

Freedom Watch

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Bagram, Afghanistan

Local purchases in Masar-e Sharif

By Spc. Travis Edwards
1st COSCOM PAO

MASAR-E SHARIF, Afghanistan, — Down a long dark alley, in a small concrete room, two men sit on a dusty floor haggling over an acceptable price for services. These men deal with each other as classic businessmen do, offering a place to rest and tea to seal the friendship of business. Armed guards stand near the buyer, not drinking or conversing but watching their surroundings. The seller is eager to deal with any new friends that could bring money his way.

These men are not drug lords or terrorists they are an Afghan businessman and a U.S. Army pay agent buying supplies and equipment off the economy for U.S. and Jordanian soldiers supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

For the Forward Logistics Element of the

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Photo by Spc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

The longest yard...

The longest Ground Assault Convoy in Afghanistan began Wednesday from Kandahar. The GAC is scheduled to last 10 days and should travel over 500 kilometers. The convoy traveled to Kabul and is now returning to Kandahar. The GAC is part of Carpathian Odyssey, an operation to conduct a route reconnaissance of the road from Kandahar to Kabul.

Jalalabad CAT-A assesses its 101st village

By Sgt. Valerie Dey-Bolejack
109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

JALALABAD, Afghanistan — Village assessments are at the heart of a civil affairs team-A's mission in Afghanistan. For the CAT-A in Jalalabad, the 101st assessment was recently completed at a village in the Nangarhar Province. These assessments not only help the Army determine ways they can help a community, but they also give critical information to other agencies and the Afghan central government about the Afghan people.

"All of us are proud of it," said Pfc. Richard Brown, member of the CAT-A team and 414th Civil Affairs Battalion of Utica, N.Y, about his team's achievements. "They wanted us to do at least 60. We're kind of overachievers, as some people call it."

"I believe the whole CA objective is just to help out as much as we can during our tour. They open their hearts and their arms to us, as soon as we get there," said Brown. "With us going into villages to see what they need, they know that we actually care and are

trying to help."

The 101st village assessment was done at the village of Charvaghe Safa. Just as they were in this particular village, the CAT-A team on this mission, comprised mostly of soldiers from the 414th CA Battalion, is almost always made welcome when they assess a village.

"They usually receive us really well, extremely well," said Sgt 1st Class Michael Bolton, non-commissioned officer in charge of the six-member team. "Most people know who we are; they know our vehicles by now. They know the helpers and they know the fighters."

Charvaghe Safa has over 12,000 children of school age, but no school. Currently the children are walking to an adjoining village for school, but because of the number of children attending, they can only go to the fourth grade.

Maj. Jim Hawver, CAT-A Team Chief, 414th Civil Affairs Battal-

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



United States goes on orange alert

WASHINGTON — The United States raised the nation's terror threat level Tuesday, saying the U.S. intelligence community believes al-Qaida has entered an "operational period worldwide" and might attack within the United States.

The threat level was raised to orange, or "high" — the nation's second-highest level of warning.

U.S. defense officials said the information about a potential attack inside the United States came from intercepted communications of suspected terrorists. One source emphasized that the intercepts indicated the possibility of multiple attacks.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said there is no "credible, specific information" about targets or method of attack, but he noted that recent terrorist attacks overseas have included "small arms-equipped assault teams, large vehicle-borne explosive devices and suicide bombers.

"Weapons of mass destruction, including those containing chemical, biological or radiological agents or materials, cannot be discounted," Ridge said in a statement.

"The U.S. intelligence community believes that al-Qaida has entered an operational period worldwide, and this may include attacks in the United States."

U.S., Britain closing embassies in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — The United States and Great Britain will temporarily close missions in Saudi Arabia in response to intelligence reports of "imminent" terrorist attacks, both nations announced Tuesday.

The U.S. Embassy in Riyadh and U.S.

consulates in Jeddah and Dhahran will close Wednesday and stay shuttered at least through Saturday, the State Department said.

