

## US fails to win over UN sceptics on Iraq

### Draft moving in the wrong direction: Annan

AFP, United Nations

The United States failed to convince sceptics on the UN Security Council Thursday as it spelled out a draft resolution that diplomats said did not match their vision of how to run post-war Iraq.

France said the draft snubbed its concerns while UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, in unusually strong language, said the text was moving in the wrong direction as the divided council again struggled to find common ground.

The United States wants the resolution to give UN backing for a multinational force to help keep the peace. France, Germany and Russia want an expanded UN role in Iraq and a faster handover of power

to Iraqis.

"The revised text does not address our wishes," France's UN ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere said after the council's first meeting on the new draft. It "leaves the United Nations in a secondary role," he said.

"We didn't find the proposals that we made, along with Germany, on the main points."

France has pledged not to veto the measure, which Washington hopes will get nations to contribute cash and soldiers to share the burden in Iraq, where US troops are facing bloody guerrilla-style resistance.

But a high number of abstentions would be seen as giving only a tepid council mandate and not the robust

backing the United States wants from the world body, whose support it did not win to launch the war.

"We are encouraged by what we see to be an emerging convergence among the 15 security council members," US ambassador John Negroponte said after the meeting.

He said the US proposal for a "progressive" transfer of powers -- with a constitution to be written before elections and then finally sovereignty -- was "sound and systematic."

"We're very much in favor of transferring them as rapidly as we possibly can," Negroponte said.

After a lunch with security council members, Annan reiterated his position that Iraqis should be given sovereignty first in order to let them

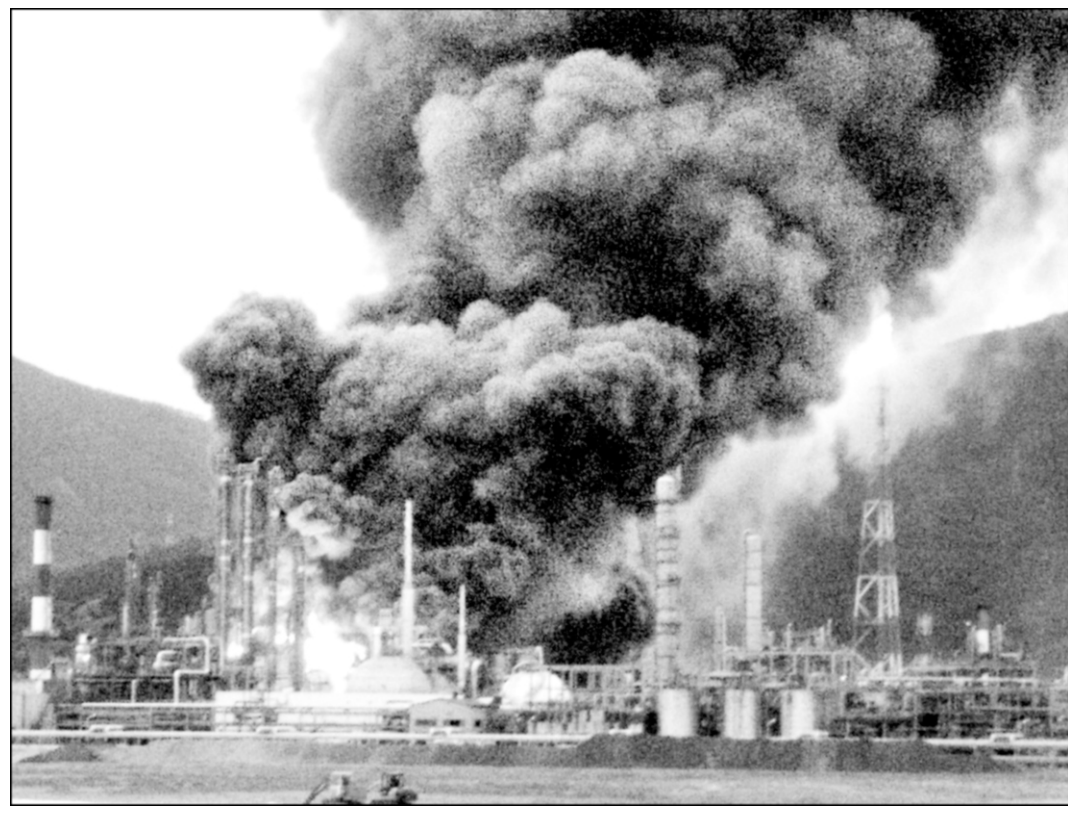
work through the political process independently.

