

Texas A&M The Battalion

Only in New Orleans

A look at the sights, sounds and smells of Mardi Gras

See Life Style

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College Station, Texas

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Deaths threaten solidarity

WASHINGTON (AP) — The mounting death toll of innocent civilians in Iraq threatens the solidarity of the international alliance against Saddam Hussein and could intensify pressure on President Bush to move swiftly toward a decisive ground war.

Bush's predicament was worsened Wednesday by news that perhaps 500 people were killed in an allied air strike on an underground structure in Baghdad. The administration called the structure a military command center and said it was uncertain why civilians were there.

The grisly news footage of charred bodies and wailing survivors suddenly gave a hard reality to what the administration had been trying to dismiss as merely an Iraqi "propaganda and P.R. battle."

For days, the White House had been arguing that civilian casualties were far lower than claimed by Saddam Hussein and that Iraq was

trying to exploit the unfortunate but inevitable civilian losses.

With confirmation of many civilian deaths, the administration quickly shifted tactics to put the blame on Saddam rather than continue to debate who was winning the public relations contest.

The White House reminded Americans that Saddam used hostages last year as "human shields" at strategic sites and now claims to have placed prisoners of war at military facilities that might be bombed by the allies. The administration said, two MiG-21s were "parked near the front door of a treasured archeological site" in the ancient city of Ur.

Iraq's Scud missile attacks have been aimed at civilian centers in Israel and Saudi Arabia.

"He kills civilians intentionally and with purpose," White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater said of Saddam. "Indeed, he time and again has shown a willingness to sacrifice civilian

lives and property that further his war aims."

The graphic pictures of slain civilians are sure to fuel antiwar sentiments around the world and put strains on the coalition of forces against Saddam. In turn, that could push Bush to resort to a ground war sooner to bring the war to an end.

The Soviet Union already had been complaining about the extent of casualties and damage from the U.S.-led bombing attacks.

"I don't doubt that this will be used to the hilt as a propaganda vehicle," said Retired Adm. Thomas Moorer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

However, Moorer and others predicted Bush would resist pressures to begin a ground war prematurely. Bush's objective is to wage war in a way that keeps allied casualties as low as possible, Moorer noted.

"I don't care how much pressure they put on the president but I'm confident he will not change his plan," the admiral said.

Drug raid Sting operation leads to arrest of 12 people

By Mike Luman
The Battalion

Brazos County narcotics officers arrested 12 "college age" people Wednesday on charges of drug trafficking during the culmination of a months-long sting operation.

Lt. Gene Knowles with Brazos County Narcotics said 15 people were placed under warrant on Wednesday, most of them college students from Texas A&M or Blinn College.

Knowles said undercover Brazos County and Brazos Valley officers purchased drugs from the 15 defendants during the past few months.

"The operation began in September and is just now coming to a head," Knowles said.

No undercover drug buys took place on the A&M or Blinn campuses, he said.

Knowles said the 15 defendants are charged with 32 indictments involving possession and sale of LSD, Ecstasy, marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamines and amphetamines.

Officers began arresting defendants in their homes in Bryan and College Station at 5 p.m.

Those arrested were booked and jailed at the Brazos County Courthouse. Knowles said a judge will set bail for the defendants this morning.

The following people were arrested Wednesday and charged with delivery of a controlled substance:

James Brando Barrett, 21; Joseph Bush, 17; Robert James Callison Jr., 24; Joan Scott Eddy, 27; Michael Green, 22; Dean Andrew Quinn, 24.

Terry Radke, 27; Todd Allen Radke, 26; Daniel B. Roberts, 30; George Rubio, 20; Gregory Sarkasian, 19; and Jason Tiemann, 20.

U.S. relations with Soviets will improve, professor says

By Troy D. Hall
The Battalion

Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union only can improve in the future, says professor Anatoly Fedoseyev from Leningrad University in the Soviet Union.

"It's impossible in my mind to turn our thinking to the past and live in the atmosphere of the Cold War," Fedoseyev says.

