

The Washington Post

FINAL

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Weather

Today: Partly sunny, windy.
High 44. Low 20.
Friday: Mostly sunny,
blustery. High 30. Low 18.

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127TH YEAR No. 48 M2 DC MD VA

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2004

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N. Korean Evidence Called Uncertain

Scientist Describes Show and Tell at Nuclear Plant Tour

By GLENN KESSLER
Washington Post Staff Writer

The North Korean engineers put a red metal box on the table and opened it. They pulled out a white box made of wood that fit snugly in it. They slid off the top and pulled out two clear jars, which looked as if they had once held marmalade. The lids were sealed tight with tape.

Siegfried S. Hecker, a former director of Los Alamos National Laboratory, peered at the jars from several feet away. One contained a greenish powder, the other an oddly shaped piece of metal. It looked a bit like a funnel, 1½ inches high and an eighth of an inch thick.

Hecker focused on the metal. This, the North Koreans proudly proclaimed, was their "deterrent"—plutonium that had been recently created and shaped from the waste of nuclear fuel rods that until a year ago had been under the careful watch of United Nations inspectors.

The jars and boxes were whisked away. Wait a minute, Hecker said. "It looks like plutonium, but there is no way I can be sure it is plutonium," he said. "I want to hold the jar." The red box reappeared.

North Korea's willingness to show off its Yongbyon nuclear facility—and eagerness to show it can produce plutonium—was intended to demonstrate Pyongyang is serious about breaking the stalemate with Washington over its nuclear programs, members of an unofficial U.S. delegation say. But the delegation's observations have alarmed U.S. officials because the trip two weeks ago appears to confirm that North Korea has processed all 8,000 spent fuel rods—giving them enough weapons-grade plutonium

See KOREA, A18, Col. 1

■ **Missile defense testing called inadequate.** | Page A4



Sen. John Edwards (D-N.C.) talks to customers at Roland's, a diner in Nashua, N.H. Edwards is trying to build on his strong second-place finish in Iowa to improve his standing in New Hampshire and shore up his prospects for the Feb. 3 primary in South Carolina, where he was born.

Kerry Gets a Lift Into New Hampshire

Iowa Victory Elevates Crowds, Donations and Standing for Tuesday

By CECI CONNOLLY
Washington Post Staff Writer

NASHUA, N.H., Jan. 21—On his last swing through New Hampshire, John F. Kerry spoke to business executives for 42 minutes without once being interrupted by applause. He toured a technology company that was closed, and supporters asked in painfully direct language why he was trailing two neophytes.

Now Kerry is riding high, begging the media not to label him a front-runner, despite signs suggesting he may be just that. When he walked on stage at Daniel Webster College here on Wednesday, an overflow crowd cheered, and three dozen cameras flashed in a blinding instant.

"The last two weeks of this campaign



John F. Kerry sees an overflow audience for a speech at Daniel Webster College in Nashua.

have really been very different—four hours of sleep a night, some all-nighters, a lot of cold pizza, an occasional warm beer, a lot of

Hostess cupcakes," he said. "Folks, I feel like I'm back in exam week in college."

Riding his upset victory in the Iowa caucuses back to familiar New England terrain, the Massachusetts senator is enjoying unusually large crowds, and officials say they have collected \$500,000 in the past 36 hours. For two straight days, he has appeared twice on the ABC network, a feat he achieved only once before, when he declared his candidacy in September.

Two post-Iowa polls put him in the lead in New Hampshire with about one-third of the vote. In early January, polls showed Kerry at least 15 percentage points behind former Vermont governor Howard Dean.

The challenge, say outside analysts and

See KERRY, A7, Col. 1

Pentagon's Online Voting Program Deemed Too Risky

By DAN KEATING
Washington Post Staff Writer

A Pentagon program for Internet voting in this year's presidential election is so insecure that it could undercut the integrity of American democracy and should be stopped immediately, according to computer-security specialists who were asked to review the \$22 million pilot plan intended for

about 100,000 overseas voters.

The critical report released yesterday is intended to halt the momentum building for national Internet voting as the least expensive and most convenient way to upgrade election technology that was exposed as unreliable in 2000.

"It's not possible to create a secure voting system with off-the-shelf PCs using Microsoft Windows and the current Inter-

net," said Avi Rubin, an associate professor of computer science and the technical director of the Information Security Institute at Johns Hopkins University.

He and Barbara Simons, a retired researcher from International Business Machines Corp., said their biggest fear is that this year's experiment would be a hit, leading to widespread Internet voting for the 2008 presidential election. That is when the

kind of Internet attack they envision could emerge, possibly from foreign subversives.

"History has shown that when people have the opportunity to tamper with an election they do," said Rubin, noting that the Internet is rife with viruses and worms even when there is no incentive for an attack.

See VOTING, A8, Col. 1

Making Way for Designer Insects

Risks and Benefits of Gene-Altered Bugs Merit Thorough Study, Report Says

By JUSTIN GILLIS
Washington Post Staff Writer

The insect world could shortly undergo a genetic makeover in the laboratory. Scientists are at work developing silkworms that produce pharmaceuticals instead of silk, honeybees resilient enough to resist pesticides and even mosquitoes capable of delivering vaccines, instead of disease, with every bite.

Researchers are tinkering with insect genes to develop more than a dozen new varieties, offering potentially broad social benefits while posing complicated new health and environmental risks. Though most of the designer insects are at least five to 10 years away from reality, concern is growing that government agencies have yet to think about how to oversee the research.

A new report scheduled for release this

morning warns that the issues posed by gene-altered insects are so complex that unless federal agencies begin now to design methods of oversight, the necessary rules may not be in place when scientists are ready to start releasing insects into the environment.

The report by the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology, a think tank in

See INSECTS, A10, Col. 1

Iraqis Face Tough Transition To Market-Based Agriculture

By ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA
Washington Post Staff Writer

KUT, Iraq—The Americans came in the summer with suitcases full of dollars and bought the wheat harvest from miles around. Farmer Faleh Abbas walked away from the sale pleased with the price and pleased that his hard work would help feed his people.

But very little of the wheat he and his colleagues grew ended up as food. Some was stored in silos, some was processed as feed for livestock. The rest was trucked away to be burned and buried.

Officials of the U.S.-led occupation authority said they felt they had to buy the Iraqi wheat because the nation's 5 million agricultural workers, roughly half the labor force, had come to expect such help after decades of living in a largely socialist state. But the officials worried that some of the grain was of such low quality that it would gum up the mills and couldn't be used for bread. So they destroyed it.

The gap in the food supply was made up with \$190 million worth of wheat from Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, courtesy of the U.S. government.



Farmer Abbas Juma'a Ghani prepares to go home after a day of work near Kut, Iraq.

How food will be produced and distributed in the new Iraq is among the biggest challenges the interim authority faces as it tries to reform the slew of state-run or state-subsidized industries that existed under the previous government.

Under Saddam Hussein, Iraqis depend-

See FARMS, A16, Col. 1

INSIDE

Sept. 11 Leak Probe

Sen. Richard C. Shelby (R-Ala.) is the focus of an investigation into the leak of NSA intercepts relating to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.
NATION, Page A2

Scandal Hits Sharon

A land developer was indicted on charges of paying bribes to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, his son and the deputy premier.
WORLD, Page A15

Duke Holds Off Terps

Maryland nearly overcame a big deficit but couldn't close the deal in a 68-60 loss to No. 1 Duke.
SPORTS, Page D1

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Donn Marshall, whose wife, Shelley, died in the Pentagon, gets ready for a school performance with children Drake and Chandler at their Shepherdstown, W.Va., home.

9/11 Money Funds a Dream

Man Plans Tribute to Wife Lost in Pentagon

By JACQUELINE L. SALMON
Washington Post Staff Writer

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va.—In the tiny townhouse he rents behind an office park, Donn Marshall unfurls an armful of papers on the living room couch. They are plans for a house to be built on land he has purchased nearby.

Modeled on an 18th-century Irish country house, it will have bedrooms for Marshall's two children, Drake and Chandler, and room for as many as six guests—everything that Marshall and his wife, Shelley, ever dreamed of.

But it will go ahead without her. Shelley Marshall, a Defense Intelligence Agency budget analyst, was among the 184 people who died Sept. 11, 2001, when terrorists flew an airplane into the Pentagon.

"I think it should be almost like a

monument," Marshall said, as he smoothed wrinkles from the house plans. "In a sense, it's Shelley's money."

The Marshall family expects to receive about \$2 million from the federal fund created to compensate the injured and the families of the 2,976 people killed that day at the Pentagon and the World Trade Center in New York. Although the money will not take away the grief that has diminished only slightly in 2½ years, Marshall said it will free him to work full time on the charitable foundation he established in his wife's name—his way of fighting back.

The fund, established by Congress to protect the airlines from billion-dollar lawsuits, has reached the family of almost every victim. Fund administrator Kenneth R. Feinberg, a Washington

See MARSHALL, A14, Col. 1



Women and children gather stalk for their farm animals to eat.

Guarantees Gone For Iraqi Farmers Under U.S. Rule

FARMS, From A1

ed on subsidies and handouts as a way of life. The Coalition Provisional Authority is determined to change that and create a capitalist economy where the state provides little, if any, support, except to the neediest.

As security has continued to be a problem, the authority has had to back away from some of its earlier plans. It gave seeds to farmers as it had hoped not to, and delayed a plan to replace monthly food rations with credits. But it continues to maintain that laissez faire is the future of the country.

"It's been hugely paternalistic here based on the misguided belief that if you [subsidize] them, farmers would produce. But when you give everything for nothing, people don't appreciate it," said Trevor Flugge, an Australian who until recently was the authority's senior civil administrator for agriculture.

In the old Iraq, the state provided seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, sprinklers, tractors and other necessities to farmers at a low cost, often a third or even a fourth of the market price. It leased land for 1 cent per donam, about six-tenths of an acre, a year. It bought the country's main crops, wheat and barley, at a fixed price, whether they were usable or not. And it ground up the grain and handed it out as flour to the people free. Each month, every family received a basket of flour, sugar, tea and other necessities.

Occupation authority officials are debating whether the subsidies to Iraqi farmers will continue and, if so, for how long. Much of the argument, one agriculture adviser said, is between the "the economists" and "the military," with the economists wanting laissez faire as soon as possible and the military worried that yanking subsidies too soon could lead to social unrest, which would further destabilize the country.

Since the end of the war, the United Nations has taken the lead on food, and the system remained pretty much the same. But in November, it transferred to the CPA control of the program that allowed Iraq to exchange oil for food and other essential supplies when sanctions were in effect.

The authority inherited \$3 billion from the program. What it does with the money will be closely watched by the rest of the world because the United States and Australia, the two countries taking the lead on rehabilitating the Iraqi agriculture sector, are also the two leading exporters of wheat. Their farmers could benefit from the shape of Iraq's agricultural industry.

Abbas is a farmer just like his father and his father's father, going back as far as anyone can remember. He lives on a 30-donam plot southeast of Baghdad in the country's heartland between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, a place of winter wheat and date palms, where lines of cows and sheep wander as they please.

The land is legendary for its bounty, the subject of passages in the Koran and countless poems. Oil may have been the muscle behind Iraq's economy, but agriculture, while accounting for only about 6 percent of the gross national product, was the country's soul.

So it was especially painful for farmers when Hussein's government cut down trees and drained the swamps a dozen years ago after the Persian Gulf War. It invested little in irrigation, and the network fell into disrepair, leaving the already salty land even saltier.

That was part of the reason Iraq, which as recently as the 1950s was self-sufficient in agriculture, was forced to import more and more food. The sanctions imposed after the 1991 war meant that Iraq had to import

more than half its food supply.

But farmers were all but guaranteed a comfortable, if not luxurious, life. Even the smallest farms could produce an income of \$3,000 a year. Many government workers, soldiers and teachers made less than \$100 a year.

A single season's harvest was plenty to support Abbas, 30, his wife and three children; his brother, Saleh Abbas, 39, his wife and their three children; and his father and mother.

"People were making so much money that the incentive to work harder, to increase production—it wasn't there," said Salam Iskender, the new head of the agriculture section for the Wasit governorate, which includes Kut.

As a result, the yield in some

regions plummeted from one ton of wheat per donam to a third of that and, particularly in the past two years, a large percentage of the crop came up "black," meaning it couldn't be eaten.

Of the 1.25 million tons, or \$118 million worth, of wheat the occupation authority purchased last summer, a third was inedible, according to a U.N. report.

The CPA hopes to break the cycle of dependence. The idea is that reducing subsidies will force farmers to invest more of their own money and have more of a stake in the outcome of their crops, providing the foundation for a capitalist economy the authority hopes will blossom after it departs in July.

"In fixing electricity, you can build a powerhouse and the problem is solved. But in agriculture you have to change the culture, and you don't do that overnight," Flugge said.

Abbas and other farmers say they are somewhat baffled by what they have heard about the coming free economy.

When he first visited the agriculture office for his governorate after the 2003 war, he found the doors smashed and the windows in pieces. The staff was gone. All the tractors, plows, chemicals and other materials that had been stored for the next planting season had disappeared.

Abbas managed to cobble together enough money to buy what

he needed to harvest the summer wheat and take it to the state silo. To his relief, the authorities agreed to buy it, but it was only a temporarily reprieve.

In October, he heard from fellow farmers that the U.S.-led administration would provide only a small amount of fertilizer and pesticides this year—and nothing else. (The occupation authority later decided it would also give seeds to farmers.) And in the near future, the government would provide no subsidies at all and it wouldn't promise to buy all the wheat.

"We are afraid of the free economy. We don't understand it. If we grow crops, who will help us and who will buy it?" Abbas said.

Mohammed Abdul Hussein, director of the Kut chapter of the General Federation of Iraqi Farmers, said reduction of subsidies will force people to abandon agriculture. "If the government will not supply seeds and fertilizer, the farmers, they will not farm," he said.

CPA officials say they are confident that won't happen. In fact, they say they have a plan to make life even better for farmers.

The U.S. Agency for International Development awarded a contract, worth as much as \$40 million, in October to Bethesda-based Development Alternatives Inc. It is designed to re-

See FARMS, A17, Col. 1



PHOTOS BY LUCIAN PERKINS—THE WASHINGTON POST

A boy walks toward Faleh and Saleh Abbas's farmhouse near Kut. Iraqi farmers are nervous about the new order imposed by the U.S.-led occupation authority.

An open letter from Dominion.

Capped rate plan brings big savings, choice for electricity customers.

Dear Dominion Virginia Power customers:

You may not realize it, but thanks to the Virginia General Assembly, you're paying virtually the same price for electricity today that you were 10 years ago – and about 25 percent less if you adjust for inflation.

Why?

It's because of a carefully thought-out Virginia law that restructured the state's electric utilities and gave you the right to keep your current utility or choose a different supplier. Among other things, this law required Dominion to cap its base rates at 1993 levels and keep them there until mid-2007.

Unfortunately, some now want to get rid of this approach and go back to a time when utilities had little or no incentive to reduce costs and be more efficient. If they succeed, we'll go back to the days when:

- You had no right to choose a lower-cost supplier, even if available.
- Utility customers paid ever increasing rates for new power plants, maintenance and upgrades of existing plants, and the expensive environmental equipment required today.

Does this make sense?

Since the Virginia Electric Utility Restructuring Act was passed in 1999, Dominion Virginia Power customers have saved hundreds of millions of dollars through the law's capped rate provision. One study says the savings will be over \$870 million by 2007.

The Governor and the Attorney General want to keep these savings going with rates capped until 2010. This would mean three additional years of stable rates and up to \$1.8 billion in total savings. Under this approach, the average Dominion Virginia Power residential customer would have frozen base rates for 12 years and save almost \$1,000.

Dominion supports this sensible approach because it gives us the chance to continue getting ready to compete. When the time comes, if our prices aren't the lowest, you can choose another company to supply your electricity. We'll still be there to take care of the power grid and restore your electricity during outages and emergencies.

But some are afraid of competition. They think electric utilities should be monopolies – monopolies that can seek constant rate increases. They're afraid to let you have the right to choose a different supplier.

They're not afraid, though, to propose changing the forward-looking Virginia law that brought you these savings as well as the right to choose.

So, please ask your state senator or delegate to support the legislation proposed by the Governor and Attorney General that would preserve the Restructuring Act and keep base rates capped until 2010. See www.dom.com for contact information. Ask them to vote "no" to any proposal that would strip away your electricity savings and allow the old system of rate cases to return.

Dominion is bringing you this message because you have a right to know about important changes that could affect your electricity bill – and we will continue to keep you informed.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this important issue.



www.dom.com

Agriculture Transformed By U.S. in Iraq

FARMS, From A16

talize the agriculture sector by providing training in marketing and food processing, and by offering micro-loans.

The target is an increase of at least 20 percent in the production of grains, a 50 percent increase in profits for 1,000 commercial companies and a doubling of productivity for 30,000 farm families.

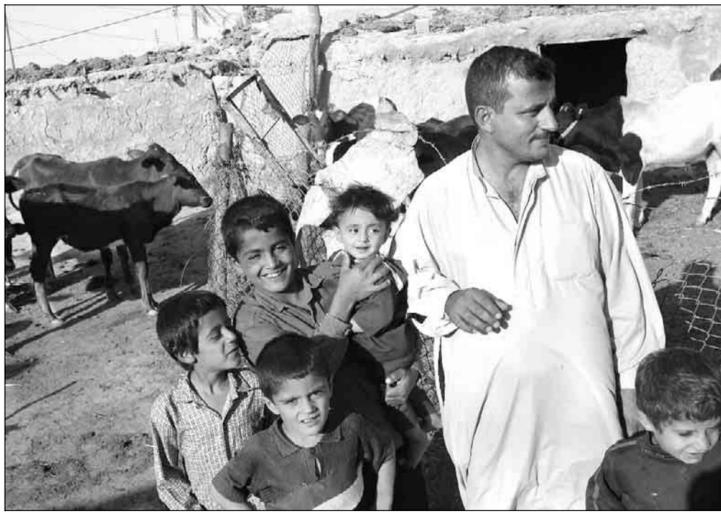
Flugge said the strategy that aid groups have used for years—providing farmers with supplies—is all wrong. He said the new government instead will provide help in the form of technology and education and that “the market” will take care of the rest. His goal is a farming sector modeled after the American one, which is subsidized on outputs, rather than inputs.

To that end, the authority will stop paying for supplies, but will pay more for wheat. “We are trying to redirect support for agriculture,” said Lloyd Harbert, an American who is a senior CPA adviser assigned to the ministry of agriculture.

The ministry of agriculture has recommended a price of \$140 a ton for the next harvest, up from \$105 a ton. The idea is to encourage farmers to increase the quality and yields of their crops so they’ll make more money.

Even those who understand and believe in the CPA’s vision of a capitalist market for agriculture worry that if there truly is an open market, the local family farmers who dominate the sector here will not be able to compete. Foreign agribusinesses that mass-produce commodities such as wheat will dominate, they fear.

Before the war, Iraq was Australia’s third-largest market for wheat. Iraq also imported grains from India and Russia. The CPA agreed to honor the contracts signed by the Hussein



Lotif Salem Dakhil and his children, nieces and nephews walk past cows next to their house near Kut.

regime.

The fact that the authority imported U.S. wheat after the war as it destroyed Iraqi wheat has made some question potential conflicts of interest facing those trying to help Iraq. “Will U.S. and Australians coming help develop and improve agriculture or create competition?” said Ahmed Hayder Zubaidi, the dean of the College of Agriculture at Baghdad University.

Esmail Hussain Ahmed, the head of the farmers union in Kurdistan, which was semi-independent and whose farming was less subsidized, said he’s optimistic about capitalism in agriculture. But he believes the CPA is moving too quickly and that small farmers are not prepared for the global politics.

“We are like a child which stage by stage needs to grow up. . . . We need time,” before becoming mature enough to compete with the rest of the world, Ahmed said.

As officials in Baghdad, Washington, Canberra and elsewhere debate issues that may determine his economic fate, Abbas worried about something simpler: when the rains will come.

As the planting season for wheat neared in November, Abbas was ready. He gathered some seeds left over from last year and used his rickety 1985 tractor to prepare the land. He purchased some fertilizer from the government—at double the price he paid the year before—and some more on the black market. Then he began the delicate process of planting 18 donams of wheat, five with onions, two with garlic and the rest with other vegetables. Now that he awaits the spring harvest, all there is left to do is pray.

Special correspondent Omar Fekeiki contributed to this report.

U.S., Britain Detail Iraq Plan at U.N.

By ROBIN WRIGHT
Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States and Britain have begun detailed discussions at the United Nations about the disputed U.S. plan to hand over power in Iraq, with Secretary General Kofi Annan expected to make an announcement as early as Monday that he will send a U.N. team to Iraq to help defuse the building political crisis, according to U.S., U.N. and Iraqi officials.

Two days of U.N. talks have focused on the proposed caucuses to elect a new provisional government and possible options to widen participation to make the U.S. plan acceptable to Iraq’s Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani and tens of thousands of his followers who have taken to the streets over the past week to demand elections, U.S. and U.N. envoys say.

In Washington and Baghdad, senior Iraqi officials predicted yesterday that Sistani would back down if the United Nations concluded that elections would not be feasible before the U.S.-led coalition returns sovereignty June 30. “Sistani is a reasonable man,” Iraqi Governing Council President Adnan Pachachi told Washington Post editors and reporters yesterday. “He will accept whatever conclusion” the United Nations makes.

In Baghdad, Ibrahim Jafari, Shiite Muslim leader of the Dawa Party, also predicted that Sistani would not insist on elections in defiance of the world organization.

“If there is a U.N. delegation that has a background in electoral and census matters and has an open dialogue . . . one side may be convinced by what the other says,” Jafari said. “If it comes to an agreement, I believe Sayyid Sistani will accept that.”

The United States and Britain are lobbying the United Nations to name Lakhdar Brahimi, a veteran U.N. diplomat and former Algerian foreign minister, to become the special representative for Iraq, U.S. and Iraqi officials said. This month, Brahimi was appointed special U.N. adviser on conflict prevention and conflict resolution, after a second two-year term as special U.N. representative in Afghanistan.

Brahimi also has the credentials



Talks have focused on developing a plan acceptable to Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani.

the United States seeks as it rebuilds a partnership with the world body after a year of rancorous relations, U.S. officials said. Brahimi served as U.N. representative in South Africa and Haiti as they went through traumatic political transitions after internal political tensions.

