

News briefs

**Fox News worker caught smuggling war souvenirs**

WASHINGTON — Some members of the media are returning from Iraq with more than just war stories.

Several journalists and a U.S. serviceman have been caught trying to slip paintings, gold-plated assault weapons and other war souvenirs into the United States. Some of the booty was pilfered from Iraq's presidential palaces.

Benjamin J. Johnson, an engineer for Fox News Channel, tried to bring 12 paintings and 40 Iraqi monetary bonds and other items through Dulles Airport on April 17, according to a criminal complaint filed in the Eastern District of Virginia.

Johnson, 27, of Alexandria, Va., initially told Customs officials that he had only \$20 in cigarettes to declare but authorities noted that his hands were shaking and he began to "sweat profusely." A search of Johnson's luggage uncovered a large cardboard box that contained 12 paintings. He first told authorities that Baghdadis had given him the paintings but later admitted that he had taken some from the palace of Saddam's son Oday. Johnson is charged with smuggling and making false statements.

In a statement, Fox News said Johnson, who worked for the network for six years as a satellite truck engineer, had been fired.

— Shannon McCaffrey, Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

**U.S. warns France it will pay for opposition to war**

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration has warned France that it will pay a price for having led the

effort to thwart the U.S.-led war in Iraq, the latest sign that hard feelings generated in the run-up to the war won't dissipate quickly.

The warnings came after a White House review this week of U.S. policy toward France, and they continue a trend by President George W. Bush of punishing nations that cross him, even allies such as Canada and Germany.

American officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said Wednesday that no final decisions had been made and that much would depend on whether French President Jacques Chirac proved cooperative in the rebuilding of post-war Iraq.

But in a television interview Tuesday night on "The Charlie Rose Show" on PBS, Secretary of State Colin Powell responded simply "yes" when asked if there were consequences for France for opposing the United States.

"We have to look at all aspects of our relationship with France in light of this," Powell said.

— Warren P. Strobel, Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

**Groups gather evidence of possible war crimes**

WASHINGTON — An international coalition of lawyers and human-rights groups is gathering evidence to determine whether American and British troops committed war crimes in Iraq.

They intend to use the 9-month-old International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, to prosecute government and military leaders who may have violated international humanitarian law, and point to the dropping of anti-personnel bombs in civilian areas as an example of such a breach.

Lawyers with the Center for Constitutional Rights and the Center for Economic and Social Rights in

Turn to **Briefs**, page 4



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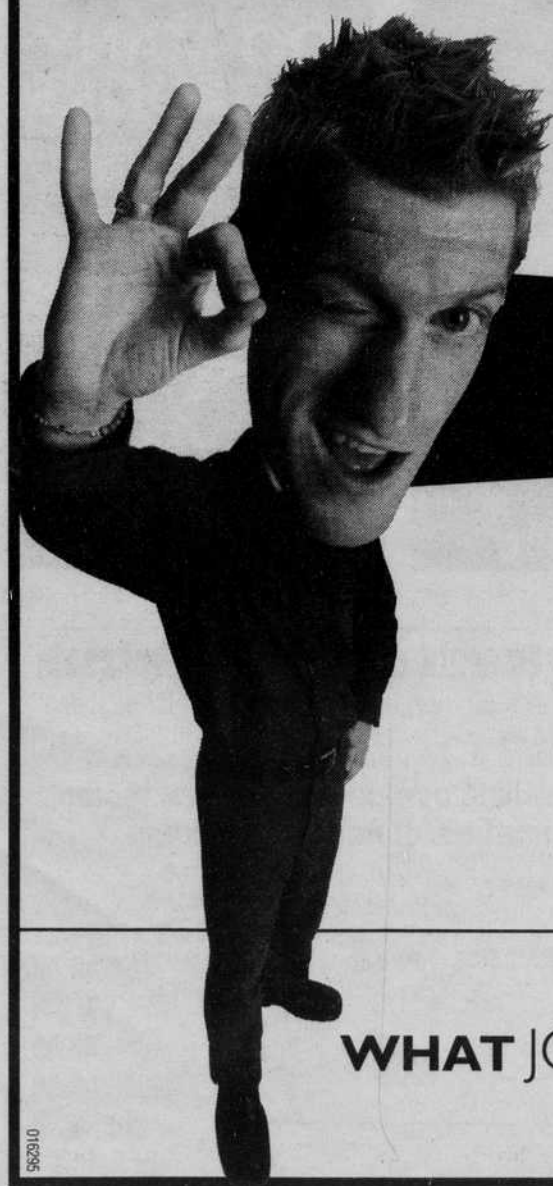
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