

Wiretaps to continue, says defiant Bush

ASSOCIATED Press
Washington, December 19

NEITHER WIDESPREAD criticism nor dipping poll ratings could make US President George W. Bush admit that he transgressed civil liberties by allowing the National Security Agency to eavesdrop — without warrants — on telephone conversations and monitor emails within the US after the September 11, 2001, attacks. If anything, he insisted on Monday that he would keep up the surveillance "for so long as the nation faces the continuing threat of an enemy that wants to kill American citizens."

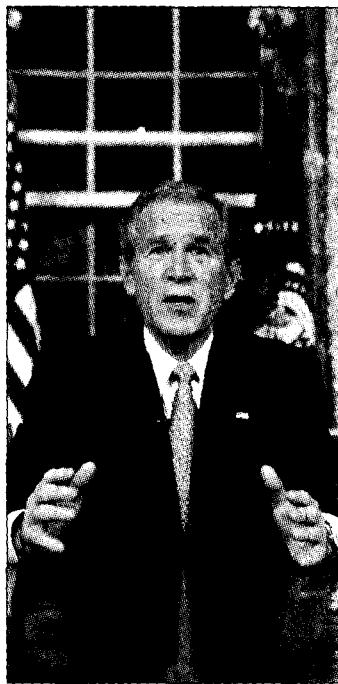
"Do I have the legal authority to do this? And the answer is, absolutely," Bush said at a year-end news conference.

Bush rebuffed any suggestion that his authorisation of the programme amounted to unchecked power, noting congressional leaders have been briefed more than a dozen times. "To say 'unchecked power' basically is ascribing some kind of dictatorial position to the President, which I strongly reject," Bush said.

"As President of the United States and commander in chief I have the constitutional responsibility and the constitutional authority to protect our country," he said.

Bush also called on Congress to renew the anti-terror Patriot Act before it expires at the end of the year. "In a war on terror we cannot afford to be without this law for a single moment," he said.

The legislation has cleared the House but Senate Democrats have blocked final passage and its prospects are uncertain in the final days of the congressional session.



The president stood at a podium in the East Room of the White House, hours after a prime-time nationwide speech from the Oval Office in which he renewed his resolve to prosecute the war in Iraq to a successful conclusion.

The existence of the programme was disclosed last week, triggering an outpouring of criticism in Congress, but an unflinching defence from Bush and his senior officials.

Bush said an investigation was under way by the Justice Department into who committed the "shameful act" of revealing the covert program to the press.

"It was a shame to disclose this important programme in a time of war. The fact that we're discussing this programme is discussing the enemy," he said.

20 DEC 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Bush defends wiretaps

AGENCIES

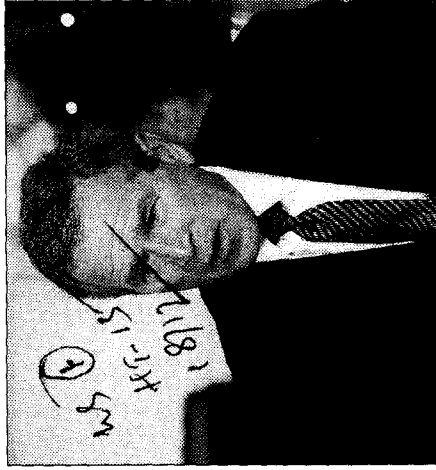
Washington, December 17

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush admitted on Saturday that he had personally authorised secret eavesdropping programmes in the US more than 30 times since the September 11 attacks, and said that anything he does to protect the public against terrorism is within the law.

He lashed out at those involved in publicly revealing the programme, saying, "This is a highly classified programme that is crucial to our national security." In a radio address delivered live from the White House's Roosevelt Room, the President said, "This is a vital tool in our war against the terrorists. It is critical to saving American lives. The American people expect me to do everything in my power to protect them and their liberties and that is exactly what I will continue to do as long as I am president of the United States."

The New York Times had reported that Bush had signed a secret order after 9/11 to allow the National Security Agency to track international telephone calls and emails of hundreds of people without warrants.

Bush and other administration officials declined to go into specifics of the programme, saying, "We do not discuss ongoing Intelligence operations to protect the country, and the reason why is that there's an en-



emy that lurks, that would like to know exactly what we're trying to do to stop them.

Civil liberties concern

Americans have been wary of monitoring by Intelligence agencies since it was learned in the 1970s that the Pentagon spied on civil rights and anti-Vietnam War groups. That led to imposing strict limits on intelligence gathering inside the US. The Bush administration has faced criticism over a range of rights issues in its declared war on terrorism.

On Friday, a group of senators calling for increased protection of civil liberties blocked renewal by Congress of the USA Patriot Act, an anti-terrorism law passed soon after the September 11 attacks. It expanded the federal government's authority to share information, conduct secret searches and obtain private records.

An 'odd guy'

Bush has branded Iran's hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad an "odd guy". Ahmadinejad has unleashed a wave of criticism this week when he described the Holocaust as a "myth" after previously calling for Israel to be "wiped off the map" or moved to Germany. "Iran's got a president that, that, you know, second-guessed the Holocaust and has announced ... The sort of destruction of Israel," said Bush. "He's an odd guy."

'Sack Shia minister'

The US has pressed for the sacking of Bayan Jabr, Iraq's Shia interior minister, whose staff have been discovered to be torturing Sunni prisoners. With a strong Sunni role in Iraq's next government apparently secure after their high turnout in Thursday's election, US officials want to ensure that cabinet posts are not exploited for sectarian ends.

18 DEC 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

HP-10
22/11

Hard times for George Bush

USA

Nothing seems to be going right for United States President George W. Bush these days. His second term agenda is in tatters; several key supporters are under investigation for suspected involvement in criminal offences; and his job approval ratings are at an all-time low. The downslide began with the administration's insensitive and inexcusably tardy response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. Many U.S. citizens were disgusted by their government's failure to provide assistance to the poor — and mostly black — victims of the disaster until days after the hurricane struck. They were further incensed when they learnt that the Federal Emergency Management Agency had been so grossly inefficient because it was headed by a person who was not at all qualified for the job. The public and the media had tended to overlook the cronyism that was the hallmark of Bush presidency. After Katrina they were no longer willing to do so. This new mood became evident when Mr. Bush nominated his legal counsel, Harriet Miers, to fill a vacancy in the Supreme Court. The Miers nomination fell through for various reasons. However, Mr. Bush had proved by his choice that he values personal loyalty over professional competence. Other negative features of this presidency, notably its far Right ideology-driven approach and its lack of accountability, have come into focus in the course of the enquiry into the 'Plamegate'. Mr. Bush had promised to take action against all White House officials who had a role in disclosing the identity of an undercover operative of the Central Intelligence Agency. While Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff, I. Lewis Libby, resigned on being indicted for offences related to this scandal, the administration does not appear to be sincerely cooperating with the special prosecutor conducting the enquiry. The scandal has also underscored the truth that the President and his close associates manipulated intelligence to justify the invasion of Iraq.

While Mr. Bush has been able to wriggle out of tough spots in the past, it might not be easy this time round. His chief political strategist Karl Rove, who is also caught up in the Plamegate enquiry, appears to be too distracted to provide advice now. Key allies in the U.S. Congress are in trouble. The Republican heavyweight in the House of Representatives, Tom DeLay, is being prosecuted for violating campaign finance laws. The party's leader in the Senate, Bill Frist, faces allegations of insider-trading in shares. These developments fly in the face of the Republican claim that the party is run by men of integrity and competence. The results of recent gubernatorial elections reflect the negative political fall-out. The ease with which the Democrats won the Governorships of Virginia and New Jersey suggests this party now has the momentum. Mr. Bush appears to be in danger of turning into a lame duck for a good part of his remaining three years at the White House.

US may not okay H1-B visa hike

Compromise Bill Could Actually Cut Their Numbers

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In a step that could affect the movement of skilled workers to the US, the House of Representatives has taken a significantly different view on increasing H1-B visas from the US Senate, which means a compromise bill could actually decrease the numbers of these visas.

About a fortnight after the US Senate passed a bill voting for an increase of 30,000 H-1B visas over the present cap of 65,000, the House on Friday endorsed its version of the same bill, but remained silent on the issue of increasing H1-B visas. This means that both Houses will now have to sit down to work out some kind of middle ground—because it will have to be a single bill that can go up for presidential assent.

According to reports, the House of Representatives, which passed its version of the bill by 217 to 215 votes, instead introduced a proposal increasing the fee for the intra-company L-1 visa by \$1,500. L-1 is a non-immigrant visa which allows firms operating both in the US and overseas to transfer certain classes of employees from its foreign operations to the US operations for up to seven years. This visa has been misused

DESTINATION USA

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and there has been a general expectation that the Congress would shut off some of the glaring lacunae in this visa.

That's not surprising. But it is equally significant that the House bill did not have its own provisions on the H1-B visa—thereby leaving open the possibility that it might actually go along with the Senate's version on this.