The Iraqi Governing Council wants a special U.N. representative appointed during the current transition to help with the potentially more difficult phases once the occupation ends and Iraqis begin a second 18-month transition. The second period will include the writing of a constitution and the holding of nationwide democratic elections for a permanent government.

But it is unclear whether Brahimi, 70, is prepared to take up another lengthy posting in another hot spot, U.S. and U.N. officials said.

Meanwhile, Pachachi said the new Transitional Administrative Law, which will outline the transition rules and serve as a precursor to a constitution, is almost finished. The next major benchmark in the transition is to be completed by Feb. 28.

On the disputed issue of whether the Governing Council will be phased out or survive after June 30, Pachachi said the 25-member body is about evenly divided, even though the U.S. plan calls for it to be eliminated. As the new national assembly will have 250 or so members representing all sectors of Iraqi society, Pachachi said he sees no reason for the council to continue.

Annan Sets Conditions for Sending U.N. Team to Iraq

Associated Press

BADEN-BADEN, Germany, Jan. 21—U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan said Wednesday that if a U.N. team is sent to Iraq to study whether the country can quickly hold elections for a new legislature, he would insist on its “independence and neutrality.”

After receiving an award in this southern resort town, Annan said his ability to support a U.S. and Iraqi request for the team “involves a complex set of considerations,” some of which he outlined in a television interview.

“In the discussions that I had with the Americans and with the [Iraqi] Governing Council on Monday, I made it clear that if the U.N. gets involved, we must insist on our independence and

neutrality and that both sides accept our judgment,” he told ARD television.

Annan indicated Monday that he was leaning toward sending U.N. experts to Iraq to help resolve a dispute between the United States and a top Shiite cleric over the best way to transfer power to the Iraqis. Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani has demanded direct elections to choose a provisional assembly, while the U.S.-led occupation wants regional caucuses to choose the assembly.

After receiving the German Media Prize, awarded annually by a group of German editors to an international personality, Annan reiterated concerns that his staff’s safety must be guaranteed in Iraq. “We remain committed to doing whatever we can to help the people of Iraq, within the very real constraints imposed by the

security situation, which is still difficult,” he said.

The secretary general ordered all foreign U.N. employees to leave Iraq in October following two bombings at U.N. headquarters, including one in August that killed U.N. envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello and 21 other people.

The Reuters news agency reported from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait told the United States they were ready to discuss a major reduction in Iraq’s debt, but both wanted to see a sovereign Iraqi government in place before any deal could be reached.

Neither country would say how much debt would be forgiven and neither wanted to make an agreement with the existing U.S. authority.

WHO WILL REMAIN STANDING?

THEY DEBATE...

You Decide
2004

Tonight 8pm ET
The New Hampshire
Democratic Presidential
Candidates Debate



Clark



Kerry



Dean



Edwards



Lieberman



Sharpton



Kucinich



Moderated by
Brit Hume

Presented by



Debate and Analysis
on FOX News Channel
8-10pm ET



The Union Leader

WMUR-TV
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FINAL

Inside: Weekend

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Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington. (See box on Page A2)

Weather

Today: Partly sunny, breezy.

High 46. Low 28.

Saturday: Sunny, mild.

High 56. Low 34.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2004

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Iraqi Cleric Yields on Elections

Shiite Leader Agrees To Delay of Six Months

By ANTHONY SHADID
Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, Feb. 26—Iraq's most influential religious leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, declared Thursday that he would sanction a six-month delay in the nationwide elections that he had demanded be held this summer, giving the U.S. civil administration crucial leeway in its plan to formally end its occupation and transfer power to an Iraqi government by June 30.

But Sistani, who has emerged as a key power broker in Iraq, said he wanted the date of an election—the end of 2004—enshrined in a U.N. Security Council resolution. He also insisted that an interim government must have sharply curtailed powers and focus its task on preparing for that election.

"The supreme religious authority demands clear guarantees, such as a resolution from the U.N. Security Council, to conduct elections by that time and to assure the Iraqi people that the matter will not be subjected again to more procrastination and maneuvering," Sistani said in a handwritten statement issued in Arabic by his office in the sacred Shiite city of Najaf.

The declaration by the reclusive, 73-year-old Sistani, his first public statement since a U.N. report this week ruled out elections by this summer, amounts to a partial victory for the Bush administration. Sistani is revered by Iraq's majority Shiite population, making

See Sistani, A18, Col. 5



By PRESTON KERES—THE WASHINGTON POST

In Baghdad, chemical analyst Sarab Basim measures the mineral content to ensure water is safe for drinking.

Iraqi Experts Tossed With The Water

Workers Ineligible To Fix Polluted Systems

By ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA
Washington Post Staff Writer

BAGHDAD—With nearly 40 years of civil engineering service under his belt, Sabah Al-Ani is among Iraq's top experts in water treatment. He kept the country's systems up and running through countless floods and droughts, years of economic sanctions and three wars.

After bombings and looting sprees left the water network in worse shape than ever, Al-Ani prepared to help out once again. But a directive from the U.S.-led occupation authority locked him out of the reconstruction process.

Al-Ani is an employee of the General Co. for Water Projects, one of 200-odd ventures in Iraq that are owned wholly or in part by the state and have been told they are ineligible for contracts being issued by the occupation. The company's 187 workers still collect their government salaries but they now spend their days on floors two and three of a downtown building here playing video games, reading books and chitchatting to pass the time.

"When someone asks me my achievements for the last months, I cannot say anything. It is a shame," said Al-Ani, a 60-year-old who holds a PhD from Baghdad University, Iraq's Harvard.

Fixing the country's water systems is among the occupation authority's highest priorities. Congress, in its \$18.6 billion allo-

See WATER, A18, Col. 1

■ Britain accused of spying on U.N. secretary general. | Page A12



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Protest Against Israeli Fence Takes Fatal Turn



By MUHAMMAD MUHEISEN—ASSOCIATED PRESS

An Israeli police officer clashes with Palestinians trying to prevent Israeli bulldozers from clearing land for a security barrier in the West Bank. Two Palestinians were killed in the protest, and an Israeli soldier was shot dead in the Gaza Strip. Story, Page A12.

New Type of Cancer Drug Approved

FDA Hails Therapy That Starves Tumors by Blocking Their Blood Supply

By JUSTIN GILLIS
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Food and Drug Administration yesterday approved Avastin, the first drug to battle cancers by blocking their blood supply, vindicating a 40-year-old medical theory once ridiculed as absurd.

Doctors said the drug was not a cure for colon cancer, the disease it was approved to treat, but they welcomed it as progress toward their long-range goal of turning

cancer into a manageable illness. Avastin blocks the action of a protein that growing tumors send out that orders the body to sprout new blood vessels to supply the malignant cells with nutrients. Without a blood supply, solid tumors do not grow.

"This is a milestone, and it may be a turning point for cancer, because of the lowered side effects" seen with Avastin and similar drugs under development, said Judah Folkman, the Harvard Medical School researcher who pioneered the

blood-vessel theory as a young Navy doctor in Washington in the early 1960s. "Can you convert cancer to a chronic, manageable disease, like Vice President Cheney's heart disease? When I was in medical school, that was unheard of."

The FDA commissioner, Mark B. McClellan, personally announced the approval, an unusual step that reflected the importance cancer doctors have attached to

See CANCER, A9, Col. 3

Water Warning Vexes Parents

Fear and Anger Expressed Over D.C.'s Lead Problem

By MONTE REEL
Washington Post Staff Writer

Claudia Menashe followed a lot of advice to help enhance the development of her child. She pointed speakers at her belly during pregnancy, hoping the music would reach the womb. She and her husband began reading books to their daughter shortly after she was born last summer. They tuned a radio to a classical station and placed it near the crib.

Then came this week's advice from the D.C. Health Department: Pregnant women and children younger than 6 in homes served by lead pipes should not drink unfiltered tap water. Lead exposure can damage children's devel-

opment, experts have noted, and potentially is harmful to intelligence and behavioral stability. Like many mothers in the District, Menashe's response to the health advisory shuttled between fear, anger and exasperation of the now-you-tell-me sort.

"It kind of scared me a little bit," said Tahesha Hackney, an Anacostia resident who is six months pregnant with her first child. "My boyfriend told me this morning: 'Don't drink the water from the sink.'"

Before the lead problems became public, child-care experts often told families that young children should drink tap water instead

See LEAD, A9, Col. 1



By LUCIAN PERKINS—THE WASHINGTON POST

"My boyfriend told me this morning: 'Don't drink the water from the sink,'" says Tahesha Hackney, 21, of Anacostia, who is six months pregnant.

Reagan Approved Plan to Sabotage Soviets

Book Recounts Cold War Program That Made Technology Go Haywire

By DAVID E. HOFFMAN
Washington Post Foreign Service

In January 1982, President Ronald Reagan approved a CIA plan to sabotage the economy of the Soviet Union through covert transfers of technology that contained hidden malfunctions, including software that later triggered a huge explosion in a Siberian natural gas pipeline, according to a new memoir by a Reagan White House official.

Thomas C. Reed, a former Air Force secretary who was serving in the National Security Council at the time, describes the episode in "At the Abyss: An Insider's History of the Cold War," to be published next month by Ballantine Books. Reed writes that the pipeline explosion was just one example of "cold-eyed economic warfare" against the Soviet Union that the CIA carried out under Director William J. Casey during the final years of the Cold War.

At the time, the United States was attempting to block Western Europe from importing Soviet natural gas. There were also signs that the Soviets were trying to steal a wide variety of Western technology. Then, a KGB insider revealed the specific shopping list and the CIA slipped the flawed software to the Soviets in a way they would not detect it.

"In order to disrupt the Soviet gas sup-

See SOVIET, A19, Col. 1

INSIDE

Grasso Says No to NYSE

Former chairman Dick Grasso has told the New York Stock Exchange that he will not return the \$139.5 million paid to him last year by the exchange and may seek \$50 million more.

BUSINESS, Page E1

WJFK Boots Herzog

Longtime Redskins radio announcer Frank Herzog was ousted from WJFK booth and replaced by Larry Michael.

SPORTS, Page D1



In Debate, Kerry Touts Experience And Edwards Stresses Electability

By DAN BALZ
Washington Post Staff Writer

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 26—Sen. John F. Kerry (Mass.) and Sen. John Edwards (N.C.) clashed over the death penalty, trade and special interests in a lively debate here Thursday, with Edwards questioning Kerry's ability to carry crucial swing states against President Bush and Kerry touting his experience as a key ingredient for victory this fall.

But the two rivals for the Democratic nomination agreed on the issue of gay marriage, with both saying they are against such marriages while sharply condemning Bush for proposing an amendment to the Constitution barring such unions.

"He is doing this because he's in trou-

ble," Kerry said. "He's trying to reach out to his base. He's playing politics with the Constitution of the United States."

Five days before the biggest primary and caucus day of the Democratic nominating season, Edwards sought to highlight his differences with the party's front-runner, arguing that Kerry is too much a Washington insider to challenge special interests. Kerry said the differences between them are far narrower than Edwards has suggested.

The tone was often polite and congenial between the two leading candidates, but there was frequent disagreement. One clear difference emerged when CNN's Larry King, who moderated the debate, asked Kerry, who opposes the death penalty ex-

See DEBATE, A7, Col. 1

Bush Shifts U.S. Stance On Use of Land Mines

Policy Slated for 2010 Won't Ban All Devices Designed to Kill Troops

By BRADLEY GRAHAM
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Bush will bar the U.S. military from using certain types of land mines after 2010 but will allow forces to continue to employ more sophisticated mines that the administration argues pose little threat to civilians, officials said yesterday.

The new policy, due to be announced today, represents a departure from the previous U.S. goal of banning all land mines designed to kill troops. That plan, established by President Bill Clinton, set a target of 2006 for giving up antipersonnel mines, depending on the success of Pentagon efforts to develop alternatives.

Bush, however, has decided to impose no limits on the use of "smart" land mines, which have timing devices to automatically defuse the explosives within hours or days, officials said.

His ban will apply only to "dumb" mines—those without self-destruct features. But it will cover devices not only aimed at people but also meant to destroy vehicles. In that way, Bush's policy will extend to a category of mines not included in Clinton's plan, which was limited to anti-personnel devices.

Bush will also propose a 50 percent jump in spending, up to \$70 million in fiscal 2005, for a State Department program that provides mine-removal assistance in more than 40 countries, officials said. The program also funds mine-awareness programs abroad and offers some aid to survivors of mine explosions.

A senior State Department official, who

See MINES, A10, Col. 1

Powell Puts Pressure on Haitian Leader To Resign

By PETER SLEVIN
and KEVIN SULLIVAN
Washington Post Staff Writers

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell yesterday questioned Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's ability to rule effectively in remarks that aides said were designed to urge Aristide to resign for the good of his country.

Powell stopped short of calling on the embattled Haitian leader to quit. But he made clear that the Bush administration does not believe Aristide can emerge from this crisis and serve successfully to the end of his term in 2006.

"I hope President Aristide will examine his position carefully and judgments will be made as to what is best for the people of Haiti at this most difficult time," Powell said. "He is the democratically elected president, but he has had difficulties in his presidency."

U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, compared Aristide's case to the resignations in October of the presidents of Georgia and Bolivia, who left office as protests threatened to overwhelm them. A resignation and an orderly transition, they said, would preserve democratic order.

See HAITI, A17, Col. 1

Iraqis Left Idle As Water Goes Bad

WATER, From A1

ation for reconstruction this year, approved \$4.3 billion for water resources and sanitation—\$1 billion more than designated for security and law enforcement and \$2 billion more than earmarked for oil infrastructure.

One reason is the connection between good water and good health. Khudair Fadhil Abbas, Iraq's minister of health, blames contaminated water for many children's health problems, including a recent outbreak of typhoid fever that affected more than 1,000 Iraqis who live around the capital. Some 40 percent of hospital visits by children are due to gastrointestinal problems from the water, he said.

The decision to ban state-owned companies from reconstruction contracts funded by U.S. taxpayers was made for both legal and philosophical reasons. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) was unclear how U.S. regulations apply to a company that was owned by a rogue state that no longer exists. And it was hoping to redistribute wealth and power in a country that for decades was dominated by Saddam Hussein and his Baath Party loyalists.

The problem is that practically every company of significance—including those responsible for essential public works such as the electrical grid and telephone system—was owned by the government. The Iraqi ministries have shifted some of the roughly 400,000 workers involved to other government jobs, but the others remain sidelined. This is forcing the occupation to pay a premium for foreign workers and to import materials that could be made within the country.

"We have many good, viable government factories and it would benefit everyone if they were part of rebuilding the country," said Sami Al-Araji, director general of planning for the Ministry of Industry and Minerals, which owns 45 companies.

For example, the CPA put Bechtel National Inc. in charge of managing the reconstruction of Iraq's water supply system, including a project the General Co. used to run, the expansion of the Sharkh Dijlah, or East Tigris River, Water Treatment Plant.

Bechtel, which estimates the project will cost \$16 million, spent four months studying the General Co. plans, concluded they were adequate, modified them slightly, city officials said, reissued orders for parts from the same supplier, and basically did what was being done before.

The American company began construction in October, according to city engineers, and has stationed two foreign engineers at the plant, who visit when the security situation allows, in two white SUVs filled with four armed guards. The rest of the work is being done by Iraqi subcontractors. So far, the Bechtel workers have driven in some con-



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According to its prepar plans, the General Co. had hoped to finish the expansion by summer 2003; Bechtel said it's still on schedule to begin operating the new water treatment facilities in June.

Under the initial postwar plan, the state ventures were to have a major role in the reconstruction. They were to be privatized, modernized and made profitable by foreign investors and wealthy Iraqis. But after some Iraqi leaders objected, saying they were uneasy about the idea of selling off state assets without the backing of a democratically elected government, the plan was delayed. The question of what to do with these companies has been in limbo ever since.

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"Probably 75 percent of the sewage in the country is going to the rivers," said Bechtel's John Kluesener, the manager for water, wastewater and irrigations systems for Iraq reconstruction.

The expansion of the Sharkh Dijlah plant is at the heart of a debate over who should decide what work is to be done in rebuilding Iraq and who should oversee that work.

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His boss, Sa'ad Bahnam, the general manager for the water authority, however, said that if he had had a choice in the matter, he would have rehired the General Co. because its workers had made a great deal of progress and most likely would be finished now if they had been allowed to restart work immediately after the war.

Bahnam said he is grateful for the American reconstruction funds but that he has been frustrated by the lack of Iraqi oversight. USAID and the CPA now supervise Bechtel's work but Bahnam said the Baghdad Water Authority is considering hiring someone, perhaps even the General Co., to check Bechtel's work. Meanwhile, Al-Ani spends his

days working in a cavernous room at the Baghdad Mayorality complex with 15 other engineers and designers. Each day, like clockwork, they come in at 8 a.m., break for lunch from 11 a.m. to around noon, and are out the door by 1 p.m. Al-Ani, the team's manager, sits at the front of the room. His workers are lined up next to the walls on either side of him. Every desk is polished and completely empty except for a computer here and there. The engineers spend all day here; they are not allowed to visit the water work sites they set up around the city.

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Influential Cleric Sanctions Delay in Elections in Iraq

SISTANI, From A1

him one of the most powerful figures in the country.

Opposition by Sistani had derailed two previous U.S. proposals for Iraq's political transition. By relenting on his demand for elections this summer, Sistani cleared the way for a June 30 transfer of sovereignty. Facing persistent attacks against its troops and eager to end the occupation before November presidential elections, the United States has said the date is not negotiable. The timing was endorsed by the U.N. report, written by Lakhdar Brahimi, a former Algerian foreign minister who led the U.N. mission to Iraq.

While U.S. officials have said elections in Iraq may not be possible for a year, perhaps longer—a delay Sistani insisted he would not accept—they have increasingly looked to the United Nations to take the lead on the timing and the mechanism. The U.N. report said that elections could be held by the end of the year or early next year if work begins immediately to organize them.

"We're looking forward to the U.N.'s input in terms of what they think is possible between now and the end of the year," said Daniel Senor, spokesman for L. Paul Bremer, the U.S. administrator of Iraq.

The Bush administration still faces a challenge in determining the shape an interim government should take. Earlier, the administration acknowledged that its plan to organize regional caucuses to choose a transitional assembly enjoyed too little support in Iraq. Iraqi leaders remain divided over the way forward. The U.N. report stopped short of providing an alternative, although Brahimi is expected to return in weeks to help mediate an agreement on transferring sovereignty.

Whatever form it takes, Sistani said its main task should be to "prepare the country for free, honest elections."

Sectarian and ethnic divisions are escalating in Iraq, and popular sentiment has leaned toward a strong hand in Baghdad to restore security, which remains a paramount concern. But Sistani's statement made clear he would oppose an assertive interim government, further hampering its credibility.

"If the powers are very, very limited, it will not be easy," said Mahmoud Othman, an independent Kurdish member of the U.S.-ap-

pointed Iraqi Governing Council. Just to prepare for elections, he said, an interim government would need to provide security in the country, ensure political stability and perhaps plan a census. "If it has limited authority, it can't do all these things."

The U.N. report this week outlined three options for a transitional government, without endorsing any: expanding the Governing Council and allowing it to take control temporarily; convening a national conference that would create a provisional government; or setting up a transitional government of technocrats that would have limited powers.

In his two-page statement, Sistani did not specify what shape that government should take. But he said he worried that the United States, United Nations and Iraqi officials would be unable to come up with a formula that enjoyed broad popular support. Ethnic and sectarian divisions have hamstrung the effectiveness of the council since its inception last June. In that case, he said, "those same parties will find themselves in the same predicament of sectarian, racial and political quotas which the supreme religious authority tried to circumvent by calling for the adoption of general elections."

Sistani's statement comes at a sensitive time. The Governing Council is scheduled to issue a basic law on Saturday that will serve as an interim constitution. But questions over the degree of autonomy Kurds in northern Iraq will enjoy and the role of Islam in legislation have delayed an agreement.

Persistent violence has continued to cast a pall over that work. On Thursday, a bomb exploded near a police car in Baqubah, a town 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, killing one policeman and wounding four others.

Sistani's statement revealed an element of pragmatism in his character. The Iranian-born cleric has remained in virtual isolation since an assassination attempt in 1997 in Najaf and—despite his influence—remains little known, even to his supporters. While Sistani had signaled he would abide by the U.N. findings, the call marked the first time since the fall of former president Saddam Hussein's government that he has relented on a public position.

Correspondent Ariana Eunjung Cha contributed to this report.

Rumsfeld Cool on Bin Laden Hunt

Capture 'Will Happen When It Happens,' He Says in Kabul

By PAMELA CONSTABLE
Washington Post Foreign Service

KABUL, Afghanistan, Feb. 26—Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld Thursday played down reports that U.S. forces were chasing Osama bin Laden and other terrorists with new urgency and might be close to locating the Saudi fugitive and his aides, believed to be hiding in the rugged borderlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Rumsfeld, on his sixth visit to the Afghan capital since the U.S.-backed government of President Hamid Karzai took power in late 2001, bantered cordially with Karzai at a news conference about whether Kabul or Washington was a safer city and reiterated the Bush administration's commitment to helping Afghanistan until the battered nation was "firmly on its feet."

He said the capture of bin Laden "will happen when it happens. . . . I have no idea when." He refused to comment on reports that special commando units have been transferred here from Iraq to join the hunt for bin Laden and other leaders of the al Qaeda terrorist group in the border region.

U.S. military officials here said this week that there was a "renewed sense of urgency" in efforts to capture bin Laden and his cohorts.

Pakistani military authorities recently launched several major raids in the border areas, and there have been a flurry of reports about stepped-up military operations in Afghanistan and the unconfirmed sighting or capture of several bin Laden associates.

Rumsfeld heaped praise on the strides Afghanistan has made in the two years since the military rout here of the radical Islamic Taliban militia by U.S.-led troops.

He said the country was full of energy and making "steady progress on the path to self-government" after two decades of "tyranny, occupation and war. It's a remarkable transformation."

Both he and Karzai, speaking at twin lectures outside the presidential palace, dismissed concerns about the revived threat by Taliban forces, despite a recent spate of terrorist attacks on civilians and repeated threats by alleged Taliban spokesmen to step up violence against economic projects and as well as against preparations for na-

tional elections planned for June.

In the latest attack Wednesday, officials said a team of Afghan aid workers in Kabul province was ambushed by armed men; five were shot dead and three escaped. Last Sunday, gunmen fired on a helicopter that was ferrying visitors to a U.S.-aided health clinic in southern Kandahar province, killing the Australian pilot and injuring two passengers. On Feb. 14, four Afghan land-mine clearers were killed by gunmen in remote western Farah province.

