



# IRAQ INVASION

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## Protesters focus on occupation

REUTERS, London

Thousands of peace campaigners poured onto the streets of Europe and elsewhere on Saturday switching their focus from preventing war on Iraq to protesting against the continuing US and British military presence.

Although US and British officials say the military operation is drawing to an end after the fall of President Saddam Hussein's government, activists said their concerns were as grave as ever.

"It is good Saddam has gone but we cannot forget this war is illegal and without the sanction of the United Nations. It is setting a very dangerous precedent of pre-emption," Pakistani politician and former international cricketer Imran Khan told Reuters as he joined a mass rally in London's Hyde Park.

"No country should have the right to be judge, jury and executioner. That is the reason the UN was set up -- to protect the weak from the strong. But this war sets a precedent where might is right and undermines the UN."

Organisers estimated 100,000 people marched through the city center, waving banners saying "No Occupation of Iraq" and chanting "Bush, Blair, CIA,

how many kids have you killed today?" Police put the numbers at closer to 20,000.

In Washington, thousands of people demonstrated against the war. Wearing T-shirts like one that read "I see all the dead Iraqi children. Boy, do I feel safe," and carrying signs saying "Fight the new colonialism!", the protesters also condemned the way U.S. media covers the war.

In the Italian capital Rome, a march originally organised to call for an end to the fighting changed its slogan to "No to an infinite and global war."

"This war is far from over and anyway it will have terrible effects on the Middle East and maybe on the whole world," university professor Umberto Allegretti who joined the protest.

Maha Alkatib, an Iraqi woman living in Britain, said it was vital the Iraqi people be allowed to take responsibility for forming their own government.

"It is difficult to comprehend a democratic government appointing a government for another state," she said.

In Paris, about 11,000 people marched through the streets demanding an immediate cease-fire in Iraq and the withdrawal of US and British troops. Demonstrators, led by several

prominent French Communist politicians, carried banners reading "Stop the occupation in Iraq" and "Yes to a democratic and independent Iraq."

In Berlin, about 12,000 protesters marched past the headquarters of the opposition CDU conservatives, who have backed the US-led campaign, shouting "peace not occupation."

About 200 Kurds also gathered in the city to celebrate the toppling of Saddam. Dozens of hard-line students protested noisily in front of the British Embassy in Tehran, shouting "Down with Bush," "Down with England."

In San Francisco, more than 1,000 demonstrators huddled peacefully under umbrellas in a steady rain in front of City Hall to protest a US "occupation" of Iraq, then marched to a nearby park for another anti-war rally.

Although the turn-out in London was far below the roughly million anti-war protesters who marched through the capital in February, organisers said numbers exceeded their expectations.

Burgin said there was a fear that Iraq was only the beginning in a series of wars planned by the United States, and possibly Britain.

"Iraq now, but will it be Syria and Iran tomorrow?" he said.

## Restoring order in Iraq US embarks on huge task

AFP, Baghdad

US forces, facing mounting anger for failing to stem widespread looting after their takeover of Baghdad, began Sunday the Herculean task of trying to restore normalcy to Iraq.

They set up an operations centre to screen Iraqi workers in the heart of the battered capital, triggering massive traffic jams as hundreds of locals queued up for jobs in the post-Saddam Hussein era.

They flocked to a recruitment desk in the Palestine Hotel, where a Marines spokeswoman said they were seeking to put Iraqis back at work in key sectors, starting with the police and electrical power departments.

"We want workers, not only senior officials," said Gunnery Sergeant Claudia Lamantia, of the 1st Marines Expeditionary Force. "The idea obviously is to get everything back working."

Since Wednesday's collapse of Saddam's regime, the Americans have come in for increasing criticism for failing to stem looting and establish security and other basic services in the ravaged country.

Baghdad, a city of five million people, has been without electricity for about 10 days while most homes are also without water and telephone services. Public transportation is non-existent.

But the biggest fear among residents has been the security situation, highlighted by the pillage of entire sections of the city in recent days by rampaging youths from the immense Shiite suburb of Saddam City.

Lamantia, who was getting an earful of complaints from local citizens in the lobby of the Palestine Hotel, said the Marines were holding Sunday their first meetings to rebuild the police force and

power utility. "There are fears that this is not happening fast enough," she said. "We are trying to do things one thing at a time."

If more people were on the streets of Baghdad on Sunday, shops remained closed and the sprawling city appeared to teeter between a massive drive for urban renewal or another descent into potential chaos.

US-led forces control most of Iraq, but pockets of resistance remain and the city of Tikrit, Saddam's fiefdom some 150 km north of Baghdad, remains to be captured. Snipers are still a major concern.

An AFP correspondent who reached the centre of the city of 200,000 people on Sunday reported the streets were deserted with no military presence visible.

The correspondent came in from the north, along a road that was open but not secured by US-led coalition forces.

