

Slovak Prime minister visits his troops

Story and photos by Spc. Kelly Hunt
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – One man’s mission to bring the words of encouragement from his people to their troops overseas was underway Friday as he and his entourage spread his country’s well wishes and encouragement to Slovakian troops protecting freedom.

Slovakian Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda walked steadily in front of a formation of troops who greeted their country’s leader with a proud, solid salute as he began to cross their path.

He took his place in front of the formation facing his troops as the Slovakian Na-



Slovak Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda shakes the hand of Slovak 2nd Lt. Fejercak Lubumir, operational officer as Minister of Defense Juraj Líška is saluted by Slovak Lt. Col. Truska Jan.

See **SLOVAK**, Page 3

SF medics save lives of family after explosion

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Dennis E. Beebe
CJSOTF-APAO

ASADABAD, Afghanistan – An explosive device in their home injured a family of Afghans on Jan. 8.

The family had expanded their house by building another room onto their home near Asadabad. They had finished the walls, ceiling and doors only a few days before and had moved their possessions into this new room. They made a fireplace in one corner, consisting of placing bricks and stones on the floor then building an open wood fire on top of that.

The heat from the fire set off a long buried explosive device left over from the Soviet occupation.

Wounded in the explosion were the 35-year-old mother, a 15-year-old daughter, a 4-year-old son and a 6-month-old daughter.

Their wounds are consistent with a buried device, rather than

one that was out in the open. They have shrapnel wounds from the metal as well as puncture wounds and bruises from the rocks and bricks from under the fire.

The explosive experts said that if the explosive device ‘were being worked on out in the open, that wherever someone was touching the device, that part of the person would cease to exist.

“If you touch it, you lose it,” said Gul Karim, the local Afghan National Army explosive ordinance expert. “Also, there would be no women or children involved,” he said.

The wound patterns are at the lower body level, again showing consistency of a buried device. He later visited the home of the family and determined that the cause of the explosion was from an aerial bomb which had not exploded when it was dropped many years ago.

The 4-year-old boy was in critical condition for 20 hours while the team of doctors, Army medics and Navy corpsmen worked to

See **MEDICS**, Page 3

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



An Iraqi walks past razor wire protecting U.S. headquarters in central Baghdad on Sunday.

Two Pilots missing in Iraq after U.S. chopper crash

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Two pilots of a crashed U.S. Army helicopter were missing Sunday, after they crashed into the Tigris River near downtown Mosul in northern Iraq, a U.S. military source said.

The OH-58 Kiowa Warrior helicopter was on a search-and-rescue mission for another U.S. Soldier who was reported missing after his patrol boat capsized.

Two Iraqi police officers and an Iraqi translator were killed and three U.S. Soldiers were rescued in the boat incident.

Military officials said an investigation was under way into the cause of the helicopter crash.

The helicopter was attached to the U.S. Army 101st Airborne Division, officials said.

RPG attack kills U.S. Soldier

(CNN) – In the central Iraqi town of Beiji, just north of Tikrit, Sunday a U.S. Soldier died of wounds suffered the previous night when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his vehicle, a U.S. military source said.

The Soldier, whose name has not been released, was assigned to the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division, the military source said.

The Soldier was riding in Bradley fighting vehicle when an RPG slammed into it. Other Soldiers in the patrol convoy returned fire against the attackers and captured six suspected insurgents, the military source said.

The critically wounded Soldier was taken to the 28th Combat Support Hospital where he died hours later after surgery, the source said.

Beiji is in Iraq's so-called Sunni Triangle,

the volatile region north and west of Baghdad, where many of the deaths have occurred.

Five U.S. Soldiers and four Iraqi civilians were killed Saturday in three separate bomb attacks in the Sunni Triangle, U.S. military officials said.



Saakashvili is blessed by the leader of the Georgian Orthodox Church.

