

## Eid brings thanksgiving to Afghan population

Story by Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson  
4<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment

**BAGRAM, Afghanistan** – While U.S. forces and most of the coalition forces here will celebrate Thanksgiving on Thursday, Afghanistan and other Muslim-faith nations will be giving thanks today as they celebrate Eid AlFitr.

Eid Al Fitr is the three-day festival that marks the end of Ramadan – the month of fasting when Muslims sacrifice eating during the day to build their spiritual awareness and closeness to Allah.

As the third pillar of Islam, Ramadan is a time of spiritual cleansing and reflection in which Muslims draw strength from their relationship with Allah to sustain them throughout the day as the purge themselves.

“(Muslims) go hungry during this time to grow closer to Allah because when (one) is hungry it is (Allah) who will carry him through that time of need,” said Belal Abawi, an Islamic Interpreter for the Combined Joint Task Force-180. “Ramadan is also time of sacrifice when Muslims show that we relate to struggles of those in need.”

Abawi noted that Ramadan is a time of concentrated worship, reading from the Quran, purifying one’s behavior, and learning self-control. He said ascending spiritually is possible because one loses the preoccupation with satisfying bodily hunger.

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### *A dose of help...*



Photo by Spc. Kelly Hunt

*Sgt. Michael Fraley, Combined Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force, sorts and bags pills Monday that will be distributed to the local population during an upcoming Cooperative Medical Assistance operation.*

## Bush signs authorization act during ceremony

Story by Jim Garamone  
American Forces Press Service

**WASHINGTON** – Calling it a landmark piece of legislation that sends the clear message that “Americans stand with the United States military,” President Bush signed the fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act in a Pentagon ceremony here today.

A bipartisan group of legislators and DoD’s civilian and uniformed leaders flanked him.

The act authorizes DoD to spend \$401.3 billion in the fiscal year that began Oct. 1. “We will do all it takes to keep our military strong, to keep the peace and to keep the American people secure,” Bush said.

The money is in addition to the \$87 billion supplemental bill passed earlier this month. “The war on terror is different than any war America has ever fought,” the president said. “Our enemies seek to inflict mass casualties without fielding mass armies. They hide in the shadows, and they are often hard to strike. The terrorists are cunning and ruthless and dangerous, as the world

saw on Sept. 11, 2001, and again in Istanbul last week.”

But the terrorists now are facing the United States and its allies, “and this threat to civilization will be defeated,” Bush said.

The new threats mean the U.S. military must be fast, smart and agile, the president said. “Right now, America’s armed forces are the best-trained, best-equipped and best-prepared in the world, and this administration will keep it that way.”

Bush said the legislation supports the force

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# World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



A U.S. soldier searches an Iraqi at a checkpoint in Baghdad Monday.

## Council announces timetable for Iraqi self-government

**UNITED NATIONS**—The Iraqi Governing Council announced a timetable Monday to select a provisional legislative body by the end of May and a provisional Iraqi government “no later than the end of June.”

The interim governing body also shut down an Arabic-language television network, accusing it of being a “tool” for inciting violence and acts of terrorism.”

The timetable announcement is in accordance with a mid-October resolution from the U.N. Security Council giving the governing council until December 15 to establish a timetable and a program for the drafting of a new constitution for Iraq, and to hold democratic elections under that constitution.

The announcement came in a letter from the current president of the governing council, Jalal Talabani, to the Security Council dated Sunday.

The letter stated that general elections for a constitutional convention, which would draft a permanent constitution, would take place by March 15, 2005. Elections for an Iraqi government would take place once the Iraqi people had ratified the constitution “prior to the end of 2005.”

As soon as the provisional government is in place, allowing Iraq to be self-ruled, the Coalition Provisional Authority and the governing council would be dissolved.

The letter asks that the Security Council adopt a new resolution “taking into consideration the new circumstances.”