However, a CNN news team had earlier come under fire after going through a checkpoint in Tikrit and then again as they fled, live images showed.

The fall of the city would all but mark the end of the US-led war to topple Saddam launched on March 20, which has seen every other major centre in the country of 26 million people fall into the hands of the US-led coalition.

As a reminder of the work to be done, US marines exchanged heavy fire Saturday with at least two Iraqis who attacked them from the area of Saddam's presidential compound in central Baghdad.

And in a harrowing sign of the warfare possibly to come, US military officials said that US Marines patrolling Baghdad on Friday had discovered 310 vests fitted for use by suicide bombers.



Iraqi volunteers equipped with surgical masks and rubber gloves, push carts, loaded with bodies wrapped in blankets and Iraqi flags, through the streets of Baghdad yesterday after picking up the remains of seven Iraqi civilians killed in fighting between US troops and forces of the ousted Iraqi regime. The Iraqis shouted "There is no God but Allah" before burying the dead at Sheikh Maaruf al-Karkhi cemetery.



An anti-war protester portrays a global occupier US President George W. Bush during a demonstration 12 April 2003 at Freedom Plaza in Washington, DC.

## Families of killed journalists sue Spanish PM

BBC NEWS ONLINE

The brothers of a Spanish journalist killed by US troops in Baghdad are backing a lawsuit against Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar.

The action is being brought by a coalition of anti-war groups, which accuse Mr Aznar of supporting the US-led invasion without the authority of the Spanish parliament or the head of state, King Juan Carlos.

Television cameraman Jose Couso, 37, died on Tuesday after a US tank fired on a hotel used by foreign journalists in

Baghdad. Despite fierce popular opposition, Mr Aznar's conservative government has been one of the most vocal supporters of war.

Mr Couso's brothers also asked the Spanish Foreign Ministry to provide information about his killing and the diplomatic efforts to explain the incident.

"We want to know if we live under the empire of law or under the law of empire," they said at a press conference on Friday.

The lawsuit against Mr Aznar was

filed last week by a number of groups - including Culture Against the War and the Free Association of Lawyers.

Justice Minister Jose Maria Michavila has dismissed the suit as "unfounded", saying the government acted in keeping with international law.

The Spanish Government has asked Washington to look into Mr Couso's deaths, as well as that of another Spanish journalist, Julio Anguita Parrado - who was killed on Monday by Iraqi rocket fire.

## G-7 agrees on key role for IMF, WB in rebuilding Iraq

WASHINGTON POST, Washington

The world's seven major industrial nations agreed on the need for a "multilateral effort to help Iraq," including international negotiations concerning Baghdad's debt burden and reconstruction loans from institutions such as the World Bank.

"We began substantive discussions about how our nations and the international institutions can work together to help the Iraqi people recover, not just from 25 days of conflict, but from 25 years of misrule," Treasury Secretary John W. Snow said after a meeting in Washington of the Group of Seven's top economic policymakers.

But on the issue of giving Iraq debt relief, participants offered somewhat disparate interpretations of what they had agreed to, underscoring how the US rift with France, Germany and other countries with strong antiwar sentiments is plaguing the Iraqi reconstruction effort. Estimates of reconstruction costs vary widely; most are in the tens of billions of dollars annually, though most of that would be peacekeeping expenses.

There was broad agreement at the G-7 meeting, and a later meeting of a larger group of countries at the International

Monetary Fund, that the IMF and World Bank should play important roles in aiding a new Iraqi government. The countries also agreed that the UN Security Council must approve a new resolution to replace ones that impose strict sanctions on economic transactions with Iraq, although they left undecided what such a resolution would say. The Bush administration is balking at mandates that would give the United Nations as big a part in running postwar Iraq as many European nations want.

Snow said the G-7 also backed the US position on sending World Bank and IMF teams to Iraq to begin looking at aid requirements. He said he no longer expected resistance on that issue from World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn. The two men tangled last week when Wolfensohn said that despite his eagerness to help Iraq, he couldn't send a fact-finding mission there, much less offer loans, because UN resolutions ban World Bank activity in the country.

A World Bank spokesman confirmed late yesterday that Wolfensohn believes he now has the backing he needs from the bank's 184 shareholder nations to send a mission as soon as it is safe to do so. He still intends to consult the bank's

board on the matter, the spokesman said.

Regarding the debt, Snow said the G-7 recognized that "the Iraqi people cannot bear the burden of current debt levels." The need for debt forgiveness has become an increasingly urgent refrain of the Bush administration. Deputy Defence Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz said last week that the best way France, Germany and Russia could help Iraq is to write off the money they "lent to the dictator to buy weapons and to build palaces."

European irritation with US pressure was evident yesterday, even though officials acknowledged that, as stated in the G-7 communique, the debt issue would need to be addressed at the Paris Club, an organization of creditor nations that negotiates debt deals with financially strapped governments.