"I have not seen any indication that the Taliban pose a military threat to Afghanistan," said Rumsfeld, who arrived in Afghanistan on Thursday morning and visited a new U.S. military assistance base in Kandahar.

Lt. Gen. David Barno, the top U.S. commander in the country, briefed Rumsfeld on reconstruction efforts. An 81-member team led by civil-affairs officers—one of 11 throughout the country—has \$10 million worth of infrastructure projects underway.

Rumsfeld also congratulated a graduating class of 48 Afghan police officers who are scheduled to do road patrol along the dangerous highway connecting Kandahar and Kabul. After meeting with Karzai, he flew to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where he wound up a weeklong visit to Iraq and Central Asia.

Karzai was upbeat in his comments, claiming that "the Taliban movement doesn't exist any more," and that "we have won the war against terror." The country's security problems, he said, stem more from "banditry, theft and institutional weakness" than Islamic terrorism.

The Afghan president, who is under 24-hour protection by a phalanx of private American military guards—and whose government has had two cabinet ministers assassinated in the capital—even suggested laughingly that Kabul is "probably more secure than Washington." Rumsfeld laughed, but declined to be drawn into the comparison.

Karzai said he hoped national elections could be held as scheduled in June, but he left open the possibility that if enough voters could not be registered in time, the elections might have to be postponed.

Correspondent Sewell Chan contributed to this report.



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Iraqis Left Idle As Water Goes Bad

WATER, From A1

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SISTANI, From A1

him one of the most powerful figures in the country.

Opposition by Sistani had derailed two previous U.S. proposals for Iraq's political transition. By relenting on his demand for elections this summer, Sistani cleared the way for a June 30 transfer of sovereignty. Facing persistent attacks against its troops and eager to end the occupation before November presidential elections, the United States has said the date is not negotiable. The timing was endorsed by the U.N. report, written by Lakhdar Brahimi, a former Algerian foreign minister who led the U.N. mission to Iraq.

While U.S. officials have said elections in Iraq may not be possible for a year, perhaps longer—a delay Sistani insisted he would not accept—they have increasingly looked to the United Nations to take the lead on the timing and the mechanism. The U.N. report said that elections could be held by the end of the year or early next year if work begins immediately to organize them.

"We're looking forward to the U.N.'s input in terms of what they think is possible between now and the end of the year," said Daniel Senor, spokesman for L. Paul Bremer, the U.S. administrator of Iraq.

The Bush administration still faces a challenge in determining the shape an interim government should take. Earlier, the administration acknowledged that its plan to organize regional caucuses to choose a transitional assembly enjoyed too little support in Iraq. Iraqi leaders remain divided over the way forward. The U.N. report stopped short of providing an alternative, although Brahimi is expected to return in weeks to help mediate an agreement on transferring sovereignty.

Whatever form it takes, Sistani said its main task should be to "prepare the country for free, honest elections."

Sectarian and ethnic divisions are escalating in Iraq, and popular sentiment has leaned toward a strong hand in Baghdad to restore security, which remains a paramount concern. But Sistani's statement made clear he would oppose an assertive interim government, further hampering its credibility.

"If the powers are very, very limited, it will not be easy," said Mahmoud Othman, an independent Kurdish member of the U.S.-ap-

pointed Iraqi Governing Council. Just to prepare for elections, he said, an interim government would need to provide security in the country, ensure political stability and perhaps plan a census. "If it has limited authority, it can't do all these things."

The U.N. report this week outlined three options for a transitional government, without endorsing any: expanding the Governing Council and allowing it to take control temporarily; convening a national conference that would create a provisional government; or setting up a transitional government of technocrats that would have limited powers.

In his two-page statement, Sistani did not specify what shape that government should take. But he said he worried that the United States, United Nations and Iraqi officials would be unable to come up with a formula that enjoyed broad popular support. Ethnic and sectarian divisions have hamstrung the effectiveness of the council since its inception last June. In that case, he said, "those same parties will find themselves in the same predicament of sectarian, racial and political quotas which the supreme religious authority tried to circumvent by calling for the adoption of general elections."

Sistani's statement comes at a sensitive time. The Governing Council is scheduled to issue a basic law on Saturday that will serve as an interim constitution. But questions over the degree of autonomy Kurds in northern Iraq will enjoy and the role of Islam in legislation have delayed an agreement.

Persistent violence has continued to cast a pall over that work. On Thursday, a bomb exploded near a police car in Baqubah, a town 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, killing one policeman and wounding four others.

Sistani's statement revealed an element of pragmatism in his character. The Iranian-born cleric has remained in virtual isolation since an assassination attempt in 1997 in Najaf and—despite his influence—remains little known, even to his supporters. While Sistani had signaled he would abide by the U.N. findings, the call marked the first time since the fall of former president Saddam Hussein's government that he has relented on a public position.

Correspondent Ariana Eunjung Cha contributed to this report.

Rumsfeld Cool on Bin Laden Hunt

Capture 'Will Happen When It Happens,' He Says in Kabul

By PAMELA CONSTABLE
Washington Post Foreign Service

KABUL, Afghanistan, Feb. 26—Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld Thursday played down reports that U.S. forces were chasing Osama bin Laden and other terrorists with new urgency and might be close to locating the Saudi fugitive and his aides, believed to be hiding in the rugged borderlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Rumsfeld, on his sixth visit to the Afghan capital since the U.S.-backed government of President Hamid Karzai took power in late 2001, bantered cordially with Karzai at a news conference about whether Kabul or Washington was a safer city and reiterated the Bush administration's commitment to helping Afghanistan until the battered nation was "firmly on its feet."

He said the capture of bin Laden "will happen when it happens. . . . I have no idea when." He refused to comment on reports that special commando units have been transferred here from Iraq to join the hunt for bin Laden and other leaders of the al Qaeda terrorist group in the border region.

U.S. military officials here said this week that there was a "renewed sense of urgency" in efforts to capture bin Laden and his cohorts.

Pakistani military authorities recently launched several major raids in the border areas, and there have been a flurry of reports about stepped-up military operations in Afghanistan and the unconfirmed sighting or capture of several bin Laden associates.

Rumsfeld heaped praise on the strides Afghanistan has made in the two years since the military rout here of the radical Islamic Taliban militia by U.S.-led troops.

He said the country was full of energy and making "steady progress on the path to self-government" after two decades of "tyranny, occupation and war. It's a remarkable transformation."

Both he and Karzai, speaking at twin lectures outside the presidential palace, dismissed concerns about the revived threat by Taliban forces, despite a recent spate of terrorist attacks on civilians and repeated threats by alleged Taliban spokesmen to step up violence against economic projects and as well as against preparations for na-

tion elections planned for June.

In the latest attack Wednesday, officials said a team of Afghan aid workers in Kabul province was ambushed by armed men; five were shot dead and three escaped. Last Sunday, gunmen fired on a helicopter that was ferrying visitors to a U.S.-aided health clinic in southern Kandahar province, killing the Australian pilot and injuring two passengers. On Feb. 14, four Afghan land-mine clearers were killed by gunmen in remote western Farah province.

"I have not seen any indication that the Taliban pose a military threat to Afghanistan," said Rumsfeld, who arrived in Afghanistan on Thursday morning and visited a new U.S. military assistance base in Kandahar.

Lt. Gen. David Barno, the top U.S. commander in the country, briefed Rumsfeld on reconstruction efforts. An 81-member team led by civil-affairs officers—one of 11 throughout the country—has \$10 million worth of infrastructure projects underway.

Rumsfeld also congratulated a graduating class of 48 Afghan police officers who are scheduled to do road patrol along the dangerous highway connecting Kandahar and Kabul. After meeting with Karzai, he flew to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where he wound up a weeklong visit to Iraq and Central Asia.

Karzai was upbeat in his comments, claiming that "the Taliban movement doesn't exist any more," and that "we have won the war against terror." The country's security problems, he said, stem more from "banditry, theft and institutional weakness" than Islamic terrorism.

The Afghan president, who is under 24-hour protection by a phalanx of private American military guards—and whose government has had two cabinet ministers assassinated in the capital—even suggested laughingly that Kabul is "probably more secure than Washington." Rumsfeld laughed, but declined to be drawn into the comparison.

Karzai said he hoped national elections could be held as scheduled in June, but he left open the possibility that if enough voters could not be registered in time, the elections might have to be postponed.

Correspondent Sewell Chan contributed to this report.



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THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2004

M1 M2 M3 M4 M5 V1 V2 V3 V4

Weather

Today: Breezy, a shower.
High 64. Low 50.
Friday: Partly sunny, warm.
High 74. Low 52.

Details, Page B8

127TH YEAR No. 111 M2 DC MD VA

U.S. May Halve Forces in Germany

Shift in Europe, Asia Is Aimed at Faster Deployment

By BRADLEY GRAHAM
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Pentagon has drafted plans to withdraw as many as half of the 71,000 troops based in Germany as part of an extensive realignment of American military forces that moves away from large concentrations in Europe and Asia, according to U.S. officials.

Under the plan, which is nearing approval, smaller, relatively spartan bases would be established in Romania and possibly Bulgaria, and designed for the rapid projection of U.S. military power against terrorists, hostile states and other potential adversaries.

Farther east, in Central Asia, bases in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan that were established in 2001 to support the war in Afghanistan would be preserved as training sites and as staging areas that U.S. forces could use in emergencies.

In Asia, about 15,000 troops out of a total presence of about 100,000 would be withdrawn, mostly by streamlining administrative staffs of the U.S. military commands in South Korea and Japan, the officials said. But much of that reduction could be offset by a buildup of personnel and aircraft in Guam and the possible stationing of another aircraft carrier battle group in either Guam or Hawaii, the officials said. The Pentagon plan also calls for new training and staging areas in Australia and expansion of military ties with Singapore and Thailand.

See MILITARY, A19, Col. 1

Europeans Come Down Hard on Microsoft

By JOHN BURGESS
Washington Post Foreign Service

BERLIN, March 24—Microsoft Corp. is abusing a "near monopoly" in crucial computer software to squeeze out competitors, the European Union ruled Wednesday after a contentious five-year investigation. It ordered the company to pay a fine of more than \$600 million, and to offer two versions of its Windows operating system in Europe, one without software for playing digital music and videos.

The order effectively puts Microsoft on notice that future attempts to add features to Windows could be challenged in Europe if the additions put rival products at a competitive disadvantage. The ruling is intended to ensure that "anyone who develops new software has a fair opportunity to compete in the marketplace," EU competition commissioner Mario Monti said in Brussels.

The penalties go well beyond the terms of a settlement Microsoft reached with the U.S. Justice Department and several states in 2001. A Justice Department official criticized the EU's decision to adopt separate mandates, and several members of Congress warned that the ruling could widen trade and diplomatic rifts between the United States and Europe.

EU officials, in defense of their action, said they sought to establish what has eluded Microsoft compet-

See MICROSOFT, A12, Col. 1

■ Ruling illustrates rift between EU, U.S. | Page E1

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Ex-Aide Recounts Terror Warnings

Clarke Says Bush Didn't Consider Al Qaeda Threat a Priority Before 9/11



"Those entrusted with protecting you failed you," Richard A. Clarke, right, told Sept. 11 victims' relatives, including Beverly Eckert and Abraham Scott.

Analysis

Clarke Stays Cool as Partisanship Heats Up

By DANA MILBANK
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Sept. 11 commission shed its bipartisan spirit and turned a Senate hearing room into a courtroom yesterday for the testimony of Richard A. Clarke, the White House counterterrorism chief-turned-Bush administration whistle-blower.

Democrats, prosecuting President Bush for ignoring terrorism before the 2001 attacks,

used the newly famous Clarke as their star witness. Republican commission members—armed with fresh information on Clarke released by the White House yesterday through Fox News—played defense lawyers determined to discredit the witness as a closet Democrat.

"You've got a real credibility problem," Republican commissioner John F. Lehman told Clarke, the author of a new book eviscerating Bush's terrorism policies. "And because of my

real genuine long-term admiration for you," he continued, "I hope you'll resolve that credibility problem, because I'd hate to see you become totally shoved to one side during a presidential campaign as an active partisan selling a book."

Democratic commissioner Bob Kerrey sought to build the witness's credibility and objected to the Fox News report one Repub-

See CLARKE, A6, Col. 4

By DAN EGGEN
and WALTER PINCUS
Washington Post Staff Writers

President Bush's top counterterrorism adviser warned seven days before the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorism attacks that hundreds of people could die in a strike by the al Qaeda network and that the administration was not doing enough to combat the threat, the commission investigating the attacks disclosed yesterday.

Richard A. Clarke, who served as a senior White House counterterrorism official under three successive presidents, wrote to national security adviser Condoleezza Rice on Sept. 4, 2001, urging "policymakers to imagine a day after a terrorist attack, with hundreds of Americans dead at home and abroad, and ask themselves what they could have done earlier," according to a summary of the letter included in a commission staff report. Clarke also cites the same plea in his new book.

Clarke told the commission in testimony yesterday afternoon that whereas the Clinton administration treated terrorism as its highest priority, the Bush administration did not consider it to be an urgent issue before the attacks.

"I believe the Bush administration in the first eight months considered terrorism an important issue but not an urgent issue," Clarke told the 10-member panel. "... There was a process underway to address al Qaeda. But although I continued to say it was an urgent problem, I don't think it was ever treated that way."

Clarke's appearance before the panel, formally known as the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, climaxed days of furor over claims in his book that the Bush administration did not do enough to pursue al Qaeda before Sept. 11, 2001, and has neglected the war on terrorism since then because of an obsession with waging war on Iraq.

The second day of this week's commission hearings also produced new revelations about events before the attacks, including a denial of the White House's long-standing claim that Bush requested a briefing on

See HEARING, A6, Col. 1



Shether Menshad Habeeb prays at the reconstructed port in Umm Qasr in southern Iraq, where he will stand guard during the night.

At Iraqi Port, Progress Is Matter of Perception

U.S. Role Disappoints Dockworkers

By ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA
Washington Post Staff Writer

UMM QASR, Iraq—A year ago, the capture of this port by U.S. and British troops was celebrated as the first victory of the Iraq war. Today, the U.S.-led occupation authority points to Umm Qasr's \$98 million rehabilitation into a bustling center of commerce as one of the first victories of the reconstruction.

Tanker ships unload colorful containers full of cigarettes, powdered baby milk and television sets in quantities unseen in Iraq in decades. Grizzled sailors from all over the world share stories over pots of tea. Businessmen and tourists struggling with suitcases spill out of passenger ferries.

But ask an Iraqi and chances

are you'll get a different view. "Nothing's changed," maintained Hamdi Abdul Rahim, a senior engineer at the grain processing plant next to the port. "There has been no improvement," said Saddam Abdul Karim, an accountant for an import-export company. "Just maintenance. That's all they did," said Falah Habsi, a director general at the Iraqi Transportation Ministry who is charge of reconstruction projects.

After billions of dollars of Iraqi money and foreign aid have been spent and thousands of consultants brought in, the Coalition Provisional Authority can point to a long list of tangible accomplishments. But occupation officials say one of the biggest

See IRAQ, A18, Col. 1

Bremer Cites Gains, Avoids Issue of Violence

Administrator L. Paul Bremer, marking the 100-day countdown to the formal end of the U.S. occupation of Iraq, emphasized the country's economic and political advances. **WORLD, Page A19**

Md. House Backs \$1 Billion Tax Plan

Democrats Band Together to Beat Back GOP's Challenges

By LORI MONTGOMERY
and TIM CRAIG
Washington Post Staff Writers

The Maryland House of Delegates overwhelmingly endorsed a plan to raise more than \$1 billion in new taxes late yesterday, including a temporary surcharge on the income of wealthy Marylanders and the first increase in the sales tax in nearly 30 years.

In a remarkable display of party unity, House Democrats beat back

a trio of amendments offered by Republican lawmakers to gut the tax package, which was unveiled earlier this week by House Speaker Michael E. Busch (D-Anne Arundel).

The vote margins stunned even some veteran lawmakers, who had been skeptical the plan could win broad support.

The chamber voted 90 to 48 to protect Busch's plan to raise the sales tax from 5 percent to 6 percent and dedicate the money to

public schools. The chamber voted 87 to 50 to apply the same increase to the titling tax for new vehicles. And it voted 92 to 48 to preserve a plan to temporarily raise income taxes for families with an adjusted gross income of more than \$200,000 a year. The package also would reduce the property tax paid by homeowners.

On each of those votes, fewer than a dozen of the 98 House Democrats abandoned the speaker's plan. Busch conceded that support

See BUDGET, A16, Col. 1

INSIDE

One Large Skull for Mankind

A genetic mutation may have allowed the expansion of the skull in pre-human primates, making possible the development of human brains. **NATION, Page A11**

High Court Hears Pledge Case

Michael A. Newdow of California leaves the Supreme Court building after arguing that the phrase "under God" should not be included in the Pledge of Allegiance. Newdow, an atheist, is challenging a 1954 law passed by Congress that added the words. **NATION, Page A3**



By MICHAEL LUTZKY—THE WASHINGTON POST

Rockville Biotech to Shrink

Human Genome Sciences will cut 200 workers and some experimental drugs, and its well-known leader, William A. Haseltine, will retire. **BUSINESS, Page E1**

Baby Steps Made In Well-Being of Children, Data Show

By LAURA SESSIONS STEPP
Washington Post Staff Writer

Children and teenagers are safer now than they have been in three decades, but on many other measures, including school performance and health, their lives are no better, according to a first-of-its-kind national survey released yesterday.

Young people today are less likely to become criminals, crime victims or parents than they were in 1975, the survey's base year. High school seniors are less likely to smoke, drink or use illicit drugs. But children and youths also are more likely to be obese or to commit suicide and far more likely to live in a single-parent home, which brings with it a number of financial and emotional problems.

The report was compiled by researchers from Duke University and the Foundation for Child Development, a philanthropic organization that supports child research. They are trying to create an ongoing index—akin to the consumer price index—to evaluate how American children are faring from year to year.

Lead researcher Kenneth C. Land, a professor of sociology at Duke, looked at 28 measures that social scientists consider the gold standard for assessing

See CHILDREN, A7, Col. 2

Iraqis Skeptical of Progress at Port

IRAQ, From A1

challenges they have had to confront is convincing Iraqis that the right things are being done for their country—and for the right reasons.

According to occupation and Iraqi ministry officials, telephone access is now 20 percent greater than before the war, thanks to a new cellular network. For the first time in years, schoolchildren have received new math and science textbooks, about 60 million of them. Water and sewage treatment plants that in the recent past have done little to contain the spread of disease are being repaired. Provincial cities that were once without power 24 hours a day are now receiving some electricity. Wages have increased tenfold or more for some government workers. And a poll released this week by ABC News, most Iraqis interviewed said their lives had improved since before the war.

Yet Peter Bingham, the Coalition Provisional Authority's senior adviser on maritime issues, said it may take years before the full value of the work that has been done becomes clear to Iraqis. He said an overhaul was necessary to rid the country of the favoritism, corruption and dependence on the state that dominated life during President Saddam Hussein's rule.

"We are just finishing the foundation," Bingham said, "and the bricks are just starting to become visible."

Ideals and Reality

When the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority arrived in Iraq last spring, it had all sorts of ideas about the principles the country should embrace. Some were as technical as environmental protection, worker safety and open accounting practices, others as philosophical as equality, integration, women's rights and capitalism. Hiring consultants and advisers to spread those values to the Iraqi people, the occupiers sought not only to rebuild, but to remake.

The immediate effect, at least in part, has been to slow the progress of the reconstruction. Power struggles, both small and large, have erupted, pitting foreign advisers and some Iraqi government officials against other Iraqis who have their own ideas about the shape of the new Iraq.

The occupation authority made sure electricity was distributed fairly around the country, gaining the support of those in the countryside but angering many Baghdad residents who were used to getting more than their share. It tried to integrate Arabs and Kurds in the army, pleasing those who want to mend Iraq's ethnic divisions but creating more tensions among those who prefer separation. It elevated women to positions of power, drawing applause from women's rights groups but spurring protests from some influential Islamic clerics. It sought to scale back food subsidies, winning the support of those who wanted to move away from a socialist economic model but provoking the ire of some Iraqis who felt the situation was too dire for such a move.

At Umm Qasr, the tension has been over the role of the state-owned Iraqi Port Authority in what occupation officials envision as a capitalist Iraq. Should the government continue to manage it? Should an outside company take over its management? Should it be privatized and sold to the highest bidder?

As debate continues over how to spend the next round of \$18.6 billion that Congress has allocated to the reconstruction, a key question is whether the ideological overhaul is the best strategy or whether the occupation instead should focus on quick, high-impact fixes. Occupation officials acknowledge they may have overestimated their ability to change Iraq's culture, just as they underestimated the deterioration of its infrastructure and the impact that security concerns would have on the pace of reconstruction. But they say they will not retreat from their ideals.

The battle for Umm Qasr, located on a canal that opens onto the Persian Gulf a few miles from the Kuwaiti border, was one of the iconic moments of the war. Invasion forces arrived March 20, the first day of the war, planted an American flag and declared the town would fall within hours. Days later, they were still fighting.

On March 27, the port was declared secure—for the fourth and final time—and a reconstruction survey team was dispatched immediately. Analysts from the Pentagon and the U.S. Agency for International Development had determined that the port should be among their highest priorities for repair. The three-mile strip, by far the largest of five ports in Iraq, would be critical for transporting military, humanitarian, reconstruction and commercial supplies.

The assessors found Umm Qasr badly damaged. Administration buildings had been looted after the invasion, but the rest of the facility showed years of neglect. No fewer than 40 wrecked ships bobbed in the waters, and silt had gotten so high that it was impossible for large ships to dock. The port's finances were a

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A collection of photographs of the port at Umm Qasr by staff photographer Sarah L. Voisin can be found at www.washingtonpost.com/world.

mess, and employees were lazing around confused about what to do. No one was manning the cranes, and docks were devoid of ships.

Fergus Moran, the project manager for Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) remembered, "It looked like a port, smelled like a port, but it didn't operate like a port."

The occupation adopted a two-pronged approach for rehabilitating Umm Qasr. It hired Bechtel Corp. for the technical work of dredging, removing wrecks and fixing equipment and buildings. SSA would manage the port and teach and mentor the Iraqi Port Authority.

