



WEATHER

Sunny, breezy and warm today. High 81. Clear and mild tonight. Low 58. See Page A18.

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Latest developments • Key happenings in the war against Iraq • Complete coverage on Pages A9, A14, A15

TIKRIT LAST MAJOR CITY TO FALL

U.S. Marines overran loyalists staging a last stand at Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, seemingly ending the major combat phase of the Iraq war.

TROOPS, IRAQIS PATROL BAGHDAD

Iraqi police and U.S. troops jointly patrolled Baghdad streets to quell the lawlessness that engulfed the capital after the collapse of Saddam's regime.

U.S. MAY TAKE ACTION AGAINST SYRIA

The U.S. says it will consider diplomatic, economic and other steps against Syria because of concerns that Damascus is harboring Iraqi fugitives.

Rendell, airline jockeying

US Airways urged to reinvest in state

By Brad Bumsted and Jim Ritchie TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Gov. Ed Rendell drew a clearer picture Monday of how the state might help US Airways and said a meeting with airline officials will occur in early May.

Rendell offered an example: If US Airways agreed to put a training facility in Pennsylvania, the state would pay for site work and building construction.

Rendell repeated his position that state aid should be based on the level of commitment the airline makes to the airports in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia — certain to be a topic he discusses with US Airways Chief Executive David Siegel.

"It'll depend on the level of investment they want to make here," Rendell said.

US Airways spokesman David Castleverer said the airline "is anxious to negotiate ... with Gov. Rendell."

US Airways rejected its \$50 million in leases and contracts at Pittsburgh International just before emerging from Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on March 31. The Arlington, Va.-based carrier has demanded lower operating costs at Pittsburgh, where it is the dominant carrier.

The airline also wants \$390 million in improvements at the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia airports, including \$155 million in Pittsburgh. US Airways' local demands include a \$40 million maintenance and training center at Pittsburgh International, a condition for the airport in Findlay becoming the base for its MidAtlantic Airways regional jet operation.

Rendell has insisted that US Airways make a long-term commitment to Pennsylvania in return for state help. He said persuading US Airways to move its corporate headquarters to Pennsylvania will be among the issues he raises. The carrier's three main hub airports are in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Charlotte, N.C.

"Our goal is trying to persuade them not to disinvest, but to reinvest in Pennsylvania," Rendell said.

Siegel called Rendell late last week to arrange a meeting, Rendell said. Before meeting with Siegel, Rendell wants to sit down in Harrisburg with leaders from Pittsburgh and Philadelphia to forge a statewide strategy.

Locally, Allegheny County and airport officials plan to meet this week to discuss negotiations. County Chief Executive Jim Roddey would not comment yesterday. Roddey has appointed a five-member committee, including former U.S. Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, to advise the county.

Brad Bumsted can be reached at bbumsted@tribweb.com or (717) 787-1405. Jim Ritchie can be reached at jritchier@tribweb.com or (412) 320-7933.

Inside

LIVING: The success of "The Bread, My Sweet" just keeps growing and growing for filmmakers Adrienne Wehr (top) and Melissa Martin. Page D1.



SPORTS: Pitt will name first assistant coach Jamie Dixon today as the successor to Ben Howland. Page C1.

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Combat coming to end in Iraq

Troops still on alert for suicide attacks

By Jonathan S. Landay, Sara Olkon and Martin Merzer KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

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 Saddam's ancestral hometown.

In Washington, the Bush administration's attention already was shifting to two post-war concerns.

The White House and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld turned up the pressure on Syria, demanding that it stop harboring Iraqi fugitives and renounce terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, even as British Prime Minister Tony Blair denied any U.S.-British plans to invade Syria.

U.S. officials also looked forward to a meeting today in Nasiriyah, where they hoped to begin forging an interim government for post-Saddam Iraq by welding together rival ethnic, religious and exile factions.

The military action, however, focused on the Marines' success in securing Tikrit.

They seized an opulent presidential palace and rolled their armored vehicles along the city's broad boulevards. They watched white flags flutter from taxicabs, cement homes and mud huts. They accepted roses from a few grateful residents — and stayed alert for suicide attacks by the remnants of pro-Saddam militias.

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

PLEASE SEE COMBAT/A14



A U.S. Marine watches over men Monday suspected of looting in Baghdad. The Marines have begun to crack down on looters after Baghdad residents complained of the lack of law and order in the capital.



Iraqi men stand in front of a U.S. Marine armored vehicle Monday in central Tikrit, Iraq. U.S. Marines overran loyalists staging a last stand yesterday at Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, ending the major combat phase of the Iraq war.

