Union address, Mr Bush said the US would present the UN security council with new evidence of Iraqi defiance of disarmament on February 5.

"The dictator of Iraq is not disarming, to the contrary he is deceiving," Mr Bush said and warned that "trusting in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein is not an option."

Almost three months ago the security council gave Saddam Hussein his final chance to disarm. "He has shown his utter contempt for the United Nations, and for the opinion of the world," Mr Bush said in an hour-long address.

"We will consult, but let there be no misunderstanding: if Saddam Hussein does not disarm for the safety of our people and the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him," he said. The American President sounded a warning note to other "outlaw regimes" like Iran and North Korea, saying "today the gravest danger in the war on terror... The gravest danger facing America and the world... Is outlaw regimes that seek nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. "These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror and mass murder. They could also give or sell those weapons to their terrorist allies who would use them without the least hesitation."

On the ongoing global war against ter-

ror, he said, "The war against terrorism goes on and we are winning. We have the terrorists on the run... They are learning the meaning of American justice." There is evidence that Iraq aided and protected terrorists, including members of Osama bin Laden's Al Qaida network, the group behind September 11, 2001 attacks in the US, Mr Bush said.

He said Iraq still possessed thousands of litres of anthrax and nerve gas and thousands of munitions to deliver chemical weapons. In his address, Mr Bush touched on a range of domestic and foreign policy issues, including situation in West Asia and Afghanistan.

In the West Asia, the US will continue to seek peace between a secure Israel and a democratic Palestine, he said.

Some have said we must not act until the threat is imminent," Mr Bush said. "Since when have terrorists and tyrants announced their intentions, politely putting US on notice before they strike? If this threat is permitted to fully and suddenly emerge, all actions, all words, all recriminations would come too late," he said. Mr Bush warned that Saddam Hussein, by flouting a UN disarmament ultimatum, was squandering his "final chance" to avert war.

"Twelve years ago, Saddam Hussein faced the prospect of being the last casualty in a war he had started and lost," Mr Bush said. "To spare himself, he agreed to disarm of all weapons of mass destruction. For the next 12 years, he systematically violated that agreement." AFP

30 JAN 2003

Time is running out for Iraq to disarm: Powell

Washington: As the UN arms inspectors reported to the security council that Iraq was "not genuinely" accepting disarmament, the United States has stepped up pressure on it to comply with the UN Resolution 1441, saying it did not have much more time left to do so.



Colin Powell

Iraq could still avert military action, but its opportunity for peaceful disarmament was "fast coming to an end", secretary of state Colin Powell told reporters on Monday, after chief weapons inspector Hans Blix presented his report on the 60-day search for Iraqi weapons.

Mr Powell told the security council to enforce Resolution 1441 that gives Iraq a last chance to comply with demands for disarmament.

The report of the UN inspectors showed that Iraq is not cooperating in implementing the security council resolution, which calls for disarmament with active and not passive cooperation, Mr Powell said.

Iraq's non-compliance "continues to challenge the relevance and credibility of the security council," Mr Powell said. "To this day, the Iraq regime continues to defy the will of the United Nations."

Iraq has only offered "empty claims, empty declarations and empty gestures" in response to disarmament demands. "The security council and the international community must stand behind 1441," he said.

But Iraq could still avert "serious consequences", he said.

"Iraq could answer this afternoon, if it

Who said what

- German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder added his voice to calls for UN weapons inspectors to be given more time to seek arms in Iraq, and stressed that any decision on the next move is a matter for the security council. The chief UN inspectors "have made it clear that they think (Baghdad's) cooperation must improve and that the inspectors should get the time they need to be able to complete their work in the sense of (UN) Resolution 1441," Mr Schroeder said.
- Australian Prime Minister John Howard said, "Although Iraq may have cooperated in a process sense, in substance Iraq has not cooperated and therefore, on my reading of it, is in further material breach of ... earlier resolutions".
- China's deputy envoy Zhang said the inspectors should be allowed to continue their work "impartially, objectively and professionally".

chose to," he said. Mr Powell also rejected calls for the arms inspectors to be given more time, saying it would yield little because of Iraqi non-cooperation.

"The issue is not how much more time the inspectors need to search in the dark. It is how much more time Iraq should be given to turn on the lights and come clean," he said.

"The answer is 'not much more time'," he added. Mr Powell said the security council meeting later this week was not expected to decide on the action to be taken against Iraq. The action will come only after President George W. Bush consults with allies.

"These consultations this week are not for the purpose of determining what the next steps should be," he said.

"I think we'll need more work and heads of state and government talking to one another, and foreign ministers talking with each other, before one would make a judgment as to what those next steps should be." PTI

COLIN POWELL PILES ON WAR PRESSURE ON IRAQ

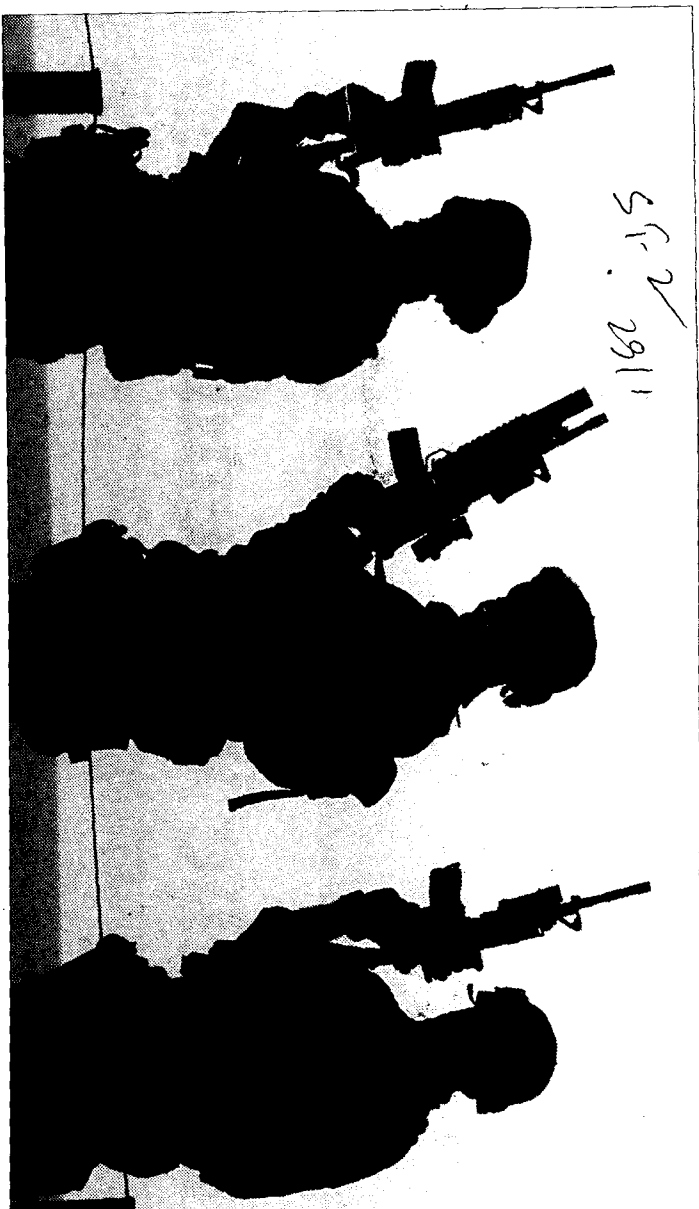
Pentagon ready for Feb strike

Agencies

WASHINGTON/ NEW YORK, Jan. 28. — The US secretary of state Mr Colin Powell has continued ratcheting up pressure on Iraq to comply with UN Resolution 1441, saying it did not have much more time left to do so — "Iraq could still avert military action, but its opportunity for peaceful disarmament was fast coming to an end," he told reporters yesterday, after chief weapons inspector Mr Hans Blix presented his report on the 60-day search for Iraqi weapons.

And in New York, Pentagon officials were today quoted as saying that the US military will be ready by mid-to-late February to quickly launch military offensive on Iraq if US President George W Bush so decides, even as evidence showed Iraq was preparing for an urban warfare, moving its missile launchers to civilian buildings around Baghdad. The February timeframe refers to the goal of being ready with a full invasion force that could achieve the goals of disarmament and regime change, they said.

Mr Powell rejected calls for the arms inspectors to be given more time, saying it would yield little because of Iraqi non-cooperation. "The issue is not how much more time the inspectors need to search



ARMS AND THE MEN: US Marines at a battle drill on Tuesday aboard the amphibious USS Nassau operating in Gulf waters. — AFP

in the dark. It is how much more time Iraq should be given to turn on the lights and come clean," he said. "The answer is: not much more time," he added.

Mr Powell, however, said the Security Council meeting later this week was not expected to decide on the action to be taken against Iraq. The action will come only after

President Bush consults with allies.

Iraq will target Kuwait: Aziz
Iraq will not rule out launching an attack against Kuwait if that country is used as a base for a US military operation against Iraq, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Mr Tariq Aziz said in an interview with Canada's CBC television, adds AFP.

"Kuwait is a battlefield and US troops are in Kuwait and preparing themselves to attack Iraq," Mr Aziz said late last night. "If there's an attack from Kuwait, I cannot say that we will not retaliate. We will of course retaliate against the American troops wherever they start their aggression on Iraq. This is legitimate," he added.

World against military action

Press Trust of India

UNHQ, Jan. 28. — Differences have emerged among UN members, including the permanent five, after the arms inspectors presented their reports on Iraq to the Security Council. The USA has taken a hardline, but Russia, France and China favour more time for inspection. Britain is walking tight-rope.

Russian ambassador Mr Sergey Lavrov claimed that inspectors were doing a useful job, while China's deputy envoy Mr Zhang Yishan said there was no clear reason to stop the inspections.

French Ambassador Mr Jean-marc de Sablier called for more active cooperation from Iraq but said, "we need more time". Outside the UNHQ, hundreds of demonstrators shouted anti-war slogans. Seventeen protesters were arrested for disorderly behaviour.

Australian Prime Minister Mr John Howard said "although Iraq may have cooperated in a process sense, in substance Iraq has not cooperated and therefore on my reading of it, is in further

material breach of... earlier resolutions," even as New Zealand said war was "far more likely".

China, however, insisted more time was needed for weapons inspectors to do their job. Mr Zhang said the inspectors should be allowed to continue their work "impartially, objectively and professionally."

Japan was tight-lipped about its position on an extension of UN weapons inspections. "We have to strongly demand that Iraq actively clarify the suspicion and follow all the UN resolutions, including the abandonment of weapons of mass destruction," chief Cabinet secretary Mr Yasuo Fukuda said. The Canadian Prime Minister Mr Jean Chretien also said his country supported UN resolution 1441 under which arms inspectors returned to Iraq and added "now we are waiting for the inspectors' reports."

Like Canada, Portugal too said it favours giving arms inspectors more time to carry out their work and urged Europe to adopt a common stance on the issue.

COOPERATION ON ACCESS, NOT SUBSTANCE'

Iraq not ready to disarm: Blix

Associated Press

UNHQ, Jan. 27. — Iraq has not genuinely accepted a UN resolution demanding that it disarm and while Baghdad is cooperating on access, it needs to do more on substance, chief weapons inspector Mr Hans Blix told the UN Security Council today.

"Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance, not even today, of the disarmament that was demanded of it," Mr Blix said at the beginning of a crucial assessment on 60 days of weapons inspections.

Mr Blix — head of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission — said it was not enough for the Iraqis to open doors. "It would appear from our experience so far that Iraq has decided in principle to provide co-operation on process, notably access. A similar decision is indispensable to provide cooperation on substance in order to bring the disarmament task to completion, through the peaceful process of inspection, and to bring the monitoring task on a firm course."

Touching on the question of how much time inspectors need, he said he shared "the sense of urgency" to achieve disarmament within "a reasonable period of time".

Mr Blix said three questions remain unanswered:

- How much illicit weapons material might remain undeclared and intact from before the Gulf War in 1991 and possibly thereafter?
- What, if anything, was illegally procured

or produced?

- How the world can prevent any weapons of mass destruction from being produced or procured in the future?

Mr Blix noted that Iraq's 12,000-page arms declaration contained little more than old material previously submitted to inspectors. "The finding on rockets shows that Iraq needs to make more effort to show that its declaration is currently accurate." He said Iraq had illegally imported 300 rocket engines that could be used for missile propulsion.

Mr Blix said inspectors also discovered a mustard gas precursor during recent inspections. "Regrettably the 12,000-page declaration, most of which is a reprint of earlier documents, does not seem to contain any new evidence that will eliminate the questions or reduce their number."

On nerve agent VX, which Iraq is believed to have weaponised before the Gulf War, he said the Iraqis hadn't sufficiently answered questions on the fate of its stockpiles.

On biological weapons, Mr Blix said Iraq had failed to produce "convincing evidence" that it unilaterally destroyed its anthrax stockpiles and that there were indications that Iraq could have

had larger quantities than it reported to inspectors.

"In the fields of missiles and biotechnology, the declaration contains a good deal of new material and information covering the period from 1998 and onward. This is welcome."

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America readies fresh evidence, page 2

Onus on UN, says America

UNHQ, Jan. 27. — The UN Security Council must "face its responsibilities" on disarming Iraq, US ambassador to the UN Mr John Negroponte said tonight after warning that a crucial UN report showed no sign that Baghdad was ready to disarm.

The British foreign secretary, Mr Jack Straw, said the crisis couldn't be resolved through the UN without Iraq's total co-operation, while the Nato secretary-general Lord Robertson played down a split between top members of the alliance over Iraq. A "peaceful" solution to the crisis is still possible, said the EU's Greek presidency. — AFP

28 JAN 2003

N. Korea poses a global threat: Powell

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DAVOS (SWITZERLAND) JAN. 26. The United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said on Sunday that North Korea's nuclear programme was a danger to the Asian region and to the world.

