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Cloning, assassination in less-publicized news

Serbian prime minister killed, endangered oxen cloned and Beaufort Sea opened to oil exploration in recent months

News digest

Aimee Rudin
City/State Politics Reporter

A major media function is to serve as a public watchdog, alerting citizens to important events and providing, in part, a series of checks and balances on government and government organizations. With much of the media focus going toward the war in Iraq and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in China, however, several world, national and state events may have at times gone unreported.

Newsworthy events have occurred around the United States, in places such as Iowa and Washington, D.C., and other countries around the world, such as Serbia, Somalia and Cuba.

World

In Europe, Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic was assassinated on March 12. Since his death, Serbia has seen a decrease in organ-

ized crime and an increase in the number of crimes being solved — policies that Djindjic worked toward throughout his lifetime, according to Serbian officials. Serbia has also gained entrance into the Council of Europe and is expected to receive financial foreign aid from the United States and Europe.

Political analysts said Djindjic's death initiated Serbia's reform. According to reports by Katarina Subasic, a World Press Review correspondent in Serbia, the nation is becoming what Djindjic always wanted — peaceful and prosperous.

In Africa, warlords are meeting in Somalia for the 14th time since the collapse of the Somalia government in 1991 to discuss the implementation of a central government. In the past, faction leaders were the predominant parties interested in peace talks; however, according to a senior defense department official, Somalia's new label as one of the world's leading havens for terrorists has resulted in the United States joining the discussion.

According to the World Press Review, Somalia's location — which is across the Gulf of Aden from Yemen — and its rumored links with the terrorist group al-Qaida make it a likely place for terrorist activity.

In Cuba, Cuban leader Fidel Castro has made numerous recent arrests of critics of the Cuban government. An almost immediate trial and sentencing are often following these arrests. Several of the people arrested had shown open dissent toward the Cuban government in the past according to reports by Nick Miroff, a World Press Review correspondent. An independent journalist, an economist and a campaign organizer have all been sentenced to at least 20 years in prison.

National

In Iowa, scientists are using cloning techniques to breed endangered and rare animal species. Two banteng oxen were cloned using the genetic material of a wild ox that died in 1980, according to the Zoological Society of San Diego. The society provided preserved cells from the ox to scientists at Advanced Cell Technology and Trans Ova Genetics. The two companies had cloned an endangered species once before, but it died after two days.

The banteng clones were carried to term by two ordinary beef cows. There are only about 5,000 bantengs left. They survive mostly in their native habitat of Indonesia.

In Illinois, religious leaders from

Chicago and the surrounding area met at a Planned Parenthood center on April 12 to voice their support for reproductive rights. More than 40 of the leaders signed a letter affirming women's right to choose, and urged all religious leaders and people of faith to be respectful of the rights of those seeking to make free and respectful choices about their reproductive health, a Planned Parenthood spokeswoman said in a press release.

In Washington, D.C., government officials are opening the Beaufort Sea, off the coast of Northern Alaska, to oil exploration. According to administration officials, the government will begin taking bids later this year for access to drilling rights in the sea. Unlike drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, offshore drilling in the Beaufort Sea would not require congressional approval.

Offshore drilling is extremely costly, according to industry experts. Administration officials have said that in order to make exploration more desirable, the government plans on offering oil and drilling companies millions of dollars in tax incentives.

Again in Washington, D.C., a new international study comparing the literacy levels of U.S. fourth graders with fourth graders in 34 countries around the world showed that American children out-performed 23 of their counterparts, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

"The results from this study indicate that U.S. fourth-graders performed well on many reading tasks, but there is room for improvement," Grover "Russ" Whitehurst, director of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, said in a statement. "In the United States, there are significant gaps in reading literacy achievement between racial and ethnic groups, between students in high poverty schools and other public schools, and also between girls and boys."

In Oregon, the jobless rate continues to rise as the economy continues to decline, according to the Oregon Employment Department. Unemployment rose from 7.3 percent in February to 7.6 percent in March, almost two full points above the 5.8 percent national average.

John Mitchell, the regional economist for U.S. Bancorp, said in a press release that the Oregon jobless rate has been higher than the national rate since February 1996.

Contact the senior reporter at aimeerudin@dailyemerald.com.

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Robbery

continued from page 1

"When he heard the dog barking and coming up into the attic, he gave himself up," McKee said.

Police cordoned off the blocks between Chambers Street and Grant Alley and West 11th and 13th avenues for 90 minutes. At 5 p.m., there were still more than a dozen police vehicles in the area, including at least nine police cars, several unmarked detective cars, a police truck and two police motorcycles. Officers and detectives milled around the run-down blue house and ducked under yellow police tape as they secured the area. Several officers brandished assault ri-

fles, and McKee said FBI agents were also on the scene.

McKee, who has been a member of the Violent Crimes Unit for four years, said the robbery was highly unusual because police acting on a tip were able to respond and apprehend the suspects very quickly.

"It doesn't happen real often," he said. "When we receive reliable information like we did today, we take it seriously."

McKee said the FBI is handling further details of the case because as a second-degree robbery, it wouldn't be pursued in the state court system.

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