

HEAVY COMBAT OVER

SMALL BATTLES REMAIN

Fall of Tikrit ends a major phase of war, general says.

LOOTING EASES IN BAGHDAD

Iraqi officers join Marines to patrol capital's streets.

2 AIRCRAFT CARRIERS PULLED

Constellation and *Kitty Hawk* are going home.



U.S. Marines celebrate the capture of the Farouq Palace in Tikrit, Iraq, on Monday. "There is nothing beyond Tikrit," said Marine Lt. Col. Doug Hardison. "That is it."

New York Times

Final stronghold of Hussein wilts

TIKRIT, Iraq — The Pentagon declared the end of significant fighting in Iraq on Monday as Marines stormed the heart of Tikrit, suppressed hard-core resistance there and captured the last stronghold of Saddam Hussein.

"The major combat operations are over," Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal said after more than 3,000 Marines fought their way to the center of Hussein's ancestral hometown.

They seized an opulent presidential palace and rolled their armored vehicles along the city's broad boulevards. They watched white flags flutter from taxicabs, concrete homes and mud huts. They accepted roses from a few grateful residents — and

stayed alert for suicide attacks by the remnants of pro-Hussein militias.

Tikrit was the last important center of Hussein's regime, and now it had fallen — much like Basra, Nasiriyah, Najaf, Karbala, Kut, Kirkuk, Irbil, Mosul and Baghdad.

"There is nothing beyond Tikrit," said Marine Lt. Col. Doug Hardison. "That is it. It's now just a function of when to call the win."

Said McChrystal: "Tikrit was the last area where we anticipated seeing major combat formations."

Iraqi forces once again evaporated and large concentrations of Iraqi troops no longer exist anywhere, McChrystal and others said, though they cautioned that small-scale battles remained likely.

Please see **WAR 2A**

INSIDE

THE DAILY BRIEFING: A look at developments in the war, as well as an update on forces coming and going to the region and a history of U.S.-Syria relations. **4A**

AFTER THE FIGHTING: The scenes in Baghdad, Mosul and Tikrit, where troops enjoy a sprawling riverfront palace. **6A**

SYRIA IN SPOTLIGHT: With Hussein out of the picture, the Arab world looks to Syria for leadership. **5A**

REBUILDING IRAQ: A swift war has handed Jay Garner a rare and daunting opportunity: to create a new state. **2A**

WEAPONS FOUND: Troops find missiles and green tanks of an unknown substance near Kirkuk. **5A**

U.S. ratchets up pressure on Syria

Compiled from Times wires

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration sharply scolded Syria for a second day on Monday, warning it to "ponder the implications" of what Washington says is that country's support of terrorism, its development of chemical weapons and its harboring of fugitives from the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Secretary of State Colin Powell for the first time raised the possibility of imposing sanctions on Syria, noting the "new environment" created by the fall of Iraq and advising that Syria's leaders "should review their actions and their behavior."

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer was even more critical,

calling Syria "a rogue nation" and warned that it needed to adapt its actions to the region's radically changed environment.

"I think that what's next is Syria needs to seriously ponder the implications of their actions in terms of harboring Iraqis who need not and should not be harbored," Fleischer said. "They should think seriously about their program to develop and to have chemical weapons. I think it's time to think through where they want their place to be in the world."

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told reporters that "we have intelligence that indicates that some Iraqi people have been allowed into Syria, in some cases

Please see **SYRIA 5A**

Turkeys to some, priorities to others

Here are 10 of the dozens of state House projects that the Senate says cannot be justified when education and health care spending are being cut.

| Project | Amount |
|---|--------------|
| Orlando airport light rail project | \$10-million |
| Miami-Dade Community College Freedom Tower | \$7-million |
| Edison Community College golf building | \$700,000 |
| St. Petersburg bike-pedestrian master plan | \$600,000 |
| Three emergency shelters in Washington County | \$300,000 |
| Fourteen hybrid fuel vehicles for Pinellas Park | \$225,000 |
| Tarpon Springs heritage museum and park | \$150,000 |
| USA Softball training center in Altamonte Springs | \$100,000 |
| Portable two-way radios for Oldsmar | \$100,000 |
| Fort White train depot restoration | \$49,000 |

Source: HB 1789, the House appropriations bill

'Turkeys' may gobble \$400-million

Leaders of the Florida House and Senate feud over whether there is enough money for lawmakers' pet projects, and whether the items are needed at all.