Gen. Powell said the U.S. had always been honest with the reclusive Communist nation and was also the biggest donor of humanitarian aid, but North

Korea had to prove it could be trusted.

"The U.S. stands ready to build a different kind of relationship with North Korea once Pyongyang comes into verifiable compliance with its commitments," Gen. Powell said in a speech to the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum.

"The United States is willing to talk to North Korea about

how it will meet its obligations to completely dismantle its nuclear weapons programme ... Pyongyang's behaviour affects the stability of both the immediate region and the world," he said.

Gen. Powell repeated that the U.S. did not intend to attack North Korea and that it would continue to provide aid to the country, which had suf-

fered famine and economic collapse. "North Korea's policies have dragged its people into a dark, cold, hungry hell," he said.

North Korea is demanding a non-aggression treaty with the U.S. Washington has ruled out a formal treaty, but hinted that it could provide a written security guarantee. — AP

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IRAQ / 'FRANCE, GERMANY CAN SIT ON THE SIDELINES'

U.S. will not lack allies: Powell

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JAN. 24. Faced with mounting protests internally and from overseas, the Bush administration is trying to play out the line that the United States would not have to act alone against Iraq; but has made the point that if nations such as France and Germany decide to sit on the sidelines, it was their business and prerogative.

"I don't think we'll have to worry about going it alone", the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said after a meeting with his British counterpart, Jack Straw, going on to stress that the U.S. reserved the right to act alone if the United Nations did not provide the lead in Iraq.

"I am quite confident if it comes to that, we will be joined by many nations... it will be a strong coalition".

The Bush administration, in seemingly taking a tough stance on Iraq and on the perceptions of allies, is now trying to soften its image for the domestic and foreign audiences; and is giving the impression that it might be flexible on the time-frame at the U.N. if that could be a way to win back support in New York and in the Security Council.

Referring to the report of the weapons inspectors that Hans

Blix is due to give on Monday at the Security Council, Gen. Powell noted that this was the beginning of a debate, "not the end" of the debate. "We listen to others and we find a way forward", the top Cabinet official said.

At the White House, the spokesman, in responding to the criticism and attitude of America's Atlantic allies, argued that nations could opt to stay on the sidelines but there would be plenty of countries supporting the United States. "It is their prerogative, if they choose, to be on the sidelines", Ari Fleischer remarked.

The administration has gone about in a variety of ways on Iraq, especially as it pertained to an imminent military strike against the Saddam Hussein regime. Playing out the diplomatic cards in Washington, New York and world capitals apart, pressure is also being kept on Baghdad.

For instance, one of the top hawks in the administration, Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defence, accused the Hussein regime of intimidating its scientists and threatening them and their families with death should they cooperate with the U.N.



THE WAY TO GO?: The United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell (right), with the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, at the State Department in Washington on Thursday. — Reuters

Domestically, the administration is finding a major challenge on its hands both by way of public opinion and sentiments on Capitol Hill over the showdown with Iraq.

The American public is telling the administration that while it supports military force to topple Mr. Hussein, this was not before diplomatic efforts and

the inspections process run their full course. A latest poll shows 63 per cent of Americans want the President, George W. Bush, to find a diplomatic solution.

Gen. Powell and the Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, went up to Capitol Hill to give a closed-door briefing to Senators.

THE TIMES

2 7 2003

IRAQ / WASHINGTON DISMISSES ALLIES' CRITICISM

U.S. will stick to strategy: Powell

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JAN. 23. The Bush administration is taking on criticism from Atlantic allies head-on, making the point that while Washington is willing to wait for the report of the inspectors, the bottom line is that Saddam Hussein will have to be disarmed. And the options before the Iraqi leader is that he could do this disarmament process himself or have someone else do it for him.

The Secretary of State, Colin Powell, in some unusually plain observations about the attitude of France on the ongoing crisis, said that he hoped Paris "will come to the understanding of the need for such a strategy and the importance of such a strategy". But Gen. Powell stressed that the United States would "stick with that strategy".

Prior to the final formulation of Security Council resolution 1441, France held out for about eight weeks and has now made the point that any attempt by Washington to have its way in the Council in the aftermath of the report of the weapons inspectors next week could be met with a veto. In the Non-Permanent category at the Council, Germany is with France.

The blunt talking of administration officials has not been confined to senior Cabinet members. The President, George W. Bush, himself has been quite vocal in the last few days responding to international and domestic criticism, besides showing frustration and irritation with allies which are asking for "more time" for the current process in place at the United Nations. On Wednesday in St.



ON BOARD U.S. CAMPAIGN: A sailor waves from the deck of the Royal Australian Navy ship HMAS Kanimbla before the vessel left for the Persian Gulf from Sydney on Thursday. — Reuters

Louis, Missouri, Mr. Bush once again warned Saddam Hussein of "serious consequences" in a war with the U.S., including a warning to the Iraqi Generals who may be instructed to use weapons of mass destruction in the event of a showdown. "There will be serious consequences for the dictator in Iraq. And there will be serious consequences for any Iraqi general or soldier who were to use weap-

ons on our troops or on innocent lives", Mr. Bush remarked. "Should any Iraqi officer or soldier receive an order from Saddam Hussein or his sons or any of the killers who occupy the high (offices) of their Government, my advice is don't follow that order", the President said.

The fact that Mr. Bush has been using every opportunity to warn the regime in Baghdad of serious consequences in the

event of a military strike and in the resort to the use of weapons of mass destruction has been construed in some quarters as meaning that a war may just be a few weeks away. The President's warning to the Iraqi leader on the use of weapons of mass destruction comes with a perception that a Saddam Hussein, who is pinned down, might just resort to use of chemical and biological weapons.

The Bush administration has made it known even from last year that any Iraqi General who obeys instructions on the use of weapons of mass destruction will be tried as a war criminal. The warnings from the President and his senior officials have to be seen not just in the context of rising discontent across the Atlantic over the policies and attitudes of this Republican administration. Rather, there is a growing feeling even within this country that the White House has not fully justified why the U.S. should be heading to war — according to one poll, 53 per cent are questioning the President's justifications and rationale for taking on Saddam Hussein.

Neither the disquiet in the Atlantic nor the rumblings within the country appear to rattle the administration as it goes about the preparations for a military showdown.

The daily announcement of beefing up forces and flotilla in the Persian Gulf apart, the top Pentagon brass is confident that American forces are ready for combat. "We're ready now", says the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard Myers.

Iraq's neighbours look for ways to avert war

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), JAN. 23. THE Foreign Ministers of Iraq's key neighbours, along with their counterpart from Egypt, today met in Istanbul to look for ways to delay, if not avert, a war in Iraq.

In what appears to be a two-stage strategy, the Foreign Ministers of Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt looked for a formulation that would encourage Iraq to disarm as well as meet the U.S. demands for "regime change" in Baghdad.

A summit meeting of the five countries in Damascus is expected to follow the Istanbul conference. The foremost task of the Foreign Ministers was to seek a delay in a possible war by adding their weight to the espousal of the European countries, especially France and Germany, that the United Nations weapons inspections in Iraq should be allowed to run their course before a war to disarm Iraq is brought under consideration.

There is a realisation among regional players that for postponing the decision on the war, the United States needs to be discouraged from taking unilateral military action against Baghdad. Opposed to unilateral action, the Foreign Ministers are insisting that the U.N. Security Council should, through a fresh resolution, sanction any course of action for disarming Iraq.

The U.S., it is expected, may not find it easy to get a U.N. nod for military action, as France, a Security Council member, has threatened to veto a war resolution, without allowing the inspections to run their course. Among the countries participating in the Istanbul conference, Jordan and Turkey have some leverage to delay any U.S. military action. Jordan has stated that it will not allow the use of its territory or airspace for military action against Iraq. Without Jordanian support, the U.S. would find it difficult to open a "western front" against Iraq.

While Turkey is not opposing the use of U.S. military bases on its soil, it is against staging a large number of U.S. troops on its territory. The stationing of these forces in Turkey is necessary in case the U.S. wishes to open a "northern front". Turkey, by extending its negotiations with the U.S. on this subject, is in a position to influence, if not delay, a U.S. military strike on Iraq from the north. Turkey, which is a NATO member, is yet to come under the collective pressure of the grouping, as the military alliance itself is reluctant to formulate collective plans in support of war.

On the question of disarming Baghdad, Iraq's neighbours are keen that the Saddam Hussein regime should accelerate this process. But it is on the issue of encouraging "regime change" they find themselves virtually toothless.

There have been reports in recent days that the neighbours are urging that Mr. Hussein must into exile, thereby accomplishing the goal of "regime change" without involving the use of force. But subsequently, the Iraqis as well as its neighbours have denied that such a proposal is on the table at the Istanbul conference.

China too not for military action

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JAN. 23. The political polarisation of international opinion on the Iraq crisis acquired a sharper edge today, as China made common cause with France and Germany on the diplomatic side of the spectrum, while Australia openly joined the U.S.-U.K. ranks on the military side for a practical game of confrontation.

As the only Asian country among the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, China joined the group of nations which see the inadvisability of using military force to 'disarm' Iraq of its alleged stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and disable Baghdad in its sus-

pected search for capabilities to produce and deliver them.

Alluding to the Franco-German consensus on this issue, the Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Zhang Qiyue, said at a regular press conference in Beijing today that China "hopes to resolve the Iraq issue through diplomatic and political means" within the framework of the United Nations.

Any move that might be made by the "relevant countries" should be 'conducive' to such a diplomatic-political search, Ms. Zhang said, in response to a question about Australia's latest action in the Asia Pacific context.

In the face of some dissonance within the Australian political arena, the Prime Minis-

ter, John Howard, today saw off a batch of military personnel who set sail on a mission of preparations for a possible conflict with Iraq.

While Mr. Howard emphasised that Australia would still seek to explore ways of settling the current Iraq crisis short of open military hostilities, the country's defence establishment portrayed the mission as a form of 'pre-deployment' of forces for a 'potential' war with Baghdad.

The main argument within the Opposition circles in Australia was that the U.N. should first be allowed to explore the Iraq issue in full.

Germ attack detectors

NEW YORK, JAN. 23. A network of monitoring stations, known as 'Biowatch', is to guard the United States, giving early warning of biological warfare attacks on its cities. The system, based at many of the 3,000 air quality monitoring sites, is designed to detect harmful agents such as anthrax and smallpox, and alert the health services to the danger.

However, in one significant drawback, the system will not pick up the release of hazardous materials in

closed areas such as subways or shopping malls. The first city to be equipped with the technology will be New York, the country's largest population centre.

The monitoring stations will forward samples of a special paper filter to laboratories which will then analyse the results and can sound the alarm within 12-24 hours giving the country's health system more time to despatch antibiotics and vaccines. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2003

BUSH MAY GIVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Europe is not just France and Germany: Rumsfeld

24/1
WASHINGTON, JAN. 23. Playing down French and German opposition to an early attack on Iraq, the U.S. Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, said the U.S. President, George W. Bush, is likely to present "some additional information" on Baghdad's weapons programme and terrorist links if military action was needed.

Europe means not just France and Germany. There are a very large number of countries who have said they are "anxious and ready" to join a "coalition of willing" to disarm Iraq, Mr. Rumsfeld said at a press conference on Wednesday.

Though a good deal of material information had already been presented on an open basis on Iraq's non-compliance with the U.N. resolution, more details might be made public if a military action was necessary, he said. "If the President decides to use force because of lack of cooperation on the part of Iraq, (he) would very likely

HO-1
present the world some additional information, relating to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, its relationships with terrorist organisations." On the support for an early attack on Iraq, he said: "Germany has

WS (2)
been a problem and France has been a problem. But look at the vast number of other countries in Europe. They are not with France and Germany on this. They are with the U.S." — PTI

U.S. sticks to stand: Page 14

Arrogance, says France

PARIS, JAN. 23. A host of French Ministers reacted angrily on Thursday to the U.S. Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld's dismissal of France and Germany as the "old Europe", saying his remarks underscored America's arrogance.

But on a visit to Berlin, the French President, Jacques Chirac, immediately called for calm to prevent the row from degenerating into a full-blown diplomatic crisis.

Mr. Chirac's spokesperson, Catherine Colonna, said the French President considered the debate on a war with Iraq "legitimate" but wanted to see it "take place with seriousness and calmness".

His more conciliatory tone was not echoed by Ministers in Paris. The Finance Minister, Francis Mer, said he was "profoundly vexed" by the remarks. "I wanted to remind everyone that this 'old Europe' has resilience, and is capable of bouncing back," he told LCI television. "And it will show it, in time."

The Government's official spokesman, Jean-Francois Cope, said Mr. Rumsfeld would do better to listen to the "wise" advice of the "old Europe" gained through its long history. — AP

Russia, China ask Bush to go slow

24/1
Press Trust of India

MOSCOW, Jan. 23. — Mr Vladimir Putin today telephoned Mr George W Bush to discuss the North Korean nuclear crisis and the Iraq issue. The Russian President expressed hope for a political settlement of the North Korean crisis and stressed that any action against Iraq should be taken only after the UN weapons inspectors submit their report.

Mr Putin told the US President that he believed Russian envoy Mr Alexander Losyukov's just concluded mission to Pyongyang provided good outlines of the base for a productive dialogue with North Korea to end the nuclear crisis, a Kremlin press statement said here.

In another development, Beijing today asked the USA and North Korea to resume early direct talks and not to complicate the situation in the Korean peninsula.

"We think that the top priority at this time is for the relevant parties to resume dialogue at an early date, which is the most effective way to solve this issue," Chinese foreign min-

istry spokeswoman Ms Zhang Qiyue said.

