

The Day
PERSPECTIVE

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SECTION C



LAURENT REBOURS / Associated Press

■ A U.S. Marine waves aboard an armored personnel carrier crossing the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), which separates Kuwait and Iraq.



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Watching This War

Wartime thoughts:

■ The experience of watching television war coverage in an era of the 24-hour news cycle is surreal. It is bizarre to flip between NCAA basketball games and satellite transmissions of interviews with troops getting ready to roll into Iraq. One Iraqi soldier who surrendered without firing a shot said, "This is a technology war. We don't have the equipment to fight this." Technology also rules when it comes to the news. But blanket coverage may trivialize the experience, making it just one more reality TV show.

■ Rep. William Dyson, D-New Haven, increased his reputation for being ideological — as well as petty and stubborn — with his lone vote against extending health benefits to state employees who were laid off as well as those in reserve units who have been called up to fight in the Iraq war. Caring people can disagree on whether or not we should be in Iraq. But Dyson's vote was shortsighted. He said he voted against the proposal because he opposes the war. "I just think it's misguided," Dyson said. "I can't blindly be for our boys."

■ I believe the war against Iraq is necessary, but the suggestion that once the firing starts all debate must end is patently ridiculous. Critics who accused Sen. Tom Daschle of being unpatriotic because of his remarks against the war last week were, themselves, unpatriotic. Dissent is the glory of our democracy. If he wants to disagree with the war, fine. It doesn't make us look weak. It makes us look secure in our freedom to speak out.

■ The verb of the war is, apparently, "embedded." Journalists are not covering military units, they

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Maura Casey is associate editorial page editor of The Day.

Not As Conquerors, But As Liberators

When British troops rolled into Baghdad in 1917, the words were full of optimism. But they spent decades holding Iraq through military might. Now American troops roll into a similar political landscape.

By TRUDY RUBIN

“OUR ARMIES DO NOT come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators,” declared British Maj.-Gen. Stanley Maude, commander of British forces in Iraq. He was marking the British capture of Baghdad in March 1917, after the breakup of the Ottoman Empire.

Those words probably sound familiar. President Bush has repeated over and over that we enter Iraq “not to conquer but to liberate.” On the verge of an Iraq war, one can only hope the White House has studied the history of past efforts to “liberate” Baghdad.

The British invaded the three

Ottoman provinces of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, for reasons of self-interest and in the name of high ideals. London wanted to protect British interests in the Persian Gulf and develop the oil fields of Mosul, goals that conflicted with its promises of self-determination for the Arabs.

At first, the population welcomed the British. But the Brits underestimated the conflicts among Kurds, Sunni and Shia Muslims, all of whom soon turned against the British presence. By 1920, a violent revolt had broken out, in which thousands of Iraqis and hundreds of British army soldiers died. The British held on — they dominated Iraq for another 38 years — but that was the colonial era. In the present era of satellite

TV that bloody rebellion would probably have led to a speedy British retreat.

Flash forward, and note the similarities. American troops may well be welcomed by most Iraqis as liberators but will face an Iraq deeply divided between Kurds, Shia and Sunnis.

The administration's goals of finding hidden weapons and installing a compliant regime will likely clash with its professed ideals of godfathering an Iraqi democracy. If liberation/occupation lasts too long — predictions range from one to many years — Iraqis will turn on Americans as they did the Brits.

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Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Digging In At Israeli Bomb Shelter

By DANIEL WOLF SAVIN

I HAVE TO SAY THAT THERE IS a certain relaxing aspect to being in Israel right now. While everyone back in the U.S. is in a tizzy trying to figure out how to deal with the current war and possible terrorist attacks, life here is amazingly calm.

For instance, I don't have to worry about where my bomb shelter is. The one at home is 30 yards from my door. At the research institute near Tel Aviv where I am working, there are a number all over the place. And at my Hebrew language school, it is just three flights down and out the door.

Now if I were back in New York City, I'd have no clue. Let's face it, except for the NYC's emergency management office, I don't think there are any shelters anywhere. So there is a certain sense of safety to living in Israel where new buildings



AP PHOTO

■ An Israeli soldier shows a youth how to wear a gas mask.

are required by law to have a shelter. A quick description of the shelter. It is made up of two sections. Between the outside and the outer section is an airtight door. Between the outer and inner

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Daniel Wolf Savin, a native of New London, is an atomic physicist working on a year-long research fellowship in Israel.