Georgia swears in new leader

TBLISI, Georgia – Two months after his so-called Rose Revolution swept away President Eduard Shevardnadze, Mikhail Saakashvili was sworn in as president of Georgia Sunday.

The 36-year-old Saakashvili – elected earlier this month with more than 96 percent of the vote – takes over the country facing enormous problems.

In an interview with *CNN*, Saakashvili – a U.S.-trained lawyer – said his first task will be putting an end to government corruption in Georgia. He is also faced with an economy in which many people exist on less than a dollar a day. Another problem is the breakaway regions of the country and two Russian military bases which Georgia wants removed as soon as possible.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov attended the inauguration.

In his inaugural address Sunday Saakashvili said Georgia must have Russia as a friend and ally, not an enemy. He said his country appreciates the support given it by the U.S.



Blair: I believe the intelligence was correct.

Blair defends Iraq WMD reports

LONDON – Intelligence reports suggesting Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction were correct, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair said in an interview with a Sunday newspaper.

Blair said he believed in the intelligence material presented to him ahead of last year's conflict, despite the subsequent failure of coalition forces to find WMD in Iraq.

Blair made the comments shortly before U.S. official David Kay quit his job as head of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG), the body tasked with locating Saddam's alleged WMD.

Kay signed off by saying he did not believe there were stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons in Iraq.

Interviewed by *The Observer*, Blair was pressed on whether he still believed that weapons would be found, despite the ISG's failure to date to uncover such evidence.

Woman passes N.Y. airport security with stun gun, knife

DENVER, Colo. – A woman passed through security screening at New York's LaGuardia Airport with a stun gun and knife in her purse – but later discovered the mistake herself and alerted authorities.

The woman realized she was carrying the items after a short layover in Detroit and on her way to Denver.

"She immediately went, 'Oh, my God, I'm not supposed to have these here,' and called the flight attendant over," said Spirit Airlines spokeswoman Laura Bennett.

The pilot alerted Denver International Airport; police met the plane at the gate and took the woman into custody for questioning. She was released without charges.



Slovak troops stand in formation Friday awaiting the arrival of Slovak officials to include Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda and Minister of Defense Juraj Liška.

SLOVAK, from Page 1

tional Anthem played loud and clear throughout the compound. All attendants stood at attention in honor of their country.

When the last note was played, Dzurinda addressed his troops commenting on the hard work they have put into extending the Bagram's flightline and the successful addition they have become to the coalition forces.

Dzurinda thanked Slovakian troops for their dedication to Operation Enduring Freedom adding that the thanks he is pre-

senting to troops was not only for the role Slovakia plays in coalition support, but for the help they are providing for the people of Afghanistan, he said.

"The only way to fight terrorism is to fight on their ground," said Dzurinda in reference to the necessity of having troops in Afghanistan. I'm "proud that two years ago we made the right choice to support coalition forces."

Slovak Minister of Defense, Juraj Liška, followed the prime minister's speech with one of his own, wishing troops health in all that they are doing and speaking out on the importance of their mission in support

of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Liška told troops that since Slovakia plans on joining NATO in May, "this is one of the biggest tests for Slovak soldiers before they enter into NATO."

Many Slovak troops said the visit by Slovak officials to Bagram Air Base was an incredible honor.

"This is the greatest honor," said Slovak 2nd Lt. Fejercak Lubumir, Operational Officer. "We have not yet gotten situated here and we are just technicians so we appreciate that our Prime Minister came to visit us," he said with excitement in his voice and a smile on his face.

MEDICS, from Page 1

keep him alive until a medical evacuation could take him to a hospital in Bagram. He had a bruised lung, slowly filling up with fluids, while his oxygen levels were dropping.

The boy was so small and the tubes and instruments the medics had to use were too big to fit into the places they had to go to draw out the fluids and put pure oxygen back in. They managed several

work-around-solutions and were able to stabilize him until the helicopters arrived to take the whole family to Bagram Air Base.

