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U.S. BOMBARDS BAGHDAD

Forces capture two presidential palaces as airstrikes aim for leadership

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. forces bore down on Baghdad with unstoppable force Monday, seizing two of Saddam Hussein's opulent palaces and bombing a building where the Iraqi leader and other regime officials were believed to be staying.

A lone B-1B bomber carried out the strike on what U.S. officials described as a "leadership target" — Hussein, himself, and unspecified top Iraqi leaders. It was not immediately clear whether any of them were killed or wounded.

Earlier Monday, U.S. and British officials said they believed Hussein's top commander in southern Iraq had been killed in a U.S. airstrike.

The airstrikes came as U.S. forces moved through the capital with near impunity.

Some Iraqi soldiers jumped into the Tigris River to flee the advancing column of more than 100 armored vehicles. A dozen others were captured and placed inside a hastily erected POW pen on the grounds of the bombed-out, blue-and-gold-domed New Presidential Palace.

An estimated 600 to 1,000 Iraqi troops were killed during the operation, said Col. David Perkins. "We had a lot of suicide attackers today," he said. "These guys are going to die in droves. ... They keep trying to ram the tanks

with car bombs."

U.S. troops toppled a 40-foot statue of Hussein and seized another of his many palaces, the Sojoud. Tank-killing A-10 Warthog planes and pilotless drones provided air cover as Americans briefly surrounded another prominent symbol of Hussein's power, the Information Ministry, as well as the Al-Rashid hotel.

It was the third straight day the Army penetrated Hussein's seat of power. This time, though, there were plans to stay. Rather than withdrawing at nightfall, as units did over the weekend, members of the 2nd Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division hunkered down for the night at the sprawling, splendorous New Presidential Palace where Hussein once slept.

Several miles away, two soldiers and two journalists were killed in a rocket attack on the 3rd Infantry Division south of Baghdad, the U.S. Central Command reported. Another 15 soldiers were injured in the attack on an infantry position south of the city.

On the other side of town, Marines encountered tough fighting as they entered Baghdad for the first time, coming under machine gun fire. Lt. Col. B.P. McCoy said two Marines were killed and two were injured after an artillery

shell hit their armored personnel carrier.

Marines crossed into Baghdad from the east, their engineers deploying a temporary pontoon bridge over a canal at the southern edge of the city after Iraqis rendered the permanent structure unsafe for heavy, armored vehicles.

Hours later, the sound of occasional U.S. artillery split the night air.

The regime, its brutal hold on a country of 24 million slipping away, denied all of it. "There is no presence of American infidels in the city of Baghdad, at all," insisted Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf.

The Iraqi government maintained its hold over state-run television and radio — arguably its most important remaining levers of control over the country — and broadcast emotional appeals to resist U.S. forces.

Also shown were images of Hussein meeting with key advisers.

The U.S. military flexed its muscle in downtown Baghdad while British officials said one of the regime's most brutal leaders, Ali Hassan al-Majid, had apparently been killed in a weekend airstrike in the southern city of Basra.

A cousin of Hussein, al-Majid was dubbed "Chemical Ali" for ordering a poison gas attack that killed thousands of Kurds in 1988.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/JOHN MOORE

U.S. Army soldiers from A Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, search one of Saddam Hussein's Baghdad palaces Monday.



DTH/HUNTER McRAE

Ginger Gattis (center) lives with her children, Robert, 9, and Crystal, 11, in a Chapel Hill trailer park. Since moving to Chapel Hill from Durham five years ago, the family has lived below the federal poverty line. Gattis, a former UNC employee, has been receiving welfare since February.

POVERTY RISES IN COUNTY

RATE HAS INCREASED 4 PERCENTAGE POINTS SINCE 1999

BY LAUREN RIPPEY
SENIOR WRITER

Ginger Gattis moved to Chapel Hill five years ago in search of a fresh start.

Unhappy with her lifestyle and the opportunities Durham offered, the single mother of two decided she wanted a change for herself and her children.

"Chapel Hill is like Disneyland compared to Durham when it comes to helping parents with their needs," she said.

But even though Gattis found

housing and a series of jobs in Orange County, she still considers her life a struggle.

And she is not alone. Gattis is one of the 14.1 percent of Orange County residents who live below the federal poverty line.

This rate, which has increased steadily since 1999, was revealed in mid-March by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau reported that Orange County's poverty rate was 9.9 percent in 1999 and 12.9 percent in 2000.

