

# AMERICA AT WAR

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A5

## Many Iraqis out of reach of food, water

Iraqi forces fire on Basra residents seeking aid, trying to flee city

By TINI TRAN  
Associated Press Writer

Umm Qasr, Iraq — Tons of desperately needed food and water reached this port city escorted by attack helicopters and a minesweeping ship, but the people it could benefit most — 1.3 million residents of nearby Basra — remained under siege Friday and under fire from Iraqi fighters.

Iraq's second-largest city, just 20 miles north of the port where a British supply ship delivered water, rice, powdered milk and other humanitarian aid, was encircled by British forces.

When about 1,000 residents tried to flee Basra to find food on Friday, Iraqi paramilitary forces fired on them with mortars and machine guns, British military officials and

witnesses said.

Women and children were targeted as they ran across a bridge leading out of the west side of Basra, according to a British pool report. Wounded civilians were taken to a British regimental aid facility, where the sobbing husband of one slightly injured woman offered repeated thanks, the report said.

Before the mortar and machine-gun fire started, more than 1,000 other Iraqis had escaped the city via the bridge. They greeted British forces with pleas for food and water, and with cries of "Down with Saddam," the pool report said.

"Here perhaps are the first pieces of evidence of Iraqi people trying to break free," said Col. Chris Vernon, a British military spokesman. "And clearly the militias don't want that. They want to keep their population in there, and they fired on them to force them back in."

Britain's 7th Armored Brigade opted to withhold fire during the attack, fearful that they might hit civilians, said Lt. Cmdr. Emma Thomas, spokeswoman for British forces in

the Persian Gulf.

Inside Basra, electricity and water supplies remain cut off. Many residents have been forced to drink contaminated water, raising the possibility of widespread cholera and diarrhea, and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called for "urgent measures" to prevent a disaster.

British forces have ringed Basra in an effort to eradicate units loyal to Saddam Hussein while clearing a path for the aid. Earlier this week, British officials reported that some civilians in Basra had turned on the Iraqi forces.

The desperate need for aid was demonstrated in the southern Iraq border town of Safwan, where two trucks carrying aid from Kuwait were quickly overrun Friday in a near riot. Some 500 people emptied the trucks of bottled water, cheese and other food in barely 10 minutes, just as they had when a similar delivery arrived two days earlier.

The flow of humanitarian aid through the key port of Umm Qasr started with the arrival of the British supply ship Sir Galahad,

which navigated mine-laden waters to deliver 100 tons of water and 150 tons of rice, lentils, cooking oil, tomato paste, chickpeas, sugar, tea and powdered milk.

The Galahad followed the British mine-detecting ship HMS Sandown up a 200-yard wide channel along the 40-mile route from the Persian Gulf to Umm Qasr. A U.S. Naval patrol boat protected its rear, while two Kuwaiti patrol boats and attack helicopters provided an escort.

A new source of fresh water in southern Iraq was expected this weekend. Lt. Gen. Ali al-Momen, head of Kuwait's Humanitarian Operations Center, said Kuwait will begin pumping 1.5 million liters of fresh water daily to Umm Qasr.

And a seven-truck convoy of medical supplies was headed Friday to Baghdad, the target of daily bombings since the war began March 19. The trucks departed from Amman, Jordan, carrying anesthetics, antibiotics, pain killers, blood and bandages dispatched to the Iraqi Red Crescent, said the official Jordanian news agency.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

Security Council approves resolution on humanitarian aid program for Iraq

United Nations — The U.N. Security Council unanimously approved a resolution Friday to restart a humanitarian food program for Iraq once the U.S.-led war winds down. The resolution gives Secretary-General Kofi Annan control for the next 45 days over the humanitarian side of the U.N. program, which uses Iraq's oil revenues for medical supplies and food. The program had been feeding 60 percent of Iraq's 22 million people. The military situation will determine how quickly the United Nations can return its staff to Iraq to begin distributing the aid, Annan said Friday. He pulled U.N. workers out a day before the war began last week. The Security Council agreed on the wording of the resolution Thursday night after a week of acrimonious negotiations.

Bush's \$74.7 billion bill for war getting some flak on Capitol Hill

Washington — Lawmakers have pledged to rush to passage President Bush's \$74.7 billion proposal for paying for the war with Iraq — but they want some changes. Members of both parties are eager to support funds for troops in the field, but many are complaining that Bush is proposing to retain an unusual amount of control over most of the funds, limiting congressional strings. They are also clamoring to add funds for items including state and local police and other emergency responders and for the independent commission examining the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. And many say the bill falls far short of the many billions expected to be needed for a postwar U.S. role in Iraq, including reconstruction, humanitarian aid and peacekeeping.

