

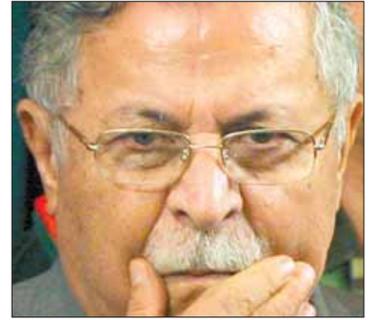
THE WAR IN IRAQ

Shiite vice president escapes bomb blast



An Iraqi army soldier carries a wounded person after an explosion inside a building where the Iraqi Vice President Adel Abdul-Mahdi delivered a speech in Baghdad, Iraq, on Monday. The vice president was slightly wounded and 10 others were killed during the attack.

Baghdad, Iraq, on Monday. The vice president was slightly wounded and 10 others were killed during the attack.



Iraqi President Jalal Talabani was flown to neighboring Jordan for medical treatment Sunday. Iraqi officials said Talabani was suffering from exhaustion and lung inflammation.

Iraqi leader in hospital, treated for exhaustion

Officials: Talabani in stable condition at Jordanian facility

By JAMAL HALABY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AMMAN, Jordan

Iraqi President Jalal Talabani was in stable condition Monday, recuperating from exhaustion and lung inflammation at an Amman hospital, his personal physician and other officials said.

The physician, Yedkar Hikmat, said rumors about a heart problem were "categorically wrong."

"This is not true at all, the president's case doesn't involve any heart problems. He did not suffer any heart attack," Hikmat said.

Talabani, 73, fell ill Sunday and was unconscious when he was rushed to a hospital in Sulaimaniyah, his hometown in northeastern Iraq.

He was then flown to neighboring Jordan later in the day for extensive examination.

Talabani's spokesman, Hiwa Osman, speaking from Baghdad, denied that the Iraqi president had been moved to intensive care and said the president remained in a normal hospital room.

"He's very good. He's stable," Osman said.

Talabani's son, Qubad Talabani, told CNN that his father did not have a heart attack or a stroke and had made his own way off the plane when he landed in Jordan.

"He's absolutely up and about, being able to communicate," Qubad Talabani added.

Saad al-Hayyani, the Iraqi ambassador to Jordan, said Talabani was found to have suffered exhaustion and a mild inflammation of the lungs.

Chief Jordanian government spokesman Nasser Judeh told reporters that King Abdullah II, who visited the Iraqi president Monday, had instructed doctors at the hospital to provide Talabani with all possible care.

"He is a guest and a dear friend of Jordan, and we will do everything for him," Judeh said.

The day before Talabani collapsed, he appeared in Sulaimaniyah in public and met U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and Massoud Barzani, the leader of the Kurdish autonomous region of Iraq.

A member of Talabani's party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said the president has a long history of fainting when he is exhausted, a condition dating back to his years as a Kurdish guerrilla leader fighting Saddam Hussein's regime.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

Investigators work to solve how bomb was smuggled into ministry building

By BRIAN MURPHY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq

Iraq's Shiite vice president narrowly escaped assassination Monday as a blast ripped through a government meeting hall just hours after it was searched by U.S. teams with bomb-sniffing dogs. At least 10 people were killed.

Adel Abdul-Mahdi was slightly wounded in the explosion, which splintered chairs, destroyed a speakers' podium and sent a chilling message that suspected Sunni militants can strike anywhere despite a major security crack-



ABDUL-MAHDI

down across Baghdad.

As U.S. forces sealed off the area around the municipal building, investigators grappled with the troubling question of how the bomb was smuggled into the ministry of public works, a seven-story structure with crack surveillance systems from its days as offices for Saddam Hussein's feared intelligence service.

The bomb, possibly hidden in the podium, went off moments after the minister for public works finished a speech in the third-floor chamber, witnesses said.

Abdul-Mahdi had made a welcoming address a few minutes earlier, raising speculation the bomb could have been on a timer-trigger that missed the vice president by sheer luck.

Among those killed were several ministry employees, police said. More

than 25 were wounded, including the public works minister, Riyadh Gharib.

