

Update

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

opened fire with rocket-propelled grenades.

Some of the 7th Cavalry's equipment was damaged in the attack, the official said.

The unit is part of the Army force driving on Baghdad. Some elements of the force are farther north, near Karbala, with only the Medina armored division of the Republican Guard between them and Baghdad.

Muslim clerics in Iran warned against military threats to shrines in Iraq. An Najaf is the burial place of Imam Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed.

Details of the situation inside the southern city of Basra, Iraq's second-largest, also were sketchy. British journalists reported that residents were staging an uprising against pro-Saddam forces and that Iraqi troops were firing mortars at them.

British forces staged a raid on a suburb of the city, captured a se-

nior leader of the ruling Baath party and killed 20 of his bodyguards.

"He's sitting there in his little room thinking he's having a good morning and whap, we're in, whap, we're out," boasted Col. Chris Vernon, a British Army spokesman.

The Iraqis denied all of it. "The situation is stable," Information Minister

Mohammed al-Sahhaf said in an interview with Al-Jazeera, an Arab satellite television network.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and others have warned of a possible humanitarian crisis in Basra.

The International Red Cross said during the day that it had begun repairs at a war-damaged water-pumping station serving the city.

Annan told Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, the United States is legally responsible for providing humani-

tarian aid to Iraqis in areas controlled by coalition forces.

The United Nations cannot provide humanitarian assistance until security conditions allow the safe return of U.N. staff, Annan told Rice. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer blamed Saddam for slowing the flow of goods by placing mines near Umm Qasr.

Thus far in Operation Iraqi Freedom,

Americans said they had taken nearly 4,000 Iraqi prisoners. There was no accurate death toll among Iraqi troops or civilians.

American losses ran to 20 dead and 14 captured or missing. The remains of the first two to die were flown overnight to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.

Twenty British troops had also died, including two killed Monday by friendly fire. The U.S. Central Command, which oversees the war, announced the capture of an Iraqi military hospital used as a military staging area.

Officials said Marines confis-

cated more than 200 weapons and stockpiles of ammunition and more than 3,000 chemical suits with masks, as well as Iraqi military uniforms. The Marines also found a T-55 tank on the compound.

Secretary of State Colin Powell predicted that the coalition eventually will find weapons of mass destruction, saying "there will come a time, when the enemy has been defeated, to make a more thorough search."

Elements of the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division were about 50 miles from Baghdad and hit Republican Guard units defending the Iraqi capital with an all-night artillery barrage.

Thousands of other troops hastened — as much as the sandstorms would allow — to join them for the coming battle against Saddam's seat of power.

But some helicopters were grounded by the weather, and combat aircraft taking off from the USS Harry Truman returned a few hours later without dropping bombs on their targets.

USC to research health disparities with Kellogg Grant

BY JESSICA FOSTER
THE GAMECOCK

USC's Arnold School of Public Health will team up with the state's historically black colleges and universities as recipients of a Kellogg grant to research and remedy health disparities among African Americans and other groups.

The five-year, \$2.75-million grant will enable researchers at USC's Arnold School of Public Health to collaborate with faculty of similar interests at Allen University, Benedict College, Claflin University, Morris College, South Carolina State University and Voorhees College in an effort to discover the causes for the dispro-

portionate number of diseases among blacks in South Carolina.

Sandra Glover, a USC public health researcher, will oversee the grant. She said diseases such as cancer, HIV and AIDS, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke, obesity and Type II diabetes are all disproportionately reflected in the minority population of South Carolina as well as the nation.

The Kellogg Grant is designed to reduce these disparities through research. USC President Andrew Sorensen said this type of partnership is unprecedented in this state.

"This is an historic step for health care in South Carolina,"

• GRANT, SEE PAGE 6

STATE

House committee approves bus bill

COLUMBIA (AP) — The House Education Committee approved a bill Tuesday that would clarify laws to protect students getting on or off school buses.

The bill would require buses to pick up and unload students only on the right side of roads that have two or more lanes traveling in each direction. That way students would not have to cross the highway.

If the bus driver sees students crossing the highway, the school could penalize the students.

"One of the intents of this law is to simplify things, to protect these kids, to assure us they will be getting off on the right side of the highway," said Highway Patrol Capt. George Blackwell.

The bill also clarifies current laws to let drivers know when they should stop for buses.

Most people think they do not have to stop on a four-lane road without a median because of the way the current law is written, said Donald Tudor, transportation director for the Education Department.

NATION

Turkey in line for more than \$8 billion

WASHINGTON (AP) — Turkey is providing minimal help to the United States in the war against Iraq, and Israel is on the sidelines.

But if Congress goes along with President Bush's request, Turkey will get \$1 billion that it can use to acquire loans of \$8 billion or more.

And Israel will get \$1 billion in special military aid, and another \$9 billion in guaranteed loans.

It's all part of a plan to help countries impacted by the war with Iraq. Israel, for instance, its economy in the doldrums, has had to take expensive precautions to guard against rocket attacks.

Overall, Bush is asking Congress for about \$5 billion, including \$35.8 million to build a new U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, \$187 million to the State Department itself, and \$770 million to counter terrorism in Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Philippines and Colombia. Afghanistan, alone, would get \$400 million.

WORLD

Fears grow about fatal mystery illness

HONG KONG (AP) — Adding to fears that a deadly flu-like illness is being spread by air travelers, Hong Kong officials said Tuesday nine tourists apparently came down with the deadly disease after another passenger infected them on a flight to Beijing.

The World Health Organization insisted air travel is safe but said its scientists are investigating each case to make sure the disease is not spread through ventilation.

In recent weeks severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, has spread beyond hospitals, where dozens of health care workers became infected, to schools, with at least four closed for several days, and now to air travelers.

Hong Kong officials said the nine tourists became sick after a mainland Chinese man with SARS infected them on a March 15 Air China flight to Beijing.

If SARS can be more easily spread through the air — rather than by close contact with infected people who cough or sneeze — it could force travel and other restrictions to contain the disease.

USC BRIEFS

Student awarded Truman scholarship

A USC student has been named a 2003 Harry S. Truman scholar, making her the only student from a South Carolina school to win the prestigious \$30,000 scholarship.

Lara Bratcher, a third-year anthropology student, said she found out she won the award at a McNair Scholarship dinner when USC president Andrew Sorensen announced unexpectedly that she had been selected.

"I was very excited and couldn't talk for a few minutes," she said.

The \$30,000 award will go toward Bratcher's medical-school education, and will also allow her to spend a week in Missouri

in May with the other 74 Truman Scholars during the Truman Scholarship leadership week. Next summer, Bratcher will also have an internship with

Bratcher

"some sort of government agency that reflects my interests," she said.

Bratcher said the Office of Fellowships and Scholar Programs helped her through the application process. A committee looked through her application and gave feedback on how she could make it better.

"They are a wonderful resource, and they will help you step by step," she said.

Bratcher said that students

thinking about applying for national scholarships shouldn't be intimidated by the drawn-out application process.

"Please apply; even if you don't get the actual scholarships, it will help so much with applications for grad school," she said.

Critical Mass begins again this Friday

After months of bad weather, USC's Critical Mass will start up again this Friday at 5:30 p.m. on the Horseshoe.

Critical Mass is an event in which bicyclists ride to raise awareness of bicycling and let drivers know that bicycling is "a valid means of transportation," said Katie McClendon, Student Government safety director.

Attention Minority Women!!

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Registration:

When: March 24 - 28, 2003

Where: Greene St Table

USC Health and Wellness

Questions? Contact:

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Larrell Wilkinson and Maurice Williams 777-8248



CASINO NIGHT

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