"We do not hope to see any other party to take any moves that will complicate this issue," Ms Zhang said when asked whether Beijing would support Washington's move to place Pyongyang's nuclear issue before the UN Security Council.

China's basic position on Pyongyang's nuclear issue was to maintain peace and stability in the Korean peninsula and "we stand for the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula".

Sanctions ruled out

The USA has said that it will ask the UN Security Council to take up the issue of North Korea's secret nuclear programme by the end of this week but ruled out seeking sanctions against Pyongyang.

US undersecretary of state Mr John R Bolton, who is visiting Seoul, said the North Korean issue would reach the UN "by the end of this week", media reports said. But, according to top US officials accompanying Mr Bolton, USA will not seek sanctions when it asks the UN Security Council to address Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, the *Washington Post* said.

THE STATESMAN

24 JAN 2003

19/12/01

IRAQ / WAR THE ONLY OPTION, SAYS ARMITAGE

19/12/01

Bush chides allies for 'dithering'

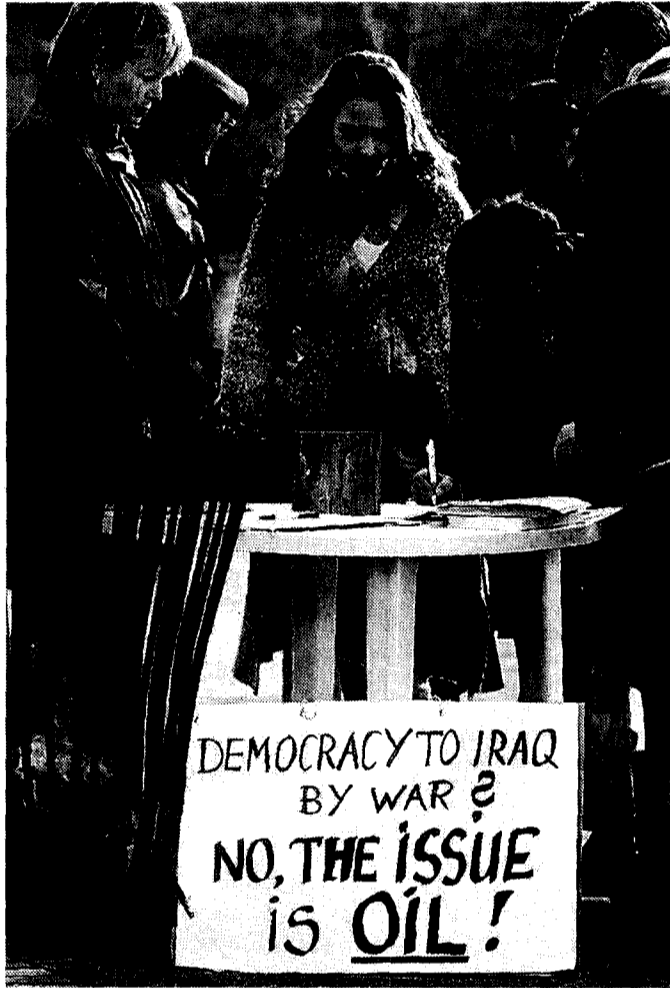
By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JAN. 22. Faced with some unusually blunt criticism from allies across the Atlantic over its course in Iraq, the Bush administration is attempting to meet the challenge in different ways even as it tries to keep up the military pressure on Saddam Hussein.

A visibly irritated United States President, George W. Bush, on Tuesday asked allies how much "more time" had to be given to the Iraqi leader, who in his view, was not disarming. The President also went on to remind allies of their own history. "The business about more time: how much time do we need to see clearly that he's not disarming", the President asked in referring to Mr. Hussein. "Surely, our friends have learned lessons from the past. Surely, we have learned how this man deceives and delays", Mr. Bush said at the Oval Office.

Mr. Bush's mild rebuke or chiding of allies is only one part of a broader strategy that this Republican administration is resorting to in an effort to win over allies at the United Nations Security Council and in the international community as a whole. In a speech that is said to have been cleared by the White House, the Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, argued that time was running out for any option except war. "Some people may say there is no smoking gun, but there's nothing but smoke", Mr. Armitage said here.

Privately, senior members of the administration are talking with both permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council in New York. The Secretary of State, Colin Powell, while making his rounds in New York, was asked if the U.S.



JOINING HANDS: People sign a declaration against a war on Iraq, in the eastern German city of Greifswald on Wednesday. — AP

would militarily go after Saddam Hussein with or without the authorisation from the Security Council. He argued that the Iraqi leader must be disarmed "if not peacefully, then by force... one way or another, Saddam Hussein must be disarmed".

It is not without reason that the Bush administration is ac-

tively courting the non-permanent members of the Security Council, knowing that their powers are limited. It requires at least nine votes in the Council to push through a resolution; and in the current context of Iraq, even some of the "allies" in the war against terror are proving to be tough customers in the campaign against Iraq.

Right now, the biggest problem for the administration is coming from France and Germany, and to some extent from Russia and China which are all opposed in some way or another to any military strike against Iraq. While France, Russia and China are veto-holding members, Germany takes over the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. So far, only France has given the clearest indication of casting a veto on any resolution that is sought on use of force.

The Bush administration is trying to downplay media reports that more and more allies of the U.S. are distancing themselves from the scheme of things. Yesterday, the President reminded the "punditry" of the situation on the eve of the voting on resolution 1441 last November. The U.S. came away with unanimous backing in the Security Council with even Syria extending its support. But the situation and environment — over and beyond New York — is vastly different now, more than two months down the line.

One of the critical periods in this ongoing showdown with Iraq is next week when three things will take place; two in New York and one in Washington. First, on January 27, the chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, will be submitting his report to the Security Council; the Council has scheduled a session on January 29 to discuss the report. And on January 28, Mr. Bush will be delivering his State of the Union address, which will have his first reactions to the report of Mr. Blix.

The expectation is that Mr. Bush will not use the occasion to impose a final deadline — rather, continue more forcefully with his case against Saddam Hussein.

THE HINDU

22 JAN 2002

25 JAN 2002

Bush says no more time, Europe objects

Washington/Baghdad, Jan. 21 (Reuters): President George W. Bush spelled out the US' readiness to attack Iraq soon, dismissing calls from Europe, Russia and West Asia today to give President Saddam Hussein more time to disarm.

"It's clear to me now that he is not disarming... He's been given ample time to disarm," he said. "Time is running out."

UN weapons inspectors pleaded for several months longer to check Iraq's denials. And Security Council big powers France, Russia and China called for more time for diplomacy. But Bush responded: "This business about more time — how much more time do we need to be sure he is not disarming?"

"This looks to me like a rerun of a bad movie and I'm not interested in watching it," he added, saying Saddam had been defying UN resolutions since his Gulf war defeat in 1991.

Coming just a week before

crucial meetings at the UN, they were among the most impatient comments yet from the leader of the world's lone superpower. He is massing more than 150,000 troops in the oil-rich Gulf and has made clear he is ready to use them, with or without a new UN mandate.

Oil prices hit two-year highs as the Pentagon ordered two more aircraft carriers and 37,000 troops to the region.

Yesterday, chief UN arms inspector Hans Blix is to deliver a report to the Security Council. If he voices dissatisfaction with Iraq's cooperation — and he told Reuters today there were still "many questions" unanswered — it could mean war.

The Security Council meets two days later on January 29 and Bush will meet British Prime Minister Tony Blair, his one big military ally in a "coalition of the willing", on January 31.

Washington has made clear it sees no need further Security

Council approval for an attack on Iraq — and France for one underlined that it will not get that mandate any time soon.

Foreign minister Dominique de Villepin said Paris wanted to rally the EU against a hasty decision to fight: "We see no justification today for a (military) intervention, since the inspectors are able to do their work," he said in Brussels. "We could not support unilateral action."

France, which has nonetheless left the door open to eventual use of force, has a veto on the 15-seat Security Council, along with the US, Britain, Russia and China. A White House spokesman voiced some frustration with the French stance, arguing that Paris agreed Saddam was lying. The EU is sharply divided, with Germany firmly against any war and Britain mobilising alongside the Americans, whose generals would prefer to fight before the hot desert summer.

THE TELEGRAPH

22 JAN 2003

Ambush claims American in Kuwait

Associated Press

KUWAIT CITY, Jan. 21. — An unidentified assailant ambushed a vehicle carrying two Americans near a US military camp today, riddling the car with bullets and killing one person in what the US embassy called a terrorist attack.

Both victims were civilian contractors working for the US military based in Kuwait, and the statement said the second man was critically wounded.

"We condemn this terrorist incident, which has cost the life of an innocent American," US ambassador to Kuwait Mr Richard Jones said.

US embassy spokesman Mr John Moran said the Americans were inside their vehicle on Highway 85 north of Kuwait City near Camp Doha, a large military installation serving as a base for 17,000 troops.

The embassy statement said

Security Council plea on terror

UNHQ, Jan. 21. — Condemning terrorism in all its forms, the Security Council has asked member states to take "urgent action" to prevent and suppress all "active and passive support to terrorists."

In a declaration unanimously adopted yesterday at the end of a special meeting on combating terrorism, the Council demanded that all states bring to justice those who finance or commit terrorist acts or provide a safe haven to terrorists. — PTI

both men had multiple gunshot wounds.

An investigator said that an attacker fired a Kalashnikov from behind the bushes. The gunman or gunmen then fled.

The man who died was 51 and the wounded man is 47,

said interior ministry official Brig. Mahmoud al-Dossari, who confirmed that the weapon used was a Kalashnikov. Their identities have not been released. Nobody has claimed responsibility.

Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and foreign minister, Sheik Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah sent a condolence message to US secretary of state Gen. Colin Powell, the official Kuwait News Agency reported. He expressed "sincere regret" and Kuwait's "strong condemnation of such criminal acts that target the historic relations and strong ties between the two friendly nations", the agency reported.

Saudi foreign minister Saud al-Faisal described the killing as "tragic", adds AFP from Cairo.

"This is something tragic, especially because of the relations between Kuwait and the USA," the kingdom's minister said following talks here with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.



The body of the US army's civilian contractor, who was shot dead near Kuwait City on Tuesday. — AFP

A name found in

Don't shirk your duty, Colin Powell tells UN

United Nations: In a harbinger of what lies ahead, France bluntly told the United States it would not support an attack on Iraq in the coming weeks, a position diplomats said was shared by most of the 15 UN Security Council members.



Colin Powell

Its foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin, in a news conference after US secretary of state Colin Powell spoke on Monday, hinted at using his veto against any resolution authorising military force. "We believe that nothing today justifies envisaging military action," he said.

Mr Villepin was careful to distinguish between supporting force now and in the future, which he did not rule out. His position, diplomats said, reflected apprehension among a number of council members that the Bush administration wanted support for war next week, choosing a timetable based on when the weather was best for the US military.

On January 27, UN weapons inspectors are to give a major report to the Security Council.

Monday's meeting involved foreign ministers of security council members, who came to the United Nations for a counter-terrorism meeting called by Mr Villepin, whose country holds the council presidency in January.

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer gave a solid "no" to military action in his first statement to the council since Berlin joined the 15-member body

W (W) in January.

(11-9 2001)
"We are greatly concerned that a military strike against the regime in Baghdad would involve considerable and unpredictable risks for the global fight against terrorism," he said. "These are fundamental reasons for our rejection of military action."

And China's foreign minister, Tang Jiaxuan, argued that UN weapons inspectors should be given more time to search for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction after January 27. "I believe this report actually is not a full stop of the inspection work but rather a new beginning," Mr Tang said.

Mr Powell, departing from his planned speech on counter-terrorism, said the security council would have to "make a judgment" on Iraq's cooperation after the inspectors give their report next week. He warned the council several times not to shirk its responsibilities.

"We must not shirk from our duties and our responsibilities when the material comes before us next week," Mr Powell said. "We cannot be shocked into impotence because we are afraid of the difficult choices that are ahead of us."

In contrast to the US, France believes that Iraq's weapons have been kept in check as long as inspectors are on the ground. If Washington went to war without support from the security council, it would only be "a victory for the law of the strongest," Mr Villepin said.

British foreign secretary Jack Straw gave the only sign of support for the US, telling that "time was running out" for President Saddam Hussein and his "cat and mouse" game. Reuters

US forces on mission to assassinate Saddam

Larnaca/Washington, Jan 20

THE UNITED States has given Saddam Hussein three options — get killed, leave Iraq or face an all-out war.

The US reportedly launched a military and intelligence effort to track down and possibly kill Saddam Hussein. Bush also offered Saddam immunity from prosecution if his departure from Baghdad would avert war.

The activities are part of a strategy designed to pressure Saddam to depart or disarm and, if he won't, pave the way for a US-led invasion to oust him.

US special forces, CIA paramilitary units, satellite imagery, radio intercepts and airborne reconnaissance are all being used in the operation against Saddam. Missions include monitoring troop movements at army bases used by Iraqi Republican Guard, Saddam's most loyal defenders.