Abdul-Mahdi — protected by his bodyguards in an instant — suffered minor leg injuries and was hospitalized for tests, his office said. He was later released.

"I heard a big explosion," said Tagrid Ali, a public works ministry employee who attended the gathering to honor outstanding workers.

"I fell to the ground, and the whole place was filled with black smoke."

Suspicion for the attack fell on Sunni insurgents, who have waged nonstop bombings and attacks against Iraq's majority Shiites for cooperating with the U.S.-backed government.

Criticism of the security plan is getting louder.

Al-Hashemi, the Sunni vice president, said the security plan does not

treat all groups equally — an apparent reference to Sunni complaints that they are facing the most pressure and attention.

"Up to now, legal procedures have not been observed," he said in an interview. "The human rights of Iraqis have not been respected as they should be."

Al-Hashemi also said he warned U.S. officials during a visit to Washington in December that sectarian rivalry had paralyzed the unity government and the White House must study alternatives if its current security strategy fails.

"I was very frank with the American administration. I encouraged them to think seriously about 'Plan B,'" he said.

"What sort of alternative do we have in the future in case the current security plan fails?"

Aside from a troop 'surge,' what's next for the United States in Iraq?

By CAROLYN LOCHHEAD
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

WASHINGTON

While Democrats in Capitol Hill are denouncing President Bush for sending 21,500 more troops to Iraq, both parties are skirting the question of what comes next.

By the administration's own description, the troop surge is temporary. Yet with a handful of exceptions, few politicians are discussing an endgame, even as national security experts warn that Washington must begin laying the diplomatic and

ANALYSIS

military groundwork for the next phase if U.S. options narrow.

Options, should the surge fail, include setting a timetable for a U.S. pullout; containing Iraq's civil war to prevent a regional war, including a "diplomatic surge" with Iraq's neighbors and other powers; retreating to Iraq's borders and abandoning Baghdad and other urban areas to ethnic cleansing while escorting refugees to safer regions; and decentralizing Iraq into a loose confederation of

Kurds, Shiites and Sunni, or various combinations of all these plans.

Many security analysts believe militias will re-emerge in full force as soon as U.S. troops leave.

A few politicians have begun exploring post-surge strategies, all of which are grim and loaded with unknowns. Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., has long promoted a "soft partition" of Iraq into separate Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish regions. Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., and Rep. Mike Thompson, D-Calif., are calling for redeployment of U.S. troops starting May 1, with a withdrawal of

all but a few troops by March 2008. Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa., promises to squeeze funds to force a pullback.

Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., called for a containment strategy that changes the mission of U.S. forces to maintaining Iraq's "territorial integrity," training the Iraqi army and conducting counterterrorism operations.

The House Progressive Caucus calls for a complete withdrawal in six months.

But there is no agreement on these alternatives, and many fear the possible consequences of each.

Iraqi Cabinet approves draft oil law seen as breakthrough

By ROBERT H. REID
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq

The Iraqi Cabinet approved a draft law Monday to manage the country's vast oil industry and distribute its wealth among the population — a major breakthrough in U.S. efforts to press the country's Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish groups to reach agreements to achieve stability.

Parliament will take up the measure when it reconvenes early next month after a recess. With all major parties endorsing the bill, approval is likely, although some politicians predicted a

vigorous debate on some of the details.

Many Iraqis fear the measure will effectively hand the country's major natural resources over to foreign oil companies. Supporters maintain that oil giants have the billions of dollars needed to upgrade the country's decrepit wells, pipelines and port.

"I very much hope the main political groups will rise to the occasion" and approve the bill in parliament, said Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh.

Iraq has some of the world's largest petroleum reserves, and supporters hope the legislation will encourage major oil companies to invest billions — if the

security situation improves.

However, the bill had been bogged down for months in infighting between Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Shiited government and the self-ruled Kurdish administration of northern Iraq over who had the final say in negotiating contracts and managing the revenues.

Under the oil legislation, regional administrations will be empowered to negotiate contracts with international oil companies. The contracts will be reviewed by a central government committee in Baghdad headed by the prime minister.

