



Faces of conflict

U.S.: Some military personnel oppose a 'war of aggression' against Iraq and seek conscientious objector status

Prashant Gopal

South Florida Sun-Sentinel (KRT)

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — National Guard reservist Bryan Alarcon said "no" when his sergeant called looking for volunteers to go to Turkey as part of the U.S. military ramp-up to war. If he's ordered to go, Alarcon says, he'll refuse — even if his decision lands him in jail.

The 25-year-old West Palm Beach, Fla., resident is among a small group of military personnel who have joined another fight — the one building locally and across the country against war.

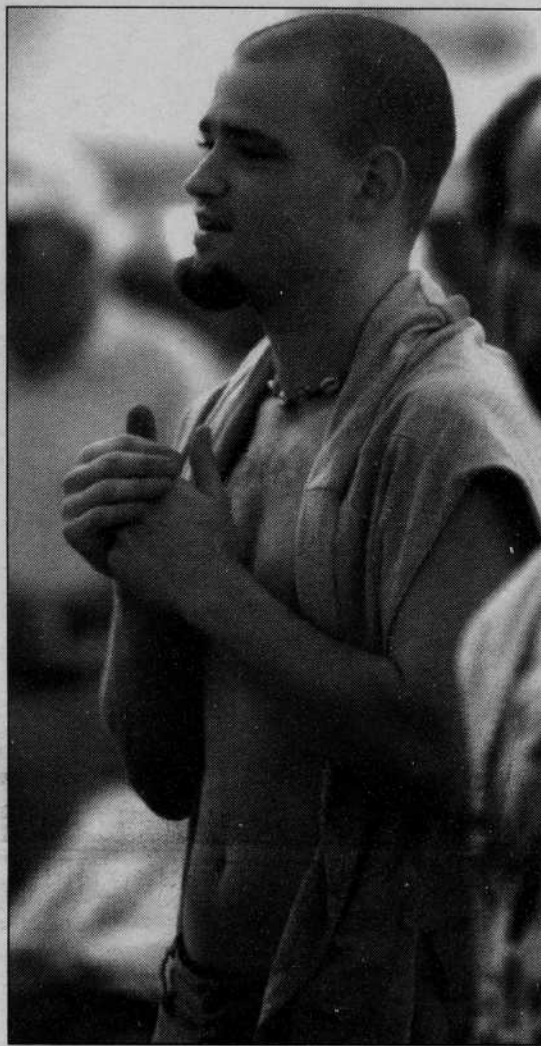
Alarcon said he'd rather risk going to jail than participate in a conflict he considers immoral. He said he didn't apply for money from the military to pay for his Palm Beach Community College tuition this semester and joined thousands of other Americans for the Jan. 18 peace rally in Washington, D.C.

It's uncertain how many service people share Alarcon's beliefs. But as war talk heated up in January, the anti-war G.I. Rights Hotline fielded a record number of calls, mostly from military personnel and families seeking advice on conscientious-objector and other discharges. The 3,582 calls were twice the normal monthly call volume, the group reported.

"They're going to call me a coward," said Alarcon, a full-time student who has a 9-month-old daughter. "But being a coward is not acting as I believe."

Soldiers who don't want to participate in the looming war are facing a difficult choice. But jail isn't the only option for resisters. The military recognizes conscientious objectors who prove they have deeply held moral, ethical or religious beliefs that would keep them from participating in war

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A. Enrique Valentin South Florida Sun-Sentinel



Peter Andrew Bosch Miami Herald

IRAQ: A Kurdistan village under 24-hour watch by Iraqi soldiers eagerly awaits the start of an American war

Mark McDonald

Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

KALAK, Iraq — It's a drab little village, pleasant enough when the olive trees are in flower, but mostly it's just sunburned shepherds and their black-faced sheep. Even the locals admit that Kalak is unremarkable — except that it's probably the most dangerous place in all of Iraq.

Pitched above a broad tributary of the Tigris River, Kalak is part of Kurdistan, that broad swath of northern Iraq that's beyond Saddam Hussein's control. A quarter-mile away, dug into a ridge above the town, Hussein's

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IRAN: After an eight-year war, residents of a small village near the border of Iraq trust neither Hussein nor the United States

Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson

Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

QASR-E-SHIRIN, Iran — Few Iranians suffered the ravages of their bloody, eight-year war with Iraq more than the residents of this sleepy little border town.

