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1,409
U.S. Death toll in Iraq

\$80 billion
additional funds requested
from President Bush for Iraq

31 U.S. soldiers killed
in helicopter crash
Wednesday

500 yards
Distance militants are asking Iraqis to stay
away from voting booths Jan. 30

11 Americans killed
in car bombings
Wednesday

U.S. sees deadliest day in Iraq

BY JASON KEYSER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A U.S. helicopter crashed in a desert sandstorm in the early morning darkness Wednesday, killing the 30 Marines and one Navy sailor aboard. Six other troops died in insurgent ambushes in the deadliest day for Americans since the Iraq war began nearly two years ago.

Only days before Iraq's crucial elections Sunday, militants set off at least eight car bombings that killed 13 people and injured 40 others, including 11 Americans. The guerrillas also carried out a string of attacks nationwide against schools that will serve as polling centers.

In Washington, President Bush called on Iraqis to defy terrorism and go to the polls despite relentless insurgent attacks. He said it was a "very discouraging" day when the U.S. death toll for the war rose above 1,400.

The CH-53E Super Stallion was

carrying personnel from the 1st Marine Division on a security mission in support of the election when it went down about 1:20 a.m. near the town of Rutbah, about 220 miles west of Baghdad, the military said.

The crash occurred during severe weather, but its cause was still under investigation, said Army Gen. John Abizaid, chief of U.S. Central Command. An Accuweather map showed sandstorms Wednesday in the western region of Iraq near the Jordanian border where the crash took place.

A search and rescue team was at the site. The victims were 30 Marines and one sailor, said Lt. Gen. John Sattler, the top Marine commander in Iraq — the most American service members to die in a single incident since the March 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The deadliest previous incident for U.S. troops was also a helicopter crash: a November 2003 collision of two Black Hawk helicopters that killed 17. Before

Wednesday's bloodshed, the most Americans killed in one day came on the invasion's third day — March 23, 2003 — when 28 troops were killed during the U.S. military's drive to take Baghdad and topple Saddam Hussein.

The U.S. military has not seen such a high loss of life in one day in 15 years — since an explosion ripped through a gun turret on the USS Iowa during a training exercise in the Caribbean in April 1989, killing 47 sailors.

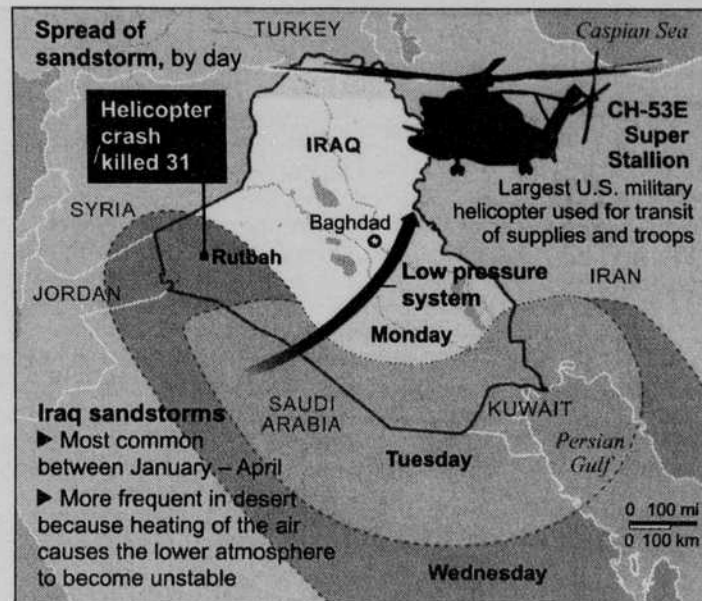
Iraqi security forces and civilians have borne the brunt of violence in Iraq, with bombings often killing scores of people at a time.

Violence has only increased ahead of Sunday's election, which will create a 275-member National Assembly and regional legislatures. Sunni Muslim extremists have threatened to sabotage the election, and many Sunni clerics have called for a boycott because of the presence of U.S. and other foreign troops.

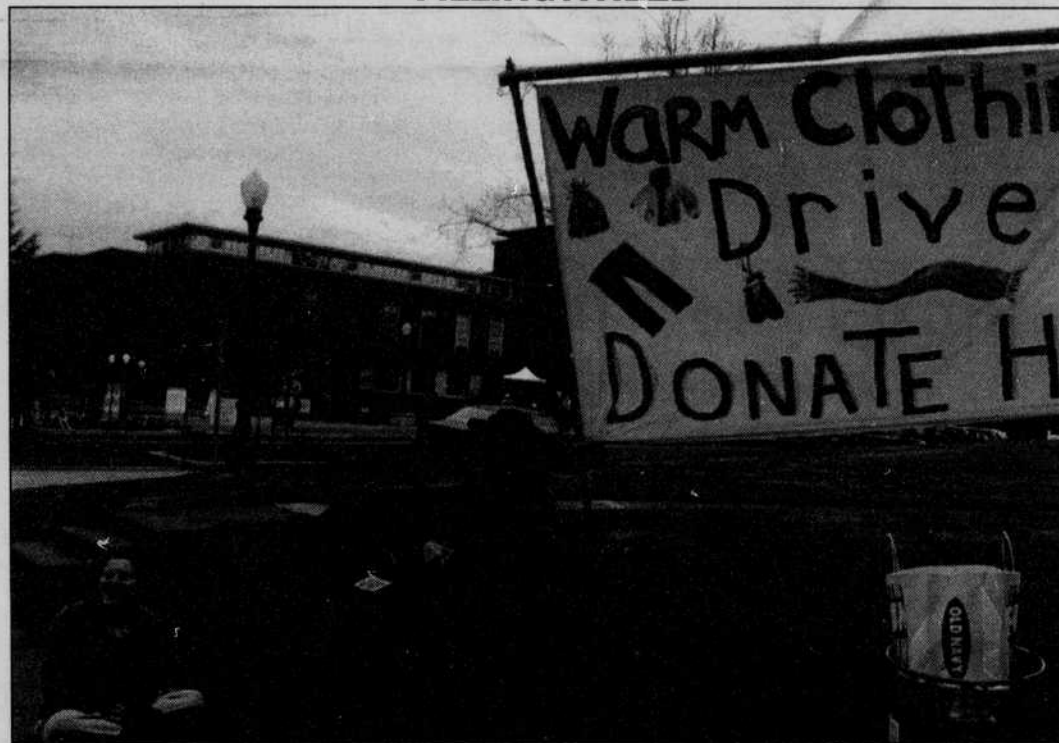
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General says severe weather at crash site