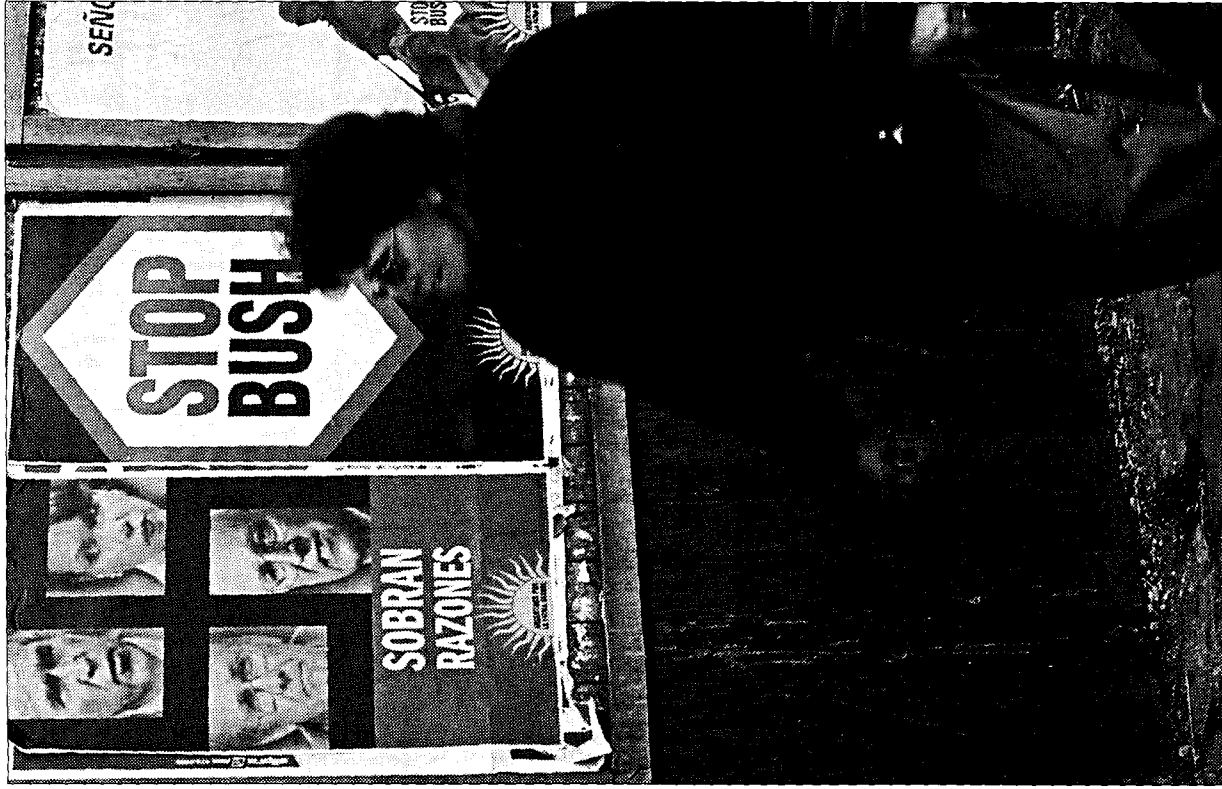
The H1-B is hot property for both countries like India, Russia and the US' IT and tech industries, which have paid large sums of money in lobbying for increased numbers of tech visas.

যাও বশ ১৮০ মিছিল আমেরিকায়

নিউ ইয়র্ক, ৩ নভেম্বর (সংবাদ সংস্থা)
— প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশের ইস্তফার দাবিতে
আমেরিকার মোট ১৮০ জায়গায়
প্রতিবাদ মিছিল হল গতকাল।
ওয়াশিংটন, নিউ ইয়র্ক, শিকাগো,
আটলান্টা, সিয়াটল, সর্বত্র হাজার
হাজার মানুষ বিক্ষোভ দেখাতে পথে
নেমেছিলেন। 'দ্য ওয়ার্ল্ড ক্যান্ট ওয়েট'
নামে যে সংগঠন এই বিক্ষোভ কর্মসূচির
উদ্যোক্তা, তার জাতীয় কো-অর্ডিনেটর
ডেবরা সুইট ছিলেন নিউ ইয়র্কে প্রায়
পাঁচ হাজার মানুষের এক মিছিলের
পুরোভাগে। তিনি বললেন, বুশ
যেভাবে প্রশাসন চালাচ্ছেন, যে পথে
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ক্ষোভকে একটা চেহারা দেওয়া দরকার।
জনমত একজোট করে এমন এক
রাজনৈতিক পরিস্থিতি তৈরি করা
দরকার, যার চাপে বুশ প্রেসিডেন্টের
পদ ছাড়তে বাধ্য হন। গতকাল
দেশজোড়া এই প্রতিবাদে বহু ছাত্রছাত্রী
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গ্যাব্রিয়েলা গার্সিয়া। সত্তরের দশকে
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04 NOV 2005

War partners face fire at home, abroad



Thousands protest against Bush; Blair forced to shelve terror Bill

AGENCIES
Washington, November 3

NOVEMBER DID not bring happy tidings for the partners in the war against Iraq, even as the violence-weary Iraqis tried to celebrate Id in peace. While US President George W. Bush headed off irate demonstrators in his homeland, his detractors in Argentina readied for a showdown over free trade during his visit to the Latin American country for the Summit of the Americas. It wasn't easy for Tony Blair either, as the British Prime Minister suffered a double blow: close ally David Blunkett's resignation and the shelving of his much-touted counter-terrorism bill.

Across the US, thousands of Americans marked the first anniversary of Bush's re-election on Wednesday with noisy demonstrations to protest the President's policies. A strong police presence did not deter demonstrators as they chanted and waved banners and placards denouncing issues as diverse as the war in Iraq, Bush's economic policies and his administration's response to Hurricane Katrina. There were protests in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York and Chicago. A firebomb was thrown at the police in San Francisco, but no one was injured. "Drive out the Bush regime," "The world can't wait," "Bush Lies, People Die" and "The people united will never be divided", the crowd shouted. Eleven people were arrested.

AP
Anti-Bush posters in Buenos Aires on Thursday. Bush is in Argentina to attend the Summit of The Americas.

FESTIVE SPIRIT

Signs of celebration emerged as a three-day holiday began in Iraq on the occasion of Id ul-Fitr. In Tikrit, children were on the streets in new clothes, and parks were crowded with families hoping for a temporary lull in violence.

LIBBY PLEA

Dick Cheney's former chief of staff, I. Lewis Libby, pleaded not guilty on Thursday in the CIA leak case, marking the start of a trial in which Cheney and other top Bush administration officials could be summoned to testify.

CHINA VISIT

George W. Bush will visit Beijing from November 19-21 during which he will hold talks with the Chinese leadership on a range of issues confronting the world's most developed nation as well as the fastest developing country.

have arrived at the seaside resort of Mar del Plata, to take on Bush over his push for unfettered free trade and a new trade zone stretching from Alaska to Argentina. Anti-Bush sentiment runs high in Argentina because of the war in Iraq and US-backed free-market policies that Argentines say pushed millions of their compatriots into poverty. Leaders from across the Americas fear that liberalised trade would allow corporations to dominate the poor.

Shopkeepers raced to board up storefronts and residents fled town as protesters prepared for a huge showdown. More than 7,500 police officers erected a security ring around the summit hotels and patrolled the streets and beaches of this normally bustling city of 600,000. Coast guard boats and helicopters trolled the shore, while air space was restricted.

Fresh trouble for Blair

For the British Prime Minister, Wednesday was one of the grimmest days of his eight-year reign. He apparently told a cabinet meeting on Thursday that "times are tough, but they are tough because we are trying to do tough things."

Even though Blunkett's resignation from captured all the headlines, more worrying for Blair was the way rebels in his Labour party cut his parliamentary majority to just one

— Its lowest ever — over counter-terrorism measures, forcing his ministers to shelve major parts of the legislation.

Blair had insisted on Wednesday that police needed powers to hold terrorism suspects for up to 90 days. Now the government will consult again in search of consensus.

"He needs to get back on the front foot and fast," said one Labour parliamentarian loyal to Blair.

Blair has declared he will not fight another election but insists he will serve a full third term in power and force through radical reforms.



Bush and Blair
Under attack



APF
Ruby Gray, whose father was killed in the July 7 bombings, is consoled by her mother at the Remembrance Service in London.

ROCK STAR

Tony Blair's past life as a wannabe rock-n-roll star with shaggy hair and lurid underwear is to be exposed in a comedy documentary. Blair apparently fronted the rock band Ugly Rumours during his days at Oxford University.

7/7 SUSPECTS

All four July 7 London suicide bombers had apparently been tracked by intelligence services a year before the attacks. *The Mirror* reported that the watch was called off because they failed to "fit the terrorist profile".

NEW MINISTER

John Hurton has been named as the replacement for David Blunkett as work and pensions minister. Hurton leaves his post as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in effect a minister without portfolio.

Time of troubles for Bush administration

A grand jury indictment of I. Lewis Libby, chief of staff to the United States Vice-President Dick Cheney, has dealt a serious blow to the Bush administration. Although Mr. Libby resigned on being indicted for the offences of obstructing justice, making false statements, and committing perjury, this response hardly counts as an exercise in damage control. The Special Prosecutor, Patrick Fitzgerald, intends to continue investigations to determine whether President George Bush's chief political advisor, Karl Rove, should be charged for the same offences. The case pertains to the disclosure by White House officials of the identity of Valerie Plame Wilson, an undercover operative for the Central Intelligence Agency. It is an offence under U.S. law to reveal the identity of a secret agent to those not cleared for receiving such classified information. Mr. Fitzgerald has not been able to pinpoint whether it was Mr. Libby, Mr. Rove, or someone else who first informed the press that Ms. Wilson worked for the C.I.A. However, Mr. Libby was alleged to have transgressed the law when he attempted to derail the enquiry and lied to the investigators and the grand jury. Supporters of the administration might argue that the prosecutor should not have pressed for an indictment on these 'peripheral' charges when the investigation into the main issue remained inconclusive. They do not have a leg to stand on. After all, many of them approved when President Bill Clinton was impeached for committing perjury even though his dalliance with Monica Lewinsky was not a crime.

The political implications of 'Plamegate' are far more significant than the legal. Ms. Wilson's identity was disclosed at a time when the Bush administration was building its case for the invasion of Iraq. Her husband and former diplomat, Joseph Wilson, had been sent to Niger by the C.I.A. to enquire into allegations that the regime of Saddam Hussein had obtained uranium from the African country. Mr. Wilson, who concluded that the allegation was untrue, was appalled when the administration persisted in talking of a Niger-Iraq uranium connection. Ms. Wilson's identity was revealed to the press a few days after her husband set the record straight in an article in *The New York Times*. While no one has been able to confirm a causal connection between the two events, many observers are not prepared to rule out vindictiveness as a possible motive. It is not just a question of whether the administration resorted to underhand political methods. The more significant point is that such methods were used to undermine a well-grounded critique of the administration's arguments for the war against Iraq. Plamegate was an episode in a campaign of deceit to help sell the war to the American people. The Libby indictment might lead to a closer scrutiny of the record. With opinion polls showing that a majority of U.S. citizens no longer trust his administration, President Bush appears to be in quite a bit of trouble.

Bush nominee sparks heated Capitol debate

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Washington, November 1

THE WHITE House got the reaction it hoped for out of its third U.S. Supreme Court nominee, federal appeals judge Samuel Alito: immediate acceptance from the conservatives who helped torpedo President George W. Bush's previous pick. But Democrats, particularly those for abortion rights, are openly talking about trying to block the jurist with an extended debate known as a filibuster.

