

A look back in time

In light of the events around the world, and most importantly in our own nation, *The Courier* is

taking this opportunity to provide its readers with a comprehensive overview of events. In this installment of *The Courier*, the opportunity to recap the Persian Gulf War, America's previous engagement with the nation of Iraq.



opportunities to provide its readers with a comprehensive overview of events. In this installment of the paper, the opportunity to recap the events of

Coming Up...
Look for the next installment in this series on Tuesday March 24, 2003.

SPECIAL EDITION

PAGE 2

THE COURIER

A reflective look back at the Persian Gulf War

By Sonam Shah

Editor-in-Chief

I was four years old when the Persian Gulf War erupted. It was the first war since my birth, in America we are fortunate to not continually be at war like so many other nations around the world. At the time the only gulf I knew about was the Gulf of Mexico, and so in my child mind I thought the war must have been occurring there. And further still in my mind I pictured hundreds of thousands of Texans fleeing to the west in an attempt to escape the war. Despite my age or my innocence to the actual events as they occurred, I do remember my distinct fear. I feared the war could come to my home, and unlike the Texans, I didn't know where to go. I feared that my dad would be sent to this Persian Gulf to fight "bad guys."

It is now 2003. I know where the Persian Gulf is. In the aftermath of that war Americans celebrated its brevity. A nation that has endured such hardships as the Vietnam War is more than entitled to

celebrate the brevity of a war. However, most Americans fail to acknowledge that the war did not end there. While a resolution was met in the United Nations, while the cease-fire was called, for some people the war never truly ended.

People tell me not to worry, any future war with Iraq will be equally short. I can not help but wonder if the war was equally short for the men and women that were captured by Iraqi soldiers. Or perhaps the soldiers now facing Persian Gulf War Syndrome; a disease that has made everyday of their lives a battle to survive.

No war is short.

For this reason and many others I have been an advocate of peace. What is startling to me is the American misconception of peace. For many, believing in peace is endorsing Saddam. That is not the case at all. I understand some, if not many, Americans fear methods of peace or neutrality because most views these methods as what insti-

gated World War II into becoming just that, a world war. I also understand the undeniable truth: that this is a nation that *needs* peace.

Anxiety over a potential (and it becomes more probable with each passing moment) war is now a feeling I share with many others. Modern warfare and other methods of mass destruction are now what Americans have to think about. Things Americans have to be prepared for.

For a moment I can not help but think back to 1990, when in school I was learning about such great leaders as Martin Luther King Jr. for the very first time. After so many years their stories have become rhetoric to most, but for the first time in the eyes of a child, to learn of such a hero, is amazing. Similarly I can't help but wonder if their everlasting struggle for peace and the lessons rooted in that have also just become rhetoric.

SPECIAL EDITION

Basic facts involving the nation of Iraq



Country Name: Republic of Iraq
Capital: Baghdad
Independence: October 3, 1932 by way of League of Nations mandate
Population: Estimated 24,001,816 as of July, 2002
Ethnic Groups: 75%-80% Arab, 15%-20% Kurdish, 5% Turkoman, Assyrian or other
Religions: 97% Muslim (60%-65% Shi'a, 32%-37% Sunni), 3% Christian or other
Languages: Arabic, Kurdish, Armenian, Assyrian
Literacy Rate: Estimated 58%
Executive Branch as follows:

President: Saddam Hussein (since July 16, 1979)
Vice President: Taha Muhyi al-Din Maruf (since April 21, 1974)
Vice President: Taha Yasin Ramadan (since March 23, 1991)
The President and Vice President of Iraq are elected by a 2/3 majority of the Revolutionary Command Council. The last elections were held on October 17, 1995. By a Presidential referendum on October 15, 2002 Saddam Hussein was elected president for a fifth consecutive five-year

term to the presidency. By Presidential referendum that five-year term has been extended to seven.

Heads of Government:

Prime Minister: Saddam Hussein (since May 29, 1994)

Deputy Prime Minister: Tariq Mikhail Aziz (since N/A, 1979), Hikmat Mizban Ibrahim al-Azzawi (since July 30, 1999), Ahmad Husayn al-Khudayir (since July N/A, 2001), and Abd al-Tawab Mullah al-Huwaysh (since July N/A, 2001).