Meanwhile Tuesday, Saudi security officials confirmed that three suspected al Qaeda militants have been arrested in Jeddah.

They are not thought to have been involved in the Riyadh bombings that killed 25 people, including eight Americans, and nine bombers last week, but officials believe the three suspects have information about the attacks.

The three suspects were on the Saudi most-wanted list and are believed to be linked to al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, the officials said.

The identities of the suspects have not been revealed. They were arrested boarding a flight to Sudan, Saudi security officials said.



Statues of Iraqi military leaders wait for destruction at a government-owned art studio in Baghdad.

Iraqi sanction vote expected Thursday

UNITED NATIONS — A vote on lifting U.N. sanctions against Iraq is likely to go before the U.N. Security Council Thursday, diplomats said Tuesday.

Diplomats at the U.N. Security Council discussed the resolution on Iraq, put forward by the United States, UK and Spain, for four hours Tuesday

The three sponsors made at least 60 changes to the document before presenting it Monday, a U.S. official said.

John Negroponte, the U.S. ambassador

to the United Nations, said the resolution provides "a good framework for the international community to support the people of Iraq in the creation of a stable and secure society."

Among the changes made were lengthening the time for dismantling the oil-for-food program from four to six months, which several Security Council members had requested. The amended resolution also provides for additional duties for the U.N. special representative to Iraq and demands that the representative report regularly to the Security Council.

The revised text also leaves open the possibility of an eventual return of U.N. arms inspectors to Iraq to search for weapons of mass destruction.

Mad cow disease reported in Canada

EDMONTON, Canada — Canadian agriculture officials said Tuesday a cow slaughtered in Alberta in January tested positive for mad cow disease. It is the country's first case in 10 years.

The 8-year-old cow was tested and killed in January after showing signs of illness, Canadian agriculture officials said. Tests at a laboratory in the United Kingdom on Tuesday confirmed signs of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) or mad cow disease.

Samples from the cow tested positive for BSE last week, officials said. Canadian officials sent samples to the United Kingdom to confirm the test.

Health officials said they think they have limited the spread of the disease.

The meat from the cow was declared unfit for consumption, was kept from other meat bound for packing plants and stores, and the rendered byproduct was not mixed with byproduct from other cows, Canadian officials said.

As a precautionary measure, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said it is temporarily banning Canadian beef.

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman said the case appears isolated and that the risk to human health and of animal transmission is likely very low.

Bagram's first coffee shop is here



Munsu Heo, Army and Air Force Exchange Service contractor and regional manager for Stan countries, has a laugh with a customer at the new AAFES Coffee Shop, as he tops off his triple mochaccino with some chocolate and marshmallow mix.

Story and photo by
Pfc. Christina Carde
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Servicemembers no longer have to start their mornings with the “coffee” from the dining facility. The Army and Air Force Exchange Service’s newest addition is helping troops all over Bagram wake up – the AAFES Coffee Shop.

After being postponed for almost a month, the new coffee shop opened on Tuesday ready to welcome troops with some good coffee, other beverages and a little good old-fashioned AAFES hospitality.

“The coffee shop was supposed to open on April 17, but it kept getting pushed back due

to plumbing problems,” said Maria Schizas-Price, Bagram Post Exchange store manager, AAFES. “The engineers had to do a lot of work to get running water into this building, but they did a good job and we were finally able to open.”

Another problem the coffee shop is dealing with, is having cappuccino on the menu, but no cappuccino machine.

“I’ve had customers coming in all day, ordering cappuccino because the menu says we have it,” said Munsu Heo, AAFES contractor and regional manager for the Stan countries. “Our cappuccino machine was supposed to be here for the opening but it’s still on order – sorry troops, no cappuccino for at least another month.”

Despite the plumbing and cappuccino draw-

backs, the coffee shop attendants are proud of the other things they have to offer servicemembers.