SSA said it would need \$162 million to fix the port; Bechtel estimated its costs at \$400 million. The companies got \$14 million and \$38 million, respectively, and were told to do what they could. The U.N. Development Program assisted in emergency dredging and shipwreck removal with a \$2.5 million donation from the Japanese government and \$43.5 million from the Iraqi oil-for-food program. The port was up and running by June 16, and emergency dredging and wreckage removal was finished by the fall.

Much of the work since then has focused on making the state-owned port company run like a modern business rather than the sluggish socialist entity it was, with an eye toward the day when it might be privatized in a newly capitalist Iraq. The U.S.-paid companies helping port managers have imposed new controls on finances to better track the money going in and out.

They have trained workers in leadership and business practices. And they have cracked down on corruption, which under the Hussein government held up shipments for weeks or months.

A Relative Peace

On a recent weekday at Umm Qasr, the achievements and challenges of the reconstruction were sitting, walking and talking.

Muhammed Diyab, a security guard at the port, was at the main gate, scanning the lines of trucks who had just awakened and were preparing for the long trip to Baghdad, which they no longer make at night for fear of kidnappings and hijackings. A few days earlier, Diyab had caught some men running away with stolen bags of sugar, and he was worried others might be eyeing the rows of white pickup trucks being prepared for delivery to some ministry.

In all, more than 240 Iraqi Port Authority police patrol the area, showing off the dozens of AK-47s they recently acquired after sharing four guns among themselves for months. In addition to smuggling, the port has had five fires, and security patrols have found 17 bodies around the complex since the war. Even so, the port is safer than other parts of Iraq. Foreign officials with the occupation authority and contractors roamed around without flak jackets or escorts.

The relative peace has allowed commerce to flourish. A renovated processing facility has received 200,000 tons of wheat and other grains, critical to feeding the country as its agriculture industry continues to struggle.

At the passenger terminal, about 500 Shiite Muslims from India and other pilgrims coming to visit Iraq's shrines were leaving their cruise ship and passing through an immigration check to the luggage pickup area.

After 40 hours at sea, they were being confined to the ship for 24 extra hours until dockworkers could be found to let them off. Now they were stuck waiting another four hours for their luggage.

"We went to ship manager and asked who is in charge. He said he didn't know. I asked someone else at the dock and he didn't know either," said Ali Shamary, 37, an Iraqi American who was visiting with six other members of his family from Seattle.

At the old port where smaller ships dock, Saad Hanesh, 26, and four other truck drivers were preparing wads of cash to hand out as bribes. They said they used to pay about \$220 for each trip they would make to Baghdad. Now they say they pay less than \$20.

"It's normal," Hanesh said with a shrug. "We have paid bribes since Saddam's time. Before, we knew the bribes went to Saddam. Now everyone's working for himself."

Salaries Delayed Again

Dock employees milled about in small groups, whispering about whether they should launch another strike. In January, after their salaries were delayed for two successive months because of an administrative glitch, the workers briefly refused to

work and threatened to close the port. After some pleading and promises from managers, they returned to their jobs. Now their salaries were late again.

Najm Abid Sakr, 44, a finance manager for Umm Qasr, said he appreciated the freedoms of the new Iraq but said that under Hussein's government at least he was paid on time. He said he worries about the occupation's plans—if the port were privatized and the owners could not make money, what would happen to him and the other workers? "We were hoping for good things, but after a year we are already disappointed," he said.

With the salary problems, the management overhaul, a threat by the provincial governor to take over the port, the accumulation of bids from companies that want to privatize Umm Qasr and the imminent end of SSA's contract, rumors were swirling about the future of the port. Workers were uneasy.

They knew that SSA's financial review showed the port was profitable: It had \$1 million a month in revenue and \$800,000 in operating expenses. But further investigation revealed more layers of corruption than anyone imagined. Auditors were going through employee rolls and finding names of people who weren't showing up for work, people who had died years ago and people who didn't exist. In all, they estimated that as many as 1,000 of the 3,600 people on the payroll were not doing any work.

Meanwhile, the main administration building was full of local digni-



BY SARAH L. VOISIN—THE WASHINGTON POST

During a break from unloading a ship in the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr, dockworkers celebrate a player's win in a game of dominoes. Some workers worry about future management of the state-owned port, possibly including privatization.

taries discussing how Umm Qasr should be run in the coming months. The port manager, Capt. Adel Khalaf, who has spent 27 years in maritime work and was trained in Yugoslavia, met with occupation officials and said he told everyone that he enjoyed a good relationship with the SSA team and was grateful for its manpower. But he also said he felt its value to the port had been "providing us with moral support and self-trust" at a critical time. The port authority, he said, was ready to work on its own.

"We know our work very well. What we need is new technology

and new information," Khalaf said. "Then we can be independent and do the work ourselves."

Over the next year, the port has been promised \$5 million for management services and \$40 million for infrastructure from the U.S. government, plus about \$7 million from the British government for dredging. Khalaf said the money earmarked for administrative support would be better spent on physical improvements.

Occupation officials disagreed, saying they would like an outside company to continue managing the port until the June 30 handoff to a

sovereign Iraqi government. Craig Hautamaki, a USAID official who oversees the port, said foreign advisers are necessary because they teach such things as fiduciary responsibility, capital investment, contractual practices, human resources planning and international standards for checks and balances.

By the end of the day, Khalaf and the occupation officials were still deadlocked. But the Coalition Provisional Authority concluded it knew what was best for Iraq. The foreign officials made plans for Stevedoring Services of America to continue its work at the port.

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Bailey's Crossroads
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Style

THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2004

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BY RICH LIPSKI—THE WASHINGTON POST

President Bush with Presidential Medal of Freedom recipients Rita Moreno and Arnold Palmer.

Lucky 13: President Honors Nation's Best

Grosvenor, Podhoretz Among
Medal of Freedom Recipients

By REBECCA DANA
Washington Post Staff Writer

About success: There is not much to say that is unambiguous these days.

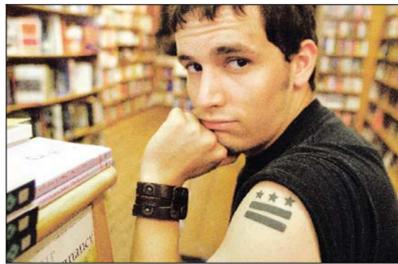
Except, of course, congratulations. To Arnold Palmer and Norman Podhoretz and a handful of other men, plus two actresses and a cosmetics billionaire, many of whom sat under the chandeliers and lights in the East Room of the White House and made everything so much clearer. This is success. These people did it right.

How to win—a war, an election, the moral high ground—that's still fuzzy. This is why we need the Presidential Medal of Freedom and its 13 accomplished recipients—to distill the black and white from the vast gray.

What is success, exactly? Well, President Bush said yesterday when he handed out America's highest civilian honor that it is the work of these people honored: authors, intellectuals, animal rights activists, actors and religious leaders.

Seated behind the president was Palmer, who has won 92 championships and nodded approvingly as Bush mimed a golf grip. Next to the master golfer sat a

See MEDAL, C8, Col. 1



BY JAHN CHIKWENDU—THE WASHINGTON POST

David Onate, 22, and his D.C. flag tattoo at Kramerbooks. "I love this city, truly and profoundly," he says.

The District Flexes Its Political Muscle, One Tattoo at a Time

By TOMMY NGUYEN
Washington Post Staff Writer

Mookie, a tattoo artist at Top Notch Tattoos who doesn't like to be called Marcus Raferty, flips through a photo album of his professional work, pointing out the more popular designs at his U Street shop these days. Koi fish, praying hands, the old-school Americana of thumping hearts and landing eagles—big favorites, Mookie says—flipping along, flipping along.

Wait a minute—flip it back a page. There's a photo of a kid with a tattoo of the D.C. flag sprawled out on his back, the red stripes and stars stretching from shoulder to shoulder.

"Those are real popular here," Mookie says. "I've done four in the last couple of months."

So what's going on here?

Mookie raises his eyebrows as if to say *Are you joking?* "Represent!" he says. "Punk-rock city, yo!"

He's referring to the growing legion of kids roaming

See TATTOO, C14, Col. 1

The Cost of Liberty



PHOTOS BY ANDREA BRUCE WOODALL—THE WASHINGTON POST

Halla Maarouf bargains with a customer in her mother's house. Below, wearing a traditional abaya, she tucks the proceeds from her prostitution into her bra.

By ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA
Washington Post Staff Writer

BAGHDAD

The row of beauty salons had been ransacked and torched. Shards of glass, dust and bottles leaking sweet-smelling liquid were all that was left, creating an eerie mosaic in the afternoon light. Wrapped in a black *abaya*, Halla Muhammad Maarouf stood in the middle of the street, staring at the destruction and trying not to cry. There was no note, no graffiti saying who had done it or why, but Halla knew the attack was a warning meant for her.

Three months before, in October, Halla had begun working as a prostitute to supplement the income she earned helping out at her mother's salon. Her brother had been killed in the U.S.-led invasion, and after her husband was killed in the bloody chaos that followed, Halla suddenly found herself solely responsible for supporting her two young children. The \$5 or so a week she earned at the salon was not enough.

She had tried to be discreet, but word got out.

In a Chaotic New Iraq, A Young Widow Turns to Prostitution

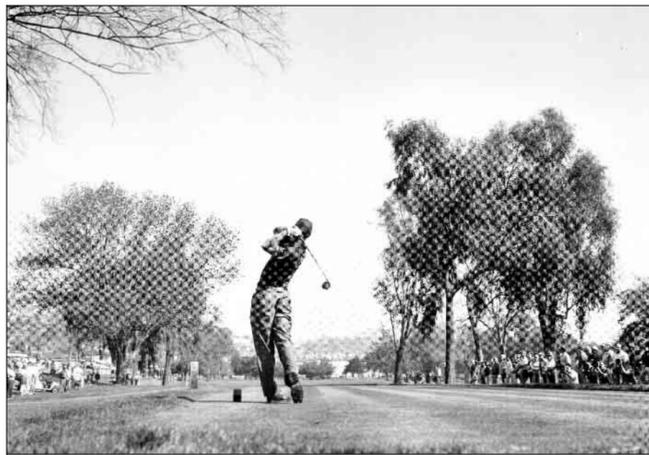


Earlier that week, she says, a stranger had shown up at her doorway with a copy of the Koran and asked her whether she knew any women who sold their bodies and, if she did, to tell them it was wrong. Neighbors inquired about the men coming and going from her apartment, and potential clients had tracked her down at the salon.

When U.S. troops marched into the capital on April 9 last year, they liberated a people who, for decades, had lived under a government that controlled nearly every aspect of their lives. In the later years of Saddam Hussein's rule, getting caught trying to solicit meant life in prison or even death. In a public ceremony in 2000, Hussein had 200 women beheaded after accusing them of prostitution.

Today, under a justice system largely overseen by foreigners, getting caught generally means a slap on the wrist and 48 hours in a jail cell. That has made soliciting a more inviting option for a new generation of women, especially in a place where few employment opportunities exist and hundreds of thousands of women have been left widows as a result of

See HALLA, C4, Col. 1



GOVINDA GALLERY

"Tiger Woods," on view at Govinda Gallery in Walter Ioo's "Classic Golf" retrospective.

Galleries

Catch the Birdie!

By JESSICA DAWSON
Special to The Washington Post

Rule No. 1 of golf photography: Stick close to the gallery ropes. No straying onto the fairway. Got it? It seems someone forgot to pass that little nugget on to Walter Ioo Jr., back when he was a 20-year-old photographer on his first pro golf gig. The year was 1964. Assigned to shoot Tony Lema for Sports Illustrated (Ioo has been working for the magazine ever since), the eager young photographer in-

sisted on getting the perfect picture. His quest took him smack dab in the middle of the green just as Lema was taking a shot.

Those familiar with the rabid sensitivity of professional golfers can guess what happened next: A high-volume chewing out by the pro and, for the next 17 holes, a barrage of dirty looks from his fans.

Though Ioo learned his lesson, his knack for rule-breaking would never change. When you stop

See GALLERIES, C5, Col. 1

Theater

'Machinal': A Woman Worn Away To Madness

By TRICIA OLSZEWSKI
Special to The Washington Post

In American Century Theater's "Machinal," mother's little helper is a bottle of pebbles that she uses to kill her husband. Based on the story of murderess Ruth Snyder, a photograph of whose execution in 1928 was published in the New York Daily News, "Machinal" is playwright Sophie Treadwell's tense, fascinating portrait of a woman come undone.

Snyder's crime has also been fictionalized in films such as "Double Indemnity" and "The Postman Always Rings Twice," both of which portrayed the wife as a cold-blooded *femme fatale*. Treadwell takes a more sympathetic approach, focusing on the unhappiness of her anti-heroine, Helen, and glossing over the violence entirely, instead recounting the incident in a trial at play's end.

Treadwell wrote "Machinal" in 1928, but the drama's criminal-as-victim viewpoint, as well as its de-

See THEATER, C5, Col. 3

New Freedoms and an Old Profession

HALLA, From C1

three successive wars.

But as the U.S. occupation draws to an end, and more conservative Islamic clerics gain power, the fate of prostitutes like Halla is uncertain. In recent months, attacks on people and establishments accused of promoting vices have escalated. Masked gunmen have shot at liquor vendors, according to Iraqi police officials. Religious leaders have run renters of racy videotapes out of town. And anonymous vigilantes have kidnapped, beaten and killed prostitutes in several major cities. Women's rights groups, including the Organization of Women's Freedom, have decried the killings, saying the women are in need of help, not punishment.

"Maybe there is an order to kill all the prostitutes," Halla would recall thinking that day. "If the Islamic parties arrive to power maybe even the Americans can't stop them." As she made her way through the rubble, Halla wondered what it would be like to have a real job, of being a receptionist at a hotel, a laundry woman or maybe opening a boutique for used clothes. She was 23 years old, healthy and a hard worker. There was a chance she could start anew. Wasn't there?

Halla grew up in one of the roughest neighborhoods in Baghdad, a strip of nondescript apartment buildings a few blocks from the Palestine and Sheraton hotels that became bunkers for foreign journalists during the U.S.-led invasion. Her father was a carpenter, her mother a beauty stylist. She had three younger brothers, and money was always a problem. After her parents separated when she was 10 years old, she dropped out of school to work alongside her mother. She washed hair and swept the floors.

The Loving Wife

She met her husband at the salon years later. She had spied a tall, muscular man staring at her. She was 15, barely five feet tall with bleached blond hair and a sassy attitude. At 26, Walid Hameed was more serious and worked as a security guard in Tikrit, about 90 miles north of Baghdad. He had stopped by to pick up a friend who was getting her tresses set.

Within days they went on their first date and within a few months he proposed. At first, both families objected. Halla's mother had another, wealthier beau in mind for her only daughter. Walid's parents thought Halla was too young. But the two were in love, and in late 1996 they were married at the swank Babylon Hotel. There were mounds of sweets, pretty shimmering clothes, and family and friends from all over Iraq. When her new husband came to their bedroom that night and tried to take her clothes off, she giggled. She says she changed into a nightgown and insisted on keeping her flowing white veil and her elbow-length white gloves. She ran out of the room and back to the elevator, where she spent the entire night pressing buttons and going up and down. It would be a week before she figured out what it meant to lose her virginity.

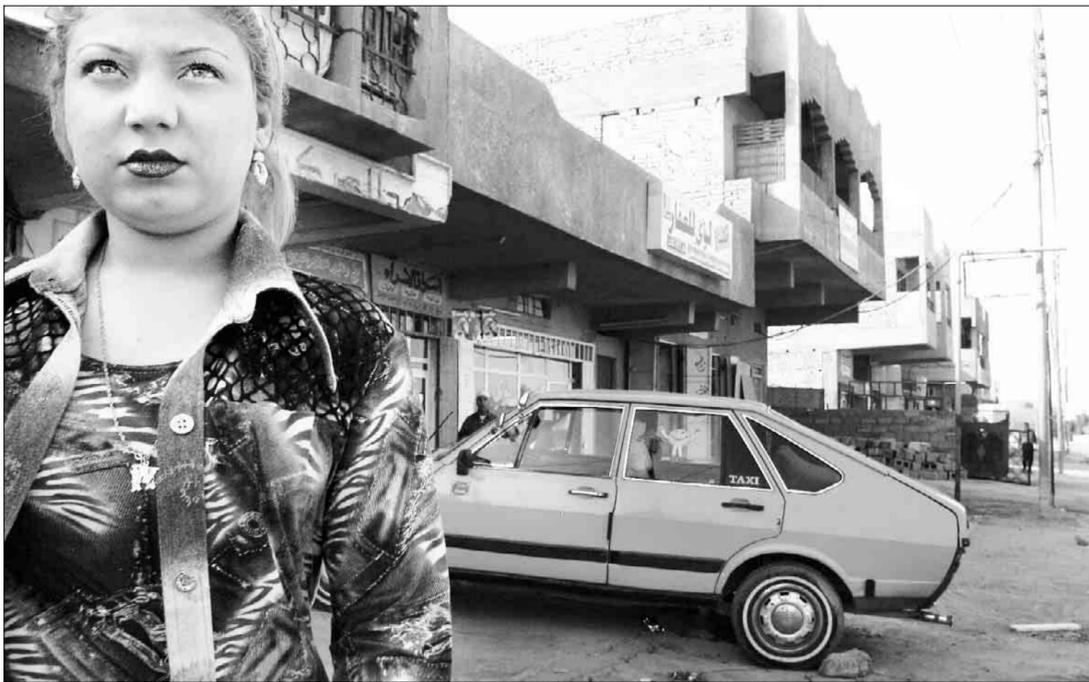
Married life suited Halla and Walid. They both kept their jobs, lived in a small one-bedroom apartment and shared the chores. On hot evenings, they used to get ice cream and sit on the sidewalk staring at the passersby. She affectionately called him "bald man" because his hair was thinning. He called her "baga," or bug, because she was so tiny. The couple had two boys, Iaad and Saif, in quick succession.

Everything changed with the war. Her middle brother, Ali Muhammad Maarouf, 20, a soldier, was shot and killed in the first few days of the fighting in the southern port city of Basra. And a few weeks later, after major combat was declared over but when law and order had yet to be established, her husband was shot in the head one night by a business associate. Halla said that her husband was still alive when she arrived at the hospital and that he managed to tell her, "Halla, be a good girl," before he died. Halla insisted on spending the night at the morgue, hugging Walid's body and weeping. At daybreak, one of her brothers came and gently carried her away.

Halla says she did not leave her mother's house for a month. When she finally ventured out and started thinking about her situation, she knew it was dire. Shortly after Walid's death, his family took all of the couple's possessions and stopped talking to her. She had already used up their modest savings and knew her wages from the salon would not be enough to support her sons and her younger brothers, who had had trouble finding work.

As a distraction, some girlfriends offered to treat her to a trip up north, to the resort town of Sulaymaniyah for a mini-vacation. They spent the days wandering around the marketplaces, staring at the blocks of honeycomb, hand-woven carpets. She had no money but as she touched the beautiful things she said she somehow felt more alive and hopeful.

One night at dinner, she was in-



Halla near her Baghdad apartment, wearing makeup and Western clothes. Below, she fixes her hair to resemble the style worn by Britney Spears on the poster.



troducted to an older man who said he was a car salesman. He had a big potbelly, thin legs, and wore glasses but was otherwise quite cheerful looking. She said she told him about her husband and her worries about money. He took out four \$100 bills and told her he would give them to her—if she would spend the night with him. Halla says she shook her head when he made the advance, but he persisted and she followed him to a hotel.

She remembers that he gave her the money as soon as they walked into the room, and she put it on the table, ready to bolt. He picked it up and handed it to her again, telling her not to be afraid. She took a cigarette and a drink and they talked for a few hours before he took her to the bed and lay on top of her. She began to scream: "I can't breathe! I can't breathe!" She pushed him away and ran out, she says. But the next day he invited her to lunch, and a few hours later they were back in the hotel room. This time she gave in.

"I had a shock with that man, but I thought that with \$400 I could buy everything," she says. She imagined the honeycomb, the carpets, the children's clothes and toys. "After that it became easier."

Her subsequent clients, maybe 40 to 50 in all, are a blur. The government officials from the Anbar province out west. The skinny young man who looked like a chicken. The wealthy former military official. The money flowed—\$100 to \$300 for each night, as much as \$2,500 some months, plenty to support herself, her sons, her brothers, aunts and uncles and cousins.

No one in her family asked where the money was coming from, but they soon found out. She says that by the winter, they were talking about prostitution openly, as if it were just another 9 to 5 desk job.

The Life

On a recent afternoon, Halla was holding court in her ground-floor apartment, a place that has become a salon of sorts for the destitute in the new Iraq. More than a dozen people rotated in and out of the room. There were small-time criminals, pimps and other prostitutes. Halla's brothers, Omar, 22, and Maarouf, 18, who act as her bodyguards, were also there. So was Halla's most regular customer, Shamil.

Shamil, an engineer who is a subcontractor for a U.S. company, visits Halla several times a week, three times a day, for breakfast, lunch and dinner that she cooks for him. He says he liked her because she is "frank" and "pure of heart." He has a wife, with whom he lives in a big house in the ritzy Mansour district of Baghdad, but he spends most of his free time with Halla. He has even helped her brothers by providing them with odd jobs in his company.

In Iraq, there are no red-light dis-

tricts, and Halla and other prostitutes don't walk the streets. They typically meet their clients through friends. Aya Abbas Latif, 22, talks about being "married" three times to customers. Another friend, Nada Baqr, 31, refers to being in love with one of her "boyfriends." Halla and Shamil quarrel like husband and wife and he treats her children—now 4 and 2 years old, like his own, buying them presents and playing with them when he is in the apartment. He has prohibited Halla from seeing other men. (She does, though, behind his back.)

Sometimes the conversation at Halla's place is mundane and practical, about repairing the electricity generator or favorite restaurants. Sometimes the conversation is racy. At other times, it's reflective.

Halla's friend Nada fell into prostitution when she could not pay her rent and her landlord said he'd let it go if she came to a party and danced. "My first reaction was that I felt sad and ashamed," she recalls. She told her husband the money came from her new job as a cleaning lady. Nada says one day she and her sister were driven to an office building near the Baghdad airport and were introduced to two American soldiers. She was afraid, she says, but they were gentle and nice and made jokes and slipped them an extra \$100 each. She was so giddy from the encounter that she hardly cared that the pimp's profit, Nada says, was \$700.

