

# AMERICA AT WAR

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## Iraqi regime after week of resistance: 'We're still here'

By HAMZA HENDAWI  
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Baghdad, Iraq — Standing beside 20 trucks loaded with 700 tons of flour, Iraq's trade minister said they were headed to Basra — not to hold off starvation, but to make the traditional sweet pastry baklava.

"Your excellency," asked one reporter, "do the inhabitants of Basra really need to eat cakes and baklava in the middle of a war?"

"Yes. The people of Basra need everything," the minister, Mohammed Mehdi Saleh, said Thursday with a grin. The convoy, he added, was a "a gesture of solidarity to show that we are still here."

Saddam Hussein's regime, emboldened by what it sees as battlefield successes in a war

many thought it would lose in a matter of days, is sounding increasingly confident of victory over U.S. and British forces.

It's virtually impossible to tell whether the bravado shown by the Iraqi regime and media is designed to intimidate the allies, give confidence to Iraqis or perhaps even reassure itself that it's doing well against a seemingly invincible enemy.

Senior Iraqi officials, however, don't tire of boasting of how lightly armed Iraqi forces are inflicting heavy damage on allied forces. The fighting, they assert, is being done by a coalition of armed forces, militiamen, tribesmen and ordinary Iraqis — an image that's being projected to underline the notion of a united nation under Saddam's leadership.

Iraq's leaders also ridicule allied forces as cowardly and accuse them of rounding up civilians and parading them in front of TV cameras as POWs. They mock U.S. and British war pronouncements and frequently deride President Bush as a "stupid cowboy" and British Prime Minister Tony Blair as his lackey.

On Thursday, Iraqi Defense Minister Sultan Hashem Ahmed even cited intervention from God in sending a two-day sandstorm that slowed down the U.S.-led coalition.

"The sandstorm was a divine gift to tell the aggressor that he is an aggressor," he said.

State television and radio constantly broadcast patriotic songs and footage of Saddam. A favorite piece of archival material, run on the hour on state television, is of Saddam firing a rifle held aloft in one hand, a

pose that has emerged as an icon of his regime.

Since war began a week ago, choral groups have been rehearsing and recording new patriotic songs in the open air by the east bank of the Tigris River.

Already, there's one song that's being repeatedly played to celebrate Ali Obeid, an elderly man whom the Iraqi government credits for shooting down a U.S. Apache helicopter with his rickety rifle this week. Gen. Tommy Franks has ridiculed the notion that any "farmers" brought down the aircraft.

Another song has the refrain "Afyah," Iraqi dialect for "bravo," and is sung by a man in Arab dress brandishing his Kalashnikov as a woman in black chador next to him performs a taunting dance.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

U.S. ambassador walks out of U.N. after Iraq ambassador's comments

United Nations — The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations walked out of a debate on the Iraqi war Thursday after Iraq's ambassador accused the United States of trying to exterminate the Iraqi people. "I did sit through quite a long part of what he had to say but I'd heard enough," U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte said. The walkout was a dramatic finale to the first open meeting of the bitterly divided council since U.S. and British forces launched their attack last week. Iraq's U.N. envoy Mohammed Al-Douri claimed the United States had arranged contracts to rebuild Iraq in 1997, six years before the U.S.-led war began last week. Negroponte got up and walked out as Al-Douri continued speaking, accusing the United States of a military campaign to wipe out the Iraqi people.

Seeing pictures of war in Iraq spurs depression among some veterans

Fort Lauderdale, Fla. — Images from the war in Iraq are stirring up bad memories for veterans who served in the jungles of Vietnam, the foxholes of World War II and the sandy deserts of the first Gulf War. For Ivan Suarez, it was the story of Iraqis pretending to surrender before ambushing and killing Americans last weekend. "It was as if I was in Vietnam for a split second. They turned on us and started firing on us," the 55-year-old former Marine recalled. Since the war began last week, officials at Veterans Affairs centers across the nation are reporting a spike in veterans with underlying symptoms of post traumatic stress, including flashbacks, nightmares, panic attacks, anger, emotional withdrawal and depression.

G.I. family's thrill: Touched by actor's tribute on night he won an Oscar

New York — For one shining moment Sunday night, a soldier from Queens became the best-known G.I. in the world, thanks to a childhood friend who hit it big. When Adrien Brody won Best Actor honors at the Academy Awards, he sent a global shout-out to his buddy, Army Spec. Tommy Zarobinski. "I have a friend from Queens who's a soldier in Kuwait right now, Tommy Zarobinski, and I hope you and your boys make it back real soon," said Brody, who won for his role in "The Pianist," a Holocaust drama. "God bless you guys." Zarobinski's family was thrilled Brody remembered his friend, who is with the 773rd Transportation Company. "Here he is making the Oscars for the first time in his life, and he's talking about my son," Thomas Zarobinski, the soldier's father, said Monday. "That's amazing."