While participating in a professor exchange program, Fedoseyev led a discussion group during last week's Student Conference on National Affairs. He also spoke to several classes during his three-week visit to Texas A&M.

While at A&M, Fedoseyev says he discovered similarities between students attending A&M and Leningrad University.

"I have been acquainted with the direction of students in the U.S. in the past," he said. "They are active and open-minded and interested in different regions of the world."

Fedoseyev said both universities' students seem concerned with the changes in Europe and the Baltic republics. He also answered questions about the present situation in the Soviet Union.

Fedoseyev says the role of the Soviet government has not changed, but top officials now are under attack from opposing forces. As a result, he says these pressures have influenced domestic policy.

"The instability in the Baltic republics is a natural process," he says. "These people in the republics want to achieve independence; they want natural self-expression."

He says he believes domestic policy problems might be a result of social, economic and political policies in the Soviet Union.

"It is not correct to use these military forces against the people," Fedoseyev says. "It has only been recently our top officials have recognized the great mistake from previous military conflicts."

Fedoseyev also says the Soviet government just recently has made information open to the public.

Fedoseyev served in the Red Army during several military conflicts, including the invasion of Afghanistan.

He says he is convinced U.S.-Soviet relations are headed for better times.

"With the exchange of peoples, educators and policy, the result can only be more stable contact," he says.



Roses are red

Roses are by far the most popular flowers on Valentine's Day, Jimmie Walston, owner of Aggie-land Flowers, says. She says she ordered more flowers and hired extra help to meet demand.

HUY THANH NGUYEN/The Battalion

Gas fire creates underground inferno

CARMICHAEL, Calif. (AP) — Gasoline from a wrecked tanker truck turned the storm drains of an affluent suburb into rivers of flame Wednesday, burning four homes, injuring three people and forcing the evacuation of 300 residents.

An eyewitness said the driver of the truck was speeding and lost control on a sharp curve on a major artery through the Sacramento suburb about 3 a.m., California Highway Patrol spokesman Bob Carlson said.

Fuel from the 8,400-gallon tanker poured into open ditches and from there into the storm drain system's

underground pipes. Officials said they didn't know what ignited the gasoline.

"The creek behind us caught fire, and we grabbed the kids and ran," resident Lisa Daum said. "Manholes down the street were exploding and flying off. You could feel the rumble follow us up the street. It was strange."

Flames roared back to the truck, which exploded in a fireball in front of firefighters, police and the driver, who had climbed out of the wreckage. Hundred-foot tall ribbons of flame rose from the open ditches, ig-

ning houses, fences and parked vehicles.

Secondary explosions in the pipes created an underground inferno, blowing manhole covers off and spewing fire skyward for blocks around.

Two homes were destroyed and two others were damaged as more than 100 firefighters used water and foam to keep dozens of spot fires away from other homes. The average house in the neighborhood is valued at about \$250,000. Officials estimated the total fire damage at more than \$1 million.

Experts believe chemical warfare highly unlikely

By Mike Luman
The Battalion

Texas A&M military and medical experts say any chemical or biological weapons Saddam Hussein launches against coalition troops would be "relatively ineffective, a nuisance and a terror tactic."

Dr. Richard Thomas, director of A&M's Center for Strategic Technology, says chemical and biological compounds available to Hussein are outdated.

Such compounds make poor weapons against well-prepared coalition troops, he says.

"You can't lay down a curtain of this stuff

with enough intensity to have effects for a long time," Thomas says. "They're not very good weapons."

Dr. E. Murl Bailey, an Army reservist and A&M professor of toxicology, says Hussein's chemical arsenal probably includes nerve agents, blood agents and blister agents.

Hussein is known to have mustard gas, a blister agent. Blood agents, like cyanide, prevent the body from utilizing oxygen.

Bailey says coalition troops are prepared to handle chemical attacks. Civilian casualties from chemical attacks would be higher, he says.

"Saddam Hussein has no regard for hu-

man life, and I think he will use it (a chemical weapon) even if it causes destruction in his own country," Bailey says.