Yet while residents hate and fear Saddam Hussein — "Have you forgiven Hitler?" Zahra Dekami, 32, asked — there is no apparent support for President George W. Bush's plan to oust him.

Many of the 30,000 Kurds who live here saw family members killed or captured by Hussein's troops when they occupied the hamlet in 1980.

The Iraqi invaders leveled every building except the mosque. The town, called

"Sweet Castle" in Persian, has since been rebuilt, although rusting Iraqi tanks and artillery still litter barren fields that once were vast palm tree groves in this breadbasket of western Iran.

"It's America who backed the Iraqis in their war against us, and now all they want to do is collect the weapons they left behind," insisted Dekami, drawing her black, head-to-toe chador tightly around her.

Added her father, Yabdullah Dekami, 75, who spent four years as an Iraqi prisoner of war: "Bush insults us if he thinks we believe the reasons he's giving for this war."

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Reza Moattarian KRT

Above: Marine Corps reservist Travis Clark, of Plantation, Florida, a special events coordinator for a South Florida anti-war group, participates in a peace rally Sunday in Hollywood, Fla. **Top right:** A young student in the northern village of Kalak, Iraq, attends the Avesta Primary School for Girls, whose curriculum promotes an independent Kurdistan. **Below:** A member of a war-stricken family in Qasr-e-Shirin, Iran, spends a Saturday in Basij Park overlooking the city, razed in the 8-year Iran-Iraq war.

Speaker suggests native law approach

The weekend's Environmental Law Conference featured 15 keynote speakers on a variety of issues

Ali Shaughnessy

Environment/Science/Technology Reporter

As the time approached 1 p.m. Saturday, the EMU Ballroom rapidly filled with students, environmental activists, lawyers and community members, who had gathered to hear the Honorable Robert Yazzie speak. Seats filled quickly, and people entering late were resigned to sitting on the floor or leaning against the wall.

"I miss the days of heavy winter snows," Yazzie said. "When I see, feel and taste the declining quality of our water, life and earth, I worry what my grandchildren and future generations will inherit."

Yazzie — the Chief Justice of the Navajo Supreme Court — was one of 15 keynote speakers involved with the 21st annual Public Interest Environmental

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MIPs rise 23 percent in 2002-03

The Eugene Police Department has already issued 200 citations this term; weather conditions and enforcement are factors

Caron Alarab

Safety/Crime/Transportation Reporter

The Eugene Police Department has issued more than 50 minor in possession of alcohol citations during the last two weekends, accounting for about 25 percent of those issued this term alone. And while both EPD and the Department of Public Safety's MIP statistics are already higher compared with last year, local officials say rises and fluctuations in cited alcohol-related offenses result from several factors, including weather conditions and enforcement.

"It's essentially up to the people," Sgt. Peter Aguilar said. "Change is a strange animal."

According to EPD numbers reported between Friday evenings and Sunday mornings, about 200 MIP citations have

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WEATHER

Today: High 57, Low 48, cloudy, chance of showers
 Tuesday: High 55, Low 45, light rains, breezy

LOOKING AHEAD

Tuesday
 Students and community members of various faiths come together monthly

Wednesday
 Students risk losing grant money after Kulongoski approves legislative plan

News brief

Oregon Commentator issues disappear

It may be hard to find a copy of the Oregon Commentator today. More than 1,500 copies of the Commentator's latest issue — about 75 percent of the publication's March press run — went missing from boxes around campus Friday, and unless there was a sudden upsurge in reader interest, theft is a likely culprit. The incident marks the second time is-

ssues of the Commentator, the "conservative journal of opinion," have disappeared. The paper said last spring at least half of its "Hate" issues were stolen.

Commentator editor in chief Pete R. Hunt said he believes campus community members were incensed by the last page of the new issue, which features an image of anti-war protesters in Washington, D.C., with "You Fucking Racists" printed in bold capital letters below the picture.

"People have told me that the page was 'irresponsible' and 'reckless,'" he said.

"However, I fully stand behind our decision to run it ... I believe that there are both subtle and obvious elements of racism throughout these demonstrations."

Hunt added he doubts the missing papers have anything to do with the Oregon Voice's recent grievance which alleged that the Commentator stole unprinted Oregon Voice material and altered it with anti-Semitic remarks.

The Commentator is considering ordering another 1,200 copies of its March publication for distribution.

— staff writers