The study is conducted every

"The majority of the area layoffs and hiring freezes have occurred in the private sector."

LAURIE CHAREST, HUMAN RESOURCES

three years and determines poverty rates based on a federal threshold.

In 2002, single persons with an income less than \$9,359 and families of four making less than \$18,390 were considered to be living in poverty according to nationwide Census Bureau standards.

Orange County officials were particularly shocked by the report because the rate exceeds nearby Wake County's 7.8 percent, Chatham County's 9.7 percent and Durham County's 13.4 percent. It

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UM supporters: diversity enhances college experience

BY ADAM CARDAIS
STAFF WRITER

As the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor continues to wait for a decision on its admissions policy from the U.S. Supreme Court, proponents of the university's policy have continued to argue that a diverse student body fosters an enriched learning environment.

UM was sued in two 1997 cases for its affirmative action admissions policy, which awards minorities an immediate 20 out of a possible 120

points.

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments from both sides on April 1.

The university takes race into account to maintain a "critical mass" of minorities, said Julie Peterson, a spokeswoman for UM's admissions office. She said "critical mass" is an educational concept that says it is necessary to foster a diverse learning environment and to create a comfortable climate for minority students.

"The admissions process is in the process of trying to figure out how to

make the best student body," Peterson said.

Opponents of UM's admissions policy say it too closely resembles the kind of quotas the Supreme Court deemed unconstitutional in its 1974 Bakke decision.

"Flat out, we think that's wrong," Peterson said, adding that there is no "magic number" of minorities the university seeks to admit each year.

UM admits a different number of minorities each year, she said. So while race is a consideration, there is

no quota for admitting minorities.

And the strength of UM's argument is a myriad of research that shows how racial and cultural diversity foster a better learning environment, she said.

Jerry Lucido, director of admissions at UNC, also said a university's admissions office should strive to create the best student body — one that includes racial diversity.

"What you're trying to do in the

SEE ACTION, PAGE 7

Nerve agents possibly found on battlefield

BY BOBBY WHISNANT JR.
STAFF WRITER

Symptoms possibly related to the use of chemical nerve agents were found Monday in several U.S. citizens stationed in Iraq, adding validity to coalition forces' arguments that Iraq is harboring weapons of mass destruction.

On Monday, a laboratory tested more than a dozen soldiers, two journalists and two Iraqi prisoners of war who experienced symptoms consistent with exposure to "very low levels of nerve agent," according to Knight Ridder Newspapers.

The laboratory detected the presence of sarin, a powerful nerve agent.

Still, there is a discrepancy in the finding because while some tests indicated the presence of the agent, other tests came back negative.

Anjali Bhattacharjee, research analyst at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California, said that she is not surprised by Monday's findings but that she is unsure what conclusion to draw because some patients tested negative.

"It's very interesting, because nothing is confirmed and a lot is unaccounted for," she said. "They haven't found warheads, and they don't know if (the agent) was found

SEE WEAPONS, PAGE 7

Durham suffers 1st local death of war on Iraq

BY EMILY VASQUEZ
STAFF WRITER

In 1996, as a senior at Riverside High School in Durham, Brian Anderson was a busy athlete with one of the most inviting smiles his teachers had ever seen.

He played football, ran track and took his wrestling team to the state championship.

However, Anderson wasn't just thinking about sports; he was thinking about his future. That year, Anderson decided he would join the Marines.

Six years later, he was on his way to Iraq on his first overseas mission as a member of the 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division.

Then, only four months after his deployment from Camp Lejeune, Lance Cpl. Anderson was killed in a vehicle accident just west of Nasiriya, Iraq.

On Wednesday, standing atop a seven-ton truck and manning a .50-caliber rifle, Anderson was electrocuted when the vehicle passed under low-hanging power lines.

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COURTESY OF THE ANDERSON FAMILY

Marine Brian Anderson of Durham died last week, four months after arriving in Iraq.



INSIDE

CAROLINA'S CHILDREN

First story in a three-part series exploring child-care needs of UNC students, faculty and staff **PAGE 3**



INSIDE

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Weekend events, Wilson Library exhibit celebrate Coker Arboretum's 100-year anniversary **PAGE 9**

WEATHER

TODAY Rain, High 53, Low 45
WEDNESDAY Rain, High 56, Low 40
THURSDAY Rain, High 52, Low 41