Teacher wants 'million Mogadishus;' referring to 1993 ambush of officers

New York — A Columbia University professor told an anti-war gathering that he would like to see "a million Mogadishus" — referring to the 1993 ambush in Somalia that killed 18 American servicemen. At Wednesday night's "teach-in" on the Columbia campus, Nicholas De Genova also called for the defeat of U.S. forces in Iraq and said, "The only true heroes are those who find ways that help defeat the U.S. military." And he asserted that Americans who call themselves "patriots" are white supremacists. De Genova's comments about defeating the United States in Iraq were cheered by the crowd of 3,000, *Newsday* reported. But his mention of the Somali ambush — "I personally would like to see a million Mogadishus" — was largely met with silence. A call Friday to De Genova, 35, an assistant professor of anthropology, was answered with a recording that said his voice mailbox was full.

Amid casualties, anti-war sentiment, coalition members redefine roles

Vienna, Austria — As coalition casualties mount, America's allies in the war with Iraq are cautiously redefining their roles to appease angry opponents at home. Resolve remained strong Friday among key coalition members Australia, Britain and the United States, and there were no desertions among the smaller nations offering non-combat troops, logistical help and moral support. But with anti-war sentiment raging in many countries, and a perception growing that Operation Iraqi Freedom could take longer than war planners anticipated, some governments were taking pains to clarify exactly what they are — and are not — willing to do.

Russian president calls war in Iraq worst crisis since end of Cold War

Moscow — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday called the U.S.-led war against Iraq the most serious crisis since the end of the Cold War and warned that it threatened global stability. The war is "in danger of rocking the foundations of global stability and international law," Putin said during a meeting with Russian lawmakers, segments of which were aired on Russian television. He said the "only correct solution to the Iraqi problem is the immediate end to military activity in Iraq and resumption of a political settlement in the U.N. Security Council." The Kremlin has been strongly critical of the U.S.-led war but insists its disagreement with Washington will not damage relations.

Arabs, Muslims, Sikhs report sporadic hate crimes as Iraq war continues

Muslim, Arab and Sikh groups say reports of backlash crimes are trickling in, and they fear an increase if the war in Iraq drags on. Advocates who track such incidents say they've heard about a dozen potential hate crimes — most involving verbal harassment or property damage to Arabs, Muslims and Sikhs — since the war began last week. "The longer the war goes on and the higher the number of American casualties there, I think probably you can make a correlation there

## Saddam's survival may hinge on how long war lasts

By DAFNA LINZER  
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Militias fighting in Iraqi towns, guerrillas attacking U.S. military convoys, the Republican Guard moving south to greet approaching coalition forces.

Saddam Hussein's war strategy may look chaotic from the outside, but military experts believe it's a carefully crafted plan meant to drag out the fighting and prolong a humanitarian crisis that would prompt the international community to push for a political solution.

"That's his only hope for survival," said retired Army Col. William Nash, now a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

So far, Saddam's tactics seem to be having an impact.

Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace, the senior ground commander in the conflict, said Thursday that a longer-than-expected war now seems likely, in part because of the surprisingly tough resistance by forces loyal to Saddam.

Fighting in the southern Iraqi cities of Nasiriyah and Basra has provided two striking examples of Iraq's determination.

U.S. Marines traded fire with Iraqi forces Friday in Nasiriyah, site of some of the fiercest fighting in the war. Coalition ground forces called in Cobra support helicopters in the battle, which drew almost continuous small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

In Basra, Iraq's second largest city, Iraqi forces said to be members of the paramilitary Fedayeen prevented British troops from taking the city and fired on about 1,000 civilians trying to flee.

British forces have encircled the city for days, but have been reluctant to enter for fear of becoming trapped in urban warfare.

In such a situation, the defenders almost always have the advantage and many believe that is why Iraq appears to be waiting for coalition forces to get to Baghdad.

Nash said that strategy would also "give Saddam a decision point of whether he wants to revert to chemical warfare."

"When the troops are gathering close together, they become a lucrative target. It's much harder to successfully strike at soldiers spread across the desert," he said.

Iraq's defense minister said the real fight will be in the Iraqi capital — home to 5 million people.

"The enemy must come inside Baghdad, and that will be its grave," Sultan Hashim Ahmed said. "We feel that this war must be prolonged so the enemy pays a high price."

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, however, suggested American troops might lay siege to the capital rather than invade, in hopes its citizens will rise up against the government.

The United States had hoped for uprisings in several small, Iraqi towns heavily populated by Shiite Muslims, who are culturally and religiously tied to Saddam.

When some of those communities rose up during the 1991 Gulf War, they were left later to deal with an even angrier Iraqi dictator who remained in charge when the fighting was over. The bad experience likely kept home this time many would-be supporters of the U.S. effort.



TIM COOK / The Day

■ *Machinist Mate 2nd Class Matthew Rector, left, and Machinist Mate Third Class Gregory Schmuck bow their heads while a list of U.S. Navy submarine casualties is read during the dolphin-pinning ceremony in the crew's mess area on the USS Providence, as part of an onboard award ceremony while operating in the eastern Mediterranean on Thursday.*

## Dolphin pins are badges of honor in undersea world

By ROBERT A. HAMILTON  
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Aboard the USS Providence — Submariners call it the "brotherhood of the pin."

