

The Battalion

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Waco cult boasts of 'sufficient firepower'

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WACO — Federal authorities, in their most extensive comments thus far on the firepower of the heavily armed religious cult to which they've laid siege, Monday said the group may have explosives capable of disabling armored personnel carriers.

FBI spokesman Bob Ricks said Branch Davidian cult leader David Koresh had indicated during negotiations that he had "sufficient firepower to blow up the Bradley vehicles." He said Koresh claimed the cult could blow those armored personnel carriers 40 or 50 feet into the air.

Because of that, Ricks said, Army Abrams tanks were being

brought in, unarmed, for defensive purposes.

"Because of some intelligence indicating he may have stockpiled other than just automatic weapons — there may be explosives and perhaps even rockets within the compound — we are taking additional defensive measures," he said.

However, precise information is difficult to get, and Ricks said authorities hope they have overestimated their foe.

"We cannot state with any specificity or with any certainty the level of armaments that he has in that compound. We hope that it's greatly less than what could possibly be there," he said.

The Abrams is a 67-ton tank with massive armor capable of withstanding .50-caliber fire.

Bush Library director answers charges

Wilson rejects conflict of interest accusations, says he is glad to come to A&M

By ROBIN ROACH

The Battalion

Dr. Don W. Wilson, the newly appointed executive director of the George Bush Presidential Library Center, said he is excited about coming to A&M despite charges that his appointment is a conflict of interest.

Wilson signed an agreement on Jan. 19 at 11:30 p.m. giving President Bush control of over 5,000 White House computer tapes which contain information from the Iran Contra era.

"My signing was strictly administrative," Wilson said. "If they look into the situation it's pretty clear."

He announced his resignation as archivist of the United States on Feb. 12 when he was appointed as the executive director of the Bush Library Center.

He is now facing charges that he engaged in a conflict of interest by signing the agreement at a time when he was being considered for the Bush Library Center position.

Both Congress and the Office of Government Ethics are conducting an investigation of the charges. A representative from the Office of Government Ethics confirmed the matter is under investigation but was unable to say when the investigation would be complete.

Wilson said the conflict of interest charges came as a great shock and the charges were raised only after he announced his resignation as U.S. archivist.

Dr. Larry Hill, head of the history department, said he and other historians are concerned with the way Wilson handled the transfer of the computer tapes.

"I don't think there was an

agreement to exchange the tapes for the position, but there is genuine concern in the history profession about the way he handled the transfer of these documents," Hill said.

Wilson said he was consulted by lawyers and ethics professionals before he signed the Jan. 19 agreement and was assured the agreement was proper and legal.

"I'm very comfortable with what I did and the way I did it," Wilson said. "Because I had no role in drawing up the agreement, it's hard for there to be a conflict."

Hill said Wilson should have treated the computer tapes as he would treat paper documents by leaving them in the control of the National Archives.

Wilson said the main issue here is establishing what kind of record electronic materials are - specifically, whether they are personal,

presidential or agency records.

Dr. Ed Harris, associate professor of philosophy, said technology produces more ethical problems because it produces more choices, but he sees this problem as a factual issue.

"It has to do with what's on the tapes which is a factual issue," Harris said. "It seems like Bush put a lot of effort into it - there must be something he wanted control of."

Dr. E. Dean Gage, senior vice president and provost, said he is confident the charges will soon be resolved.

"We had no knowledge of any kind of conflict of interest, and he (Wilson) has assured us there is no problem," Gage said. "I just

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Students fluent in native languages creating problems for department

By JENNIFER SMITH

The Battalion

Texas A&M University students taking language classes in which they are fluent are causing concern among students and professors.

Dr. Michael Wetherill, head of the modern and classical languages department, said students who take classes in their native language can cause problems for the department, but there are many alternatives for these students.

"There is a credit by exam system that helps solve this problem," Wetherill said. "We also encourage these students to take advanced courses."

Christopher Marcks, a sophomore general studies major, is fluent in French, but he decided to take German.

"It's frustrating to see people doing well in their native language since I'm struggling through German," Marcks said. "They have an unfair advantage. I could never compete with them."

"It's frustrating to see people doing well in their native language . . . they have an unfair advantage."

-Christopher Marcks

Antonio Caraballo, a Spanish lecturer at Texas A&M, said the modern language department tries to encourage these students not to take a language they are fluent in. "The department tries to encourage these students to

place out of their native language," he said.

But, Caraballo, said having bilingual students in a language class can be an asset to the teacher.

"A lot of times they will help me learn different grammar from different countries," he said. "I encourage them to be tutors, and I will pair them up with American students in the class to help them."

Wetherill said students who take classes in their native language are encouraged to assist students who may be struggling.

"We want to maximize the value of the bilingual students, and make sure we are encouraging them to go further in their studies," he said. "They also can teach students who are not native speakers."

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Freestyle Frisbee



JOHN BARTRAM/The Battalion

Johan van der Meer, a junior German major, takes advantage of the weather on Monday to practice some freestyle Frisbee throwing. Van der Meer is an international student from the Netherlands, and frequently plays Frisbee.

Space station fate depends on redesign, officials say

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The fate of America's space station depends on finding a new design that the nation can afford without absorbing NASA's whole budget, Clinton administration officials said Monday.

Dr. John H. Gibbons, head of the Office of Science and Technology Policy in the White House, said the Clinton administration ordered a space station redesign after it found that rising costs of the project threatened all the other civilian space and aeronautics research programs.

The space station Freedom project, Gibbons said Monday in an interview, was "like a Pacman...it was going to eat everything that NASA had."

Asked if the fate of the space station depends on a redesign, Gibbons said, "Yes. It's very much up in the air."

