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Photo by Doug La Rue

Flame-quenching

College Station firefighters hose down a duplex that was damaged by a fire Tuesday night. Lt. Terry Thigpin of the College Station Fire

Department said no injuries resulted from the fire, which heavily damaged the duplex at 203 Fairview in College Station.

Iranian missile hits Baghdad; Iraq strikes back

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — A missile hit Baghdad on Tuesday, and Iraqi warplanes raided Iranian cities and missile batteries in reply. Iran claimed to have broken out of a beachhead on the fifth day of its offensive, but Iraq denied it.

Iranian reports monitored in Cyprus said the missile hit a trade center, but an Iraqi military spokesman said it exploded in a heavily populated district, killing or wounding many Iraqis. Journalists were kept away, but witnesses said the missile narrowly missed the residential district.

Iraq said its air force raided Isfahan, Dezful and the holy city of Qom in retaliation. All three Iranian cities have been bombed three days in a row.

Reports from Iran's official Islamic Repub-

lic News Agency quoted Tehran communiques as saying Iranian forces broke through heavily fortified defenses on a six-mile front and advanced toward Iraq's southern port city of Basra over 38 square miles they were able to "liberate."

The Iraqi high command said its troops, tanks and helicopter gunships "annihilated" Iranians who tried to push out of the beachhead on Iraqi territory east of Basra. The ancient city is Iraq's second largest.

Communiques reported heavy fighting in the southern marshlands, which have been a frequent battlefield since the war began in September 1980. Both sides reported using warplanes, missiles and artillery Tuesday.

Conflicting claims cannot be reconciled be-

cause neither side allows Western journalists into battle areas except on rare guided tours.

At the United Nations in New York, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar proposed a meeting of foreign ministers of the 15 Security Council members.

"Something dramatic has to be done," he told a news conference. "Otherwise we can continue being the witness to a real massacre in the Middle East again with a chance of an expansion of the conflict."

Battles resulting from the Iranian offensive, which began Friday with a thrust across the Shatt al-Arab border waterway and flooded marshlands west of it, appear to be the fiercest since Iran captured part of the Faw Peninsula in southern Iraq 11 months ago.

Iraq's reports indicated it had reinforced its 3rd and 7th Army Corps, which normally make up the southern sector, with units from the 2nd Army Corps and the elite Presidential Guards.

The Iranians said the breakout east of Basra began before dawn and overran what they called Iraq's "Iron Fort" line, an elaborate network of earthworks, bunkers and minefields.

A communique from the Iraqi command said its men repulsed the "hopeless attempt to recover footholds" it said the Iranians had lost south of Fish Lake, an area flooded by the Iraqis in 1982 to stop Iranian advances.

Iraq also said it had seized the islands of Belqaniya and Umm al-Tavila in the Shatt al-Arab.

University leaders pledging to work with Legislature

AUSTIN (AP) — The state has heard the wrong message about Texas higher education and needs to show nation it's a top priority, college university leaders said Tuesday.

Meeting just two hours before the legislature convened, the university officials said they hoped to work with lawmakers during upcoming negotiations.

"We are here today not to demand more funding, but to pledge to work with the Legislature," said Temple, chairman of the state Higher Education and University System Coordinating Board and head of the Senate Committee on Higher Education.

Temple told about 250 people gathered for a higher education summit that the state undermined national institutions when the Legislature proposed cutting funding by 26 percent.

"We cannot afford to send out the wrong kind of message to the country about the kind of priority we place on higher education," Temple said.

Temple said the threatened 26 percent cut scared away prospective students.

"We care so much about creating a new economic base and reducing unemployment that we cut the education that would train the workers of tomorrow," Temple said.

Wales Maden Jr., a member of the select committee, said at least 220 prospective educators declined offers from Texas institutions last year.

"The current practice of turning to employment of part-time faculty

in order to meet shrinking budgets may produce short-term solutions, but it will create long-term problems," Maden said.

Worker charged with murder in hotel blaze

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — A Dupont Plaza Hotel maintenance worker was arrested Tuesday and charged with 96 counts of murder for the New Year's Eve fire at the posh hotel.

Federal officials said early today that a second person had been arrested in the case, but would not identify him or provide any further information.

The maintenance worker, 35-year-old Hector Escudero Aponte, was an employee of the hotel for 10 years. According to charges filed in the U.S. District Court in this U.S. commonwealth, Escudero Aponte set the fire "in concert with and in agreement with others."

Justice Secretary Hector Rivera Cruz and Jerry Rudden, chief spokesman for the U.S. Treasury

Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms that joined the investigation, also said they did not believe Escudero Aponte had acted alone.

One federal investigator, speaking later on condition he not be identified, said, "I don't have any of the particulars, but there has been a second arrest."

The *New York Times* said the second suspect was taken into custody and was under detention Tuesday night. It quoted an unidentified federal official as saying the second detainee provided material to set the fire and had blocked Escudero Aponte from public view while the blaze was set.

The *Times* said the second suspect was a busboy at the hotel

Court upholds state maternity leave rule

States can mandate worker job protection

WASHINGTON (AP) — States may require employers to give pregnant workers job protections not available to other employees, the Supreme Court ruled Tuesday.

The court upheld a California law requiring employers to grant unpaid leaves of absence of up to four months to women whose pregnancies leave them unable to work even if leaves are not granted for any other disability.

Although the 6-3 decision was a major victory for working women, some feminist lawyers said the decision did not go far enough in promoting on-the-job equality.