## U.S. soldiers ambushed in Iraq attacks Sunday identified

*(CNN)*—There was fresh violence in Iraq on Monday, with an improvised explosive device and small-arms attack on a convoy that wounded one U.S. soldier in the northern city of Mosul, not far from the Turkish border.

Meanwhile, U.S. Army officials denied earlier reports that two soldiers killed in Mosul this weekend had their throats slashed. An autopsy revealed both died of gunshot wounds and found no other wounds or slash marks on their bodies, officials said.

A coalition spokesman said the soldiers, traveling in a civilian vehicle, stopped when the car in front of them stopped, and were shot through the front windshield by attackers who jumped out of that car.

The bodies were then dragged from the vehicle and looted of personal effects by a crowd of Iraqis, military sources acknowledged.

Bystanders gave detailed descriptions of a swarm of children and adults stripping the bodies of everything they could, including watches and a hand grenade.

The Pentagon identified the victims as Command Sgt. Maj. Jerry L. Wilson, 45, of Thomson, Georgia, and Spc. Rel A. Ravago IV, 21, of Glendale, California, both assigned to the 101st Airborne Division’s 502nd Infantry Regiment, based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

## Iran nuke issue agreed upon

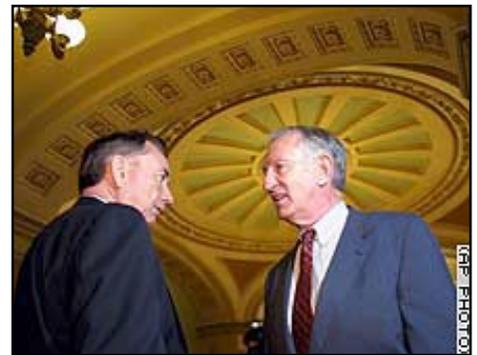
*(CNN)*—U.S. and European negotiators in Vienna, Austria have reached an agreement on a text for a resolution condemning Iran’s secret nuclear program, senior Bush administration officials have told *CNN*.

The draft resolution notes Iran’s past breaches of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and calls on Tehran to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the officials said. It also leaves open the door for further action by the IAEA if Iran fails to comply with the nuclear agency.

“Should any further serious Iranian failures come to light, the IAEA board of governors would meet immediately to consider, in light of the circumstances and the advice of the director general, all options at its disposal,” the draft resolution reads.

“It means that Iran is on notice that it has to do certain things and if it doesn’t do those things, there will be consequences,” one senior official said.

“It is stronger than the previous drafts ... and we think we took what was shaping up to be a text that gave Iran a lot of the benefit of the doubt and helped develop something a little more robust.”



Sen. Jim Jeffords, I-Vt., right, talks to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson on Capitol Hill Monday.

## Senate advances Medicare bill

**WASHINGTON**—Two last-minute efforts by Democratic senators to block passage of a contentious \$400 billion plan overhauling Medicare failed Monday, and the historic bill was expected to win passage in the Senate by the end of the day.

A threatened filibuster was ruled out when the Senate voted 70 to 29 in favor of ending debate on the issue. Sixty votes were needed to avoid a filibuster.

The next effort nearly succeeded. Democrats opposed to the bill raised a budget point of order, saying the bill would require more spending next year than Congress had approved.

The Senate voted 61 to 39 to waive the budget act, allowing the bill to proceed to a vote. Again, 60 votes were needed.

The bill, a centerpiece of President Bush’s domestic agenda, would be the largest expansion of Medicare since it was created in 1965.

It would add a prescription drug benefit to the program, provide billions of dollars in subsidies to insurance companies and HMOs, and take the first step in allowing private plans to compete with Medicare.

Supporters say the bill would help lead to better private coverage for seniors.

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“We celebrate (Eid Al Fitr) because it is a symbol of our successful completion of our month of fasting,” said Kabir Sakander, an Islamic Interpreter for CJTF-180. “After completing a job well done it is not unusual for people to celebrate and that is what Eid represents – celebration of a job well done.”