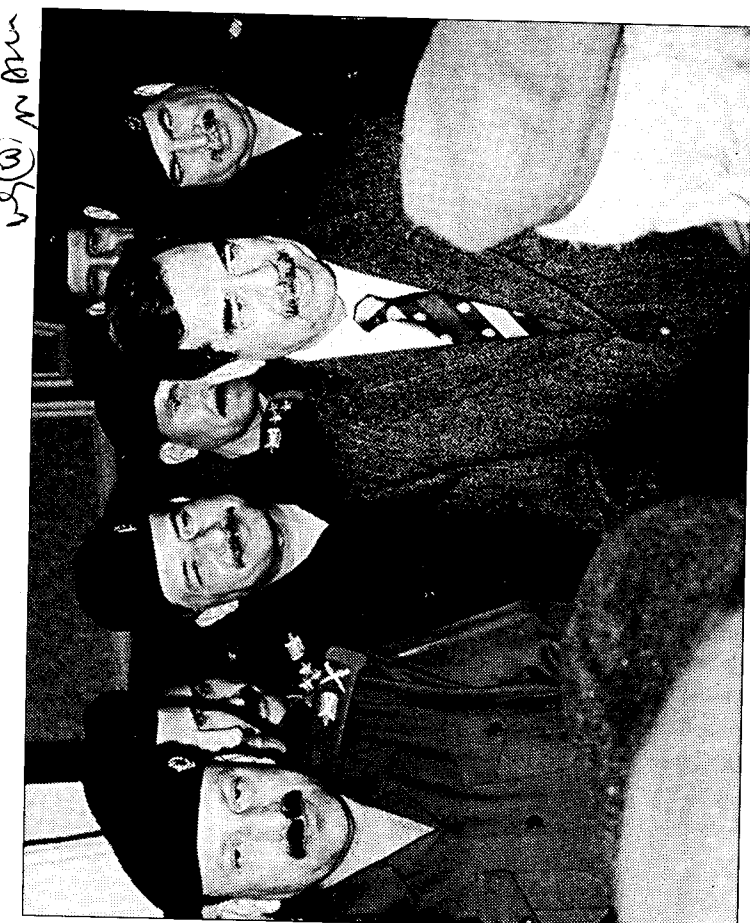
A converted Boeing 707 is flying 10 hours a day, recording telephone conversations of top Iraqi officials and pinpointing the location of calls to within a mile.

Two spy satellites are intercepting calls and walkie-talkie transmissions from Iraqi military sites, Saddam's motorcade, his palaces and other areas.

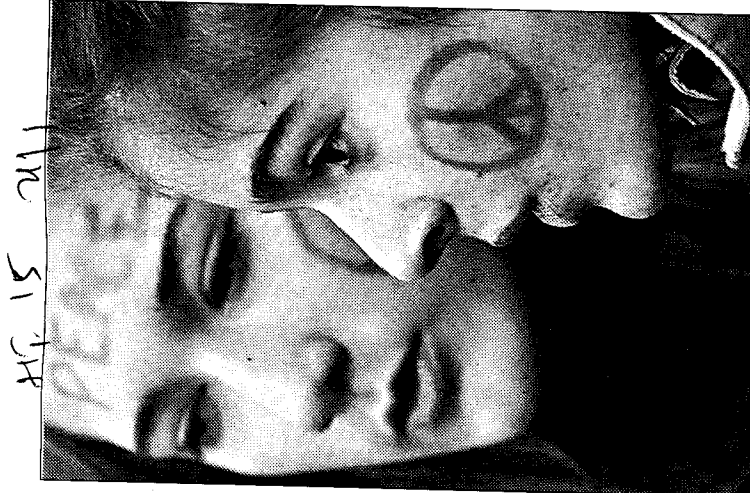
With only seven days to go before weapons inspectors deliver their crucial report to the UN Security Council, US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, dangled the prospect of a peaceful way out, despite the massive military build-up.

"If to avoid a war," Rumsfeld said in a TV interview, "I would recommend that some provision be made so that the senior leadership in that country and their families could be provided haven in some other country."

Hours later, his more dovish rival in the US administration,



President Saddam Hussein with army officers and his son Qusai in Baghdad. (Right) Two girls sing a protest song along with anti-war demonstrators outside the FBI building in Washington on Sunday.



AFF

Colin Powell, backed his remarks. Asked about a reported Saudi initiative to grant amnesty to senior Iraqi leaders, he said: "I would encourage Saddam Hussein, if he is getting any messages of this kind, to listen."

Even if the US granted President Saddam immunity from prosecution, the viability of the Arab plan would depend on his willingness to give up power, something many believe he would never contemplate. In London, the Foreign Office maintained that the main issue was disarming Iraq rather than removing Saddam.

"The key issue is for Iraq to comply with its international obligations whatever group of people forms its leadership," a spokeswoman said.

Hans Blix, the chief UN weapons inspector, began high-level meetings on Sunday night in Baghdad, saying: "We do not think war is inevitable."

Rumsfeld piled the pressure on Iraq by saying that Washington would know "in a matter of weeks whether Iraq was cooperating fully with the inspectors". His comment contrasted with remarks by Mohammed el-Baradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Authority, who said that UN monitors needed "a few more months".

El-Baradei and Blix must report to the UN by January 27. UN officials said Baghdad re-

AF 15 211

Iraq allows UN to question scientists

Baghdad, January 20

IRAQ ON Monday agreed to encourage its scientists to be interviewed by UN inspectors in private, a major concession to UN officials pressing for greater cooperation in the search for banned weapons.

A 10-point agreement was signed to facilitate the work of disarmament monitors, chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix announced.

The accord covers access to all sites, including private homes, encourages Iraqi scientists to accept private interviews and appoints a team for a comprehensive search for warheads.

An adviser to President Saddam Hussein also said the Government agreed to enact laws on "proscribed materials", meaning weapons of mass destruction, as had been urged by the United Nations.

"Those asked for interviews in private will be encouraged to accept," presidential adviser Amir al-Saadi told reporters at the end of two days of talks with chief inspectors Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei.

The two UN officials arrived in Baghdad on Sunday to seek greater cooperation from Iraq as the US warned time was running out for Baghdad to comply with UN orders or face attack.

At the of the final round of talks, al-Saadi described the discussions as "very constructive and positive" and outlined a series of steps agreed to by both sides to enhance cooperation. Al-

Saadi said Iraq had appointed a team to investigate the discovery last week of 16 warheads which could be used for chemical weapons, banned under UN resolutions.

He said Iraq was also prepared to answer questions arising from Baghdad's 12,000-page weapons declaration, which the United Nations and the United States have termed insufficient.

In addition to encouraging scientists to speak with inspectors in private, al-Saadi said the list of people involved in weapons research programmes "will be supplemented in accordance with advice" from the UN and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The US had complained that the list provided by Iraq of scientists involved in weapons programmes was incomplete and that inspectors had been unable to interview them without the presence of Iraqi officials.

The concessions by Iraq appeared aimed at undercutting the US complaints that Baghdad was failing to cooperate with the inspectors and therefore in "material breach" of UN resolutions.

In Washington, Bush administration officials again signalled impatience with the process. "We can't keep this up forever," Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Sunday.

He said Iraq still has not accounted for stocks of biological and chemical warfare agents "that we know they had".

Agencies

administration hinted on Monday that they would consider a safe haven from Iraq if that would avoid a war, even as they rejected calls for delay before confronting him militarily.

Asked if a safe haven could also mean forgoing war crimes trials, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld suggested that he would recommend that some provision be made so that the senior leadership in that country and their families could be provided haven in some other country.

"And I think that that would be a fair trade to avoid a war," he added.

Agencies

vealed it had found four more empty chemical warheads similar to the dozen found by inspectors last week.

Blix insisted: "It requires comprehensive inspections and very active Iraqi cooperation." He earlier accused Iraq of playing "a cheap game of chess".

Blix played down the discovery of 3,000 documents in the home of the Iraqi physicist Faleh Hassan last week. The papers, found after a tip-off, were "not evidence of a weapon of mass destruction and are all pre-1990", he said.

Saddam exile plan

Three top officials of the Bush

Wave of anti-war protests hits US

WJ/K.P. NAYAR WS/W

Washington, Jan. 19: The ghosts of anti-Vietnam war protests, which radically transformed American society in the 1960s, revisited the US this weekend as this nation observed the 74th birthday of the late Martin Luther King as a national holiday.

From America's capital here in the east to San Francisco in the west, protesters opposed to unilateral US military action against Iraq marched in Portland, Des Moines, Indianapolis, Albuquerque, Lansing, Montpelier, Houston, Richmond and several cities in California and Florida, including the gates of MacDill Air Force base in Tampa, headquarters of the military's Central Command, which will direct the war in Iraq.

Women in Montana protested in the nude in a blistering sandstorm and Donna Sheehan, a 72-year-old California artist, is organising women in San Francisco to shed their clothes and assemble to form the words "No war" and "Peace".

The biggest protest was here in front of the US Capitol, where half a million people, according to unofficial estimates, marched in sub-zero temperatures to a navy yard for a "people's inspection" of America's weapons of mass destruction.

They journeyed by bus to the Capitol from places as far away as Minnesota and Maine. Official estimates put the crowd at only 30,000.

Actress Jessica Lange and Ron Kovic, crippled in Vietnam 35 years ago whose story created the movie *Born on the Fourth of July*, were among the star speakers at the Washington rally.

Folk singer and Vietnam war protest veteran Joan Baez, actress Amy Brenneman and Martin Sheen, who plays the role of the US President in *The West Wing* TV serial, led the demonstrators in San Francisco, where the city hall opened its doors to the march as sign of official support for anti-war rallies.

Some 35 city councils across America have officially signalled support for anti-war protests, which have suddenly gathered momentum in anticipation of a crucial report to the UN by weapons inspectors in Iraq on January 27.

As in the Vietnam era, the protests had the seeds of dividing American society. Mike Ellis, a graduate of West Point military academy, stood among a handful of pro-war demonstrators in San Francisco. His girlfriend was across the road in an anti-war protest.

20 JAN 2003

For the present the USA has decided upon war with Iraq even if the pretext of unearthing weapons of mass destruction has proved to be flimsy

THE TALK OF WAR

By SM MURSHED

SADDAM Hussein, even if it is supposed that he possesses weapons of mass destruction and that he has used such weapons against his own people in the past, does not pose a threat to the USA, Britain and the western world. It is thus difficult to understand the anxiety of George W Bush and his self-appointed aide, Tony Blair, to wage war on Iraq. A credible casus belli is absent. Blair says that instead of finding out the hard way what mischief such weapons can cause, it makes good sense, after 11 September, to take them away from potential mischief makers, beginning with Iraq, which is one of the three states forming Bush's famous axis of evil. This is merely echoing Bush's doctrine of a pre-emptive strike against Iraq.

The USA has reinforced its threat of war with active preparations on the ground. It has so far despatched about 100,000 combat troops to the Gulf region and Britain has despatched a convoy of 15 warships, led by the aircraft carrier "Ark Royal", to the same region, although the ostensible purpose for this is holding naval exercises in Malaysian waters.

The rhetoric of both Bush and his principal aide is that Saddam Hussein should disarm himself and get rid of his weapons of mass destruction or they will disarm him by force in accordance with UN's Security Council resolution no 1441. Saddam Hussein says that he does not have the weapons in question. He submitted to the UN a declaration by the stipulated date — 8 December 2002 — of what he has and does not have. This declaration is false, and Saddam has been known to lie in the past, is the American and British position.

Even if it is conceded, for the sake of argument, that lies have been spoken in the past, that does not conclusively prove that they have been repeated now without verification of the truth. For the purpose of this

The author is a retired IAS officer and former adviser to the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir.

verification, the UN has a team of inspectors who have not so far discovered any trace of them. Notwithstanding this, Bush and Blair insist that the weapons are there and they are, therefore, preparing to take them away by brute force. Blair went a step further by presenting to a sceptical world an egregious dossier, prepared by his intelligence agencies, of what he regards as evidence of Saddam Hussein possessing wea-

hold their horses till then at least and decide their course of action only after they see what is in the report.

War with Iraq will not be automatic according to the UN resolution 1441. The question whether there are grounds for going to war has to come up for discussion before the Security Council in terms of that resolution. But Blair is quick to point out that the question does not depend upon a second reso-

North Korean intransigence is open and defiant. But the USA is not contemplating war against that country



pons of mass destruction, nuclear, biological and chemical. This dossier contains no evidence at all, but only bland assertions not capable of verification.

It apparently has not occurred to Bush and Blair that if Saddam, according to his declared position, does not have contraband weapons in his possession, how can he get rid of them. Bush in a rare brain wave enunciated the doctrine that it is not for him to prove that Saddam has the weapons, but for the latter to prove that he does not have them! Apparently, he has not heard of the logical truism that a negative cannot be proved. Neither Bush nor Blair will disclose their evidence, such as it may be, for saying that the weapons exist; they will not share this evidence with the inspectors.

The proposition seems fairly obvious that if the inspectors do not find any questionable weapons, the weapons simply do not exist now, whatever might have been the position in the past. Their preliminary report is, however, not due before 27 January. Bush and Blair should

lution, implying thereby that if, after a general discussion of the question, there is a block in the Security Council against war, then the US may decide to go it alone. What will be Britain's own position in this eventuality? Blair has not spelt this out clearly. A substantial part of the British population and an important minority of Blair's own Labour Party have, however, voiced strong reservations against going to war in this situation.

For the present, it seems that USA has decided upon war even if the pretext of unearthing weapons of mass destruction has proved to be flimsy. Its only reason for this will then be to induce a regime change in Iraq — i.e., replacing Saddam Hussein with a coterie of avowed quislings — with a view to gaining control over the country's vast oil reserves. In an effort to buttress this line of thought, Bush and Blair have both argued that Saddam has oppressed his own people, using a part of his weapons against them.

As the only superpower of the world, Bush fancies for the USA

the role of a policeman among nations.

This raises the question of North Korea, which has made no secret of its nuclear designs, has walked out of the international nuclear non-proliferation treaty, has given marching orders to UN inspectors and is boldly calling for a dialogue with the US. The latter first appointed the New Mexican Governor, Bill Richardson, as an interlocutor in the North Korean imbroglio and now has decided upon holding formal talks.

The North Korean intransigence is open and defiant. But the USA is not contemplating war against that country, even after branding it as the second country in the axis of evil. The Iraqi situation is markedly different. Unless proved otherwise by UN inspectors, Iraq is not engaged in any belligerent nuclear programme. Yet war is contemplated against Iraq. How does USA explain, much less justify, these double standards?

