

Freedom Watch

December 9, 2003 ♦ Published in the interest of those serving in Operation Enduring Freedom ♦ Bagram, Afghanistan

On the prowl...



Photo by Sgt. Greg Heath

A soldier with 2nd Bn., 87th Inf. Regt., 10th Mountain Division, out of Firebase Catamount provides security as members of his platoon searches an Afghan compound during a cordon and search mission in Nuristan Province as part of Operation Mountain Resolve late November.

Keeping Bagram's power flowing daily

Story by Spc. Kelly Hunt
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Looking forward to a heated tent at night and switching the microwave on to make some hot chocolate are options that troops here have come to know and expect over the last few months, but few troops know and understand where and how that power gets to them or how they can help to ensure it keeps coming.

Power is supplied by two plants that power an underground and an overhead distribution system.

“We’ve got a total of 16 feeders; 12 underground and four overhead,” said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Spaulding, the last of the 249th Engineer Battalion Prime Power and the eyes and ears of the operation.

On the overhead runs 13,800 volts of electricity

See **FLOW**, Page 3

Defense Department targets military pay for 2004

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample
American Force Press Service

WASHINGTON—Military personnel will see their basic pay more in line with that of civilian counterparts in the private sector in 2004 thanks to an increased pay and benefits compensation package included in the 2004 Defense Authorization Act approved by Congress this year.

Air Force Col. Virginia S. Penrod, director of military compensation office for the Defense Department, said the 2004 military pay and benefits plan provides for a 3.7% across the board pay increase and further targets pay increases for noncommissioned officers and warrant officers, some as high as 6.25 percent for senior-enlisted service members.

In addition, service members will see 2004 increases in housing allowance pay and special incentive pay.

Penrod said the average basic pay raise, which is equal to a little over 4 percent, helps to close the gap between military pay and civilian pay.

“Everyone receives a 3.7 percent pay raise across the board, this is by

law,” she said, adding that the pay raise is a half percentage point more than the private sector wage earner will earn. “The NCOs, E-5 through E-9 will receive targeted pay raises from 4.6 to 6.25 percent. And we’re also paying a targeted raise to our warrant officer grades.”

Penrod also noted that part of the pay incentive is to help in retention of senior noncommissioned officers, pointing out that highest pay raises, 6.25 percent, will go to E-9s with 26 years or more service.

“This (raise) recognizes the contribution of our senior noncommissioned officers and our career enlisted force,” Penrod explained. “All NCOs will receive some form of a targeted raise, and the pay increases as the grade increases. So it’s an incentive to continue in the military and to pursue higher rank.”

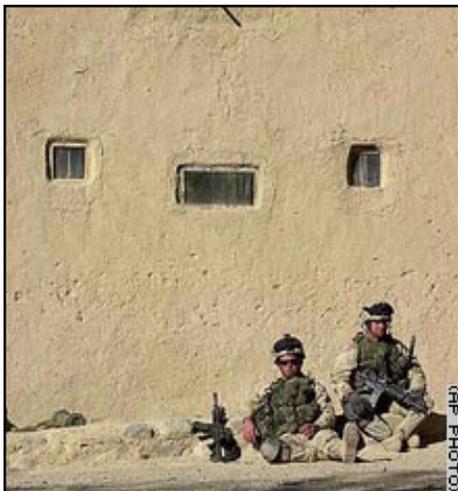
Also included in the package is an average increase of almost 8 percent for military basic allowance for housing (BAH)—money given to military personnel to help defray the cost of housing expenses.

Penrod said the almost 8 percent increase for housing allowance continues our effort to reduce out of pocket expenses for military personnel,

See **PAY**, Page 3

English/Dari phrase of the day: *My name is - Naam man (name) asst*

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



U.S. soldiers rest outside a house in a village in eastern Afghanistan.

Afghan offensive launched

(CNN) – The U.S. military has launched a major ground operation in Afghanistan in an effort to eliminate the remnants of al Qaeda and the Taliban regime overthrown in 2001.

Military spokesman Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty described “Operation Avalanche”, which began over the weekend, as the largest ground operation yet in Afghanistan. He said the operation would focus on areas where international troops and aid workers have been hit by terrorist cells.