Can U.N. Survive U.S. Assault?
Only Americans Believe It Was The French Who Broke The System

By GWYNNE DYER

IN THE END, IT WASN'T THE wicked French and their veto that deprived the United States and Britain of a second United Nations resolution authorizing them to attack Iraq; the Bush administration couldn't even come up with a majority of “yes” votes that would trigger a French veto. But it's a safe bet that the Security Council will not pass a resolution condemning the U.S. attack either.

The long propaganda campaign to link Saddam Hussein to the Islamist terrorists of al-Qaida has persuaded about half the American public that there must be some connection, but it has been a purely domestic campaign based on endless naked assertions by local pundits and authority figures (including President George W. Bush) whose credibility stops at the U.S. border. Nowhere



AP PHOTO

else on the planet is this alleged linkage widely believed, so Washington was bound to find it hard to get U.N. support for its Iraq adventure.

The anti-French hysteria that has been whipped up by sections of the U.S. media helps to distract American public attention from the fact that there are strong popular ma-

majorities against this war in virtually every country in the world outside the United States. If you're busy shaking your fist against the “cheese-eating surrender monkeys” and renaming French fries “liberty fries,” you're less likely to notice that even the few governments that back the U.S. attack on Iraq (Britain,

Spain and Italy) do so in the teeth of their own public opinion.

On the other hand, nobody wants the United States to abandon the U.N.: President Bush is quite right in saying that if the U.S. rejects the U.N.'s authority then it will become, in his word, “irrelevant.” Other countries would not give legal cover to a “preemptive” U.S. attack on Iraq that most of them see as grossly premature and a terrible precedent, but they will not deepen the rupture with the United States by passing resolutions against it.

The war in Iraq will duly end in an American victory, but how much damage will Mr. Bush's decision to go it alone do to the U.N., to America's alliances, and to international law? If things work out as well

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Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist.

INSIDE PERSPECTIVE

Times change, but not the courts
Probate Court Judge Robert K. Killian Jr. says it is past time to reduce the number of probate courts in the state. C3

Been there, done that
A president demands regime change in Iraq, by force, if necessary. No, it wasn't George Bush, it was JFK. C5

Another day, another scandal
Gov. John G. Rowland has an awful lot of scandals swirling around him, but he says he didn't know a thing. C3

Lincoln slept here
Bill Stanley says the evidence is in: Lincoln really did stay at the Wauregan Hotel. C5

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History shows tough task ahead

From C1

But U.S. troops can at least chalk up some goodwill in the short run by their behavior upon entering southern Iraq from Kuwait. To ask how best to do this, I spoke by phone with Hussein Sharistani, an independent Iraqi opposition leader waiting anxiously in Kuwait to enter southern Iraq as soon as the war starts.

Sharistani is a former nuclear scientist who endured 12 years of torture and prison for refusing Saddam's demand to make a nuclear bomb. After a miraculous escape from prison and Iraq during the Gulf War, he founded the London-based Iraq Refugee Aid Council. A Shia Muslim, he has an extensive network of contacts inside the Shia cities and towns of southern Iraq where U.S. troops will soon arrive.

Don't stay too long is the lesson.

"Our understanding," says Sharistani, "is that all the main cities in south and central Iraq won't offer any military or civilian resistance. People are counting the minutes until they are free of Saddam's heavy hand." Iraqi army officers, he says, are telling communal leaders in the south that they don't want to fight this war.

Sharistani's biggest fear is Saddam's dispatch of Ali Hassan Majid to command his special forces in the south. Majid is known as "Ali Chemical" because he was in charge of the gassing of Iraq's Kurds in 1988, and Shia fear he has brought chemical-tipped artillery shells with him to the south.

What Sharistani urges American troops to do as soon as possible is the following:

Go after Ali Chemical's men, but don't attack conventional army units that don't want to fight but may not yet be aware of U.S. efforts to get them to surrender;

Be prepared to find that many southern towns will have liberated themselves. "American soldiers should find local leaders and make clear that they are there to protect them but not to control and occupy the towns and cities."

Get humanitarian aid into those towns as soon as possible, since oil-for-food rations will have been cut by the war. And bring in the United Nations and international aid groups because U.S. troops won't be able to handle the humanitarian crisis alone.

Will the citizens of Basra throw flowers at arriving soldiers? I asked Sharistani.

"The people will be very happy to see anyone who comes to free the area from the regime," he replied carefully. "But if they soon see that the Americans and the British are there to control them or impose military commanders on them, I could imagine people getting angry very quickly. Then they will see it as another occupation."