California's pregnancy law had been challenged by the California Federal Savings and Loan Association and other employers whose leave policies did not meet the law's requirement.

The justices discounted arguments by the employers that the law forces them to discriminate illegally against men and non-pregnant women.

The court concluded that the state law does not conflict with a 1978 federal law, the Pregnancy Disability Act, that bans discrimination based on pregnancy.

"By taking pregnancy into account, California's pregnancy disability leave statute allows women, as well as men, to have families without losing their jobs," Justice Thurgood Marshall wrote for the court.

Eight other states have similar laws. They are Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Montana, New Hampshire, Ohio and Washington.

"Congress intended the (1978 law) to be a floor beneath which pregnancy disability benefits may not drop — not a ceiling above which they may not rise," Marshall said.

He was joined by Justices William J. Brennan, Harry A. Blackmun, John Paul Stevens and Sandra Day O'Connor. Justice Antonin Scalia, in a separate opinion, agreed that the state and federal laws are not in conflict.

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and Justices Byron R. White and Lewis F. Powell dissented. In an opinion for the three, White said the 1978 law's language "leaves no room for preferential treatment of pregnant workers."

"Congress intended employers to be free to provide any level of disability benefits they wished — or none at all — as long as pregnancy was not a factor in allocating such benefits," White said.

But Marshall said the California law does not mandate preferential treatment.

He said the law "does not compel employers to treat pregnant workers better than other disabled employees; it merely establishes benefits that employers must, at a minimum, provide to pregnant workers."

Marshall added, "Employers are free to give comparable benefits to other disabled employees."

The dispute over California's law arose when Lilian Garland, a receptionist at a California Federal Savings and Loan office in

Los Angeles, began a pregnancy leave in early 1982. When she said she was ready to return to work three months later, she was told her job had been filled and no comparable job was available.

Garland returned to work as a receptionist at the savings and loan association seven months later.

The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing alleged that the savings and loan association had violated the state pregnancy disability law in dealing with Garland, and that action led to the association's challenge of the law.

Cal Fed spokesman James Hurley said his organization was "surprised and disappointed" by Tuesday's ruling.

Eleanor Smeal, president of the National Organization for Women, said, "We're very pleased... Women everywhere, I think, will benefit in the long run by the decision."

Other feminist leaders, however, voiced some concern.

13th reporter is kidnapped in west Beirut

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Gunmen on Tuesday kidnapped a French reporter covering Terry Waite's mission to free American and other foreign hostages held in Lebanon. They pistol-whipped and shot at another French newsman who escaped.

Police said eight men in two cars grabbed Roger Auque, 31, soon after he photographed Anglican Church envoy Waite taking a morning stroll along the waterfront in Moslem west Beirut. Auque is a freelance reporter-photographer for French, Canadian and Belgian radio stations and photo feature agencies.

Paul Marchand, a French reporter accompanying Auque, fought off the men in west Beirut's Raouche residential district at 9:40 a.m. and escaped, police said.

Marchand told France's Radio Monte Carlo, his employer, that the assailants shot at him as he fled. He said he will stay in west Beirut.

"I can't leave now," a shaken Marchand told the CBS television network in an interview. "Roger is my friend."

No group claimed responsibility for Auque's abduction.

Auque was the 13th foreign journalist kidnapped in west Beirut since Moslem militias wrested control of the Moslem side of the capital from the army in bloody fighting Feb. 6, 1984. Seven have escaped or been released. Several different groups have claimed responsibility for the abductions.

In Paris, France's Foreign Ministry deplored the kidnapping and said in a statement it "intends to pursue its efforts to reach a settlement of the entire hostage problem."

Waite met for 45 minutes behind closed doors Tuesday with Walid Jumblatt at Jumblatt's west Beirut home. Jumblatt, head of the Druse militia and the Progressive Socialist Party, is Lebanon's tourism and transport minister.

Jumblatt pledged to do his best to help Waite to free hostages held by Shiite Moslem extremists.

After meeting Jumblatt, Waite left for the Chouf mountains southeast of Beirut to meet Sheikh Mohammed Abu Shakra, spiritual head of Lebanon's 300,000-member Druse sect, a secretive offshoot of Islam. But Waite's convoy was turned back before he got there. Jumblatt militia officials gave no explanation.

Waite, in Beirut for the fifth time since November 1985, began his day with a 30-minute stroll along the Ein Mreisseh seaside boulevard where he drank a cup of Arabic coffee offered by a vendor.

After covering Waite's stroll, Auque and Marchand drove to Auque's apartment in nearby Raouche.

Marchand told Radio Monte Carlo he was waiting for Auque to come down from the apartment when three gunmen drove up in a white car.

One assailant toting an AK-47 assault rifle tried to grab Marchand by the jacket, telling him in English: "Come with us."

Marchand said: "I was able to get loose. I saw Roger was still in the foyer... behind a locked gate... I told him, 'Stay, stay!'"

He said the gunman "fired a shot at me and I saw then that Roger had come out of the building. I told him, 'Run, run!' Me, I took off. I heard gunshots."

Police said eight men in two cars were waiting for the Frenchmen.

Officers said the assailants beat and pistol-whipped Marchand and the driver. They said Auque apparently did not resist as he was bundled him into a car and driven off.

Seventeen foreigners are now missing in Lebanon after being kidnapped: six Americans, six Frenchmen, two Britons, one Irishman, one Italian and one South Korean.