“We’re going to operate simultaneously throughout the entire eastern and southern part of the country so we get inside the decision cycle; so we hit them before they can hit innocent men, women and children,” Hilferty said.

Between 2,000 and 11,500 soldiers will be dispatched in east and south Afghanistan to go after Taliban and al Qaeda militants, he said.

“The terrorists are going into their winter campaigning season where they don’t campaign as much,” he said “We’re going to make sure that we get them before they get a chance to hunker down.”

Hilferty said Operation Avalanche comes as Operation Mountain Resolve, carried out in the snowy peaks of eastern Afghanistan, ends.

But the new offensive was marred by a botched weekend operation in which U.S. military aircraft appear to have accidentally killed nine children in an airstrike on the east-central Afghanistan village of Petaw.

The children and a still unidentified man were killed in an attack that targeted a suspected Taliban terrorist.



Rhonda Miller is filing a defamation suit against California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Woman alleges Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger defamed her

LOS ANGELES – A Hollywood stuntwoman who claims she was sexually harassed by actor Arnold Schwarzenegger filed a lawsuit Monday alleging defamation by the governor and his campaign staff.

The day before Schwarzenegger was elected California’s governor, Rhonda Miller spoke at a news conference alleging “outrageous acts” of sexual harassment by the bodybuilder turned actor turned politician.

The lawsuit repeats that claim and says his campaign spread lies that she was a convicted felon.

“She’s a nice woman,” said her attorney, Paul Hoffman. “And what they did was not very nice.”

Miller, who also is represented by Gloria Allred, claimed that while working with the superstar in January 1991 on the set of “Terminator 2,” Schwarzenegger engaged in “improper and unlawful” conduct.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Miller said Schwarzenegger pulled up her shirt and photographed her breasts and touched them even as she fought with him and yelled at him to stop.

She said she later found the photo on the ceiling of the set’s makeup trailer.

In October, Schwarzenegger issued a statement that he recalled seeing photos of crew members in the makeup trailer and admitted making what he called crude comments about them, but he denied taking Miller’s picture or even being in the trailer at the time.

Palestinians can’t agree

CAIRO, Egypt – Palestinian factions ended four days of exhaustive talks Sunday without agreeing on how to pursue a comprehensive cease-fire with Israel.

Held under Egyptian auspices in a secret location south of the capital, the talks produced only a news release that contained no mention of a cease-fire. The talks were aimed at getting all Palestinian factions, especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad — two Islamic fundamentalist groups that have claimed responsibility for most of the suicide bombings against Israelis — to declare an end to such attacks.

The two groups, labeled terrorist organizations by the U.S. State Department, indicated they were willing to end the attacks, but only if Israel halted what they called assassinations of militants, ended raids in Palestinian territory and released prisoners. They refused a comprehensive cease-fire without such conditions, and they refused to empower Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qorei to negotiate with the Israelis on their behalf.

They also insisted on maintaining a distance from the “road map for peace,” sponsored by the so-called Mideast Quartet – the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations.

Draft ready on N. Korea talks

WASHINGTON – The United States has agreed with South Korea, Japan and Russia on a proposal for a new round of talks aimed at persuading North Korea to scrap its nuclear program, senior administration officials have said.

The proposal has been sent to China for it to pass along to North Korea, the officials said, adding that U.S. President George W. Bush, when he meets Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on Tuesday, will urge Wen to use Chinese influence to get Pyongyang to accept the proposal.

Officials said the talks – to include the United States, South Korea, Japan, China, Russia and North Korea — will likely happen in January, although one senior administration official said they could happen as early as next week if North Korea accepts the proposal.

“We are ready,” the senior administration official said, but said there is only a “50-50 chance” of talks before the end of the year.

FLOW, from Page 1

with three megawatts of capacity on each feeder. The underground supply provides 4,160 volts and one megawatt capacity for each feeder.

"All new electrical expansion will be added to the overhead system for several reasons," said Spaulding. "It's more easily configurable and there's room for additional growth." Currently, the underground system is as big as it can get. It's not easy to reconfigure it and all the feeders that are buried are near being maxed out, he said.

With power running both above and below ground throughout base, it's important that unauthorized personnel, stay away from those

sources. Don't know where those sources are? That's why only a limited amount of people have the authority to do electrical work.

"About 15 outages we've experienced were because someone cut the cables underground," said Spaulding. "Either they were digging with a backhoe, a shovel, or driving a ground rod."

