



IRAQ INVASION

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The Daily Star
DHAKA THURSDAY APRIL 3, 2003



PHOTO: AFP

British Gurkhas escort four Iraqi men stopped in a vehicle west of Basra, to a waiting helicopter. Two Puma helicopters were sent out to intercept the vehicle with four Iraqi men on board. The men were then taken off for questioning.

'The allies losing the battle to build trust'

New York Times

"The Bush administration had envisioned a different kind of invasion in Iraq, one that would flood the Arab world with pictures of American soldiers feeding hungry people and giving medical attention to sick children. Instead, billions around the globe are seeing and hearing reports that women and children were gunned down [on Monday] while riding in a civilian van at an American checkpoint.

"This is just what the Iraqi commanders have in mind when they send soldiers disguised as noncombatants to fire on unsuspecting American troops... The real goal is to turn the Americans against Iraqi civilians and cause them to behave like a hostile occupying army rather than the friendly liberators we had envisioned...

"If such scenes become routine... the political war for Iraq could be lost even before the military one is won."

Washington Post

"As US forces move into Iraqi cities and towns, a number of media reports have depicted a wary reception from Iraqi civilians. Some appear supportive of the allied mission to destroy the regime of Saddam Hussein but uncertain it will succeed... If there are substantial innocent casualties, or if American forces are driven to repressive measures in their effort to find the paramilitaries, the chance to win over this wary population could be lost - which in turn could prolong or even increase resistance to the allied operation.

"Using patient and discriminating tactics and offering aid and reassurance to civilian noncombatants, [allied commanders] can demonstrate that their mission is one that will benefit those who now watch cautiously from the sidelines, unsure

whether their liberation is real."

Independent

"Our governments promised faithfully that they were not waging war on the people of Iraq, only on the tyrannical ruler who was hated by the Iraqis themselves; we were not going to be conquerors, but liberators. And because our governments believed that they were waging war on behalf of Iraq's people, they promised also to minimize civilian casualties.

"Had President Saddam and his Ba'ath Party been 'decapitated' in the first air strikes, those guiding principles might not now sound as insubstantial, even hypocritical, as they do. There might have been just a slim chance for the Allied troops to be welcomed as the liberators they hoped to be. The uncomfortable reality, however, is that after less than two weeks of war, the allied troops are regarded across the region as invaders, and Iraq's despotic president as a patriot... The longer it takes to remove President Saddam and the more desperately Iraqis fight - for their homeland, if not for the regime - the less likely it appears that the principle of avoiding civilian casualties will endure."

Arab News

"President Saddam and his generals have evidently been reading their military history books. The use of civilians as shields, the pretence at surrender, are ploys that the Vietnamese used to great effect in their war with the US. The Iraqi military wants the Americans to lose their nerve and start firing on Iraqi civilians... The Iraqis know they have one great military advantage, which they will exploit to the extreme: their opponents' need to avoid civilian casualties. It spells a protracted urban guerrilla conflict, something quite new in the annals of warfare...

"This is a rotten war that the people of Iraq do not want. They have made it abundantly clear they do not want to be liberated by the Americans and British. Not that that is going to make any difference in Washington or London. The wishes of the Iraqis appear to be the last thing on George Bush and Tony Blair's agenda."

Los Angeles Times

"The 'terrorist' is generally considered such because he is indifferent to the fate of civilians. As the Iraqis, lacking B-52s and tens of thousands of bombs, turn to guerrilla tactics, their use of civilian shields properly horrifies us. Yet when civilians are terrorised in their homes by our hi-tech explosives, their deaths and sorrow are considered beside the point of 'collateral'...

"Language is everything here... As long as the meaning of 'terror' exists only in the eye of the beholder, the function of the word is to subvert the moral argument. It's just that arrogance that led Mr Bush to believe that the Iraqi people would be so grateful for our 'smart' bombs they would rise up en masse from the ruins to greet us."

Daily Mirror

"There will be more civilians killed as the shock and awe bombing campaign continues. More Iraqi troops killed as they fight rather than surrender... Which will inevitably mean more British servicemen killed...

"What is essential is that a clear-cut conclusion is reached. Already there are warnings that Iraq could become another Vietnam with US forces embroiled for years. The difference this time would be that British troops would be involved, too. That cannot be allowed to happen. The cost in lives and money would be horrific."

