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War briefing



Secretary of Defense **Donald H. Rumsfeld** speaks to defense attachés and representatives of 26 of the Operation Iraqi Freedom coalition nations gathered at the Pentagon for a meeting on Thursday. Operation Iraqi Freedom is the multinational coalition effort to liberate the Iraqi people, eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and end the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Rumsfeld hopes for Shiite uprising in Baghdad

By Robert Burns
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld suggested on Thursday that U.S. forces bearing down on Baghdad might lay siege to the capital and hope anti-Saddam Hussein citizens rise up against the government before American troops have to invade the city of 5 million.

Rumsfeld also said the United States and its battlefield allies would accept nothing short of total victory in Iraq.

"There isn't going to be a cease-fire," Rumsfeld told the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee. He said later, "It will end at the point where that regime does not exist and a new regime is ready to go in its place."

Rumsfeld appeared before two congressional committees Thursday amid efforts by the Bush administration to counteract speculation that the war effort is bogging down and that it underestimated the need for armored forces to protect attacking U.S. troops long supply lines inside Iraq. The defense secretary said there is a near-continuous flow of fresh U.S. forces into the Persian Gulf, noting that 1,000 paratroopers from the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade jumped into northern Iraq on Wednesday. He estimated that between 1,500 and 2,500 troops are arriving daily. The total number of American forces in the Gulf region stands at 250,000. Close to 90,000 are in Iraq, a senior defense official said Thursday. That's an increase of some 13,000 since Tuesday. An additional 100,000 to 200,000 ground troops are in the process of heading to the Gulf, including the army's 1st Armored Division, 1st Cavalry

Division and the 2nd and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiments. Also, elements of the 4th Infantry Division left for Kuwait on Thursday from Fort Hood, Texas, although the ships carrying the division's equipment won't all be there until about April 12.

Iraq claimed to have downed an Army Apache attack helicopter and a U.S. drone aircraft, but Pentagon officials confirmed only the loss of a reconnaissance drone. They said footage of a downed Apache shown on Iraqi state-run television was of an Apache that was lost during fighting Monday. After curtailing airstrikes because of blinding sandstorms and thunderstorms, allied planes intensified their attacks Thursday as the weather improved. They flew more than 600 strike missions across Iraq, with special focus on Republican Guard forces ringing Baghdad, officials said.

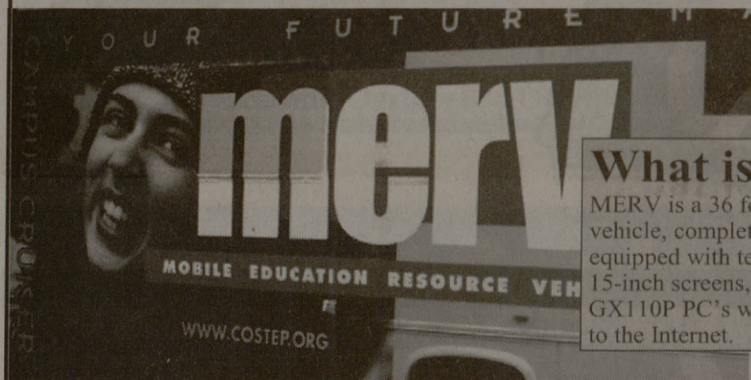
Asked by Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., what American ground troops would do once they reached Baghdad, Rumsfeld answered by alluding to what is happening in Basra, Iraq's second-largest city. British forces there have "aid siege, hoping for a successful uprising by the city's Shiites. Rumsfeld noted that both Basra and Baghdad have large Shiite populations. "And they are not terribly favorable to the regime," Rumsfeld said. "They've been repressed, and they are in the present time in Basra assisting us." He said that roughly half the Baghdad population is Shiite. "The regime has tended to be fearful of them and repress them," he said. Rumsfeld said he expected Saddam's loyalists to shoot any Iraqi troops in Baghdad who try to surrender and those who might try to assist U.S. forces.

"There isn't going to be a cease-fire. It will end at the point where that regime does not exist."

— Donald H. Rumsfeld
U.S. Defense Secretary

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Two men suspected of assassination shot and killed by police

BELGRADE, Serbia-Montenegro (AP) — Police shot and killed two major suspects in the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic as they resisted arrest late Thursday, the government said. Dusan Spasojevic and Milan Lukovic were leaders of the Zemun Clan, a crime gang that has been accused of masterminding the March 12 assassination of Djindjic, the Interior Ministry said in a statement. "The suspects resisted arrest and opened fire on police officers ... they were killed in an ensuing shooting" in the town of Barajevo, 17 miles south of the capital, the ministry statement said. The ministry revealed no details about what specific role the two allegedly played in the assassination, and police were not immediately available for comment. Police have rounded up more than 3,000 suspects in the investigation that followed the Djindjic killing. About a third of them remain in custody.

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Volume 109 • 1

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By Rolando C
THE BATTALION

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Asked by Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., what American ground troops would do once they reached Baghdad, Rumsfeld answered by alluding to what is happening in Basra, Iraq's second-largest city. British forces there have "aid siege, hoping for a successful uprising by the city's Shiites. Rumsfeld noted that both Basra and Baghdad have large Shiite populations. "And they are not terribly favorable to the regime," Rumsfeld said. "They've been repressed, and they are in the present time in Basra assisting us." He said that roughly half the Baghdad population is Shiite. "The regime has tended to be fearful of them and repress them," he said. Rumsfeld said he expected Saddam's loyalists to shoot any Iraqi troops in Baghdad who try to surrender and those who might try to assist U.S. forces.

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By Lauren S
THE BATTALION

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