

Clashes break out in Najaf, but crisis calms, officials say

By **ABDUL HUSSEIN AL-OBEIDI**
Associated Press Writer

NAJAF, Iraq (AP) — U.S. forces and Shiite militants fought fierce battles in Najaf on Monday, with airstrikes near a revered shrine and exchanges of mortar fire and artillery, as the U.S. military stepped up pressure on the insurgents to quickly hand over the holy site to Shiite religious authorities.

Gunfire rang in the city throughout the day Monday, and black smoke rose over the Old City neighborhood, where much of the fighting has been centered and where militiamen loyal to radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr still control the Imam Ali Shrine. Militiamen early Monday fired mortars at U.S. troops, who responded with artillery.

In Baghdad's heavily Shiite Sadr City neighborhood, an explosion, apparently from a U.S. air attack, killed four people and injured nine others Monday, said Dr. Qasim Saddam, director of Sadr Hospital. The U.S. military said it was unaware of the incident.

In the southern city of Nasiriyah, U.S. journalist Micah Garen said after his release from more a week in captivity that he hoped to stay in Iraq to continue working

on a documentary project he'd started about the looting of archaeological sites.

"This experience hasn't made me want to leave at all," Garen said late Sunday in an interview with Associated Press Television News. He also thanked al-Sadr for helping free him from his captors.

Late Sunday, U.S. warplanes and helicopters attacked positions in Najaf's Old City for the second night, witnesses said. Leaders of al-Sadr's Mahdi Army militia said the Imam Ali Shrine compound's outer walls were damaged in the attacks. The U.S. military said it had fired on sites south of the shrine, from which militants were shooting, and did not hit the compound wall. The renewed clashes in Najaf appeared more intense than in recent days as U.S. forces sealed off the Old City. Iraqi government officials counseled patience, saying they intended to resolve the crisis without raiding the shrine, one of Shia Islam's holiest.

"The government will leave no stone unturned to reach a peaceful settlement," Iraqi National Security adviser Mouaffaq al-Rubaie told The Associated Press. "It has no intention or interest in killing more people or having even the most trivial dam-

age to the shrine. We have a vested interest in a peaceful settlement."

The crisis in Najaf, which has spread to other Shiite communities, appeared on the verge of resolution Friday, when insurgents agreed to turn over the shrine to representatives of Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani.

The transfer has bogged down in quibbling over technicalities. Representatives from both sides have said they were still working out the details.

Senior government officials said last week an Iraqi force was preparing to raid the shrine within hours to expel the militants loyal to al-Sadr, but interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi quickly backed off that threat.

Such an operation would anger Shiites across the country and could turn them against the new government as it tries to gain legitimacy and tackle a 16-month-old insurgency.

Worries over the fallout have fueled calls for international action to end the Najaf fighting. Syria's prime minister, Naji al-Otari, in talks with his Jordanian counterpart Monday, warned that instability in Iraq "is about to backfire on neighboring coun-

tries" and called for Arabs and Iraq's neighbors to "help it get out of its current ordeal."

Iran has called on Muslim nations to hold an urgent meeting to deal with Iraq. Iranian President Mohammad Khatami repeated denials of claims by some Iraqi officials that his country supports al-Sadr.

"We have never taken sides in favor or against any group or faction in Iraq," Khatami told reporters when asked if Iran was supporting al-Sadr, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

The chairman of the world's largest grouping of Muslim countries suggested the United Nations take a role in helping stop the Najaf violence. "If the confrontation in Najaf is not defused, it will inflame emotions and may create unpredictable conditions," said Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who heads the 57-member Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Assailants in Tikrit, 80 miles north of Baghdad, killed one Turkish citizen and two Iraqis along a road as they headed to the northern city of Kirkuk late Sunday, Maj. Neal O'Brien, a spokesman for the U.S. Army's 1st Infantry Division, said Monday. No other details of the attack were

immediately available.

In Kirkuk, Sharzad Hassan, 31, an official with the pro-U.S. Patriotic Union of Kurdistan was gunned down by unknown attackers late Sunday in a drive-by shooting, police officer Sarhat Qadir said Monday.