Sakander noted that the other four pillars of Islam, believing – submitting one’s faith in Allah, praying five times daily, Zakat – paying of taxes one-fifth of one’s yearly earnings and the pilgrimage to Mecca, complete the cycle of Islamic faith for Muslims.

Eid Al Fitr, which means breaking of the fast, is celebrated on the first day of the lunar moon Shawal, the tenth month in the Muslim calendar year. It is believed that the Quran, the Islamic Bible, was revealed to Muslims in this month.

As Eid represents a thanksgiving to Allah for health, strength and opportunities given to Muslims to fulfill their obligations of fasting and other good deeds during the month of Ramadan, it also represents a time of charity and appreciation.

“Eid is a time when you share your wealth with your neighbor,” said Sakander, adding “Although (Eid) is celebrated with a big feast, it is a time to give to the needy and to those less fortunate, but also a time to give gifts to family and friends to show appreciation for their contribution to [your] life.”

Sakander noted that Eid is also a time when any bad feelings or resentment (a Muslim) has for a person are forgotten and for injustices against him are forgiven.

Although Eid is a day of thanksgiving, it is comparable to another holiday recognized for “joy to the world.”

“Eid for Muslims is the equivalence of Christmas for Christians,” said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Kenneth Sampson, of CJTF 180. Sampson, who studied

Islam for a year at Princeton Theological Seminary and taught at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, said Eid a time of tranquility for Muslims. “Ramadan recognizes the equality of all under God – a period when everyone has the opportunity to draw nearer to God through fasting, and Eid represents purification or a sense of newness. It is a time of peace for Muslims.”

Sakander noted that Eid acts as a new beginning or a rebirth of life for Muslims and during Eid Muslims wear their newest clothing as representation of newness of the soul.

Though Eid Al Fitr is an Islamic celebration Sampson said its significance is an event all service members of the coalition can observe.

“(Eid) a opportunity for the all to realize the rich, positive heritage of the faith of Islam,” he said. “As we appreciate and recognize the celebration, the combined joint operations area and CJTF-180 are helping bolster the true meaning of Islam – living in harmony.”

Sampson added that he is enriched by the local Muslims dedication to their faith saying it makes him “personally examine my own spiritually awareness.”

“This is a good time to heal the wounds of the world; it’s a time to come together and celebrate – not just Muslims, but every religion,” said Sakander as he spoke about the significance of Eid Al Fitr.

Agreeing with the former statements, it isn’t what Abawi said about Eid that embodies what the celebration signifies, conversely it is what he said about the people whom celebrate it.

“Being in Afghanistan and having the chance to see (people of Muslim faith) daily, (coalition troops) have the opportunity to go back to their [homeland] and let people know that Muslims are not the terrorists and hurtful people that they see on TV,” said Abawi. “The actions of a few Muslim extremist don’t represent the teachings of Islam or represent the heart of all Muslims. Islam teaches us to love all people and true Muslims live by those teachings.”

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with an across-the-board pay raise that averages 4.1 percent. It extends the current payment of \$225 and \$250 per month for hazardous duty/imminent danger pay and separation pay. It reduces housing costs for those living off post, and it keeps up the robust bonus-pay program that has served the all-volunteer force so well.

“Those who risk their lives for our liberty deserve to be fairly paid and fairly treated, and this bill keeps those commitments,” Bush said.

The legislation helps America remain prepared and fully equipped for unseen challenges. “In our new struggle, challenges can emerge suddenly, and so we must always be ready,” Bush said. The bill fully funds operations and maintenance accounts and amends some environmental laws that had an adverse effect on realistic training for America’s military.

“The Congress has authorized the full \$9.1 billion that I requested for ballistic missile defense,” Bush said. “The spread of ballistic

missile technology, along with the spread of weapons of mass destruction, is a terrible danger to America and the world. We must have the tools and the technologies to properly protect our people.”

