

Iran prepared to fight if attacked

Supreme leader denounces war on terror

BEHESHT-E-ZAHRA, Iran (AP) — Iran's supreme leader accused the United States on Tuesday of "massacring" innocent Afghans during its war on terrorism, and said Iran was ready to fight if attacked.

Addressing thousands of people on the 13th anniversary of the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the father of Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the United States launched the war in Afghanistan to get rid of Sept. 11 terror suspect Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida organization, but instead massacred civilians.

"In Afghanistan, in the poor and wronged country of Afghanistan, they entered the arena under the guise of combating a group or even a few individuals. They did not get their hands on those individuals, but they massacred many innocent people, bombarded them, killed them," Khamenei said. "...This imposition of violence or expression of violence cannot help America achieve its aims and succeed."

In Washington, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said, "The United States helped liberate the Afghani people from repression."

Fleischer noted that Iran played a constructive role in the Bonn talks in December that established the interim Afghan administration and "we expect them to play a constructive role now."

But amid chants of "Death to America," on Tuesday, Khamenei called the United States "the most hated regime in the world."

Cars and buses carrying Iranians from around the country jammed the highway leading to the glittering, golden-domed shrine of Khomeini, where Khamenei spoke.

Iran and the United States have had no relations since the 1979 revolution, when militants stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days.

Khamenei, who has the final say on all matters, has repeatedly ruled out talks with Washington, despite calls by some reformist lawmakers that the issue of U.S.-Iran relations be decided in a referendum.

The United States accuses Tehran of seeking nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. President Bush has lumped Iran together with Iraq and North Korea in what he says is an "axis of evil" threatening world peace.

Water testing



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Graduate civil engineering students, **Aditya Raut**, left, and **Chunwoo Lee**, right, take water samples at Research Park. The samples, which test the general nutrients, chemicals and toxins in the water, are part of a preliminary experiment for Information Technology in Science graduate program.

Pakistani president will not renounce nuclear weapon use

ALMATY, Kazakhstan (AP) — Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf refused Tuesday to renounce first use of nuclear weapons, as efforts to bring him together with his Indian counterpart to defuse tensions over Kashmir appeared to fail.

In New Delhi, a senior Indian government official told The Associated Press on Tuesday that India was paying close attention to diplomatic pressure being applied by Washington and other capitals. The Americans had persuaded

India's government to show restraint, at least for now, the official said on condition of anonymity.

Secretary of State Colin Powell pledged "a full-court diplomatic press" on the two nations.

"It would be absolutely horrible in the year 2002 for any nation to use nuclear weapons in a situation such as this," Powell said Tuesday while attending an international conference in Barbados.

Trying to keep diplomatic efforts

alive, Russian President Vladimir Putin and other world leaders met separately with Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at an Asian summit in Kazakhstan and, according to Musharraf, invited them to Moscow for possible talks. The discussions presumably would try to prevent the conflict from exploding into a fourth full-scale war between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

Musharraf accepted the invitation, but the timing of the proposed meeting

was vague, and the Kremlin said Vajpayee was not invited. Putin will visit India late this year.

Tuesday morning, the two leaders angrily blamed each other for more than five decades of conflict as they sat across a table while their troops fired at each other in the disputed Kashmir region.

Musharraf, when asked to state Pakistan's nuclear policy and explain why it will not renounce first use of nuclear weapons as India has, said:

"The possession of nuclear weapons by any state obviously implies they will be used under some circumstances."

He said that it would be irresponsible for a leader to discuss such things and that Pakistan's "deeper policy" for denuclearization of South Asia.

India National Security Adviser Brajesh Misra responded, "We will not be the first to use nuclear weapons. We hope the enormity of the use of nuclear weapons is understood by the president of Pakistan."

Arafat presents reform plan to prevent more terror attacks

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — Yasser Arafat, under pressure from the United States to do more to prevent terror attacks on Israel, presented a plan Tuesday for reforming his unwieldy security services to CIA chief George Tenet.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, meanwhile, approved the construction of a fence between Israel and the West Bank along about one-third of the unmarked frontier, the so-called Green Line, to keep out Palestinian militants, an adviser confirmed.

In the West Bank, Israeli troops raided several Palestinian areas in search of suspected Palestinian militants. In one confrontation, a 16-year-old Palestinian was shot dead by soldiers dispersing stone throwers, doctors said.

At Arafat's headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah, two dozen Palestinians protested Tuesday against the Tenet mission, chanting "Tenet go home" as the convoy of the CIA chief drove into the compound. The protesters said they opposed United States involvement in internal Palestinian affairs.

Tenet met with Arafat, and

then held separate talks with three Palestinian security chiefs Jibril Rajoub, Amin al-Hindi and Mohammed Dahlan. Tenet left Arafat's headquarters after five hours without speaking to reporters.

Paul Patin, spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, said U.S. officials would judge the

"Reforms that have no substantial change in strategy and policy are worthless."

— Raanan Gissin
Sharon adviser

reform efforts against results. "If there is a cessation of terror, then it's good. If there's not a cessation of terror, it's not good," Patin said.