"For a time, if U.S. troops liaise with responsible leaders and help them to organize their community, the Iraqis will be very grateful."

Therein lies the test for this administration as war nears: How to win that gratitude — and not lose it by staying too long.

Iraq will soon give up its secrets

By ROBERT STEWART

Saddam Hussein's 48-hour window of opportunity came and went quietly. The days to come will be far from silent.

Saddam Hussein had an extended opportunity to disarm. He failed. He had the opportunity to comply fully and immediately with U.N. weapons inspectors. He failed. And he had the opportunity to leave the country and turn it over to the people of Iraq. He failed.

Now Saddam is in the midst of the "serious consequences" promised by the United States and United Nations in Resolution 1441. All over the country, the Iraqi regime is feeling the effects of the most powerful military force ever assembled.

America and the coalition of the willing, though, face difficult challenges in the days, weeks, months or possibly years that now lie ahead. Not just in the combat phase but in the rebuilding that will certainly follow the end of Saddam's regime. For Saddam's regime surely will end, but the timing, cost and sacrifice have yet to be determined.

Regardless of the outcome, this will certainly be a different war, fought against different forces and with significantly different weapons.

The vaunted Republican Guard that was so feared in the media before the Gulf War — and so laughable during and after that war — is even smaller and weaker than the paper tigers of 1991.

American military might, too, has improved exponentially. In the Gulf War, estimates on the number of precision-guided munitions, or smart bombs, accounted for approximately 10 percent of all bombs dropped on Iraq. In this war, that figure will be more than 90 percent. This added precision and lethality will no doubt change the way the military prosecutes the war.

In the Gulf War, a month of heavy air bombardment preceded the ground war. Not this time. The military's

current ability to find and destroy targets — both fixed and mobile — has dramatically changed the calculus for military planners. Intelligence information gleaned from covert assets already on the ground, and from the world's best satellites miles above the Earth, make ours a highly efficient lethality. What took a month in 1991 can now be accomplished in mere hours. For that reason, more gross tonnage is likely to hit its targets in this first week than in the first month of Desert Storm combined.

Despite the uncertainty of war, though, one outcome is clear:

When Iraq is liberated, the world will see the cost of its inaction over the past decade. A defeated Iraq will finally offer up the most heinous of its secrets. Atrocities by the Baath regime will soon be made public after years hidden in dark prisons, inaccessible to human-rights groups or intelligence services. Freed people will divulge atrocities only imagined, and victims liberated by force will provide histories hidden from the world's gaze.

The United States and its allies promised serious consequences. They are keeping their word: Bombs are finding their targets, shrapnel is arcing across the desert and more planes, satellites and lasers than ever before are finding and destroying the infrastructure of terror cobbled together by a brutal dictator. This will continue until the Saddam regime is disarmed, and removed from power, root and branch.

But the United States and its allies also promised not to stay one day longer than necessary, and to pave the way for the political and economic renaissance of the Middle East. If they are to be truly successful in Iraq — and elsewhere in the future — they must keep that promise, as well.

Robert Stewart is a Washington-based writer and former Army intelligence analyst. He wrote this commentary for the Orlando Sentinel. He can be reached at trawets67@hotmail.com.

Bush's shameful war

By MATTHEW ROTHSCHILD

President Bush bears responsibility for the horrors he is ordering up, and for the horrors that may flow from his decision to wage war.

It was not comforting to hear the president say in his Wednesday speech that "this will not be a campaign of half measures," and that he was going to apply "decisive force."

Baghdad is a city of 5 million people. They are now facing an onslaught from the mightiest military ever to array itself on the face of the Earth.

Babies, mothers and fathers, grandparents, brothers and sisters — all will be killed in this war. And U.S. soldiers, too, will give their lives. For what?

In part, for oil. Back on Aug. 26, Vice President Dick Cheney said the United States cannot let Saddam Hussein sit "atop 10 percent of the world's oil supply." Iraq has the second-largest oil reserves in the world.

Iraq is also the test case for the new U.S. strategic doctrine, which says the United States has the right to preventively attack any country it perceives as a distant threat. This is a brazen repudiation of international law.

In the White House report to Congress on March 19 justifying this war, the Bush administration strained credulity by saying, "U.S. action is consistent with the U.N. Charter." In fact, as U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has suggested, it's a blatant violation of the charter.

Article 2 of the charter states that "all members shall refrain in their interna-

tional relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state."

