

Iraqi prime minister visits Sunni insurgent stronghold

In Ramadi | Nouri al-Maliki meets with the provincial governor and tribal leaders

By GASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD — Iraq's Shiite prime minister, hoping to persuade Iraqis outside the capital that the government is working to tame rising violence everywhere, traveled to the Sunni insurgent stronghold of Ramadi today and met with tribal leaders and the provincial governor.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's visit came a day after he warned that extremists would flee to other parts of the country during a security crackdown in Baghdad and promised government help in fighting them.

Surrounded by heavily armed bodyguards, al-Maliki also visited Iraqi security forces after he was flown to the U.S. base on the western outskirts of Ramadi, the provincial capital of the volatile Anbar province, which stretches west from Baghdad to the borders with Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

He discussed security issues and the need to restore infrastructure in the battered city during the meeting with Gov. Maamoun Sami Rashid al-Alwani, according to Iraqi state television.

The U.S. military is pressing a campaign to encourage Iraq's Sunnis — those involved in or sympathetic to the insurgency — to stop attacks and break with al-Qaida in Iraq fighters who have taken deep root in Anbar province.

Four Anbar governors have served in less than four years. One was assassinated, another resigned after surviving an attack, and two, including the current one, have had sons kidnapped. Recently, local tribal leaders who have met with U.S. commanders have been killed.

Al-Alwani operates under tight U.S. security at a government center in central Ramadi, which has been a favorite target of insurgents and is heavily guarded by U.S. troops.

Al-Maliki's visit came a day after a suicide car bomber detonated explosives near an Iraqi checkpoint in Ramadi, killing

himself and wounding 15 people, mostly civilians, the U.S. military said. More casualties were prevented because Iraqi troops opened fire and disabled the vehicle before it reached the checkpoint, the military said.

The prime minister said Monday that extremists would flee to the hinterlands during the Baghdad security sweep.

"Some of these gangs fled to the provinces and have become active recently, targeting innocent people and committing random murders," al-Maliki said Monday. "So the role of security services in the provinces is very important. The government is ready to offer the necessary help. We are beginning to confront terrorism, and we must continue to do so."

Meanwhile, more than 700 additional U.S. troops arrived in Iraq's increasingly volatile Diyala province to try to quell violence northeast of Baghdad.

The U.S. Army's 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division moved from northern Baghdad into Baguiba to supplement about 3,500 American soldiers already stationed there.

The move comes at a time when more than 20,000 new American troops are pouring into Baghdad as part of a U.S.-Iraqi push to pacify the capital.

While sectarian killings in Baghdad have fallen since the crackdown began last month, violence has skyrocketed to the northeast in Diyala, where direct attacks on U.S. forces have risen 70 percent since last summer, according to U.S. military figures.

U.S. deaths

As of Monday, at least **3,193** members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to The Associated Press. The figure includes seven military civilians. At least **2,576** died as a result of hostile action, according to the military.

The AP count is three higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 7 a.m. PDT Monday.

No deaths were reported Monday by the military.

The latest identification reported by the military:

- Army Spc. **Jonathan K. Smith**, 19, Atlanta, died Sunday in Baghdad in a noncombat related incident, assigned to the 15th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

To learn more: www.defenselink.mil/news/

"We began looking at this several months ago, in support of the Baghdad plan. We knew the surrounding provinces would be in play," Maj. Gen. Benjamin Mixon, commander of the Army's 25th Infantry Division and the top U.S. official in northern Iraq, told The Associated Press.

"I recognized for sure that Diyala would become more violent as operations picked up in Baghdad," Mixon said.

The additional American forces join more than 20,000 Iraqi security forces in Diyala, according to figures provided by the U.S. military. About half of those are Iraqi police, and half are members of the Iraqi 5th Army Division.

"This should be fun, but three months and it's over," said Sgt. Todd Selge, 22, of Burnsville, Minn., whose unit is slated to leave Iraq in late spring. "We've heard that a lot of insurgents have moved here from Baghdad. The Iraqi army is supposed to be OK here, so we're coming to help them stand up."