Aya, who goes by the nickname Hiba, says she had to give her son to a distant relative because she could not support him. She took a job as a dental assistant but the monthly salary of \$64 was not enough. She says she sends most of the money she makes to her family and is occasionally allowed to see her son. "I go to kiss him and tell him I love him but I don't tell him I am his mother because I don't want the other children to know he is the son of a prostitute," she says.

Halla and her friends say they worry about pregnancy and disease and have sought advice from each

other about how to protect themselves. Before they became prostitutes, they say, they didn't know very much about sexual health. But those are relatively minor concerns when compared with how to reconcile their jobs with their religion. Halla is Muslim but acknowledges that she doesn't believe her job conforms to Islamic law. Still she is more afraid of being judged by other Iraqis and being hurt than of a higher being in the afterlife. Allah, she says, will understand why she is doing what she is doing.

Halla's parents and brothers say they feel guilty about letting Halla work as a prostitute but have little choice. Her mother doesn't have the money to reopen her beauty salon and her father is now too old to work. Her brothers have had short stints as construction workers but say there are few steady jobs for people their age and with their junior high school education. "I hate it, but without her doing this we could not survive," Omar says. They sleep on the floor in her apartment and do what they can to keep her safe from the beatings that other prostitutes have suffered. One night a few months ago, a drunken man came to Halla's apartment and began shouting for Halla, she says. Omar told him to go away. The man fired two bullets into Omar's leg, cracking the bones. Doctors said he will have to wear a brace on that leg for a full year.

The attack on the salons in October badly shook Halla, her family and friends. When U.S. soldiers arrived to help extinguish the flames, she says they told her they thought the attackers were Islamic extremists and warned her to be careful. She was—for a while. Halla says she made inquiries about other jobs through friends, but her attempts were cursory and she discovered that they often paid \$30 or less a month, a tiny fraction of what she made as a prostitute. As the days passed without another attack, the fears started to fade and she went back to her old life.

Rude Awakening

One day in February, she woke up on a cold stone floor, confused. Her head was resting on her purse and she was covered by a blanket. She was still in her red flannel pajamas but was also wearing an abaya robe on top of them. The left sleeve was ripped. Then Halla noticed that the walls of the room were sky blue, the trademark color of the Iraqi police. She was at a police station.

Her head spun as she recalled the events of the night. She had been out with a friend, Asaad Abdul Razak, 22, and they had gotten into an argument. He criticized her for being a prostitute, but what really set her off was that he had said her late husband, Walid, was no good and had chastised her for being so stuck on him. She hit him and he hit her. Then somehow her brother Maarouf showed up, stabbed Asaad in the stomach and ran from the scene.

The police arrived but found only Halla and the wounded young man. She was arrested and locked up in an office in the local police station. All she did that day was cry, she says, so hard that at one point she had an asthma attack and the police had to rush her to the hospital.

But by morning, she says, things didn't seem as gloomy. Shamil had brought chicken and rice from her favorite restaurant and had talked the police into visiting Asaad in the hospital to clear things up. Asaad signed a statement saying Halla wasn't involved and told police some random gangsters had attacked him. After reviewing all the reports, a U.S. Army captain signed Halla's release papers, Halla says, and smiled as he wished her well.

That gave Halla an idea. Images of money flashed through her mind. She scribbled down her phone number and slipped it to the interpreter to give to the soldier.

She was disappointed when he didn't call.

Special correspondent Shereen Jerjes contributed to this report.

ART BUCHWALD

Driving On Fumes

I haven't said anything about the soaring price of gas for one good reason—I don't drive. Whenever I'm in a car, the person giving me the lift is paying for the gas. This doesn't mean I'm selfish. It means that because I don't have to pay attention to the road, I can devote all my time to thinking about the price of petroleum and how much it costs to get from here to there.

The other day, I was on the Beltway. I didn't say we were moving—we were bumper-to-bumper and dead still.

My driver—I'll call him Joel—was trying to keep down his road rage. "It is costing me \$2.27 a gallon to stand still," he said.

I was sympathetic. "That's the big problem. It's not how much you pay for gas, it's how much you burn up waiting for the traffic to move. I was out in California not long ago and that guy I was driving with used up a full tank of gas while we were stuck on the Santa Monica Freeway."

Joel asked, "Was it rush hour?" "No, it was noon. It is always that way on the freeways. Californians accept it because they're so laid back."

Joel said, "Maybe there's an accident up ahead."

"I doubt it. If there were an accident, the electric signs along the way would be blinking 'DRIVE SLOWLY.'"

Joel said, "That's a joke. How can I drive slowly if I can't move?"

I said, "Well, you can't blame Bush for the traffic jam. If you want to blame anybody, you can start blaming Saudi Arabia. Their people don't care how much gas you burn."

"Can I blame the oil companies who market it in the United States?"

"No, because they sponsor some of the best programs on television." We moved 20 feet.

I said, "This is a national security problem. I'll bet many of the people in these cars work for the CIA, the FBI or Homeland Security, or are going to Neiman Marcus at Tysons Corner."

Joel said, "You see the guy in the next lane? He looks like a terrorist."

I said, "You can't believe everyone who has a beard is a terrorist."

Joel said, "Let's take down his license plate number just in case."

I said, "Why don't we listen to the traffic report?"

We turned on the radio. "This is your helicopter traffic reporter. I am now flying over the Beltway. Oh dear. It looks like a white SUV tried to pass a red Jeep and the Jeep gave the SUV a bent fender. Traffic is backed up all the way to Richmond."

"Now we know what's going on," I said. "Look, there's a state policeman trying to get through."

Joel said, "Since no one is hurt, why can't they just move the cars over to the shoulder of the highway?"

"Because the insurance companies won't let them," I replied. "It looks like you're running out of gas."

"It is no big deal. I'm a member of the AAA and they'll send a tow truck if we hit empty." Then Joel said, "A traffic jam is a great way to get to know somebody. There is nothing like being stuck on the Beltway with a friend."

I agreed, "Especially if it's someone who doesn't drive."

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Photo: B. Schiller

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SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2004

M1 M2 M3 M4 M5 V1 V2 V3 V4

A DANGEROUS PLACE | Assisted Living in Virginia

As Care Declines, Cost Can Be Injury, Death

Lapses by Home Operators, State Create Perilous Conditions

First of four articles

By DAVID S. FALLIS
Washington Post Staff Writer

When death came to Theresa Buford, she was cold and alone.

She was 75, the favorite "Aunt T" whose nieces and nephews had spent their holidays over turkey and sweet potato pies at her Richmond home. A large, robust woman who loved watching soap operas, she had worked for years as a nurse's aide and had volunteered with the Girl Scouts.

But after her schizophrenia was diagnosed, she no longer could live by herself. In 2000, her niece placed her in Forest Hill Manor, a deteriorating assisted living facility on Richmond's west side.

She had been there just seven weeks when emergency workers found her, clammy and listless on a bare mattress in Room 5. She was suffering from hypothermia, doctors later determined, her body temperature 15 degrees below normal. She arrived at the hospital in a coma, was placed

on life support and died two weeks later.

When state social service officials visited the home to investigate in the weeks that followed, they found residents huddled in blankets and wearing hats, jackets and gloves, records show. Outside, temperatures had dipped into the 20s. Inside, heaters were broken, and some thermostats were locked in wooden boxes and they could not be adjusted by caretakers.

Buford's death is among thousands of incidents of harm at Virginia's assisted living facilities, 627 homes licensed by the state to care for more than 34,000 disabled residents. An 18-month investigation by The Washington Post found a troubled and worsening record of care at the homes, including avoidable injuries and deaths, and a system of state oversight that often failed to identify or cor-

See HOMES, A15, Col. 1



"This place had so many violations I didn't know about," Antonette Byrdsong says of the home where her aunt, Theresa Buford, left, suffered hypothermia before dying.

Kerry Broadens Scope of His Pitch

Senator Hopes to Woo Swing Voters

By JIM VANDEHEI
and DAN BALZ
Washington Post Staff Writers

Sen. John F. Kerry (Mass.) has begun targeting swing voters and disaffected Republicans in an effort to expand the election battleground, a strategy that includes emphasizing centrist themes on the campaign trail while privately reassuring liberal constituencies he is committed to their core issues.

After watching and sometimes wincing at a clip of himself on the evening news in California earlier this month, Kerry has tried to adjust his campaign pitch by toning down the rhetoric and dropping some of his more bombastic sound bites from the primary campaign. His stump speech now includes a measured appeal to independents and "non-Bush Republicans" and the assertion that he is more conservative than the president when it comes to budget deficits and respecting the Constitution.

Kerry aides have been talking about investing money for advertising in additional Republican-leaning southern states, including North Carolina and possibly Virginia, that most analysts consider strong Bush country. Kerry is also intrigued with the idea of putting an unmistakable bipartisan stamp on his candidacy by appearing to woo a Republican such as Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) as his running mate, or at least signaling his intention to tap Republicans for key Cabinet posts, according to some aides.

Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) said four Democrats not part of the Kerry campaign have asked whether he has any interest in joining Kerry's ticket. Hagel said no, but, in an

See CAMPAIGN, A10, Col. 1

■ **Frist stumps for Daschle's rival.** | Page A6

Countdown to the Ceremony



At the National World War II Memorial, Donna M. Kluckman of Fredericksburg, Tex., reminisces about her World War II Marine service. Planners are rushing to accommodate thousands of veterans who are headed here for the memorial's dedication Saturday. Beginning today, a five-part series revisits life on the home front and abroad and reflects on the diverse social legacy left by the war. Stories on Page C1.

In Iraq, the Job Opportunity of a Lifetime

Managing a \$13 Billion Budget With No Experience

By ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA
Washington Post Staff Writer

BAGHDAD—It was after nightfall when they finally found their offices at Saddam Hussein's Republican Palace—11 jet-lagged, sweaty, idealistic volunteers who had come to help Iraq along the road to democracy.

When the U.S. government went looking for people to help rebuild Iraq, they had responded to the call. They supported the war effort and President Bush. Many had strong Republican credentials. They were in their twenties or early thirties and had no foreign service experience. On that first day, Oct. 1, they knew so little about how things worked that they waited hours at the airport for a ride that was never coming. They finally discovered the shuttle bus out of the airport but got off at the wrong stop.

Occupied Iraq was just as Simone Ledeen had imagined—ornate mosques, soldiers in

formation, sand blowing everywhere, "just like on TV." The 28-year-old daughter of neo-conservative pundit Michael Ledeen and a recently minted MBA, she had arrived on a military transport plane with the others and was eager to get to work.

They had been hired to perform a low-level task: collecting and organizing statistics, surveys and wish lists from the Iraqi ministries for a report that would be presented to potential donors at the end of the month. But as suicide bombs and rocket attacks became almost daily occurrences, more and more senior staffers defected. In short order, six of the new young hires found themselves managing the country's \$13 billion budget, making decisions affecting millions of Iraqis.

Viewed from the outside, their experience illustrates many of the problems that have beset the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Au-

See STAFF, A20, Col. 1



Anita Greco, John Hanley, center, and Basel Abushaban of the Ministry of Finance gather for an office party in Iraq.

President Plans Drive To Rescue Iraq Policy

Speeches, U.N. Action Will Focus on Future

By ROBIN WRIGHT
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Bush will launch an ambitious campaign tomorrow night to shift attention from recent setbacks that have eroded domestic and international support for U.S. policy in Iraq, particularly the Abu Ghraib prison scandal and the escalating violence, and focus instead on the future of post-occupation Iraq.

The president will open a tightly orchestrated public relations effort in a speech at the Army War College outlining U.S. plans for the critical five weeks before the limited transfer of political power June 30. The White House then intends to circulate this week a draft U.N. resolution on post-occupation Iraq, wrap up negotiations with Iraqis on an interim government and begin shoring up the coalition to ensure that other foreign forces also stay after June 30, U.S. officials said.

"There's a sense that this week is our chance to create some movement in a different direction. We'll start talking about the future, not the past, by focusing on the U.N. resolution and [U.N. envoy Lakhdar] Brahimi's transition process. Sure there'll still be plenty of arguments, but it will be about the future, and that's a healthy change," said a senior State Department official who would speak only on condition of anonymity.

The diplomatic campaign is a response to serious reversals over the past two months and to growing turmoil. Last week alone, the U.S.-appointed president of the Iraqi Governing Council was assassinated and a cabinet official was almost killed in a suicide bombing; in a disputed episode, more than 40 people were killed by U.S. troops at what Iraqis said was a wedding party; and 16 arrest warrants were issued for aides or associates of Ahmed

See POLICY, A23, Col. 1

■ **Iraqi Interior Ministry official survives bomb blast.** | Page A22

Prison Visits By General Reported In Hearing

Alleged Presence of Sanchez Cited by Lawyer

By SCOTT HIGHAM, JOE STEPHENS
and JOSH WHITE
Washington Post Staff Writers

A military lawyer for a soldier charged in the Abu Ghraib abuse case stated that a captain at the prison said the highest-ranking U.S. military officer in Iraq was present during some "interrogations and/or allegations of the prisoner abuse," according to a recording of a military hearing obtained by The Washington Post.

The lawyer, Capt. Robert Shuck, said he was told that Army Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez and other senior military officers were aware of what was taking place on Tier 1A of Abu Ghraib. Shuck is assigned to defend Staff Sgt. Ivan L. "Chip" Frederick II of the 372nd Military Police Company. During an April 2 hearing that was open to the public, Shuck said the company commander, Capt. Donald J. Reese, was prepared to testify in exchange for immunity. The military prosecutor questioned Shuck about what Reese would say under oath.

"Are you saying that Captain Reese is going to testify that General Sanchez was there and saw this going on?" asked Capt. John McCabe, the military prosecutor.

"That's what he told me," Shuck said. "I am an officer of the court, sir, and I would not lie. I have got two children at home. I'm not going to risk my career."

Shuck also said a sergeant at the prison, First Sgt. Brian G. Lipinski, was prepared to testify that intelligence officers told him the abuse of detainees on the cellblock was "the right thing to do." Earlier this month, Lipinski

See PRISON, A21, Col. 1

Battle for Heartland Starts at Gas Pump

By DAVID FINKEL
Washington Post Staff Writer

STURTEVANT, Wis.—In the last days of gasoline that costs less than \$2 a gallon, a 1995 Plymouth Neon and a 1993 Ford Ranger pickup truck are making their way toward the gas pumps in front of the Village Food and Liquor Mart, where the price of regular gas is moments away from jumping from \$1.939 to \$1.999.

The Ranger has one person inside, a recently divorced man who is on his way to a restaurant for a dinner of liver and onions. The Neon has four people inside, two of whom are small children, towed from a long afternoon drive.

The man in the Ranger, whose wife walked out on him 18 months before, will be dining alone as he tries to bring steadiness to an off-balance life. The two adults in the Neon, a man of 20 and a woman of 19, are adjusting to some lopsidedness as well, in their case the fact that life has so quickly come to mean an aging Neon with tension in the front seat, children in the back and hardening french fries in between.

From separate directions, they head for a gas station in a village where the difference between George W. Bush and Al Gore in the 2000 election was nine votes. The village is in Racine County, where Bush beat Gore by fewer than

2,500 votes, and the county is in a state where Gore's overall margin of victory was 5,708 votes, a mere 0.2 percent. Four years later, with another presidential election underway, Wisconsin has become a pivotal swing state. Racine will play a central role in determining Wisconsin, and Sturtevant—Gore 894, Bush 885—is a perfect indicator of the split heart of Racine.

All of which is why the arrival of two cars at a gas station late on a mid-May afternoon is a significant event.

Both contain voters who have been affected by the record-high price of gas.

See DRIVERS, A8, Col. 1

INSIDE

In the Hot Seat

Howard Kurtz turns the tables on Washington's toughest interviewer to find out if Tim Russert can take as good as he gives.

THE MAGAZINE

Cannes Honors '9/11'

"Fahrenheit 9/11," Michael Moore's controversial documentary, wins the Cannes Film Festival's top prize.

STYLE, Page D1

High School Sunday

Expanded coverage of the high school playoffs returns with a four-page pullout section.

SPORTS, Pages E9-12



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Young Workers Thrown in Over Their Heads in Iraq

STAFF, From A1

thority (CPA), a paucity of experienced applicants, a high turnover rate, bureaucracy, partisanship and turf wars. But within their group, inside the "Green Zone," the four-mile strip surrounded by cement blast walls where Iraq's temporary rulers are based, their seven months at the CPA was the experience of a lifetime. It was defined by long hours, patriotism, friendship, sacrifice and loss.

The CPA was designed to be a grand experiment in nation-building, a body of experts who would be Iraq's guide for transforming itself into a model for democracy in the Middle East. Unlike previous reconstruction efforts, it was to be manned by civilians—advisers on politics, law, medicine, transportation, agronomy and other key areas. They were supposed to be experts, but many of the younger hires who filled the CPA's hallways were longer on enthusiasm than on expertise.

L. Paul Bremer, Iraq's top civil administrator, may have been the public face of the CPA, but it is these rank-and-file workers who defined the occupation at the ground level. This account of the budget team's time in Baghdad is drawn from direct observation and interviews with more than three dozen civilian and military members of the occupation government.

War on Terror

Ledeen's journey to Baghdad began two weeks earlier when she received an e-mail out of the blue from the Pentagon's White House liaison office. The Sept. 16 message informed her that the occupation government in Iraq needed employees to prepare for an international conference. "This is an amazing opportunity to move forward on the global war on terror," the e-mail read.

For Ledeen, the offer seemed like fate. One of her family friends had been killed in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and it had affected her family deeply. Without hesitation, she responded "Sure" to the e-mail and waited—for an interview, a background check or some other follow-up. Apparently none was necessary. A week later, she got a second e-mail telling her to look for a packet in the mail regarding her move to Baghdad.

Others from across the District responded affirmatively to the same e-mail, for different reasons. Andrew Burns, 23, a Red Cross volunteer who had taught English in rural China, felt going to Iraq would help him pursue a career in humanitarian aid. Todd Baldwin, 28, a legislative aide for Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), thought the opportunity was too good to pass up. John Hanley, 24, a Web site editor, wanted to break into the world of international relations. Anita Greco, 25, a former teacher, and Casey Wasson, 23, a recent college graduate in government, just needed jobs.

For months they wondered what they had in common, how their names had come to the attention of the Pentagon, until one day they figured it out: They had all posted their resumes at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative-leaning think tank.

By the fall, when Ledeen and peers arrived, the CPA had a serious staffing problem. Initial plans called for 3,700 people, but for most of the year it had been operating with 1,300. Moreover, many of those who did come stayed the minimum 90 days. Mark St. Laurent, 36, a D.C. paramedic who was assigned to the economics team, said the short commitments made getting work done difficult: "One month learning the ropes. One month doing actual work. One month lame duck—you don't want to do anything because you don't want to piss off the guy coming next."

Pentagon spokesman Lt. Col. Joseph Yoswa said the CPA was satisfied with the quality of applicants. Some staffers may have been young and inexperienced, he said, but "we have people right out of college leading troops on the ground."

Yoswa said the recruiting office had to hire quickly for the Madrid donors conference that fall and "turned to the Heritage Foundation, an educational facility, albeit a conservative one, but primarily a place where you can get good, solid people." He said this was a one-time event and that there was no organized effort to hire Republicans.

In late October, he said, the Pentagon set up a job site on the Web. Eleven thousand people filled out an application and several hundred of them were hired. "Nowhere did we ask party affiliation," he said.

'The Brat Pack'

When Ledeen's group showed up at the palace—with their North Face camping gear, Abercrombie & Fitch camouflage and digital cameras—they were quite the spectacle. For some, they represented everything that was right with the CPA: They were young, energetic and idealistic. For others, they represented everything that was wrong with the CPA: They were young, inexperienced, and regarded as ideologues.

Several had impressive paper credentials, but in the wrong fields. Greco was fluent in English, Italian and Spanish; Burns had been a policy analyst focused on family and health care; and Ledeen had co-founded a cooking school. But none had ever worked in the Middle East, none spoke Arabic, and few could tell a balance sheet from an accounts receivable statement.

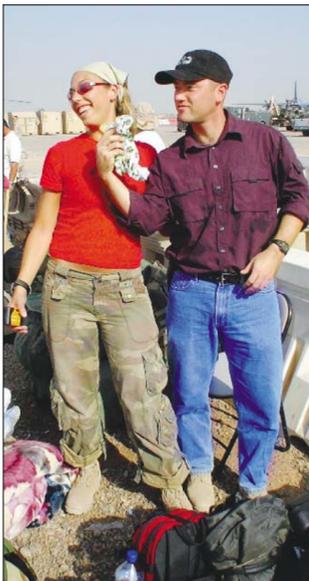
Other staffers quickly nicknamed the newcomers "The Brat Pack."

"They had come over because of one reason or another, and they were put in positions of authority that they had no clue about," remembered Army Reserve Sgt. Thomas D. Wirges, 38, who had been working on rehabilitating the Baghdad Stock Exchange.

Some also grumbled about the new staffers' political ties. Retired U.S. Army Col. Charles Krohn said many in the CPA regard the occupation "as a political event," always looking for a way to make the president look



Simone Ledeen greets John Hanley at Dulles International Airport on Monday upon his return from Iraq. Ledeen came home in March.



Anita Greco, 25, a teacher, and Casey Wasson, 23, a college graduate, arrive in Baghdad in October. Soon they were working 100-hour weeks managing Iraq's finances.

good. Ledeen was determined to prove she could do her job. She and the others worked 100-hour weeks and ended up producing not only their assigned report but a searchable Web site of possible reconstruction projects. At the end of their six-week assignment, their bosses were so impressed that they were rewarded with more permanent postings.

The occupation's economics teams had been especially hard hit by attacks by insurgents. After the United Nations bombing in August, the International Monetary Fund pulled out. And after the rocket attack on the Al-Rashid Hotel in October, one CPA staffer who suffered burns on his feet and lost a testicle was evacuated and another was so spooked he went home. So that's where Ledeen and her colleagues were placed.

High Salaries

Working at the CPA was, as Ledeen described it, a bunch of "high highs" and "low lows."

They would get up at dawn, after a fitful night of sleep in the coed hallways of the palace where alarm clocks started going off at 4 a.m. They would spend the rest of the day shuttling back and forth between the CPA headquarters and the Ministry of Finance. Meals were cafeteria food devoured with plastic utensils.

The pay turned out to be good. Ledeen and her co-workers had agreed to come to Iraq without knowing their salaries. They ended up with standard government base salaries in the range of \$30,000 to \$75,000 a year, plus a 25 percent foreign differential, another 25 percent for a workplace "in immi-



Todd Baldwin, 28, a former legislative aide for Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), drives a convoy.

nent danger," and overtime pay. In the end, almost everyone was making the equivalent of six-figure salaries.