No jubilation for soldiers' families

By Anne Michaud TRIBUNE-REVIEW

For families with loved ones in Iraq, the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime in Baghdad has brought surprisingly little comfort.

"I don't know what to think until I see bodies" of Saddam and Baathist leaders, said Tracy Wood of Whitehall. Her son, Justin Rhule, 22, is serving with the 1st Marine Division.

"I wouldn't put my guard down for anything in the world," she said. "A lot of people expect they've got a free walk now, and that's when you end up getting hurt."

John Bugay, of West Mifflin, expects his wife to ship out from her station at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Md., within the next week. He's caring for their five children while she serves as an Army medic.

"It's still Iraq, and she's still my wife," he said of Beth Bugay's expected post-war service. "Who knows who may be hiding in their population? Who's going to have latent anger at Americans and lash out?"

As American and British forces in Iraq continue to capture strategic cities, delivering more of the country to coalition control, attention is turning to restoring order and rebuilding the battered nation. No one is talking of sending troops home, and indeed they may occupy Iraq for months to come. Families on the home front remain edgy, though perhaps



Tracy Wood, standing with husband Doug Wood, son Bryan Behr and daughter Candyce Behr, holds a photo of her son, U.S. Marine Cpl. Justin Rhule, outside the family's Whitehall home. Justin is serving with the 1st Marine Division in Iraq.

slightly less so than any time since the war began. "There's a little bit of relief," Wood said. "Not much, but a little bit." PLEASE SEE FAMILIES/A9

War winding down but loose ends will remain

By Tom Raum THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — By any normal gauge, the war with Iraq is over. Saddam Hussein's government is gone, all key cities are seized, major combat is winding down and two air-craft carriers are going home.

Yet major questions remain, including the whereabouts of Saddam and any weapons of mass destruction and whether Iraqis can govern themselves after a quarter-century of one-man rule.

The role of the United Nations or

individual nations in Iraq's future also is up in the air. The United States has invited its coalition partners to talks on rebuilding Iraq — but not countries that objected to the war, such as Germany, France and Russia.

Some of these loose ends could take months or even years to tie up, analysts suggest.

But for now, nobody is disputing the immediacy or decisiveness of the allied military successes.

Saddam's "regime is in disarray and no longer in control of Iraq," said Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks at Central Command headquarters in

PLEASE SEE LOOSE/A14

White House gets stern with Syria

By Dana Milbank THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration escalated sharp diplomatic warnings to Syria on Monday, accusing Iraq's neighbor of developing chemical weapons, harboring former Iraqi leaders and allowing foreign fighters to enter Iraq to attack U.S. troops.

White House press secretary Ari Fleischer, at his morning briefing, said repeatedly that "Syria needs to cooperate." He read from a CIA report to Congress last year that Syria had stockpiles of the nerve agent sarin, that it was "trying to develop more toxic and persistent nerve elements," and that it was "highly probable" that Syria was pursuing biological weapons. Fleischer described the document as "authoritative" and said the charge is "well corroborated."

Fleischer declined to dispel the impression that administration was targeting Syria for possible diplomatic or even military measures. "I can only say to you that it should not be unexpected

PLEASE SEE SYRIA/A15

N. Korea seems to be in shock and awe over U.S. gains in Iraq

By Daniel Cooney THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, South Korea — U.S. military success in Iraq appears to have shocked North Korea into trying to peacefully resolve the standoff over its nuclear activities, but some experts warn a resolution to the crisis is far from guaranteed.

After months of insisting on one-on-one talks with Washington, North Korea signaled over the weekend that it would be

willing to accept U.S. demands for multilateral discussions over the communist country's alleged nuclear weapons program.

The change was welcomed by world leaders, including President Bush, who described it as "very good news for the people in the Far East."

"This is the most positive statement since this crisis started," said Paik Haksoon, a political analyst at the Seoul-based Sejong Institute research center. "Its timing shows North Korea is really shocked

by what has happened in Iraq."

South Korea's top security adviser Ra Jong-il said Monday the North's decision to be more flexible was because the Iraq war had shown "it wasn't in an advantageous position internationally," the Yonhap news agency reported.

Scott Snyder, the South Korean representative for the Asia Foundation, said he was optimistic about the North's comments but warned that a resolution to the crisis was far from certain.

"There is still a wide difference in the stated positions between Washington and Pyongyang," he said.

A North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said that Pyongyang "will not stick to any particular dialogue format" if the United States "is ready to make a bold switchover in its Korea policy for a settlement of the nuclear issue," the North's KCNA news agency reported.

PLEASE SEE NORTH KOREA/A8