In introducing Bush, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld called the legislation “transformational.” The president agreed. “This bill also advances the vital work of transforming the personnel system for civilian defense workers so we can put the right person in the right job to meet the challenges we face,” he said.

Bush pointed out the department’s nearly 700,000 civilian workers have been laboring under “a cumbersome, inefficient system designed for another century.”

The National Security Personnel System gives DoD managers the flexibility to place civilian workers where they are most needed without needless delay, Bush said. The bill reduces the time it takes to hire new people, and it introduces pay for performance bonuses and

streamlines the promotion process.

“These are landmark reforms – the most ambitious of their kind in a quarter of a century,” the president said. “To win the war on terror, America must fully utilize the skill and talents of everyone who serves their country, and this bill will help us achieve that goal.”

Bush said everyone associated with the Defense Department is involved in a great and historic task. “And the stakes for our country could not be higher,” he said. “We face enemies that measure their progress by the chaos they inflict, the fear they spread and the innocent lives they destroy.

“America’s military is standing between our country and grave danger,” he continued. “You are standing for order, hope and democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq. You’re standing up for the security of all free nations and for the advance of freedom. The American people and your commander in chief are grateful, and we will support you in all your central missions.”

## Helicopter crash kills five near Bagram; more news from Iraq

WASHINGTON – Five U.S. soldiers were killed and seven others were injured Nov. 23 when their helicopter crashed near Bagram, Afghanistan, U.S. Central Command officials said.

A CENTCOM statement did not specify the type of helicopter or its unit, except to say it was a U.S. military helicopter and that the soldiers were taking part in an operation called Mountain Resolve in the eastern part of the country. Officials said the cause of the crash is being investigated.

News from Iraq includes more casualties, but also relates more successes in the crackdown on insurgents, as well as an instance of Iraqi citizens stepping forward to prevent more bloodshed.

Two soldiers on a mounted patrol near Shkin were wounded Nov. 23 when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device, CENTCOM reported. The soldiers received initial medical treatment on the scene and were evacuated by air to the medical facility at Salerno firebase. No report was available on their condition.

Two 1st Armored Division soldiers were killed and another was injured when an M-1 Abrams tank struck a humvee near Baghdad International Airport in a Nov. 22 traffic accident, CENTCOM reported.

Paratroopers from the 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division captured two enemy personnel and five caches of various weapons near Fallujah Nov. 23, officials at Combined Joint Task Force 7 in Iraq reported today.

The soldiers confiscated 54 60 mm mortars, a complete 60 mm mortar system, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, RPG rounds, rifle grenades, hand grenades, a Russian anti-tank missile, AK-47 assault rifles, SKS assault rifles, flares, pistols, bayonets, and materials used for making improvised explosive devices.

Soldiers from the 82nd killed three insurgents and wounded another during raids near Ramadi the night of Nov. 22, officials at CJTF 7 also reported today. One soldier was wounded and was taken to a nearby medical facility, where he was reported in stable condition.

The names of the dead and injured soldiers are being withheld until their families are notified.

*(Information provided by American Forces Press Service.)*

## Bagram Air Base MWR presents

### “Changing Lanes”

1530Z at the MWR building:

The story of what happens one day in New York when a young lawyer and a businessman share a small automobile accident on F.D.R. Drive and their mutual road rage escalates into a feud...



Tomorrow's movie: “The Time Machine”

## Local weather

### TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Wednesday
<b>Bagram:</b>	Clear H: 57F L: 27F	Clear H: 55F L: 30F
<b>Kandahar:</b>	Dusty H: 57F L: 34F	Dusty H: 57F L: 36F
<b>Kabul:</b>	Clear H: 57F L: 30F	Clear H: 55F L: 34F
<b>Uzbekistan:</b>	Partly Cloudy H: 57F L: 30F	Partly Cloudy H: 56F L: 31F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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# Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *SI.com*)

## Possible trade needs Schilling approval

**PARADISE VALLEY, Ariz.** – Curt Schilling is headed to the Boston Red Sox — if he waives his no-trade clause with the Arizona Diamondbacks.