Military officials are investigating what caused the crash of a U.S. military transport helicopter near Rutbah, Iraq, that went down in severe weather, killing 30 Marines and one Navy sailor.



FILLING A NEED



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER

University students and Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group members Daniella Marchick and Froheil Chand watch a table Wednesday for community members interested in donating clothing for those in need. As part of OS-PIRG's hunger and homeless campaign, the group has placed bins in University sororities and will be near the intersection of East 13th Avenue and University Street through Friday. "We want to try to keep our friends warm," Marchick said.

IN BRIEF

Western Oregon's graduation rate low

ALBANY, N.Y. — The State University of New York Board of Trustees on Tuesday ordered administrators to improve graduation rates, some of which are so poor that at some campuses three in four students don't graduate within four years.

Unnecessarily lengthy stays in college drain tax dollars, block potential openings in the classroom and delay students from starting productive professional careers, SUNY Board Chairman Thomas Egan said.

Chancellor Robert King said he offered a plan to improve four-year graduation rates that sought a higher \$600 tuition increase in the fall and automatic tuition increases for incoming classes tied to a higher education cost index after that. Much of that funding would go to hiring more instructors and

opening up more sections of courses as long as state aid grew, King said.

But Egan said more money isn't the answer, pointing out SUNY's total budget has increased to \$8 billion from \$5 billion over the past 10 years.

A report released this month by The Education Trust, a national nonprofit group that studies higher education, compared similar schools nationwide to the graduation rate of SUNY at Plattsburgh.

Using six-year rates, it found Plattsburgh graduated 58.9 percent of its freshman class, compared to 65.9 percent at Millersville University in Pennsylvania, and 31 percent at Western Oregon University. It also noted the higher rates at private colleges like Amherst and Williams in Massachusetts graduated more than 95 percent of students within six years. Plattsburgh was credited as having a better rate than 21 of 25 similar colleges.

— The Associated Press

Expert says roles of sex, gender crucial to international law

BY KARA HANSEN
NEWS REPORTER

Women are largely absent from discussions of war and conflict, but their roles are crucial to understanding violence at an international level, international law expert Hilary Charlesworth told more than 200 people attending an annual Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics lecture on Wednesday.

"(Sex and gender) are crucial to understanding the continuing Iraq crisis and the war on terrorism," Charlesworth told the students and community members who filled every seat in a Knight Law Center

lecture hall, with the overflow of listeners spilling onto stairs and leaning against walls.

Margie Paris, associate dean for academic affairs at the law school, said despite their importance, the issues of sex and gender are often left out of traditional accounts of war.

"The arena of international law has long suffered from this perspective — women are largely invisible," Paris said. "International law has a gender and that gender is male."

Charlesworth, the 24th holder of the Wayne Morse Chair of Law and Politics, began her speech with a discussion of

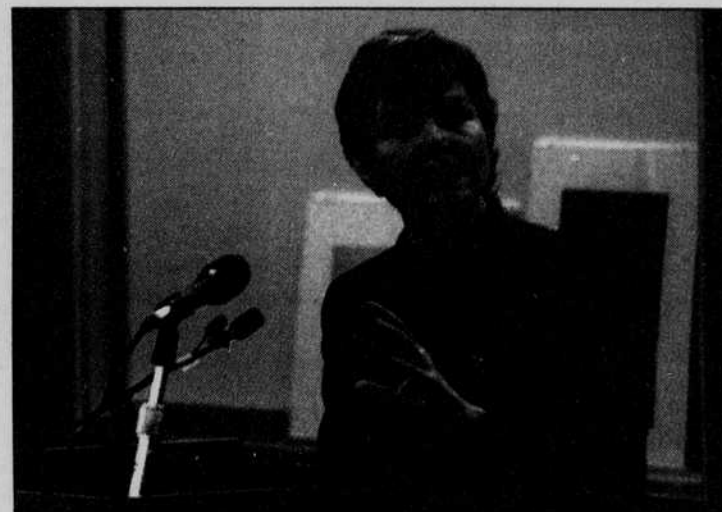
Morse's enthusiasm for international law. However, she said she wasn't entirely sure whether Morse would approve of her contemporary topic, "The Missing Voice: Women and the War in Iraq."

Charlesworth said the events of Sept. 11, as the foundation for the war in Iraq, offer a starting point in illustrating the absence of women in conflict.

"Immediately after, they were invisible except portrayals alongside males as victims," Charlesworth said.

None of the Sept. 11 plane hijackers

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NICOLE BARKER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Hilary Charlesworth, 24th holder of the Wayne Morse Chair of Law and Politics, speaks at the Law Center Wednesday night. Her lecture was part of the series entitled "The Changing Geopolitical Order: Implications for Peace and Stability."