Strains of war test the allies

TIMES ONLINE

Tensions between Britain and the US over the conduct of the Iraq war were growing last night as British commanders voiced their dismay at American soldiers' heavy-handed tactics.

The strains burst into the open after US troops fired on a civilian vehicle, killing the driver, hours after seven Iraqi women and children were shot dead at a checkpoint. An Apache helicopter was also said to have blown up a lorry, killing 15 members of a single family, yesterday.

Such killings highlighted a series of military and political differences that senior British government sources say are creating "hairline cracks in the relationship".

The military relationship has been strained by "friendly fire" deaths, an incident in which a Royal Marine com-

mander complained that US troops endangered his men, and the Americans' general attitude to the Iraqi population.

Politically, the allies have been at odds over the treatment of prisoners of war, plans for postwar Iraq and the Middle East peace process. Britain has also been dismayed by Donald Rumsfeld's threatening noises towards Iran and Syria.

Monday's checkpoint shootings were seen as a disaster for the coalition's efforts to win Iraqi hearts and minds. Asked if they undermined attempts to court the local population, Colonel Chris Vernon, a British army spokesman, replied: "It does indeed, and if you were a civilian watching that you would interpret it in that way."

The difference in approach was epitomised yesterday when the Royal Marines in four southern Iraqi towns

swapped their helmets for berets as a sign of goodwill. American troops wear helmets at all times and checkpoint troops cover their faces with goggles and scarves.

US commanders are also said to have instructed their troops to adopt tougher tactics to weed out militiamen. "Everyone is now seen as a combatant until proven otherwise," one Pentagon official is reported as saying before Monday's checkpoint shooting.

A senior American officer involved in war planning acknowledged yesterday that the US had misjudged the mood of the Iraqi people. "There is the information/psychological front that we try to push but we are probably not as sophisticated about it as we want to be," he said. "There is a big cultural difference between the United States and the Arab world that makes it hard.

Turkey to allow US use its territory

AFP, Ankara

The Turkish government has agreed to let the United States use its territory to resupply US forces in neighbouring Iraq, US Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Wednesday.

"We have solved all the outstanding issues with respect to providing supplies through Turkey to those units" in northern Iraq, Powell told a joint press conference with Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul.

The supplies would mainly be food and fuel, Powell said.

He added, however, that possible search-and-rescue operations would be conducted out of Iraq, contradicting earlier reports that such operations might be carried out from Turkish soil.

"Once we are able to set up our forces in northern Iraq, then some of the issues with respect to search-and-rescue can be dealt with, handled out of Iraq," he said.

Gul, for his part, said that the provision of supplies to US forces would not

require parliamentary permission and could be dealt with directly by the government.

He also added that Turkey would continue to allow US warplanes to make emergency landings on its bases and possible transfers of wounded through its territory.

Washington's plans to deploy tens of thousands of US soldiers to Turkey, to aid in setting up a northern front in its war on Iraq, were rendered moot after parliament narrowly rebuffed the US request last month, angering the US government.

Powell told journalists while on his way to Ankara the United States now wanted Turkey to support US military operations in northern Iraq.

"We are not looking at the kind of requests that we were looking at a month or so ago... these are requests having to do with just sustaining the operations in northern Iraq, and it should not be difficult for the Turks to accommodate."

Doubts deepen over Saddam's health

THE GUARDIAN, London

It was unclear why President Saddam himself did not appear in person to deliver a short speech, which was read by the information minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf.

Although the Iraqi leader did not always deliver messages in person before the war, his non-appearance yesterday is likely to fuel continuing speculation that he could be dead.

President Saddam has delivered two televised addresses since the war began, though both have been disputed. There were claims from the US that a lookalike appeared in the first broadcast and that the second might have been pre-recorded.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said the fact that Saddam did not personally deliver his televised message to the Iraqi people on

Tuesday raised questions about his health.

"The fact that he failed to show up for his scheduled appearance today raises additional questions," he said, adding the United States did not know if Saddam was alive or dead.

British Cabinet minister Peter Hain said that President Saddam's failure to deliver his message in person raised questions over whether he had been injured or had fled Baghdad.

