

# UN wants US to define its post-war role

**AP, United Nations**

While the United States presses for quick UN action to lift sanctions against Iraq, many Security Council members are waiting for the Bush administration to make a specific proposal and spell out the role it envisions for the United Nations once the war ends.

Council ambassadors met informally Thursday afternoon at France's UN Mission in a third brainstorming session to bridge serious differences on dealing with the aftermath of a war that the United Nations did not authorize. Sanctions are just one issue.

Under council resolutions, the lifting of sanctions is linked to UN certification that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction have been destroyed. That is linked to the return of UN weapons inspectors to Iraq - and the debate on whether the United Nations will play a significant political role in postwar Iraq, as many council members want, or just a humanitarian one, as Washington appears to favor.

"We know, and we recognize that there are many differences, and there are sharp contrasts in points of view in the council," Mexico's UN Ambassador Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, the current council president, said Thursday. "That's why we have to (make) an extraordinary effort to bring the council together."

The council was bitterly divided over the war, with France leading the opposition to the US-led military action, joined by Russia, Germany and China. Now, diplomats say Russia appears to be taking the lead in demanding the return of UN weapons inspectors, verification of Iraq's disarmament, and a significant role for the United Nations in postwar Iraq.

While President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair said the world body will play "a vital role," they have provided few specifics. Similarly, US Ambassador John Negroponte said this week that US officials in Washington were still discussing the specifics of lifting sanctions.

"The sanctions are outdated," White House spokeswoman Claire Buchan said Thursday, "and we look forward to working in the UN to lift the sanctions against Iraq so they can become traders in the world economy."

Germany's deputy UN ambassador Hanns Heinrich Schumacher said before Thursday's meeting: "We want to know what exactly the president has in mind."

To bridge some of the differences, the council has been holding the informal sessions ahead of its first formal consultations on postwar issues next Tuesday.

The council had scheduled a briefing by chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix even before Bush urged the council on Wednesday to lift sanctions. It also scheduled a separate briefing late Tuesday by Benon Sevan, who runs the oil-for-food humanitarian program for Iraq, which has been feeding 60 percent of the country's 23 million people.

Secretary General Kofi Annan withdrew UN weapons inspectors and all international staff for security reasons just before the war began, but he has pressed for the inspectors' return as quickly as possible. The United States, however, has fielded its own disarmament teams inside Iraq to search for weapons of mass destruction and has not invited UN inspectors.

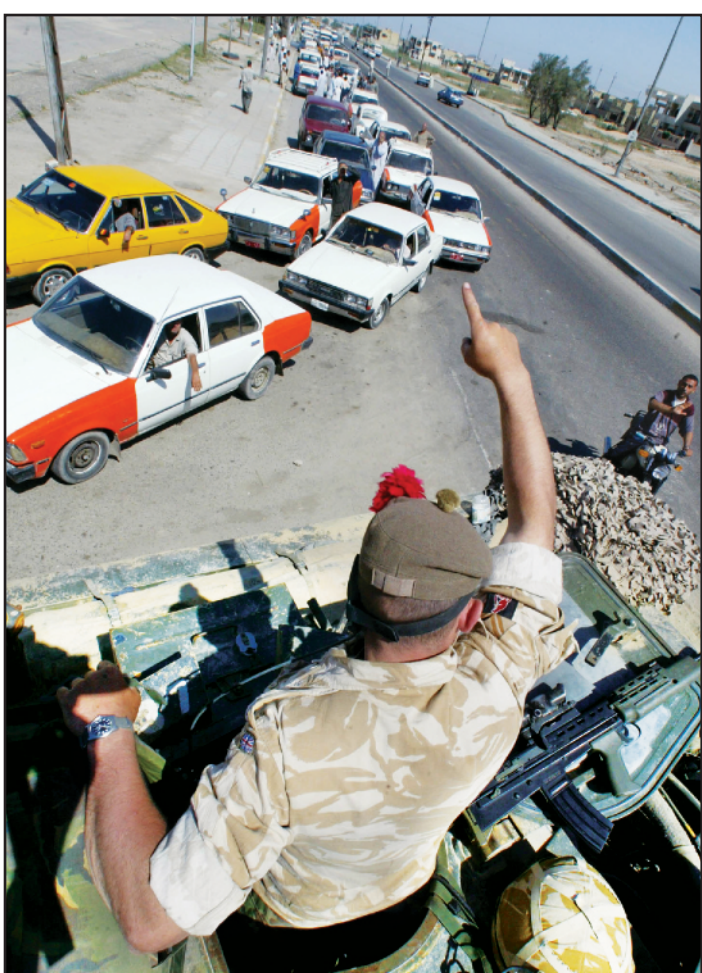
The council imposed economic sanctions and an arms embargo on Iraq four days after Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

A resolution adopted in April 1991 after a US-led coalition routed the Iraqis said sanctions could be lifted when UN inspectors certified that Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and long-range missiles had been destroyed.