"You get rid of the idea that it is an occupation and cut back on the resistance," he said.

"That doesn't mean the international community walks away."

Along with the pace of a transfer of power, the council also remained divided on the UN's role in Iraq, where its Baghdad offices have been hit by two deadly suicide bombings since August.

UN chief Annan wants responsibilities in Iraq to be clearly stated -- in part so UN personnel do not appear linked to the occupation -- and guarantees on security after two deadly suicide attacks on the UN's Baghdad offices.



Flames and dark smoke rise into the sky from the Honam Petrochemical Corp. complex in Yeosu, about 455 km south of Seoul yesterday. At least one worker was killed and seven others injured in an explosion that ripped through the petrochemical plant.

## Arms hunters reexamining Iraqi trailers

AP, Washington

US weapons hunters are re-examining the only discovery the Bush administration has cited as evidence of an illicit Iraqi weapons programme -- a pair of trailers the CIA said were laboratories for making biological weapons, senior military officers involved in the hunt told The Associated Press.

The two metal flatbeds stocked with cooling equipment, a water tank, an air compressor and a battered fermenter were first described by Iraqi defectors as part of a weapons program. But that assertion, challenged by some US defence analysts, has become the latest prewar intelligence called into question.

In six months of searches, no biological, chemical or nuclear weapons have been found to bolster the administration's central case for going to war. To disarm Saddam Hussein of suspected weapons of mass destruction.

Although Bush administration officials continue to say publicly that the trailers were part of a biological weapons program, David Kay, the CIA representative charged with leading the weapons search in Iraq, acknowledged Thursday that those findings are "still very much being examined."

## Pakistan test-fires its nuclear-capable missile

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan test-fired an indigenous short-range nuclear-capable missile early yesterday, the military announced, its first test since peace overtures began with rival nuclear power India six months ago.

"Pakistan carried out a successful test fire of its indigenously developed short-range surface to surface ballistic missile Hafthi Ghaznavi," an official military statement said.

Islamabad notified neighbouring countries ahead of the tests, and more tests would be conducted in coming days, it said.

The test was conducted at 8:42 am (0342 GMT), spokesman Major General Shaukat Sultan told AFP. He would not reveal the location.

The missile test is Pakistan's second this year but the first since a peace process was initiated between Islamabad and New Delhi in April. The process has been floundering in recent weeks with both sides accusing each other of hampering efforts to reach a deal.

The military, however, said the timing of the test reflects Pakistan's "determination not to engage in a tit-for-tat syndrome to other tests in the region."

The test is the second of the Ghaznavi, which has a range of 290 kilometers (180 miles).

The Ghaznavi is capable of carrying "all types of warheads accurately," the statement said.

"The test was part of a series of tests to be conducted in the next few days to validate the design parameters of various missile systems," it said.

"Pakistan will maintain the pace of its own missile development program and conduct tests as per its technical needs."

India has conducted several missile tests this year but Pakistan has refrained from immediately launching its own tests in response.

Last year the rival neighbours engaged in a series of tit-for-tat tests as a million of their troops faced off across their border on the brink of war.

Pakistan last tested a missile on March 26, when it fired the short-range Abdali (Half II) missile on the same day as India launched its Prithvi missile.

The military said Friday's "second successful test fire of the indigenously developed Ghaznavi missile system bears testimony to the professional excellence of Pakistani scientists and engineers."