To trump that, the administration cited Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, which is the right of self-defense. But that article speaks of self-defense only "if an armed attack occurs" against the country invoking the right. And while international legal scholars have allowed the self-defense claim if an attack is exceedingly imminent, neither the U.N. Charter nor international law permits a so-called war of choice like this one.

By violating the U.N. Charter, Bush may be violating the U.S. Constitution.

The White House report to Congress also asserted that "the use of force against Iraq will directly advance the war on terror."

But it is much more likely that Bush's assault on Baghdad will be a recruiting call for al-Qaida.

Finally, this war is about messianic militarism. Bush views himself as world liberator and deliverer from evil. He believes, with God on his shoulder and a B-2 bomber with angel wings in the skies, he can set right the wrongs of mankind.

Because of his missionary purpose, Bush seems blind to other negative consequences this war could cause.

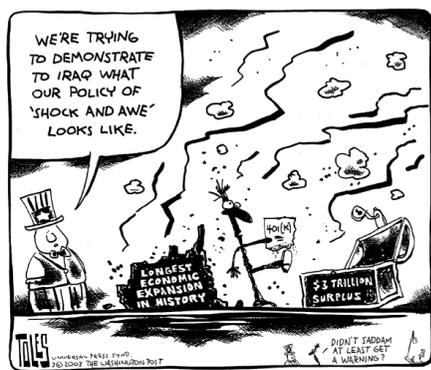
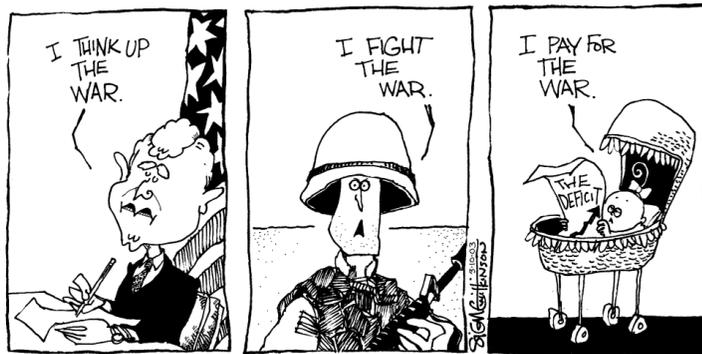
On March 19, Bush talked about "the peace of a troubled world." He's the one disturbing that peace, and he's doing so in an unlawful and dangerous way.

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Cartoon Roundup

Last week through the eyes of cartoonists

TO WAGE WAR, EACH GENERATION MUST SACRIFICE!



Watching this war

From C1

are said to be "embedded" there. A request that The Day consider running the columns of Michael Kelly said, "As you may already know, Michael has been embedded since earlier this month with the 1st Marine Division, at last word positioned in Kuwait City." Well, gee, can a journalist write while being embedded anywhere? It makes us sound like thorns which, of course, is sometimes our job.

I hope the military will keep lies to a minimum during this campaign. To protect lives, the military often needs to withhold information, and only an idiot would quibble with that. But in the Gulf War, public relations lies abounded — such as when Gen. Norman Schwarzkof claimed that Patriot missiles had 100-percent success rate — when, in fact, the success rate was utterly dismal.

Even under normal circumstances, getting information from the military is often ridiculously difficult. Case in point: when, in October of 2001, a small plane was forced to land after flying too close to Millstone Nuclear Power Station. Some news reports said the aircraft was a Cessna; others said it was a

Piper Cub. While writing an editorial on the matter, I called the base in Cape Cod from which a military jet was sent to intercept the plane and popped the question: Was the plane a Cessna or a Piper Cub? Nothing doing. I was told: I had to call North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) in Colorado for information of such staggering national consequence. So I dutifully called NORAD. After making several phone calls and going through an increasingly elaborate chain of command, NORAD spokesmen ultimately refused to answer my question. Why? To do so, they said, would threaten national security.

If Iraqis greet American troops as liberators, as some have suggested might be possible, I wonder what will be the reaction of those who are now protesting all over the world. Many have spoken out against the war because, they say, war is bad. Of course it is. So is disease. Who is for disease? Yet, if the war is conducted with minimal casualties on both sides, gets rid of a brutal dictator and establishes democracy in an area that is crying out for a modicum of self-rule, will any of those who now protesting carry signs saying: "We were wrong"? Somehow, I doubt it.

From C1

as the White House serenely expects (and Tony Blair desperately hopes), then the damage may not be all that great.