It must be said to Blair's credit that he has consistently been arguing for a Palestinian state and that the Iraqi question should be dealt with *pari passu* the question of Middle East peace, meaning thereby the Palestine-Israel question. The USA, openly siding with Israel, has turned a deaf ear to this plea and the killings in this conflict go on with the world posing as a dumb and impotent spectator. The Israeli incursions into, and the siege of, Gaza and the West Bank, resulting in the death of civilians, including children, and destruction of property are described as exercises in self-defence and the matching suicide bombings from the Palestinian side are described as acts of terror, when the only difference between the two sets of action is that in the one case they are carried out by men in uniform and in the other by men not in uniform.

It is this conflict that is crucial to the stability of the Middle East and should engage Bush's attention first rather than the imagined threat from Saddam's chimerical weapons of mass destruction.

US war decision on Iraq by 27 Jan'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18. — US Secretary of State Gen Colin Powell has said that his country will not wait much longer than 27 January to decide whether or not it should go to war with Iraq, with or without the approval of the UN Security Council.

The Iraqi regime has the intent to develop weapons of mass destruction and the capacity to do so and the burden is on Iraq to prove that it does not have such weapons, Gen Powell, who was speaking to correspondents from countries who have just joined the UN Security Council yesterday said.

Gen Powell said President Mr George W Bush has not taken a decision for war and he has said he would like to see this resolved peacefully. But he believes the international community has an obligation to disarm Iraq forcefully. "And he (Bush) believes," that if the international

community is not willing to do it, then the United States, with like-minded nations, may have that obligation so that the world does not face an Iraq with weapons of mass destruction."

Gen Powell took exception to suggestions in the USA and abroad that the USA has become or is becoming imperialist. He said that America has not been an imperialist nation. "We are not the ones who colonised or imposed imperialist regimes on the world. Quite the contrary," he said.

When a correspondent reminded him that the USA seized the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico from Spain, Gen Powell said "the Philippines are free. I don't see any American flags in Cuba. Puerto Rico is a unique situation and wishes to remain in its current status (as a Commonwealth of the USA but not

proactive cooperation from the Iraqi side," Mr Blix said yesterday, pressing Baghdad to provide inspectors with better information and access to Iraqi scientists.

which they were briefing leaders on 50 days of inspections ahead of their first in-depth status report to the UN Security Council on 27 January. "We feel that we need a more sincere and more

cooperation from a defiant President Mr Saddam Hussein who has vowed to fight any US-led war. Mr Blix and Mr ElBaradei were due to arrive for a 24-hour trip after a European tour, in

as a state)." **UN inspectors return to Iraq tomorrow:** Chief UN disarmament inspectors Mr Hans Blix and Mr Mohamed ElBaradei return to Iraq tomorrow calling for greater



A girl at a rally protesting a possible war in Iraq in Tokyo on Saturday. — AFP

Gen Powell said President Mr George W Bush has not taken a decision for war and he has said he would like to see this resolved peacefully. But he believes the international community has an obligation to disarm Iraq forcefully. "And he (Bush) believes," that if the international

USA to fund N Korea's energy programme

Agence France Presse

WASHINGTON, Jan. 17. — The USA intends to fund a multinational consortium implementing a 1994 deal which froze North Korea's plutonium programme, despite deeming the pact ruptured by Pyongyang's latest nuclear drive. The Bush administration has asked Congress to authorise \$3.5 million in the budget for the current fiscal year, 2003-04, to pay its share of costs of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation, officials said last night.

The body was set up to implement the so-called Agreed Framework, and to provide two nuclear reactors deemed unsuitable for weapons production, plus 500,000 tonnes of heavy fuel oil per year to the energy-starved state.

In return, Pyongyang agreed to mothball a nuclear plant and to seal plutonium fuel rods, but has

in the last few months turned its back on the deal and blamed Washington for an escalating nuclear showdown.

The USA cut the fuel spigot late last year after its envoy Mr James Kelly confronted North Korean officials with US intelligence which exposed their programme to enrich uranium, which the US side said nullified the deal.

Nuclear programme peaceful — In an official media report, North Korea today reiterated that its nuclear programme would be limited for the time being to peaceful purposes and blamed the United States for the present crisis, adds an AFP report from Seoul

One week after Pyongyang withdrew from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, North Korea's official media defended the decision but said it had no plans to produce nuclear bombs.

"Though North Korea withdrew from the NPT, its nuclear activity at

the present stage will be limited to such peaceful purposes as electricity production," the Korean central news agency said quoting the Communist Party daily, *Rodong Sinmum*.

"The US raised the unreasonable and brigandish demand that North Korea scrap its nuclear programme before dialogue, far from honestly responding to the latter's constructive proposal for concluding a non-aggression treaty with the US," it added. Washington has refused to negotiate unless North Korea agrees to scrap its nuclear weapons drive.

Pressure on USA for talks

The USA came under increased global pressure today to open discussions with North Korea to end an intensifying nuclear stand-off, adds AP from Seoul. South Korea's President-elect encouraged the USA to "engage in talks", while a Russian envoy said the crisis was to be resolved between the USA and North Korea.

USA softens stand on North Korea

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, Jan. 13. — Softening its stand on North Korea, the USA today offered to consider giving energy aid to the impoverished country if it abandoned its nuclear weapons programme.

"Once we get beyond nuclear weapons, there may be opportunities with the USA, with private investors, with other countries to help North Korea in the energy area," US Assistant Secretary of State Mr James Kelly said in Seoul after meeting with South Korean President-elect Mr Roh Moo Hyun.

Mr Kelly's statement is significant because Washington has maintained throughout the crisis that it would not negotiate with Pyongyang unless it scraps its nuclear weapons programme.

North Korea has maintained the US decision to suspend fuel aid in November last year forced it to revive its frozen programme and walk out of the NPT. Mr Kelly said the USA was willing to talk to North Korea "about their response to the international community" on the issue. Mr Kelly is on a five-nation tour to Asia during which he will also visit China, Singapore, Indonesia and Japan.

"It is a concession, a change of position," Mr Lee Chung Min, an expert on North Korea at Yonsei University, said. "It is an indication of the Bush Administr-

tion really wanting to settle this diplomatically, and probably under a lot of pressure to do so." Unlike in the case of Iraq, which the USA can strike from bases nearby, it has no allies for a war with North Korea. South Korea is supportive of a peaceful settlement and so are Japan, China and Russia.

North Korea's ambassador to Moscow today said Pyongyang could reverse its decision to withdraw from the NPT if the USA and the International Atomic Energy Agency reverse their policy, but warned that his nation would view any sanctions as a "declaration of war", even as Pyongyang was under fire at a meeting of Asia-Pacific legislators in Kuala Lumpur today, with the USA, Japan and South Korea urging it to drop its nuclear weapons programme. Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged policy makers in Asia and the Pacific today to improve global security by befriending North Korea and softening their stance toward Iraq. "Chilli diplomacy": Mr Bill Richardson, the Governor of New Mexico, has said his "chilli diplomacy" would lead to direct talks between the USA and North Korea at the United Nations. He said he had briefed General Colin Powell on the "useful nuances" he had found during nine hours of talks with two North Korean envoys at his mansion in Santa Fe, which included a lunch of the local speciality of green chilli scrambled eggs. Mr Richardson went out of his way to praise Mr Powell's diplomacy, adds The Times, London.

THE STATESMAN

14 JAN 2003

US envoy in Seoul to defuse nuke crisis

Seoul/Washington: With the world gripped by fear of a nuclear war in North Korea, a US envoy arrived in Seoul on Sunday to try to defuse the crisis amid warnings from Russia that too much pressure on the communist state could backfire.



North Korea again denied it had ever admitted to having a covert nuclear weapons programme and warned the United States its people would disappear in "a sea of fire".

In the latest diplomatic response to North Korea's decision to pull out of a global treaty preventing the spread of nuclear arms, James Kelly was making his first visit to the region since October when he said Pyongyang admitted to a nuclear arms programme.

Mr Kelly is due to meet officials at the presidential Blue House on Monday and to hold talks with President-elect Roh Moo-hyun.

"We are going to talk positively," he said on his arrival. Diplomatic activity was under way elsewhere in the region.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, fresh from talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, met in eastern Russia with Konstan-

tin Pulikovsky, a Russian point man on North Korea who is believed to have close ties to its reclusive leader, Kim Jong-IL.

"It is important that North Korea be steadfastly worked upon to gain a peaceful solution," Mr Koizumi told Mr Pulikovsky. Mr Putin's pre-
fect for the Far East.

North Korea, suspected by the United States of making nuclear bombs and of possibly having two in its arsenal, on Saturday became the first country to pull out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), triggering alarm in neighbouring countries and worldwide condemnation.

Within hours, it said it was free to resume missile-firing tests, ratcheting up tension with the US in a bid to force Washington into negotiations.

Analysts say Pyongyang and its secretive leader have been anxious for the survival of their administration ever since President George W. Bush last year bracketed North Korea with Iraq and Iran in an "axis of evil".

South Korean officials, their capital within striking range of 11,000 North Korean artillery barrels, said Pyongyang was trying to hasten a resolution of the nuclear standoff.

Japan's deputy chief cabinet secretary, Shinzo Abe, told Fuji Television from Khabarovsk that Pyongyang was "playing a dangerous



More than one million North Koreans massed at the Kim Il Sung Square in Pyongyang on Saturday. The North Koreans rallied to voice "burning hatred" for the United States and to support their government's decision to quit the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

game", but the issue could be resolved through talks.

"If the world applies pressure and convinces North Korea that it will not gain anything with this game...I think it is possible for the situation to return to the way it was," he said.

However, Mr Pulikovsky said his knowledge of Kim Jong-IL suggested a soft approach was likely to be more effective.

"He will not permit being pressured from outside," Mr

Pulikovsky was quoted as saying. "He will only be repelled by this."

Signalling its anger in a renewed outpouring of rage against the United States, Pyongyang urged all Koreans to unite to rid the peninsula of the US presence, part of a drive to build on differences between South Korea and the United States sparked by mounting anti-American sentiment.

"The US intentionally fabricated our admission to a

nuclear development programme," South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted the North's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) as saying.

The US said in October that North Korea had admitted during Mr Kelly's last visit to having a covert programme to enrich uranium for nuclear arms in violation of a 1994 agreement.

Pyongyang has said repeatedly its remarks to Mr Kelly were distorted.

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IRAQ / WAR MACHINE GETS ROLLING

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U.S. sends massive force to Gulf

WASHINGTON, JAN. 12. The U.S. Defence Secretary, Donald H. Rumsfeld, has ordered about 62,000 more U.S. troops to head for the Persian Gulf region in the coming days, doubling the size of the force now arrayed on the periphery of Iraq.

The movements make clear that the Pentagon intends to have sufficient force in place for an Iraq war as early as the first weeks of February, although the White House says the U.S. President, George W. Bush, has not yet decided to attack.

Just hours after officials disclosed on Friday that Mr. Rumsfeld had ordered nearly 35,000 troops, including two large Marine units, to ship out for a possible war with Iraq, the Defence Secretary signed another order to deploy 27,000 more troops, mainly Army and Air Force combat units.

One senior official with access to the deployment orders said the units designated for deployment in the latest Rumsfeld order include a squadron of Air Force F-117 stealth fighter-bombers that played a key role in the 1991 Gulf War.

The order also includes thousands of Marines and an Army air-borne infantry brigade, officials said. The troops' actual departure for the potential war zone will be spread out over the rest of January.

The Central Command, the headquarters that would run any war against Iraq, has begun dispatching its battle staff to a command post in Qatar, and it is expected to be operational near the end of January.

Eventually, the size of the U.S. force arrayed against Iraq could reach 250,000, but defence officials have said any attack ordered by Mr. Bush could begin with 100,000 or fewer troops in place. The rest could be brought to the fight later or held in reserve.

Sources said this means the U.S. could be positioned for an attack on Iraq by mid-to-late February with a force exceeding



Staff Sgt. Paul Roraff and his wife, Kim, embrace while their children, Shelby (centre), and Paul Jr., cry before Roraff is deployed to the Persian Gulf with the 96th Transportation Company in Fort Hood, Texas, on Saturday. — AP

150,000 soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen. However, increasing pressure from allies for Washington to allow U.N. weapons inspectors to complete their work in Iraq has raised speculation in recent days about

whether U.S. war plans might yet be slowed. Meanwhile, the U.S. military has begun an e-mail campaign urging military and civilian leaders in Iraq to turn away from the President, Saddam Hussein, a Pentagon official said, on condition of anonymity.

Iraqis began to receive the e-mails last week.

"If you provide information on weapons of mass destruction or you take steps to hamper their use we will do what is necessary to protect you and protect your families," one of the e-mail messages said. "Failing to do that will lead to grave personal consequences," it added.

The U.S. propaganda effort is in line with the Bush administration's policy of encouraging the Iraqi soldiers to topple Mr. Hussein or at least lay down their arms when the U.S. war machine starts rolling in.

"Iraqi chemical, biological and nuclear weapons violate Iraq's commitment to agreements and United Nations resolutions and Iraq has been isolated because of this behaviour," another e-mail said. — AFP, Reuters

THE HINDU

13 JAN 2003

US asked to go slow on Iraq

Washington, January 10

AS US warships, planes and troops converge on the Persian Gulf, the message to the Bush administration from its allies is clear: Slow down.

Military action against Iraq will be hard to justify without proof of clandestine weapons programmes, European Union foreign policy coordinator Javier Solana was quoted as saying on Friday.

His comments come as UN arms officials told the UN Security Council on Thursday that Iraq's arms declaration submit-

ted a month ago left open many questions but said they had uncovered no "smoking guns" pointing to such programmes.