Israel was skeptical. "Reforms that have no substantial change in strategy and policy are worthless," said Raanan

Gissin, a Sharon adviser. Israel accuses Arafat of doing little to encourage terror attacks.

The makeover of the security services is part of a broader reform package sought by the United States.

The reform plan presented by Tenet calls for cutting in half the number of Palestinian security services. After restructuring, the services would police, border guard, internal security and external security, military intelligence and Arafat's personal guard unit.

Arafat named Abdel Razaq Yehiyeh, 73, a former negotiator with Israel and commander of the Palestinian Liberation Army, as supervisor of the new security services, Palestinian officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Arafat, who has not yet announced Yehiyeh's appointment publicly, would retain over all control over security matters.

The choice of Yehiyeh was seen as a snub of Dahlan, head of the Preventive Security Service in Gaza, who had hoped to be given that post. Dahlan has close ties with U.S. officials and is believed to have maintained a back channel with Israel.



Crossing Place®
We Hear You!

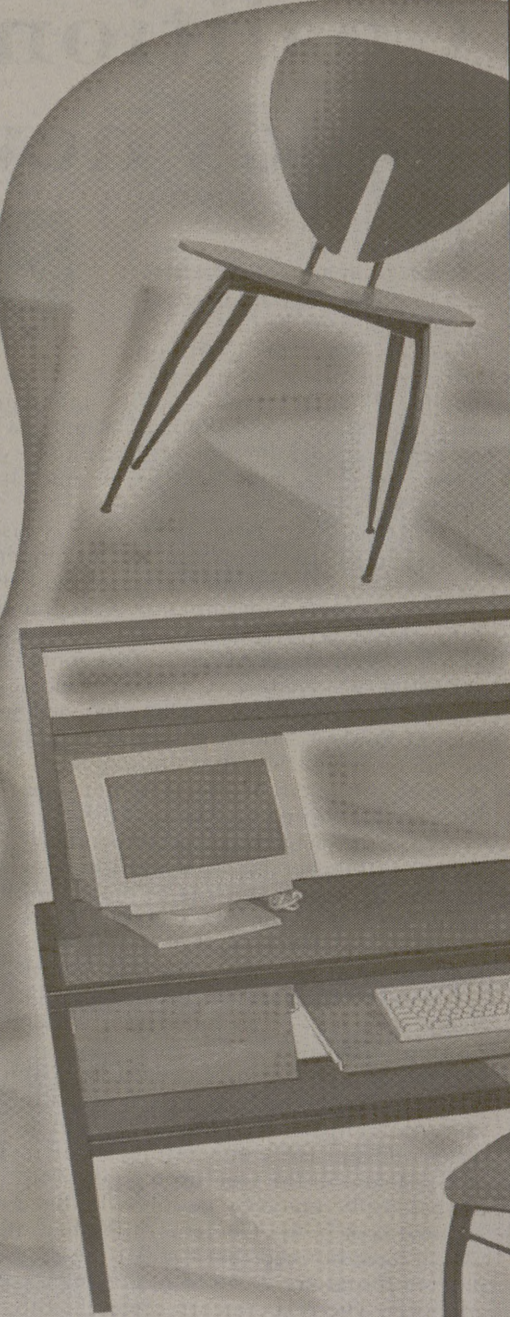
You asked for it. You got it!

You asked the Crossing Place team to create apartments for students with contemporary furnishings and a comfortable, vibrant clubhouse where you'd hang out... We heard you! Then you said, match the prices of other student apartments... And we said, you bet! And if that's not enough, you'll get \$150 instant cash now or a move-in gift when you finalize a lease for August move in. We really listen and take prompt action to please students.

400 Southwest Parkway
Leasing Center
(Culpepper Plaza)
1619 S. Texas Ave.
College Station

979-680-8475

www.crossingplace.com



Offer subject to change.

College Station's New Apartments for Students

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gunmen open fire on school bus near Myanmar border

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — Three masked gunmen opened fire on a Thai school bus near its border with Myanmar on Tuesday, killing two teenage students and wounding 15 others.

The attack threatened to deepen the enmity between neighbors Thailand and Myanmar.

A senior Thai defense official said the shooting in Ratchaburi province, about 12 miles from Myanmar, was probably carried out by one of Myanmar's ethnic minority guerrilla groups and may have been intended to "create more misunderstanding" between Thailand and Myanmar.

Relations between the Southeast Asian neighbors have deteriorated since a shelling incident last month along their 1,300-mile frontier, where fighting between Myanmar's government and rebels often spills over into Thailand.

Greenspan says economy looks brighter, but still slow

MONTREAL (AP) — Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said Tuesday that America's economic prospects were looking brighter, but cautioned that economic growth in the coming months will slow from the January-March pace.

"I suspect the American economy is in an upswing — it's not going to be a dramatic upswing ... but events look increasingly positive," Greenspan said in response to questions during a panel discussion with other central bankers.

The U.S. economy, which suffered its first recession in a decade last year, rebounded at an annual rate of 5.6 percent in this year's first quarter. But Greenspan, agreeing with the consensus of private forecasters, said that going forward, "We will not grow at the pace of the first quarter."