Wounds occurring from mines, unexploded ordinance and gunshots are treated every week at the Sgt. 1st Class Christopher J. Speers clinic at Asadabad.

They also see patients involved in auto-pedestrian accidents, dog bites and burn victims as well as all the range of injuries that can happen to one living in rural Afghanistan.

Pres. Bush to ask for \$401.7 billion for defense in 2005

Story by Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – In a break from past practice, the Defense Department announced that President Bush will request a \$401.7 billion defense budget for fiscal 2005.

Normally, this is one of the more closely guarded figures in the Pentagon. It usually is released with great fanfare after the president's budget request is delivered to Congress the first week in February.

Officials said the number represents about a 7 percent increase from fiscal 2004. The request does not include funds for the ongoing war on terror. DoD will make supplemental budget requests for those funds, officials said. DoD Comptroller Dov Zakheim said during a recent Defense Writers' Group briefing that he does not expect to make a supplemental request in fiscal 2004.

The fiscal 2005 request will fund continuing transformation efforts and the operations and maintenance of today's force. The budget also will focus on pay and benefits for service members and "quality-of-life measures needed to recruit and retain the highest quality volunteers for service in the active and reserve forces," a DoD official said.

"The president three years ago directed that we consider how best to transform this department to ensure our nation has the capabilities and people needed for the national security circumstances of the 21st century," Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said in a written release. "We have made significant progress."

An official familiar with the budget request's details said the request invests in new intelligence capabilities, counter proliferation strategies and new capabilities to capitalize on influencing situations before war begins and after one ends.

DoD officials said the budget capitalizes on the new National Security Personnel System Congress passed last year. The system will allow DoD to more effectively manage its civilian work force. The specific numbers making up the \$401.7 billion will be announced Feb. 2.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

"The Crow: City of Angels"

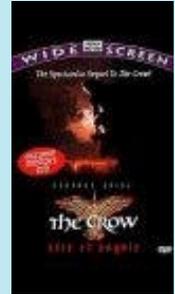
0830Z at the MWR building:

This sequel to the 1994 cult classic which ended in the real life death of Brandon Lee has "the Crow" revive a new character...

1530Z: Latino Dance Night

Tomorrow's movie:

"The Crow: Salvation"



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Tuesday
Uzbekistan:	Mostly Cloudy H: 46F L: 23F	Cloudy/Rain H: 46F L: 21F
Bagram:	Cloudy/Fog H: 59F L: 37F	Cloudy/Rain H: 57F L: 41F
Kabul:	Cloudy/Fog H: 41F L: 24F	Cloudy/Rain H: 45F L: 21F
Kandahar:	Clear H: 30F L: 23F	Mostly Cloudy H: 36F L: 26F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

Freedom Watch falls under the supervision of the Combined Joint Task Force - 180, and is published daily, Monday - Saturday.

CJTF-180 Commander —
Brig. Gen. (P) Lloyd J. Austin III
CJTF-180 Command Sergeant Major —
Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Carey
Public Affairs Officer —
Maj. Matthew L. Garner
Public Affairs Sergeant Major —
Master Sgt. Sharon Opeka

Freedom Watch, an Army newspaper



publication, is produced by the 4th Public Affairs Detachment at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.

Commander — Maj. Matthew L. Garner
NCOIC — Staff Sgt. Keith Thompson
Editor — Sgt. Stephanie Hall
Journalists — Staff Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson,
Sgt. Gregory Heath, Spc. Kelly Hunt

In accordance with AR 360-1, this Army newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas.

Contents of Freedom Watch are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

All submissions are subject to editing for size and content by the 4th Public Affairs Detachment, located in Motel 6, CJTF-180, Bagram Air Base.

Visit the CENTCOM Web site at www.centcom.mil and click on the Freedom Watch or Forces in Afghanistan link at the bottom of the page to get the latest editions of the Freedom Watch. To be added to the daily distribution list email HallSTE@baf.cjtf180.army.mil



Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from SI.com)

Memphis Grizzlies win eighth straight

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – The Memphis Grizzlies are on the best run in franchise history, and they want to keep going.

