

## Saddam forces troops to fight

IN EASTERN SAUDI ARABIA - Saddam Hussein's front line, though hammered by allied air strikes and manned by dispirited, lice-ridden soldiers, can hold out for months, senior allied officers fear.

"They will fight because they have no choice," said a Saudi officer with access to defecting Iraqis. "They know they might survive a battle, but if they run they will be shot."

Like other senior Saudi officers, he spoke frankly only when assured of anonymity, fearful of contradicting official optimism. But he reflected a view widely held among commanders close to the front.

"Nothing about this is going to be easy," said Lt. Col. Hu Blazer, a U.S. Army maintenance battalion commander who learned the hard way in Vietnam the limits of air support in a ground war.

Group Capt. Niall Irving of Britain's Royal Air Force told reporters Saturday of plans to house Iraqi prisoners of war.

"I think we are anticipating huge numbers — once (ground) operations start or maybe even before — are going to give themselves up fairly quickly."

Iraqis might surrender en masse once their lines are penetrated and control structures break down, allied ground commanders say. Until then, the allies expect a withering hail of Iraqi artillery fire and rockets.

Treacherous minefields are designed not only to slow allied forces from moving north but also to stop Iraqis from fleeing south.

"Saddam has 4,000 Republican Guards assigned to every division whose job is to make sure the men fight," said a front-line Saudi officer. "Troops can take their choice, dying in front or behind."

The Republican Guards are the elite core of the Iraqi army and are considered especially loyal to Saddam.

Clearly, the air war is taking a heavy toll. Bombs from B-52s gouge gaping craters, blasting away gun emplacements and munitions stores. Strafing raids disrupt Iraqi supply lines and communications.

But many of Iraq's 530,000 troops in the Kuwait theater are secure in hardened bunkers, and their 155mm guns are capable of pinpoint accuracy with conventional or chemical shells.

While U.S. forces are equipped with old-style howitzers, loaded one shell at a time by a burly "number one man," the Iraqis have French-made automatic howitzers.

Iraq's Soviet-made T-72 tanks, with laser-guided fire and heavy armor,

are a fair match for the Americans' M-1 Abrams tanks and their range is longer than the older-model, smaller U.S. M-60s.

U.S. Marine officers say the Iraqis have built concentric sand berms, 12-foot-high walls, behind moats which can be filled with flaming oil. Explosive butane tanks are buried under likely tank routes.

A half million mines in two broad belts form an outer defense, from the Saudi-Iraqi border, and many more are expected to be scattered on the way toward inner fortifications at Kuwait City.

A Saudi commander confirmed that many Iraqis were prepared to defect, and said those taken prisoner offered little resistance when their enemy was upon them.

In a briefing, Group Captain Irving said Iraqi prisoners had been down to one meal a day and one said he had not seen meat in weeks. Many had lice and open sores because they had to get by on a single uniform.

But the Saudi officer warned against interpreting this as a portent of quick victory.

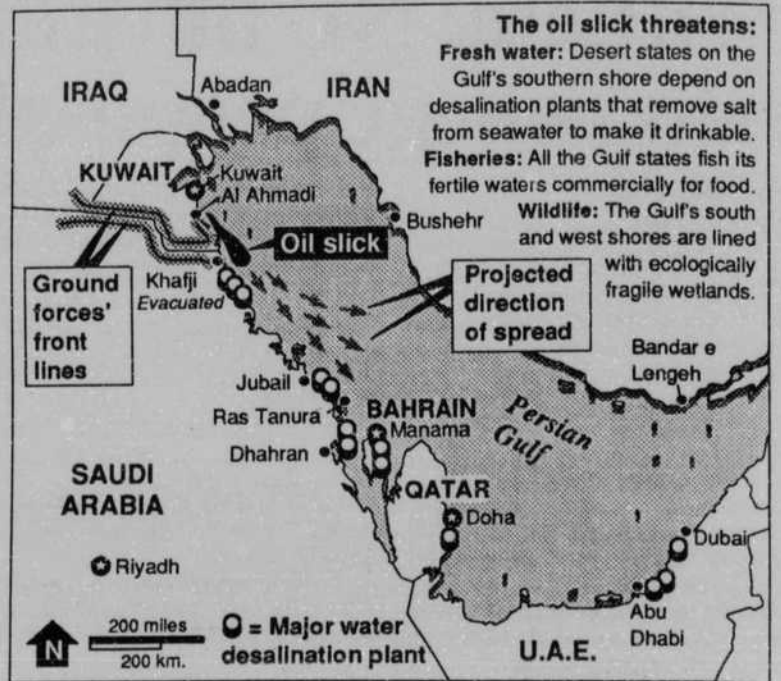
"Most of them know they won't win," he said, "but they're not going to go away."

He also noted that a large part of Saddam's army was well-trained and motivated. Some take comfort in the Islamic belief that a warrior martyred in a holy war will earn a place in paradise.



