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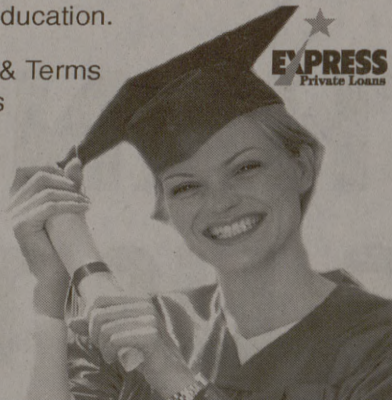
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Iraq boosts military forces at borders

By Selcan Hacaoglu
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HABUR GATE, Turkey — Iraq has boosted tank and artillery forces outside the oil-rich northern Iraqi city of Mosul, but most of the soldiers look exhausted and undisciplined, Turkish truck drivers returning from Iraq said Tuesday.

Mosul, 60 miles south of the border with Turkey, is just outside an autonomous Kurdish-controlled region. The ethnically mixed city is expected to be a top target for U.S. troops if they strike Iraq from Turkey.

"There's definitely been an increase in troops," said Suleyman Ali, a 35-year-old trucker from southern Turkey. "There's always been some military presence, but now there are many more cannons, tanks and anti-aircraft guns."

Gazi Idis, a driver who left Mosul on Sunday, said tanks and artillery guns can be seen under camouflage netting near the main road leading to the city. He also said Iraqis have been building up forces for the past two months.

"They brought excavators to dig out deep circular bunkers in the soil and they moved their tanks into them," Idis said.

Most of the cross-border truck traffic comes from crude oil deliveries, with Turkish drivers ferrying more than 80,000 barrels of Iraqi oil daily into Turkey under a special deal between the two countries.

Hasan Zirik, also a truck driver, said the Iraqis were using sandbags to set up foxholes on the sides of road.

Idis said the barrels of the guns were pointing north toward Turkey, where the United States is hoping to base thousands of troops for any possible attack against Iraq.

Idis said the Iraqi soldiers looked exhausted.

"They look to be in shambles. I don't think they even can fire a single bullet at the Americans," Idis said. "They look like refugees on the run more than soldiers."

Idis said whenever he asked for water from Iraqi troops along the road, the soldiers

Iraq boosts forces

Iraq has boosted tank and artillery forces outside the oil-rich northern city of Mosul, Turkish oil truck drivers reported Tuesday.



SOURCES: Associated Press; CIA; GlobalSecurity.org; ESRI

complained they have no other food nor water themselves.

"They wear dirty worn-out camouflage uniforms," Idis said. "They don't look like they have military discipline."

Husnu Dagli, another driver, said Iraqi authorities were trying to restrict foreign information in the area.

"They banned us from bringing in our mobile phones more than a month ago," Dagli said. "We also not allowed to take newspapers or magazines with us."

Dagli said Iraqis kept asking him when a war would start.

The cross-border trade is not approved by the United Nations but has been mostly ignored given the billions of dollars in trade lost by Turkey following the 1991 Gulf War and the imposition of economic sanctions.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Toyota set to open San Antonio plant

TOKYO (AP) — Toyota Motor Corp. has decided to build its new U.S. plant in San Antonio, picking the Texas city over a site in Arkansas.

Japan's largest automaker is expected to formally announce the decision in the U.S. on Monday.

The top Japanese automaker is considering another plant in North America to expand its highly profitable business. The \$750 million truck plant being considered could make up to 100,000 trucks per year and perhaps expand to make sport utility vehicles.

Toyota officials say San Antonio would be a better site than Arkansas given it fits in bet-

ter with their plan to tap Latin American markets.

Dewhurst delays water permit request

AUSTIN (AP) — Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst has asked state regulators to wait to take action on a water permit application until the Legislature has the chance to clarify the commis-

sion's authority to issue such a permit.

Dewhurst made the request in response to an application by the San Marcos River Foundation for a permit to appropriate up to 1.3 million acre-feet of water a year from the Guadalupe and San Marcos rivers to maintain freshwater inflows into the Guadalupe Estuary, Dewhurst said.

U.S. factory orders rising

By Jeannine Aversa
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

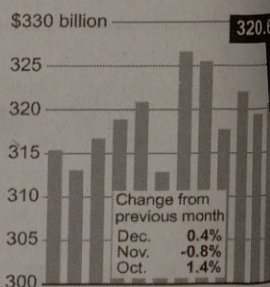
WASHINGTON — The nation's manufacturers saw demand for their products grow in December, offering a dose of good news for an industry that has been struggling.

The Commerce Department reported Tuesday that orders at U.S. factories bounced back in December, rising by 0.4 percent over November orders, while orders declined by 0.8 percent

Factory orders

Here is a look at total new orders to American factories.

Seasonally adjusted



Note: Semiconductor manufacturers not included.

SOURCE: Department of Commerce

Stronger demand for computers and household appliances more than offset weaker demand for automobiles and other transportation equipment.

"We are seeing a little bit of a break in the ice for American manufacturers. Their current order books are reflecting a brighter signal," said Carl Tannenbaum, chief economist at LaSalle Bank.

"This is especially encouraging because, after all, manufacturing has been the hardest hit in the last couple of years and its recovery is thought to be central to an improving set of economic conditions in general," he said.

December's performance was slightly better than the 0.3 percent advance analysts were expecting.

But on Wall Street, war worries pushed stocks down. The Dow Jones industrial average closed down 96.53 points at 8,013.29.

On Monday, a more forward-looking report showed manufacturing grew in January for the third straight month though at a slower pace, as worries about a war with Iraq dampened optimism.

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