

Baghdad bombings kill dozens, wound hundreds

By Charles J. Hanley
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Striking in rapid succession, suicide car bombers bent on death for "collaborators" devastated the Red Cross headquarters and three police stations Monday, killing three dozen people and wounding more than 200 in the bloodiest day in Baghdad since the start of the U.S. occupation.

From north to south in this city of 5 million, the explosions over a 45-minute period left streetscapes of broken bodies, twisted wreckage and Iraqis unnerved by an escalating underground war. The dead included a U.S. soldier, eight Iraqi policemen and at least 26 Iraqi civilians.

"We feel helpless when we see this," said an Iraqi doctor.

Iraqi and U.S. authorities in Baghdad blamed the coordinated quadruple blasts on foreign fighters intent on targeting those they accuse of collaborating with U.S. forces. One captive would-be bomber was said to carry a Syrian passport.

But in Washington, Pentagon officials said they believed loyalists of ousted President Saddam Hussein were responsible. President Bush said insurgents had become more "desperate" because of what he said was progress in Iraq.

The tactics suggested a level of organization that U.S. officials had doubted the resistance possessed. In past weeks, bombers have carried out heavy sui-

cide bombings but in single strikes.

Not only were Monday's attacks coordinated, they also involved disguise: the use of an Iraqi ambulance in the Red Cross attack, a police car and uniform in a police station explosion.

The blasts, which echoed the Aug. 19 bombing of the U.N. headquarters here, left the Red Cross and other aid agencies examining whether they should decrease their presence in Iraq. Paris-based Medecins Sans Frontieres said it would reduce its seven-member expatriate team in Baghdad.

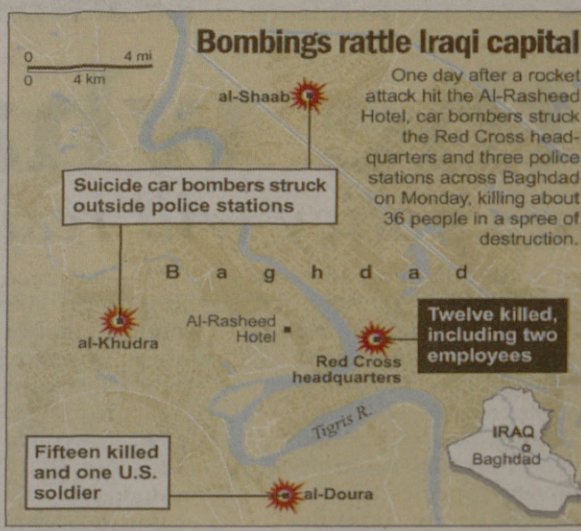
Secretary of State Colin Powell said he hoped nongovernment organizations, contractors and the United Nations would stay in Iraq despite the dangers.

"They are needed. Their work is needed. And if they are driven out, then the terrorists win," Powell said in Washington.

The differing theories about who was behind the bombings underscored the confusion generated by two days of bold, stunning attacks, beginning with a rocket barrage on a U.S. headquarters hotel Sunday that killed a U.S. colonel, wounded 15 other people and sent Americans scurrying to safety, including the visiting deputy defense secretary, Paul Wolfowitz.

Later Sunday, three U.S. soldiers were killed in two attacks in the Baghdad area.

Then, at 8:30 a.m. Monday, on a warm, clear morning beginning the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, the first of four thunderous explo-



SOURCES: ESRI; NIMA; East View, Associated Press

sions rocked the city.

A police car, somehow commandeered for a suicide mission and driven by a man in police uniform, blew up after entering the courtyard of the al-Baya'a police station in southern Baghdad, said police Brig. Gen. Ahmed Ibrahim, the deputy interior minister.

Officers said the blast killed 15 Iraqis and one U.S. soldier, and the U.S. military said six other Americans were wounded. American troops have been working with Iraqi police and

guarding the stations.

Just five minutes later, a second blast struck local headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross, a small, three-story building on a quiet street in central Baghdad. This bomber, using a subterfuge — an Iraqi ambulance that apparently was able to approach the ICRC offices with suspicion.

"I saw this ambulance driving up toward the Red Cross, and then suddenly it blew up," said cigarette vendor Ghani Khadim. The vehicle stopped 60 ft from the front of the Red Cross building, at a protective line of earth-filled barrels, and disintegrated as it blew a 15-foot-wide crater in the road.

