

Questions raised in wake of friendly fire incident

By Andrew Maykuth & Sudarsan Raghavan
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GHANIKHEL, Afghanistan (KRT) — Residents of this village inside territory controlled by the opposition United Front on Sunday buried the victim of a stray U.S. bomb, on a day of light U.S. attacks on nearby positions of the Taliban military.

While United Front officials welcomed recent stepped-up U.S. bombing on Taliban positions, the friendly fire incident on Saturday has shaken confidence in and raised questions about the U.S. bombing campaign.

A 25-year-old mother of two who was working on a hand-powered machine sewing clothes for her brother-in-law's wedding was killed by shrapnel Saturday when a 500-pound bomb crashed through the roof of her house.

Seventeen others, mostly the woman's relatives, were injured, her cousin told CNN.

"The United States announced they could defeat our enemies by computer technology," said Baluch, 57, a local military commander who like many Afghans uses only one name. "Why do their bombs miss? They should destroy our enemies, not us."

The death of the young woman was the only U.S.-confirmed fatality, though Dr. Abdullah, the chief spokesman and foreign minister of the United Front, said two people died.

Abdullah, speaking to reporters Sunday night, called the bombing of Ghanikhel a "tragic mistake," but he said such incidents were "inevitable" in times of war, especially along a frontline that stretches for more than 600 miles in various locations.

"We should bear in mind it's quite a lengthy frontline, and this was the first time" a bomb struck civilians in areas under control of the United Front, he said.

Abdullah praised the increased intensity of bombing Saturday, which followed several days of complaints from United Front commanders about the pace of the American attacks. "If yesterday's type of bombing becomes the standard, our objectives could be achieved much quicker," Abdullah said.

Despite — or perhaps because of — the civilian casualties among Afghans and a growing sense the air campaign is making little headway, President Bush faced calls Sunday on several fronts to step up the pace of attacks even further.

"Other issues," including the upcoming Islamic season of Ramadan, "have to be secondary to the primary goal of eliminating the enemy and doing it with whatever methods are necessary to achieve it," Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said on the CBS News program "Face the Nation."

Former ambassador to the United Nations Richard Holbrooke said that one of the lessons of the Kosovo war in 1999 was that, because any level of air strikes brings negative political consequences, nothing is gained by holding back.

Defending the course of the war, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, speaking on ABC News' "This Week" broadcast, accused the Taliban of using mosques to store ammunition and as military command-and-control posts, and he said Afghanistan's rulers were lying about civilian casualties.

"There are plenty of people throwing ordnance around in Afghanistan besides the United States," he said. "We're bombing from the air, but the opposition forces are, in fact, fighting against the Taliban. The Taliban is fighting against us and the opposition forces. So when someone dies, it could have come from any one of those four locations."

United Front officials in Tashkent conceded Sunday that the Taliban appeared to be more resilient than they had anticipated and that nearly three weeks of U.S. air bombings had not significantly weakened the Islamic regime's fighters.

"They are determined to fight till the end," said Ibrahim Ghafoory, a senior opposition official in Tashkent.

But Ghafoory added that the United Front also has the will to fight hard as long as the U.S. stays committed to providing assistance.

"We're hoping that the coordination between our forces and the Americans will continue, and together we will also fight till the end. We're determined to fight till the end. The Taliban cannot fight back over a long time."

In the village of Ghanikhel, Afghans expressed concern about what appeared to be a wildly off-target bomb. Situated among plots of corn and cotton on a broad plain north of Kabul, Ghanikhel is at least four miles from the Taliban targets that American jets had been hammering throughout Saturday in the heaviest attacks during a week of bombardments of frontline positions.

Residents were further galled because they say the stray bomb fell within sight of foreign military observers — said to be either American or British — who they say are camped on a nearby hill to help pilots target their weapons.

"If the United States repeats this action again, we will stand against them as we stood against the Russians," said Abdul Jan, who identified himself as a local commander. "If they cannot destroy our enemies, they should just stop bombing."

Knight Ridder Newspapers correspondent Warren P. Strobel contributed to this report. © 2001, Knight Ridder/Tribune Information Services.

which was renamed after Grayson and his wife, Susan.

University General Counsel Melinda Grier is currently in negotiations with Lennon. The University has not announced whether it will return the money.

Shelley Sutherland, coordinator of the University Greek Life office, said she did not know of any request made by Lennon for Beta Theta Pi to return donations made by Grayson, nor did she know any details of when such a donation might have been made. Greek Life doesn't keep records of donations, Sutherland said, only the individual chapters do. An agreement between the University and Lennon would not affect the fraternity because it is a private organization, she added.

The president of Beta Theta Pi did not return the Emerald's phone calls.

— Kara Cogswell

Public library hosts discussion on Islam

The Eugene Public Library is inviting community members to a public discussion tonight beginning at 7 p.m. Panelists at the discussion, "Keep the Dialogue Going: Perspectives on Islamic Culture and History," will answer questions about Islam, said librari-

an Ilana Ferris.

"We're trying to show Islam as a world religion, not merely a Arabic one," she said.

Four Muslims will serve on the panel — one from China, one from Syria, one from America and one from Indonesia, Ferris said. Professor Jonathan Katz will serve as the moderator and answer questions about Islamic politics, history and economics.

— Sue Ryan

Lecture focuses on career outlook

The University Career Center is sponsoring "Crouching Economy, Hidden Career: Job Outlook in the Current Economy" today from 3 to 4 p.m. in the Gerlinger Alumni Lounge.

The event will feature two speakers: Ed Whitelaw, an emeritus professor of economics, and Margaret Hallock, a professor in the Labor Education and Research Center. They will address the current economic state and its effects on the Pacific Northwest as well as gender issues in the labor market.

The event is open to all students, faculty and staff. For more information, call the Career Center at 346-3235.

— Katie Mayer

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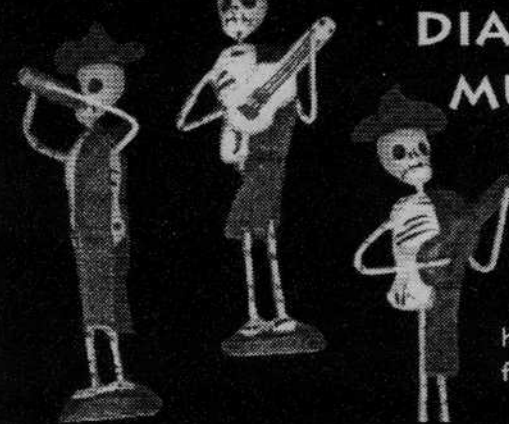
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