

The Boston Globe

MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2003

THE WEATHER
Today: Mostly sunny, mild;
cooler at coast. 50s.
Tomorrow: A few a.m. clouds, 59;
chance of p.m. rain.
High tide: 3:32 a.m., 4:16 p.m.
Full report: PAGE B16

US units battle resistant Iraqis



GETTY IMAGES PHOTO

Fight nears Baghdad; Hussein rallies troops in national address

By Brian MacQuarrie and Anne Barnard
GLOBE STAFF

AN NAJAF, Iraq — US troops engaged Republican Guard soldiers drawn in around Baghdad last night and early today, although Iraqi resistance slowed the swift advance of coalition forces.

As the forces were closing in, President Saddam Hussein addressed his nation this morning, lauding that resistance and the renewed fighting in the south and vowing that "victory will be ours soon."

"Iraq will strike the necks (of the enemy) as God has commanded you," he said. "Strike them, and strike evil so that evil will be defeated."

Hussein appeared in full military uniform and seemed calmer than during the much-debated national address Thursday following the first round of cruise missile attacks on his capital. Then, many observers questioned whether the speaker was Hussein and whether the address was taped before the attack.

Iraqi specialists and reporters believed there was little doubt that today's address was indeed Hussein and that the speech was either live or recently taped. Hussein made several references to recent battles in Umm Qasr and An Nasiriyah.

He tried to rally his troops.

"These decisive days, oh you Iraqis are in line with what God has ordered you to do, to cut their throats," he said. "In these decisive days, the enemy tried not using missiles and fighter jets as they did before. This time, they sent their infantry troops. This time, they have come to invade and occupy your land."

Last night, two brigades of those troops — from the US Army's Third Infantry Division — were fighting as far north as An Najaf, a Muslim holy city

IRAQ, Page A18

US Marines carried a wounded comrade to safety yesterday in An Nasiriyah. Fighting came when Iraqis feigned surrender and then opened fire.

As war strategy unfolds, risks may grow

By John Donnelly and Bryan Bender
GLOBE STAFF AND GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON — American forces are suddenly confronting the risks of a war strategy that relied on speedy movement of ground forces, the absence of a days-long air war to weaken front-line Iraqi troops before an attack, and the anticipated mass surrender of enemy troops. At the same time, media images of civilian casualties and American prisoners of war have begun to pose challenges for US commanders.

And the diceiest parts of the war, say US officials and analysts, still lie ahead.

Pentagon planners are worried that ground troops could encounter tough battles and possibly a chemical or biological attack closer to Baghdad and in Tikrit, the hometown of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. They also are concerned that hostilities could erupt between Turks and Kurds in northern Iraq.

President Bush, returning to the White House after spending the weekend at the Camp David retreat, sought to be optimistic but sounded a note of caution. "This is just the beginning of a tough fight," he said.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld warned, "There are still a large number of the difficulties and things that can go wrong that are still ahead of us."

RISKS, Page A20



AFP PHOTO

US Marines conducted a house-by-house search yesterday in An Nasiriyah, where fighting was stiff.

Combat erupts in a port city thought secure

By Marcella Bombardieri
and Thanassis Cambanis
GLOBE STAFF

KUWAIT CITY — The people of the bedraggled port city of Umm Qasr were supposed to rush into the street to cheer for their American and British liberators, a benign force that would quickly bring quiet to the streets and then boatloads of food and medicine to the port.

Instead, most of Umm Qasr's 4,000 residents have been hiding in their houses, as Iraqi soldiers fighting guerrilla-style mount fierce resistance to the Anglo-American occupation of the city two days after military officials said it was secure. Marines briefly raised the American flag over the city, before US commanders, cringing at the symbol of occupation, ordered it taken down.

Eyewitnesses also reported seeing at least two civilian casualties in the border town of Safwan, which allied forces said they had secured Saturday. The witnesses also said areas of the town that had supposedly been cleared by the military came under sporadic gunfire and shelling.

"There is serious friction and chaos out there," said Colonel Chris Vernon of Britain. "This is not playing. This is not congestion and traffic in central London."

UMM QASR, Page A22

Inside Today 'Chicago' tops Oscars

The musical takes six Academy Awards, including best picture and best supporting actress (Catherine Zeta-Jones). Top acting awards go to Adrien Brody for "The Pianist" and Nicole Kidman for "The Hours." **Living/Arts, C13.**

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Hussein support wide in West Bank

Streetwise Arabs see tough survivor

By Charles A. Radin
GLOBE STAFF

NABLUS, West Bank — The lane that runs alongside of the ancient casbah of Nablus teemed yesterday with the sort of people whom Arab leaders from Cairo to Amman to Ramallah speak of in fear when they warn that "the street" is a danger to their regimes and to American interests in the Middle East.

Day laborers. Small-time shopkeepers. Pushers of carts laden with vegetables and baked goods. Most of all, the unemployed, sitting with their backs to the old stone wall on the sunny side of the lane. People whose smiles are as warm as the bright spring weather until someone asks about Saddam Hussein and the war.

Hussein, as the hottest new cassette in the music shop de-



AFP PHOTO

Palestinians demonstrated in support of Saddam Hussein of Iraq yesterday in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

clares in a sort of Middle East version of rap, "is the hawk of the Arabs, the builder of Arab glory. He strengthens Islam and the Arab nation. . . . Saddam is the star in the heaven. Saddam is the sun of the Arab nation," it says, calling on the Iraqi president to

"explode America and destroy Israel. . . . Saddam, shoot Israel with your chemicals."

Rayek Inab, 57, sat on the floor of his open-fronted shop, hand-stitching comforters stuffed with cotton and wool, and

THE STREET, Page A23

American troops bolster Kurd uprising in north

By Charles M. Sennott
and David Filipov
GLOBE STAFF

SULAYMANIYAH, Iraq — Fierce fighting erupted in northern Iraq between government forces and Kurdish opposition fighters yesterday as the stalled US effort to open a second front here got a much needed boost with the arrival of American combat troops.

Four cargo planes landed under cover of darkness early yesterday, off-loading attack helicopters and at least 150 combat troops at the Bakrajo airstrip, some 10 miles west of Sulaymaniyah in the eastern half of Kurdish-controlled territory.

Kurdish military officials in the area described the arrival of American troops as an 11th-hour attempt to open a northern front in the US-led campaign to oust Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, which has been complicated by Turkey's refusal to allow an American invasion force to enter Iraq

Huddled in Baghdad

For an isolated family of five, war turns life upside down. **A17.**

Fears of backlash

Area colleges take precautions to protect students abroad. **B1.**

Further accounts

Some war journalists use the Internet as an alternative outlet. **B9.**

Coverage, **A17-24, B4.**

from its territory.

A senior Kurdish military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the newly arrived US troops, believed to be Special Forces, would join approximately 200 American commandos and intelligence operatives already in the region. More US troops were due to arrive, the official added, in troop transport planes.

The precise details of the role the US Special Forces would play on the ground and in a push on the strategic northern cities of

NORTH, Page A22