

Experts dispatched to Gulf

# Oil spill won't hinder operations: Bush

WASHINGTON, Jan 27: A team of US oil and environmental experts will be dispatched to the Gulf to help with the massive oil slick there, officials said Saturday.

US Defense Department spokesman Pete Williams told reporters that the White House has authorized the team of experts to provide advice to Saudi Arabia on how to handle the slick.

The slick is reported to be 30 miles by eight miles wide.

Williams also said Iraq continues to dump oil into the Gulf.

United States and Saudi Arabia say the oil slick is being poured by Iraq from ships and territory held by Saddam Hussein's forces.

Bush said Friday, and US officials repeated Saturday, that the oil spill will not impede military operations.

"If you're sailing through a sea of oil, you will have problems. We do not intend to do that," said Brandtner.

"We do not expect it will have an impact on our military operations," he said.

Coast Guard Capt. Bill Holt, chief of the Coast Guard's marine environmental protection division, said the team dispatched by Bush, probably five people, may leave as early as Sunday.

But Holt said he wasn't optimistic that civilian oil spill technology could be effectively applied in the Gulf situation.

"It has complicated matters tremendously being in a war zone" Holt said. He called the spill catastrophic. Holt would not discuss possible

missions to choke off the continuing flow of oil into the Gulf.

**1,000 sorties flown**

In the 10th day of Operation Desert Storm, Maj. Gen. Martin Brandtner told reporters at the Pentagon that the US-led coalition had flown 1,000 sorties in the previous 24 hours, for a total of 20,000 in the air war seeking to force Iraq out of Kuwait. 11,000 of them combat-related.

He said there were no coalition aircraft losses or casualties in the past 24 hours, while US fighters shot down three Iraqi MIG 23 jets. Brandtner said the air war is concentrated on the Iraqi Republican Guard troops dug in near the northern border of Kuwait on lines of communication and supply and on Scud missile launchers.

## BRIEFLY

**Iraqi fighters to stay:** US Secretary of State James Baker said on Saturday Iran has assured the United States that Iraqi fighter planes landed in Iranian airfields will remain there for the duration of the Gulf war, reports Reuters.

Baker told reporters in Washington that the United States has been in touch with Tehran.

We have been assured that Iran intends to remain totally neutral in the conflict and that aircraft from either side of this conflict will remain there for the duration of the conflict, he said.

At least 24 Iraqi fighters and other aircraft have landed at airfields in Iran in the past few days, Pentagon officials said.

**5th Scud attack on Riyadh:** Iraq launched its fifth Scud attack on Riyadh on Saturday night, firing one missile which was shot down and exploded in the desert, witnesses in Riyadh said. There were no initial reports of casualties, reports Reuters.

"Our air defence means immediately intercepted it and with God's help, succeeded in blowing it up in the air with a Patriot anti-missile," a Saudi military spokesman told Saudi radio.

But the Scud warhead apparently landed in an open area about half a mile (one km) from a residential neighbourhood on the northern edge of the Saudi capital.

Television film showed the Scud being hit by one of two Patriot missiles and a flash of light on the ground, suggesting the warhead had fallen to earth.

**Scud hits Tel Aviv:** Iraq fired four Scud missiles at two Israeli cities on Saturday night but the army in Tel Aviv said no one was hurt, reports Reuters.

The US defence Department in Washington said three Scuds were launched at the northern port of Haifa and one at Tel Aviv, Israel's largest city.

Army spokesman Nachman Shai said, there were no reports of injuries. Israel television showed two US Patriot missiles being fired from the ground but said it was not clear if they intercepted the Scuds.

Two separate alerts were sounded within 20 minutes. It was the sixth time Israel had come under attack.

**13.5b-dollar Saudi aid for war:** US Secretary of State James Baker in Washington said on Saturday that Saudi Arabia has pledged 13.5 billion dollars more to the campaign to oust Iraq from Kuwait, bringing the total international support for the first three months of 1991 to 36 billion dollars, reports Reuters.

Earlier, Kuwait pledged 13.5 billion dollars, Japan pledged 9 billion dollars Baker said more pledges are expected.

"I think this represents not only a generous contribution towards the objective of liberating Kuwait but also I feel it underscores the strength and determination of the coalition partners to ensure that the United Nations Security Council resolutions are fully implemented," he told reporters.

**Action not to exceed limit:** Military actions in the Gulf should not "exceed limits fixed by United Nations Security Council resolutions, Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh in Moscow Saturday said before leaving for Washington, reports AFP.

"While adhering to resolutions of the Security Council, we should verify simultaneously that actions in the region do not exceed the limits fixed by resolution 678," he told Soviet journalists at the airport, the official Tass news agency reported.