President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali "have congratulated the officers and men on their outstanding success."

After conducting nuclear tests in May 1998 India and Pakistan launched missile development programs leading to a series of tests of long, medium and short range projectiles.



A Pakistani-made missile replica stands as a decoration at a roadside where a labourer works yesterday in Islamabad. Pakistan test-fired an indigenous short-range nuclear-capable missile early Friday.

## No surprises in Iraq WMD report, says Blix

### Britain insists banned arms could still be found

REUTERS, AFP, London

Former UN chief weapons inspector Hans Blix said yesterday there were no surprises in the report by the US-led team hunting for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

"The most important point is that they can confirm they have not found any stocks or weapons of mass destruction of any kind," Blix said of the report by CIA adviser David Kay.

"I don't think there are any surprises," he told BBC World Service Radio. Blix said he doubted whether Iraq posed the "clear and present danger" that prompted London and Washington to invade.

"I am of the view that the action could not be reconciled with the demands of the UN charter," he said.

"The intelligence was not so strong in reality that it (the threat) could be said to be manifest," he said.

"If they could develop weapons of destruction in five years or 10 years, well that certainly is not imminent. It probably failed in my view on these two counts."

But British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, reacting to the report Friday, insisted that Saddam

Hussein's regime "did indeed pose a current and serious threat."

"Military action today is as justified as it was in March," he told BBC Radio. "There is not the least evidence of serious compliance by the regime."

Blix urged caution about the evidence given to Kay's team.

"Many Iraqi scientists and technicians will feel that they would have a chance to be rewarded for speaking to the Americans and the British. One should be a little cautious about what they may say," he said.

"Just as defectors seem to have come up with many stories that they expected the interrogators wanted to hear, the same thing may have occurred in Iraq now," he added.

"Therefore I think whatever stories they get from one must be corroborated and must be corroborated on the ground."

Blix also took issue with Kay over the danger of leaving Saddam unchecked. "There is one point he makes that if the armed attack had not occurred in the spring, then these things could have proceeded and developed into something bigger.

That would not have happened

"because the Security Council had never intended to abandon the long-term monitoring. The Iraqis would not have been left alone to proceed with whatever they had started," Blix said.

AFP adds: Weapons of mass destruction could yet be found in Iraq, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said yesterday, as the findings of the Iraq Survey Group drew a mixed reaction in Britain.

Speaking on BBC radio, Straw said the group's interim report, released Thursday in Washington, actually backed up the US and British decision to invade Iraq last March.

"The fact that they've not found weapons ... does not mean that they are not there," he said, adding that "a great deal already has been found in terms of programs" to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

Questioned later on Sky News television on whether he still felt Saddam's regime was a clear threat to global security, Straw replied: "There's nothing in this report that undermines that."

## IAEA seeks access to US WMD report

AFP, Vienna

The UN nuclear watchdog that investigated alleged Iraqi weapons programs before the war has asked for access to the findings in a US report that said no Iraqi weapons of mass destruction had yet been found.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) "still has an inspection mandate in Iraq both under UN Security Council resolutions and under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to ensure that Iraq has no nuclear weapons-related activities," IAEA spokesman Mark Gwozdecky told AFP.

"We therefore expect that Dr. Kay's findings will be shared with us ... to enable us to fulfill our responsibilities," said Gwozdecky, referring to the report by David Kay, the head of a US team of 1,200 experts scouring Iraq for WMDs.

The United States has not let IAEA inspectors back into Iraq to resume their monitoring activities since US forces toppled Saddam Hussein in a war they began last March.

## Pets to push for pay up!

REUTERS, Moscow

For a Russian electricity company, pets are not just for Christmas -- they are for ransom.

Russia's First Channel television reported Dalenergo, an electricity company in Russia's Far Eastern city Vladivostok, is so frustrated by customers who owe around \$10 million that it has decided to confiscate their pets.

"Let the father answer his daughter's question as to why her favorite cat has been taken away," Dalenergo Director Nikolai Tkachyov told First Channel.