"The filibuster's on the table," Democratic Senator Barbara Boxer said as Alito headed back to Capitol Hill on Tuesday. Alito is courting Republicans crucial to his attempt to replace retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

Bush nominated Alito to the Supreme Court on Monday as a substitute for White House counsel Harriet Miers, who withdrew last week after conservatives refused to support her.

But Republican senators said Alito deserved a Senate confirmation vote and

PRESIDENT SEEKS \$7.1 BILLION FOR BIRD FLU FIGHT

George W. Bush asked Congress on Tuesday for \$7.1 billion in emergency funding to prepare the US for a possible pandemic of bird flu. The package includes \$1.2 billion to make 20 million doses of the current vaccine, \$2.8 billion to accelerate new flu-vaccine technology and \$1 billion to stockpile more antiviral drugs. "We must have emergency plans in all 50 states, in every local community. All levels of government should be ready to act," he said.

AP, Washington



threatening to eliminate judicial filibusters if Democrats try to block him. "If someone would filibuster ... I would be prepared to vote to change the rules," said Senator Mike DeWine, a Republican. DeWine is one of the 14 centrist senators that Democrats need to sustain a filibuster of a Supreme Court nominee.

abortion groups. James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family Action, said he was "extremely pleased," and the anti-abortion Operation: Rescue declared that the country was on "the fast-track to derailing Roe v. Wade as the law of the land" in reference to the 1973 ruling that established abortion rights.

Democrats, however, are deeply suspicious of Alito, with Senator Harry Reid, the party's leader, wondering aloud "why those who want to pack the court with judicial activists are so much more enthusiastic about him" than about Miers.

Other Democrats too are apprehensive. "Judge Alito's record demonstrates that he would go to great lengths to restrict the authority of Congress to enact legislation to protect civil rights and the rights of workers, consumers and women," said top Judiciary Democrat Patrick Leahy of Vermont.

Added Sen. Edward Kennedy, "Alito could very well fundamentally alter the balance of the court and push it dangerously to the right."

Roberts gets top U.S. judicial post

Rare victory for embattled Bush

Julian Borger

WASHINGTON: John Roberts was confirmed as America's Chief Justice with a clear Senate majority marking a rare victory for George Bush in a blizzard of setbacks, failures and embarrassments.

The Senate voted 78-22 for Mr. Roberts, with 22 Democrats crossing the aisle, as the President watched with his nominee on a White House television. Though many liberals suspect the new Chief Justice will turn out to be a radical rightwinger on social issues, they could point to little hard evidence in his record, and the federal appeals judge was able to parry questions about abortion and other emotive subjects in front of the Senate.

Contentious straits

Welcoming the vote, Arlen Specter, Republican Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said: "To come away with 78 votes, considering where the Senate was, in such contentious straits, earlier this year, I think is really remarkable."

After being sworn in on Thursday, Mr. Roberts will take his seat on Monday as the 17th Chief Justice, replacing William Rehnquist, who died earlier this month after 19 years in the top judicial job.

Like Rehnquist, he is viewed as a strict but pragmatic conservative.



John Roberts takes oath as the U.S. Chief Justice in Washington on Thursday.

- PHOTO: REUTERS

Mr. Bush's choice to fill the second court vacancy could be more controversial. The outgoing judge, Sandra Day O'Connor, is a moderate, and her replacement by an ideological conservative would tilt the court's balance sharply to the right. The Democrats have vowed to unite against a hardliner, and Mr. Bush has to make his choice when his popularity rating is languishing at around 40 per cent after the fiasco of the federal response to Hurricane Katrina and a constant flow of bad news from Iraq. - ©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2005

The Washington Post

Bush Addresses Uproar Over Spying

'This Is a Different Era, a Different War,' He Says as Some Lawmakers Seek Probe
[FINAL Edition]

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Full Text (1478 words)

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The political uproar over President Bush's secret domestic spying program escalated yesterday as the president denied oversteering constitutional bounds while congressional critics from both parties stepped up their attack and vowed a full investigation.

Bush mounted a vigorous defense of his order authorizing warrantless eavesdropping on overseas telephone calls and e-mail communications of citizens with suspected ties to terrorists. He contended that his "obligation to protect you" against attack justified a circumventing of traditional process in a fast-moving, high-tech battle with a shadowy enemy.

"This is a different era, a different war," the president said at a year-end news conference in the East Room. "People are changing numbers and phone calls, and they're moving quick. And we've got to be able to detect and prevent. I keep saying that, but this requires quick action."

But Democrats and some key Republicans on Capitol Hill were unconvinced, and they questioned whether Bush has violated a law intended to prevent the government from spying on its citizens without court approval.

Voicing "grave doubts" over the legality of the National Security Agency program, Senate Judiciary Chairman Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) will conduct hearings next month on the issue. To rebut suggestions of congressional acquiescence, Sen. John D. Rockefeller (D-N.Y.) released a handwritten letter he secretly sent Vice President Cheney in July 2003 objecting to the program.

The dispute further fueled the debate over the USA Patriot Act, the measure bolstering the powers of law enforcement agencies that passed shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. The Senate yesterday again failed to muster the votes to end Democrat-led efforts to repeal legislation renewing the law, which expires Dec. 31. Bush angrily branded the filibuster "inexcusable" three times at his news conference but refused to accept a temporary extension.

"I want senators from New York or Los Angeles or Las Vegas to go home and explain why these cities are safer," Bush said. "It's inexcusable to say, on the one hand, 'connect the dots' and not give us a chance to do so."

The meeting with reporters was the latest effort in a presidential communications barrage intended to calm public nerves about Iraq and woo back disaffected supporters; it came the morning after a prime-time Oval Office address and followed four other congressional briefings and a surprise trip to Iraq by Cheney. Bush once again counseled patience, saying that "21/2 years seem like eternity, but in the march of history it's not all that long."

In the wide-ranging news conference, Bush demanded that the Senate confirm Samuel A. Alito Jr. to the Supreme Court by Jan. 20, as Democrats vowed to question the nominee on his view of the NSA program. Bush acknowledged that the bungled intelligence program has made it harder to pressure Iran to drop any nuclear weapons aspirations. Looking ahead to 2006, he listed as a priority rebuilding the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast, and he expressed regret that some question whether he cares enough about black victims.

But the 56-minute session became dominated by the four-year-old NSA surveillance program, which was revealed last week by the New York Times. While generally relaxed and sometimes joking, Bush grew testy when asked if he is presiding over the expansion of "unchecked power" by the executive branch. "To say 'unchecked power' basically is ascribing some kind of dictatorial position to the president, which I strongly reject," he responded sharply, waving his finger.

Asked what limits he sees on a president's power in a time of war, Bush said a few key congressional leaders were briefed on the spying program and his administration reviews its own actions periodically. "I just described limits on this particular program," he said.

<http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/access/943827231.html?dids=943827231:9438...> 1/9/2006

"That's what's important for the American people to understand. I am doing what you expect me to do, and at the same time save the civil liberties of the country."

Bush's remarks left many critics unassuaged and many questions unanswered. The president offered no details about how many are under surveillance, what standard must be met to intercept communications or what terrorist plots have been disrupted as a result of the program.

Nor did he explain why the current system is not quick enough to meet the needs of the fight against terrorism. Under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the NSA in urgent situations can already eavesdrop on international telephone calls for 72 hours without a warrant, as long as it goes to a secret intelligence court by the end of that period for retroactive permission. Since the law was passed in 1978 after intelligence scandals, the court has rejected just five of 18,748 requests for wiretaps and search warrants, according to the government.

Air Force Gen. Michael V. Hayden, who was NSA director when the surveillance began and now serves as Bush's deputy director of national intelligence, said the secret-courts process was intended for long-term surveillance of agents of an enemy power, not to hunt for elusive terrorist cells.

"The whole key here is agility," he said at a White House briefing before Bush's news conference. According to Hayden, most of the surveillance conducted under Bush's authorization lasts just days or weeks, and requires only the approval of a shift supervisor. He said getting retroactive court approval is inefficient because it "involves marshaling arguments" and "looping paperwork around."

In asserting the legality of the program, Bush cited his power under Article II of the Constitution as well as the resolution authorized by Congress after the Sept. 11 attacks. The resolution never mentions such surveillance, but Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said it is implicit and cited last year's Supreme Court decision in *Hamdi vs. Rumsfeld*, which found that the force resolution effectively authorized Bush to detain U.S. citizens indefinitely as enemy combatants. But the same ruling held that detainees are entitled to their imprisonment in court.

"This is not a backdoor approach," Gonzales said at the White House. "We believe Congress has authorized this kind of surveillance and acknowledged that the administration discussed introducing legislation explicitly permitting such domestic spying but decided against it because it "would be difficult, if not impossible" to pass.

Bush and Gonzales maintained that the program is not unchecked because select congressional leaders have been briefed on it a dozen times. But several of those who received classified briefings objected yesterday that it hardly constituted oversight. In fact, lawmakers said they were sworn to secrecy, barred from disclosing the program even to their colleagues and staff, and therefore could not block the president's actions.

Rockefeller, ranking Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, released his 2003 letter to Cheney to make the point that "profound" concerns at the time but could not act on them. He said he kept a copy in a sealed envelope ever since to preserve his views. Complaining about seeing Bush and his aides "repeatedly misrepresent the facts," he demanded "a full investigation" of the program.

Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) and his predecessor, Thomas A. Daschle (D-S.D.), said yesterday that they had been briefed on the program and were not asked for their advice or consent.

Reid added that "key details about the program apparently were not provided to me," and Daschle said he voiced concern at the time but was surprised and disappointed that the White House would now suggest that none of us informed of the program objected," he said in a statement.

Specter was briefed for the first time by Gonzales on Sunday night and vowed to seek more information. "I have grave doubts about the wide scope of executive power claimed by Attorney General Gonzales," he said in an interview. Despite Gonzales's reassurances, he said, "I'm far from being satisfied."

