

Fix Her Up



Sharon Aeschbach • THE BATTALION

Senior mechanical engineering major **Brian Auer** works on a motorcycle at a shop in Bryan Wednesday afternoon.

Winning the War on Terror Controversy

By Pauline Jelinek
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) — The war on terror might eventually be won, depending on one's definition of winning.

Victory might mean a drop in the number of terror attacks, or a drop in the death tolls they inflict. But almost no one foresees a complete end to terror tactics that have succeeded in getting attention for Islamic extremists and others. Witness the Middle East, for example.

President Bush ignited a continuing controversy early this week by saying he doesn't think the war is winnable; then he reversed himself, saying flatly that it is.

The truth is probably more nuanced, say experts on the military, Islam and international issues.

And though Bush asserted that the United States is winning now, there's wide disagreement on that as well.

It won't be time to even think about declaring victory until the

United States goes "many years" without a catastrophic attack like the Sept. 11, 2001, assaults that killed some 3,000 Americans, said Michael O'Hanlon, a defense analyst for the liberal-oriented Brookings Institution, which operates as a sort of loyal-opposition commentator here when Republicans hold the White House.

Even then, O'Hanlon said, attacks would continue, perhaps at the level of the October 2000 bombing of the USS Cole off of Yemen that killed 17 sailors.

"The best we can hope for is to reduce the level of conflict, the deadliness of conflict and the frequency," agreed Shireen Hunter, Islam specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a national security-oriented research group.

That will require protecting the homeland, crushing the current generation of al-Qaida and its sympathizers and stemming the rise of new generations of like-minded Islamic radicals, analysts said.

Americans are split on how it's going. A survey last month showed four in 10 saying the war is being won, four in 10 saying that it isn't and the rest not sure.

Analysts appeared more worried.

The war's not being won, O'Hanlon said, "because we're doing a good job against the first generation of al-Qaida but not ... the second."

Al-Qaida was scattered from its haven in Afghanistan, arrests of some leaders and operatives have been made around the world and international coalition efforts have stemmed the flow of some money used to finance terrorist activities.

"We are doing damage to the other side," said Joshua Muravchik of the American Enterprise Institute.

At the same time, some U.S. actions have increased contempt for America among Muslims, thus helping terrorists recruit new followers, O'Hanlon and others said.

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