

Demonstration reported in Baghdad

Rebels say fighting to go on till Saddam's exit: 9 cities seized

BEIRUT, Mar 6: Islamic fundamentalist rebels said on Tuesday they had taken control of nine Iraqi towns and cities, including Basra. They vowed to fight until President Saddam Hussein was ousted, reports Reuter.

to oust Iraqi forces from Kuwait will be withdrawn as soon as a ceasefire is formalised. SAIRI member Mohammed al-Haidari said earlier in Beirut their hundreds of women, children and old people were killed in Basra, Iraq's second city, by artillery fire from Saddam loyalists.



TEHRAN: Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim, leader of a Shi'ite opposition group based in Teheran, the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, who emerged on March 4 as spokesman for the reported insurrection in southern Iraq which, the Ayatollah said, had taken control of four cities including Basra.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Earlier, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Saoudun Hammadi arrived in Tehran on a surprise visit, carrying a message for Rafsanjani from Saddam. He said, there were no details of the message.

8 anti-Iraq Arab states set up peace force

DAMASCUS, Mar 6: Eight Arab countries in the anti-Iraq coalition agreed on Tuesday to set up an Arab peace force as part of a draft security and economic plan, officials and diplomats said, reports Reuter.

Abdel-Maguid said such a Force could fill the gap left by eventual withdrawal of the US-led multinational troops who drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait. Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al-Shara told reporters the agreement to be called 'Damascus declaration' would be announced and signed by the eight ministers today.

700 killed in communal clash in India last year

NEW DELHI, Mar 6: Nearly 700 people were killed in Hindu-Muslim clashes in India in 1990, some 100 more than the previous year, parliament was informed on Tuesday, reports AFP.

BRIEFLY

UK holding 65 Arabs: Britain said it was holding 65 Arabs mostly Iraqis and deportation proceedings against them would continue despite the end of the Gulf war, reports Reuter.

600 Albanians in Italy: Nearly 600 Albanian refugees arrived in Italy on board a Romanian ship early Wednesday, a Brindisi Port official in Brindisi, Italy said, reports Reuter.

AI seeks Palestinians' protection: The human rights group Amnesty International in London appealed on Tuesday for protection of Palestinians and others in Kuwait "at risk of reprisal killings," reports Reuter.

9 killed in Punjab violence: Sikh militants attacked police escorting rebel detainees, leaving three dead Tuesday after six more people died in separatist-linked violence overnight last night in the northern state of Punjab, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports AFP.

Albanian politicians to be freed: Albania will release all political prisoners before national elections of March 31, Italian television reported on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Major meets Bush Mar. 16: British Prime Minister John Major will meet US President George Bush in Bermuda on March 16 for informal talks on the aftermath of the Gulf war, government officials said, reports Reuter.

Jews to be doubled in WB: Israel's Housing Ministry plans to double the number of Jewish settlers on the occupied West Bank by 1993, two left-wing members of parliament revealed in Jerusalem on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Kenya accuses US: Kenya authorities Monday accused the United States government of interfering in the due process of law in Kenya and disregarding diplomatic norms in dealings with Kenya, reports AFP.

Maldivian FM confirms political discontent. Massive crackdown on anti-Gayoom activists. COLOMBO, Mar 6: A wave of unprecedented arrests and detentions have highlighted simmering dissent in the tiny Indian Ocean atoll nation of Maldives which glossy travel brochures tout as the last paradise on earth, reports AFP.

Any differences of opinion and thought that may occur among the people should not be allowed to adversely affect the stability of the country.

US to help rearm ME. WASHINGTON, Mar 6: Even before the smoke of the Gulf War has cleared, there are signs the Middle East is moving to rearm—with help from the United States, reports AP.

Critics say this policy ignores the mistake of having armed Iraq so heavily. Secretary of State James A. Baker III is leaving for a nine-day trip to the Middle East that will include discussions with leaders about arms control.

There are US plans to sell F-16S, "smart" bombs, cluster bombs and missiles to Egypt, and to provide new military aid to Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and others in the region, according to Defense Department documents and congressional sources.

Iran's first public reaction to the revolt against Saddam Hussein Rajsanjan urged the Allied forces occupying southern Iraq to leave and let regional countries solve their own problems.

observer said. Maldivian Foreign Minister Fathulla Jameel acknowledged there was discontent in the country, but said the problem was being exaggerated by people who are involved.

The country's parliament passed tough prevention of terrorism laws in December to contain the rising militancy. Hardline newspapers Sangu and Hukuru were closed and their top journalists arrested, following unprecedented criticism of the government and former Junior Defence Minister Ilyas Ibrahim.

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All of these surrogates have their own agendas," he said. "we could find ourselves once again in a terrible mess."

The countries in the Middle East should be devoting their resources to their own development. It is the diversion of scarce resources to wasteful and dangerous military expenditure that is the cause of so much instability in the region," said Sen. Claiborne Pell, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Off the Record

Benazir says cake was there!

KARACHI: Pakistan could have staved off a damaging US aid cut off but for the folly of highlighting its nuclear programme, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said on Monday, reports Reuter.

