



Iraqi protesters shout anti-US slogans as they surround Humvees from the 4th Infantry Division (ID) during a demonstration against the occupation of Iraq April 19 in Baghdad. The US army took over the civil administration of post-war Iraq from the Marines, inheriting a daunting task plagued by confusion and public animosity towards the US occupation.

## Tension still runs high in Mosul

REUTERS, Mosul

Ethnic tensions simmered in Mosul on Friday but the worst of the looting and violence that have plagued the northern Iraqi city appeared to have passed. The US military made its presence felt, sending two fighter jets roaring over the city. They swooped to within a few hundred meters (yards) of the ground before climbing steeply, prompting traffic and passersby to stop and watch. "So this is (US President George W.) Bush's freedom," shouted one local, voicing the resentment felt by many among the city's dominant Arab population at what they see as an occupying force. Mosul residents who had crossed the Tigris river to the western part of the city, where Arabs are concentrated and where the worst of the looting and violence occurred, said that the situation was mainly calm on Friday. Reuters reporters were advised by

Kurdish fighters and locals east of the river not to enter the western part of the city of more than one million people. The residents said most shops were still shut there, in stark contrast to the bustling trade in fuel and vegetables in the eastern sector, where most of the city's minority Kurds live. "The situation now seems to be more stable," said Mahar Aziz, a grocer working on the eastern bank of the river. "I saw some small-scale looting Thursday, but the Americans are patrolling the streets constantly." One small US patrol was seen on the east of the Tigris and a small convoy of five Humvee off-road vehicles with supplies arrived in Mosul from the Kurd-controlled city of Arbil in the early evening. Warplanes could be heard flying overhead. Within hours of falling to US and Kurdish fighters last Friday, the city, which is a focus of historic rivalry between Arabs and Kurds, descended into anarchy as looters swooped on

public buildings in a frenzy of arson and plunder. In one incident on Tuesday, US troops killed at least seven Iraqis in Mosul when a demonstration against their presence in the city turned violent. Mashaan al-Juburi, the self-proclaimed governor of the city some 240 miles north of Baghdad, said the clash occurred when US forces tried to raise the American flag over the governor's building. But Mosul locals blamed Juburi and senior members of the Ba'ath party of ousted leader Saddam Hussein for whipping up trouble in an attempt to undermine the US military. Late on Thursday, Kurdish forces near Mosul also handed to the US military Samir Abul Aziz al-Najim, a Ba'ath party regional commander and number 24 on Washington's list of most wanted Iraqi leaders. A Kurdish "peshmerga" guerrilla commander in Mosul said more US

troops were needed to secure the city, where relations between Arabs and Kurds were still strained. "If we (the Kurds) interfere then this tends to create tension, but with greater cooperation from the Americans the situation should stabilise," said the commander, who asked not to be named. Several Arab locals said they welcomed the US forces into Mosul and were glad to see the back of Saddam's regime. But they also wanted the Americans to leave as soon as possible. "When the situation calms down then they must leave," said Ayad Daudi, a doctor. A senior US Army officer told reporters on Friday the Marines in Mosul had been too heavy-handed and were stirring up resentment. "The Marines are messing this up for us, because that's how they operate," the officer said. "They don't do this kind of thing (policing) very well."

## Bush to ask UN to lift sanctions in phases

AFP, Washington

President George W. Bush will ask the United Nations to lift economic sanctions against Iraq in phases, leaving the UN in charge of Iraqi oil sales for now, the New York Times reported Saturday. Instead of a single Security Council resolution to lift sanctions, Washington will seek three or four resolutions over several months, the daily said, citing administration officials who requested anonymity. The new approach follows cool responses from France, Russia and other UN Security Council members to the US call, issued Wednesday, to lift sanctions against Iraq and end the UN-administered "oil-for-food" program. Administration officials fear that if the Security Council vetoed the lifting of sanctions, it would open the way for lawsuits arguing that sales of Iraqi oil not sanctioned by the United Nations violate international law. "Nobody wants to have litigation on this," the Times quoted an administration official as saying. "For a while there was a lot of talk about one omnibus Security Council resolution on Iraq," a senior administration official told the Times.