“We have mochaccinos, espressos, regular coffee, hot chocolate and other beverages in different sizes with prices ranging anywhere from 65 cents to \$4,” said Heo. “We also have some soft jazz music playing throughout the day for troops to sit outside, relax and take a break from the duty-day.”

“I think the prices and the variety are great,” said Schizas-Price. “This is the best and probably only coffee shop presently in Afghanistan.”

“The coffee is great,” said Staff Sgt. Jose Pizarro, 48th Combat Support Hospital, Fort Meade, Md. “After drinking that stuff they serve at the DFAC for six months; this is good coffee.”

“For the area of operation we are in this is a real treat,” said Don England, laborer, Kellogg, Brown and Root. “This is just what I need to keep me wired until midnight.”

According to Schizas-Price, the coffee shop is due for expansion in the near future.

“The coffee shop is here due to the popular demand of the troops, so we are working with the present resources we have to meet their expectations,” said Schizas-Price. “We are expecting a mall to be built here by the end of this year which will lead to more room and better accommodations for the coffee shop.”

The coffee shop is open daily between the hours of 0430Z and 1430Z. These hours are expected to be extended in the near future.

ASSESS, from Page 1

ion, says their major concerns are security, irrigation and water, and especially schools.

“Every village I have gone too has a high priority of getting girls schools,” he said. “The system here is to have a boy’s school and a girl’s school. That is their culture. We are not here to change their culture. They have a high value on education of both the males and the females. They understand that to keep up in the world they must have an educated population.”

The village elders support education and the central government. But this village, like so many others, lacks the basics — schools, clean drinking water, medical care and any employment opportunities. Around the area, entire villages fled the Taliban and now are trying to return and rebuild what remains of their homes,

schools and mosques.

The Nangarhar province has a very high unemployment rate, and the only jobs available are often in Pakistan, where Afghan’s are treated as cheap labor, usually only making \$1 a day. Jalalabad’s predominately Pashtun population fought off the Taliban. The area’s war damage is not as significant as in other regions. But like the rest of the country, the Nangarhar Province has a high illiteracy rate, many villages have no water source, and there are not enough schools or teachers to go around.

Rumors had started that the Americans would leave Afghanistan because of the Iraqi war. By continuing their efforts, the CAT-A in Jalalabad has reassured villagers that they will continue to be there for them. Now that they have exceeded their goals of village assessments, the team is planning to return to the villages they have previously visited.

PURCHASE, from Page 1

Joint Logistics Command here, local purchasing is necessary to meet its mission requirements of supporting the Kingdom of Jordan Army field hospital.

“Once I receive approval from my field ordering officer, my job is to find the best price and quality for needed supplies in the city of Masar-e Sharif, Afghanistan,” said Sgt. 1st Class Kurt Hollier, FLE pay agent, 373rd Corps Support Battalion.

The 373rd is a reserve unit from Beaumont, Texas. It is attached to Logistical Task Force 46th, 1st Corps Support Command, Camp Stronghold Freedom, Uzbekistan.

“Going into town and interacting with Afghans is the most rewarding part of my job here in Afghanistan. I get to see the culture and customs up close and personal,” said Hollier. “I have learned several basic phrases in Dari, the Arabic dialect spoken in Masar-e Sharif.”

“We take our interpreter with us on trips to the city. He provides all the information I need to make an informed decision. Since he lives in the city, he knows who has what,” said Master Sgt. Jesus Davalos, FLE pay agent, 373rd. Davalos and Hollier switch off being the FLE pay agent.

Pay agents are issued money from finance officers at the major bases in theatre to make purchases in town. They are responsible for all transactions and proper accountability and paperwork on each item.

“When the hospital needs something fast and we don’t have it, off we go into town,” said Hollier.

The pay agent does not go into town alone. They are accompanied by one interpreter and several armed U.S. Army soldiers.