Environmental-International Agreements: party to Law of the Sea, Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

Military Branches: Army, Republican Guard, Navy, Air Force, Air Defense Force, Border Guard Force, Fedayeen Saddam

Military Age: 18 years of age

Military Manpower: 6,135,847 (estimated numbers of 2002)

SPECIAL EDITION

PAGE 4

THE COURIER

Looking back: timeline of the Persian Gulf War

1990

August 2: Iraq invades Kuwait

August 5: President George Bush Sr. makes a public statement against the invasion

August 6: King Fahd requests military assistance from the United States, he meets with then Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney.

August 28: A secret delegation of Israelis arrives in Washington, D.C. to discuss the likelihood of an attack on Israel

September 19: US makes plans for a ground offensive

October 31: President Bush doubles the number of soldiers stationed in Saudi Arabia, the decision is withheld from the public until November 8, 1990

November 29: United Nations Security Council authorizes any means necessary to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait

1991

January 9: Tariq Aziz, Foreign Minister of Iraq, meets with James Baker in Geneva at an attempt to negotiate peace, an agreement can not be reached

January 12: Congress authorizes the use of force in Iraq

January 15: United Nations deadline for Iraqi forces to leave Kuwait

January 17: Allied attack begins with scud missiles at 2:38 AM Riyadh time

January 18: Scud missiles hit Israel; American air attack is launched from Turkey

January 19: First American pilots are shot down and taken hostage

January 31: Khafji is recaptured

February 1: Tomahawk missiles are launched in an attack against an airfield in Baghdad

February 8: Cheney and Powell travel to Riyadh to oversee by land war plans

February 15: Radio Baghdad suggests Iraqi withdrawal; President Bush ignores suggestion for truth

February 24: Ground attack begins

February 26: Iraqis flee Kuwait City

February 28: Cease fire begins at 8:00 AM Riyadh time

March 5: Most POWs are released

June 8: Victory parade in Washington D.C. celebrates the end of the war

SPECIAL EDITION

March 16, 1988: northern city of Halabja, Iraq attacked; genocide

Iraq was pushed into the modern limelight by an incident that occurred March 16, 1988 in Halabja, a village in northern Iraq.

While many such incidents lead to the event on March 16, 1988—nearly fifteen years ago to the day—the incident at Halabja is said to have been the most devastating.

It is reported that for the first time in modern history a leader of a nation used chemical warfare against his own people. 5,000 citizens of Halabja died within

hours of the attack from a variety of different reasons. Those that survived were left sometimes blind, cancerous, disfigured or even maimed.

Dr. Christine Gosden of Liverpool University, who developed a treatment and research foundation for survivors, reports that in the aftermath Iraqi soldiers entered the village in biochemical suits analyzing the deaths, shooting the survivors and then burning the bodies. A three year investigation by the Human

Rights Watch has reported that anywhere between 50,000 to 100,000 citizens have died due to these attacks in the years that have followed.

The attack on Halabja was one of many in the regime's Anfal campaign to displace and effectively destroy the people of northern Iraq. The attack on Halabja has been classified as modern genocide.

In the aftermath of war: Persian Gulf Syndrome

On October 15, 2002 the United States Department of Defense released a final report concerning some soldiers' exposure to unexplained particulate matter.

A growing number of concerned and ailing veterans forced the Department of Defense to thoroughly analyze the effects of exposure on soldiers during both Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm between 1990 and 1991.

Though the report was intensive and did acknowledge that soldiers were exposed to elements

that are otherwise harmful to the human body, the report did *not* state that a direct link can be made back exposure and illness. In fact, the report states that the average exposure to possibly dangerous chemicals for soldiers was a period of approximately 153 days. The report compares this average versus a lifetime within an occupation that allows for exposure to the same chemicals stating that a lifetime exposure would exceed that of the 153 days soldier's were subjected to. Using this theory the report indirectly states that no ill-

nesses have arisen due to occupational exposure which may have lasted a lifetime.

Despite the report's analysis, Persian Gulf War Syndrome has been legally classified as a disease afflicting veterans. Foundations have begun in an effort to aid families suffering because of this illness since symptoms vary and an actual diagnosis is difficult.