



ITSUO INOUE/AP

U.S. Marines with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit took their positions Wednesday in the Kuwaiti desert near the Iraqi border.

THE WAR:

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

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Face it. You're worried. More than worried. On edge. Rattled. The prospect of war with Iraq any moment now has unleashed a steady stream of grim predictions.

In recent weeks, government officials and media pundits have warned us to prepare for:

- Terrorist attacks featuring anthrax and nerve gas.
- Soaring gasoline prices.
- Big jolts to our recession-battered economy, which could sink under the weight of a war costing anywhere between \$100 billion and \$2 trillion.

"Yeah, I'm worried about the price of oil, how it might shoot up to the moon" in response to war, said Tom Berger, 52, of Belleville, who was interviewed outside the Belleville post office at 120 W. Washington St.

Gloria Campbell-White, a self-described "senior citizen," confessed to feeling jittery about the prospect of more domestic terror.

On Sept. 11, 2001, "I think we got a sample" of terror attacks that still lie in store for America, she said.

Paul Milosevich, 45, of Belleville, said he, too, expected higher gas prices and some kind of terrorist retaliation.

Was Milosevich taking any special precautions, such as stockpiling duct tape and plastic sheeting?

"No," he said. "I'm just living life."

A waiting game

The anticipated war with Iraq has generated a lot of anxiety for Americans worried about their families' safety and financial well-being.

But experts remind us there's a lot we can do to regain some sense of control over our lives — steps that call for nothing more than basic preparation and a tweaking of our fears about the

Preparing for war and the threat of terrorism

The American Red Cross suggests steps you can take to protect yourself and your family against terrorist attacks at home once war against Iraq begins:

Create an emergency communications plan.

Choose an out-of-town contact your family can call or e-mail in the event of a disaster. Your selected contact should live far enough away that he or she would be unlikely to be directly affected by the same event.

The contact should know he is the chosen contact. Every household member should have the e-mail addresses and telephone numbers for the contact and each other.

Leave these numbers at your children's schools and your workplace. Your family should know that if telephones are not working, they must be patient and try again later.

Establish a meeting place.

Having a predetermined meeting place away from your home will save time and minimize confusion.

Be sure to include any pets in these plans, since pets are not permitted in shelters and some hotels will not accept them.

Assemble a disaster kit.

If you need to evacuate your home or are asked to seek shelter, having some essential supplies on hand will make you and your family more comfortable.

Prepare a disaster supplies kit in an easy-to-carry container such as a duffel bag or small plastic trash can. Include "special needs" items for any member of your household



(infant formula or items for people with disabilities or older people), first aid supplies (including prescription medications), a change of clothing for each household member, a sleeping bag or bedroll for each, a battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries, food, bottled water and tools.

Check on the school emergency plan for your children.

Check on the school emergency plan for your children. You need to know whether the school will keep your children

until a parent or designated adult can pick them up, or send them home on their own. Be sure that the school has updated information about how to reach parents and responsible caretakers to arrange for pickup.

Ask what type of authorization the school may require to release a child to someone you designate if you are not able to pick up your child.

For more information, go to the Red Cross Web site at www.redcross.org.

Source: American Red Cross

work in suburban and rural areas will ever be exposed to the direct impact of a terrorist act, said Neal Rawls, a security expert and co-author of the recently published book, "Be Alert, Be Aware, Have A Plan."

Truth is, terrorists aim for targets of high symbolic value because they want to get the most bang for their buck, Rawls said.

"So unless their political statement is, 'I want to attack a rural farm area,' they aren't going to do it," Rawls said. "Their political statement has been landmarks, financial areas, people who vacation at certain areas, because these places would make a huge statement."

Ready for anything

Since the attacks Sept. 11, 2001, a new spirit of readiness has sunk in, both with government agencies and regular folks.

Take air travel. Today air crews and passengers know what to expect from terrorists, Rawls said.

"The terrorists will not hijack a plane in the United States with a box cutter anymore," Rawls said. "The passengers will clobber them."

Before the Sept. 11 attacks, it used to be standard procedure for the crew and passengers of a hijacked flight to cooperate with their abductors to ensure everyone's safety.

"But now, that's not our mindset anymore," Rawls said.

With air marshals and pilots packing guns, as well as passengers ready to fight to the death, Rawls said, "The terrorists' life and limb will be at risk if they try to hijack a plane without some sort of very powerful weapon."

People can apply this same attitude to their everyday lives by taking a few moments to prepare a response plan to whatever situation they find themselves in, Rawls said.

Sadly, not enough people have adopted this attitude for

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consequences of a war with Iraq. Let's start with the big one: Terrorism at home.

First the bad news. No matter what lengths you resort to, no foolproof way exists for prevent-

ing terrorism. Just ask the Israelis.

The good news is that weapons of mass destruction, such as biological and chemical agents, are notoriously unstable

and difficult to control, especially in open areas.

Here's another thing to keep in mind: It is extremely unlikely the vast majority of Americans, especially those who live and

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