Bonzi Wells scored 17 points and the Grizzlies extended their franchise-record winning streak to eight games with a 106-88 victory over the Denver Nuggets on Sunday.

“I think we might be turning some eyes,” Memphis point guard Jason Williams said. “But I think we’ve got a long way to go.”

Memphis shot 70 percent (26-for-37) in the second half when they outscored Denver 64-39 on the way to their seventh straight home win.

Pau Gasol and Stromile Swift each scored 15 for Memphis, and Lorenzen Wright and Mike Miller finished with 12.

“They outthustled us, outdefended us, outcoached us and outplayed us in the second half,” Denver coach Jeff Bzdelik. “We just played the hottest team in the league. They are also the steadyest team in the league.”



Stromile Swift came off the bench to score 15 points in 16 minutes.



Mickelson has six victories in seven tries when participating in a playoff.

Phil Mickelson ends 18-month drought

LA QUINTA, Calif. – Phil Mickelson can hardly wait to tee it up again. Mickelson birdied the first playoff hole to beat Skip Kendall in the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic on Sunday and end an 18-month winless streak.

“It’s terrific. I can’t wait to do it again. I want it next week,” said Mickelson, who had dropped from second to 16th in the world rankings. “I just have so much fun when I’m playing well.

“Not having been there last year, I realize how much I missed it.”

The 2002 Hope champion, he rolled a 3-foot birdie putt into the center of the cup to win it again.

Kendall was left still looking for his first tour victory. He was runner-up for the fourth time in his career, losing three times in playoffs.

Mickelson, making his 2004 debut, closed with a 4-under 68 to match Kendall (65) at 30-under 330 in the 90-hole tournament.

Mavs top Kings to extend win streak

DALLAS – The longest winning streak of the season really means something now for the Dallas Mavericks.

Their eighth straight victory didn’t come against another struggling team or the injured-riddled Los Angeles Lakers. This time, the Mavericks beat the team that came in with the Western Conference’s best record.

Michael Finley scored 23 points, including the go-ahead 18-footer with 1:58 left Sunday, and the Mavericks beat the Sacramento Kings 108-99.

“We’ve had a good streak and that feels good,” Mavericks guard Steve Nash said. “It always feels better to justify it against a good team. ... It’s very vindicating and rewarding to beat a team with the best record.”

The last seven wins have come since Mavericks owner Mark Cuban met with Don Nelson to clear the air about rumors concerning the coach’s future.

“We struggled early and a lot of people wrote us and the coaching staff off,” Finley said. “That brought us closer together to overcome adversity.”



Michael Finley led a balanced attack by making 10-of-17 from the field.

Last-minute surge lifts unranked Florida State over No. 10 Wake, 75-70

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Tim Pickett’s second strong finish made some history for Florida State.

The Seminoles, with Pickett again having a big second half, beat No. 10 Wake Forest 75-70 on Sunday, giving them consecutive wins over Top Ten teams for the first time in school history.

He scored all of his 18 points after halftime Sunday and Florida State made six straight free throws over the final 45 seconds to hand the Demon Deacons’ their fourth straight loss.

Last Thursday, Pickett scored 22 points after halftime to spark the Seminoles to a 90-81 overtime victory over No. 7 North Carolina.

Up next is No. 1 Duke on Thursday.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

New commander of multinational bde. to keep Afghan partnerships strong

KABUL, Afghanistan (*Canadian Press*) – The partnerships between international military forces and Afghan authorities will not only continue but be improved in the months ahead, Brig.Gen. Jocelyn Lacroix said Saturday as he assumed control of the Kabul Multinational Brigade.

“I will continue to maintain and strengthen, where needed, the partnerships and the excellent co-operation . . . developed with the Afghan people,” said Lacroix, who also commands the 5th Mechanized Brigade Group of Valcartier, Que., known as the Vandoos.