The security crackdown in Baghdad already has seen a decline in execution-style killings, random shootings and rocket attacks, in large part because Shiite parties have been successful in persuading the Shiite militias to pull armed fighters off the streets to avoid a showdown with the Americans.

Police found only nine bullet-riddled bodies in Baghdad on Monday — apparent victims of Sunni-Shiite reprisal killings. Before the security crackdown, the daily count was running above 50.

21.5"

Cheney: War foes hurt troops

Congress | The vice president lashes out at those seeking to cut funds for Iraq

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG
NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — Vice President Dick Cheney lashed out at congressional opponents of the war in Iraq on Monday, saying that Democrats and others who would limit President Bush's authority to spend money on the war were undermining the troops and "telling the enemy simply to watch the clock and wait us out."

Cheney's remarks, delivered at a meeting of The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, were the most pointed warning

"When members of Congress pursue an anti-war strategy that's been called 'slow bleeding,' they are not supporting the troops, they are undermining them," Cheney said, adding, "Anyone can say they support the troops, and we should take them at their word, but the proof will come when it's time to provide the money."

Remarks inflame debate

Cheney's remarks served to inflame what is already an impassioned debate on Capitol Hill, as congressional Democrats move to translate voter discontent with the war into binding policy changes.

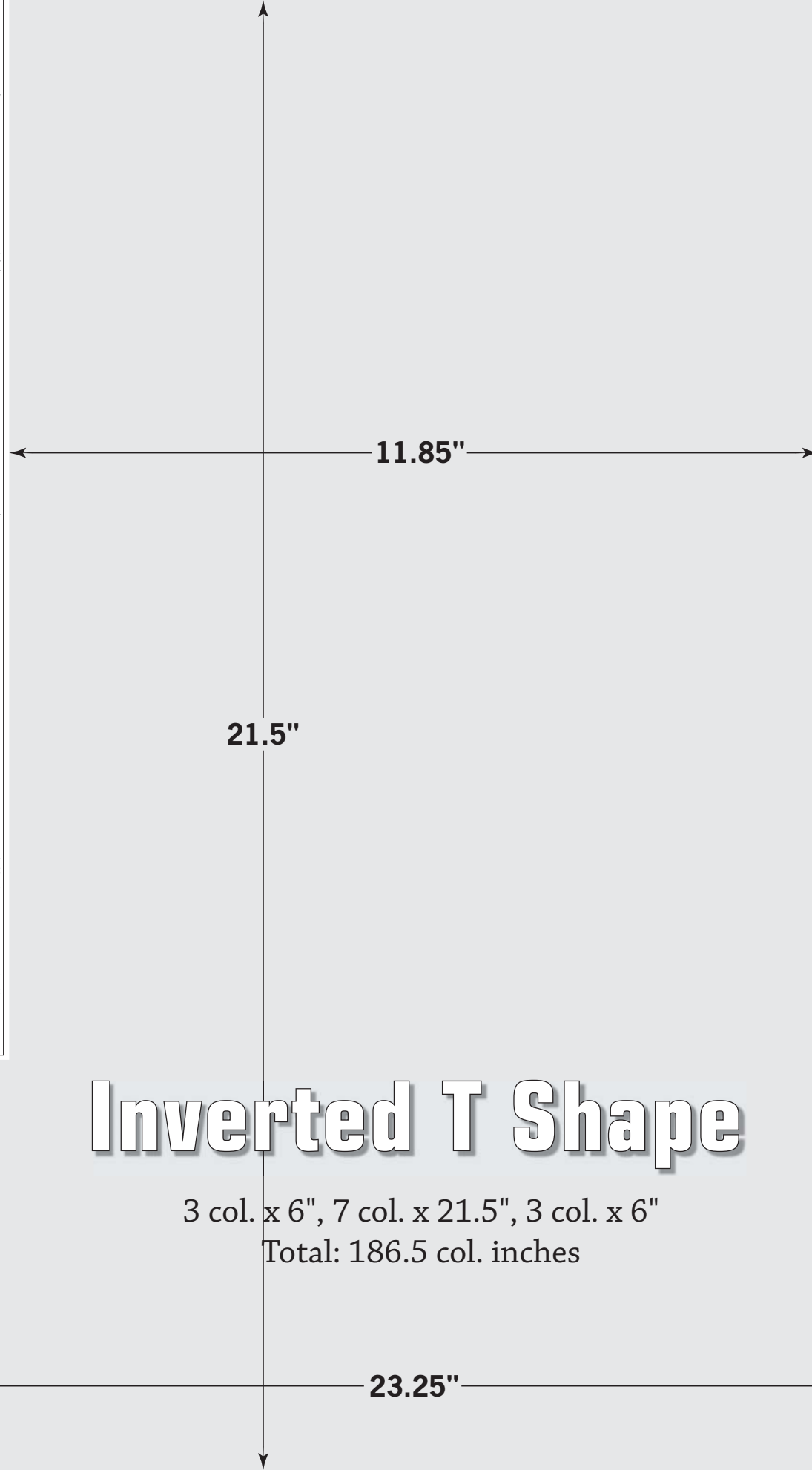
The House has already voted to approve a nonbinding resolution disapproving of Bush's