Under the measure, revenues will be distributed to all 18 provinces based on

population size — a concession to the Sunnis whose central and western homeland has relatively few proven reserves. Most of Iraq's oil is in the Kurdish north and Shiite south, and many Sunnis fear they would be cut out of a fair share.

Al-Maliki announced the decision after the Kurds accepted the draft oil bill over the weekend, nearly two months after the government's own deadline for enacting a new oil law.

The prime minister said the measures would be another foundation stone in building a new Iraq, which relies on oil revenues for about 90 percent of its national budget.

DAILY JOURNAL READERS' GUIDE

MAIN PHONE NUMBER

736-7101

8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday

ADDRESS

2575 N. Morton St. (U.S. 31)
P.O. Box 699
Franklin, IN 46131

DELIVERY, BILLING QUESTIONS

736-2777; (888) 736-7101

6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday-Friday,
7 a.m. to noon Saturday.
Subscribers should call if they have not received a newspaper by 7 a.m.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

736-2700; (888) 736-7101
8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday-Friday
Fax: 736-2754

STORY IDEAS, NEWS TIPS

736-2712
After 5 p.m.: 736-2723
Fax: 736-2766
newstips@thejournalnet.com

SPORTS

Send sports scores, stories and suggestions to:
rmorwick@thejournalnet.com

ADVERTISING

736-2786

8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday
Fax: 736-2713

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to:
Daily Journal, P.O. Box 699,
Franklin, IN 46131
Periodical Class Postage
Paid at Franklin, IN
Daily Journal (USPS 565-520)

VOLUME

Volume 44, No. 192

BACK ISSUES, DIGITAL PHOTOS

Copies of the Daily Journal are available for six months. Digital files of photos published in the newspaper are available on CDs. Please call 736-7101.

COPYRIGHT

© The Daily Journal, 2007
All rights reserved.

ABOUT THE DAILY JOURNAL

The Daily Journal is an award-winning newspaper published daily except Sundays and Christmas at 2575 N. Morton St., Franklin, IN 46131.

Founded in 1963, the Daily Journal is owned by Home News Enterprises L.L.C. and is one of Indiana's most widely recognized and honored community newspapers.

The Daily Journal is committed to responsible reporting, professional business practices and dedicated community service.

The newspaper is a member of the Associated Press, Hoosier State Press Association, Inland Press Association and Certified Audit of Circulations.

TO SUBSCRIBE

Subscription rates are listed below. To subscribe, call 736-2777.

Single copy

Monday-Friday \$.50
Weekend issue \$ 1.00

Home delivery

Month \$ 10.40
Year \$ 118.80

Mail delivery

4 months \$ 49.00
8 months \$ 98.00
12 months \$ 147.00

Student

1 semester \$ 47.00
2 semesters \$ 96.00

Military

4 months \$ 42.00
8 months \$ 80.00
12 months \$ 113.00

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

P.O. Box 699
Franklin, IN 46131
letters@thejournalnet.com

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Publisher

Jeffrey W. Owen 736-2744
jowen@thejournalnet.com

Editor

Scarlett Syse 736-2749
syse@thejournalnet.com

Assistant managing editor

Michele Holtkamp-Frye 736-2774
mholtkamp@thejournalnet.com

Assistant managing editor

Jennifer L. Gaskin 736-2721
jgaskin@thejournalnet.com

Circulation director

Mike Warren 736-2711
mwarren@thejournalnet.com

Delivery manager

Bruce Powell 736-2702
bpowell@thejournalnet.com

Advertising director

Christina Cosner 736-2750
ccosner@thejournalnet.com

Administrative manager

Linda Wirey 736-2751
lwirey@thejournalnet.com

Information technology manager

Kathy McDermott 736-2782
kmcdermott@thejournalnet.com

PAYMENTS

Payments can be made by cash, check, MasterCard or Visa. Readers also can sign up for E-Z Pay plan and have their monthly subscriptions deducted automatically from their checking accounts, Visa or MasterCard. Direct questions about payments to 736-7101.

WEB SITES

www.thejournalnet.com
www.themarket24.com