He told BBC2's Newsnight: "It is very mysterious, because he has always used such opportunities to come upfront himself. He is urging his own people to rise up, but he is not prepared to actually rise up in front of the cameras.

"Does he exist? Is he injured? Where is he? I think it is very odd." The tone of President Saddam's speech was more religious than usual,

though the Ba'athist regime - which is largely secular - tends to invoke religion in times of crisis.

The message was aired at the end of a day marked by a steady stream of powerful explosions in Baghdad and points south.

Missiles launched from coalition warplanes again targeted one of Saddam's palaces along the Tigris river, Iraq's Olympic headquarters and a presidential yacht, according to US navy officials.

The al-Salam presidential palace, famous for its four busts of President Saddam, one on each corner, bore two gaping holes. The former HQ of the Iraqi air force, used in recent years as an officers' club, was reduced to rubble, though a statue of the Iraqi leader outside the building survived intact.

'Iraq won't accept any compromise or truce'

AFP, Beirut

Iraq will accept neither a compromise deal nor a ceasefire with the US-led coalition, Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz told a private television station here on Tuesday.

Aziz asserted: "The war will only come to an end with the total and unconditional withdrawal (of the US and British forces) and the lifting of the embargo imposed on Iraq since 1991."

Speaking to the LBCI channel, Aziz promised his government "will accept neither a compromise nor a ceasefire with the invaders".

He also claimed the US should "pay the Iraqi people compensation for their aggression" and expressed his confidence in an Iraqi victory.

In Washington, US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld denied rumors of ceasefire negotiations or a



PHOTO: AFP

A video frame grab shows Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz during an interview with the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI).

third party peace plan, saying the only thing that would be discussed was the regime's unconditional surrender.

"There are no negotiations taking place with anyone in Saddam Hussein's regime," Rumsfeld said. "There will be no outcome to this war that leaves Saddam Hussein and his

regime in power. Let there be no doubt."

President Saddam Hussein called on Muslims around the world Tuesday to wage holy war against the United States and Britain, after dozens more Iraqi civilians were reported killed by coalition air attacks.

The president's call was read on state television on night 13 of the war to topple him from power, appealing to international fury over the latest killings of women and children.

But US President George W. Bush blamed Saddam for civilian deaths, as US and British forces continued both the air blitz and a grinding, bitterly fought ground campaign pushing northward toward a showdown in Baghdad.

In a speech read by Information Minister Mohammed Said al-Sahhaf, Saddam said jihad or holy war was a "duty" for Arabs and Muslims.

US Congress okays money bill for war

REUTERS, Washington

The US Congress rushed on Tuesday to send President Bush money to finance the war in Iraq, as key House of Representatives and Senate committees passed spending bills of nearly \$80 billion for the military, to reward allies and to help airlines.

Appropriations Committees of the House and Senate approved Bush's \$75 billion emergency request, plus more than \$3 billion in aid for the airlines that have lost business during the war, bringing both packages to more than \$78 billion in total.

Both committees also put curbs on the sweeping discretion Bush sought over the use of the huge spending package directed mostly at the Pentagon, which brought a swift rebuke from Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld who said he will press Congress for "full flexibility."

In a bid to send Bush the money before Congress breaks on April 11 for

its Easter recess, the bills were slated to go to both the House and Senate floors this week and to a conference early next week to resolve differences before final passage.

A stumbling block to a quick final bill could be settling differences in the \$3.2 billion House committee's airline relief plan and the Senate committee's \$3.5 billion measure that use different formulas to help airlines with security and other expenses they say are contributing to record losses.

Even as Congress worked to meet Bush's request, White House budget director Mitch Daniels said the president had not ruled out asking for additional funding for the war.

Both committee bills would provide \$62.5 billion to finance the war, but they break the money into categories instead of offering the huge \$60 billion contingency fund the Pentagon sought to meet war costs. The House bill provides a \$25 billion war contingency fund, and the Senate bill an \$11 billion fund.



PHOTO: AFP

Picture made available on Tuesday shows a British Desert Rat as The Rats enter the Iraqi city of Basra, where a factory complex used by Iraqi forces to attack Allied positions was captured by British soldiers. The enormous food storage depot on the edge of Basra, the key strategic city in southern Iraq, had been used as a base from which mortars were fired at troops for almost two weeks.