By **STEVE BOUSQUET**
Times Staff Writer

TALLAHASSEE — House Speaker Johnnie Byrd and his followers boast that their state budget

"lives within our means" while leaving out "the pet projects of the past."

But even as House leaders ration dollars for universities and health care for the poor, they have set aside money for softball fields, water taxis, hybrid-fuel vehicles and police radios. The Senate calls such member-sponsored projects "turkeys" and says they add up to \$400-million in spending.

It's another reason for the two sides to fight.

"People are directing dollars to their own community, their own

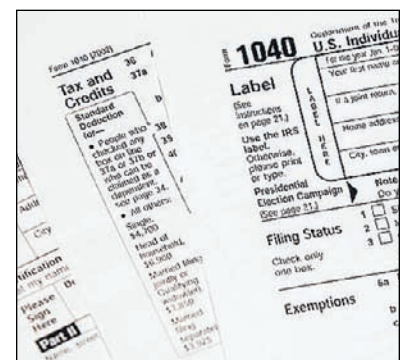
city, for their own purpose," said Senate President Jim King, R-Jacksonville. "I'm not saying those purposes are bad. But in a time when we don't have money, to produce \$400-million specifically earmarked for your own ends doesn't make any sense."

Byrd disagrees. He says that money is plentiful and that local projects deserve a place.

"Legislators are the ones who are elected," Byrd said. "They're the

Please see **BUDGET 11A**

THE TIMES TODAY



Tick, tick, taxes until midnight

That's right, it's April 15 and there are just a few hours left to file your federal tax return. If it's any consolation, you're not alone. **1B**

Push to shove to spray

Forty Pinellas Park Middle School students are treated after a resource officer uses pepper spray to break up a wrangle on campus. **1B**

A fresh score to master

USF-St. Petersburg is introduced to its new vice president, who arrives with an ear for music and a knack for leadership. **1B**

BUSINESS

WorldCom morphs to MCI

WorldCom takes the name of its long-distance unit to escape the onus of bankruptcy and accounting troubles. It's moving, too. **1E**

Rough sailing at home

MarineMax's chief executive pitches boating as a family endeavor, but when his marriage went adrift, the course was for court. **1E**

SPORTS

Hot prospect gone missing

Josh Hamilton, the Rays' promising No. 1 draft pick, has been gone almost a month. Those who know aren't saying where or why. **1C**

NATION & WORLD

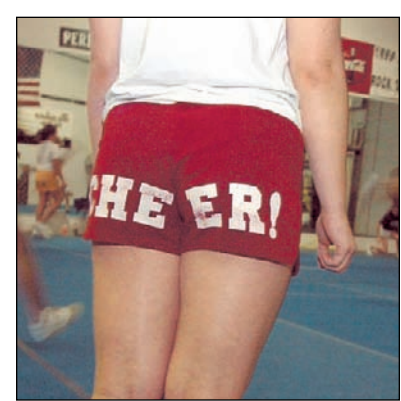
Toxic Teflon?

The EPA announces an investigation into a chemical used in manufacturing, among myriad other products, coated cookware. **7A**

China: SARS crisis 'grave'

After previously downplaying the respiratory ailment, Beijing now says SARS requires "effective and powerful" preventive steps. **13A**

FLORIDIAN



A grown woman groans

Have you seen these young girls in Softees that have goofy words on the back? These chic short shorts are for the young . . . and trim. **1D**

PULSE

Disturbing memories

Research in Tampa involving rats helps shed light on soldiers dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder. **Pulse, 3D**



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