Even British Prime Minister Tony Blair, a staunch supporter of Bush's Iraq policy, voiced a willingness to slow down. "We are in the middle of a process. The UN inspectors have just, at the beginning of the year, got their full complement of inspectors there," Blair said.

The US, however, has pushed aside Blix's statement saying: "Because he (Blix) says so far there is no smoking gun does not mean there is not one."

Focus now on scientists

Iraqi scientists whose evidence could provide Washington with a trigger for war are to be whisked out of the country soon to Cyprus.

A tug-of-war between the US and Baghdad over the scientists is shaping up as the crunch issue. The dilemma for Saddam Hussein is that if he allows a scientist out to blow the whistle on a banned weapons programme, it could lead to war, but if Iraq were to block their departure, that too could be the cause of all-out conflict.

Agencies

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 1 JAN 2003

CIA claims Iran pursuing N-arms programme

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Washington: The United States is convinced Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapons programme despite its status in the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT), says the CIA.

Iran is vigorously pursuing programmes to produce indigenous weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems as well as advanced conventional weapons (acw), the CIA says in a report to congress on developments in the six-month period ending December 31, 2001.

To this end, it seeks foreign materials, training, equipment and know-how that have enabled it to produce some complete weapon systems, with their means of delivery, and components of other weapons.

During the reporting period, Iran focused particularly on entities in Russia, China, North Korea and Europe. Estimates of conventional Russian arms sales to Iran of 300 million dollars a year would put Iran's share of Russian sales worldwide at roughly 10 per cent, compared to more than 50 per cent going to China and India. Iran capitalises on the specialised weapons services and lower prices China and North Korea have to offer.

About other countries, the

CIA says:

Iraq: It continues to develop short-range ballistic missile systems that are not prohibited by the UN and is expanding its longer-range systems. In the light of Iraq's growing industrial self-sufficiency and the likely availability of mobile or covert facilities, says the CIA, "We are concerned that Iraq may again be producing biological weapon agents."

CIA suspects that the refurbished I-29 trainer aircraft, originally acquired from Eastern Europe, have been modified for delivery of chemical or, more likely, biological warfare agents. Iraq aggressively continues to seek advanced conventional warfare equipment and technology. A thriving gray arms market and porous borders have allowed Baghdad to acquire smaller arms and components for larger arms, such as spare parts for aircraft, air defence systems and armoured vehicles.

Iraq also acquires some dual-use and production items that have applications in the advanced conventional weapons arena through the oil-for-food programme.

North Korea: Pyongyang has continued attempts to procure technology worldwide that could have applications for its nuclear programme. Agencies

10 JAN 2003

We have no intention to invade N. Korea: Bush

Washington: US President George Bush has said Washington had no intention of invading North Korea even as the White House parried queries on Pyongyang's demand for a non-aggression pact with the US to give up its nuclear enrichment programme.



G.W. Bush

"I went to Korea and clearly said that the United States has no intention of invading North Korea. I said that right there in South Korea and in Kim Jong Il's neighbourhood. I spoke as clearly as I said we won't invade you...," Mr Bush told reporters on Tuesday in response to a query that the North Koreans believed that US was a threat to them.

The US, he said, expected North Korea to "keep its word" to a 1994 agreement with Washington that it would not develop nuclear weapons.

Expressing confidence that the nuclear standoff would be resolved peacefully and diplomatically, he said, "We will have dialogue; we have had dialogue with North Korea... But we expect people to honour obligations. And for Kim Jong Il to be a credible

member of the world community, he has got to understand that he has got to do what he says he is going to."

State department spokesman Richard Boucher parried a question on North-Korea's demand for a non-aggression pact with the US saying, "The issue is not of non-aggression. The issue is non-compliance. It is a verifiable and visible and prompt dismantlement of the North Korean nuclear enrichment programme."

North Korea has demanded a no-invasion guarantee from US, Russia and China as a condition for giving up its option to build more nuclear bombs. It is not clear whether North Korean leader Kim Jong Il will demand that assurance in writing, in the form of a treaty or any other form.

Meanwhile, a senior South Korean official dashed to Washington in a bid to resolve the North Korean dispute as Seoul welcomed the UN nuclear watchdog's decision.

Observing that meetings were taking place between the US, Korean and the Japanese delegations, Mr Boucher said, "All of us share the goal of peaceful resolution of the problems created by North Korea's nuclear programmes on the peninsula and the steps that North Korea has taken recently." Agencies

US planes, ships pour in around Iraq

Washington/Baghdad, Jan 7

THE UNITED States poured planes and ships into the Gulf for a potential war in Iraq and called a defiant statement from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein "discouraging news" for a peaceful resolution.

UN inspectors hunting for banned weapons took to the sky for the first time on Tuesday, flying in helicopters to a site near Syria's border. Experts headed also to a missile plant, cancer research centre, university, cement plant and air base.

President Bush, speaking amid a major American military buildup and revelations of US plans for administering a post-war Iraq, delivered a fresh demand for Saddam to come clean over any weapons of mass destruction. "He has the obligation to disarm. For the sake of peace, he must disarm," Bush said.

The Iraqi President, who denies having any arms programmes, accused UN inspectors of carrying out intelligence work, a comment seized on by Bush as an example of Iraqi defiance.

The US President, who has made no secret of wanting to see Saddam toppled, was given no ammunition by a senior UN inspector to justify a war against Baghdad. "We haven't yet seen any smoking gun," International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei said on Monday after several weeks of searches in Iraq by his nuclear experts.

UN arms inspectors are due to report to the UN Security Council on Thursday. They have to deliver a major assessment on Iraqi compliance with council resolutions by January 27.

In Britain, defence sources said the country was expected to announce the mobilisation of frontline troops and ships as well



Iraqi woman volunteers holding AK-47 rifles march in Baquba city, 40 km northeast of Baghdad, on Tuesday.

as put 7,000 reservists on notice.

In France, President Jacques Chirac told troops on Tuesday to stand ready for "anything that could happen" in the year ahead, and highlighted the need for vigilance over Iraq's respect for disarmament resolutions.

None of the UN inspection chiefs have reported any evidence of an illegal weapons programme since the inspectors returned to Iraq in November after a four-year absence. A new Security Council resolution allowed inspectors to resume a mission that

began after the 1991 Gulf War.

Television footage on Tuesday showed thousands of armed Iraqi men and women in a military parade near Baghdad one day after Saddam used a televised address to say Baghdad was ready for any attack and to brush aside Washington's threats as the "hiss of snakes and bark of dogs."

Iraq identified the marching units as part of the volunteer Jerusalem Army, which it says numbers seven million people. Saddam also used Monday's

address to make his first public criticism of the UN teams, saying they were compiling lists of Iraqi scientists, asking workers misleading questions and gathering information about "legitimate military production" rather than seeking weapons of mass destruction. "These things, or most of them, are pure intelligence work."

The United States sent planes and ships to the Gulf, stepping up troop deployments to at least double the 60,000 already there.

Reuters

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Sanctions can mean war, says N Korea

Seoul, January 7

NORTH KOREA said on Tuesday that economic sanctions over its nuclear programme would mean war and urged the United States to sit down and talk, just hours after Washington signalled that dialogue was still an option.

President Bush, who has branded the communist state part of an "axis of evil" along with Iraq and Iran, said on Monday he remained open to dialogue but White House officials said the North must first end efforts to develop atomic weapons.

Pyongyang's KCNA news agency denounced the United States' brief seizure last month of a shipload of North Korean scud missiles bound for Yemen, calling it "part of the US-tailored containment strategy against the DPRK (North Korea)."

"The strategy means total economic sanctions aimed at isolating and stifling the DPRK," the agency said on Tuesday. "Sanctions mean a war and the war knows no mercy. The US should opt for dialogue with the DPRK, not for war, clearly aware that it will have to pay a very high price for such reckless acts."

A South Korean Unification Ministry official said that North Korea customarily emits shrill rhetoric, but that its words were being watched carefully because of its nuclear brinkmanship.

"People do not think that there is going to be a war," said the official. "But this time, North Korea's nuclear threat can

be taken seriously because the North has broken its promises to the United States and the international community."

A South Korean presidential envoy headed to Washington on Tuesday in a fresh bid to defuse the crisis that flared up last month, when Pyongyang expelled UN nuclear inspectors and vowed to restart a reactor idled under a 1994 pact which froze its nuclear programme in exchange for oil from the West.

National security adviser Yim Sung-joon was expected to suggest that the United States give North Korea security assurances and promises to resume energy supplies in return for the North agreeing again to abandon its nuclear programme.

The UN nuclear watchdog, meanwhile, gave Pyongyang a last chance to readmit inspectors expelled last week.

Meeting in Vienna, the governing board of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) passed a resolution warning North Korea to cooperate with its inspectors or be reported to the UN Security Council for breaching nuclear safeguards.

North Korea has yet to respond to the IAEA ultimatum. South Korea joined the United States and Japan in urging Pyongyang to heed the IAEA's latest decision. "The Government hopes North Korea will not miss the cherished opportunity for a diplomatic and peaceful solution," the foreign ministry said.

Reuters

US calls on Iraq to disarm for the sake of peace

Washington/Baghdad: As the US speeded up deployment of troops to the Gulf for a potential war with Iraq, US President George W. Bush called a defiant statement from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein "discouraging news" for a peaceful resolution.

Mr Bush, speaking amidst a major American military build-up and revelations of US plans for administering a post-war Iraq, delivered a fresh demand for Saddam to come clean over any weapons of mass destruction. "He has the obligation to disarm. For the sake of peace, he must disarm," Mr Bush said.

The Iraqi President, who denies having any weapons programmes, accused UN inspectors of carrying out intelligence work, a comment seized on by Mr Bush as an example of Iraqi defiance.

However, the US president, who has made no secret of wanting to see Saddam toppled, was given no ammunition by a senior UN inspector to justify a war against Baghdad.

"We haven't yet seen any

smoking gun," International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed El-Baradei said after several weeks of searches in Iraq.

None of the UN inspection chiefs has reported any evidence of an illegal weapons

programme since the inspectors returned to Iraq in November after a four-year interlude. A new UN Security Council resolution allowed inspectors to resume a mission that began after the 1991 Gulf War. Reuters

Reuters



Women volunteers holding AK-47 rifles join a military march in Baquba City, 40 km north-east of Baghdad, on Tuesday. Thousands of volunteers took part in a military parade to declare their readiness to defend Iraq against a possible US-led invasion.

America flexes muscle, calls army reserves

Washington, January 6

IN THE latest sign of escalating war preparations for Iraq, the Pentagon has alerted at least 275 Army Reserve units throughout the nation to be ready to move overseas as early as this week, military officials say.

The notifications, known as alert orders, instruct unit commanders to be ready to move out between January 10 and February 15, Defence Department sources say.

Counting several thousand other Army Reserve soldiers alerted on Friday for duty in the US, the orders affect more than 10,000 troops, said Lt Gen James Helmly, commander of Army Reserve forces. The troops will consist of a few entire units as well as pieces of other units. Some will fill in at home for those deployed overseas, but most are likely to be sent to the Persian Gulf, officials say.

Unlike active duty forces, Reserve and National Guard troops typically need at least a month to prepare for overseas duty. This latest call-up follows similar ones in the past two weeks, many in support jobs critical to combat. Together, the moves indicate that preparations for possible war in Iraq are accelerating.

The latest activation — the largest single call-up since September 11 — could eventually exceed 100,000 National Guard and Reserve troops for a war with Iraq. These Gulf-bound troops would join a larger force of permanent active duty personnel. The nearly 60,000 US troops already there could double in coming weeks, officials said. War plans call for about 250,000 US and allied troops. The National Guard has already mobilised about 9,000 troops to protect 163 Air Force bases worldwide.

Jim Wilkinson, a spokesman for US Central Command in Tampa, declined to specify which units had received orders to mobilise. But the call-ups will greatly increase public awareness that the

Inspectors are US spies, says Saddam

Baghdad, January 6

A DEFIANT Saddam Hussein has declared his country ready for war and issued his first public criticism of UN weapons inspectors, accusing them of spying.

In a 25-minute televised Army Day message on Monday, Saddam dismissed US threats to disarm Iraq as "clamour, commotion and hysteria" to divert attention from US domestic and foreign policy failures, and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

"As we monitor the hiss of snakes and bark of dogs accompanied by continued aggression in the north and south of the country, we act with the confidence of the assured whose actions are not hurried or confused," he said. "Here, we have prepared for everything."