The trips into Masar-e Sharif are anything but shopping trips. They are armed convoy re-supply missions into the still volatile area of northern Afghanistan, said Davalos.

“There have been times when I have felt slightly unsure about my surroundings, but we have good intelligence and I trust our interpreters to keep us on the right track,” said Hollier.

The pay agents have acquired a wide range of equipment and supplies off the local economy to include a washing machine, auto parts and fluids, medical supplies, building material, and hard to find mechanical equipment.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

The Dragon Palace movie sectin is closed for renovations until further notice. The telephone room and Internet Cafe are open.



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Thursday
Bagram:	Cloudy H: 86F L: 55F	Cloudy H: 88F L: 54F
Kandahar:	Dusty H: 95F L: 68F	Dusty H: 95F L: 66F
Kabul:	Cloudy H: 86F L: 55F	Cloudy H: 84F L: 54F
Uzbekistan:	Sunny H: 91F L: 56F	Sunny H: 90F L: 57F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *ESPN.com*)



Richard Hamilton, center, and the Pistons fell short again.

Martin scores 16 of his 25 points in fourth quarter

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — Another fourth-quarter comeback. Another two-point victory. Another breathless moment over a last-second shot that didn't go in.

The New Jersey Nets, behind Kenyon Martin's 16 points in the fourth quarter, beat the Detroit Pistons 88-86 Tuesday night to take a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

Richard Jefferson's two free throws with 48 seconds remaining were the winning points, but the Pistons had two chances to tie or win. Corliss Williamson missed a short hook with about 30 seconds left, and Chauncey Billups couldn't put any mustard on a 3-pointer at the buzzer with Jason Kidd in his face.

Martin finished with 25 points and nine rebounds for the Nets,

who rallied from an 11-point fourth quarter deficit. They came back from 10 down in the third quarter in Sunday's 76-74 victory in Game 1.

The series moves to the Meadowlands for Game 3 on Thursday. Only two teams in NBA history have won a best-of-seven series after losing the first two games at home.

The Nets have won eight straight playoff games, including five in a row on the road.

Richard Hamilton, an offensive spark for the Pistons in the second half, led Detroit with 24 points, while Ben Wallace had seven points and 19 rebounds.

Kidd, who hit the winning shot in Game 1 with 1.4 seconds to go, had 20 points and seven assists for the Nets, while Jason Collins held his own against Wallace with 11 points and a career-high 14 rebounds.

The game included 14 ties and 16 lead changes and little sustained offense until Hamilton got going in the third quarter. The Nets stayed in the game with a 19-7 edge in offensive rebounds for the game.

The Pistons seemed in control when Hamilton's short baseline jumper made it 69-58 early in the fourth quarter.

But Martin would not let Detroit go easily. He scored 14 of New Jersey's next 16 points, including two three-point plays and a putback. After Detroit's Jon Barry lost the ball, he drew a technical foul for complaining after Martin rammed home a breakaway dunk. Lucious Harris made the free throw to cut the lead to two with 6:06 remaining.

Kidd tied the game at 81 with a three-point play, making a 12-footer while acrobatically drawing the bump from Billups. An exchange of baskets between Hamilton and Martin made it 83 all, then Billups and Kidd traded shots to tie it at 85 with 1:45 left.

Jefferson made one of two free throws for the Nets, and Williamson did the same for the Pistons to tie it at 86 with 1:07 remaining. Jefferson then made the free throws for the game's final points.

The Pistons' final possession came after a timeout with 1.8 seconds left. Rookie Tayshaun Prince got the ball to Billups, but Kidd stayed close but vertical and wouldn't allow a good final shot.

The Nets needed only six seconds from the opening tip to score, with Kidd hitting Martin for an alley-oop dunk off the opening tip.

But New Jersey scored just three more fast-break points in an opening quarter dominated by poor shooting and good defense.

There were four offensive fouls called in the quarter.