Several senators pressed the matter further. Specter and Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.) sent letters to Alito promising to grill him on the issue at confirmation hearings next month. Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wis.) raised the prospect of a special prosecutor investigating the program, said Gonzales would have to recuse himself. Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) sent an inquiry to presidential scholars asking if the program was legal. John Dean, the White House counsel during Watergate, who she quoted as saying that Bush has admitted to an impeachable offense.

But Bush had a different investigation in mind. At his news conference, he said that although he had not issued an order, he promised the Justice Department has opened an inquiry into who leaked the information about the NSA program. "It was a shameful act for someone to disclose this very important program in a time of war," he said. "The fact that we're discussing this program is helping the enemy."

Staff writer Jim VandeHei and researcher Julie Tate contributed to this report.

Katrina blame-game turns nasty in DC

Washington: A combative Michael Brown blamed the Louisiana governor, the New Orleans mayor and even the Bush White House that appointed him for his agency's dismal response to Hurricane Katrina in a fiery appearance before Congress.



KNIVES ARE OUT: Michael Brown

In response, lawmakers alternately lambasted and mocked the former Federal Emergency Management Agency director.

House members' searing treatment of Brown, in a hearing that stretched nearly six hours, underscored how he has become a symbol of the deaths, lingering floods and stranded survivors after the August 29 storm.

Brown resigned September 12, three days after being relieved of his onsite command response effort. "I'm happy you left," said Rep. Christopher Shays of Connecticut, "because that kind of, you know, look in the lights like a deer tells me that you weren't capable to do

the job."

"You get an F-minus in my book," said Rep. Gene Taylor of Mississippi, the hardest-hit state in the disaster after Louisiana. At several points, Brown face turned red and he slapped the table in front of him. "So I guess you want me to be the superhero, to step in there and take everyone out of New Orleans," Brown said. "What I wanted you to do is do your job and coordinate," Shays retorted.

Brown acknowledged mistakes during the storm and subsequent flooding that devastated the Gulf Coast, but he accused New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin and Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco, both Democrats, of fostering chaos and failing to order an evacuation more than a day before Katrina hit.

"My biggest mistake was not recognising by Saturday that Louisiana was dysfunctional," Brown told a special panel set up by House of Representatives Republican leaders to investigate the catastrophe. Blanco vehemently denied that she waited until the eve of the storm to order an evacuation of New Orleans.

"Such falsehoods and misleading statements, made under oath before Congress, are shocking," Blanco said in a statement.

In New Orleans, Nagin said that "it's too early to get into name-blame and all that stuff," but that "a FEMA director in Washington trying to deflect attention is unbelievable to me." AP

New Orleans police chief quits post under pressure



Eddie Compass

New Orleans: Police superintendent Eddie Compass resigned on Tuesday after four turbulent weeks in which the police force was wracked by desertions and disorganisation in Hurricane Katrina's aftermath.

"I served this department for 26 years and have taken it through some of the toughest times of its history. Every man in a leadership position must know when it's time to hand over the reins," Compass said at a news conference. "I'll be going on in another direction that God has for me."

As the city slipped into anarchy during the first few days after Katrina, the 1,700-member police department itself suffered a crisis. Many officers deserted their posts, and some were accused of joining in the looting that broke out. Two officers Compass described as friends committed suicide. His decision comes as the local Times-Picayune newspaper reported that the department will conduct a case-by-case investigation into the nearly 250 officers who failed to report for duty during the Katrina disaster. AP

Kerry nominated

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, July 29. — US Democrats have formally nominated Senator John Kerry as their presidential candidate to try to unseat incumbent Mr George W Bush from the White House in the November election.

The nomination came last night at Democratic Party's convention in Boston soon after his running mate Senator John Edwards, praised Mr Kerry as a decisive and battle-tested leader and urged voters

to embrace the policies of hope over what he called a low-road campaign by the Republicans.

Mr Kerry swept into the convention city yesterday surrounded by a dozen veterans who had served with him in the Vietnam War. He came aboard a Swiftboat — the kind which he commanded during the Vietnam War, ship in Boston Harbour.

Mr Kerry's weapon to counter the plea of the Republicans not to change the captain mid-stream during the continuing war against terrorism is to cite the support from veterans and

his own distinguished record in the Vietnam War, where Mr Bush did not go.

The Democratic answer to the Republican position that it is unwise to change the captain midstream is that the captain (President Bush) has lost his way and it is time for a more experienced commander to take over.

It remains to be seen whether the Republican Convention in New York which will come later will produce similar emotion in favour of President Bush and Vice-President Mr Dick Cheney.

25 SEP 2005

THE STATESMAN

Hurricane Rita comes ashore

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Rupert Cornwell

WASHINGTON, Sept. 24. — A massive relief and rescue operation began tonite after Hurricane Rita smashed into the US Gulf Coast, blasting communities along the Texas-Louisiana border with raging winds, sheets of rain and storm surges, which left many inland areas under feet of water.

Rita, one of the most dreaded hurricanes of recent years, came ashore at 2:30 a.m. today as a Category 3 storm, with maximum sustained winds of 120 mph and even stronger gusts. Though downgraded from the category 5, 175 mph monster that crossed the Gulf of Mexico last week, it was still a huge and powerful storm, more than 400 miles across. Hours after the storm hit, massive waves and wind were still lashing Lake Charles, a city in west Louisiana. Giant casino river boats were ripped from their moorings, tossing on the angry waters. Multi-storey lake front apartment buildings looked to be flooded, overwhelmed by the tidal surge.

As dawn broke, rescue teams headed for the worst affected areas, Lake Charles, the oil industry centre of Port Arthur in Texas and other vulnerable coastal areas. Many houses were badly damaged, and trees and power lines were blown down across the area. Flooding occurred as far inland as Lafayette, Louisiana, 30 miles from the Gulf.

The prospect of the widely feared disaster disappeared when Rita shifted north and east 24 hours before it struck, veer-



DEVASTATED!

Water from the Industrial Canal (foreground) rushes into the Ninth Ward district of New Orleans through a levee breach caused by Rita on Friday. AFP

ing away from the Houston area and its four million inhabitants towards less populated parts, also ensuring there would be no repeat of the Galveston hurricane of 1900, in which at least 6,000 people died. This time buildings were damaged in the fragile island city, but its 17 ft seawall easily coped with the

storm. Moreover, mindful of Katrina, the local populace this time had departed beforehand. The biggest single loss of life caused by Rita may prove to have been the 24 elderly people from a Houston nursing home who died in a bus fire yesterday as they were being evacuated to Dallas. **The Independent**

Bush oozes confidence

Expressing confidence that his administration can effectively tackle the aftermaths of hurricane Rita, US President George W Bush today said all out efforts will be made to give respite to the affected people by cutting down red-tapism and involving

the private sector, adds a FTI report.

"In the recovery effort, the federal government has a vital role and we'll do our duty. We will cut through the red tape in Washington so we can speed the work of rebuilding," Mr Bush said, in his weekly radio address from Colorado Springs.

THE STATESMAN

Rita sparks fires, flooding in Texas but spares New Orleans

✓
HD-12
W-50

Hurricane weakens while fears of severe flooding persist; Louisiana too battered

2579

BEAUMONT (TEXAS): Hurricane Rita slammed into Texas and Louisiana early on Saturday, smashing windows, sparking fires and knocking power out to more than 1 million customers, but largely sparing vulnerable Houston and already reeling New Orleans.

Rita made landfall at 0730 GMT as a Category 3 storm just east of Sabine Pass, on the Texas-Louisiana line, bringing top winds of 193 kph and warnings of up to 64 cm of rain, the National Hurricane Center said.

By late morning, it had weakened to barely above hurricane status, with its sustained winds at 121 kph as it moved north near Jasper.

No fatalities reported

Fears of severe flooding persisted; parts of the east Texas counties of Jasper and Tyler had received 25 to 30 cm of rain, officials said.

There were no immediate reports of fatalities, or any detailed word on damage to the area's vast oil refinery industry, though rescuers and search teams in many areas had to wait for winds to subside before venturing out.

About 3 million people had fled a 800-km stretch of the Texas-Louisiana coast ahead of the storm, motivated in part by the devastating toll that Hurricane Katrina inflicted on New Orleans and other parts of the Gulf Coast barely three weeks ago.

The storm spun off tornadoes as it churned northwest, causing



BRUNT OF HURRICANE: A burnt-out car lies amid the charred rubble of a building in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita in Galveston, Texas, on Saturday. — PHOTO: AP

transformers to explode. In Jasper County, a house with seven people inside floated in floodwaters after it came off its foundation, said an official.

But the flood-prone cities of Houston and Galveston — largely evacuated over the past four days — escaped a direct hit.

In New Orleans, rain drenched parts of the abandoned city early on Saturday, straining the levee system damaged by Katrina and causing more flooding in already ruined and abandoned poor neighborhoods.

But the forecast of up to 8 cm

throughout the day was less than had been previously predicted.

In the days before the storm's arrival, hundreds of thousands of residents of Texas and Louisiana fled their homes in a mass exodus that produced gridlock and heartbreak.

Bill White, Houston Mayor, expressed frustration: "It is just totally unacceptable that there was not adequate fuel supplies stashed around the state," he said.

President George W. Bush planned to visit his home state of Texas on Saturday. — AP

NEARLY 2 MILLION NEED TO BE EVACUATED

WSD
SF
2919

Rita headed for Texas, Louisiana



Vehicles jam the lanes of a Houston highway as people move to safer places. — AFP

Associated Press

HOUSTON, Sept. 23. — A slowly weakening Hurricane Rita steamed towards the Texas and Louisiana coast with 201 kmph winds today taking direct aim at the nation's oil-refining industry. As many as 24 people were killed when a bus carrying elderly evacuees caught fire.

"We're going to get through this," Texas Gov. Mr Rick Perry said. "Say a prayer for Texas." In New Orleans, Rita's rains breached a patched levee, sending water spilling into the hard-hit but largely empty ninth ward just days after the neighbourhood was pumped dry.

"Our worst fears came true," said Maj. Mr Barry Guidry of the Georgia National Guard. "We have three significant breaches in the levee and the water is rising rapidly." Rita weakened during the day to a Category 3 hurricane, down from a fearsome Category 5 with 282 kph winds on Wednesday. It was expected to come ashore early tomorrow along the upper Texas-Louisiana coast on a course that could spare Houston and nearby Galveston a direct hit. But it could plow instead into the oil and chemical centres of Beaumont and Port Arthur, about 120 kilometres east of Houston.