Anything going in the ground requires a digging permit available from base operations Facility Engineer Team, who will provide troops with a qualified person to scan the proposed dig area and tell them whether it's safe to dig.

"That will prevent a lot of problems," said Spaulding. Self-wiring projects are another issue that has caused power suppliers problems.

"There're only several organizations that are (authorized) to do wiring, no one else," he stressed. "There are no electrical self help projects what so ever."

Just one additional tip put out there for people concerned about safety and power supply to their village.

"There's cables in a lot of the villages that run across roadways," said Spaulding. "It's important that the camp mayors get those covered with sandbags or buried (to prevent damage and destruction)."

Together suppliers and consumers can ensure that power continues to run through base safely, keeping distribution flowing smoothly.

PAY, from Page 1

which the Pentagon is hopeful to do by fiscal year 2005.

"When BAH was enacted, housing allowances amounted to 80 percent of housing costs, this left the service member with 20 percent out-of-pocket cost," she said. "In fiscal year 2000, the Secretary of Defense committed the department to reduce these out of pocket expenses to zero by 2005. And we're on track to do this."

She said that military out of pocket expenses for housing is down to about 3.5 percent for January 2004 and "should be at zero in 2005."

"If you talk to a service member today compared to their compensation package ten years ago they are very pleased," Penrod said. "The housing increase has been absolutely the right benefit at the right time. It shows we do value their commitment to the military and what they do for the country."

Another area of increase pay will be special and incentive pay, such as imminent danger pay and family separation pay.

Penrod explained those pay increase were made possible in part due to President Bush's supplemental funding request this year. That request authorized funding for increases in imminent danger pay from \$150 to \$225 per month, as well as increases in the family separation pay and support allowance from \$100 to \$250 per month.

Other new measures in the 2004 compensation package allow for services to offer incentive pay to get officers to extend overseas tours. "Previously this was only offered to enlisted members," she explained.

Penrod said the compensation policy has two principal thrusts: The first of which is to have an overall level of military compensation that is at least equal to the 70th percentile of the pay of civilians with comparable levels of education. The other is to target special and incentive pays and bonuses to address retention problems that are specific to various occupations and recruitment problems.

In addition, beginning in 2004, the new compensation package will begin phasing in percentage increases each year of amount offset under current law for military retirees with a VA disability of 50% or more and eligible to receive both military retirement and Veterans Affairs disability pay. Currently a veteran's retirement pay is reduced by a percentage of the disability pay received from VA. Penrod said that beginning next year, veterans will receive an increased portion of the "off-set" to their retirement pay. "And by 2014, the member will have the full concurrent receipt."

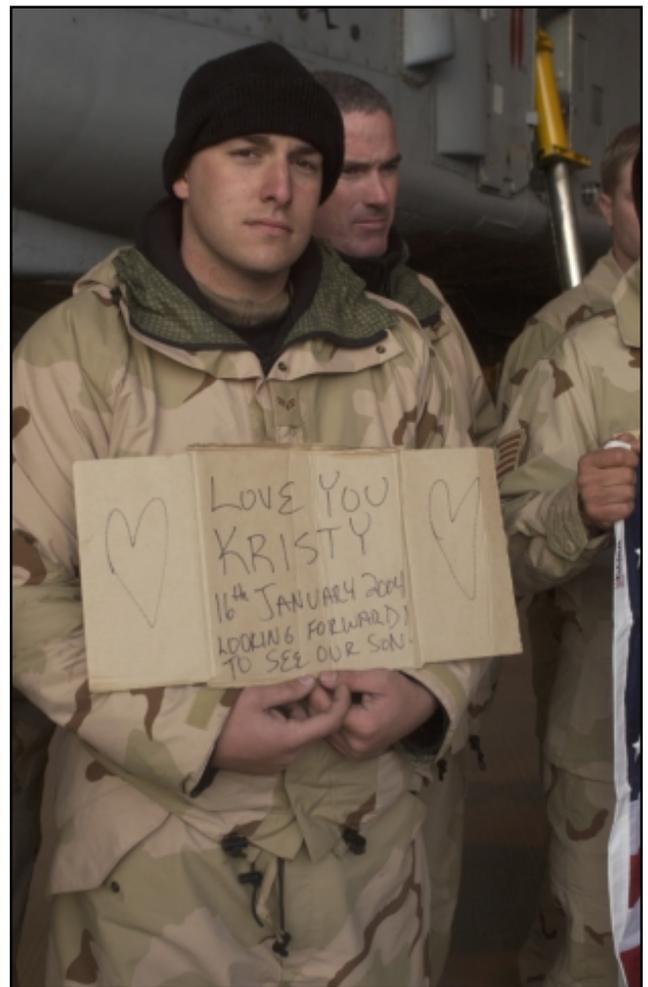
Going the distance...

