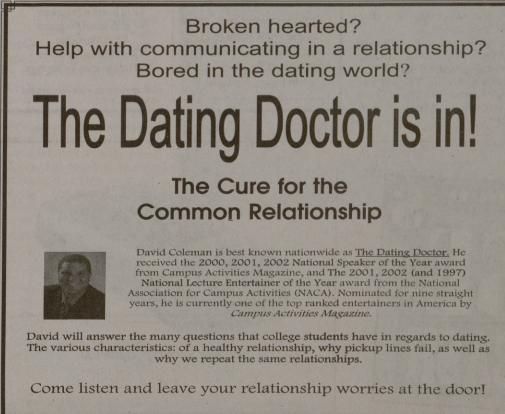


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Thursday, April 10, 2003

U.S. bomb kills 11 Afghan Chin

By Todd Pitman THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGRAM, Afghanistan ----A U.S. warplane called in to support allied Afghans under fire mistakenly bombed a house Wednesday, killing 11 civilians. It was the worst friendly-fire incident in Afghanistan in nine months.

Afghan authorities condemned the bombing, and the U.S. military said it was not clear why the bomb missed its target: a group of assailants attacking a checkpoint. The 20 attackers earlier

fought a brief battle with Pakistani soldiers deployed on the Pakistan side of the border, U.S. military spokesman Lt. Col. Douglas Lefforge said. It was unclear whether they came from Pakistan.

The assailants then headed toward the Afghan checkpoint just east of Shkin, 135 miles south of Kabul, and opened fire, wounding four Afghan soldiers.

Americans sent four armored Humvees with at least 16 U.S. soldiers to the scene and called in two Harrier attack jets, Lefforge said.

The attackers fled, apparently splitting into two groups. One of the planes fired a 30 mm cannon and dropped a 1,000-pound laser-guided bomb that crashed into the house.

"Coalition forces never intentionally target civilian locations," Lefforge said. "The bomb missed the intended target and landed on the house.

Whether "it was a technical malfunction or bad coordinates or anything like that, we just

Accidental bombing kills 11

Eleven Afghan civilians were killed when a bomb dropped by an American warplane landed on a home near the border with Pakistan.



simply don't know vet." Lefforge said.

American troops arriving at the bomb site found one injured survivor and took him and the four wounded Afghan soldiers to a U.S. base near the eastern town of Khost. No U.S. soldiers were injured.

"To the families of the Afghan citizens accidentally killed in a bombing in Afghanistan ... we send our sincere condolences," Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at a Pentagon briefing Wednesday. "We sincerely regret the incident."

Mohammed Ali Jalali, the governor of eastern Paktika province where Shkin is located, condemned the killings and said he discussed the incident with U.S. officials.

"They were neither al-Qaida nor Taliban," Jalali told The Associated Press by telephone. "They were only innocent civilians." The last time Ameri

forces caused major civili casualties was July 1, when civilians were killed and more were wounded by from an Air Force ACgunship that attacked seven villages in Afghanista Uruzgan province, accord to Afghan officials.

Across the border in t Pakistani town of Ang Adda, shopkeeper Muhamm Ramzan said witnesses him Wednesday's vicin mostly were women and d dren of the Ahmedzai tribe.

"The locals are very up with this bombing because the people had nothing to do w the attack on allied force Health Mini Ramzan said.

About 11,500 coality troops - 8,500 of the American - are in Afghanis hunting rebel fighters from h former Taliban regime, al-Qa and their allies.

About 100 American si diers are based at Shkin, a area that has been the target several rocket attacks ambushes in recent weeks. Afghan authorities

Taliban remnants are reorg izing, especially in south Afghanistan, in efforts destabilize the fledgling g ernment of U.S.-back President Hamid Karzai.

Lefforge said 500 l troops launched a fresh op tion dubbed Resolute Strike the southern province Helmand on Tuesday.

Lefforge said 41 peo were detained and question as part of the sweep.

U.N. U.S. plans to move Seoul base

By Jae-Suk Yoo THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, South Korea — The United States will move its main military base in South Korea out of the capital as soon as possible, a U.S. official said Wednesday

For decades, the Yongsan Garrison in the heart of Seoul has been a symbol of the U.S.-South Korean military alliance forged during the 1950-1953 Korean War.

The headquarters also has become a source of friction in recent years. Some South Koreans complain that U.S. forces occupy valuable real estate and sometimes cause trouble in nearby neighborhoods.

is admittedly a very complex and comp issue," Lawless said.

Lawless represented the U.S. side in talk redeploying American troops in South Koreal month, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rums said troops near the border between the Koreas could be shifted south, moved to a countries in the region or brought home.

South Korea is concerned that such a redep ment would make it more vulnerable to Not Korean threats. The two sides did not disreducing the number of U.S. troops, Lawless Lawless and South Korean officials agreed

any redeployment plans must not weaken the nations' ability to deter the North Korean mil The two sides agreed that there would be Negroponte c

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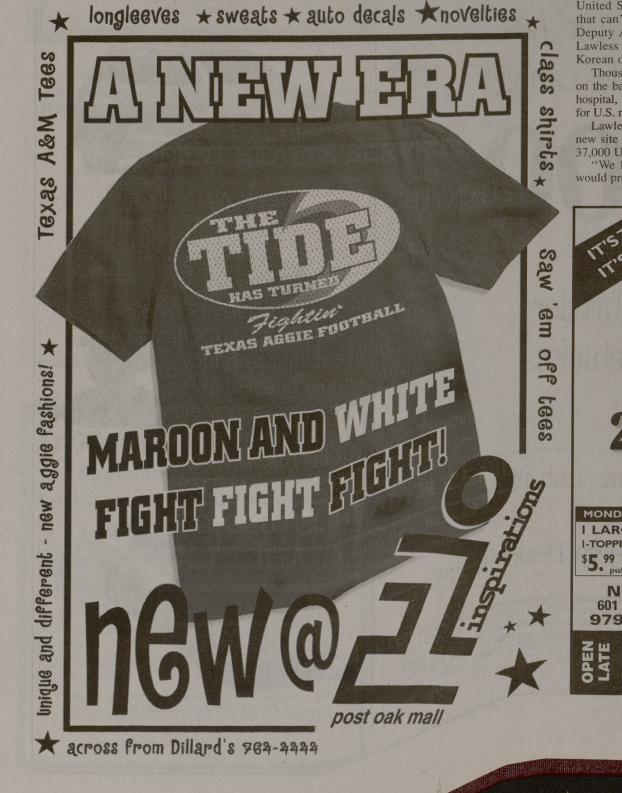
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'Both the Republic of Korea side and the United States have decided that this is an issue that can't wait any longer for resolution," U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless said after two days of talks with South Korean officials.

Thousands of U.S. soldiers and their families live on the base, which covers 800 acres and houses a hospital, a radio and television station, and schools for U.S. military dependents.

Lawless did not give a time frame or a possible new site for the headquarters, which oversees the 37,000 U.S. soldiers in South Korea.

'We have committed to one another that we would proceed ... as fast as possible to solve what compromise in the combined deterrence of the forces throughout the process of realignment

The two sides plan to meet at least every! months to determine details of redeployment, cials said.

Tensions with North Korea are high because the North's suspected nuclear weapons progra but Seoul and Washington want a peaceful solution

Most South Koreans tolerate the U.S. milit presence, and some benefit economically f it. The South Korean government regards U.S. troops as a "tripwire" that automatical would lead to U.S. involvement in fighting of North Korean invasion.

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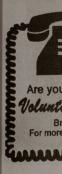
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