

Handout #3: Articles from *Daily Telegraph*, United Kingdom, April 3
(www.telegraph.co.uk)

Article #1

US troops close in on Baghdad
(Filed: 03/04/2003)

US forces are just four miles from the edge of Baghdad following a two-pronged advance on the Iraqi capital, according to allied commanders.

The US Army's 3rd Infantry Division, backed by the 82nd Airborne Division, has closed in on the Iraqi capital from the south-west while the US Marines have moved in from the south-east.

Coalition forces have also targeted the Saddam Hussein International Airport, 12 miles south-west of the city, as most of Baghdad has been plunged into darkness following a power cut.

A US military source said: "We are in the vicinity of Baghdad airport and we are engaging anything that's there."

Tracer rounds streaked across the sky and massive explosions echoed across Baghdad as the city suffered its first blackout since the war began. The US military denied that it had deliberately targeted the city's electricity grid.

On the approach to Baghdad itself, frontline reporters said scores of burnt-out Iraqi army vehicles and dead soldiers were strewn across the roadside.

Two divisions of the Republican Guard - the Baghdad and Medina - have been destroyed but four more are believed to be moving south towards the advancing coalition forces.

Meanwhile, thousands of US military vehicles have moved across the Euphrates after taking a bridge at Musayyib, 35 miles from Baghdad, which had been rigged with explosives by the Iraqis.

Yesterday, the marines moved across the Tigris at the town of Kut and up Highway 6 towards Baghdad. But soldiers from the 1st US Marine Expeditionary Force have continued "cleaning up" operations in Kut, fighting building-to-building skirmishes with Iraqi forces.

With US forces charging forward and meeting little resistance, there are fears that the Republican Guard has retreated to draw the allies into street fighting in Baghdad.

Brig Gen Vince Brooks, the US military spokesman in Qatar, played down suggestions of an immediate invasion.

He said: "We are having success now but we believe there is fighting ahead and we can't predict exactly how that will unfold."

US forces may follow the British example at Basra of making occasional raids and waiting for the regime to "implode".

Grp Capt Al Lockwood, the British forces spokesman, said: "We hope that ultimately the regime will realise how ridiculous it is to continue with this effort and surrender en masse."

In London, Geoff Hoon, the Defence Secretary, warned against over-optimism on how long it would take to win the war.

"Do not underestimate the task that still faces our forces, or the length of time that it may take to complete," he told MPs.

Some 56 miles from Baghdad, US special forces launched a dramatic helicopter raid on Saddam Hussein's Tharthar presidential palace, US commanders said.

Guards returned fire as the soldiers fought their way into the palace. But they failed to capture any members of the Iraqi regime and brought back only documents.

US Central Command said it has intelligence the regime is planning to start a bombing campaign against Shi'ite Muslims in Baghdad with the intention of blaming the explosions on allied aircraft.

Meanwhile, a Black Hawk helicopter was downed by an Iraqi surface-to-air missile near Karbala, 50 miles south of Baghdad, killing six soldiers, the Pentagon said. A Navy F/A-18C Hornet was also downed and the US said it appeared to have been hit by a Patriot missile battery in a "friendly fire" incident.

They are also investigating reports of another "friendly fire" incident involving an F-15E Strike Eagle in which one soldier died and several were injured.

In southern Iraq, British forces stumbled across the palace of Ali Hassan al-Majid, leader of the southern area and the man dubbed "Chemical Ali" for his atrocities against the Kurds.

A potent symbol of the impending fall of the regime, the luxurious play palace lay in tatters, ransacked by local people.

Cpl Nyall Jenkins, 33, from Selby, North Yorkshire, said: "The place has been ransacked, just about gutted, everything's been ripped out."

Article #2

US must lead post-war Iraq, says Powell
(Filed: 03/04/2003)

Colin Powell, the American secretary of state, has said that the United States and Britain should take the "leading role" in the reconstruction of Iraq.

But Mr Powell said that the allies would not "shut others out" of any post-war administration and that the United Nations would play some role in the rebuilding of the country.

Mr Powell made his comments after he had held meetings with European and Nato foreign ministers in Brussels over the nature of a post-war Iraq.

The US is planning to establish a temporary military administration of Iraq when the war is over but wants to restrict the role of the UN to purely humanitarian work.

European countries, particularly France, Germany and Russia, want the UN to take a more central role in replacing Saddam Hussein's government.

Such a role would require a new UN Security Council resolution and all three countries are wary that a fresh mandate would effectively endorse the US-led war.

Britain, for its part, has not explicitly backed the US plans for a military occupation and Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, has suggested that the UN should head a conference of Iraqi leaders to choose a new government.

However, Mr Powell said that the US, Britain and its allies had to lead the reconstruction of the country because they had taken on the "expense" of overthrowing Saddam.

He told a press conference: "When we have succeeded, and when we look down the road to create this better life for the Iraqi people...I think the coalition has to play the leading role in determining the way forward. This is not to say that we have shut others out."

On the role of the UN, Mr Powell said he had held a "healthy dialogue" with European ministers.

Mr Powell added that the leadership of Nato had also signalled that the organisation might be prepared to take on a role in post-war Iraq.

Mr Powell said: "I'm pleased there is at least a receptive attitude here today that Nato is willing to consider that. The important thing is that no one raised any objection to that possibility."

Lord Robertson, Nato's secretary-general, said that his discussions with Mr Powell had been "frank and direct but always balanced, calm and without acrimony."

He admitted that America had been through a "difficult period" with her Nato allies but that he hoped the organisation could now work together.