Five U.S. troops were reported dead on Sunday — including three Marines killed in action Saturday in Anbar province, a Marine who died in a vehicle accident and a soldier killed by a roadside bomb Sunday in the northern city of Mosul.

As of Friday, 949 U.S. service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq in March 2003, according to the U.S. Defense Department.

Garen, who was kidnapped Aug. 13 in Nasiriyah, was released Sunday along with his Iraqi translator at al-Sadr's offices there after the cleric's aides appealed for his freedom.

APTN videotape showed Garen in apparently good health, drinking a soft drink on a couch next to Sheik Aws al-Khafaji, an al-Sadr aide in Nasiriyah.

"I feel like I have lots and lots of friends here and I hope that I can continue to work here," the 36-year-old New Yorker said.

Opening statehouse parking garage expected to help

TOPEKA (AP) — Patrons of downtown businesses near the Statehouse will have an easier time finding a place to park after a \$15 million underground parking garage opens Tuesday on the north side of the Capitol.

While some business owners are happy that congestion downtown will be eased during the annual legislative session that runs from January through May, other people question the need for the \$135 million Statehouse renovation project at a time when the state is facing a court battle over education spending.

Besides the parking garage, the building's east wing, which includes the Senate chamber, is being renovated. The west wing and

House chamber are scheduled for renovation after work on the east wing is finished next summer. The entire renovation project is slated to be completed in October 2010.

"I'm hoping it makes the Capitol much more accessible to citizens, which is good news," Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said of the park-

ing garage. "Certainly during the session, it's very hard for people to think about coming to hearings or participating because there's no place to park. And I think it will free up a lot of space for commercial businesses in Topeka."

Susan Mahoney, executive director of Downtown Topeka Inc., which represents downtown Topeka businesses, agreed.

"It's certainly going to relieve some of the parking pressure that we have between January and May," Mahoney said. She added that opening up parking spaces downtown makes business properties more valuable.

Sen. Dave Jackson, R-Topeka, said he hasn't heard much yet from downtown businesses other than grumbling about the cost of the project, which is being funded through bonding.

d

It looks like the perfect d.
The only problem is, it's a p.
It's dyslexia. A reading disability where some kids confuse their d's with p's, b's and q's. But, with help most of these kids can go on to do well in school. Call 1-888-G8R-MIND now. There's no reason to be held back.

Ad Council

Guard becomes component in war on terror

WICHITA (AP) — The Air National Guard's Network Operations and Security Center is about to become an important part of the war on terror, offering Internet security for more than 300 National Guard sites around the country.

The center, called a NOSC, will

service computer networks for more than 100,000 National Guard personnel, protecting the system from hackers and possible terrorist activity. It will also work in conjunction with the Kansas Air National Guard's 161st Intelligence Squadron, which provides near

real-time analysis of data gathered worldwide by reconnaissance aircraft.

The center will go online Oct. 1. "It is a jewel in the crown for Wichita," said Col. Gary Wells, commander of the 184th Information Operations Group.

Business Directory

To have your ad placed in the Business Directory, call Crystal or Jeremy at 462-3963.

Advanced Technology Auto Glass

"The Difference is Clear"

Rory Henry • 785-460-7773



1114 Main, Gem (785) 462-3501

Chuck Saddler Tracey Galli

• Tree Removal & Trimming • Full Insured • Careful & Prompt Service • Late Model Bucket Truck • Free Estimates!

Murray Roofing

Authorized DURO-LAST Contractor

FREE ESTIMATES

800-794-3204
785-462-6908
fax: 785-465-9208

Specializing in Low-Sloped, Flat or Metal Roofs!

Jeff Dreiling, Sales Manager

THE WORLD'S BEST ROOF

© Duro-Last Roofing, Inc.