When the Clinton administration took over, said Gibbons, "we were faced with a situation of a divergence between plausible available resources for NASA and the way the space station was going."

NASA has already spent \$8 billion on the project and, under the current plan, the eventual construction costs of Space Station Freedom are estimated at more than \$30 billion. NASA officials told Congress last week that cost overruns in one year alone could reach more than \$500,000. The lifetime operating cost of the station in its present form has been estimated at about \$100 billion.

Gibbons said the administration believed that NASA would be able to get only modest increases in its upcoming annual budgets, despite the rising costs of the space station. This meant that for Space Station Freedom to be fully funded in its present form, NASA would have to drop other space science projects and cut back on research, he said.

NASA administrator Daniel Goldin offered a solution, Gibbons said, by proposing that the station be completely redesigned so that the costs were cut and the agency still met its agreements with its international partners in the project.

Faculty Senate urges smoking ban

Recommended restriction includes all University buildings

By REAGON CLAMON

The Battalion

The Faculty Senate called for a smoking ban in all University buildings Monday, and said the current policy that provides for both smoking and non-smoking areas does not offer enough protection to non-smokers.

Dr. Carlton Stolle, accounting professor, introduced a resolution stating the current policy of designating smoking areas within campus buildings is not enough to protect non-smokers from second-hand smoke.

According to the resolution, Texas A&M is leaving itself open to legal and ethical challenges, if the exposure is allowed to continue.

Stolle said the Human Resources Department will also submit a report to the administration this week recommending the ban.

Many faculty members feel the University must change its policy after the Environmental Protection Agency's report last January declared second-hand smoke to be carcinogenic, Stolle said.

However, he said, special areas for smokers is probably not a possibility.

"I wish we could say we could

accommodate smokers by having places provided with adequate air ventilation systems," Stolle said. "But, we know from budget limitations that that will most certainly not be the case."

Dr. Larry Hickman, a professor in the philosophy and humanities department, called the resolution "silly" and asked the senators to consider a light-hearted amendment to the resolution that would also ban all animal fat from campus.

"If we want to be consistent in saving our colleagues from themselves, we should include well-recognized carcinogens, including all forms of animal fat," Hickman said. "They are known contributors to colon cancer, high cholesterol and heart disease."

Dr. Howard Kaplan, a sociology professor, criticized Hickman for the "trivialization of an important health problem."

"I find that second-hand animal fat does not represent a true risk to my health," Kaplan said. "Second-hand smoke is a noxious impediment to our work."

In other business, the Senate heard a plea from Dr. Jim Mazzullo to take the job of AIDS education away from student services and put it in the hands of Univer-

sity President William Mobley.

Mazzullo, an associate professor of Geology, said the University administration does not adequately support AIDS education. He said the AIDS committee had to "wheedle" \$3,000 from student services for their current education program.

Mazzullo said that because 18 to 25-year-olds are the fastest growing group contracting the AIDS virus, the problem is very much in the University's backyard.

"That's probably 90 percent of the student body," he said.

Mazzullo offered several suggestions to the Senate that would enhance the university's AIDS education policy.

He suggested the formation of an "AIDS corps" made up of faculty and staff to provide AIDS awareness presentations to University classes on short notice. Mazzullo also criticized the University for not providing more people, materials and money to AIDS education.

"If we don't do something about this, more 18 to 25-year-olds will start dying and you all will be going to a lot more funerals," he said.

Fighting in Yugoslavia hits home for A&M professors

By MARY KUJAWA

The Battalion

For Dr. Stjepan G. Mestrovic, the pleasure of revisiting his homeland of Croatia has been denied to him.

A sociology professor at Texas A&M University, Mestrovic immigrated to the United States as a young child from the Croatian town of Zagreb. He returned there in October on a Fulbright scholarship to find a civil war destroying the country.

"There is real-life desperation," Mestrovic said. "There is nothing to turn to except more years of this fighting."

Fighting in Croatia began in October 1991 when Muslims and Croats declared their independence from the Serbs of the

former Yugoslavia. The conflict spread to Bosnia when Serbs attacked Sarajevo in March 1992.

"The basic issue over which the war is fought in former Yugoslavia is the borders between new states and between ethnic groups after Yugoslavia disintegrated in 1991," said Dr. Steve Pejovich, A&M professor of political economy. Pejovich was born in Belgrade, Serbia.

Pejovich moved to the United States but frequently returns to his homeland. His last trip was in June 1991.

Mestrovic said the Serbs now control one-third of Croatia and two-thirds of Bosnia. News reports say over 18,000 people have been killed, and tens of thousands are missing. Croatia alone has taken in

over half a million refugees.

LIFE IN CROATIA

"It was depressing. Nothing is so under-reported as the economic hardship," Mestrovic said.

The average salary per month in Croatia is \$150 while the average pension is \$60, he said. Yet, the price of food is the same there as prices here in the United States.

A food crisis exists in much of the country because of the war.

"For the ordinary citizen, this means skipping meals, cutting back on meat and eating a limited diet of cabbage and potatoes, and not buying clothes and other things we take for granted in the West," Mestrovic said.

"I lost 10 pounds. There was not much

variety in the diet. They had bananas, grapes, squid, chicken, potatoes and cabbage. The portions in the restaurants became smaller and smaller as the year passed," he said.

Housing also was hard to obtain. Mestrovic lived with a family because it was impossible to get an apartment.

Many people lived in cramped apartments because families took in other families that needed help.

"I saw a lot of the communal spirit," he said.

LEARNING AND WAR

Mestrovic lectured at the University of Zagreb. He said it was difficult to teach

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