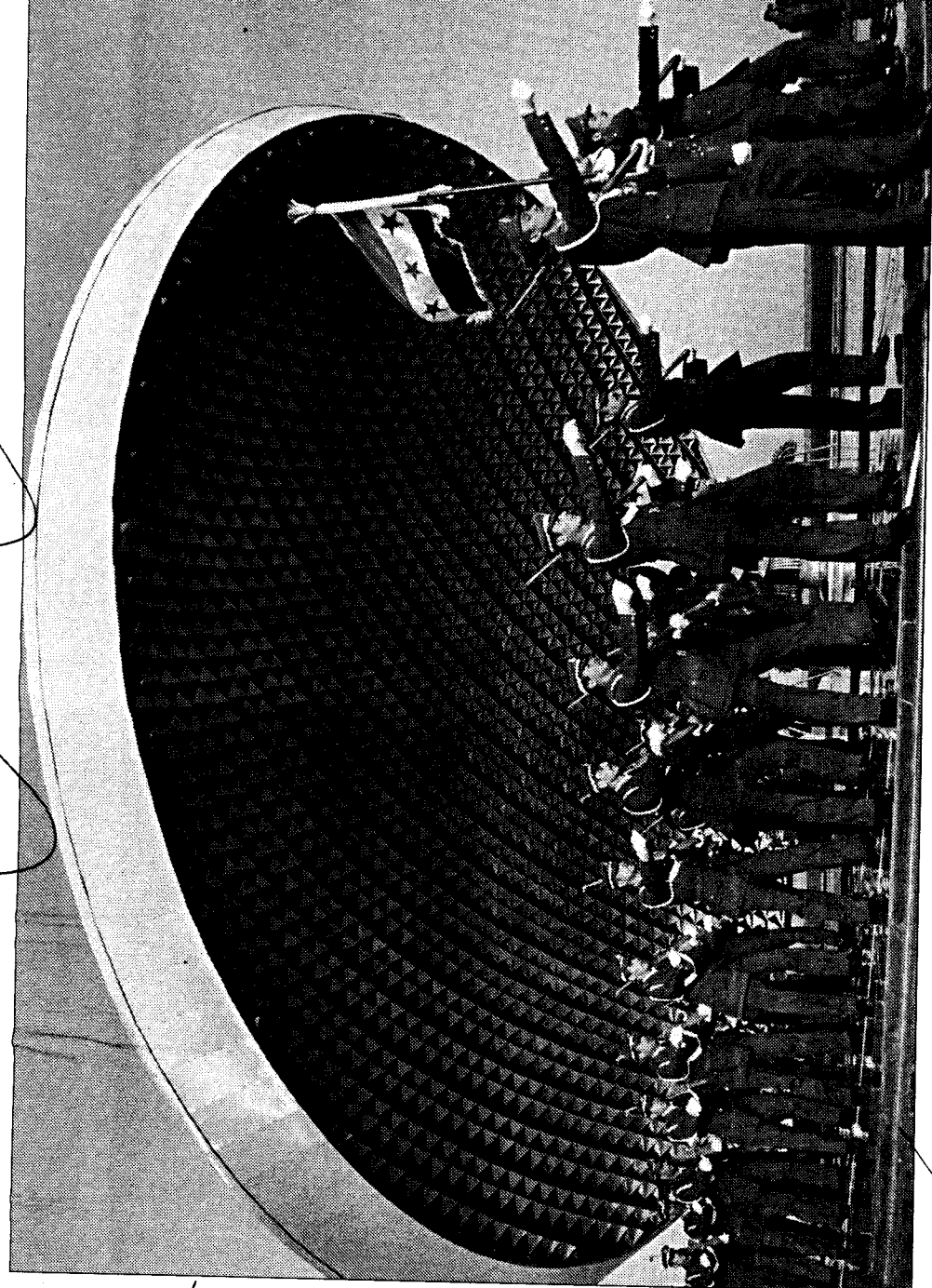
Britain, however, said war with Baghdad was far from a foregone conclusion.

Reuters

US might soon be at war, he said. "When Reservists start leaving, the citizens in their communities start paying more attention," he said. Since the September 11 attacks, some 130,000 Reserve and Guard troops have been called to active duty. Most have helped with homeland security, and more than half have rotated back out of active duty.

Almost 54,000 remain on active duty, and about 5,000 are entering their second year. Reservists alerted include doctors and nurses, communications specialists, drivers and legal officers.

USA Today



SHOW OF STRENGTH: Iraqi soldiers march in front of the tomb of the unknown soldier to celebrate Army Day in Baghdad on Monday.

Bush democracy plan for Iraq

David E Sanger & James Dao
Washington, January 6

PRESIDENT GEORGE W Bush's national security team is finalising plans to administer and democratise Iraq after the expected ouster of Iraq President Saddam Hussein.

The plans call for a heavy US military presence in the country for at least 18 months, military trials of only the most senior Iraqi leaders and quick takeover of the country's oil fields to pay for reconstruction.

The proposals, according to administration officials who have been developing them for several months, have been discussed informally with Bush in considerable detail. They would amount to the most ambitious American effort to administer a country since the occupations of Japan and Germany at the end of World War II. Bush's princ-

pal foreign policy advisers are expected to shape the final details in White House meetings and then formally present them to the President.

Many elements of the plans are highly classified, and some are still being debated. But the broad outlines show the enormous complexity of the task in months ahead, and point to some of the difficulties that would follow even a swift and successful removal of Hussein from power, including these:

- The Pentagon is preparing for at least a year and a half of military control of Iraq, with forces that would keep peace, hunt Hussein's top leaders and weapons of mass destruction and, in the words of one of Bush's senior advisers, "keep the country whole".

- A civilian administrator — perhaps designated by the United Nations — would run the

country's economy, rebuild its schools and political institutions, and administer aid programmes. Placing those powers in nonmilitary hands, administration officials hope, will quell Arab concerns that a military commander would wield the kind of absolute authority that General Douglas MacArthur exercised as supreme commander in Japan.

- Only "key" officials of the Hussein Government "would need to be called to account", according to a document summarising plans for war trials. The Government may be offered leniency.

- The administration plan says, "Government elements closely identified with Saddam's regime, such as the revolutionary courts or the special security organisation, will be eliminated, but much of the rest of

the Government will be reformed and kept."

- While publicly saying Iraqi oil would remain "the patrimony of the Iraqi people", the administration is debating how to protect oil fields during the conflict and how an occupied Iraq would be represented in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, if at all.

- After long debate, especially between the Pentagon and the State Department, the White House has rejected for now the idea of creating a provisional Government before any invasion of Iraq.

The timetable for the handover of responsibility from the military administration to an international civilian administration and eventually to an Iraqi-run Government remains unresolved, the newspaper said.

The New York Times

SINISTER IRONY

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DECLASSIFIED U.S. DOCUMENTS have revealed the extent to which Washington did not merely look away but actually provided intelligence and logistical support to Iraq at a time when it was giving shelter to wanted terrorists and using weapons of mass destruction (WMD). These revelations strike a grimly ironic note in a context wherein the U.S. is threatening military action against Iraq and its President, Saddam Hussein, supposedly to achieve the laudable objectives of extending the war against terrorism to "rogue states" and of eradicating Baghdad's WMD programme. The documents show that Washington's involvement with Iraq, when it was at war with Iran from 1980 to 1989 and before it invaded Kuwait in 1990, included the facilitation of Baghdad's acquisition of chemical and biological pre-cursors (the ingredients with which weapons of these descriptions can be made). At present, as it had done throughout the 1990s, Washington insists on interdicting Iraqi imports that can be used for military as well as civilian purposes even when the primary use to which that material can be put is a humanitarian one. In contrast, in the 1980s, successive U.S. administrations authorised the sale of numerous items that had such dual uses including toxic chemicals and deadly viruses such as anthrax and bubonic plague. The U.S. decision to extend support to Baghdad, which eventually included the restoration of full diplomatic relations, was taken despite authentic reports that Iraqi troops were resorting to chemical weapons on an almost daily basis against Iranian soldiers. Neither did Washington stop extending support after it had learnt that Baghdad had used chemical weapons against villages sheltering rebel Kurds although today the U.S. administration cites these very incidents as proof that Mr. Hussein and his regime are a menace to the Iraqi people as well as to the global community.

These documents are of great relevance in the present context not because they expose U.S.

hypocrisy but because they underline the degree to which considerations of realpolitik really drive Washington's foreign policy. The decision to extend support to Baghdad — taken despite some misgivings — was made because Iraq seemed to be losing the war against Iran. The intelligence which the U.S. provided about the massing of Iranian troops and the cluster bombs made available through third parties were of substantial assistance to Iraq in its blunting of several military thrusts. At the time, Washington was determined to ensure that revolutionary Iran did not cut into the Shia-dominated southern portions of Iraq and thus be in a position to threaten U.S. allies such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states. Today, of course, the situation is quite the reverse with the Islamic revolution having lost its steam in Iran and with Iraq perceived as posing the main threat to Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Gulf region. Given that Baghdad's WMD potential has been largely eliminated and that the U.S. has not been able to prove its allegation that Iraq sponsors global terror, it is necessary to accurately discern the real considerations that are driving Washington's current aggressive policy. The re-making of West Asia might be too ambitious even for the hyper-power to adopt as its policy goal but the reasons that have been cited in support of the policy do not make sufficient sense when matched against Washington's record.

One theory that is being put out is that the U.S. has changed so much after the terror strikes of September 2001 that the administration feels impelled to pre-empt all sources of threat. Since Iraq appears to pose neither a WMD nor a terrorist threat against the U.S. but is being targeted even as some other countries that appear to do so are being conveniently ignored, another question that can be asked is whether a mood of militarism, boosted by success in the Afghan war, has gripped sections of the Washington establishment.

N. Korea keen on mediation to end N-row with US: report

Seoul: North Korea is ready to accept mediation by a third country in its stand-off with the US over the crisis triggered by its nuclear programme, a report said on Sunday.

Quoting diplomats stationed in Pyongyang, the 'Voice of Russia' said South Korea, China and Russia could be the possible mediators. It said the remarks of Pyongyang's ambassador to Beijing Choe Kim Su on Friday that North Korea would welcome "outside mediation" were a signal to persuade the US to resume dialogue with North Korea. "Western and Asian experts believe that Mr Choe made the remark to express North Korea's willingness to accept arbitration by its allies to seek a direct dialogue with the US," the report said.

According to it, Pyongyang, while maintaining that it would not allow its nuclear programme to become an international issue, said it wanted to solve the issue on a bi-

lateral basis with Washington.

Reacting to the developments, Russia's deputy foreign minister Alexander Losyukov said Moscow was ready to cooperate with all the parties involved, while South Korean officials said they were preparing a possible compromise deal. China pledged to help solve the crisis "peacefully through dialogue".

The stand-off was sparked by Pyongyang's decision to reactivate a nuclear complex at Yongbyon which had been mothballed since 1994 under an agreement with the US.

Meanwhile, officials from South Korea are headed for Washington for a three-way talks with Japan and the US as part of the growing efforts to defuse the crisis. Japanese foreign minister Yoriko Kawaguchi and US secretary of state Colin Powell have reportedly agreed to continue the diplomatic offensive aimed at peacefully resolving the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula. Agencies

6 JAN 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

A DANGEROUS CONFRONTATION

NORTH KOREA AND the U.S. appear to have locked themselves into a cycle of provocation and counter-provocation that has the potential for disastrous consequences since it revolves around the issue of Pyongyang's acquisition of a nuclear weapon capability. The latest provocation from the North Korean side has been its warning that it was not currently able to meet commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty since the U.S. had threatened to launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike. What was more sinister was that Pyongyang specified that the commitment it would not be able to abide by was the obligation of states possessing nuclear weapons to not use them against states that do not have such weapons. In a context where North Korea has already declared that it possesses a nuclear weapon capability this statement has to be read as a threat to use such weapons against U.S. allies, South Korea and Japan, in the event of Washington launching a pre-emptive strike. Pyongyang's latest threat has followed close on the heels of actions it has taken to nullify international monitoring of its nuclear capability. North Korea has expelled weapons monitors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, disabled cameras set up to observe sites connected with the nuclear programme and broken the seals that had restricted the access its technicians had to those facilities. The technicians are understood to have begun work on making two facilities — a small research reactor that can produce plutonium and a fuel reprocessing plant — operational. If the facilities are put into full operation, Pyongyang could have enough weapon grade plutonium for five bombs before the middle of this year.

But provocative steps have by no means been taken by Pyongyang alone. The current U.S. administration, conditioned as it has been by the President, George W. Bush's inclusion of North Korea in the "axis of evil", has taken a far more aggressive posture towards Pyongyang than had

its predecessor. Washington had forced a disclosure from Pyongyang that it has also tried to acquire a nuclear weapon capability by the uranium-enrichment route, slowed down the multi-lateral programme to build light-water reactors to generate electricity and cut off fuel oil supplies. As Washington took these successive measures to force the North Korean nuclear genie back into the bottle it only convinced Pyongyang that the U.S. administration was renegeing on its commitments under the "Agreed Framework" signed by the two countries in 1994. North Korea has probably calculated that it can take a tough stance since it has reason to believe that it is less likely to become the target of a U.S. strike than is Iraq. The South Korean capital and a large part of the U.S. military in that country are well within artillery range of North Korean forces and Pyongyang can hit Japan with its missiles.

The fact that U.S. troops and allies in East Asia are vulnerable to an attack by North Korea's forces has prodded Washington to opt for a more cautious approach than the aggressive policy adopted in respect to Iraq. Mr. Bush stated his belief that "bold diplomacy" could solve the problem confronting him on the North Korean front. This diplomatic drive is directed at an objective termed "tailored containment". In essence, this process involves the imposition of economic sanctions on North Korea by the U.S. and its allies and the persuading of China and Russia to exert their influence. However, these efforts appear to be floundering even before they have been properly launched. Seoul has declared that it would not participate in a sanctions-enforcement policy and, cleverly alluding to the stand-off between the U.S. and Cuba, pointed out that pressure and isolation do not work with communist countries. That being the case, the current U. S. administration might be forced to take a lesson from its predecessor's experience and launch a fresh phase of engagement with North Korea.

THE HINDU

2003

Saddam should either disarm or go into exile, warns US

Washington: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein should either disarm or accept any offer he might get to go into exile if he wishes to avoid a crushing military defeat, the United States said.

State department spokesman Richard Boucher said he was not aware of any activity now under way to negotiate an exile option for Saddam but maintained the Iraqi leader should either "change his ways or change his venue."

"I'm not aware of any active efforts to promote such proposals," he told reporters on Thursday when asked about speculation that the US and other nations may be trying to arrange a face-saving method for Saddam to step down and thus perhaps avert a war.

"But at this point, if it's an option he has, he ought to be smart enough to take it," Mr Boucher said.

"The certainty of coalition forces prevailing if it comes to military action should make him consider any other options he might have," he said, adding, however, that there was little to suggest that Saddam would accept an offer of exile if it were extended.