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Brian Davidson

Senior Airman Patrick Blevins, 354th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron AMMO Flight, sends a message home to his wife, Kristy, and his unborn son who is due Jan. 16, during a Geraldo Rivera special on Fox News Nov. 30. Blevins is deployed from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Soldier killed in Mosul shooting; offensive operations continue

Story by John D. Banusiewicz
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – A drive-by shooting attack Monday on soldiers guarding a gas station in Mosul, Iraq, left one coalition soldier dead, even as coalition forces continue to take the offensive against the enemies of a stable and free Iraq, officials said today at the headquarters of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad.

A U.S. Central Command news release said the soldier who was killed was a member of the Army's 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) whose name is being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

At a news conference that began at 9 a.m. EST today, Army Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, deputy director of operations for Combined Joint Task Force 7, said the previous 24 hours had seen coalition forces conduct 1,663 patrols and 14 raids, capturing 76 suspects.

Forces in northern Iraq conducted 202 of the patrols and five "cordon-and-knock" operations, detaining 19 people. In such operations, coalition forces seal off an area where targeted suspects are believed to be and conduct door-to-door searches within that area to find the suspects.

Two people were detained when coalition forces found a weapons cache that included 46 rocket-propelled grenades at a Mosul furniture store during a cordon-and-knock operation. Also, Kimmitt said, tips and turn-ins from Iraqi citizens produced "significant amounts" of weapons, ammunition and small arms in Mosul.

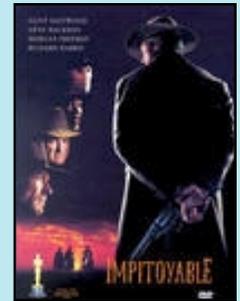
Coalition forces in the north along the Syrian border were fired upon during the last two nights, Kimmitt said, and conducted operations at five different locations east of the border. Eight people who fired at an observation post in Qaiyara from two vehicles were detained.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

"Unforgiven"

1530Z at the MWR building:
Retired Old West gunslinger William Munny reluctantly takes on one last job, with the help of his old partner and a young man.

Tomorrow's movie:
"Dirty Harry"



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Wednesday
Bagram:	Mostly Clear H: 59F L: 30F	Partly Cloudy H: 59F L: 28F
Kandahar:	Mostly Clear H: 72F L: 45F	Partly Cloudy H: 72F L: 43F
Kabul:	Mostly Clear H: 59F L: 28F	Partly Cloudy H: 59F L: 27F
Uzbekistan:	Mostly Cloudy H: 62F L: 45F	Mostly Cloudy H: 65F L: 38F

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. Lloyd J. Austin III
CJTF-180 Command Sergeant Major —
Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Carey
Public Affairs Officer —
Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty
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)

Marlins, Pudge Rodriguez part ways

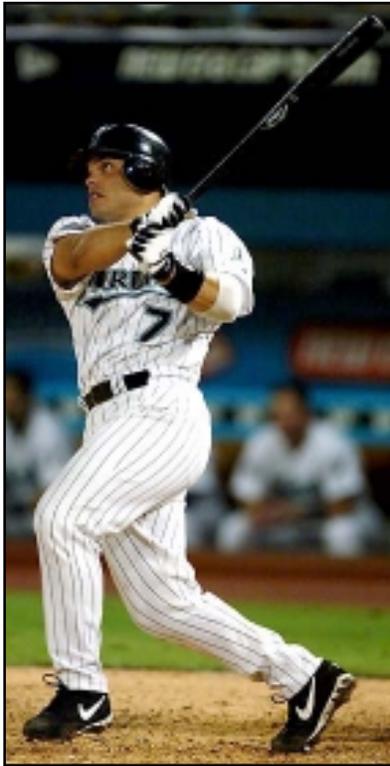
MIAMI — Ivan Rodriguez's last act in a Florida Marlins uniform was kissing home plate at Yankee Stadium. Now, he's kissed the World Series champions goodbye.