Hundreds arrested after anti-war activists block part of Fifth Avenue

New York — About 215 protesters were arrested Thursday after they lay down on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, blocking traffic in the latest of a series of demonstrations against the war. Most of those arrested at the "die-in" face charges of disorderly conduct and obstructing governmental administration, police said. Anti-war groups had called for civil disobedience, hoping to draw more attention than the largely lawful protests held daily in the city since hostilities began in Iraq. "Nothing else gets attention," Fordham University student Johann Westmacott said as she jotted down officers' badge numbers.

Mines in waterway delay food aid for southern Iraq; Friday was target date

Aboard RFA Sir Galahad — Desperately needed food and aid for people in southern Iraq was stranded offshore Thursday because of mines Saddam Hussein's regime placed in the strategic Gulf port of Umm Qasr, military commanders said. Coalition officials hoped to clear the explosives and relaunch the relief operation Friday. "This port is fundamental to the feeding of the country," said Roger Robinson-Brown, captain of the Sir Galahad, a British Royal Navy ship loaded with humanitarian supplies. Air Marshal Brian Burridge, commander of British forces in the Persian Gulf, said two mines were discovered in the Umm Qasr shipping channel and detonated Wednesday during a sweep by Royal Navy divers and specially trained, mine-detecting dolphins.

Former Pentagon official Richard Perle resigns as aide to Rumsfeld

Washington — Former Pentagon official Richard Perle resigned Thursday as chairman of a group that advises Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld on policy issues, saying he did not want a controversy over his business dealings to distract from Rumsfeld's management of the war in Iraq. In a brief statement, Rumsfeld thanked Perle for his service and said he was grateful that the former Reagan administration official had agreed to remain a board member. Rumsfeld made no reference to a reason for Perle giving up the chairmanship.

French minister: United international backing on all decisions to use force

London — French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin said Thursday that pre-emptive strikes against rogue regimes could further destabilize the world, and that any decision to use force must be backed by a united international community. De Villepin

## LETTING THEM EAT CAKE

MSI Dwayne Davis frosts a birthday cake for all submariners on board the USS Providence who celebrated a birthday in the month of March while operating in the Red Sea on Tuesday.



TIM COOK  
The Day

## The jargon of war quickly crosses the gulf to daily usage

By JOSEPH P. KAHN  
The Boston Globe

"Vertical envelopment" could be a hot new techno band or a Back Bay zoning scheme. In fact, it's a term used by Pentagon officials — masters of warspeak — to describe the unleashing of massive air power on Baghdad, selectively targeting key installations, in the first phase of the war against Iraq.

Think "carpet bombing" without the deep-pile connotation.

Should the "shock and awe" campaign pave the way to "catastrophic success," to borrow two more examples of current war lingo, then something besides an oxymoron worthy of Joseph Heller's "Catch-22" could be realized. "Catastrophic" in this context means supremely good, and leads to "decapitation" (the removal of Saddam Hussein) followed by — all together now, class — "regime change." Or "debaathification," as an Iraqi

dissident called it this week.

Got that? If not, awe shucks. Your vocabulary is, like, so Desert Storm.

"Every war is like a family tussle, with a general construct and its own characteristics," says Anne Soukhanov, US general editor of Microsoft's Encarta College Dictionary and a dedicated tracker of word usage. "As those characteristics change — weapons, location, the generation that's fighting the war — so does the language."

From the first Gulf War, says Soukhanov, we got Humvees and MREs (Meals, Ready to Eat) and "the mother of all battles," which proved to be the mother of all-purpose phrases. "There's an example of how one side, in this case Saddam Hussein, uses an expression that captures the imagination of the other side and becomes a font," Soukhanov says. "Now we hear things like 'the mother of all traffic jams.'"

Examples of freshly minted warspeak

abound in newspaper columns, Web dispatches, and TV broadcasts. Terms such as "embeds" (reporters traveling with the troops), "unilaterals" (nonattached reporters), "casevac" (short for casualty evacuation), "NBC assault" (referring to nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, not the peacock network), and "target of opportunity" have swiftly embedded themselves in the national lexicon, so to speak. (Dave Anderson wondered in a recent New York Times column which football coach might first use "target of opportunity" to describe "how his team took advantage of a glaring weakness in an opponent's defense.")

Just since Saturday, the phrase "shock and awe" has appeared more than 700 times in US newspapers and magazines. "Collateral damage," a slightly older species of war jargon referring to civilian casualties, has taken on new currency as coalition forces pound Baghdad and other cities. "Shaping fires" — an ef-

fort to weaken enemy forces so they can be wiped out by subsequent attacks — appears to be gaining ground with military officials.