Imagine that the fighting in Iraq ends in a week, with Saddam Hussein and perhaps 10,000 other Iraqis dead — and that little of the carnage is seen by the Arab public because Washington persuades Qatar to pull the plug on al-Jazeera for the duration. There are no eruptions of violence leading to Islamist take-overs in other Arab countries or Pakistan, and resistance to the U.S. occupation of Iraq doesn't start right away.

Pigs may fly, I hear you cry, but remember that the United States is the most powerful nation in world history, run by people who are quite competent at the operational level even if the strategic direction leaves something to be desired. With sufficient thrust, as a friend of mine frequently observes, pigs fly just fine. They have real problems with aerodynamic stability and in the end they tend to crash and burn, but that could be several years down the road from here.

The United States could get away with the conquest of Iraq without big

Nobody would miss NATO all that much, but wrecking the U.N. would be a very different matter.

negative side-effects, at least in the short term, in which case it can return to the U.N. next month, magnanimously forgive all who doubted it, and get them to do much of the dirty work of post-war reconstruction. A post-facto Security Council resolution would legalize the conquest, France and Russia would sulk for a bit, and then normal service would be resumed. Happy ending, at least for a while.

But if the fighting in Iraq takes several weeks, and the death toll climbs into the tens of thousands, and al-Jazeera stays on the air, then there could be calamitous upheavals elsewhere in the Arab world and a much grimmer start to the U.S. occupation of Iraq. As American casualties mount and the whole enterprise

turns sour, the natural response of the Bush administration would be to blame it all on the perfidious foreigners who sabotaged the U.S. crusade — which could have profoundly negative consequences for the U.N. and NATO.

Nobody would miss NATO all that much, but wrecking the U.N. would be a very different matter. For all its flaws, the United Nations is a serious attempt to substitute the rule of law for the age-old rule of the strong as a way of running the world. That attempt is now several generations old, and it has made as much progress as you could hope for in the first half-century.

However, it would not survive the defection of the United States, so Washington must be persuaded to remain an active U.N. member even if it spins out for a while. This doesn't mean that everyone else must adopt the Bush administration's view that the U.N. has "failed" whenever it does not agree with current U.S. policy — but if things go badly wrong for the U.S. in Iraq, what will be needed is not scorn and recrimination but sympathy and understanding.

Somehow or other, America must be kept in the system.

Gas mask maven confesses

From C1

sections is another airtight door. In this outer room there are showers. I don't know about you, but the thought of sending a bunch of Jews into an airtight room with showers to save their life makes me queasy. Actually the showers are in case one is caught outside during a chemical attack. You can go into the shelter and wash off. Not that there are any clothes to put on after you shower. But that shouldn't be a problem. After all, there are no drains for these showers.

The other nice thing where I work is that they have provided the foreign workers with both gas masks and a syringe of atropine/TA which provides a preliminary treatment against nerve agents. And if I don't use either, I can keep them as a souvenir and maybe I'll end up using them when I move back to New York.

We were also shown two instructional videos. The first about how to use the mask was in Hebrew and subtitled in English and Russian. The second video was how to use the syringe and was subtitled only in Russian. It must be that since so many of us English speakers are drug addicts, we will just know instinctively how to use a syringe.

I took the gas mask back to my office and, when I opened the box the first thing I noticed was that the gas mask was German. More bad historical memories. Then I tried to put it on. This proved to be quite an ordeal. First, the five buckles had these short tabs in them which had to be removed before you can adjust the strap to your head. That took 15 minutes. Then when I tried to adjust the straps they still wouldn't move and took another 15 minutes to figure out how to adjust. In frustration, I took the mask back to where they were being passed out and showed the folks there how difficult they are to use.

I pointed out that it took a total of 30 minutes to adjust the mask properly and that when the sirens go off we will have only three minutes to get to the shelter and get the masks on. This clearly would be a problem. One person there said that everyone should try their masks on beforehand. But I mentioned that the box said "Do Not Open" (which I had obviously ignored) and that most people would probably wait until hearing the sirens before opening the box. Someone else said that he had been in the army and from his experience, when your adrenaline gets going you can do anything quick. Boy, that was reassuring.

The bottom line is that I was asked if I would write up a detailed description of how to adjust the mask which would be e-mailed to all the foreign workers. So there I was, an American who had only held a gas mask in his hands for less than an hour and I was suddenly the resident expert. This was all too surreal. But I did as asked, the e-mail went out to all, and I am now the Gas Mask Maven here at the Institute. So if you folks back in the U.S. have any questions about your gas masks, just drop me a line.