Rodriguez and the Marlins failed to agree on a contract Sunday night, meaning the 10-time All-Star catcher will be playing elsewhere next season. His previous contract prevented Florida from offering salary arbitration, which could have extended negotiations through Jan. 8.

Instead, the Marlins ran out of time, despite all three of their top executives — owner Jeffrey Loria, president David Samson and general manager Larry Beinfest — negotiating with Rodriguez's agent, Scott Boras, Sunday and increasing their multiyear contract offer.

That session was followed by another round of talks late Sunday night. Rodriguez asked Friday for a \$40 million, four-year contract.

"I would like to thank the Florida Marlins' fans," Rodriguez said in a statement issued late Sunday night by Boras. "We had a great championship season together."



Pudge Rodriguez hit .297 and drove in 85 runs for the Marlins last season.

Woods is PGA Tour player of the year

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — A wild season in golf came to a familiar conclusion Monday when Tiger Woods was voted PGA Tour player of the year for the fifth straight time, narrowly beating Vijay Singh.

Woods failed to win the PGA Tour money title or a major championship for the first time since 1998. Still, his peers decided his season was the best on tour.

Woods won five times, including two World Golf Championships, had the lowest scoring average and was second on the money list, despite playing only 18 times.

"There's a tremendous amount of satisfaction because it just shows that guys on the tour respect that I was consistent, that I've won numerous times," Woods said. "I think that's what the award reflects."

The PGA Tour does not release vote totals.

O'Leary returns to college football



George O'Leary still plans to finish the season with the Vikings.

ORLANDO, Fla. — George O'Leary is returning to college football as the coach at Central Florida, a program battered this season by disciplinary problems off the field.

Forced to resign at Notre Dame two years ago because he falsified his resume, O'Leary said he chose to take the job at Central Florida because he saw the opportunity to build a program with a national reputation.

He had been defensive coordinator for the Minnesota Vikings for the past two seasons.

"I see the University of Central Florida as a sleeping giant," O'Leary said at a news conference.

O'Leary acknowledged his past, saying he was ready to move on from the disclosure two years ago that he had lied in his personal biography about having earned a master's degree and received three letters playing football at New Hampshire. He resigned less than a week after being hired in 2001 to lead the Fighting Irish, one of the most storied college football programs.

"I made a terrible, terrible mistake as a youngster and I paid a dear price for it," he said. "I'm truly sorry for that ... My past is my past."

Bryant attorneys suggest investigators, prosecutors have bias against player

DENVER — Suggesting racism may be behind Kobe Bryant's prosecution on a sexual assault charge, defense attorneys asked a judge Monday to help them find out whether sheriff's deputies and prosecution employees ordered T-shirts depicting the NBA star being hanged.

"The information is sought because it is relevant to show the bias of the investigating agencies," defense attorney Pamela Mackey wrote, echoing an accusation she raised in the early days of the case. "Bias is always relevant."

The request is the latest salvo in the increasingly abrasive relationship between prosecutors and defense attorneys in the case against the Los Angeles Lakers star.

Bryant is charged with attacking a 19-year-old employee at a Colorado resort last June. He has said the two had consensual sex.

Officials with the Eagle County sheriff's office have said a company called hangmantees.com gave the office two black T-shirts with a Bryant theme on Oct. 9, the first day of Bryant's preliminary hearing.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

Two Turks, Afghan freed in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) – Two Turkish engineers and an Afghan kidnapped three days ago near the capital Kabul have been freed, a security group for aid workers said Monday.

The Afghan NGO Security Office gave no details of the three men's release. Afghan officials said the workers, who were helping dig wells, were taken hostage Friday in connection with a land dispute.

The aid workers' group said it appeared that Taliban militants — who kidnapped and freed a Turkish engineer in recent weeks — apparently were not responsible.

"It would appear that this was a domestic incident deriving from a local dispute and did not involve any of the usual extremist elements," Nick Downie, head of the security office, said in a statement.