The group's primary responsibility was to hand out money. Each month, it sent out authorizations for the release of several hundred million dollars for government employees' salaries, reconstruction projects and sundry other expenses.

But they were also involved in higher-level policy decisions—revising the 2004 budget, shifting around money as priorities changed and formulating plans for replacing the food baskets Iraqi families got each month with cash payments.

They also had to deal with teachers in Basra, police in Karbala and others who came to say they were not getting paid at all—or that they wanted more. A justice official grumbled that the money for prisoners' food had not been released. Security guards at one ministry demanded to know why their friends at another ministry were earning more money than they.

Once, Ledeen remembered, a bank in Baghdad refused to release money to a U.S. military division even though it had the appropriate paperwork. That meant the commander couldn't pay his Iraqi workers, who couldn't feed their families, raising the public's anger at U.S. forces.

So Ledeen raced to the bank to plead with its officials. It didn't work. Then a woman from the Iraqi Ministry of Finance showed up. The bank manager took a look at the paperwork, nodded and released the money.

"It was the same damn letter" the Army captain had given them the week before, Ledeen said with a sigh.

That was one of a limited number of excursions she made into the streets. The budget team, which wielded so much power over Iraq, was isolated from regular Iraqi life. Among the team members' greatest frustrations was how difficult it was to leave the Green Zone. Still, members of the team became close to the three Iraqi translators who worked with the budget team: Nada, an older woman who fretted over everyone's

well-being, and Raghad and Hadeel, both twenty-somethings who were best friends and always cracking jokes. The newcomers took comfort in the cross-cultural friendship with women their own age. Later, that would turn to anguish.

Just the Basics

The staffers' good will, hard work and willingness to stay in Iraq impressed CPA representatives from other ministries, but it did little to alter the reality that the budget office had become a bottleneck.

The U.S.-led coalition had come seeking to establish a strong economy with high-paying jobs, functioning factories and a rich consumer market. This was seen as the road to democracy.

Far from such lofty missions, the budget team had its hands full just keeping things running.

Army Reserve Sgt. Glenn Corliss, who worked with the Ministry of Industry and Minerals, said staffers were so inexperienced and rotated out so quickly it was difficult for them to act on anything. In November many state-owned factories had been shut down for want of electricity, a potentially explosive problem because it left thousands jobless. Corliss had found private firms willing to invest in portable generators for the most critical factories. All they wanted was a letter of credit saying that they would be paid for their services. No one in the budget office would make a decision on it for months and Corliss finally gave up in March when he returned to the United States. "I wanted to pull their heads off oftentimes," Corliss said.

Brad Jackson, a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve who worked with the CPA, said the budget team regularly asked other ministries at the last minute to produce information that would take hundreds of people half a year to gather.

"There were a lot of people who, being political science majors, didn't know what an income statement was, who were asking the

impossible. . . . That was giving us ulcers, quite frankly," he said.

The young budget advisers are the first to admit that they weren't the most qualified to be managing Iraq's finances. "We knew we were overwhelmed. We wanted help," Ledeen said. "We were doing maintenance, trying to make sure there were no riots, that no one went hungry." The budget team reported to Rodney Bent, a former U.S. Office of Management and Budget official, and Tony McDonald from the Australian Treasury. McDonald said it angers him to hear people criticize the budget team. "The people who came were young and keen—not necessarily the most experienced—but they were here. They did a great job in working as hard as they could."

The Big Blast

December was the month everything seemed to come together. The staffers were becoming more confident in their work, more intimate in their friendships. Greco celebrated her 26th birthday and Hadeel her 29th—old for a single Iraqi woman. The translator joked that she would be an old maid. For Hanukah and Christmas, the Americans gave the Iraqi women jewelry, and they gave the Americans miniature silver frames. On New Year's, Hadeel surprised everyone by announcing that she was engaged to marry.

A few weeks later, on Jan. 18, Greco was in the shower and Ledeen was still in bed when they heard a giant boom from the direction of the north gate of CPA headquarters. Colleagues called to check on each other, but no one could locate Raghad and Hadeel, who often traveled together to work by taxi.

Ledeen checked out a car and drove the five minutes to the gate. She saw mangled bodies, flames shooting out of vehicles, families screaming and crying, but no sign of the two women. A few hours later, she learned the news: Raghad was wounded and Hadeel was dead.

The next day, wearing flak jackets and helmets, Ledeen and Greco went to visit Raghad in the hospital. As they moved to embrace Raghad—who was covered with cuts and bruises and had lost hearing in one ear—the mother of another injured woman told them to leave, saying they should have never come, that it wasn't safe.

"It's okay," Ledeen told her. "It's not okay, little girl," the woman snapped back. It was only then that Ledeen understood the mother wasn't worried about her safety. She was concerned about the Iraqi women who, as workers for the CPA, were seen by insurgents as collaborators.

The memorial service was held in the cavernous theater in the convention center with hundreds of seats, far more than needed for the small gathering. It was a mixed Muslim-Christian ceremony. A local mosque leader chanted from the Koran. A group sang a hymn. Bremer made a brief speech, but rather than remembering the victims he focused on the terrorists who had killed their friends.

Ledeen said the service was beautiful, but as she sat near Hadeel's family and fiancé, all she could think of was how the victims' names hadn't been read aloud and how empty the room seemed.

"I was ashamed for all of us that there were so few people there," Ledeen remembered. "We should have filled those seats with CPA people to thank them for their sacrifice for us. We should have filled those seats."

Turnover

Reinforcements for the budget team finally began arriving in February, another batch of young, eager faces.

Ledeen was assigned to train Brendan Lund, 26, a Merrill Lynch software developer. She taught him to greet people with "Salam alaykum," how to tighten the straps on his flak jacket, how to read the government employee payment spreadsheets. When he said, "We don't seem to have enough senior-level folks making the decisions in the right place," she responded that he was right and that he should be prepared to take the initiative.

During her last few days in Baghdad, the two met with a woman seeking money for heart surgery and with a former Ministry of Information official under Saddam Hussein.

Ledeen promised to help the woman by making calls to George Washington University and to influential members of Congress. She was equally decisive in her response to the former Baathist official who asked if he could get a raise even though he wasn't working and if his former co-workers could cash the 1 million dinar clothing allowance checks that they had been issued before the invasion.

"I laughed," she said. And then she showed him the door.

It was then that she realized, she said, that "I was all grown up."

Ledeen left Baghdad in late March to be with a sick cousin. The rest of the group departed soon afterward. On the plane ride home on May 15, Baldwin, Greco, Hanley, Wasson and Burns talked about being reunited with family and friends and about vacations plans. But the conversation kept turning back to Iraq—what they did, what they could have done, what they should have done, what they could still do.

"I support what we're doing, and I absolutely don't think we should pull out and not finish what we started," Greco said. Burns wasn't as confident. He said he was at the same time full of "optimism, pessimism and realism. . . . In some ways we went looking to establish an American system in Iraq, and we can never do that."

Meanwhile, back in Baghdad, weeks before the June 30 handover when the CPA is scheduled to dissolve, staffing levels have finally improved. Twenty people are doing the old jobs of the six.

The Washington Post

FINAL

Inside: Home, local news Extra
Today's Contents on Page A2NEWSSTAND 35¢
HOME DELIVERY 31¢Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan
Washington. (See box on Page A2)

Weather

Today: Mostly sunny, late storm. High 86. Low 69.
Friday: Humid, some sun, late storm. High 90. Low 72.

Details, Page B8

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Short Trains At Night Irk Metro Riders

Cost-Cutting Move Leaves Passengers on the Platform

By LYNDSEY LAYTON
Washington Post Staff Writer

Higher Metro fares and fees generated the most attention this week, but a more subtle change by the transit system is affecting thousands: It shrank the trains.

After 10 p.m. on Sundays through Thursdays—on every line—the subway has cut the length of its trains in half, operating trains with two cars instead of four.

Since the policy took effect this week, it has created a late crunch, especially on the heavily traveled Red Line in downtown Washington. At the Farragut North, Metro Center, Gallery Place-Chinatown and Union Station stops, angry crowds have found themselves competing for space on the trains at an hour when most had been accustomed to relaxing their urban combat skills. Those unable to push themselves aboard have to wait 15 to 20 minutes for the next train, as a new crowd forms around them.

"Did they do any research before they made this change?" asked Irena Sadbaraitė, a 28-year-old accountant who failed to fight her way aboard a packed train to Vienna at 10:25 p.m. Tuesday at Metro Center. She waited 20 minutes for the next train, steaming. "I can't believe they've done this, especially in summer, when people stay out for

See METRO, A8, Col. 5



BY MICHAEL LUTZKY—THE WASHINGTON POST

Riders wait at Metro Center for two-car trains. The policy has turned weekday late nights into rush hour, with crowds competing to board.

U.S. Judge Cuts Farmer's Sentence In Mall Standoff

By CAROL D. LEONNIG and NEELY TUCKER
Washington Post Staff Writers

A North Carolina tobacco farmer sentenced last week to six years in prison for driving his tractor onto the Mall and threatening to detonate explosives had his sentence cut abruptly yesterday in one of the first cases to get a review after a Supreme Court ruling.

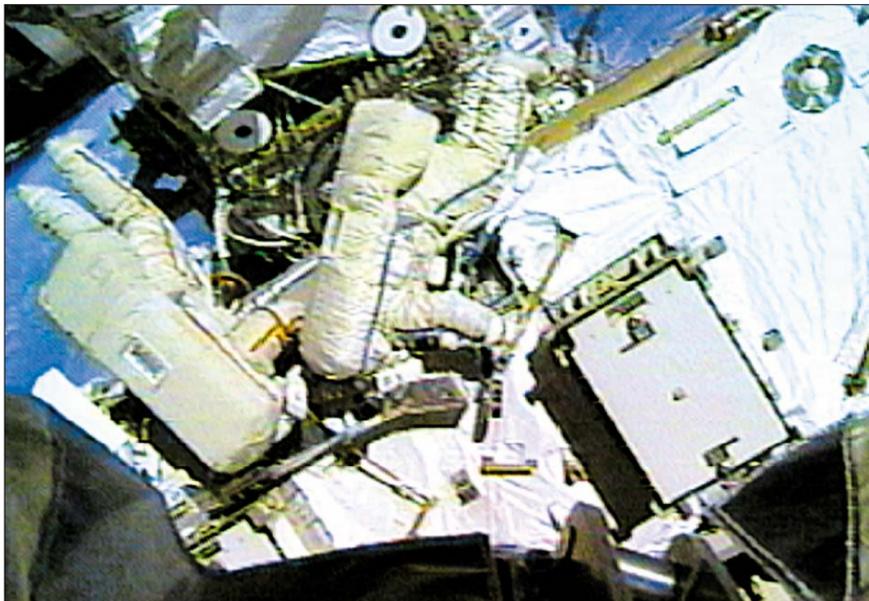
"Hallelujah!" Dwight W. Watson exclaimed in court yesterday morning after a federal judge resented him to 16 months. Watson has been locked up for 15 months and 11 days since his arrest in March 2003. With credit for good behavior, the man who waged a 47-hour standoff with police could be eligible for release this week.

A Supreme Court decision last Thursday raises questions about the legality of tens of thousands of other criminal sentences handed down across the nation. Watson was sentenced just one day before the high court's ruling, which said that juries—not judges—must decide on facts that are used to increase sentences beyond the maximum ranges called for in sentencing guidelines.

U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson went beyond the 16-month term set by the guidelines in Watson's case, saying that his menacing conduct and the havoc he caused called for a much longer sentence. Yesterday, acting on a motion filed by the defense, Jackson said he had no choice but to re-

See WATSON, A6, Col. 3

Repair on Space Station Succeeds



NASA TV VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russian Gennady Padalka, left, and American Edward "Mike" Fincke replace a faulty circuit breaker on the international space station during a televised spacewalk. An earlier attempt by the astronauts had to be aborted. Story, Page A3.

Cassini First to Orbit Saturn

Spacecraft Slips Through Planet's Rings for Exploratory Mission

By GUY GUGLIOTTA
Washington Post Staff Writer

PASADENA, Calif., July 1—The Cassini-Huygens spacecraft hurtled through the rings of Saturn and settled into planetary orbit late Wednesday, putting a pinpoint finish to a bold 2 billion-mile journey through space to embark on a four-year exploration of the solar system's sixth planet, its rings and its moons in one of the most ambitious space science projects ever un-

dertaken.

Locked in the grip of Saturn's gravity and traveling at a speed of 50,331 mph, Cassini-Huygens breached the 15,000-mile-wide gap between the planet's F and G rings at 10:11 p.m. Eastern time on Wednesday, turned its back end forward and fired its main rocket in a 96-minute "burn" to brake its progress.

At 10:25 p.m. scientists at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory applauded as the spacecraft, apparently un-

scathed, sent a radio transmission confirming that it was safely through the rings.

Eleven minutes later, louder applause broke out as the burn began steering the spacecraft on an arc that brought it within a scant 12,800 miles of Saturn's cloud tops. At 12:12 a.m. Thursday, the burn ended within a second of its predicted finish and the entire roomful of scientists and engineers

See SATURN, A8, Col. 1

Powell, in Sudan, Presses for Action

Visit to Refugee Camp Highlights Regional Humanitarian Crisis

By GLENN KESSLER
Washington Post Staff Writer

ABU SHOUK, Sudan, June 30—Surrounded by thousands of chanting victims of violence, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell strode through a sprawling refugee camp in western Sudan on Wednesday and demanded that the Sudanese government ease a humanitarian crisis that has left more than 1 million people homeless.

Powell, who was accompanied by Sudan's foreign minister, called on the government to bring under control marauding Arab militias called the Janjaweed that have attacked villages, and also said it should lift restrictions hindering the delivery of food and medicine to more than 100 camps in Darfur, a region larger than France.

"Camps are good for temporary purposes, but that cannot be the answer," Powell said after a 15-minute walking tour. "We are anxious to see the end of militarism, we are anxious to see the Janjaweed brought under control and disbanded so people can leave camps in safety and go back to their homes." Powell's trip, the first high-level U.S. visit to Sudan in 25



STATE DEPARTMENT PHOTO VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell is escorted through a refugee camp in the turbulent Darfur region of Sudan.

years, came as the United States circulated a draft U.N. resolution that would place sanctions on the militias, which are accused of killing and raping villagers during 16 months of vi-

See SUDAN, A18, Col. 1

Israeli Court Orders Changes in Barrier

Route Through West Bank Found to Violate Palestinians' Rights

By MOLLY MOORE
Washington Post Foreign Service

JERUSALEM, June 30—The Israeli Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that a contentious section of the barrier being built by Israel in the West Bank violates the rights of thousands of Palestinian residents by separating them from their farmland in "a veritable chokehold, which will severely stifle daily life."

A 34-page ruling issued by a three-judge panel of the court found that a partially completed portion of the route "established for the security fence—which separates the local inhabitants from their agricultural lands—injures the local inhabitants in a severe and acute way, while violating their rights under humanitarian international law."

Building the barrier along a route that would separate thousands of

farmers from their olive groves and other lands "severely violates their right of property and their freedom of movement," said the justices, who concluded, "The difficult reality of life from which they have suffered will only become more severe."

The Israeli military, which chose the barrier's route and is overseeing its construction, said in a statement

See MIDEAST, A18, Col. 1

Underclass of Workers Created in Iraq

Many Foreign Laborers Receive Inferior Pay, Food and Shelter

By ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA
Washington Post Staff Writer

KOLLAM, India—The war in Iraq has been a windfall for Kellogg Brown & Root Inc., the company that has a multibillion-dollar contract to provide support services for U.S. troops. Its profits have come thanks to the hard work of people like Dharmapalan Ajayakumar, who until last month served as a kitchen helper at a military base.

But Ajayakumar, 29, a former carpenter's assistant from this coastal town, was not there by choice.

He said he was tricked into going to Iraq by a recruiting agent who told him the job was in Kuwait. Moreover, he said, the company skimmed on expenses by not providing him and other workers with adequate drinking water, food, health care or security for part of their time in the war zone.

"I cursed my fate—not having a

feeling my life was secure, knowing I could not go back, and being treated like a kind of animal," said Ajayakumar, who worked for less than \$7 a day.

Working alongside Americans trying to rebuild Iraq are an estimated tens of thousands of foreign contractors without whom the reconstruction could not function. Many toil for wages that are one-tenth—or less—of what U.S. workers might demand, saving millions

See WORKERS, A16, Col. 1



BY ARIANA CHA—THE WASHINGTON POST

Back home in India with his sister-in-law and nephew, Dharmapalan Ajayakumar says tap water treated with chlorine tablets that he had to drink in Iraq made him sick.

■ Iraq gets legal custody of Hussein, top aides. | Page A10

Fed Lifts Key Rate To Curb Inflation

More Hikes May Come, Policymakers Signal

By NELL HENDERSON
Washington Post Staff Writer

Federal Reserve officials yesterday raised a key short-term interest rate for the first time in four years and signaled that they would probably nudge rates higher as the economy grows stronger.

Rate increases could become more aggressive if inflation pressures continue to build, officials indicated. But in a statement issued at the conclusion of their two-day meeting in Washington, the policymakers said they can raise rates "at a pace that is likely to be measured," because they expect inflation to remain "relatively low."

The 12 members of the Federal Open Market Committee voted unanimously to lift their target for the federal funds rate—which influences borrowing costs throughout the economy—to 1.25 percent from 1 percent, where it had been for the past year. Financial markets had little reaction to the afternoon announcement of the rate increase, which had been widely expected. Stock and bond prices rose slightly.

The Fed is raising the rate not to slow the economy, but rather to ensure that it does not grow so rapidly that inflation takes off.

The action "should not be interpreted as an attempt to brake an out-of-control economy," said Richard A. Yamarone, director of economic research at Argus Research Corp. He said the rate increase is "more appropriately analogous to taking the foot off the accelerator."

The Fed committee emphasized that it is prepared to abandon its plan for small rate increases, of a quarter-percentage point at a time, if its tame forecasts of "underlying in-

See FED, A6, Col. 3

■ Reaction muted on bond trading floors. | Page E1

IRS Toughens Scrutiny of Land Gifts

By JOE STEPHENS
and DAVID B. OTTAWAY
Washington Post Staff Writers

The Internal Revenue Service announced yesterday that it is cracking down on improper tax deductions taken by people who give real estate and cash to environmental groups, warning that taxpayers could face penalties and charities could lose their tax-exempt status.

The IRS is specifically targeting gifts of "conservation easements"—deed restrictions that limit some types of real estate development. The easements have become the environmental movement's key tool for preserving fragile ecosystems and millions of acres of open space.

The IRS is focusing on easements that have questionable public benefit or have been manipulated to generate inflated deductions.

"We've uncovered numerous instances where the tax benefits of preserving open spaces and historic buildings have been twisted for inappropriate individual benefit," IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson said in a statement. "Taxpayers who want to game the system and the charities that assist them will be called to account."

The IRS warned that it intends to levy

See TAXES, A4, Col. 3

INSIDE

New Laws in Area Hit the Books Today

New legislation takes effect in the Washington area, including the District's ban on hand-held cell phone use by drivers, Maryland's increases in vehicle registration fees and Virginia's tougher drunken driving laws.

METRO, Page B1



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Recruited by Deceit, Some Support Workers in Iraq Feel Trapped

WORKERS, From A1

of taxpayer dollars.

The employees were hired through a maze of recruiters and subcontractors on several continents, making oversight and accountability of the workforce difficult.

Pakistan is looking into reports that recruiters were illegally trying to hire security personnel to go to Iraq. The Philippines is assessing protection measures for its nationals after attacks killed two military support workers. And India is conducting an investigation into the dining service workers' allegations.

The State Department said it received a request from India for assistance and has passed it along to the Defense Department. A spokeswoman for the Army, which manages the KBR contract, said the responsibility for the investigation rests with the company.

KBR, a subsidiary of Halliburton Co., came to employ Ajayakumar and other Indian workers through five levels of subcontractors and employment agents. The company, which employs 30,000 workers from 38 countries in support of the U.S. military, said it had been unaware of the workers' concerns until recently.

KBR spokeswoman Patrice Mingo said the company met with representatives of the Indian government to discuss the complaints. For now, there is "no substantiated proof on which to take action," Mingo said, but the company is open to discussing the matter further with current or former employees.

"KBR does not condone and will not tolerate any practice that unlawfully compels subcontract employees to perform work or remain in place against their will," Mingo said.

The reconstruction of Iraq has provided workers from developing countries with job opportunities they might otherwise never have had. But the vast difference in the recruiting, compensation, accommodations and protection of some foreigners versus their American counterparts is raising uncomfortable questions about how companies calculate the value of a life in Iraq.

South Korean engineers working on Iraq's power grid have complained they did not get the flak jackets and helmets issued to U.S. co-workers. Some Filipino clean-

One Worker's Journey to Iraq

A single U.S. government contract can involve layers of subcontractors, making it difficult to determine who is to blame for problems. Abdul Aziz Shahjahan, a butcher from the south Indian state of Kerala, said he was promised a job in Kuwait. Here's how he wound up working for Kellogg Brown & Root Inc. at an American military base in Iraq instead:

June 2003

INDIA: A friend from a nearby village approaches Shahjahan saying a relative who is a recruiting agent is "selling" work visas for 70,000 rupees, or \$1,600, that will allow him to work in Kuwait for two years at four times his current salary. Shahjahan quickly agrees.

July 31, 2003

INDIA: He is taken by train to Subhas Vijay Associates' Mumbai offices, where he is given a one-way airplane ticket to Kuwait. The work contract is in English and Shahjahan doesn't know what it says, but he signs anyway.

August 3, 2003

KUWAIT: He arrives in Kuwait City, where a representative from Gulf Catering, based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, puts him on a bus. Hours into the trip, when he spies tanks and soldiers out of his windows, he realizes he has entered Iraq.

August 4, 2003

IRAQ: Gulf Catering is subcontracted to another dining services company called Alargan Group, which is helping staff dining facilities at U.S. military camps in northern Iraq. Shahjahan arrives at Q-West, which at that time was occupied by the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division.

August 4, 2003

IRAQ: Shahjahan is assigned to build a mess hall as part of Alargan's subcontract with the Event Source, which is based in the United States. He also carries and chops food in the kitchen.