The blast knocked down a 40-foot section of the ICRC's sandbag-backed front wall, demolished a dozen cars and apparently broke a water main, flooding the streets. The building's interior was wrecked — a scene of shattered glass, doors blown off their hinges, toppled bookcases and collapsed ceilings.

More than 100 staff members normally would have been inside, but starting time had been changed to 9 a.m. because of Ramadan, and probably only one-quarter of the normal staff was present. Red Cross headquarters in Geneva said 12 people were killed, only two of them employees, believed to be security guards, and the rest apparently passers-by.

The Red Cross and other aid organizations reduced their Baghdad staffs after the car bombing at U.N. headquarters that killed 23 people.

FBI: Crime stays level for 2002

By Curt Anderson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — When an arrest is made, it is becoming more common for the handcuffs to be on a woman, according to an FBI report Monday that also found the number of crimes reported to police was virtually unchanged last year.

Arrests of men and women in 2002 are part of the FBI's annual look at serious crime. It found showed a slight increase — less than one-tenth of 1 percent — to about 11.9 million murders, rapes, thefts, robberies, burglaries, aggravated assaults and vehicle thefts.

Men still accounted for the vast majority of adults arrested for these and other crimes — about 77 percent of the total. But women are gaining ground, with the 1.9 million arrested in 2002 representing 23 percent. That was a 14 percent increase from 1993.

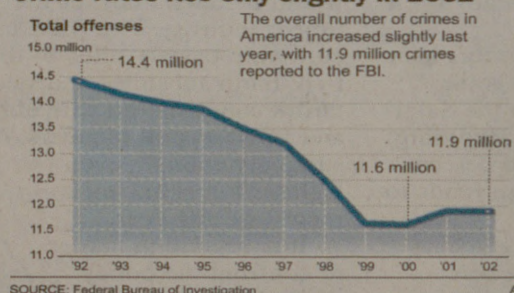
An even larger jump occurred between 1986 and 1995, when arrests of women rose by almost 38 percent. During those years, women were being placed in custody more frequently for almost all crimes, including violent offenses such as murder, robbery and aggravated assaults.

Between 1993 and 2002, women's arrests for murder, robbery, burglary, theft and arson have begun to fall. Increases for women are most notable for such crimes as embezzlement (80 percent higher), forgery and counterfeiting (19 percent), drug abuse (50 percent), vagrancy (42 percent) and liquor law violations (49 percent).

Arrests of women for aggravated assault climbed nearly 25 percent over the decade. During that same time, aggravated assault arrests for all offenders fell by 21 percent.

Kenneth Land, a professor of sociology at Duke University, attributed the rise in female arrests to societal changes over the past 30

Crime rates rise only slightly in 2002



SOURCE: Federal Bureau of Investigation

years in which more women have entered the work force and generally have achieved a status on a par with men.

"You're more likely to have situations where they can be involved as motivated offenders due to the role changes over the past decades, as compared to men," Land said.

The FBI's annual crime statistics are drawn from reports to 17,000 city, county and state law enforcement agencies. A stable picture emerges from the 2002 numbers, with no major upticks in any category but no marked declines, either.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sharon: Israel has no plans to kill Arafat

JERUSALEM (AP) — Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said for the first time Monday that Israel has no plans to kill Yasser Arafat, even as he accused the Palestinian leader of continuing to orchestrate attacks on civilians.

Sharon delivered his assessment as Israel confirmed plans to begin providing services to eight settlement outposts in the West Bank. The announcement dealt another blow to the faltering U.S.-backed peace plan.

That plan, known as the "road map," calls for a construction freeze in Israeli settlements and removal of outposts erected since 2001. Palestinians have complained that Israel is undermining the peace plan — but have also balked at the requirements that they dismantle militant groups.

In another development, Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia said that he is making progress in talks with Islamic militants about halting fighting with Israel.

Sharon met with a delegation of lawmakers from the European Parliament, where he was asked about Arafat. Israel's Cabinet last month decided to "remove" Arafat at an unspecified time in response to Palestinian suicide bomb attacks, prompting speculation the Palestinian leader would be expelled or assassinated. "I don't see any plans to kill him," Sharon told the lawmakers.

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