In December 1999, the council adopted another resolution creating a new inspection agency and providing for the suspension of sanctions for renewable 120-day periods if UN inspectors reported that Iraq had cooperated "in all respects" with them and shown progress in fulfilling key remaining disarmament tasks.



Iraqis pass a US armored vehicle and an intact portrait of Iraq's toppled leader Saddam Hussein on Thursday in the northern Iraqi city of Tikrit. Five days after occupying the capital Baghdad, US forces took control of Saddam's ancestral hometown of Tikrit on April 14 with barely a fight, effectively ending the military campaign.



A British Army 7th Brigade soldier orders a motorcycle drive to the back of a gasoline queue stretching over one kilometer, in Basra, where British soldiers are now controlling traffic around refuelling stations in the southern city.

## Kurds discover mass grave in N Iraq

**AFP, Kirkuk**

Iraqi Kurds discovered on Thursday near the northern city of Kirkuk what they suspect might be a mass grave according to initial evidence, an AFP correspondent at the site reported.

The suspected mass grave, south of here, is more like a collection of about 2,000 to 2,500 mounds and about a dozen unmarked concrete tombs over an area of about two hectares (six acres).

According to the Patriotic Union for Kurdistan (PUK) party, which seized control of Kirkuk last week, the site might be for victims of deposed-President Saddam Hussein's anti-Kurd campaign in 1988, which Kurds refer to as Anfal and which includes the infamous chemical gas attack on Halabja.

PUK authorities were led to the site by the local population. It is about 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) on the road toward Saddam's former powerbase of

Tikrit in the heart of an industrial zone and right behind a military camp accessed by a bumpy road.

The road to the camp is littered with burnt tanks and destroyed military vehicles, a reminder of the punishing US air strikes unleashed on the Iraqi regime since the start of the war on March 20.

Eyewitnesses said US soldiers dug up the remains of a woman in civilian clothes from one of the graves, which might exclude the possibility that this is a military burial grounds.

There was another empty grave nearby, but no information was available on what was found there.

Kurds, who live mostly in northern Iraq, estimate that about 180,000 people were killed and 4,500 villages destroyed during Saddam's Kurdish purge. Kirkuk has particularly suffered from the regime's forced Arabisation drive.

## 'You broke it, you fix it': Mahathir

**AFP, Kuala Lumpur**

The United States and Britain should help restore Iraq's economy as they had destroyed it through their invasion, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said Friday.

"They know how to destroy Iraq, so they must know how to reconstruct it," he told the official Bernama news agency in an interview.

Malaysia, he said, would not be involved in restoring the Iraqi economy except for providing aid such as food and medicines, and perhaps some business.

Asked about newspaper reports that the national Petronas oil company president Mohamad Hassan Marican would be asked to help in the rebuilding of Iraq's oil economy, Mahathir said: "Such an offer should only come from the United Nations, failing which we don't want to even think of it."

Mahathir, a veteran Muslim leader who was a strong opponent of the US plans to attack Iraq, said he still believed the war was unwarranted.

"We don't believe that the killing of people would help solve problems," he said.

## Syria may expel fugitives of Saddam regime

**THE GUARDIAN, Damascus**

Syria may be preparing to quietly expel some members of Saddam Hussein's regime who have sought refuge inside its borders, US officials said on Thursday night.

Intelligence reports have suggested that some Iraqi leaders have reached Syria. US officials have identified only a few of those, including Farouk Hijazi, Iraq's ambassador to Tunisia and a former senior intelligence operative, and possibly Saddam Hussein's first wife, Sajida Khairallah Telfah.

"There might be some individuals who might be made available to us," said a state department official.

The Syrians have come under intense pressure from President George Bush's administration since reports surfaced that some Iraqis had crossed the Syrian border.

Colin Powell, US secretary of state, said last night that if members of Saddam's government turn up in Syria: "We hope ... the Syrians will do the correct thing, the right thing, in our judgment, and return them back to Iraq so they can stand before justice administered by the Iraqi people."

It was unclear what, if any, negotiations were under way among the US, its allies and Syria, regarding the Iraqi leaders. Mr Powell and Syrian officials have acknowledged the governments are in communication.