"There's nothing in his past that would indicate he might," he said.

The United States has threatened to lead a military coalition to disarm Saddam if he does not cooperate fully with experts from the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (Unmovic) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) looking for signs of weapons of mass destruction.

Meanwhile, President George Bush on Friday planned to rally troops at the largest US army base as the United States weighs whether to go to war against Iraq, possibly early this year.

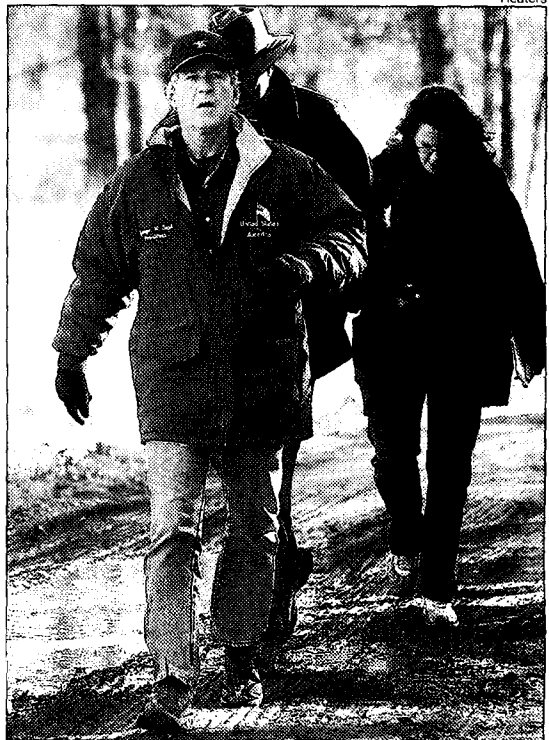
Overseeing an intensifying military build-up in the Gulf, Mr Bush was to visit Fort Hood in his home state of Texas as he maintains pressure on President Saddam Hussein.

Nearing the end of a 10-day winter break at his Texas ranch, Mr Bush said he still has not made a decision to attack Iraq. But signs such as his cancellation of a January trip to Africa and the troops' preparation have prompted many military analysts to predict he will order an attack.

While U.S. officials say they could fight any time, an invasion after February would be more difficult because of heat that could be especially debilitating if troops wear cumbersome suits to protect against chemical weapons.

More than 11,000 desert-trained US troops are set to head for the Gulf for

the possible war to force Saddam Hussein to abandon any nuclear, biological or chemical weapons programmes. Agencies



US President George W. Bush hikes along a muddy trail with reporters as he gets in some exercise on his 1,600-acre ranch 'Prairie Chapel' near Crawford, Texas, on Thursday.

Under U.S. pressure, Israel suspends defence exports to China

JERUSALEM, JAN. 2. Complying with a new American demand, Israel has suspended all contracts on the export of arms and security equipment to China.

Though surprised by the U.S. request some three weeks ago, Israel, despite its qualms, decided to comply with the demand to freeze defence exports to Beijing, the Defence Ministry sources were quoted as saying by *Ha'aretz* newspaper today.

"This is simply a new American dictate, and we didn't have any choice in the matter," a Defence Ministry official told the daily, apparently referring to American pressure earlier which led to the cancellation of a signed deal to sell Phalcon spy plane to Beijing.

The controversial deal with Beijing, which included the installation of a Phalcon early warning radar on a Russian-built aircraft by Israel Aircraft

Industries (IAI), was scrapped by Israel following intense pressure from the Clinton administration in 2000 with Beijing expressing anger over the move and demanding compensation. The move had strained relations between Israel and China and the Jewish state settled the matter after paying compensation.

While there were fears that the new American demand could harm Israel's relations with China, defence officials said the freezing of ties would probably not cause significant economic damage to Israel. They said the Defence Ministry Director-General, Amos Yaron, would "track down" the web of security ties with China, the daily reported.

The American demand stems from the fact that given the close security cooperation between Washington and Jerusalem, sophisticated U.S.

technology could flow to China via Israel.

There were indications that Washington was considering formulating a new strategic policy toward Beijing and until such a policy was devised, the Bush Administration had decided to make every effort to prevent the supply of arms and advanced military technology to China, the daily said.

It quoted one senior Israeli official as saying that Washington actually aimed at removing Israeli firms from the Chinese market while devising a policy shift towards Beijing that would enable American companies to export arms to China.

"Security ties between Israel and China exist, and will continue in an orderly way. Periodically, concrete issues arise that require more discussion between ourselves and China and between ourselves and the U.S.,

and these talks influence specific subjects," a Defence Ministry spokesman was quoted as saying by the daily.

Analysts said the U.S. objections were based on contention that access to sophisticated defence technology would provide China with a decisive military edge in any stand-off with Taiwan.

They also contend that China, while aiming to maintain a hegemony in the region, is trying to contain Japan and India from emerging as powerful competitors.

Israel, believed to be China's second largest arms supplier after Russia, is the fifth largest exporter of weapons in the world following the U.S., Russia, China, and France. Israel wants to sell three Phalcon spy planes to India and the advanced negotiations are believed to be underway in this regard. —P™

THE HINDU

3 JAN 2003

Bush begins movement of troops to Gulf

CHARLES ALDINGER
AND NADIM LADKI

Washington/Baghdad, Jan. 1 (Reuters): The US military ordered more than 11,000 desert-trained troops to begin moving to the Gulf and Western jets struck an Iraqi defence radar as pressure mounted on Iraq, defence officials said today.

The movement, including tanks and attack helicopters, will be the first deployment of a full combat division of US forces to the area since the 1991 Gulf war.

Much of the division's equipment is already waiting in the region.

US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld already had put thousands of troops on notice who when deployed could soon double the nearly 60,000 US person-

nel — including Navy and Air Force troops — already in the region.

US central command in Florida said aircraft taking part in US-British patrols hit the military defence radar after it was moved into a "no-fly" zone in southern Iraq.

"Its presence in the no-fly zone was a threat to coalition aircraft," a central command spokesman said.

The central command said the aircraft used precision-guided weapons on the radar, located near al Qurnah, 210 km south-east of Baghdad.

There was no immediate comment from Iraq.

President George W. Bush has made no decision on whether to invade Iraq over US accusations that Baghdad is developing nuclear, chemical and

biological weapons, but he has repeatedly warned that war may become necessary.

A UN Security Council resolution passed in November gave Baghdad a final chance to reveal all details of its weapons programmes, as required by resolutions going back to the 1991 Gulf War, or face "serious consequences".

The next key date is January 27 when UN weapons inspectors report back to the Security Council on whether they have found any signs of weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq says it has no banned weapons and has invited chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix to visit Baghdad to "review cooperation" before inspectors report to the Security Council.

In Baghdad, there was no new year respite for the UN

weapons inspectors who visited at least two more suspect sites today, a public holiday in Iraq.

UN sources said experts were preparing also to launch their first aerial inspections by helicopters and were setting up a base to facilitate inspections in northern Iraq.

One inspection team visited Al Majd Company facilities, including warehouses and a vehicle repair workshop.

Al Majd is run by Iraq's Military Industrialisation Commission which oversees development and production of weapons and ammunition.

In an editorial, Iraqi newspaper *Babel*, owned by President Saddam Hussein's son Uday, urged Arabs today to learn from North Korea's resistance over its nuclear standoff with Washington to help put a halt to US

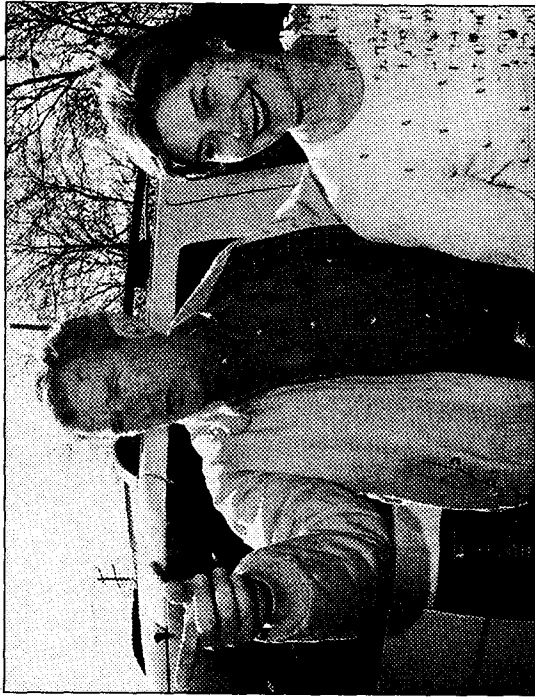
threats of war.

Tensions between the US and North Korea have escalated since North Korea announced it would expel UN nuclear arms inspectors and reopen a nuclear reactor frozen since 1994 under a non-proliferation agreement.

US army officials said the 1st and 3rd Brigades of the 3rd Infantry Division would soon begin moving to join the 2nd brigade of more than 4,000 troops, now training in Kuwait.

Naval ships from the US, Turkey and Israel began manoeuvres in the eastern Mediterranean today in an annual event showcasing military links between the countries.

The Israeli army said the exercises were not connected to "combat training and are not directed at any regional body".



US President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush at Crawford, Texas, on Tuesday. (AFP)

the wilderness

Baghdad late on Tuesday. — AP

AXIS OF EVIL / 'PYONGYANG CAN WAIT'

H0-17

Iraq a looming threat: Bush

CRAWFORD (TEXAS), JAN. 1. The U.S. President, George W. Bush, is keeping an unwavering aim on Iraq while insisting North Korea's nuclear ambitions can be held in check diplomatically and without resort to military force.

The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, poses the greater immediate danger because an attack by him, either alone or in concert with terrorist allies, "would cripple our economy," Mr. Bush said on Tuesday.

After several days of holiday seclusion at his 1,600-acre Texas ranch, Mr. Bush emerged to defend his policy of treating Mr. Hussein as a looming threat while using long-term international diplomacy to isolate and pressure North Korea's Kim Jong Il.

Since North Korea is actually believed to already possess one or two nuclear weapons and is threatening to produce additional weapons-grade material, Mr. Bush is facing increasing criticism that his priorities are reversed.

Fielding questions outside a Crawford cafe, Mr. Bush justified his choices by pointing to differences between the two situations.

While North Korea only recently broke its 1994 pledge to abandon its nuclear weapons programme, Mr. Hussein "has

defied the international community" for 11 years, he said.

Additionally, Mr. Bush said Iraq was believed to be "close to having a nuclear weapon" in the 1990s, though he acknowledged the U.S. does not know whether Mr. Hussein possesses such technology.

While making a fresh case

N. Korea vows to confront U.S.

SEOUL, JAN. 1. Showing no willingness to ease tensions over its nuclear weapons programme, North Korea vowed on Wednesday to build an army-based "powerful nation" and defy pressure from the United States.

North Korea says it fears a possible U.S. military attack. North Korea, in its New Year message, called on its people to unite under "the banner of the army-based policy" and build a "powerful nation" to counter a possible U.S. invasion. — AP

against Mr. Hussein, the President did not mention the nuclear weapons already believed to be in the North Korean arsenal. Nor did he note that North Korean leaders could produce several more nuclear bombs in a

matter of months if they carry out their threat to restart their nuclear programme.

"This is not a military showdown. This is a diplomatic showdown," Mr. Bush said of the North Korean situation. By contrast, when asked whether the cost of war with Iraq would cripple the U.S. economy, Mr. Bush tersely replied: "An attack from Saddam Hussein or a surrogate of Saddam Hussein would cripple our economy."

Some well-placed observers contend North Korea is the greater threat. Warren Christopher, a Secretary of State in the Clinton administration, urged Mr. Bush in a *New York Times* op-ed piece to "step back from his fixation on attacking Iraq" to reassess U.S. priorities.

"I had made the case, and will continue to make the case, that Saddam Hussein with weapons of mass destruction is a threat to the security of the American people." He suggested the risks of attack from Mr. Hussein outweighed the potential costs of war.

"This economy cannot afford to stand an attack," he said, even as his budget team was predicting war with Iraq would cost at least \$50 billions. It marked the first time Mr. Bush has used potential damage to the U.S. economy as justification for military action. — AP

THE HINDU

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Probe into Al-Qaeda link to Yemeni killings

JIBLA (YEMEN), DEC. 31. Yemeni and the U.S. investigators began their probe today to determine whether the man suspected of killing the three American missionaries and wounding another in southern Yemen had ties to Al-Qaeda, even as Yemen labelled the killings terrorism.

While the U.S. Embassy said it was too early to determine if terrorism was behind the shootings at a Southern Baptist hospital in Jibla, 200 km south of the capital, San'a, the Prime Minister, Abdul-Kader Bajamal, hastily added it to a report on terrorism presented to Parliament later.

The report was published in Yemeni newspapers today.

Yemeni officials close to the investigation said interrogators



The three U.S. missionaries killed in a shoot-out in Yemen on Monday. (From left): Martha Myers, Kathleen Garfety and William Koehn.

had strong suspicions that the accused assailant might have connections to Al-Qaeda, the terror network led by Osama bin Laden. Yemen is Osama's ancestral homeland and has been a fertile recruiting ground for him. An FBI team arrived in Jibla on Monday and worked over-

night, an American diplomat said today on condition of anonymity.

The U.S. diplomat would not say whether the U.S. investigators in Jibla were being allowed to directly question the suspect or to sit in while Yemeni investigators did so, but said the Americans "are very close" to the interrogation.

In addition to interrogating the suspect, arrested on Monday in Jibla and identified as 30-year-old Abed Abdul Razak Kamel of San'a, investigators were questioning prisoners picked up in earlier sweeps of suspected Islamic militants to see what they knew about Kamel. — AP

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