Texas emergency management coordinator, Mr Jack Colley, predicted Rita would destroy nearly 5,700 homes in the state and cause \$8.2 billion in damages.

President Mr George W Bush headed for his home state as the storm closed in. "We're now facing another big storm," he said. "Our job is to prepare for and assist state and local people to save lives and help these people get back on their feet."

He added: "There will be no risk of me getting in the way. What I will do is observe." Nearly 2 million people along the Texas and Louisiana coasts were urged to get out of the way of Rita, setting off an unprecedented exodus that brought traffic to a standstill across the Houston metropolitan area. Cars overheated and ran out of gas in 10 and 12-hour traffic jams. Some drivers gave up and turned around to go home.

"It can't get much worse. 100 yards (meters) an hour," fumed Mr Willie Bayer, (70). "It's frustrating bumper-to-bumper." By today morning, the highways within Houston had cleared out but traffic was still bumper-to-bumper from the outskirts of the city towards Austin and Dallas. The state escorted tanker trucks full of gas to empty stations in small towns along the way. And National Guard trucks delivered gasoline to drivers who ran out. The bus fire took place in a traffic jam on Interstate 45 near Wilmer, southeast of Dallas. The vehicle was rocked by explosions and engulfed in flames that reduced it to a blackened, burned-out shell. Early indications were that the bus caught fire because of mechanical problems, then passengers' oxygen tanks started exploding. Dallas County Sheriff's Department spokesman Mr Don Peritz said. Dozens of chemical plants are situated along the Texas and Louisiana Gulf Coast in the nation's biggest concentration of oil refineries, and damage and disruptions caused by Rita could cause already-rising oil and gasoline prices to go even higher. Environmentalists warned of the possibility of a toxic spill.

21 SEP 2005

No running from Rita for Bush

**Rupert Cornwell
in Washington**

Sept. 22. — As millions of people flee the threat of Hurricane Rita, the storm is shaping up as a critical test for President Mr. George W. Bush and for the beefed-up national emergency preparations put in place after the botched response to last month's deadly Hurricane Katrina.

Late on Wednesday, more than 48 hours before Rita was due to slam into the eastern Texas coast, the administration declared the storm "an incident of national significance" something it failed to do until two days after Katrina and readied regular army units to help with the initial relief and rescue operations. Yesterday, amphibious vessels carrying 1,000 Marines and equipment were taking up position in the Gulf of Mexico, ready

to move in the moment the storm has passed through. More than 5,000 Texas National Guardsmen were also on emergency standby.

The path of the storm yesterday, shifted slightly to the east and north, taking aim at a 100-mile stretch of coast between the city of Galveston and Houston 60 miles inland and Texas' border with Louisiana.

Inter-states heading towards north were said to be jammed for up to 100 miles, as nervous residents, mindful of the devastation left by Katrina, headed for safety.

Weathermen warn that every 20 miles of eastward movement by the storm would bring an additional inch of rain on New Orleans.

Even a small storm surge could re-open breaches in the levees, allowing more water to pour into a city 30 per cent

of which is still flooded. At noon yesterday, Rita was still a frighteningly powerful Category Five storm, 400 miles south east of Houston and packing maximum sustained winds of 165 mph, only fractionally down from the overnight maximum of 175 mph.

Experts say it is likely to weaken slightly as it approaches the shoreline. Even so, it is likely to make a fall as a Category three or four Hurricane, among the most powerful storms ever to strike Texas, akin to the legendary hurricane that destroyed Galveston in 1900 — still the deadliest natural disaster ever in modern US history. Though oil rigs, refineries and petrochemical facilities were being evacuated, secured and closed down, some damage appeared inevitable, raising the spectre of industrial pollution on top of the inevitable destruc-

tion. The political stakes are also huge for President Mr. Bush in particular, whose tumbling approval ratings took another battering as the federal government was blamed for its tardy and initially inept response to Katrina.

Since then Mr. Michael Brown, the hapless boss of the federal disaster management agency, was forced to resign, and emergency supplies and satellite communications networks have been pre-positioned throughout the threatened region. But many senior Republicans are still critical of President Bush's subsequent handling of the crisis, in particular his failure to say how the \$150 billion plus amount for government relief and reconstruction spending on Katrina will be covered, especially at a time when the budget is running at a near-record deficit.

— **The Independent**



I'M OK, YOU'RE OK! A woman carries her belongings and kitten while boarding an evacuation bus on Wednesday in Texas. — **AFF**

Snowballing Rita targets Texas

Miami, Sept. 21 (Reuters): After lashing the Florida Keys, Hurricane Rita was upgraded on Wednesday into a more powerful Category 4 storm as it headed across the Gulf of Mexico on a course that could take it to Texas and dump more rain on Katrina-battered Louisiana.

Rita's winds increased to 193-kmph winds as it headed into the Gulf. The storm hit the Florida Keys but did not get close enough to reach the vulnerable chain of islands with its most destructive forces.

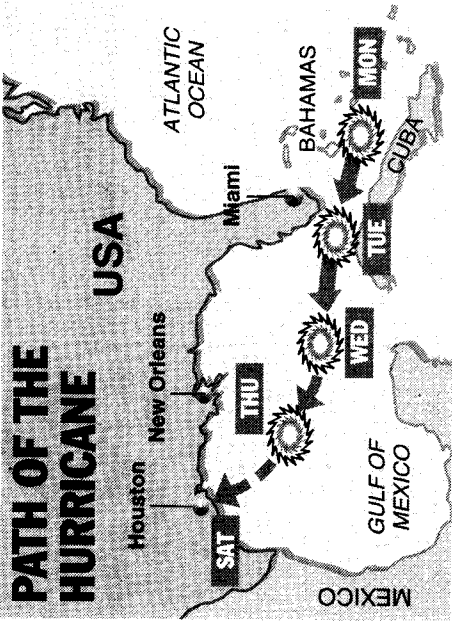
The upgrade put Rita in the same strength classification as Hurricane Katrina, which devastated parts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama last month, and it sparked concern in financial markets that the new storm could wreak as much damage as Katrina's assault on the US Gulf Coast last month.

US crude-oil prices rose and the dollar weakened against the euro. US stock futures also pointed to a lower market open.

Rita's most likely future track would take it to Texas by the end of the week, raising fears the sprawling storm could bring heavy rains to flooded New Orleans and threaten the recovery of oil production facilities in the Gulf of Mexico.

With grim news footage of Katrina's assault still fresh in their minds, officials along the Texas Gulf Coast prepared for Rita.

An evacuation was ordered for Galveston and several schools in the region



planned to cancel classes. About 1,100 Hurricane Katrina evacuees still in Houston's two mass shelters faced another evacuation as the city found itself in Rita's possible path. They were being sent to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas.

Rita's centre was about 313 km west of Key West, Florida, at 1200 GMT. The hurricane was headed west into the southeastern Gulf of Mexico at about 22 kmph, the US National Hurricane Center said.

The centre said Rita became a Category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale — with sustained winds above 217 kmph this morning.

"The conditions over the central Gulf are much like they were for Katrina," hurricane centre deputy director Ed Rappaport told CNN. A major hurricane could send a 6-metre storm surge over the Texas coast by Saturday.

Oil companies just starting to recover from Katrina evacuated Gulf oil rigs as Rita moved toward major energy

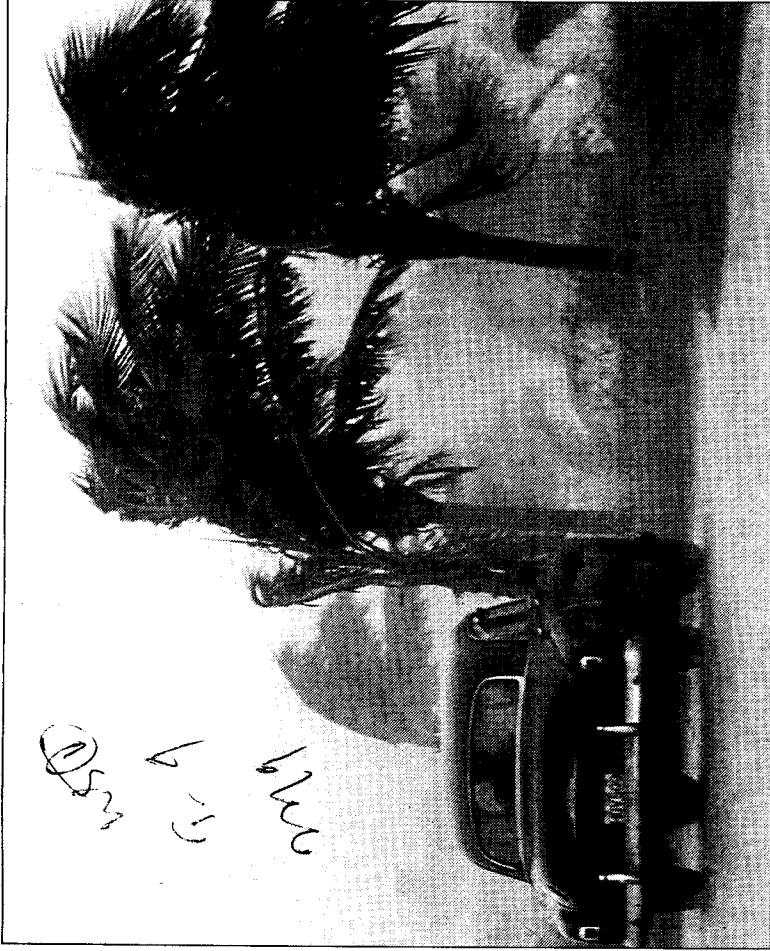
production areas. The navy began moving its remaining fleet of Katrina relief vessels, including the *Iwo Jima*, away from the Gulf Coast to ride out any potential battering from Rita.

US light crude oil rose \$1.80 per barrel to \$68, its highest level in three weeks. The dollar lost 1 per cent against the euro and Swiss franc.

President George W. Bush was briefed yesterday on the growing storm aboard the helicopter assault landing ship *Iwo Jima*, which is docked in New Orleans.