Lacroix took over command of the Kabul Multinational Brigade, or KMNB, from Brig. Gen. Peter Devlin, who has been in the job for the past six months.

The brigade is comprised of nearly 3,000 Soldiers from 22 countries, with Canadians making up the majority of the contingent.

In a speech Saturday to about 300 Soldiers from six countries, Lacroix promised to serve “with honor, professionalism and utmost integrity.”

“I will command to the best of my knowledge and experience, respectful of the cultural differences we find within the Kabul Multinational Brigade and within Afghanistan,” he added.

Lacroix noted the “constraint and restraint” of the many countries’ troops that are part of the brigade as they work together to bring peace to Kabul.

Soldiers from allies such as Canada, France, Italy and Germany were among those serving as an honor guard Saturday for the command handover ceremony.

However, the brigade also is made up of troops from several countries that have been historically unfriendly to each other, including Albania, Croatia, Bulgaria and Turkey.

In his parting address, Devlin said he would take with him many fond memories of Afghanistan, but also some sad ones.

“My thoughts go out to those who lost their lives during service for ISAF (International Security Assistance Force),” he said.

“In particular, I am saddened that I am not able to bring home two fine Canadian Soldiers, Sgt. (Robert) Short and Cpl. (Robbie) Beerenfenger.”

Both were killed Oct. 2 when their unarmored jeep struck a landmine on a dirt road south of Kabul.

Later, Devlin said he would return to Canada with a great sense of accomplishment.

“I bring a part of Afghanistan with me,” he said, his voice strained with emotion. “I leave fiercely proud of the accomplishments of all the Soldiers in the brigade.

“I think that we have made a difference over our six months here.”

Afghanistan: Foreign Minister Holds Talks With U.S. Envoy to Pakistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (*Kabul Bakhtar News Agency in Dari*) – The foreign minister of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, Dr. Abdollah, met the U.S. ambassador stationed in Islamabad, Ms. Nancy Powell Saturday.

She recently arrived in Kabul. The U.S. ambassador and special envoy in Kabul, Zalmay Khalilzad, was also present at the meeting.

At the meeting, the two sides discussed the latest political, security and economic developments in Afghanistan.

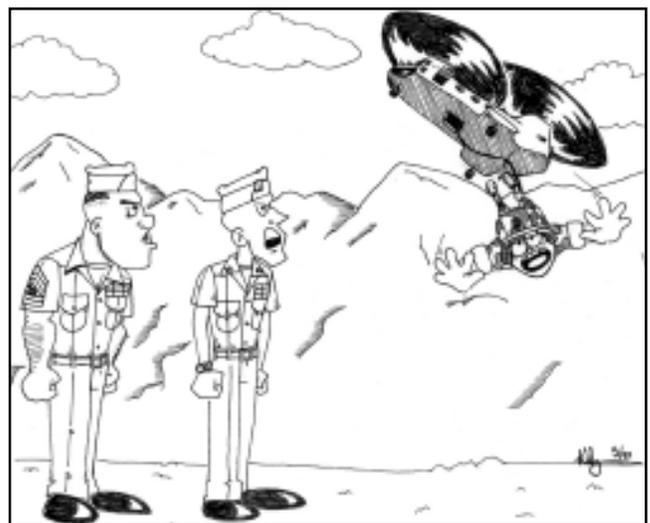
They exchanged views on these issues and discussed the effects of these developments on the region’s situation as well as bilateral regional relations.

Ambassador Powell said the developments over the past two years have been in the interest of Afghan people and useful for consolidation of peace and stability and economic progress of the region.

In turn, the foreign minister expressed happiness over the favorable conditions that have been provided for Afghan men and women over the past two years since the collapse of the undemocratic Taliban regime.

He appreciated the world community’s role particularly that of the United States to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan.

“Gunny, find out who replaced the fast rope with a bungee cord.”



kevin_kilgore@hotmail.com

By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support