The United Nations has called for Iraq to end its occupation of Kuwait. This is being enforced by a US-led multinational coalition waging war.

**India bans anti-war rally:** Police authorities banned anti-war demonstrations outside embassies in New Delhi Saturday, saying protests could strain India's ties with countries involved in the Gulf war, reports Xinhua.

An order by police chief Arun Bhagat banned the assembly of five or more people outside embassies for the coming 30 days.

The police order also bans the carrying of firearms, sticks, placards and banners in diplomatic areas.

Anti-war groups have frequently held demonstrations in the capital city outside the embassies of the United States, Britain and Iraq.

**Saddam's new call:** Iraqi President Saddam Hussein issued a new call on Saturday for world-wide "commando" attacks on America and its allies saying any one who died would be a martyr in the "mother of all battles", reports Reuters from Nicosia.

Baghdad radio appealed to supporters abroad for "tangible acts" that would "echo across the battlefield."

A statement issued by the ruling revolutionary command council and signed by Saddam said.

"Any Iraqi Arab or Muslim who dies because of taking part in a commando attack against the nations participating in the barbaric aggression against Iraq, their interests or their allies will be considered a martyr in the mother of all battles."

**Manila deports 2 Iraqis:** The Philippines on Saturday deported two Iraqi brothers linked to a failed terrorist bombing at a US government library, in Manila, an immigration official said, reports AP.

Garab Andes, spokeswoman of the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation, said Husham Abdul-Sattar and his brother Hisham left aboard a Malaysian Airlines jet for Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where they were to take a connecting flight to Tehran, Iran.

The two were linked to a bungled bombing of the U.S.-run Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center last Saturday in which one Iraqi was killed and another injured.

The brothers, sons of Iraq's former Consul-General, Hikmat Abdul-Sattar, had prior knowledge of the bombing attempt but lied about it, authorities said.

**US team to visit Gulf:** A team of US oil and environmental experts will be dispatched to the Gulf to help with the massive oil slick there, officials said Saturday, reports AP.

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Williams also said Iraq continues to dump oil into the Gulf.

"The latest information (is) that part of the terminal is on fire," he said. "Iraq is intentionally creating the worst environmental damage in the history of the Gulf region."

He said at least 115 million barrels of oil has been spilled. The oil was apparently released from five oil tankers and possibly from storage tanks on land.

Williams said the team will include experts from the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

**Sharif in Saudi Arabia:** Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif arrived in Saudi Arabia Saturday for a pilgrimage to Islamic holy sites, the Saudi press agency in Cairo reported, reports Xinhua.

Sharif has visited Jordan, Iran, Turkey, Syria and Egypt to explore a Gulf peace making role that could be played by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

In Saudi Arabia, about 10,000 Pakistani troops are in the United States-led multinational forces against Iraq.

**Algiers calls for truce:** Algeria Saturday called for an immediate ceasefire in the Gulf war and restoration of peace and security in the Middle East, reports Xinhua.

A statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Algiers said that Algeria stands for an immediate truce in the Gulf war and restoration of peace and security in the Middle East through peaceful negotiations.

The statement also said that Algeria has been mediating among parties concerned to end the hostilities in the Gulf region.

The Algerian efforts have won support of African countries, the statement claimed.

**Millions of gallons pouring**

Williams said that Iraq was continuing to dump crude oil into the Gulf, that part of the oil spill was a fire, and that thick smoke was blowing from Kuwait over Iran.

"Iraq is intentionally creating the worst environmental disaster in the history of the Persian Gulf region," the spokesman said.

He said millions of gallons were pouring from oil tankers and storage tanks at loading complex about 10 miles (16 kilometers) into the Gulf.

Williams said the tankers held 3 million barrels of oil, and at least much more was in the other storage facilities.

Iraq has claimed oil spills were caused by US air strikes on tankers in the Gulf, but



MARSEILLE (France)—Demonstrators protesting the Gulf war here on January 25. Placards read "Stop war and negotiate Middle East peace" —AFP/UNB photo

## US Allies to suffer massive casualties: Saddam's aide

AMMAN, Jan 27: Scorning the United States, a senior Iraqi envoy said today that Washington and its allies would suffer tens of thousands of deaths in a long Gulf war, reports Reuters.

"There is a feeling of disappointment, failure and defeat inside the evil American soul," said Nouri Ismael Alwais, Baghdad's Ambassador to Jordan and a close associate of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

He said Washington and its western and Arab allies would find themselves in a dangerous and unexpected trap which would materialise "in the form of tens of thousands of killed and hundreds of thousands of wounded."