Bush, who was criticised as being caught off guard by the severity of Katrina, said he had sent an admiral to Texas to coordinate any needed response to Rita. Residents of the Florida Keys were grateful that Rita merely skirted their area.

"We did not have the flooding I thought we'd have," Key West mayor Jimmy Weekley told reporters. "We were extremely lucky."



Two men in a car look for shelter as Hurricane Rita lashes Havana on Tuesday. (AFP)

New Orleans prepared

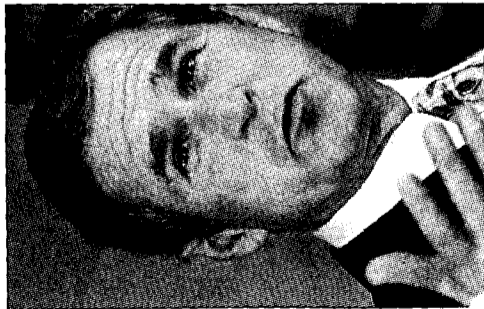
New Orleans, Sept. 21 (Reuters): New Orleans residents prepared to evacuate again yesterday as Hurricane Rita headed toward the Gulf of Mexico, but the residents who have trickled back since Katrina's devastation vowed to stay.

Mayor Ray Nagin, whose plan to bring residents home had been questioned by President George W. Bush, suspended plans to bring people into the city and urged everyone to leave ahead of Hurricane Rita, which he warned could once again swamp levees that collapsed and flooded the city three weeks ago.

But the hardy souls who either rode out Katrina here or have come home to mud-soaked, damaged houses despite a lack of drinking water and electricity were reluctant to leave.

"I'm staying. I don't think (Rita's) headed here," said Scott "Hound" Peterson, 37.

With Rita looming, Louisiana declared a state of emergency and New Orleans was taking no chances. Mayor Ray Nagin said two busloads of people had been evacuated already and 500 other buses were ready to roll. "We're a lot smarter this time around," he said.



Clinton raps Bush on Katrina

PHILIP Shenon
Washington, September 19

FORMER PRESIDENT Bill Clinton, asked by President Bush to help raise money for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, offered harsh public criticism of the Bush administration's disaster-relief effort on Sunday, saying, "You can't have an emergency plan that works if it only affects middle-class people".

Clinton's comments in an interview on the ABC News program "This Week" could prove awkward for the White House, given Bush's eagerness to involve his Democratic predecessor in a high-profile role to raise money for the hurricane's victims.

The White House has been under siege from critics for more than two weeks, assailed first for the speed and effectiveness of its response to the storm, and challenged more recently by questions about the long-term fiscal implications of its plans for rebuilding in the Gulf states. Clinton argued that lower-income Americans had done better under the economic policies of his administration than they are doing now, and said the storm highlighted class divisions in the country that often played out along racial lines.

"It's like when they issued the evacua-

tion order", he said. "That affects poor people differently. A lot of them in New Orleans didn't have cars. A lot of them who had cars had kinfolk they had to take care of. They didn't have cars, so they couldn't take them out".

"This is a matter of public policy", he said. "And whether it's race-based or not, if you give your tax cuts to the rich and hope everything works out all right, and poverty goes up and it disproportionately affects black and brown people, that's a consequence of the action made. That's what they did in the '80s; that's what they've done in this decade. In the middle, we had a different policy".

The White House spokesman, Scott McClellan, did not respond directly to Clinton's remarks about the hurricane-relief effort or mention the former president by name. But in a statement on Sunday, McClellan suggested it was unfair to link the plight of low-income victims of the hurricane to the economic policies of the Bush administration.

"There is a deep history of injustice that has led to poverty and inequality, and it will not be overcome instantly", he said, adding that Bush "from Day-1 has been acting boldly to achieve real results for all Americans".

He added, "Do we think in new and bold ways by focusing on innovative pro-

grams that work for all Americans, or do we embrace failed policies of the past which have resulted in too many being left behind?" Throughout Bush's presidency, Clinton has often been critical of his successor, and he repeated many of those criticisms in the Sunday interview in discussing the invasion of Iraq, the growing federal deficit and other issues.

But it was the directness of his criticism of Bush's policies related to domestic disaster relief that appeared likely to cause special aggravation at the White House. Noting statistics that showed a sharp drop in poverty during his presidency, Clinton said, "You can't have an emergency plan that works if it only affects middle-class people up, and when you tell people to go do something they don't have the means to do, you're going to leave the poor out".

Clinton said he was especially disturbed that many of the people who lost homes in the hurricane had no insurance for their homes or belongings.

"Everything they owned was in their little home", he said. "And if we really wanted to do it right, we would have had lots of buses lined up to take them out and also lots of empty vans" to help save the belongings of those with no home or flood insurance.

The New York Times

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20 SEP 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Lessons from the black tsunami

There is perhaps a silver lining in the clouds over New Orleans. Perhaps the US, and especially Bush, will be persuaded to join the rest of the world in the fight against poverty and to protect our planet's environment, says **Joseph E Stiglitz**.



THE world has been horrified at America's response to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath in New Orleans. Four years after the terrorist attacks of September 2001, and with

billions of dollars allegedly spent on "preparedness" for another emergency, America has shown the world that it was not prepared — even for an event that came with ample warning.

The difference between the Tsunami in Asia last December and what is coming to be called the Black Tsunami in America — because it brought so much devastation to the poor, mostly black, people of Louisiana — is striking. The Asian disaster showed the ability of those affected to overcome long-standing rifts, as Aceh rebels put down their arms in common cause with the rest of Indonesia. By contrast, the disaster in New Orleans — and elsewhere along America's Gulf Coast — exposed and aggravated such rifts.

The Bush administration's response to the hurricane confirmed the suspicion among blacks that, while they might send their boys to fight America's wars, they had not only been left behind in America's prosperity, but that there was neither understanding nor concern when they needed it most. An evacuation was ordered, but no means to do so were provided for the poor. When help came, it was, as one New York Times columnist noted, like the Titanic: the rich and powerful got out first.

I was in Thailand right after the tsunami, and I saw that country's impressive response. The Thais flew consular and embassy officials to the affected areas, aware of the sense of helplessness among those stranded far from home. America kept foreign officials from coming to the aid of their nation-



als in New Orleans — embarrassed, perhaps, at what they would see.

Even the richest country in the world has limited resources. If it gives tax cuts to the rich, it will have less to spend on repairing levees; if it deploys the National Guard and reserves to fight a hopeless war in Iraq, there will be fewer resources at home to cope with a domestic crisis.

Choices must be made, and choices matter. Shortsighted politicians like Bush often skimp on long-term investments in favour of short-term advantage. He recently signed a lavish infrastructure bill that included, among other payoffs to political supporters, an infamous bridge to nowhere in Alaska. Money that could have been used to save thousands of lives was spent to win votes.

Seldom do the "chickens come home to roost" as quickly as they have in recent years — an ill-conceived war, attempted on the cheap, has not brought peace to the Middle East. Now America has had to pay the price for ignoring loud warnings about the weakened levees of New Orleans. Clearly, nothing could

have spared New Orleans completely from Katrina's impact, but the devastation could certainly have been lessened.

MARKETS, for all their virtues, often do not work well in a crisis. Indeed, the market mechanism is often revolting to behold in emergencies. The market did not respond to the need for evacuation by sending in huge convoys of buses to get people out; in some places, it did respond by tripling hotel prices in neighbouring areas, which, while reflecting the marked change in supply and demand, is reviled as price gouging. Such behaviour is so odious because it brings little allocative benefit — no significant increase in supply in the short run — and carries a huge distributive cost, as those with resources take advantage of those without.

The Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen has emphasised that most famines are associated not with a shortage of food, but the failure to get food to the people who need it, largely because they lack purchasing power. America, the richest country in the world, clearly

had the resources to evacuate New Orleans. Bush simply forgot the poor — the tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands, who simply did not have the resources to pay for their own evacuation.

When you're poor, you don't have a credit card, and most of the stranded were especially strapped for funds because it was the end of the month. But even if they had had the money, it is not obvious that markets would have responded quickly enough to provide the needed supply; in times of crisis, they often simply don't. That's one of the reasons why the military does not use a price system to allocate resources.

Last January, after the tsunami, in response to widespread calls for an early warning system, I observed that the world had been given an early warning on global warming. The rest of the world has begun to take heed, but Bush, having ignored warnings about Al Qaeda's plans prior to September 11, 2001, and having not only ignored the warnings about New Orleans levees, but actually gutted funding to shore them, has not led America to do likewise.

Scientists increasingly believe that global warming will be accompanied by larger climatic disturbances. Recent evidence is at least consistent with that hypothesis. Perhaps Bush had hoped that the consequences of global warming would be felt long after he left office — and would be felt more by poor, low-lying, tropical countries like Bangladesh than by a rich country astride the temperate zones.

Yet there is perhaps a silver lining in the clouds over New Orleans. Perhaps America, and especially Bush, will be persuaded to join the rest of the world in the fight against poverty and to protect our planet's environment. In facing and planning for disasters, whether natural or man-made, we must do more than hope and pray for the best.

(The author, a Nobel laureate in economics, is professor of economics at Columbia University)

(C): Project Syndicate, 2005

\$200-b to rebuild New Orleans

AGENCIES

New Orleans, September 16

PROMISING "THIS great city will rise again," President Bush dedicated the federal government on Thursday to "one of the largest reconstruction efforts the world has ever seen" and pledged that it would pay most of the costs of rebuilding New Orleans.

The government failed to respond adequately to Hurricane Katrina, Bush said Thursday night from storm-damaged New Orleans as he laid out plans for one of the largest reconstruction projects ever. The federal government's costs could reach \$200 billion or beyond.

The President, who has been dogged by criticism that Washington's response to the hurricane was slow and inadequate, said the nation has "every right to expect" more effective federal action in a time of emergency such as Katrina, which killed hundreds of people across five states, forced major evacuations and caused untold property damage.

Disaster planning must be a "national security priority," he said, while ordering the Homeland Security Department to undertake an immediate review of emergency plans in every major American city.