The five-time All-Star announced the tentative trade Monday to reporters outside his house as his children and dogs played in the yard. During the impromptu news conference, teammate Randy Johnson drove by in a pickup truck and yelled to reporters playfully, “You’re blocking the street!”

Schilling is scheduled to make \$12 million next season with the chance to earn almost \$2 million more in performance bonuses, but he wants an extension before agreeing to a trade.

“I won’t leave here without an extension,” Schilling said. “I’m reading that I’m demanding three years. I’ve never demanded anything from anybody, but I will get a contract extension before I leave Arizona.”

Schilling said Red Sox general manager Theo Epstein and president Larry Lucchino were heading to Phoenix to meet with him. The Red Sox asked the commissioner’s office for permission to discuss a contract extension with Schilling, the 37-year-old right-hander said, a window that expires at 5 p.m. Friday.

Officials with both teams refused to talk of the deal.

“We won’t have any comment until we have an official transaction to announce,” Epstein told reporters earlier in Boston.

## McNair has a chance to play against Jets

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** – The Tennessee Titans have seen Steve McNair play through a variety of injuries. So coach Jeff Fisher isn’t ruling out the NFL’s top-rated passer against the New York Jets just because of a strained right calf.

“We know what his history is,” Fisher said Monday. “He wants very badly to play in this ballgame. The last time we played in the Meadowlands, he did not practice and probably won’t practice this week. If he’s able to play, in all likelihood it will be a pregame type of decision.”

McNair strained his calf in the second quarter of Sunday’s 38-31



*Curt Schilling was originally drafted by the Red Sox in 1986 and traded to the Orioles along with Brady Anderson in exchange for Mike Boddicker in 1988.*

victory over Atlanta, and he had a walking boot on his right leg when he limped off the field after the game. Doctors examined his calf Sunday night, and Fisher said they found limited damage.

That exam, plus McNair being able to use his calf muscle on Monday, made Fisher much more optimistic even as the Titans waited for results of an MRI.

“Regardless of what the MRI says, he still will not be ruled out,” Fisher said.

The Titans find themselves in a similar situation to a year ago, when McNair was unable to practice because of a rib injury, took a painkilling shot before kickoff and led the Titans to an overtime victory over the New York Giants in the Meadowlands.

McNair is having the best season of his nine-year career. He has thrown for 18 touchdowns with only four interceptions while completing 65.3 percent of his passes. His 106.3 passer rating currently is more than 16 points better than his previous best of 90.2 set in 2001.

## Cartwright fired after limp to 4-10 start



*Under Bill Cartwright, the Bulls didn’t live up to the expectations fans had for them this year.*

**CHICAGO** – Chicago Bulls coach Bill Cartwright was fired Monday, a casualty of his team’s dismal start in a year that was supposed to bring marked improvement — maybe even a return to the playoffs.

Pete Myers will be the interim coach, and general manager John Paxson hopes to name a replacement within the next week. Paxson was meeting with the team in Dallas, where the Bulls (4-10) play the Mavericks on Tuesday night.

“The team is underperforming and we have to find ways to win, period,” Paxson said. “I am not satisfied with the team’s start this season and changes have to be made. This represents the first change, but not necessarily the last.”

Cartwright is the second NBA coach to be fired this season after Doc Rivers at Orlando. Rivers has been mentioned as a possible replacement, but the Chicago native is working as a TV analyst and has said he won’t coach again this year.

Doug Collins’ name also has been floated, but the former Bulls coach has said he’s not interested.

Preseason expectations for the Bulls were huge, with team expected to make its first run at the playoffs since the dynasty days. Instead, Chicago has lost five in a row and shares last place in the Central Division.

# Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

## DHL suspends flights to Afghanistan, Iraq

**FRANKFURT, Germany** (*Reuters*)—Courier giant DHL said on Monday it had suspended flights to Afghanistan and had not restarted flights to Iraq, after one of its planes was said to have been hit by a missile and made an emergency landing at Baghdad's airport on Saturday.

Airport and U.S. army officials said on Saturday it was believed that surface-to-air missiles were fired at the DHL Airbus A300 aircraft although DHL declined to say why the Bahrain-bound aircraft was forced to return to Baghdad. All three people on board were unhurt.

A DHL spokesman in Brussels said on Monday an investigation into the incident was still underway.

In the meantime the company's flights to Baghdad—between three and six daily from the Gulf Arab state of Bahrain—remained canceled until further notice. "They are still suspended," he said.

Flights to Afghanistan had also been stopped. A spokesman for Germany's Deutsche Post, which owns DHL, said it was examining the security situation in Afghanistan.

DHL carries post and parcels to and from U.S. soldiers and packages for aid organizations in Iraq. Saturday's flight on its way to Bahrain was forced to turn back to Baghdad after an engine fire.

A spokesman for the U.S. army said two surface-to-air missiles were believed to have been fired at the plane, and one hit the left wing, setting an engine ablaze. Missiles have been fired several times at planes approaching the airport in Baghdad but Saturday's incident was the first time a fixed-wing aircraft had been reported hit.

## Canadian gen. wants more NATO aid

(*CanWest News Service*)—Canada's top soldier in Afghanistan says NATO nations must be prepared to send thousands more soldiers and spend billions of dollars more over the next decade if Afghanistan is to be put on a secure and stable footing.

In a wide-ranging interview the day before he left Kabul for his mid-tour home leave, Maj.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, vice-commander of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul, also threw his strong support behind comments Friday by NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson.

Robertson suggested the military alliance must first succeed in routing terrorism in Afghanistan before responding to heavy U.S. pressure to send troops to Iraq. To cave in to American demands, Robertson warned, would result in "two half-baked operations."

Acknowledging that as a soldier he is not supposed to wade into the political arena, Leslie said: "But what the hell." He emphasized his own conviction that Canada and NATO "made the right choice in coming to Afghanistan."

"For the entirety of the 19 members in NATO, it doesn't mean that they all have to focus exclusively on Afghanistan - whether or not they want to send some of their troops and assets to Iraq, that's their business," Leslie said on Saturday.

## Mullah Omar vows to expell U.S. forces

(*Kabul Daily*)—Taliban leader Mullah Omar has vowed to expel U.S.-led forces from Afghanistan and rejected Kabul's moves to draft a new constitution and hold elections.

In a hard-hitting statement faxed Sunday to *The News* by Taliban Islamic Movement spokesman Hamid Agha, Omar alleged the Jews and Christians were focusing on issues like the constitution and elections as an excuse to prolong the stay of foreign military forces in Afghanistan.

"This is part of the crusades to deprive Muslim nations of their sovereignty," he said in the message, received in the Peshawar bureau.

Agha, who was named the official Taliban spokesman earlier this year, claims he operates out of Afghanistan. Agha said Omar had issued the statement to coincide with Eid. Sending Eid greetings, he gave the assurance that the Afghan people would not find him and the Taliban wanting while resisting foreign occupation.

"Rest assured, my true Muslim people, that the Taliban were filled with the spirit of jihad and martyrdom and would turn the earth red with the blood of the invaders and make them spend sleepless nights. Every day, the foreign aggressors are suffering losses of men and material due to the murderous assaults by our proud and brave Taliban," Omar declared. He argued that the Taliban youths were offering sacrifices, suffering imprisonment in Guantanamo Bay, and undergoing trials and tribulations so the Afghan nation could reclaim its honour, respect, freedom, sovereignty and an Islamic way of life.



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By Kevin Kilgore

## Laugh Support