### Environmental Disaster in the Gulf

Environmental experts said there was no way to stop a mammoth oil slick pouring from Iraqi-held Kuwait. The slick has already crept 70 miles south along the Saudi Arabian coast.



**The oil slick threatens:**  
**Fresh water:** Desert states on the Gulf's southern shore depend on desalination plants that remove salt from seawater to make it drinkable.  
**Fisheries:** All the Gulf states fish its fertile waters commercially for food.  
**Wildlife:** The Gulf's south and west shores are lined with ecologically fragile wetlands.

#### Techniques used to battle oil spills:

**Technology**

<b>Containment Booms</b> Floating booms form a ring around spill to contain the oil.	<b>Skimmer Boats</b> "Herd" the oil and vacuum it up from the waters surface onto collection barges.	<b>Chemicals</b> Dispersants break up oil slick, coagulating agents gathers oil together or sink droplets below the water's surface.
<b>Nature</b>	<b>Evaporation</b> Volatile components of the oil evaporate into the atmosphere.	<b>Bacteria</b> Bacteria consume some crude over time.
		<b>Weather</b> Tar balls form from the heavier parts of the oil and sink to the bottom. Wind and wave action emulsify some oil into the water forming "Mousse".

### Soviet captain shoots Lithuanian

VILNIUS, U.S.S.R. - A Soviet army captain shot a Lithuanian at a military checkpoint Sunday, and officials of the breakaway republic said they have begun keeping a record of brutality inflicted on their citizens, a government spokesman said.

Government spokesman Audrius Azubalis said a Soviet patrol stopped the Lithuanian, who was driving a car with two hitchhikers about 1 a.m. The driver was asked to get out of the car and put his hands on the windshield.

A shot fired at the ground by the captain, apparently as a warning, ricocheted and hit the man in the leg. The Lithuanian, identified as A. Shalkingas, was taken to a Vilnius hospital for treatment.

Azubalis also said the last of six Lithuanians seized after a shooting incident involving paratroopers Thursday was released, then taken to a hospital for treatment of a concussion.

The Lithuanian Health Ministry reported a similar case Saturday in Kaunas, 60 miles west of Vilnius, where a man detained Jan. 24 by the military was released and taken to a hospital suffering from a concussion, arm fractures and chest injuries, Azubalis said.

The commander of the Soviet Army garrison had warned Saturday that his troops were getting "more and more out of control."

### Rebels gain control in Somalia

NAIROBI, Kenya - Guerrillas on Sunday won apparent control of Somalia after a month of fighting forced longtime President Mohamed Siad Barre from his official residence. A Western doctor who just left Mogadishu said rebels had taken over the airport and main radio station.

Siad Barre's whereabouts remained unknown. Reports from Somalia's capital said he may have fled to Kisumu, south of Mogadishu, one of the few sections of the Horn of Africa nation of 8 million believed still loyal to him.

Celebrations broke out Saturday night across Mogadishu after the rebels drove Siad Barre from the presidential mansion and seized state radio; on Sunday the guerrillas tightened

### U.S. ground forces combat ready before late February, official says

WASHINGTON - Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said Sunday that U.S. forces will be ready for a ground assault on Iraqi forces well "before the end of February." The White House ruled out financing Operation Desert Storm with a new tax.

"We've always assumed that we would eventually have to send in ground forces," Cheney said, all but conceding that massive air strikes alone won't oust Saddam Hussein's army from Kuwait.

Cheney, interviewed on NBC's "Meet the Press," said the U.S. deployment in the gulf is nearing the half-million mark and is nearly complete.

"I would expect it's a relatively short period of time between now and when they'd be combat ready," he said.

### Rebels gain control in Somalia

their grip by capturing the airport, the last government stronghold, Dr. Marc Gastello Etchejorry said.

"The information from Mogadishu is that the fighting has finished. There is no more shooting," said Etchejorry. "The rebels have announced that all of the city is under their control."

There was no independent confirmation of the situation due to widespread communications problems.

The rebel United Somali Congress said it seized control of Mogadishu at 8:30 p.m. Saturday.

"Last night . . . the government and the responsibility of the Somali people were taken over by the USC movement. We are addressing you from Radio Mogadishu, the voice of the Somali people," said the rebels.

But Cheney said the final go-ahead for a ground war remains "a presidential decision."

In Lafayette Park, across from the White House, only a few dozen anti-war demonstrators kept a vigil Sunday, banging on drums and cans. Discarded leaflets and signs gave the only evidence of the crowd — estimated by police as 75,000 — that had marched around the White House on Saturday.

Bush's senior advisers said the president will not ask Congress to enact a "war tax" to finance the U.S.-led military operations.

The president gives his State of the Union address to a joint House-Senate session on Tuesday evening and will submit his budget for fiscal 1992 the following Monday.

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