

# THE BATTALION



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## Making a stand

### Bush defends war in Iraq at U.N. General Assembly meeting

By Terence Hunt  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS — President Bush, defending his decision to invade Iraq, urged a vast assembly of world leaders Tuesday to stand united with the country's struggling government and said the proper response to spreading violence "is not to retreat, it is to prevail."

The country's prime minister, Ayad Allawi, offered an upbeat assessment after Bush's speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations, saying, "We are winning, we are making progress in Iraq, we are defeating terrorists," even as insurgents claimed they had killed a second American hostage in two days.

Of the brutal slayings, Bush said, "We will not allow these thugs and terrorists to decide your fate and to decide our fate."

Yet in a sign of continuing world unease with the situation, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan — who last week called the war in Iraq illegal because it lacked Security Council approval — warned that the "rule of law" is at risk around the world.

"No one is above the law," Annan said Tuesday. He condemned the taking and killing of hostages in Iraq, but also said Iraqi prisoners had been disgracefully abused, referring to the U.S. treatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad.

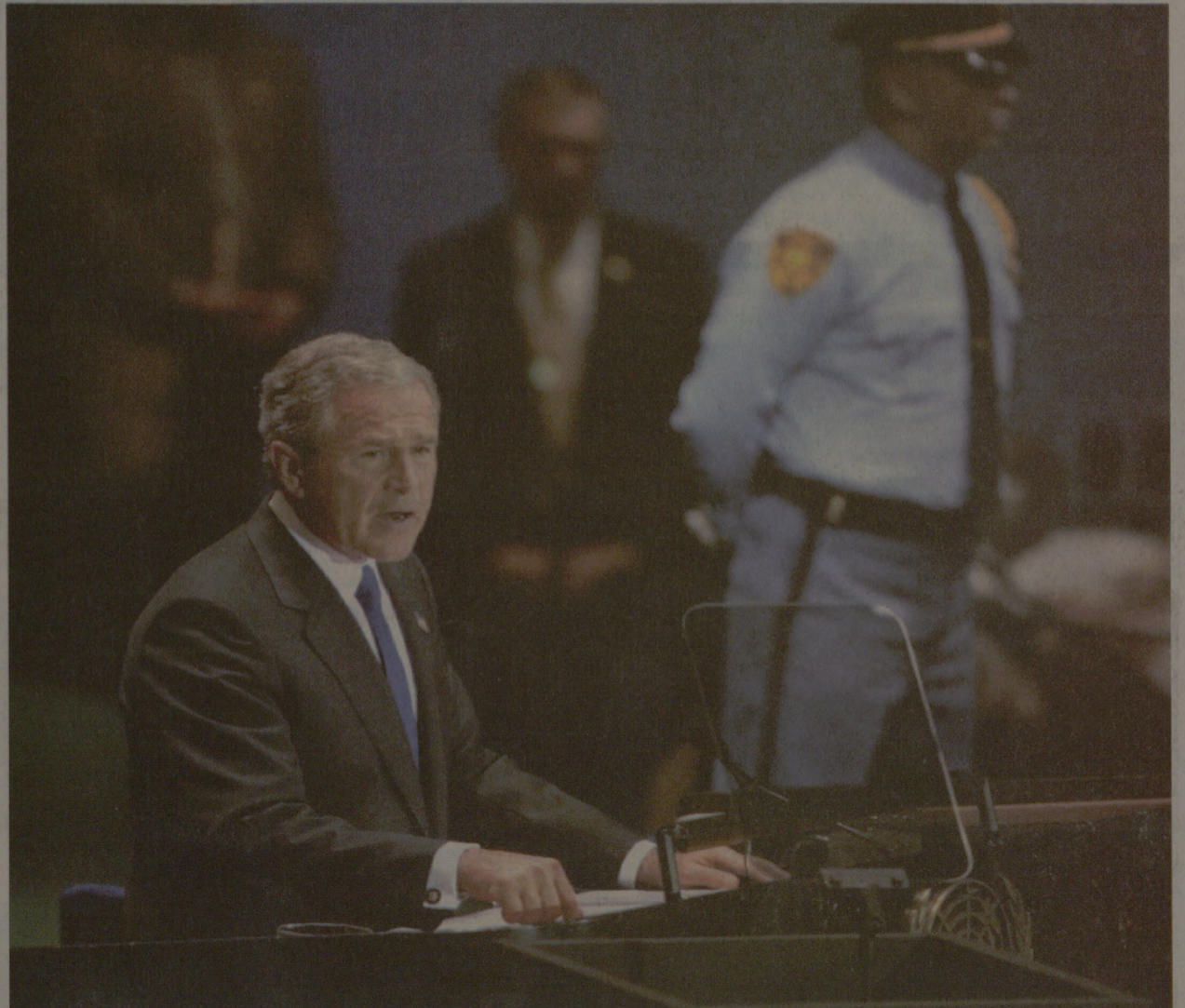
Often at odds with the United Nations on Iraq, Bush stood before a hushed General Assembly at the opening session of the 191-nation meeting six weeks before the presidential election.