"Any speculation about debt forgiveness is very, very premature, to put it in cautious terms," Hans Eichel, the German finance minister, said at a news conference. Eichel, whose nation is owed about \$4 billion, also noted that the Paris Club handles mostly restructuring of debt rather than outright forgiveness.

## Syria denies charges of aiding Saddam

REUTERS, Damascus

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara said on Saturday US accusations that Damascus had helped Saddam Hussein's Iraq were baseless and challenged Washington to provide evidence.

Senior figures in President Bush's administration have accused Syria in recent weeks of providing military help to Saddam.

Shara said Syria was not taking seriously what he called "threats" from the Bush administration because "they do not represent the general view in the United States."

"These (threats and accusations) are based on allegations that are baseless," Shara told a joint news conference with visiting French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin.

"Sometimes (the Bush administration) don't know what they want... We say to them give us evidence," he said.

Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has said the United States would hold Syria accountable for reported shipments of military equipment, including night vision goggles, to Iraq, calling them "hostile acts."

Shara said Syria's ties with Saddam's government were "not friendly for many years" and that Damascus wanted to have good relations "with the American people."

Syria, a staunch opponent of the US-led war in Iraq, has warned repeatedly that the conflict would throw the region into chaos.

"We are victimised. I am telling you now, because (the Bush administration) failed they are trying to pinpoint at a third country, perhaps Syria or another country," said Shara.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Thursday Washington did not have a list of nations it plans to attack, as he tried to quell speculation that the United States may move on from Iraq to countries like Syria and Iran.

Villepin, who was in Damascus as the second stop on a four-nation tour of Arab states, repeated French calls for the United Nations to be given a major role in a postwar Iraq.

"One country can win a war but it takes many countries to install peace," said Villepin, who met Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

## Global domination carries grave risks

WILLIAM PFAFF, International Herald Tribune

Statements by both President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell at the start of last week made it clear that the United States does not intend to give the United Nations a political role of any consequence in postwar Iraq.

Washington says that as the United States and Britain waged and won the war they will also manage the peace. The United Nations, a Pentagon official says, will have no role "in constructing a democratic Iraq."

The intellectual and political position of the administration and its supporters is that the United States, as sole superpower, legitimately defends international order because the United Nations has defaulted on this responsibility, having never enforced its resolutions demanding Saddam Hussein's disarmament.

Unilateralism and preemptive war are said to be necessary to defend the United States, and to establish and maintain a democratic international order, which the United Nations cannot or will not do.

However, Iraq is not that simple. The Fourth Geneva Convention imposes on the military occupier full responsibility for the well-being of the civil population. It severely restricts the occupier's right to make use of the occupied country's resources.

No one is going to stop Washington from doing what it pleases in Iraq, but if it goes against international law it will have to pay and stay. The Bush administration would prefer to have the international community pay for reconstruction and have other countries' forces do the peacekeeping.

Otherwise some kind of deal will have to be struck with the members of

the self-proclaimed "peace camp" in the Security Council, and with the European Union, the principal potential international source of reconstruction aid.

This confronts the United States with a problem the Bush administration is unwilling to acknowledge.

The Iraq intervention destroyed "the reputation the United States has enjoyed for so long as a benevolent power," to quote Robert Pape of the University of Chicago, writing in The Boston Globe.

Pape says that the United States broke the rule "that democracies do not wage preventive wars" by doing what no other democratic state has done in the more than 200 years of the American nation's existence.

The government of George W. Bush has made it American security policy to prevent any other nation from attempt-

ing to equal the United States in military strength. This is unprecedented.

It has inevitably produced a fundamental change in how other nations see the United States. It has caused some other democracies to resort to classic countermeasures against a government newly perceived as a potential threat.

These measures are not military but diplomatic and economic, which are more relevant, and to which Washington is more vulnerable. Thus France, Russia, Germany, Belgium and China used diplomatic methods to isolate the United States on Iraq.

The same methods may be used again in the developing controversy over a UN role in Iraq and over the contribution of the international aid community to war reconstruction.

Pape notes that the European Union is now a more powerful economic and trading power than the United States

and argues that if there were a concerted effort to require oil suppliers to bill in euros rather than dollars, this would undermine the position of the dollar as a reserve currency.

A move out of dollars by Asian or European investors would contribute to making it impossible for the Bush government to continue to run its enormous budget deficit. The University of Chicago political scientist estimates that a fall of 1 percent or more in U.S. gross national product could result.

By renouncing America's traditional foreign policy and adopting one of global military domination, the Bush administration has made a fundamental change in the international balance.

It seems proud to have done so. It seems not to understand that this has been to its own potential disadvantage and to the American nation's future risk.



Deputy Director Nabhal Amin and her husband walk through the famous Baghdad museum. Looters destroyed ancient treasures at the museum. "If there were five American soldiers at the door, everything would have been fine," Amin said.