US sources speaking privately, say that Pakistan restarted enriching uranium towards weapons grade material early last year as tension rose with its neighbour India over a Muslim revolt in disputed Kashmir.

Pakistan, despite denials, is widely believed to either possess nuclear weapons or to be close to making them. India exploded a device in 1974 but also denies having nuclear weapons.

Baghdad radio tempers tone. NICOSIA: Official Baghdad radio on Tuesday tempered its triumphant tone and compared Iraq to Japan and Germany in the aftermath of World War II, reports AFP.

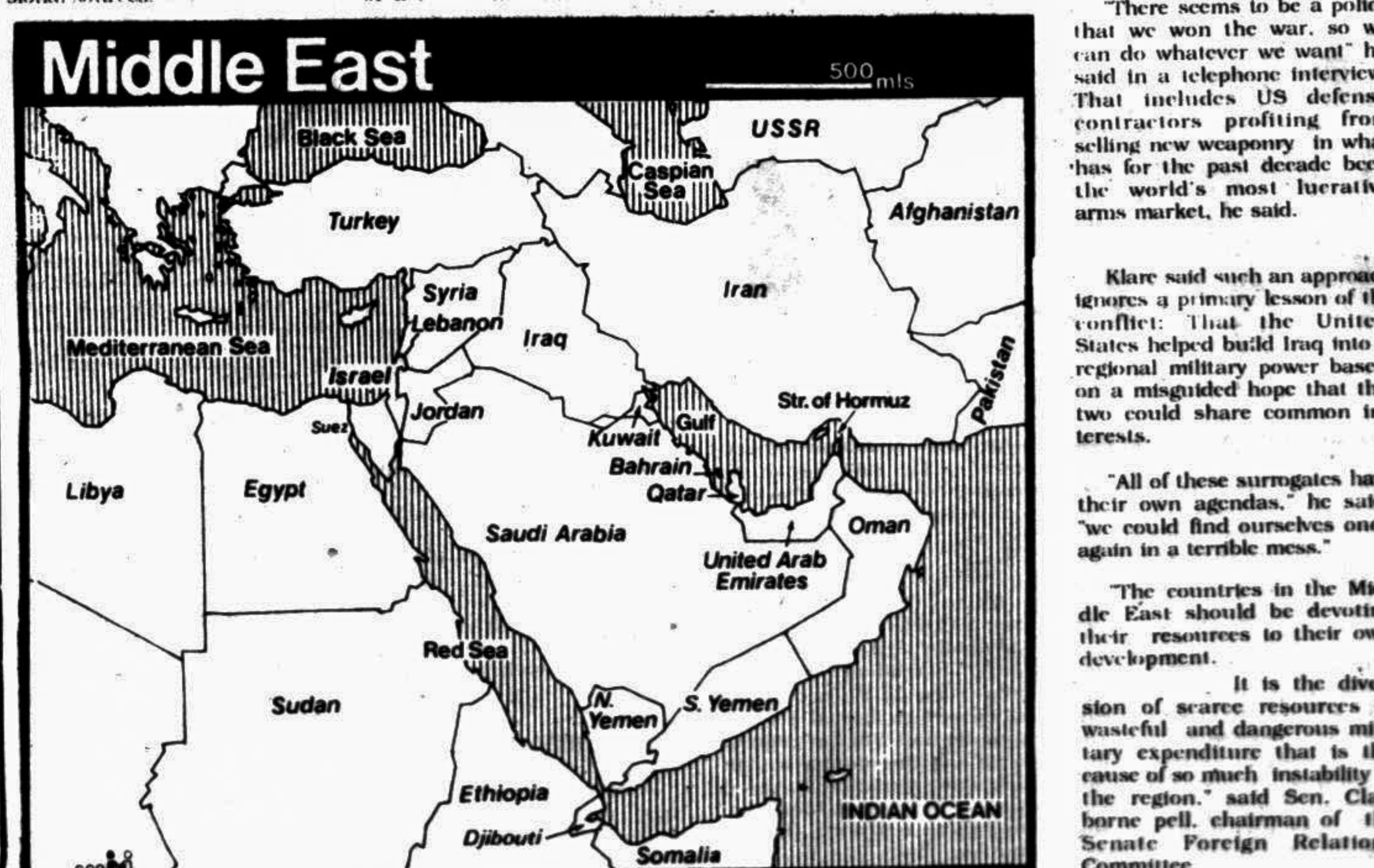
For the first time since Iraq's defeat at the hands of US-led allied forces last month the radio steered clear of describing the outcome of the hostilities as a great victory for Baghdad.

Hoxha casting shadow even from grave. VIENNA: Even from his grave, Albanian leader Enver Hoxha is casting a long shadow over the tiny Balkan country he ruled unchallenged for 40 years, reports Reuter.

US troops safer in the Gulf. WASHINGTON: President George Bush on Tuesday said American troops may have been safer in the Gulf war than they would have been walking the streets of some US cities and called on Congress to pass stiffer crime laws, reports Reuter.

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