Committee plans to take up the emergency spending bill.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., issued a retort to Cheney, saying that Democrats are determined to "take Iraq policy in a new direction" by holding both the administration and the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki accountable for meeting performance benchmarks and reducing the U.S. presence in Iraq.

In his speech, Cheney also attacked Congress for exercising "twisted logic" — a reference to the Senate's decision to confirm Gen. David Petraeus as the new military commander in Iraq at the same time that lawmakers were laying the groundwork to oppose the troop buildup, which Petraeus supports.

"It was not a mutual embrace in



Fish, game group at end of line

Santiam | An association that has run out of volunteers plans to sell cabins and dock

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

After nearly 80 years at Clear Lake, the Santiam Fish & Game Association plans to disband and sell the rustic cabins, restaurant and boat moorage it has developed and maintained.

"We all feel very sad about this, but there isn't much we can do about it," said board member Bud Barnes of Lebanon. "The majority of the people involved are just too old to get the job done, and nobody wants to volunteer anymore."

Barnes has been a member of the association since the 1950s. "I needed some fun things to do after retiring," he said. "I really got involved. I've been through all of the offices and was hands-on active."

According to its Web site, the association was formed in the 1920s when men from the mid-Willamette Valley "dis-

covered this mountain jewel known today as Clear Lake. They also quickly discovered that catching spectacular cutthroat trout was a bonus to the beauty and peacefulness of this special lake."

Today, more than 280 family memberships are sold for about \$30 a year. Much of the resort's charm is that it is rustic. It has no landline telephones, and electricity is produced by generator. Heat, stoves and lights are propane-powered.

There are recreational vehicle pads with no hookups. A log-style shelter house built by members of the New Deal-era Civilian Conservation Corps is popular among day-use visitors.

Ospreys and bald eagles can be spotted from the trail that encircles the lake. Cutthroat trout are native to the lake, which is also stocked with rainbow and brook trout.

The lake is known for cold, clear water and a ban on motorboats that attracts scuba divers and boaters who enjoy viewing fish or the petrified forest on the lake floor. It is three

miles south of the Oregon 20 junction with Oregon 126.

Tamara Hamilton, 32, the board secretary, says she is the youngest of 10 board members. "Some people pay for a membership so they can get discounts on the cabin and boat rentals. They don't want to be involved in the active care of the resort, such as the opening and closing work parties or the fishing derby for kids."

She said it is hard to find employees, partly because of the rustic charms that make it popular.

Hamilton said the resort will be open through the 2007 season but that a convenience store may replace home-cooked meals.

Although the association owns the facilities, the property is leased from the Willamette National Forest. Any sale of the property must be approved by the Forest Service, Hamilton said.

If the facilities are sold, proceeds will be donated to Oregon State University for scholarships, Hamilton said.

Fighting: Recent talk gives hope of reconciliation

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Potter's City Council liaison. "They're smart guys. They'll figure it out. The sooner they do, the better."

The sooner the better because Potter, Sten and the rest of the increasingly fractured council face big challenges. They must replace lost manufacturing jobs, fight the meth problem, slow middle-class flight and decide how to spend a \$35 million surplus.