It was not clear where the men were Monday, however, and Afghan government officials — who had been negotiating for the captives' freedom — and Turkish diplomats could not immediately confirm their release. "They told us they were going to release them," said Hilalludin Hillal, a senior Afghan Interior Ministry official.

Meanwhile, authorities continued searching for two Indian road workers kidnapped by heavily armed men in southern Afghanistan on Saturday. Authorities have arrested the Indians' driver and several other Afghans over their disappearance, Hillal said.

"We understand that the driver and two other workers of that company encouraged the two Indians to go to those villages to buy chicken," he said.

Hillal added that officials had contacted Taliban in the area, but that the Islamic militia group denied responsibility. He gave no further details.

A Turkish engineer abducted by the Taliban in late October was released unharmed a month later. He was working for the same U.S.-funded project as the Indians to improve Afghanistan's main highway between Kabul and Kandahar.

The kidnappings have raised new concerns over the security situation for aid workers, particularly in the south and east of the country. There have been a series of violent attacks by remnants of the former ruling Taliban regime and its allies, apparently aimed at undermining the U.S.-backed Afghan government.

Annan stresses need to protect civilians

(UN News Center) – Secretary-General Kofi Annan was "profoundly saddened" by reports that nine children were killed in Ghazni, Afghanistan, apparently as a result of an air strike carried out by coalition forces targeting a Taliban leader.

"The Secretary-General has noted that the coalition will conduct an investigation into this tragic incident and urges that the investigation be comprehensive and that its results be made public," a U.N. spokesman said in a statement released in New York.

Noting that "this is not the first time innocents have been killed as a result of coalition airstrikes in Afghanistan," he urged that the findings of the investigation include measures to ensure that such tragic mistakes are not repeated.

Stressing that the protection of civilians in armed conflict is an obligation of all parties, Mr. Annan said the fight against terrorism "cannot be won at the expense of innocent lives."

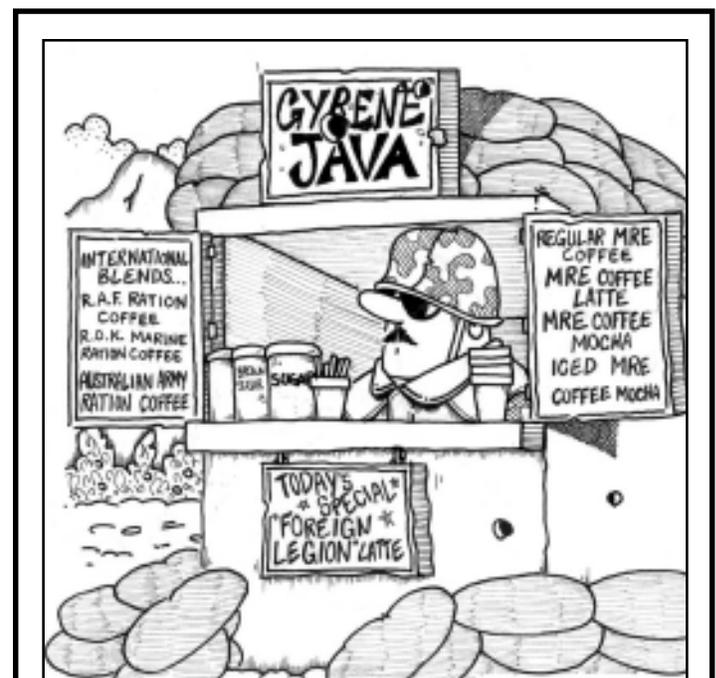
Through his spokesman, the Secretary-General extended condolences to the families of the children who were killed.

Meanwhile, Mr. Annan's envoy in the country, Lakhdar Brahimi, today issued his own statement voicing "profound distress" at the news that nine children were killed Saturday in Ghazni as a result of coalition military action.

A spokesman for Mr. Brahimi said this incident "adds to the sense of insecurity and fear in the country."

He also voiced shock and dismay at the news of an explosion Saturday in a popular Kandahar market and Thursday's attack against a convoy of the Afghan Central Statistics Office. One person was killed and ten others wounded in that incident.

"These are utterly condemnable criminal acts and the perpetrators have no justification for attacking innocent people," the spokesman said, pledging that Afghanistan and its international partners "will not be deterred by these despicable acts."



kevin_kilgore@hotmail.com

By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support