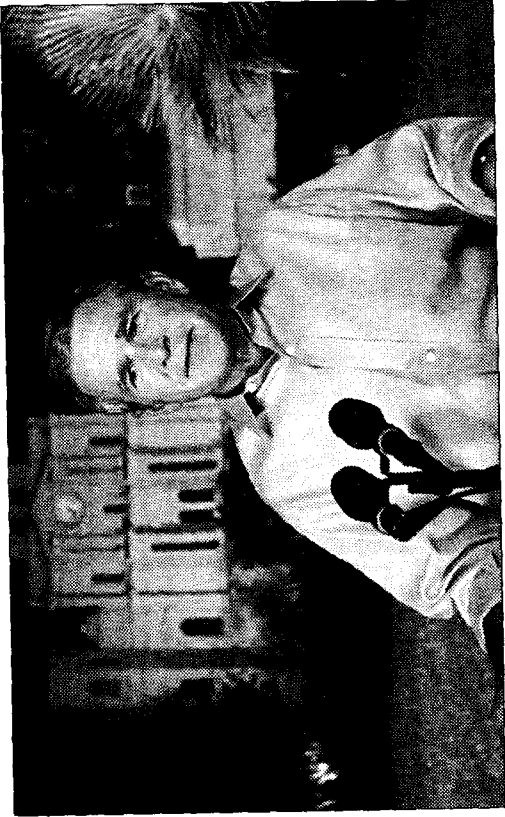
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Bush's handling of Katrina, and his job-approval rating has been dragged down to the lowest point of his presidency also because of dissatisfaction with the Iraq war and rising gasoline prices.

In his speech, the president called for a congressional investigation besides the administration's self-examination. But Democrats want an independent probe similar to the one conducted by the September 11 Commission instead of reviews that will be led by the Republican-controlled Congress and White House.

Congress already has approved \$62 billion for the disaster, but that is expected to run out next month.

In a few days, residents will begin moving back into New Orleans one ZIP code at a time, speeding the revival of the economy in places like the French Quarter — the bawdy enclave that suffered relatively minor damage in the hurricane but is still without electricity. Mayor C. Ray Nagin announced plans on Thursday to reopen some of New Orleans' most vibrant and least flood-ravaged neighbourhoods over the next week and a half, including the French Quarter. The move could bring back more than 180,000 of the city's original half-million residents.



Bush delivers his nationally televised address at Jackson Square, New Orleans.

"Our cities must have clear and up-to-date plans for responding to natural disasters and disease outbreaks or a terrorist attack, for evacuating large numbers of people in an emergency and for providing the food and water and security they would need," Bush said.

He acknowledged that government agencies lacked coordination and

were overwhelmed by Katrina and the subsequent flooding of New Orleans. He said a disaster on this scale requires greater federal authority and a broader role for the armed forces. He ordered all Cabinet secretaries to join in a comprehensive review of the government's faulty response.

Most Americans disapprove of

TO most people, the scenes of disaster and devastation on the Gulf coast of the US evoked the Old Testament Flood but to literature buffs the aftermath tore pages from Kafka and Orwell. It is indeed an ironic paradox that the nation most vocally committed to free enterprise conjured up a bizarre blend of incompetence, ruthlessness and lack of initiative reminiscent of allegories of totalitarianism, showing once more that opposites finally converge, at least in failure.

The drama began at least three days before Katrina struck on the early morning hours of August 29th. Yet preparations had officially begun more than a year ago. In July 2004 the US department of Homeland Security had staged a drill to plan for a catastrophic tropical storm code-named "Hurricane Pam". The latter was imagined to carry "sustained winds of 120 miles per hour, upto 20 inches of rain... in Southeast Louisiana and storm surges that topped levees. More than one million residents evacuated and Hurricane Pam destroyed 500,000-600,000 buildings. Emergency officials from 50 parish, state, federal and volunteer organisations faced this scenario during a five days exercise held...at the State Emergency Operations Centre in Baton Rouge".

So it appeared as if the Federal Emergency Management Agency had taken trouble to prepare. Former FEMA officials have expressed dismay and stupefaction after Katrina at the nearly complete, uncanny failure of the response mechanisms. Yet the authorities had predicted with prophetic accuracy the scope of the disaster, down to grisly details about floating bodies and coffins unearthed from graveyards by the fury of the water, and "a city drowning in its own human and chemical toxic sewage".

Hampered by the apparent lack of means in a "superpower" which has spent over three hundred billion dollars in foreign wars in the last four years and by the Republican government's blind faith in the uninhibited free market and individual self-help shibboleths, the Federal and State agencies did not even attempt to assist New Orleans residents to get out after ordering the evacuation of the city, an order which they knew many thousands of people had no ability to obey. They unwittingly provided a

The prolonged inertia of the relevant powers which was earlier repeatedly demonstrated in the case of the 9/11 attacks, leads many to wonder if there was not a deliberate decision to let the disaster take its toll. On the morning of Katrina, it was announced that New Orleans had been spared the worst since the hurricane had turned east and hit Biloxi and Southern Mississippi instead.

Yet, between 15 and 21 hours later, long after the hurricane water surge had passed, two huge breaches in the levees, near 17th Str and Industrial Canals in the city's 9th ward, poured the water of Lake Pontchartrain into the mostly

tion was conducted. The "Scope of Contract" document issued by FEMA states: "The gravity of the situation calls for an extraordinary level of advance planning to improve government readiness". Understandably Rep. Waxman is wondering why all those preparations came to nothing and why the Bush administration seems to have been more concerned

indeed about reducing the funding (by 80 percent) for the maintenance contracts awarded to the Army Corps of Engineers for the New Orleans levees. As a result, maintenance work was still underway on the Industrial Canal flood-wall when Katrina struck. Pres-

liburton, Dick Cheney's old company which is among the contractors being awarded major repair and reconstruction work through its KBR subsidiary. With the more than \$50 bn appropriated by Congress for city rehabilitation, Halliburton and its peers can look forward to an endless flow of business coming their way, even while they are major beneficiaries of US military-related activities.

What is strange about this immediate and massive allocation of funds is that there is still no clear decision about whether to rebuild New Orleans in the same location. Major newspapers have highlighted dozens of cases in which it blocked rescue efforts from many quarters. Thus on



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Bush's credibility



REUTERS

sub-sea level metropolis, except for the old quarters built on higher land.

Those sudden breaches in the levees, although abundantly anticipated, have not been explained. As luck would have it the pumps located near the collapsed levees failed to work, so that the flooding was unimpeded. For three days, from Tuesday to Friday the decision-makers took no decision except for barring the Red Cross from going into the New Orleans area, even though tens of thousands of people were marooned and hundreds dying in what had rapidly become a huge open-air cesspool.

Veteran Congressman Henry Waxman, member of the House Committee on Government Reform has written an official letter to the head of

ident Bush stated on the *Good Morning America* show of September 1 that "no one anticipated" the breakdown of the levees. This contention flies in the face of the evidence.

In New Orleans, some cynical observers have pointed out that most houses located in the city's 9th and other wards will have to be destroyed and that the city could seize the land, thus providing massive opportunities for real estate speculation. Attention is again drawn to the prominent role of Hal-

From Tuesday to Friday the decision-makers took no decision except for barring the Red Cross

September 5th *The New York Times* carried a piece entitled "FEMA prevents Coast Guard from delivering diesel fuel". The last word may be found on FEMA's own news bulletin: "FEMA (told) first responders not to respond". Even the only seemingly sensible initiative taken by Michael Brown, FEMA's head to distribute \$2,000 debit cards to all victims was promptly abandoned after he was summarily dismissed from his supervisory role.

After letting the forsaken residents of new Orleans, including the police, turn to looting in order to survive, the government's belated response was to move in heavily armed special forces with shoot-at-sight orders. It seems clear that massive sabotage of

Bush admits Katrina errors

Washington, Sept. 13 (Reuters): President George W. Bush took responsibility today for any failures in the federal government's response to Hurricane Katrina that struck two weeks ago and acknowledged the storm exposed deficiencies at all levels of government four years after the September 11 attacks.

Asked if Americans should be concerned their government remains unprepared to respond to another major disaster or a terrorist attack, Bush said: "Katrina exposed serious problems in our response capability at all levels of government, and to the extent that the federal government didn't fully do its job right, I take responsibility."

Speaking at a joint news conference with Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, Bush said: "I want to know what went right and what went

wrong. I want to know how to better cooperate with state and local government to be able to answer that very question that you asked.

"Are we capable of dealing with a severe attack or another severe storm? And that's a very important question and it's in our national interest

that we find out exactly what went on so we can better respond," Bush said.

The President plunged in the polls after fierce criticism for the government's slow response to the hurricane that ravaged the US Gulf coast when it struck on August 29, killing hundreds and displacing 1

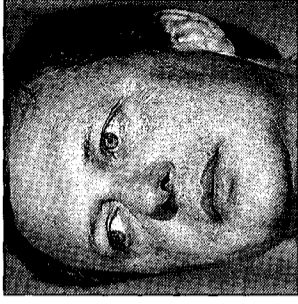
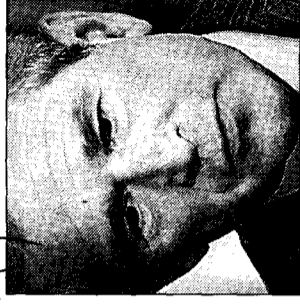
million people in one of the worst natural disasters in US history.

44 bodies found

However, the discovery of at least 44 bodies in an abandoned hospital in New Orleans raised new questions about the response to Katrina today.

Rescuers found the corpses at the Memorial Medical Center yesterday, the same day Bush toured the city. They raised the official death toll from the August 29 storm to more than 500 and officials said some may have died while waiting for help that did not arrive for several days after the hurricane.

A spokesman for the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals said today at least 44 bodies from the 317-bed hospital had been taken to a morgue for autopsies.



(Top) President George Bush in Washington and Michael Brown

Response team chief quits

Washington, Sept. 12 (Reuters): The director of the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema) Michael Brown resigned yesterday after being recalled to Washington amid criticism of the federal response to Hurricane Katrina.

In an apparent nod to demands that Brown be replaced by someone with experience in emergency response, President George W. Bush replaced Brown with David Paulison, a veteran firefighter who now runs Fema's preparedness division.

Paulison was also the Homeland Security official who urged Americans to stock up on duct tape and plastic sheeting in 2003 to protect against a biological or chemical attack. Brown, who was widely criticised for a slow federal response to the devastating Hurricane Katrina, resigned effective immediately.