August 4, 2003

IRAQ: Event Source, in turn, has a subcontract with Kellogg Brown & Root, Inc., also based in the United States, which is the main contractor providing support services to the U.S. military. Shahjahan is issued a KBR badge.



Abdul Aziz Shahjahan holding his son.

THE WASHINGTON POST

SOURCE: Washington Post reporting

ers and other support workers have said they were given others' spoiled food to eat. And some of the Indian workers said they were brought in on buses with only gauze curtains to hide them from insurgents while many other contractors come into the country on chartered planes or in convoys with military escorts.

"They were working under threat and fear of death," said S. Sreejith, superintendent of police for Kollam, where the workers' complaints were first filed. American companies "are making money off of cheating our people."

Rep. Janice D. Schakowsky (D-Ill.) said contractors' use of multiple layers of subcontracts makes it difficult for the U.S. government to ensure the fair treatment of the workers it effectively employs.

"The whole area of private military contractors is very murky in terms of accountability, chain of command and relationship to our mission," she said, "but as you get into subcontracting it gets murkier and murkier . . . and you can't tell what's going on."

Manpower Export Market

The Indian state of Kerala where Ajayakumar grew up is most famous for being the center of the international spice trade in

the 16th century. Today, it's known for its export of another important commodity: manpower.

Several million expatriates from Kerala, on the southern tip of the country, serve in the Persian Gulf region in jobs from doctors to gardeners. The money has transformed the state from a tropical backwater popularized in Arundhati Roy's 1997 Booker Prize-winning novel "The God of Small Things" to a modern center of commerce.

Ajayakumar was thrilled when a recruiting agent came to him in June 2003 and offered to "sell" him a two-year work visa in Kuwait for a catering company job that would pay \$200 a month—five times what he was making at the carpenter's shop. He gladly paid the agent's \$1,800 fee, borrowing from local loan sharks, calculating that he would still make out with significant profits.

In late July, Ajayakumar boarded a train for Mumbai along with several dozen other Indian workers who were recruited for contract work: Abdul Jaleel Shani, 24, who had worked at a wedding store; brothers Abdul Aziz Hamid, 30, and Abdul Aziz Shahjahan, 28, who were butchers; and Manzoor Haneefa Kunju, 29, and Aliyoor Kunju Faisil, 34, who had worked at local hotels.

There, at an employment agency called Subhash Vijay Associates, they signed some papers and were handed tickets to Kuwait.

In Kuwait City, the workers were put on a bus and told they were going to "the border."

It didn't stop until they arrived at Q-West, a camp occupied by the 101st Airborne Division near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. There, the men became part of the largest civilian workforce supporting the U.S. military in history. Subhash Vijay had hired them to work for Gulf Catering Co. of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, which was subcontracted to Alargan Group of Kuwait City, which was subcontracted to the Event Source of Salt Lake City, which in turn was subcontracted to KBR of Houston.

They were issued ID cards that said "Brown & Root."

In a typical U.S. government contract, there are no restrictions on the number and "tiers" of subcontractors that can be used—creating situations like the one that Ajayakumar and the other Indian workers were in. The contractor, in this case KBR, often must report only the first tier of subcontractors, meaning that the government is often unaware of how its work gets done or by whom. The General Accounting Office over the past decade has raised

concerns about the lack of visibility when multiple layers of subcontractors, especially foreign subcontractors, are involved, but the policy has not changed.

Unfriendly Surroundings

At Q-West, Ajayakumar and Shani worked the day shift scrubbing the floors, carrying boxes and doing other odd jobs for the dining facility. Hamid and Shahjahan worked nights chopping food and helping the cooks. They said they were terrified by the frequent gunfire and mortar and rocket attacks, but what really upset them was the way they were treated by others on the base.

"The attitude of the people was not friendly at all. We were doing a service for these people but they shouted at us and talked down to us," Hamid said.

While their Western managers slept in air-conditioned trailers, they were crammed into tents in 100-degree-plus temperatures. The cooks set aside some rice and curry for them but it was not enough and they had to supplement their food with whatever was left over from the soldiers' meals—which was often nothing. They were told they could not take the filtered bottled water but instead must drink the Iraqi tap wa-

ter that was poured into aluminum buckets with tablets of chlorine and chunks of ice. The workers would pick through the soldiers' trash and retrieve the empty water bottles that they would use as cups.

Ajayakumar said he threw up for weeks from the contaminated water. He was allowed to see an Iraqi doctor who gave him one pill—without explaining what it was for and which did nothing to alleviate his symptoms.

His co-workers had other complaints: that they were assigned to do construction work they weren't hired for, that they weren't adequately compensated for their 12- to 16-hour days, that Hindus were served beef, that Muslims were instructed to handle pork.

The workers said they felt trapped. They didn't want to be in Iraq, but returning home meant no more jobs, paying their own travel expenses and forfeiting the agent's fees. Plus, their bosses were holding their passports.

Three months into the men's stay in Iraq, there were explosions near the base and people ran out of the tents. While other contractors came out in full protective gear and jumped into their cars, the kitchen workers were told to stand

See WORKERS, A17, Col. 1

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Multiple Subcontracting Layers in Iraq Make Accountability Elusive

WORKERS, From A16

outside near a tent in their pajamas.

"At that moment we realized that they are privileged people and we are nothing," Shani said.

One evening soon afterward, when they were handed a dinner of beef curry that hadn't been fully cooked, several dozen of them went to their manager, who worked for Gulf Catering, to complain. According to the workers, the man told them they would not get any more food. "We bought you," he reportedly said. Some Indian workers were so furious they packed their bags and began walking to the gates of the base. Another manager, who worked for the Event Source, raced over to them and urged them to stay, promising

changes.

Things improved somewhat after that conversation, the workers said, and they got their own food, both vegetarian and meat curry each night, bottled water and—by January—many had air-conditioned trailers. Still, many felt defeated by the first few difficult months. And so in May when they were offered a bus ride out of Iraq, nearly everyone accepted.

Fighting Back

As the men returned to Kerala, they began filing complaints—about a dozen so far—with the local police department, which has launched an investigation into how they were recruited.

The local employment agents, Subhash Vijay, Gulf Catering and Alargan did not respond to requests for comment.

Paul Morrell, president of the Event Source, whose representative was in charge of the dining facilities at Q-West, said he was surprised by the workers' allegations. He said the Event Source's agreement with its subcontractors requires them to provide adequate food and water and flak jackets, helmets and security guards to workers when they travel to and from bases. But, he acknowledged, the company had been unable to independently verify whether the requirements had been met.

"Any time workers expressed concerns, people got involved. They made sure the workers were treated

fairly," Morrell said.

Meanwhile, Ajayakumar and the others are trying to bail themselves out of debt. While they were paid their promised base salaries—how much overtime they deserved and got is a matter of dispute—it was not enough to make up for the agent's fee and the interest payments many had racked up. They had assumed they would be working for two years, not nine months.

Ajayakumar has no job and no job prospects.

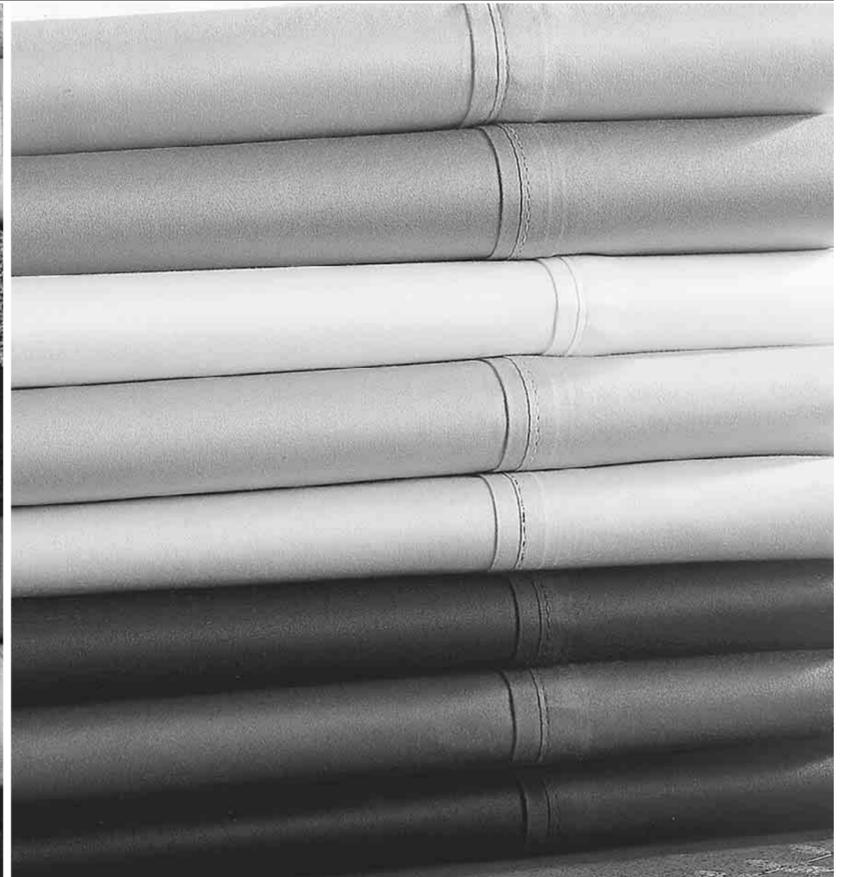
The only thing he has from his time in Iraq is a certificate of appreciation from KBR. It thanks him for his help in the success of the "dinning [sic] facility" at the camp. Thank you, the tribute on standard 8 1/2-by-11-inch paper reads, "for your tireless effort."



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The Washington Post

FINAL

Inside: Food, Classified
Today's Contents on Page A2

35¢

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington. (See box on Page A2)

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2004

M1 M2 M3 M4 V1 V2 V3 V4

Weather

Today: Partly sunny, humid.
High 90, Low 74.
Thursday: Thunder showers.
High 84, Low 62.

Details, Page B8

127TH YEAR No. 243 M2 DC MD VA K

D.C. Slots Initiative Is Dealt A Blow

Elections Board Rejects Petitions

By LORI MONTGOMERY
and SERGE F. KOVALESKI
Washington Post Staff Writers

The D.C. elections board yesterday threw out thousands of signatures gathered in support of the legalization of slot machines, saying a July petition drive illegally misrepresented the gambling initiative as a harbinger of jobs, improved public schools and better health care.

The board found that the drive was tainted by "troubling" and "pervasive" violations of law. Nonetheless, the three-member panel left open the possibility that the initiative would yet qualify for a spot on the Nov. 2 ballot. The board is scheduled to meet tomorrow to resolve the matter.

John Ray, chief advocate for the initiative, said the board's ruling wiped out well over half of the 56,000 signatures collected during a frenetic five-day petition drive. He said the remaining petitions are unlikely to contain 17,599 valid signatures, the number needed to put slots before District voters this fall.

"The ruling was not good for us," Ray, a former D.C. Council member, told reporters. Businessman Pedro Alfonso, another leading slots backer, added: "It will be extremely difficult to make the ballot."

Religious and community activists who have spent the past two months maneuvering to block the initiative were pleased. Given the

See SLOTS, A6, Col. 2

Court Offers Guidance on Sentencing In Md., Va.

U.S. Judges Urged To Issue 2 Penalties

By JERRY MARKON
Washington Post Staff Writer

A federal appeals court trying to end confusion over the legality of sentencing guidelines has come up with a highly unusual suggestion: Judges should sentence defendants twice.

The Richmond-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit issued the recommendation to judges in Virginia, Maryland and three other states on a temporary basis until the Supreme Court explains its recent decision casting doubt on the constitutionality of U.S. sentencing guidelines.

The 4th Circuit's decision to weigh in late Monday is a measure of the turmoil that has gripped federal courts nationwide since the Supreme Court ruled June 24 that Washington state's sentencing guidelines were unconstitutional. The high court struck them down because they allowed a judge, rather than a jury, to consider factors that increase a defendant's sentence.

Because Washington state's system resembles the federal one, dozens of federal judges have since ruled that the high court's decision makes part or all of the U.S. sentencing guidelines unconstitutional. The confusion has affected thousands of cases, with some hearings delayed, other sentences drastically reduced, and prosecutors and defense lawyers flooding courts with

See COURT, A6, Col. 2

The Post on the Internet:
washingtonpost.com

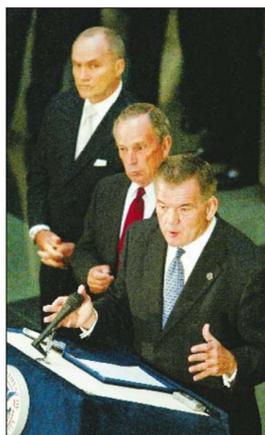


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U.S. Capitol Police officers screen cars on First Street NE, part of an increase in vigilance after the terror threat level was raised.



Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge speaks in New York, joined by Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, left, and Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Analysis

Old Data, New Credibility Issues

By GLENN KESSLER
Washington Post Staff Writer

The White House's failure to make it clear that the dramatic terrorism alert Sunday was based largely on information that predated the Sept. 11 attacks is a case study in the difficulty of managing such warnings for an administration whose credibility is a central issue in a difficult presidential campaign.

At one level, experts yesterday credited the Department of Homeland Security for narrowly targeting the warning to selected buildings in three cities, rather than raising the threat level across the nation. But they said the effort was seriously undercut by the revelation that much of the surveillance of those buildings took place three to four years ago.

"Their efforts to focus attention on specific

areas and targets is good," said William H. Webster, a former FBI and CIA director who is vice chairman of the Homeland Security Department's Advisory Council. "But they obviously have a ways to go," he said, adding that "it opens the door for people to be suspicious and cynical."

Webster said the administration is trying to avoid appearing as if it is "crying wolf," and he felt the news conference by Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge was "studied and not designed to raise panic levels." He also noted that terrorist acts often take years of planning, so a "three-year spread doesn't mean the intentions have changed; it just means nothing has happened."

Still, Webster said, it is unclear when—or

See ANALYSIS, A11, Col. 1

■ White House defends alerts despite dated intelligence. | Page A11

\$1.9 Billion of Iraq's Money Goes to U.S. Contractors

By ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA
Washington Post Staff Writer

Halliburton Co. and other U.S. contractors are being paid at least \$1.9 billion from Iraqi funds under an arrangement set by the U.S.-led occupation authority, according to a review of documents and interviews with government agencies, companies and auditors.

Most of the money is for two controversial

deals that originally had been financed with money approved by the U.S. Congress, but later shifted to Iraqi funds that were governed by fewer restrictions and less rigorous oversight.

For the first 14 months of the occupation, officials of the Coalition Provisional Authority provided little detailed information about the Iraqi money, from oil sales and other sources, that it spent on reconstruction

contracts. They have said that it was used for the benefit of the Iraqi people and that most of the contracts paid from Iraqi money went to Iraqi companies. But the CPA never released information about specific contracts and the identities of companies that won them, citing security concerns, so it has been impossible to know whether these promises were kept.

The CPA has said it has awarded about 2,000 contracts with Iraqi money. Its inspector general compiled records for the major contracts, which it defined as those worth

\$5 million or more each. Analysis of those and other records shows that 19 of 37 major contracts funded by Iraqi money went to U.S. companies and at least 85 percent of the total \$2.26 billion was obligated to U.S. companies. The contracts that went to U.S. firms may be worth several hundred million more once the work is completed.

That analysis and several audit reports released in recent weeks shed new light on how

See CONTRACTORS, A12, Col. 1

INSIDE

Hearing Begins in Abu Ghraib Abuse

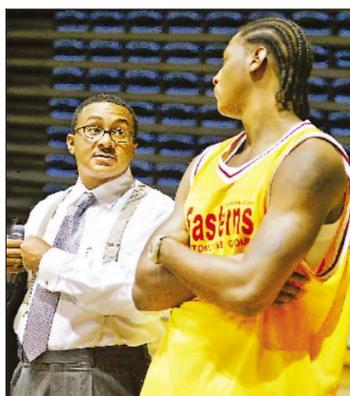
Army investigators say abuse in Iraq prison was the work of rogue MPs.
WORLD, Page A14

Spending Fell 0.7% in June

Economists debate whether Commerce figures signal a serious slide.
BUSINESS, Page E1

A Taste of Mexico

A one-mile stretch of Kenilworth Avenue, with lively restaurants and chili-packed markets, has changed the flavor of Riverdale.
FOOD, Page F1



NBA star Carmelo Anthony is among a growing number of athletes who have turned to Terence Tarrer, among others, to manage their lives.

Leading the Leagues in Assists

Concierge Industry Caters to Athletes' Needs—and Whims

By THOMAS HEATH
Washington Post Staff Writer

Detroit Lions running back Kevin Jones wanted a dog—but not just any dog. He wanted an English bulldog and, when a star athlete such as Kevin Jones wants a dog, he doesn't go to a shelter, a kennel or a breeder. He picks up the phone and, within a few days, is walking the puppy of his dreams.

Tarrer Management put the leash in Jones's hand. The company caters to every personal and financial whim in the lives of the two dozen professional athletes it serves—and that means tracking down the perfect English bulldog.

When Jones called, client services specialist Chynica Brown jumped on the Internet and found a champion bulldog breeder in Britain, or-

dering an 8-week-old, \$2,500 female that was flown to Dulles International Airport. Brown guided the puppy through customs and took it home with her. Three days later, the pup was plopped in a rented Jeep Cherokee and driven overnight by another Tarrer specialist to Dearborn, Mich., where "Cheeks," as the bulldog was named, was delivered to Jones around 7 a.m.

"I called them up and said I needed to get a dog, and the next thing you know, they got this dog," Jones said. "They got it to me within two or three days . . . all the shots done."

Jones is one of hundreds of professional athletes whose salaries have soared over the last decade, creating a class of young millionaires inclined to hire staff to handle the clutter and in-

See ASSISTANTS, A8, Col. 1

NIH to Set Stiff Restrictions on Outside Consulting

By RICK WEISS
Washington Post Staff Writer

A top official at the National Institutes of Health yesterday detailed restrictions and disclosure requirements soon to be imposed on agency scientists who wish to consult for outside companies—a response to a string of embarrassing revelations about lucrative contracts and other

apparent conflicts of interest.

The new oversight system, which officials expect to be in place within six months, will ban anyone with even indirect authority over NIH grants from consulting for drug or biotechnology companies. It will also place limits on stock ownership and require that more details of approved outside activities be open to the public, said NIH Deputy Direc-

tor Raynard S. Kington, who described the restrictions yesterday in an interview at the agency's Bethesda campus.

The changes come in the wake of a stinging eight-month congressional inquiry, an investigation by the federal Office of Government Ethics, an internal agency review, an analysis by a commission of independent experts, and—perhaps most diffi-

cult for the venerable institution—a slow but steady stream of disclosures about NIH scientists who had allegedly engaged in unethical collaborations with drug and biotech companies.

"What we have clearly concluded is that the system was not working," Kington said. And although some

See NIH, A6, Col. 2



U.S. Marines fan out as they search a roadside under the hot Iraqi sun for evidence of bombs, such as recently moved dirt or the tip of a walkie-talkie antenna.

PHOTOS BY DRUG STRUCK—THE WASHINGTON POST

Vigilance Pays Where Complacency Kills

Patrols Search for Bombs on Iraqi Roads

By DOUG STRUCK
Washington Post Foreign Service

ANA, Iraq—The holes gouged from the pavement were a reminder, as if one were necessary, of the danger to Bravo Company as it rolled through the shimmering heat.

"Stop here," Lt. Vince Noble said quietly. His Humvee, guiding three others, eased to a halt 30 yards from a bridge. Noble, in the right-hand seat, peered through his field binoculars. He lingered, examining the dirt near the bridge with the care of an archaeologist. He was looking for a subtle change in color, scrape marks, any evidence of recent digging. Or, even more telltale, the wisp of the antenna of a walkie-talkie that would set off a roadside bomb.

Bravo Company's job this day, and every day, was to keep the roads open in this piece of western Iraq. Roadside bombs and kidnappings of truck drivers threaten to throttle Iraq, which depends on the steady caravans of trucks hauling in everything from food to fuel and furniture. Insurgents know the roads are vulnerable. Last week, one group issued a videotape threatening to cut off the main highway linking Baghdad and Amman, the capital of neighboring Jordan. It did not happen, but truckers are nervous. Nearly a dozen have been kidnapped; more have been killed by roadside bombs. In the southern city of Najaf last week, more than 30 truckers refused to move without a large guard escort.

Louei Hatim Aris, the interim transportation minister, is creating a special police fleet to accompany truckers, with mounted machine guns in the front and back of each convoy; armed men would ride in every truck. But while that might deter kidnappings, it will not stop roadside bombings. That task still falls mainly to American forces such as Bravo Company, attached to the 7th Marine Regiment in western Iraq.

"We have to keep the civilian and the military convoys moving. We have to make sure whatever is on that convoy gets through," said Maj. Mark Winn, 41, the executive officer

of the regiment's 1st Battalion. "We also have to show we are in control of the area. If you lose vehicles every day, pretty soon you are going to start losing civilian drivers who are willing to drive that route."

The effort might seem personal to officers here. In one 48-hour period, the top three regimental commanders were hit by roadside bombs, Winn said. All escaped serious harm, though Col. Craig Tucker, the top commander, spit shrapnel out of his mouth that came through his cheek, according to Winn.

The bombers prefer military convoys, adding to the toll of U.S. casualties by grim ones and twos, but they also target truck convoys. A top official of the interim Iraqi government argues that roadside bombs are a sign of the opposition's desperation.

"The terrorists have changed their tactics, from openly confronting the security forces to using kidnapping and bombs," Georges Sada, a spokesman for the interim prime minister, said last week. "For sure, it's a cowardly thing. But it's easy to take someone from the highway or set a bomb at night."

Many Iraqis assert that the spectacular suicide bombings that often kill by the dozen are being carried out by foreigners. "Iraqis don't kill themselves," said one government security official. But the roadside bombs, they admit, are probably the work of Iraqis who were loyal to ousted president Saddam Hussein and want to disrupt the new government.

For the U.S. military, the search is a deadly game of move and countermove. As the Americans change their tactics, the bombers invent new threats. U.S. forces used to set roadside bombs that were set off by a switch at the end of a long wire. But when they started tracking those wires and killing the triggermen, the bombers began using remote detonators: garage door openers, toy car remote controls, wireless doorbells and cell phones. A favorite is a simple walkie-talkie—the kind that can be bought at a Radio Shack outside Iraq—wired to a detonator. It



Marine Lt. Vince Noble, left, listens to a report from Lance Cpl. Mark Roop while scouring for bombs along a road from Baghdad to Syria.

can be set off from two miles away.