The U.N. appearance gave Bush a world stage on which to demonstrate his foreign policy leadership and defend his Iraq policies, a sensitive political issue because of the relentless violence and the deaths of more than 1,000 American soldiers.

Standing before many allies who refused to send forces to Iraq, Bush said, "There is no safe isolation from terror networks or failed states that shelter them, or outlaw regimes or weapons of mass destruction. Eventually there is no safety in looking away, seeking the quiet life by ignoring the struggles and oppression of others."

After the speech, Bush brushed aside a bleak National Intelligence Estimate of Iraq's future that spoke of possibilities ranging from tenuous stability to civil war. Bush characterized the scenarios developed by senior U.S. intelligence officials as "life could be lousy, life could be OK, life could be better. And they were just guessing as to what the conditions might be like."

Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., Bush's rival for the presidency, told a news conference in Jacksonville, Fla., that the president "failed to level with world



President George W. Bush addressed the U.N. General Assembly meeting on Tuesday. Bush spoke on foreign policy leadership and defended his Iraq policies.

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### Task Force surveys Alabama TEEEX checks Hurricane Ivan's damage

By Pammy Ramji  
THE BATTALION

On Sept. 15, Gov. Rick Perry agreed to deploy Texas Task Force 1, one of 28 teams in the national urban and rescue system under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to check stability of structures in Alabama after the destruction of Hurricane Ivan.

The Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), a member of the Texas A&M University System, serves as the sponsoring agency for Texas Task Force 1. TEEX is one of the largest systems of higher education in the United States and has jurisdiction over all urban rescue systems.

Senior communications specialist for TEEX Janet Frye said sending a team will be helpful.

The 31-member group was deployed to Orange Beach, Ala., and Gulf Shores, Ala.

In Orange Beach, the team checked the structural stability of a five-story condominium hotel for five hours, and in Gulf Shores the team searched 576 structures in multistory high-rise condominiums that collapsed from Hurricane Ivan. The team returned to College Station Monday.

Associate director for emergency response and rescue for TEEX Jeff Saunders was one member of the 31-member team deployed to Alabama.

"We did not find anyone in any of those structures," Saunders said.

Saunders, along with members of the team, estimates one month to six weeks until the power will be restored from the main line, and right now there is no air conditioning or electricity.

"All their income comes in from tourism," Saunders said. "When we let the residents back into the area to see their homes,

the look on their faces was a depressed look because they are looking at their little piece of the world destroyed, knowing it will take about two to three years to get back to normal."

The team received its demobilization orders from FEMA on Sunday, after four days of search and rescue missions.

"I was a firefighter for 20 years, and I still have the need to help people when they can't help themselves," Saunders said. "We know how hard it will be for everyone to get back to a normal life, and we want to be there for the people."

Communications director for TEEX Jason Cook said he is happy to know the team made a difference.

"As President George Bush toured the devastation left behind by one of the most powerful hurricanes in U.S. history, he personally thanked the 31 members of Texas Task Force 1 on Sunday," Cook said.

#### TEXAS TASK FORCE RETURNS



On Monday the Texas Task Force returned from Alabama, where it aided in sorting through the mess left by Hurricane Ivan.

- The team searched 576 buildings for bodies over a two day period.
- The team checked structural stability of a five-story hotel
- The team has 31 members and is one of 28 in the national urban rescue system

ANDREW BURLISON — THE BATTALION  
JEFF SAUNDERS, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE — SOURCE

### Another gas leak found at apartments

By Sonia Moghe  
THE BATTALION

Area maintenance workers for University Apartments found a leak in a gas line Tuesday morning and alerted the College Station Fire Department at 9:30 a.m., said Bart Humphreys, fire department public information officer.