Hazel R. Estes
Agent

You're Never Alone

Long Term Care, Life, Auto, Homeowners, Farm Package

280 N. Franklin, Colby, Office: 785-462-6708, Cell: 785-821-2492

Vinyl Graphics & Signs

- ▶ Truck Lettering
- ▶ Vinyl Decals
- ▶ Window Graphics
- ▶ Banners
- ▶ Pinstriping
- ▶ Store Front Signs
- ▶ Sandblasted Signs
- ▶ Backlit Awnings
- ▶ Tent Rentals
- ▶ Boat Tarps & Graphics

Business & Residential

COLBY CANVAS CO.
785-462-3981 graphics@st-tel.net

Kitchens & Baths

CUSTOM CABINETS, GRANITE, SOLID SURFACE & FORMICA COUNTERTOPS

Certified Fabrication & Installation

See Our Samples At Inlow Interiors!
"Serving Colby and the Area Since 1984"

THE TOOL BOX
785-462-7843



ROUND TRIP TRAVEL
BRANSON CHRISTMAS TOUR
Nov. 28 - Dec. 3 - Call for brochure

• • VACATION SPECIALS • •

	From (per adult)	No. of nights
LAS VEGAS - Air & hotel	\$250	4
DISNEY WORLD - Hotel, air, park passes	\$505	3
MEXICO - Air & hotel	\$450	3
CARIBBEAN CRUISE & AIR	\$1,050	5
ALASKAN CRUISE & AIR	\$1,500	7
HAWAII - Air & hotel	\$740	3
LONDON, ENGLAND - Air & hotel	\$700	3
AMTRAK EXPLORE AMERICA	\$359	Max. 45

WORLDWIDE: Vacation Packages, Cruises, Tours, Groups, Flights, Hotels, Trains, Cars

ALL SPECIALS MAY BE FOR SPECIFIC DATES AND ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. CALL IN OR FAX YOUR INTERNET QUOTES AND OTHER ADS! WE CAN BOOK THEM FOR YOU WITH LOCAL, CARING SERVICE!!!

Ask about AAA, AARP Senior & Companion, Corporate and Government discounts!

ROOFMASTERS

Your Local Roofing Contractor

425 East Hill, Colby, KS
Licensed - Bonded - Insured

RESIDENTIAL
Tamko Shingles
GAF Shingles
Wood Shingles
Metal Roofs

1-800-536-6642
1-785-462-6642

COMMERCIAL
Rubber Single Ply
White TPO Single Ply
Built Up Systems
Modified Systems

FREE ESTIMATES

Elastomeric Rubber Coating For Metal Roofs

Where You Can Still Get A Full - Spine Adjustment for 1980's Fees!

Warta Chiropractic & Fitness Club

415 N. Franklin • 785-460-3350

Monday & Wednesday: 2:00p.m. - 7:00p.m.
Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 10:00a.m. - 3:00p.m.

"Science & Nature Working Together For You."

Dr. A.J. Warta
25 years of experience as a licensed chiropractor

Bill & Deb Mariman

Phone (785) 460-0460

Cellular (785) 462-0663

THE DOG HOUSE
1065 S. Country Club

B O A R D I N G

Western Kansas Center for Comprehensive Dental Diagnosis & Rehabilitation

1690 W. 4th • 460-3999 or toll free 1-866-305-3999

Jeffrey M. Rayl, D.D.S.

- Comprehensive bite analysis
- TMJ/TMD diagnosis and rehabilitation
- I.V. Sedation for all dental procedures including surgical removal of wisdom teeth
- Dental Implants: surgical placement and restoration
- Complete endodontic services (root canal) molar and anterior teeth
- Extensive cosmetic procedures
- Laser periodontal (gum disease) therapy
- Esthetic crown and bridge restorations; all ceramic (no metal)
- General dental procedures: cleanings, tooth colored fillings, partial dentures, biologic dentures

FINALLY!

Health Insurance for Individuals, Families and the Self-Employed at AFFORDABLE Rates.

Insurance is Underwritten by The MEGA Life and Health Insurance Company

800-783-9417

New System Professional Window Cleaning

650 N. Grant • Colby, KS 67701 Commercial • Residential

Call for your FREE estimate: 785-462-6995 - 800-611-6735

Serving hundreds of satisfied customers for over 10 years. Since 1994.

BIG THANK YOU TO OUR CUSTOMERS!!
SERVING NW KANSAS & EASTERN COLORADO!
Chris & Beth Lewon ~ "We do windows!"

Get On-Line for Value!

nwkansas.com

Call 462-3963 or stop by 155 W. 5th St.