Creative problem-solving, however, can prove difficult even when you're on the best of terms.

Joining forces

Sten and Potter teamed up three years ago over drinks at Billy Reed's restaurant on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Sten had opted not to run for mayor, because his wife was pregnant. Potter abandoned retirement with a unique plan for generating grass-roots support, limiting himself to \$25 contributions in the primary, and wanted Sten's support.

Though they boast different backgrounds — Sten essentially grew up counting votes in City Hall, Potter's 2004 mayoral bid was his first campaign — both work from the idea that government must reach beyond core services to make the world a better place.

Sten helped Potter, old enough to be his father, get elected. He endorsed and advised him, offered up his long list of supporters and forced City Council votes highlighting all the ways Potter and front-runner Jim Francesconi differed.

After his big win, Potter put his popularity behind Sten's bid to buy Portland General Electric and his plan to use public money for political campaigns. Their relationship began to

ahead of the mayor's timeline. Soon after, Sten and Randy Leonard challenged the priorities and leadership of the Portland Development Commission — a campaign that continued, even after Potter replaced all five members of the urban renewal agency's board.

Potter and Sten have starkly different styles, perhaps part of their problem.

Nothing ruffles the mayor as much as being accused of playing politics. He keeps his cards tight against his Jerry Garcia ties and city of Portland lapel pin, eschews the easy sound bite and disdains anyone who "horse-trades" his way to victory.

On occasion, he's appeared uncomfortable with how Sten, and particularly Leonard, can anger city staffers and even citizens. He's preached process over specific projects, vowing to increase public involvement in government. His administration has been marked by a lot of talking — about the budget, about the charter, about the city's future.

Sten, in contrast, is an unabashed politics junkie who loves plotting strategy, weighing the pros and cons of potential votes, negotiating compromise. He has taken on ambitious, splashy, concrete initiatives, such as public campaign financing and the PGE quest.

Angering each other

Both say they are right. And, allies say, both have had their feelings hurt.

Sten, friends say, expected Potter to consult with him more, particularly on housing and urban renewal. Instead, Potter has pursued his own vision for the PDC and spent little time consulting with colleagues — something he acknowledged last fall.

While Sten wanted Potter to talk more, Potter assumed that Sten, Leonard and Commissioner Sam Adams would accept his plans for remaking city government. Instead, each has focused on his own agendas, launching big initiatives without always getting, or even seeking, the mayor's blessing.

The charter campaign, a battle for Portland's political future,

of charter change supporters as the PBA (Portland Business Alliance). The Oregonian's editorial board and Tom Potter, the mighty three. The establishment. The corporate thinkers."

They've both been willing to get tough. Voters' Pamphlet arguments for the charter change, written by Potter's proxies, accuse "local career politicians" of mismanaging the city. The mayor hasn't been shy about mentioning the Water Bureau billing fiasco, which happened under Sten, as one argument for restructuring. His campaign allies include several business leaders who tried to end Sten's political career and kill public financing last year.

All this would be just inside baseball if it wasn't having an impact on the City Council's ability to reach consensus, and on Potter's potential legacy. The mayor needs three votes to turn his visionPDX — a \$1.1 million effort to figure out what Portlanders want their city to be — from a collection of interviews into specific policies.

Having Sten and Leonard against him hampers his chances of changing the form of government, and not just because both are popular politicians with core constituencies. At Sten and Leonard's urging, unions have given \$135,000 to oppose the mayor's proposed reforms — almost three times what Potter's side has raised.

"I don't think it's gotten in the way of getting things done — yet," Sten said.

Can the city's most prominent progressives patch things up? Hope came two weeks ago, when Sten pulled Potter aside after they butted heads over the city's legal strategy with Portland General Electric. Sten wouldn't offer specifics but said he and the mayor spent about 40 minutes talking more freely than they have in months.

Each apologized for public comments that might have been misinterpreted. Both agreed that no matter what voters decide in May, they must do a better job communicating.

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Inverted T Shape

3 col. x 6", 7 col. x 21.5", 3 col. x 6"

Total: 186.5 col. inches

6"

6"

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