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News brief

Legislators call for Department of Peace

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. — In an ambitious alternative rhythm to the drumbeat of war, Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., wants to see the creation of a U.S. Department of Peace.

"Why not?" she asked. "We have a secretary of defense and a secretary of state, with military being the primary option on the table."

Peace, she said, is "another way to do business."

Lee, 56, joined Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio, and other members of Congress on Tuesday to reintroduce legislation calling for a cabinet-level department.

Kucinich, a presidential candidate

and an outspoken critic of President Bush's policy on Iraq, introduced a similar bill in July 2001.

He calls the creation of a peace-driven arm of the government "new thinking."

Lee, a firm voice of dissent in Congress, agrees.

"Right now, I suspect that most cabinet members are talking about which military action to take," Lee said in a telephone interview from Washington, D.C.

"But a secretary of peace can say, 'Hold on a minute — that could lead to a world that's less secure.'"

As U.S. bombs create smoldering piles of rubble in Baghdad, she envisions a Department of Peace as playing a critical role in world stability.

The proposed legislation calls for a department whose purpose would

be advocating for nonviolence as an "organized principle." Its role would involve promoting peace education worldwide, supporting disarmament treaties and addressing issues that may lead to violent conflict.

On the domestic front, the department would tackle such thorny issues as spousal and child abuse and gang warfare.

The department also calls for a Peace Academy, with graduates having completed four years of peace education.

"What are young people seeing each and every day?" Lee said, in a reference to the 24-hour coverage of TV war. "What is being embedded in their psyche? Is it that it's OK to bomb?"

—Corey Lyons, Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

Missile

continued from page 1

office of al-Jazeera, which has shown U.S. prisoners of war and graphic footage of dead and wounded Iraqi women and children, inflaming an already angry Arab populace.

"My husband died trying to reveal the truth of the world," his wife told reporters. "Please do not conceal it. The U.S. said this is a war on terrorism? Who is committing terrorism now? Didn't their records tell them this is a press office and a house of civilians?"

Al-Jazeera Baghdad reporter Maged Abdel Hadi said on air: "We were targeted because the Americans don't want the world to see the crimes they are committing against the Iraqi people."

The network described Ayyoub as a "martyr," a common term in the Arab media to describe those killed in warfare.

U.S. officials denied that they fired on the building because it held al-Jazeera. "We do not target journalists," Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks said at a briefing in Doha, Qatar.

Central Command officials said U.S. troops came under "significant enemy fire" from that building and the Palestine Hotel.

"These tragic incidents appear to be the latest example of the Iraqi regime's continued strategy of using civilian facilities for regime military purposes," the command said in a statement that expressed regret for the "loss of innocent life."

Al-Jazeera officials said witnesses denied that anyone in the building had fired at troops. They said it was too soon to say whether the attack was deliberate.

Ayyoub's colleagues described him as a consummate journalist. "He was the first one to go after a scoop," said Khalid Dalal, Ayyoub's colleague at the Jordan Times, the nation's largest English-language newspaper, with 7,000 circulation. Besides working at the Jordan Times, where he covered economic and political issues, he did freelance work for CNN.

Sanah Bashir, Jordan's minister of trade, called Ayyoub "a non-nonsense guy" who pushed the government to release information. "I re-

spected him. He had a job to do, and I was really saddened by his death."

Over the opposition of friends and family, Ayyoub arrived in Baghdad on Saturday for al-Jazeera. His brother refused to say goodbye to him in the hopes he would not go.

His wife tried to discourage him, but Ayyoub told her, "Journalists are safe. They are civilians. They won't be targeted."

Born in Kuwait, Ayyoub studied in India, where he obtained degrees in economics and journalism. He took classes in French and Hebrew, joined the Jordan Times in 1997 and began freelancing for al-Jazeera three years ago.

While working for al-Jazeera, Ayyoub also wrote for the Jordan Times. One story about the war ended: "Extensive casualties could result if the two sides enter into battle ... near the Iraqi Ministry of Information."

It ran the day before he died.

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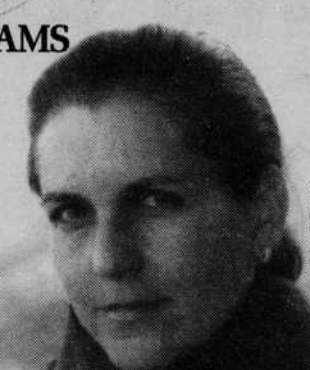
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