"This trap was not programmed in their computers or in their documents, Alwais told Reuters in an interview. Iraq has said its Muslim resolve will outlast the Allied onslaught.

Saddam has repeatedly spoken of a long and bloody war, playing on fears of massive casualties in the belief that the west could not stomach a high death toll.

U. S. and Allied officials in recent days have sought to dampen early euphoria that the war, launched on January

17, might be over fast and warned their publics to expect setbacks in a future ground battle for Iraq-occupied Kuwait.

Always said previous American assertions of swift and decisive military action had

**Three pro-Iraqi demonstrators shot dead in Pakistan**

PESHAWAR, January 27: Officials said Saturday that police in Pakistan had shot dead three pro-Iraqi demonstrators, the first reported deaths from Gulf war protests sweeping the Islamic South Asian Nation, reports Reuters.

The Government of North West Frontier Province said in a statement paramilitary forces near the border with Afghanistan shot back when gunmen in an angry crowd opened fire after Friday prayers. Eight people were wounded.

Officials said the incident happened after a mob attacked pro-Saudi Arabian Wahabi Muslim in the town of Khar.

He made his comments shortly after Saudi Arabia and Israel both came under fresh attack from the Iraqi missiles.

The Iraqi air force has "virtually stayed on the ground," he said, although Rear Adm. Mike McConnell said at least two dozen Iraqi aircraft had flown to Iran, including a dozen combat craft.

McConnell said the Pentagon did not know whether the pilots were defecting, trying to avoid combat or seeking heaven.

McConnell said he expected the number of planes flying into Iran would go higher.

"Any effort undertaken by certain parties should be dedicated to convincing the Iraqi regime to withdraw its troops from the state of Kuwait," said a statement after a meeting of GCC foreign ministers, the first since war began on January 17.

"Any idea or step should focus on this issue before discussions on means for ceasefire," said the statement carried by the state-run Saudi press agency.

Residents told him at least 20 people were killed in bombing raids by the U.S. or its allies, he said.

Arnett, one of two westerners still reporting from Iraq, said he saw huge bomb craters in a street in the Al-Amiri district about a mile (two km) from the Rouja Mubarak of Hazrat Ali (RA).

Mohammed Ali, a Baghdad engineer who had sought safety with relatives in the holy city 100 miles (160 km) south of the capital, told Arnett he saw planes attacking Najaf last Sunday. He said there was no anti-aircraft fire.

Thirteen members of one family were killed in a house which was totally destroyed in Al-Amiri, Arnett was told. Damage extended for five blocks.

In another district of the city, seven houses were flattened.

**Najaf damaged, says CNN reporter**

NICOSIA, Jan 27: Cable News Network Correspondent in Iraq Peter Arnett said Saturday he had seen two areas of the Shiite Muslim holy city of Najaf which suffered war damage and civilian casualties, reports Reuters.

**Observation of Mother Earth**

BONN: Since 1972 the German Federal government has invested over DM1bn in satellite observation of the Earth. A further DM335m is earmarked for satellite surveys between now and 1993. Research Minister Heinz Riesenhuber feels this outlay is an investment of great importance for mankind and conservation of the environment, reports DAD.

German satellite observation of the Earth mainly forms part of European research programmes that are the only way of financing ambitious schemes. At present over 300 German scientists at 22 research institutes work in satellite surveying, with a key role being played by the German Aerospace Research Establishment (DLR).

**Special classes for gifted children**

MOSCOW: Special classes for gifted children opened at 15 schools in Khabarovsk, a major city in the Soviet Far East. They are to cover the elementary school curriculum in three instead of four years, reports IAN.

In the senior grades, emphasis is laid on exact sciences and the humanities. Thus, pupils will have lessons of esthetics, painting, and acting.

A commission composed of skilled elementary school teachers and psychologists will enroll pupils for the classes.

Similar classes have already opened in Moscow and Leningrad.

**US bombing violates Geneva Convention**

LONDON, Jan 27: A professor of Theoretical Physics said that the US bombing of Iraq's "two functioning nuclear reactors" earlier this week was probably a violation of the 1977 Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, reports AFP.

The research reactors at Iraq's Nuclear Research Centre near Baghdad, said to have been the target of US bombing, "cannot be said to have any military purpose, they pose no threat to allied forces nor do they support Iraq's occupation of Kuwait," Professor Norman Dombey said in a letter published in Friday's Financial Times.

The destruction of the reactors, known to have been in operation for some time, could have released substances dangerous to the nearby civilian population, the Professor said.