"As far as we know there was only one leak," Humphreys said.

University Apartments is the location of the fatal July 31 explosion that killed 4-year-old Lamiya Zahin and, later, her grandmother Rabeya Chaudhury.

Since that incident, the University has been working to inspect and replace old gas lines, Humphreys said.

"There has been a lot of activity over there (at the University Apartments)," Humphreys said. "They have been replacing

lines. They've been doing a lot of work."

Humphreys said the leak was found outside of a building at the complex and that to fix the leak, workers had to shut down a gas line, turning off gas in three buildings about 45 minutes. The area maintenance workers eventually fixed the leak.

Humphreys said he did not know if the leak was found in an old pipe or a newly replaced one.

### Al-Qaida groups beheads second American in Iraq

By Alexandra Zavies  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — An al-Qaida-linked group led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi claimed Tuesday to have killed the second of two American hostages — back-to-back slayings that have notched up the Jordanian militant's ruthless campaign of terror.

The claim, posted on an Islamic Web site, could not immediately be verified.

Al-Zarqawi's group, Tawhid and Jihad, kidnapped two Americans — Jack Hensley and Eugene Armstrong — and Briton Kenneth Bigley

on Thursday from a home that the three civil engineers shared in an upscale Baghdad neighborhood. Al-Zarqawi beheaded Armstrong, and the militants on Monday posted a gruesome video of the 52-year-old man's death.

The new posting followed the passing of the militants' 24-hour deadline for the release of all Iraqi women from prison, and after anguished relatives in the United States and Britain begged for the lives of Bigley, 62, and Hensley, who would have marked his 49th birthday Wednesday.

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### Edwards: Electoral College unfair

By Jibrán Najmi  
THE BATTALION

To a standing-room only audience, George C. Edwards III advocated the abolishment of the Electoral College Tuesday at the Annenberg Presidential Conference Center, saying discourages voting.

"It was the Electoral College, not the Supreme Court's decision in Bush vs. Gore, that determined the outcome of the 2000 election," said Edwards, a distinguished professor of political science at A&M. "In the 2000 election, it was the Republicans who feared that Bush would get the most popular votes, but that Gore would win the election as a result of the Electoral College. They actually made some preparations to try and convince some electors to vote for the candidate who won the most votes in the country rather than the one in the respective states."

Edwards said the Electoral College does not uphold the definition of democracy, which includes equality in voting as a central standard to the democratic process.

"The percentage of the votes received by a candidate nationwide rarely coincides with the percentage of the popular vote that a candidate receives," Edwards said.

Edwards attributed the phenomenon to the fact that 48 of the states award candidates who place first in the popular vote every electoral vote. Edwards said the system effectively disenfranchised voters who supported losing candidates.

"A candidate can win some states by very narrow margins, lose others by huge margins and still win the electoral vote under our current system," Edwards said. "For example, three million people voted for Gore in 2000, while Bush received only 537 more votes in Florida, yet received all of Florida's electoral votes."

Edwards also said that the Electoral College does not protect the interests of smaller states, but allows candidates to ignore the majority of the country and focus only on battleground states.

"No matter what state you look at, there is no single common interest that you point to," Edwards said. "The Electoral College distorts the political process and violates the principles



WHITNEY MARTIN — THE BATTALION  
George C. Edwards, III, Ph.D., speaks at the George Bush Presidential Library Tuesday evening. Edwards is considered one of the leading scholars of the U.S. Presidency.

of political equality."

Edwards said the most controversial issues that have arisen have been based on economic interest or ideology, yet there have been no issues where it is small states versus larger states.

Several audience members agreed with Edwards' assessment of the entire situation.

"I feel like I'm throwing my vote away by voting for Kerry in Texas essentially, because it more or less doesn't matter as some states you just sort of know who is going to win," said Patrick Paschall, a sophomore political science major.

Paschall said Edwards' suggestion to attempt to pass a constitutional amendment that would abolish the Electoral College could happen.

"Edwards outlined a plan to start out locally, start it in the grassroots. It's hard to get a constitutional amendment passed but it can be done,"

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