Chemical weapons are compounds that have an immediate, predictable effect on the human body. A biological attack is the deliberate spreading of disease organisms.

Dr. Kenneth Dirks, a retired Army general and director of A&M's A.P. Beutel Health Center, says Iraq could have anthrax in its biological arsenal.

Dirks says he doubts Hussein's ability to attack coalition troops or civilian targets with biological weapons.

The threat of a biological attack acts as a

psychological weapon, he says.

"Human beings have a built-in fear of the unknown and things we don't know about have a strong impact," Dirks says. "In terms of a destructive weapon, it might be practical only to cause some mischief."

He says troops received vaccinations and are prepared to "go about their business" in the unlikely event of a biological attack.

Thomas says a chemical or biological attack would slow troop movements, but the coalition forces are well-equipped to handle the situation should it arise.

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Audience decides against equal combat roles

By Karen Praslicka
The Battalion

After a debate hosted by the A&M Debate Society on whether the U.S. government should be allowed to draft women into equal duty combat roles, the audience in Rudder Tower voted 82 to 55 against the issue Wednesday night.

Rich Garza, a junior political science major, spoke for equal combat roles for women.

Garza said the concept of "women and war" is offensive to some people because America has the mentality that "it's the man's job to go and fight and die and the woman's job to worry and cry."

Garza encouraged the audience to question this mentality. If the freedoms of future American genera-

tions were threatened, he is sure that anyone would be willing to fight.

"I'm sure that you all will agree that we all share in this freedom, this liberty and this pursuit of happiness. And I ask you, why are we not all protecting these rights?"

Garza said that under the current draft system it seems a man's life is worth less than a woman's because only men are drafted for combat.

"That Constitution is what we all stand for, and what we all believe in, and what we should all be willing to fight for," he said.

Garza said women have been serving in the U.S. Armed Forces since the American Revolution and have proven themselves capable of serving in the military during wartime.

"It upsets me to know there are women who are equally capable of

serving their country in the military, yet believe it is solely the man's duty to fight and risk possible disability or even death."

Garza said during army tests such as firing heavy artillery and simulated combat, women performed as well or better than men.

"A soldier will be a soldier regardless of sex," said Garza. "A soldier is trained to fight aggressively, regardless of sex."

Karen Phillips, a junior speech communications major, spoke against equal roles for women in combat.

"Risks must be taken to preserve the ideals of our nation," she said, "but it is heart-wrenching enough to watch our nation's most talented military men maimed and murdered in service of our country. But should

we unnecessarily subject our nation's women to such terrors?"

"The trend of recent history and court decisions is to forsake all in the pursuit of social equality. But when applied to military affairs it is wrong and it is dangerous.

"The military purpose is victory, not equity," she said.

Phillips said that average female body strength is 42 percent less than men's. Marines do not allow women to throw live grenades because women's average throwing distance is not far enough to avoid injuring themselves.

"Society itself upholds natural instincts by giving toy guns to boys and dolls to girls," she said.

"The differences are part of our lifestyle. There's nothing wrong with that."

Phillips quoted a brigadier general stationed in Saudi Arabia as saying, "Men simply cannot treat women like other men."

"Ask your friends who played high-school football if they would have approved the entrance of a female quarterback," she said.

"Can we risk throwing away all the work we have done to build up inner personal trust between our male soldiers by disrupting their tightly knit groups with women?"

One female officer in Saudi Arabia was quoted as saying, "If you sleep too close to the men, they think you're having an affair. If you hang around with the women, they think you're a lesbian. I don't have many friends in the military."

Phillips said that as the rate of women in the military has grown, so

has the rate of sexual harassment. She said that contact and aggression become a part of everyday experience.

Perhaps the most unnerving effect of women working side by side in combat with men is the effect it has on the mission, Phillips said.

"Israeli officials have noted several instances of patronization in which the military goals are altered because men were hesitant to leave the side of a fellow female wounded soldier."

Phillips said she salutes women who feel confident enough to handle a combat position despite these obstacles. However, surveys have shown that few of the 192,000 enlisted American women in February 1990 were "yearning for combat."

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