It's the special connection they share with others who have earned the right to wear the twin dolphins that identify them as qualified submariners. Most can recall the circumstances and the precise date when they "pinned on."

As the Providence re-entered the Mediterranean from the Suez Canal, Machinist Mate 2nd Class Louis "Leon" Leontakianakos and Electronics Technician Seaman Craig L. Tuitt were inducted into the fraternity.

Three more sailors were presented with Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medals for their support of combat operations this month. They were recognized for their role in getting the Providence to "Winchester" status, which means it fired all its missiles before any other submarine involved in current wartime operations.

The sub's captain, Cmdr. Jonathan H. Kan, said the Providence fired on schedule for every tasking and that its high readiness sta-

tus enabled it to take on extra assignments on short notice.

Electronics Technician 2nd Class Jay Witte was recognized for his role in helping the USS Cheyenne recover from a navigation systems problem, directing the repairs over the ship's communications systems.

The assistance was critical to the sister ship, Kan said, because "If a TLAM (Tomahawk Land Attack Missile) doesn't know where it's starting from, it can't get where it's supposed to go." Cheyenne also achieved "Winchester" status because of Witte's support.

Normally, it takes up to a year to complete the qualification process. Both the young men who earned their dolphins this week finished the process early — Tuitt in 11 months, Leontakianakos in eight.

Leontakianakos said it didn't matter so much that he earned his "fish" on a combat mission. The best part, he said, was pinning them on for the first time with the rest of the crew watching.

"As long as it's in front of the people who helped me get them, it doesn't matter where it happens," he said.

The sub's executive officer, Lt. Cmdr. Thad E. Nisbett, said Leontakianakos was not exaggerating the importance of dolphins. "When a guy gets his dolphins, it means I can rely on him to save my life, because he has the knowledge of the damage control equipment that he needs to do that," he said.

Qualifying requires knowing the submarine front to back, knowing how to stop flooding and put out fires, knowing how to find critical gear in the dark, and being able to draw any of the systems from memory, if asked.

Kan said the dolphin ceremony represents "a very special day in the career of any sailor in the submarine force." During the year or more that it takes most sailors to finish the qualification process, they get regular encouragement to look for the light at the end of the tunnel, he said.

Kan also praised the work of the rest of the crew, who supported Leontakianakos and Tuitt in their studies.

"Because of you, these men are now qualified in submarines," Kan said. "Your role cannot be understated."  
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## Bush officials lash out at press when questioned on war's progress

By PAULINE JELINEK  
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Washington — Annoyed by questions about how the war in Iraq is going, Bush administration officials are criticizing press coverage.

At one point Friday, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld complained of "mood swings" in the media.

And one senior official said President Bush thinks it's silly to suggest the war is not going well and right on schedule. Unlike Rumsfeld, that official would not speak for attribution.

The defense secretary opened a Pentagon news conference saying invading forces had made progress in the first week of the conflict to disarm and overthrow Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"And interestingly, in that short period of a week, we have seen mood swings in the media from highs to lows to highs and back again, sometimes in a single 24-hour period," he said.

"For some, the massive volume of television — and it is massive and the breathless reports can seem to be somewhat disorienting," he continued. "Fortunately, my sense is that the American people have a very good center of gravity and can absorb and balance what they see and hear."

The comments came after a week of some tough questions.

Some coverage has focused on statements by defense officials that the administration or its war planners had underestimated the power of Iraqi militias to head off surrenders among the military or uprisings among civilians.

An often-talked about hope of officials was that the campaign would deliver such an early punch — to "shock and awe" the government, they said — that it would be clear to Iraqi leaders they could not win. Officials had hoped for a huge number of surrenders, which they did not get.

Officials also have been sensitive to problems with the system they set up for coverage of the war by journalists traveling with troops — called "embeds" because they are embedded with units.

The arrangement has allowed rare access to the fighting, but also is blamed by many for giving a skewed view of what is happening. Each reporter only sees what his unit is doing and journalists have complained that no overview or perspective is given as expected at daily briefings at the war's command center in Qatar.

Often, reports of deaths, captures, advances and so on come from an individual reporter who has seen it or been told it in the field. Then,

it can take hours or even days before officials at the command center of the Pentagon can confirm the development.

Rumsfeld alluded to the problem Friday during the press conference with Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"Often when General Myers and I go from the building up to (Capitol) Hill to brief ... questions are posed about columns of things flying down someplace and something having happened which is reported by a person who saw it on the ground, which has not even been reported back yet to the Pentagon," he said.

He apparently referred to reports earlier in the week of columns of Saddam's Republican Guard on the move. He didn't say if he thought there was a solution to the problem.

During his daily briefing with reporters on Friday, White House press secretary Ari Fleischer expressed frustration with reports about whether progress was being made as fast as expected in the war.

"From the president's point of view, any questions about how long it will last are, of course, entirely legitimate questions. He's answered them. He has said it will last as long as it needs to last," Fleischer said.