Syria has denied taking in any senior Iraqi officials, including specifically Mr Hijazi.

Powell said he plans to go to Damascus for talks with President Bashar Assad.

Finding and questioning top members of Saddam's government remains a key US goal. They may have information on other

Iraqi leaders, including Saddam and his sons, intelligence officials said.

In addition, some leaders may have information on Iraq's alleged chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programmes. Already, two top scientists are being questioned by US authorities, but it is unclear if they are providing any useful information.

Some security and intelligence operatives, including Hijazi, may also be able to detail any Iraqi links to terrorist groups. Hijazi went to Afghanistan in late 1998 and reportedly met with Osama bin Laden, officials said.

Two of Saddam's half brothers have been detained.

Many other leaders, however, remain unaccounted for, including several military and security chiefs. Among them are most of the Iraqi leaders depicted on the deck of cards distributed by the US military.

# Iraqi archeologists accuse US of 'crime of century'

## US sends FBI to find museum looters

**AFP, Baghdad**

US troops committed the "crime of the century" when they failed to protect priceless Iraqi artifacts from looters and likely trampled archeological sites, top antiquities officials here charged Friday.

"With what I'm expecting has happened in the (archeological) sites in the field and what happened to the Iraq museum, I would say it's the crime of the century because it is really affecting the heritage of mankind," said the head of the National Archaeological Museum in Baghdad, Donny George.

"It looks like there was an action and there were other priorities (for the United States) besides the Baghdad museum," George said as he briefed reporters about the firestorm over the ransacking of the museum last Friday.

US troops who seized the Iraqi capital on April 9 watched as looters carted away artifacts from some of the world's oldest civilizations.

A UN conference held Thursday in Paris to examine the war damage to

Iraq's cultural heritage said much of the looting of the museum was carried out by organized gangs who traffic in works of ancient art.

Experts there said among the items lost was a collection of around 80,000 cuneiform tablets that contain examples of the some of the world's earliest writing. A 5,000-year-old Sumerian alabaster vase -- known as the Warka vase -- also disappeared.

Asked if that meant the US troops were ignorant of the value of the pieces housed in the museum, George answered "perhaps."

Under pressure after the museum looting, the United States has offered to send FBI agents to the Iraqi capital to help with the recovery effort.

The head of President George W. Bush's cultural advisory committee also stepped down Thursday in protest at US failure to stop the pillage.

Traffickers in Iraqi archaeological items have thrived since the 1991 Gulf war thanks to growing international demand and an economic crisis in Iraq which encouraged ordinary people to find innovative new ways to

make money, experts say.

Meanwhile, the United States, under pressure after the looting of Baghdad's main antiquities museum, has sent FBI agents to the Iraqi capital to help recover priceless artifacts.

The head of President George W. Bush's cultural advisory committee stepped down in protest Thursday over the US failure to stop the pillage, adding to international calls for action to protect Iraq's heritage.

Meanwhile, The New York Times reported Friday that the war in Iraq and the feelings it has stirred in the Islamic world has forced the cancelation or postponement of hundreds of research trips by US scholars to the region.

Experts told the daily it is the greatest interruption of overseas study since World War II.

In some cases, academic institutions or researchers themselves have canceled trips in response to State Department warnings of danger, the Times reported. In other cases, host countries have denied them study permits.

## Saddam's lions, tigers and bears go hungry

**AFP, Baghdad**

Two of Saddam Hussein's leopards stare out glumly from a cage surrounded by netting on the grounds of the presidential palace in the heart of Baghdad.

Barely able to rise when visitors approach, the animals look paralyzed by bitter hunger and the blazing heat as they lie stricken in the shade.

Their legs tremble and they need several tries to stand upright. They advance slowly, almost dragging themselves toward the bars of the cage, their eyes vacant.

In a distant corner of the enclosure, a lion, lioness and three cubs huddle together, looking exhausted and parched.

The entire family has been robbed of strength and the cubs curl up close to their mother. The stench is overwhelming.

"There is also a brown bear but he's not out today," says Second Lieutenant Karl Hoempler of the HHC, 4-64 Armor Battalion, whose unit is closest to the palace zoo.

"No one dares to enter because we don't know how to treat these animals. The veterinary unit isn't here and we don't know how to feed them."



PHOTO: AFP  
Uday Saddam Hussein's lions sit in his private zoo in Baghdad's main presidential palace on Wednesday. Uday is the eldest son of the toppled Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.