Dalenergo's parent, Unified Energy System (UES), disowned the pet-snatching plan.

"Dalenergo will not take away Vladivostok residents' four-footed friends," it said in a statement.

## Chalabi praises US, Britain, blasts opponents of Iraq war

AFP, United Nations

Iraq's Ahmad Chalabi said Thursday that his people would never forget the help of the United States and Britain, and blasted those nations which opposed the war to topple Saddam Hussein. In a speech to the UN General Assembly, he lashed out at "those who stood with the dictator and who continue to question the intentions of the American and British governments" in launching the war.

"The Iraqi people will ask you why you chose to remain silent," said Chalabi, head of the US-appointed Iraqi governing council.

"What happened is indeed liberation (and) could not have been achieved without the determination of President (George W.) Bush and the commitment of the coalition," he said, thanking Washington and London for their assistance.

"The Iraqis will never forget your courage and sacrifice on our behalf," he said. "To all those here who helped us in our struggle for liberation we extend our gratitude."

## Pakistan not desperate for peace talks: Musharraf

### Indo-Pak troops trade heavy artillery fire

ANI, AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf said his country was not desperate for talks with India but still wanted to resolve Kashmir dispute peacefully.

"Our stance on Kashmir is very clear, we want to resolve the dispute peacefully. We are not desperate for talks with New Delhi. They (India) should come forward to start the dialogue process," the Daily Times quoted the president as saying.

On the issue of his simultaneous holding two posts, Musharraf said he should be allowed to decide the appropriate timing for leaving the office of the

Chief of Army Staff, adding that his wearing the uniform was no longer an issue over which Pakistan's politicians should get excited or aggravated about.

Talking to media persons at Pindi Bhattian after inaugurating the Pindi Bhattian-Faisalabad Motorway, Musharraf said that while appreciated the objections to his holding the offices of President and Chief of the Army Staff simultaneously, he would not hold on to them "any longer than required."

When asked about Pakistan's status vis-a-vis receiving defence equipment from the United States, he said he was hopeful about Washington doing the needful to ensure that a strategic balance was

maintained in South Asia.

"We have briefed the US leaders about Pakistan's defence needs," the Daily Times quoted the president as saying.

AFP adds: A civilian was killed and property damaged in an intense exchange of artillery by Indian and Pakistani troops along their de facto border over Himalayan Kashmir, police said Friday.

The civilian died overnight when mortar rounds and artillery shells fired by Pakistani troops from across the Line of Control (LoC) -- the ceasefire line that splits Kashmir between hostile neighbours India and Pakistan -- hit villages in Indian-administered Kashmir, police said.

## US forces face tenacious Iraqi resistance

### Shiites want deadline for coalition withdrawal

AFP, Baghdad

US forces dug in for a protracted struggle yesterday against what they conceded was a deadlier, more tenacious Iraqi resistance after a new spate of attacks on the northern oil center of Kirkuk.

In the center, more than 10,000 Iraqis gathered by the graveside of slain Shiite Ayatollah Mohammad Baqer al-Hakim to mark the end of the official mourning period for the influential cleric, killed along with 82 others in a car bombing on August 29.

As Iraqis grieved for Hakim, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez warned his troops were facing a deadlier foe on the ground than a half-year ago when US forces toppled Saddam

Hussein's authoritarian regime.

"The enemy has evolved and he is a little more lethal, a little more complex, a little more sophisticated and in some cases a little more tenacious," Sanchez told reporters Thursday.

The danger of the enemy "has increased a little bit because they are using more improvised explosives against us ... So he has evolved, he is learning, but so are we and this will continue for a little while," Sanchez said.

He noted every week three-to-six soldiers were dying and another 40 were wounded.

Sanchez remarked the resistance had expanded from just pro-Saddam loyalists to a steady flow of foreign "terrorists" slipping into Iraq from Syria and northern Iran.