THE GUARDIAN

British Premier Tony Blair is facing the threat of a fresh rebellion from Labour backbenchers who are growing increasingly alarmed that the failure to uncover weapons of mass destruction in Iraq will confirm that the war was illegal. As a 1,000-strong Anglo-American task force of inspectors prepares to search hundreds of suspicious sites, Labour MPs are demanding an inquiry to establish whether M16 misled ministers about Iraq's weapons programme. Backbench Labour MPs who feel they were duped into backing the war on the basis of questionable intelligence want the cross-party Commons intelligence and security committee to carry out an investigation. One well-placed former minister said: "The intelligence committee is raring to challenge the veracity of what the security services told them about Saddam Hussein's chemical weapons. They were told what he had and where it was. There may be a perfectly innocent explanation for all this, but they don't seem to be able to find the stuff." Britain and the US are so desperate

## Baghdad still waiting to get back to normal

AFP, Baghdad

Thousands of Iraqis reported back to work at shops and office buildings Saturday, causing huge traffic jams that restored Baghdad's pre-war bustle. Most of the shops in central Baghdad were closed, but hundreds of civil servants gathered around nearby public administration buildings, seeking news on when they could start again and where they would be paid. "The Americans told us to come back Tuesday," said a woman outside the Baghdad city hall, which was guarded by US troops. Little damage appeared to have been done to the building, contrary to most other administration offices, looted and burnt after the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime on April 9. In the electricity authority offices on Saadoun street, employees wrote down their names and jobs on regis-

ters kept by the janitor at the entrance. "The director (of the authority) told me to take down the names of those who come so that we can restart work," said Souheil Mohammed. An employee, Hassan Mustafa, said he also put down his name in hope of receiving his pay for April, which he would like to receive in dollars. He said the call broadcast on the US-led coalition radio for people to go back to work spread by word of mouth, along with news that the 2.5 million civil servants would be paid from confiscated Iraqi funds in US banks, ferried to Baghdad on American planes. Despite a few explosions heard from time to time around the city, the security situation appeared far better than a week ago. Buses were crowded and it took nearly an hour to get through the jams in central Baghdad where traffic police also returned to work.

Most of the shops open in the centre and other neighbourhoods of the five-million-strong capital were groceries, bakeries, tearooms and barbers. A lot of trade was done on the sidewalks for fear of vandals and looters. "I just came to check on my souvenir shop," said Ali Hassan. "I won't open, I don't think many will come to buy, the risk is not worth it." Thousands of people milled about in Shorjah, Baghdad's largest grain and food market. "It's close to normal," said a trader, explaining that the market was open for the duration of the US-led war on Iraq, but activity dropped after the fall of Baghdad to US troops. In the Qazimiya suburb, northwest of Baghdad, the gold soak around the holy Muslim Shiite shrine of Imam al-Kazem was closed. But it was business as usual for kebab shops and vegetable stalls.

## 900 Iraqi prisoners released

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, Washington

The United States military has released more than 900 Iraqi prisoners, leaving 6,850 still in custody, the Pentagon said Friday. The military determined that the 927 who were released had not been involved in combat, a Pentagon official said. Most were civilians who were somehow caught up in the fighting, not members of the Iraqi military. "The process of sorting people to determine their status has begun," Major Ted Wadsworth, a Pentagon spokesman, said. "We stated from the beginning that we don't want to hold anybody any longer than absolutely necessary."

But determining what to do with many of the others is likely to prove much more difficult. The military wants to release as many prisoners as it can, both to show good faith to the Iraqi people and to reduce the burden of caring for them. But the United States also wants to make sure it is not releasing anyone who has information about the possible location of weapons of mass destruction or anyone who ought to be subject to a war crimes trial. In addition, the Pentagon wants to identify any high-ranking Iraqi military officers who may have shed their uniforms before they were captured. US-led forces are continuing to take more prisoners as they search for illegal weaponry and senior Iraqi officials.

Kurdish troops in northern Iraq captured a senior Ba'ath party official, the Pentagon announced Friday, the fourth such arrest this week. But the US military has not been able to verify the identities of many prisoners. And if the experience from Afghanistan is any guide, making these determinations will not be easy. The United States is still holding 646 Afghans at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, in many cases because their identities or histories have not been fully researched. While 6,850 prisoners are still in custody in Iraq, American-led forces are making preparations to hold many more. They are putting up a tent city in Umm Qasr in southern Iraq that can hold 24,000 prisoners.



Smoke billows from the Iraqi information ministry after looters had set it alight in Baghdad on April 18.

## Prove Iraqi guilt, MPs tell Blair

## \$ 50 m contract awarded to US firm for policing

AFP, Washington

The United States on Friday awarded a 50-million-dollar contract to a private, Virginia-based firm to recruit advisors to train police in post-war Iraq, the State Department and the company said. "We have awarded a contract to DynCorp International to identify, deploy and support up to 1,000 police, justice and prison advisors to Iraq," said Brenda Greenberg, a department spokeswoman. The value of the contract could be as high as 50 million dollars in the first year, she said, confirming a statement from DynCorp's parent company Computer Sciences Corporation. The final amount of the contract will depend on assessments of Iraqi capabilities and needs by initial advisors, who are expected to arrive in the country shortly, the company said.



day prayers since the collapse of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's regime. Imam Hussein, grandson of the Prophet Mohammad (SM), who was killed and buried here in 680 AD, died fighting for the right to lead all Muslims and his death was the final act in the schism between Shiite and Sunni Muslims that exists today.