**US denies damage to holy shrines in Iraq**

WASHINGTON, Jan 27: The United States Saturday denied reports that holy shrines around the Iraqi cities of Alnajaf and Karbala had been damaged by allied bombings, reports AFP.

"We have examined very carefully the area around the holy shrines at both those cities and we have concluded without a doubt that there is no damage to those shrines," Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams told reporters.

"Now, if (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein chooses to put military facilities in places that he considers sensitive, that's a decision that he has made. We can't say that military facilities are off limits because they are in certain places," he added.

Cable News Network (CNN) reporter Peter Arnett, the only US journalist authorized by the Iraqis to cover the war from Baghdad, said Al-Najaf was seriously damaged by allied

bombs which caused several civilians casualties and destroyed dozens of homes.

Mr Arnett said on television that authorities took him on a tour of the town 170 kms south of Baghdad to show him damage sustained by Islam's third holiest city.

Mr Arnett, in a report cleared by Iraqi censors, said he saw only residential neighbours on the tour and that there were no military installations near the city which would have made it a strategic target.

"Everyone, I am sure, in the United States, is concerned about casualties in Iraq. Just as we are concerned about casualties in Israel," said Mr. Williams. "The difference I would say is that we are trying very deliberately to go after military targets."

He added that Mr. Hussein "has chosen to put his people at risk" by refusing to withdraw his troops from Kuwait.



SAUDI ARABIA — A Saudi soldier digs a trench on the border between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as US and Saudi forces dig in for a possible ground assault on Kuwait. Iraqi and Allied Forces continue nightly exchanges of artillery fire on the border. —AFP/UNB photo

## Off the Record

### Saddam's wife in Zambia

LUSAKA: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's wife and brother have fled to Zambia to escape the Gulf war, a Zambian opposition leader said on Saturday, reports Reuters.

"I want to tell you all truth. Members of Saddam's family are in Lusaka" Christian Tembo told a rally of the country's first opposition party, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD).

"The wife of Saddam Hussein, her baby, three bodyguards, her two sisters, a maid and Saddam's brother are all in Zambia," he said.

Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda told Cable News Network (CNN) television on Thursday that there was no truth in rumours that members of Saddam's family have fled to Zambia.

Tembo said Saddam's family were staying at a state guest house and were being guarded by members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Kaunda is an old friend of Saddam. He visited Baghdad shortly before war broke out, and one of Lusaka's main thoroughfares is named after the Iraqi President.

Tembo said: "This man Kaunda will put us in trouble for nothing," and added that the wife of Prime Minister Malimba Masheke had been expected to visit Saddam's family on Saturday morning.

Tembo, formerly Zambian Ambassador to West Germany, joined Zambia's fledgling opposition movement last year after being released from two years in jail. He was imprisoned in 1988 for plotting a coup but the case against him was later dismissed.

Last week reports circulated that Saddam's wife had fled to Mauritania. The Mauritanian Government denied the reports.

### A humanitarian gesture

WASHINGTON: The U.S. State Department said on Friday it had allowed the 16-year-old son of Iraq's ambassador to Washington to remain in the United States as a humanitarian gesture, reports Reuters.

The Ambassador, Mohammed Al-Mashat, left the country last week when the Bush administration ordered a reduction of the Iraqi Embassy staff ahead of the Gulf war.

The United States said four Iraqi diplomats, including Al-Mashat, could remain to staff the embassy but the Ambassador said he was recalled by Baghdad.

In a statement, the State Department said that before leaving, Al-Mashat "made a request that his son be allowed to stay in the U.S. to continue his schooling."

"On a humanitarian basis, his request was approved," it said.

The son, Kasim Mohammed Al-Mashat, was a high school student in a suburb of Washington, but has not attended classes since his father left the country, according to news reports.

### 30 embassies homeless

MOSCOW: About 30 foreign embassies and representative offices in Moscow do not have premises of their own. Sergei Stankevich, Deputy Chairman of the Moscow City Council told Novosti. Some of these have found refuge in hotels and apartments, reports IAN.

Until now, the diplomatic corps has been draining the city's coffers. Moscow authorities had to set aside the best plots of land and buildings for foreign representative offices without receiving any compensation whatsoever. The money is collected by department catering for foreign diplomats, which subsequently remits it to the union government. This cannot be allowed to continue, Stankevich believes.

"It is necessary to adopt a law recognizing Moscow as a double capital. Besides, the city should receive an adequate compensation out of the Union and Republican budgets for exercising its functions as the capital of the USSR and the Russian Federation. At present we are unable to find 30 mansions for the 'homeless' foreigners, and the number of representative offices, as well as that of Information and Cultural Centres, which are to be sited in Moscow, keeps on growing, Stankevich said in conclusion.

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