The commander warned his

soldiers would not be exiting the country anytime soon.

"It will definitely be years. We never said it would be anything less than years," Sanchez said about the moment when US forces will leave the country.

Meanwhile, the main Iraqi Shiite Muslim group on Friday criticised Washington's draft UN Security Council resolution because it does not set a deadline for a withdrawal of coalition forces, Egyptian state media reported.

Reda Jawad Taqi, a representative of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), said the draft was "weak" because it does not include "a deadline and a timetable for the withdrawal of coalition forces," MENA news agency reported.

## Most Americans now believe Iraq war was unjustified

REUTERS, Washington

Most Americans now believe the Iraq war was not worth it, according to CBS News/New York Times poll released on Thursday which showed a sharp fall in public confidence in President Bush's ability to handle foreign and economic policy issues.

The poll found new lows for Bush's foreign policy performance, which garnered just a 44 percent approval rating. Among respondents, 50 percent lacked confidence in his ability to handle an international crisis and 53 percent said they now believed the Iraq war was not worth it.

Bush's overall job approval rating was just above 50 percent, almost back to the level before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and down

sharply from his 89 percent approval rating after the attacks, the poll said.

"Landing on the carrier, declaring the conflict over, this Romanesque sort of victory parade, certainly did raise the stakes," historian James T. Smith told CBS News. "And now those expectations are falling because people are seeing that the Iraq situation is not going according to plan."

The poll found most Americans are critical of Bush's ability to handle both foreign and domestic problems, and a majority said the president does not share their priorities.

Just over a year before the Nov. 2004 election, a solid majority, 56 percent, of Americans thought the country was seriously on the wrong track, the poll found.

The nationwide telephone poll of

981 adults has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points and was taken from Sunday through Wednesday.

Fifty six percent of Americans lacked confidence in the president's economic decision-making, compared with four months ago when 54 percent voiced confidence, the poll found.

Eying the presidential election, voters were split 44 percent to 44 percent between Bush and an unnamed Democratic opponent. But respondents by a 50 percent to 35 percent margin believed Bush would be re-elected.

Almost two-thirds of Americans viewed Bush as a strong leader, but the majority felt his leadership was not focused on priorities that mattered to them.



Activists of the All India Anti-Terrorist Front (AIATF) display placards during a silent protest against terrorism in Bangalore yesterday. The activists demonstrated to denounce terrorism and to wish a speedy recovery to chief minister of the neighbouring Indian state of Andhra Pradesh Chandrababu Naidu, who was injured in an attack on October 1.

## Israeli barrier can't stop attacks: Hamas

REUTERS, Gaza

The Islamic militant movement Hamas said yesterday the barrier Israel is building with the West Bank would not prevent attacks on Israelis and doomed the US-backed peace "road map" to failure.

"The wall will not protect the Zionist entity and will not stop the strikes of resistance. The day will come when this wall will eventually collapse just as the Berlin Wall collapsed," Hamas said in a statement released in the Gaza Strip.

The statement stepped up a Palestinian campaign against the barrier, which Israel decided Wednesday to extend deeper into Palestinian territory to enclose some big Jewish settlements.

The Palestinian Authority, led by President Yasser Arafat, is demanding intervention by the world powers steering Middle East peacemaking to persuade Israel to stop the project.

## US redesignates LTTE, Jaish, LeT, Harkat, Hamas as terror outfits

PTI, AFP, Washington

Pakistan-based terrorist outfit Harkat ul-Mujahideen, al-Qaeda, LTTE and Hamas are among the 25 groups re-designated by the United States as 'Foreign Terrorist Organisations' making it illegal for persons in the US to provide material support to them, an official announcement said.

Other Pakistan-based groups, including Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi continue to remain on the list of foreign terrorist organisations.

"The Secretary of State (Colin Powell) re-designated 25 groups as Foreign Terrorist Organisations under US law on October 2. The initial designations of these groups in 1997 and 1999 are due to expire on October 3," State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher said.