

CAMPAIGN NEWS DIGEST

SEPTEMBER 2004

Continuing Resistance in Najaf

FIGHTING CONTINUES between U.S. forces and members of the Mahdi Army, controlled by radical Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, in the Iraqi city of Najaf. U.S. Marines have reported killing hundreds of the Mahdi fighters, some of whom took refuge in the sacred Imam Ali shrine. The U.S. has surrounded the shrine with tanks and troops, but has been reluctant to attack it directly for fear of angering Iraq's majority Shi'ite population.

Al-Sadr has said he will turn over the shrine to Iraq's popular Shi'ite leader, the Grand Ayatullah Ali Husaini Sistani, though at the time of writing Mahdi forces still control it. But many of the fighters have already left, taking weapons with them, and the number inside has fallen from around 2,000 to only a few hundred. The future of the shrine, and of al-Sadr's resistance, is uncertain.

In related news, the NATO Training Implementation Mission in Iraq (NTIM-I) has begun deployment. Comprising about 50 officers and NCOs from various NATO countries, NTIM-I is led by Major General Carel Hilderink of the Netherlands. Its goal is to help train Iraqi security forces so that 'Iraq can better provide for its own peace and security.'

U.S. to Withdraw 60,000 Troops Worldwide

PRESIDENT BUSH has announced that the U.S. will withdraw at least 60,000 troops in the next ten years from bases around the world, in what the *New York Times* has called 'the biggest realignment of the United States military since the end of the cold war.' Bush said the changes, which will primarily affect bases in Europe and Asia, will better address terrorist threats. The Pentagon has already begun to move about 12,000 troops from South Korea to Iraq.

U.S. Democrats have said the new policy is motivated by election-year politics, and is a bad idea. General Wesley Clark, NATO supreme allied commander during the Kosovo campaign of 1999 and a former Democratic presidential candidate, said, 'Withdrawing forces from Europe will further undermine already strained relations with long-time NATO allies.'

Maoist Rebels Blockade Nepal Capital

MAOIST REBELS blockaded Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, for a week last month, demanding that the government release Maoist prisoners and provide information on other detainees. The rebels did not place barricades around the city, but threatened to attack anyone trying to enter or leave. There were several bombings in Kathmandu, and officials reported that two men shot and killed a police officer on the outskirts of the city. The government offered to restart peace talks, and to investigate what happened to some Maoist detainees reported missing, but it has not agreed to other demands. Nevertheless the rebels, at repeated requests from the civilian population and from human rights groups, decided to postpone their blockade for one month. But they have threatened stronger measures if their demands are ignored.

France Celebrates 60th Anniversary of Liberation

LAST MONTH France celebrated the World War II liberation of Paris from Nazi forces 60 years ago. On August 25, 1944, German commander General Dietrich von Choltitz signed a formal surrender, and Charles de Gaulle made his famous speech that Paris, after 50 months of Nazi occupation, was finally free.

A popular uprising in Paris led by the French Resistance helped to avoid a full-scale battle for the city. About 1,500 Parisians died in the uprising, which drove some 20,000 German troops into a few fortified areas that allied forces could focus on. About 3,200 German troops in total were killed in the fighting. The day was celebrated with an official ceremony and a ball on the Place de la Bastille.

McGeary, Johanna; 'The Lessons of Najaf;' *Time*; August 22, 2004.

'The NATO Training Implementation Mission Arrives in Iraq;' NATO Press Release; August 19, 2004.

Bumiller, Elisabeth; 'Bush Tells Veterans of Plan to Redeploy G.I.s Worldwide;' *New York Times*; August 17, 2004.

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Student Worksheet

Task 1: pre-reading vocabulary

Before reading the articles, match the underlined words in the first column with their closest synonyms in the second column.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. <u>shrine</u> | a) deny access |
| 2. <u>deployment</u> | b) revolt |
| 3. <u>realignment</u> | c) border, fringes |
| 4. <u>undermine</u> | d) change of position or arrangement |
| 5. <u>blockade</u> | e) holy place |
| 6. <u>outskirts</u> | f) destabilize, weaken |
| 7. <u>uprising</u> | g) complete, total |
| 8. <u>full-scale</u> | h) positioning or placement (especially of troops) |

Task 2: read and check

As you read the articles, check your answers from Task 1.

Task 3: sentence writing

Use the vocabulary from Task 1, and write separate sentences using each underlined word.

Task 4: finding information

Each of the stories above answers what journalists call the six classic questions, the 'five Ws and an H': who, what, where, when, why, and how. Find the five Ws and an H in each story.

Task 5: writing about news

Have the situations in Iraq and Nepal changed since this news digest was written? Investigate one of the stories and write a brief update; no more than 200 words. Include the five Ws and an H. Study how information is presented in the articles and try to imitate the concise journalistic style.

Task 6: briefing

Consider the political, military, and economic impact of the proposed U.S. troop redeployment on the international community, and on your country in particular. Prepare to speak for no more than five minutes. You may use notes to outline your thoughts.

Task 7: talking about history

Describe an important day in your country's history that is still celebrated today. Describe not only what happened, but how it was important.

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Teacher's Notes

Task 1

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
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Task 2

For advanced students, you might have them talk about the difference between the underlined words and their synonyms. Think not only of literal meaning, but of connotations, usage, etc.

Task 3

Before you correct student work, you might try having the students first correct each other's sentences, checking for prepositions, word order, etc.

Task 4

Allow discussion. Sometimes the answer to a 'why' or 'how' is implicit in the story itself, sometimes it is expressly stated. The 'when' might be a specific date, or a general time period such as 'currently' or 'in the recent past' and may be expressed only by verb tense. And sometimes, depending on your point of view, the 'who' in a story may be debatable: in the first article, for example, is the 'who' the U.S. Army, the Mahdi Army, or even Moqtada al-Sadr?

Task 5

An excellent introductory exercise for intermediate to advanced students is to have them try to put answers to all six question words for any given story in one sentence. This is a great way to work on word order, phrases and clauses, and eliminating needless vocabulary. For advanced students, you can even place a word limit on the sentence, like 25 words or less. It's tricky, but it can be done. You might give them a fun example:

who? Mickey Mouse *what?* hit Donald Duck over the head *how?* with a baseball bat *where?* at the zoo *when?* yesterday afternoon *why?* because Donald kicked him. (21 words)

Have the students look at each other's sentences and identify the five Ws and the H. Then have them vote on which sentence they liked best.

Tasks 6 and 7

Either of these may partly be assigned for homework, with individuals or teams developing a presentation to give in the next class. Encourage the use of audio-visual aids if you have these available.

For more information, visit these websites:

Iraq: www.nytimes.com/pages/world/worldspecial/index.html

For U.S. Troop Withdrawal see the Council on Foreign Relations:

www.cfr.org/pub7258/bernard_gwertzman_william_l_nash/nash_little_value_in_announcing_troop_pullout_from_europe_and_asia_now.php

Nepal: www.nepalnews.com/

Paris Liberation: www.paris.org/Expos/Liberation/