Sexy new acronyms and initials have become ubiquitous as well, from MOABs ("massive ordnance air burst," also "mother of all bombs") to UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicle) to SSE (sensitive site exploitation) forces.

There is even a military alphabet — S Day, D Day, A Day, G Day — signifying moments in the battle, some occurring on the same day, when specific goals are realized by specific US commanders.

This process of lexical assimilation has happened before, though not with the same immediacy that today's all-access, instant-analysis style of warfare produces.

As far back as the Civil War, terms such as "slacker" and "unconditional surrender" moved from the language of the battlefield into mainstream society.

## Traditions abound aboard war-time subs like the Providence

By ROBERT A. HAMILTON  
Day Staff Writer

Aboard the USS Providence — For most Navy sailors, the informal headgear worn on board is a ball cap embroidered with the name of the ship.

But during submarine operations, nobody's going to see what the men are wearing, and the captain typically relaxes the dress code to "under way ball caps," as well as T-shirts and shoes.

Electronics Technician 1st Class Todd J. Welch typically wears his University of North Carolina cap.

"I picked up on them when J.R. Reid went there," Welch said. "He went to Kempsville High (in Virginia Beach) when I went to Kempsville Elementary, so I've kept track of him ever since."

"Normally, I wear my Providence hat, but it's always nice to be able to put some personal flare into your life."

Yeoman 1st Class Rick Magtira said running shoes make more sense on a submarine — where strength is so important — than thick leather boondockers that are standard issue. "The only ones who should be wearing

them are in the engineering space, or in the torpedo room for reloads," Magtira said of the heavy shoes.

Another tradition has to do with off-duty time in the Mediterranean Sea. Usually the boat pulls into La Maddelena, Italy, for maintenance and repairs on a "Med run" and the officers stay at "The Sanctuary," a house owned by the submarine squadron.

It's a sort of officers' fraternity house, with television, telephone, DVD player, game consoles, pool and two refrigerators — not to mention a laundry that lets them finally get all their clothes clean.

"It's a veritable museum, because every boat that comes through leaves something," said Lt. j.g. Jeff Yackeren. Pictures, plaques and inscribed liquor bottles are among the mementoes scattered throughout the house, and there is "shooter's alley," a passageway filled with photographs of boats that have fired in combat that got started after the Gulf War and will fill up fast after the war with Iraq.

The origin of some submariner traditions is shrouded in history, such as the one about stealing the executive officer's stateroom door. Some say it was a way to get the executive officer acquainted with the ship — he'd have to search every nook to get his door back.

"I don't think that was the reason," said the Providence's captain, Cmdr. Jonathan H. Kan, who attributed it more to high-spirited harassment.

"And I don't think the XO (executive officer) would take it very well," added the engineer, Lt. Matt Mulcahy, to everyone within hearing range.

Then there is the tradition of the yeoman sneaking something through in the "plan of the day," the schedule that drives the ship on most days, such as letter-number combinations for plan of the day bingo, or a secret message of some sort.

That was how Mexican food night became known as "Tijerina's favorites" this month. Mexican food is a favorite on board with most people, but not Yeoman 3rd Class Mark Tijerina, who grew up in San Antonio.

"It's not even close to Mom's," Tijerina said. "But I stopped complaining about it a long time ago."

Another yeoman on board typed up a plan of the day with "Tijerina's favorites," got it through several levels of review, and finally brought it before the executive officer, who noticed it but approved it with a smile.

"Now I have to get him back," Tijerina grinned.

Other traditions on the boat are fairly universal, such as the habit of giving almost everyone a nickname.

Machinist Mate 2nd Class Louie "Leon" Leontakianakos quickly became known as "L14" for the first and number of letters in his last name, and as "Tacos," the last dispensed by Chief Electronics Technician John

T. Tucker, widely acknowledged as the assigner of nicknames.

Some suggest nicknames themselves, Tucker said. A guy named Williams became "Willy" and another named Jones now goes by "Indiana."

He tagged one torpedoman as "Tater" ("Look at his head," Tucker said of a bald associate). One chief got the moniker "Tinkerbell" and a senior chief became "Pooh Bear," no explanations offered.

"Everybody pretty much gets a nickname," Tucker said.

The senior ensign on board is generally called the "bull ensign." He gets ensign bars engraved with that designation, and by tradition (at least, recent tradition), if you get one of the bars he owes you a drink the next time you get into port.

The position belongs to Ens. Michael J. Vulpis, who nearly lost one of his bars when he was in the bathroom and a hand came sneaking under the stall door. Another time some enlisted men were showing him how to don the firefighting equipment on board.

"When they were helping me out of it, they tried to help me out of the bars as well," Vulpis said.

Vulpis said he's learned to guard the bars carefully, even when he's in his rack.

He won't disclose where he hides them when he sleeps.

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