



# U.S. says conflict 'coming to a conclusion'

Patrick Peterson, Peter Smolowitz and Martin Merzer  
 Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. Army soldiers spent the night in one of Saddam Hussein's main presidential palaces, and 10,000 U.S. Marines surged into the capital's outskirts as U.S. officials suggested that major combat was all but over in Iraq. "The hostilities phase is coming to a conclusion," Secretary of State Colin Powell said Monday. Another leading indicator: Gen. Tommy Franks, who commands the allied force from a base in Qatar, spent much of Monday visiting his troops in Iraq.

At the same time, experts tested chemicals that could

prove that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction. U.S. officers said they found substances that preliminary tests determined were the nerve agents sarin and tabun and the blister agent lewisite.

If additional testing confirms the presence of such chemical agents, the discovery at a compound near the city of Hindiyah, about 60 miles south of Baghdad, would be the first proof that Iraq has been hiding banned weapons of mass destruction — a primary justification for the war.

In Washington, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld cautioned that initial reports and tests are often inaccurate. "Almost all first reports we get turn

out to be wrong," he said.

Some military officers at the scene said the material could be the residue of pesticides; others said they believed nerve agents are present. About a dozen soldiers and two journalists, including Knight Ridder reporter Tom Lasseter, said the substances made them ill or caused blotches on their skin. More sophisticated tests will be conducted in coming days, Rumsfeld said.

In another major development, U.S. and British officials announced that allied bombs almost certainly had killed Ali Hassan al-Majid, known as "Chemical Ali." A member of

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A Marine clears rubble on Monday from a portrait of Saddam Hussein at his presidential palace at Salman Pak after it was overrun by Marines the night before.  
 Andrew Cutraro  
 St. Louis  
 Post-Dispatch

## On the spot democracy



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Candidates for ASUO Executive debate University issues such as diversity and the allocation of student fees in the EMU Ballroom on Monday night. From left to right, top: Pierre Spence, Jack Mantel, Christa Shively, Greg Bae, Maddy Melton and Eddy Morales. Bottom: Jarrett White, Gregory McNeill, John Drake, Joe Boyd and Jeremy L. Jones.



## The great debate

Six ASUO Executive tickets debated on Monday, offering visions from a Student Bill of Rights to focus groups

### ASUO elections

Jennifer Bear  
 Campus/Federal Politics Reporter

Chairs outnumbered students two-to-one as ASUO Executive candidates debated in the cavernous EMU Ballroom on Monday evening.

Despite the event's low attendance, the debate was quite lively, with six tickets and 11 total candidates espousing their views on how to run next year's student government. One candidate, Jeremy Jones, even had a Secret Service-esque bodyguard, who unfortunately failed to protect him during a mock assassination attempt at the end of the two-hour debate session.

All the other executive hopefuls stressed the importance of amplifying students' ideas and concerns through the megaphone of student government to influence University administrators and Salem legislators, but they had slightly varied ideas on how to

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## War protesters prompt police 'safeguarding'

The Iraq war has incited demonstrations, bringing police out to protect communities and protesters

### War hits home

Aimee Rudin  
 City/State Politics Reporter

Wherever protesters go, police follow. Despite occasional skirmishes between the people who enforce the government's rules and the people who disagree with the government's policies, many watchdog groups said interactions have been largely positive.

Numerous citizen marches, rallies and events have brought the controversial war in Iraq to local communities. As groups gather to speak out about war, police forces have been close at their heels, working not only to safeguard the community, but also to protect participants from possible danger.

"Our idea is to allow these things to continue peacefully," said Eugene Police Department Capt. Steve Swenson, the officer in charge of EPD's special operations division. "We want to allow people to use their First Amendment rights. This is the United States, and we want to ensure people the right to demonstrate responsibly and safely."

Police often position themselves at the border of a crowd to direct traffic and observe crowd activity, as they did during the March 15 war protest in Portland and at smaller Eugene-area rallies. They also watch for illegal activity and use force to make arrests when necessary.

Despite their differences, police officers and rally participants work toward similar goals: Both groups say they want to protect human life.

The media often fail to capture the positive — yet uneventful — exchanges between police forces and event participants, according to Dan Handelman, a member of Portland group Copwatch. Handelman said that media tend to focus on the

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### ASUO election coverage inside

The Emerald's primary election candidate and ballot measure profiles wraps up today with a four-page section inside.

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The ASUO elections are being conducted entirely via DuckWeb — read more inside.

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## E-filing can zap hours off filing taxes

People who plan to file taxes this year can file electronically, and possibly for free

Ali Shaughnessy  
 Environment/Science/Technology Reporter

Tax day — April 15 — is only a week away, and students who are already feeling the pressure of spring term may find it easier to file their taxes electronically using e-file.

While e-filing is not a new phenomenon during tax season — more than 42 million people e-filed last year — this is the first-year a service called Free File is being offered. The Free File Alliance, a group of 17 companies, are working with the Internal Revenue Service to provide free tax preparation and e-filing services to qualifying taxpayers.

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### E-file for free

• Super Site  
 Where: 275 W. 11th Ave.  
 When: 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Mondays through Wednesdays; 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursdays.  
 • The Singer Conference Room in the Eugene Public

Library  
 Where: 100 W. 10th Ave.  
 When: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.  
 Both sites accept walk-in appointments and will be open through April 15.  
 SOURCE: Internal Revenue Service