Noble, 26, a Naval Academy graduate from Philadelphia, said the bombers recently have begun leaving explosives in cars that blend in with the ubiquitous broken-down vehicles beside Iraqi roads.

On a recent morning, men from Noble's company kneeled around him as they planned the day's patrol. They already were sweating in the fierce midmorning sun. In the open-top Humvees, they got hotter and dirtier.

They rolled out of their camp near Haditha, past the sign saying "Complacency Kills," onto Highway 12, a major road that reaches through the brown desert from Baghdad to the Syrian border.

In the lead Humvee, Lance Cpl. Mike Riggle, 21, from Youngsville, Pa., steered to the center of the road, away from the right side, where bombs would be placed. He edged over only to let traffic pass. All eyes in the convoy swept the roadside for suspicious scenery.

"We've been up and down this road so many times we can tell what pile of dirt is new," said Sgt. Shawn Gianforte, 27, of Caledonia, N.Y.

Black-faced sheep and scrawny goats drifted into the road, chased back by shepherds with long switches. Noble's Humvee, the most likely to get hit because it was first in line, was enclosed in armor; those trailing

had steel plates bolted to them. "In theory, they protect us from shrapnel," said Gunnery Sgt. Kristian Eckholm, 33, of Green Bay, Wis. That was in case the convoy "found one the hard way."

A trail of ragged holes in the highway showed the work of the bombers. At one spot, three craters 10 yards apart were evidence of a "daisy chain"—bombs linked together to try to hit several vehicles in the convoy.

Bridges are favored spots for the roadside bombs, and Noble approached each one with caution. At one bridge, where two craters wrote the signatures of previous bombs, Noble ordered his men out of the Humvees to search under and around the structure. They fanned out quickly, and several of the Marines knelt and aimed their weapons at the brown ridges nearby. They peered through their scopes for any sign of a triggerman.

Scrambling along an embankment underneath the bridge, Cpl. Daniel Vella found no bombs but noticed Arabic writing on a steel beam, accompanied by a sketch of a truck. "We'll have to come back with an interpreter," Noble said.

Four hours later, Noble guided his men back to his camp, hot and tired. No bomb had been found, and he noted, "When it's quiet, it means we're successful."

Iraq's New Form Of Justice Seems To Satisfy Few

Case Offers View of U.S.-Backed Court

By JACKIE SPINNER
Washington Post Staff Writer

BAGHDAD—Kamal Mutib Salim, a neatly bearded man in a yellow prison jumpsuit, stopped briefly to whisper a prayer before walking into the courtroom where three judges in black robes were waiting for him. A police officer clasped his right hand firmly into Salim's left and led him to an ornately carved wooden cage at the front of the room. Salim stepped inside, folded his arms across his broad chest and waited for his trial to begin.

Salim's case was making its way through the hybrid legal system that evolved after the U.S.-led invasion last year as a blend of Iraqi- and American-style justice. He was arrested by the U.S. Army in April, when soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division raided his house and charged him with illegally possessing explosive-making materials. Last week, he answered the charges in an Iraqi court—the Central Criminal Court, established last year by the U.S.-led occupation authority.

The court, which so far has tried 37 cases involving 55 defendants, relies on a mixture of Iraqi law and rules laid down by the now-dissolved occupation authority. Although U.S. military authorities say they have established something new in Iraq—a fair tribunal that gives defendants due process—many Iraqis have refused to accept a legal system backed by the U.S. government, even if it is run by Iraqis.

While Iraqi justice generally tends to be swift—before Salim's trial, a man was tried and sentenced to death for a double murder in two hours—the court has been bogged down from the start, handling just a fraction of the hundreds of cases the military plans to send to trial.

In cases in which Iraqis have been accused of being threats to security, the Iraqi judges have imposed light sentences, ranging from two months to six years. The stiffest sentence involving a security detainee was handed down when a man who had approached a military checkpoint with four mortars, 16 mortar rounds, fuses and explosive charges in the trunk of his vehicle was ordered to spend 30 years in prison, the minimum sentence.

But the majority of the cases have turned out like Salim's. He got 18 months, and his trial provided a rare look into how an Iraqi court is dispensing justice for a foreign military force.

The court meets under heavy security in a building that used to be a personal museum of the overthrown president, Saddam Hussein. The man in charge of the court, Luqman Thabit, was also chief judge for Hussein's special secret court, in which sentences were often dictated by the Iraqi leader or his sons. Thabit said he was fired and persecuted by Hussein three years ago after he refused to sentence five prostitutes to death. As a matter of law, the women did not deserve death, Thabit said while drinking tea in his chambers before court convened.

After Hussein's son Uday had the women executed, Thabit said, he was asked again to impose the death penalty, as one final slap.

"You can't kill someone who is already dead," Thabit said. "So when I refused, I was removed from the bench."

The new court over which he presides "is fully independent," Thabit said. Because the court was set up to hear all cases of threats to security and stability in Iraq, the double-murder case also came before Thabit.

As evidenced by Salim's trial, the U.S. military has no official role in the actual court proceedings, other than to provide witnesses and an interpreter.

Staff Sgt. Guy Ridings, 31, of Waco, Tex., and Staff Sgt. Eduardo Fernandez, 27, of Guayama, Puerto Rico, were members of the unit that raided Salim's house. The two soldiers, dressed in their camouflage fatigues, testified that they found circuit boards, a disassembled alarm clock and batteries hidden in a dresser in the house. They spoke to Thabit through Maher Soliman, an Arabic-speaking divorce lawyer from California who works as a special prosecutor for

the U.S. military.

Thabit, a slight but commanding figure who had sentenced the double-murderer to death by telling him in an impassioned speech that "the bloodshed must stop," asked Fernandez whether Salim had resisted arrest. No, Fernandez replied, and then he grabbed the interpreter's arm. "Tell him," Fernandez pleaded with Soliman. "Tell him it was early in the morning and he was basically asleep."

Before the start of the trial, as he waited with Fernandez in a small room used by military lawyers, Ridings said that if it were up to him, Salim "wouldn't see the light of day."

"I've got soldiers dying about every day," he said. "I picked a dead body out of a vehicle no more than a week ago. I hope he gets what he has coming to him."

In the courtroom, the soldiers looked at Salim only once, when the judge asked them to identify him as the owner of the house where the materials were found.

After the soldiers testified, a plainclothes guard and an Iraqi police officer removed Salim from the defendant's cage to stand in front of the judges. Etched into the pink marble behind them were a scale of justice and a verse from the Koran that read, "When you judge between a man and a man, you judge with justice."

Salim told the judge that the circuit boards came from a battery factory where he had worked and that he was only holding them for safekeeping after the factory was looted.

"Aren't you against the Army?" the judge asked. "Aren't you against the Iraqi police?"

"No," Salim responded. "No." Later, Salim asked to speak with the judge. Gesturing from inside the cage, Salim said he was a victim of a conspiracy. The informant who had tipped off the Army was an old nemesis, he said, and the materials in the house were used for fishing. "I shock the fish and take them," he said. "But the timer, I don't use it at all."

After a 10-minute recess to discuss the case with the other judges, Thabit announced that he was ready to rule.

"The instruments they found in your house can be used for bombs," Thabit said, his head turned to address Salim in the cage. "But we didn't have any connection between a bomb in your neighborhood and the devices in your house."

Thabit ordered Salim to spend 18 months in jail.

Mukdad Alwan, Salim's attorney, protested that the court had no right to bring charges against his client in the first place. "This court is not legitimate," he said in an interview after the verdict.

Alwan said no Iraqi law prohibits the possession of the materials that the soldiers claimed to have found in Salim's house. "The Iraqi law found my client not guilty, but the court didn't say that. They tried him according to occupation forces."

Although the court is open to the public, not many Iraqis know that it exists. Americans as well as Iraqis have expressed surprise and disappointment at how light the judges have gone on security detainees like Salim.

Bashar, a 25-year-old pharmacist who was kneeling on a prayer rug behind the desk in his shop, said the violence will stop only if the detainees are imprisoned longer.

"We have many bad people in my country. Unfortunately, we need a thousand people like Saddam to control them," said Bashar, who declined to give his last name. "The court is legal, but the judge is not fair. He should put him in the jail a long time."

The only one who seemed pleased by the outcome was Salim.

After his trial, he greeted his attorney outside the courtroom with a kiss on each cheek.

Well, Alwan told his client, it could have been worse. The guy the other day got 30 years.

Salim smiled broadly. "I'll take it easy," he said, before gesturing with his thumb at the U.S. soldiers. "Those dogs are finished."

Special correspondents Omar Fekiki and Luma Mousawi contributed to this report.

Iraqis Complain of Little Control Over Money

CONTRACTORS, From A1

the occupation authority handled the Iraqi money it controlled. They show that the CPA at times violated its own rules, authorizing Iraqi money when it didn't have a quorum or proper Iraqi representation at meetings, and kept such sloppy records that the paperwork for several major contracts could not be found. During the first half of the occupation, the CPA depended heavily on no-bid contracts that were questioned by auditors. And the occupation's shifting of projects that were publicly announced to be financed by U.S. money to Iraqi money prompted the Iraqi finance minister to complain that the "ad hoc" process put the CPA in danger of losing the trust of the people.

Kellogg Brown & Root Inc., a subsidiary of Halliburton, was paid \$1.66 billion from the Iraqi money, primarily to cover the cost of importing fuel from Kuwait. The job was tacked on to a no-bid contract that was the subject of several investigations after allegations surfaced that a subcontractor for Houston-based KBR overcharged by as much as \$61 million for the fuel.

Harris Corp., a Melbourne, Fla., company, got \$48 million from the Iraqi oil funds to manage and update the formerly state-owned media network, taking over from Science Applications International Corp. of San Diego. The new television and radio services and newspaper have been widely criticized as mouthpieces for the occupation and symbols of the failures of the reconstruction effort. When it was being financed with U.S.-appropriated funds, the contract drew scrutiny because of questionable expenses, including chartering a jet to fly in a Hummer H2 and a Ford pickup truck for the program manager's use.

Fareed Yaseen, one of 43 ambassadors recently

appointed by Iraq's government, said he was troubled that the Iraqi money was managed almost exclusively by foreigners and that contracts went predominantly to foreign companies.

"There was practically no Iraqi voice in the disbursements of these funds," Yaseen said in a phone interview from Baghdad, where he is awaiting his diplomatic assignment.

Even Iraqi officials who served in the government while the CPA was in charge complained they had little say in the use of their own country's money. Mohammed Aboush, who was a director general in the oil ministry during the occupation, said he and other Iraqi officials were not consulted about expanding the KBR contract. But he said he informed his American "advisers" at the CPA that the Iraqis felt KBR's performance had been inadequate and that he'd prefer that another company take over its work.

Aboush said that he was ignored and that he believes the decision to go with KBR was political. "I am old enough to know the Americans and their interests and they are not always the same interests as the Iraqi interests," he said.

U.S. officials contend the CPA was faithful to the terms of a United Nations resolution that gave the United States authority to manage the Iraq oil money during the occupation. "We believe that contracts awarded with Iraqi funds were for the sole benefit of the Iraqi people, without exception," Brig. Gen. Stephen M. Seay, head of contracting activity for the successor to the CPA's office, wrote in a response to a critical CPA inspector general report released last week.

The CPA identified the best company for each job, said Army Lt. Col. Joseph M. Yoswa, a Defense Department spokesman. He said shortcomings in the contract-award process should be looked at in

the context of the volatile work environment in Iraq, where the need for speed and security were critical.

Critics of the CPA accused the occupation authority of using Iraqi money to bypass U.S. contracting rules on competition, oversight and monitoring for controversial projects.

"With American firms charging 10 times as much as Iraqi firms for construction work, with sole-source contracts being awarded, with allegations of money-wasting . . . it is likely that the CPA was doing its best to ensure Iraqi money was spent in Iraqi interests? It doesn't look like it," said Anthea Lawson, an analyst for Christian Aid, a nonprofit group that has been investigating the spending of Iraqi oil money.

Svetlana Tsalik, director of the Iraq Revenue Watch project of the Open Society Initiative think tank, said there were few clear distinctions between which pot of money—U.S. or Iraqi—the CPA would use to pay for reconstruction. "Whenever it had expenses that looked unpalatable for the U.S. public they would just dip into Iraqi funds," Tsalik said.

While it ran Iraq, the CPA had at its disposal at least \$45 billion—the biggest reconstruction fund since the Marshall Plan rebuilt Europe after World War II. The money included \$22 billion that Congress appropriated in two supplemental spending bills, and \$23 billion in two Iraqi accounts, one holding proceeds from oil sales and the other seized assets, including frozen overseas bank accounts from the Hussein years.

In most cases, to spend congressionally appropriated funds, CPA officials had to coordinate with officials in Washington, keep detailed records, ad-

See CONTRACTORS, A13, Col. 1

Violence Claims 4 More Troops

Seven Iraqi Security Officers Also Killed in Scattered Attacks

By PAMELA CONSTABLE
Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, Aug. 3—Four U.S. troops and seven members of the Iraqi security forces were killed late Monday and Tuesday in continuing violence across the country, including a car bombing near the central city of Baqubah and a roadside bomb in the capital.

Meanwhile, four Iraqis working for a French aid organization were reported Tuesday to have been stabbed to death near the city of Najaf, the scene of recurrent clashes between U.S. military forces and Shiite militia members loyal to the radical cleric Moqtada Sadr.

The latest attacks occurred as the interim prime minister, Ayad Allawi, returned home late Tuesday from a 10-day trip through the region aimed largely at seeking support from other Muslim countries to bolster security in Iraq by tightening borders and providing troops.

Also Tuesday, saboteurs bombed an oil pipeline in northern Iraq, causing a large fire to spread, and negotiations continued to free seven foreign truck drivers, taken hostage July 21 by Muslim militants who have demanded that foreign firms and troops withdraw from the country.

Four Iraqi National Guardsmen were killed and six were injured in

the Baqubah incident Tuesday afternoon, U.S. and Iraqi officials said. A white pickup truck sped toward a guard post, attempting to reach a U.S. military convoy, and exploded as a driver in the convoy tried to force the truck off the road. No Americans were killed in the blast.

The car bomb was the second recent attack on security forces in Baqubah, where 70 people were killed last Wednesday when a minibus detonated in a crowded street outside a police station where hundreds of men were lining up to apply for jobs.

Meanwhile, in the affluent Baghdad district of Mansour, a roadside bomb killed an Iraqi police station chief, Col. Moayad Mahmoud Bashir, and a second officer. In the northern city of Mosul, gunmen fired at a police station, killing one officer and wounding two more before escaping.

"The continued targeting of Iraqi security force personnel undermines the security of all Iraqis and will only quicken the resolve of Iraqi security forces to provide a safe and secure environment," said Maj. Neal O'Brien, a U.S. military spokesman.

Officials said two U.S. soldiers were killed either late Monday or early Tuesday when a roadside bomb exploded in west Baghdad, but no further details were immediately available.

Military spokesmen also reported Tuesday that two U.S. Marines were killed in western Iraq overnight during clashes with insurgents. A total of 919 American troops have died since U.S.-led forces invaded Iraq 16 months ago.

In two other incidents, officials said one U.S. soldier died from "non-hostile fire," indicating an accidental shooting, and another was killed in a vehicle accident.

In the gruesome Najaf killings, officials of the Paris-based Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, known as ACTED, said four of their Iraqi employees were apparently stabbed to death Friday after local militiamen discovered them near the site of a car bombing.

The group said the militiamen suspected the aid workers of being linked to the car bombing and summarily executed them in a scene of panicky violence just after the explosion. All the men were stabbed, and the eyes of one were gouged out. The men were reported missing Friday, and their bodies were found in the Najaf cemetery.

The city, a Shiite Muslim shrine center and the headquarters of Sadr and his youthful Mahdi Army militia, has been the scene of recurrent clashes. In the past few days, U.S. troops have surrounded Sadr's house and engaged in heavy armed clashes with his followers.

Some Deals Offered to Few Bidders

CONTRACTORS, From A12

vertise contracts widely and conform to waiting periods for bids to come in. Some of the money was held up by a turf war between the Pentagon and the State Department over who controlled the reconstruction.

It was simpler to use the Iraqi money.

Nearly all the Iraqi assets were held in what was known as the Development Fund for Iraq. It was used primarily to support Iraqi government ministries by paying salaries and expenses, according to budget documents. But some of the fund was used to pay private contractors for reconstruction projects. The main restriction on spending the money was that it be used for the benefit of the Iraqi people.

To get access to the funds, all that was usually needed was the recommendation of an entity called the Program Review Board, made up of 10 members and a chairman, according to former CPA officials. The final authorization required a single signature—that of L. Paul Bremer, the occupation's top civil administrator.

CPA officials have acknowledged that contracts were sometimes shown to a just a few bidders and that winners were picked within days. Several of the large contracts that went to U.S. companies, for example, were awarded with no competition, including a \$16.8 million contract awarded to Custer Battles LLC of McLean to provide security for the main U.S. military base in Baghdad, and a \$15.6 million contract for police radios awarded to Motorola Inc. of Schaumburg, Ill., the CPA inspector general's compilation shows.

Iraqi company executives have complained since the first days of the occupation that the process favored U.S. firms. They said in interviews that they could not get through the heavily guarded gates of the occupation headquarters in the Green Zone to meet with contracting officers. They also said the process was so secretive that they had to bribe CPA translators to get information about what requests for bids were coming up.

In April, the CPA announced that contracts worth less than \$500,000 awarded from the Iraq oil fund should go only to Iraqi companies.

The biggest contract obligation paid with Iraqi money went to KBR. The oil-services company's work began in early 2003, before the war with Iraq began, when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gave it a no-bid contract worth as much as \$7 billion to repair Iraq's oil infrastructure. There were fears that Hussein would set the oil fields ablaze, and the U.S. government believed that it needed a contractor lined up to go in right behind invasion forces.

The first tasks KBR performed under the contract—training for and advising on a safe shutdown of oil facilities, pre-positioning spill equipment and preparing repair plans—were paid for with U.S. funds.

But in fall 2003, the occupation was confronted by a different kind of oil problem. It had become clear that pipeline sabotage was causing a shortage and the occupation authority decided that it had to import fuel to prevent a full-blown crisis.

Meanwhile, some members of Congress expressed their disapproval of using more U.S. money for KBR's no-bid contract. In meetings on Nov. 11 and Nov. 29 in Baghdad, the CPA authorized tapping Iraqi funds to import fuel and fix the distribution system, according to min-

Iraqi-Funded Contracts

U.S. companies are being paid at least \$1.9 billion in Iraqi money for reconstruction work.

U.S. COMPANY	CONTRACT AWARDED	AMOUNT AWARDED
Kellogg Brown & Root	Restore southern oil fields and import fuel	\$1.66 billion*
Harris	Iraqi Media Network	48 million
Custer Battles	Currency exchange support Military base security	21.4 million 16.8 million
General Motors	Vehicles	20.7 million
Kiesler Police Supply	9mm pistols	19.9 million
General Electric	Gas turbines Gas turbine parts	10.2 million 9 million
First Defense International Group	Academy weapons and ammo Body armor	9.1 million 8.4 million
Mushriqui Consulting	Body armor	16 million
Motorola	Police radios	15.6 million
Ernst & Young	Consulting on external debt	13.2 million
Nour USA	Security vehicles	9.9 million
Boiler Tube Co. of America	Boiler tubes	8.3 million
Agon Group International	Extended cab trucks	5.3 million
Stevedoring Services of America	Umm Qasr port rehabilitation	5.1 million
ICS Technologies	Information technology	1.6 million

*An additional \$883 million has been paid by funds appropriated by Congress.

Sources of Funds

The United States and Iraq are the major financiers of Iraq's reconstruction, supplying more than \$45 billion together.



SOURCES: Coalition Provisional Authority Inspector General, Washington Post research

utes of CPA meetings. The task was added to KBR's contract and no new bids were sought, even though the funding source changed.

In all, KBR was paid \$2.53 billion, \$1.64 billion of which came from the Iraqi funds, according to an analysis for The Washington Post by Andre Verloy, a researcher for the Center for Public Integrity.

Verloy said the commingling of U.S. and Iraqi money to pay for tasks under a single contract raises significant oversight issues. "It is often difficult enough to find out where the money is coming from, but if U.S. taxpayer funds are used alongside Iraqi money, who has the ultimate oversight?" he said. "Can Congress oversee work funded with Iraqi assets? Should U.S. government agencies even pay U.S. companies with Iraqi money?"

The CPA also shifted the funding source for several other contracts.

As U.S. money for Stevedoring Services of America Inc.'s contract to manage the port of Umm Qasr began to dwindle, CPA officials on March 6 authorized an infusion of Iraqi money to keep the company in place until the transfer of authority. Sometime this spring, a few months into Harris Corp.'s media contract, the CPA stopped using Defense Department money to pay Harris and began charging the Iraqi oil funds.

On April 24, a little over a month after complaints by a losing bidder of political favoritism and a flawed contracting process prompted the U.S. Army to cancel a \$327 million contract funded by U.S. money to Nour USA Ltd. of Vienna, the CPA awarded the company a different contract from Iraqi money. The new \$9.9 million contract was for supplying the Iraqi security forces with vehicles.

Two recently released audits

point to numerous problems with the procedures the CPA used to account for, authorize and disburse Iraqi money.

The United Nations, in a report dated July 15, noted that metering of oil extracted from Iraq was not functioning so it was impossible to tell whether all of it had been accounted for. The U.N. report also criticized the CPA's program review board for authorizing funds in at least 10 cases when it lacked a quorum. The audit also noted that only one of the review board members was Iraqi, and he had attended only two of the 43 meetings held by December 2003. "Controls were insufficient to provide reasonable assurance... whether all [Iraqi oil-funded] disbursements were made for the purposes intended," the audit concluded.

The CPA's inspector general found in audits released last week that the occupation failed to establish "effective funds controls and accountability" for hundreds of millions of dollars that were held in cash. In fact, the investigative unit said, the keys to one of the safes that held the cash was "kept in the disbursing officer's unattended backpack."

It also studied 60 disbursements from assets seized from the former regime and found that no documentation existed for five of them, totaling \$99.1 million in payments. Paperwork had not been properly filled out for items such as furniture, carpets and vases, meaning, the inspector general said, that the CPA was not able to ensure that the assets "would be available for the use and benefit of the Iraqi people."

Special correspondent Omar Fekiki in Baghdad contributed to this report.

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