2002/03 NBA standings

Eastern Conference		Western Conference	
Atlantic		Midwest	
(2)New Jersey	50-32	(1)San Antonio	60-22
(4)Philadelphia	48-34	(3)Dallas	60-22
(6)Boston	44-38	(4)Minnesota	51-31
(8)Orlando	42-40	(7)Utah	47-35
Washington	37-45	Houston	43-39
Central		Pacific	
(1)Detroit	50-32	(2)Sacramento	59-23
(3)Indiana	48-34	(5)L.A. Lakers	50-32
(5)New Orleans	47-35	(6)Portland	50-32
(7)Milwaukee	42-40	(8)Phoenix	44-38
Atlanta	35-47	Seattle	40-42



SPORTS, from Page 5

Mavericks' rally based on 49 straight free throws

SAN ANTONIO — The Dallas Mavericks missed their first free throw and made their final 49. Yep, 49 in a row.

That superb free throw shooting — along with a few defensive gimmicks from Don Nelson's book of tricks — was how the Mavericks pulled off a stunning comeback and defeated the San Antonio Spurs 113-110 Monday night in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals.

"I didn't know we shot that well, but I don't expect us to miss," Nelson said. "It was an incredible basketball game."

"We didn't have a great game, but we found a way to win."

The Mavericks closed the game with a 24-9 run after falling behind by as many as 18 points and trailing for nearly the entire game.

Dirk Nowitzki led Dallas with 38 points, going 17-for-17 from the line, and Michael Finley was 10-for-10 at the stripe while scoring 26. Nick Van Exel was 7-for-7 at the line for 14 points, and Steve Nash was 6-for-6 and scored 22.

"The big thing for us is we got to the line 50 times," Nowitzki said. "Usually we average 10 or 11 per game and get outshot by about 20."

NBA playoff history includes 10 games in which a team made all of its free throws, with the best of the bunch a 28-for-28 performance by Phoenix in 1989.

That makes what Dallas did even more impressive, given that they were 0-for-1 from the line after Eduardo Najera missed the first one with 2:25 left in the first quarter.

That was the same first quarter in which this game looked totally different from the way it ended. Tim Duncan was nearly unstoppable, Dallas was frustrated, and it looked as though the Spurs might turn it into a runaway.

The three-hour, one-minute game certainly didn't turn out that way.

After Dallas fell behind 101-87 with 8½ minutes left, the Mavs made their comeback. Finley ended it by driving around his defender and scoring on a floater over Duncan for a 111-110 lead with 14 seconds left.

Duncan shot an airball from in close while being double-teamed, and Nowitzki made two free throws with 4 seconds left for a three-point lead.

Duncan scored six of San Antonio's first eight points of the fourth quarter, and Speedy Claxton had the defensive play of the night when he lived up to his nickname, chased down Nowitzki on a breakaway, deflected the ball away and saved it to a teammate while falling out of bounds. Kevin Willis had a follow shot on the Spurs' next possession to give San Antonio a 14-point lead, 101-87.

Williams returns after spending time with grandmother

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — New Jersey Nets forward Aaron Williams returned for Game 2 of the Eastern Conference finals Tuesday after leaving the team for a day to visit his ill 80-year-old grandmother.

Williams missed practice Monday to travel to Peoria, Ill., to see his grandmother, June Tweten, who had a stroke Friday.

"I just told her to be strong," Williams said before the morning shootaround. "And we're going to try to win the championship for you."

Williams called his grandmother "the anchor for our family." He said her prognosis is uncertain, but that his family encouraged him to return to his team.

"I think I was more heavy-hearted before Game 1," Williams said. "I feel a little better now that I've got to see her."

Williams scored four points in 20 minutes in New Jersey's 76-74 Game 1 victory Sunday. He has played in all 11 Nets playoff games, averaging 6.8 points and 4.5 rebounds in 19 minutes.

"Obviously we're happy he's back," coach Byron Scott said. "Our prayers are with him and his family."



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support