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Disaster chief quits as Katrina toll passes 500

New Orleans: The head of the US disaster agency resigned on Monday in the face of unrelenting criticism over Washington's response to Hurricane Katrina as the confirmed death toll from the calamity passed 500. Michael Brown quit as chief of the Federal Emergency Management Agency while President George W Bush was winding up a two-day visit to New Orleans and other devastated areas.

Brown had been removed three days earlier from direct control over recovery efforts on the Gulf Coast as complaints mounted that he came to the emergency too late with too little.

In an apparent nod to critics who said the agency needed more expertise at the top, the White House announced that David Paulison, a veteran firefighter who runs the agency's preparedness division, would take over as acting director. 54% of Americans dis-

approve of Bush's handling of the response to Katrina, according to two polls released on Monday—one by ABC News/Washington Post and the other by CNN/USA Today/Gallup.

Bush returned to Washington after rejecting charges that his administration responded to the August 29 storm too slowly because most of the victims were black, or that the war in Iraq had cut into available manpower and resources.

"My attitude is this: The storm didn't discriminate and neither will the recovery effort. When those Coast Guard choppers ... were pulling people off roofs, they didn't check the colour of a person's skin. They wanted to save lives," the president said. He said it was "preposterous" to claim that the Iraq war had drained military resources, leaving too few troops to help with the hurricane. Reuters

45 bodies found

New Orleans: The bodies of more than 45 mostly elderly patients were found in a flooded-out hospital in the biggest known cluster of corpses to be discovered so far in the city. The exact circumstances under which they died were unclear, with at least one hospital official saying on Monday that at least a few of the patients were dead before the storm, and another saying the rising temperature in the hospital afterward likely contributed to some of the deaths. Hospital assistant administrator David Goodson said it was unclear exactly how the patients died. AP

Water low, frustration high in New Orleans

REUTERS

New Orleans, September 11

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush headed to the US Gulf Coast on Sunday to confront a region where the flood waters of Hurricane Katrina were receding but anger and frustration still overflowed.

"I'm finding a lot of frustration, and it's a lot easier to deal with frustration than anger," said Vice Admiral Thad Allen, chief of staff of the US Coast Guard, who was put in charge of rescue and recovery on Friday.

New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin said on NBC's *Meet the Press* he had the impression Bush was badly informed in the immediate aftermath of the storm which flooded his city, stranding thousands of people unwilling or unable to evacuate.

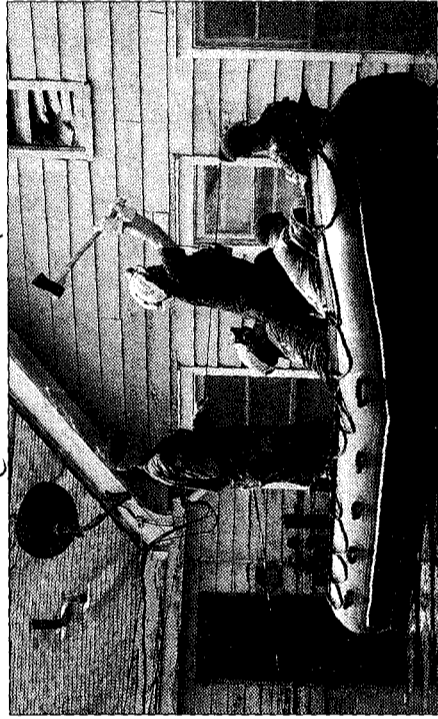
"I think the President for some reason probably did not

understand the full magnitude of this catastrophe on the front end," said Nagin, who is himself facing severe criticism for his performance.

Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco could not reach either Bush or his chief of staff on the day the hurricane hit and had to leave a message pleading for help with a low level address, *Time* magazine reported.

Illinois Senator Barack Obama said Bush seemed to lack empathy for those stranded by the hurricane, which devastated a large swathe of the Gulf Coast of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, driving around a million people from their homes.

"It's puzzling, given his immediate response during 9/11, that he did not feel a greater sense of empathy towards the folks that were experiencing this enormous disaster," Obama said on ABC's *This Week*. He said the



REUTERS

Rescue workers search a house for survivors in New Orleans.

Bush administration was excellent at public relations but less effective when it came to action.

Allen, appearing on the same programme, again urged residents still refusing to leave New

Orleans, thought to number several thousand, to do so.

"The conditions in which they're living — the water is deteriorating, the environmental conditions — this is not a safe

place to be until we get everybody out, the water has been completely drained and we do environmental assessments here," he said. "Everybody needs to be out of New Orleans so we can move forward and repair the infrastructure."

The most hopeful sign emerging from the tragedy was that initial estimates that fatalities could reach as high as 10,000 appeared to be wildly exaggerated.

"I think it's going to be a lower number, much lower than the 10,000. That 10,000 was based at a time when we didn't know what we didn't know," Army Lt. Gen. Russell Honore told CNN.

The US Army Corps of Engineers said it would take half the time originally thought to pump New Orleans dry — 40 days not 80. Seventy-four of the city's 174 pumps were operating, sucking poisoned water out of the historic below-sea level city.

New Orleans poor ignored even in death

JAMES HIDER

New Orleans, Sept. 10: The four police patrol cars pull up by the naked body lying half-tangled in a black bin bag on the shoulder of the I-10 highway running through central New Orleans.

For a moment it looks as though they might do something about it. But then all four vehicles take off leaving the naked black man's body to bake in the morning heat.

A few hundred yards away, just before the slipway dives under the stagnant waters, two more bodies lie on the roadside. One is zipped into a black plastic body bag, next to surgical masks and rubber gloves discarded by the medics who put the corpse inside.

The other lies under a blue

duvet, a black arm and leg sticking out. The body has burst in the intense heat, brown fluid leaking down across the ramp.

Why these people died is unclear: they are not in the water, and scores of water bottles, Rice Krispies packets and Cheerios cartons lie strewn around them. New baseball caps and a pristine track suit top — still with the price tags attached, and presumably stolen from a store — lie beside the bodies.

Why the corpses are still on the road of a large American city a dozen days after disaster struck is even less clear. There are thousands of soldiers and police on the streets, and this is a country that has always gone to extraordinary lengths to recover the bodies

of Americans killed overseas, whether in Vietnam, Beirut or Baghdad.

After the police speed off, National Guard trucks and boat rescue teams stream past, none stopping to give the dead a moment's notice, despite the fluorescent orange arrow painted on the road next to the young man in the bin bag.

"There's not a whole lot we can do with them," said Michael Edgar, a state trooper and one of the drivers of the police cars that stopped to look at the body. "They've been out there for a week. We're still getting the living out."

There may be thousands more bodies in the swamp waters covering 60 per cent of the city. The mortuary teams appear woefully inadequate and the police and army say that

they have no mandate and no means to pick up the bodies. The authorities are shipping in 25,000 body bags, though no one seems to know how many have died.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has banned the filming or photographing of the dead being collected, a move reminiscent of the ban on pictures of flag-draped soldiers' coffins coming back from Iraq.

The agency says that the ban is out of respect for the dead. Bush has instructed officials to honour the victims "by treating the dead with the dignity and respect they deserve". But for the three people on I-10, nobody has shown sufficient respect actually to pick them up.

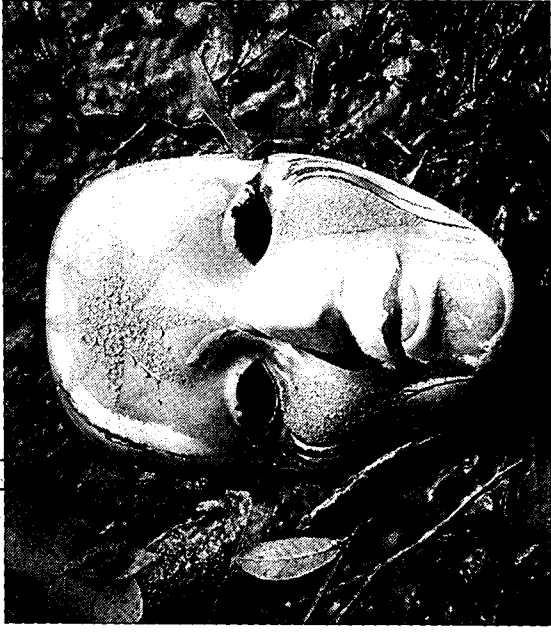
Those who remain in the

city make their way past the bodies with barely a glance. Vincent Allison, a rescue boat volunteer from New Mexico, backed his lorry into the floodwaters yesterday, apparently oblivious to the two rotting corpses only yards away.

Several other boats were tied up to the railings, their owners presumably as injured to the suffocating stench of death as Allison.

The dead were probably poor black people who had sought higher ground on the vast flyovers and ramps of the I-10. But the I-10 no longer leads to Houston: it plunges treacherously back into the lethal waters, and those who failed to make it out in time are as neglected in death as they were in life.

THE TIMES, LONDON



A Mardi Gras mask, caked in mud, found on a New Orleans street. (AFP)

Muslims feel vulnerable

4 yrs after 9/11: Fear factor strong in cities

ZIA Haq
New Delhi, September 10

FOUR YEARS ago on this day, New York's twin towers fell to a terrorist attack. The event sparked two wars — in Afghanistan and Iraq — and a global upheaval.

But has the chain of events after 9/11 affected the lives of Muslims in India, as elsewhere?

HT

CFORE SURVEY

An HT survey of 883 Muslims in seven cities shows the answers don't come as an emphatic 'yes' or 'no'. Whether 9/11 and America's War against Terrorism has impacted the lives of Indian Muslims depends on which Muslim you speak to — the one on the street, the frequent flier abroad, or the Muslim father who needs to send money to his son studying in the US. For instance, the survey finds that, overall, only 42 per cent of the community sympathises with the 9/11 attackers. But, when you go out of the metros, you get a different picture: in Patna, it was 61 per cent; in Lucknow 56 per cent; and, in Hyderabad, 51 per cent.

As for whether their lives changed since 9/11, only 43 per cent overall say it has. At the same time, however, nearly two-thirds — 63 per cent — say the attacks have made their community more vulnerable to hatred. At airports, in hotels and everywhere, they are now looked at with suspicion, some would say.

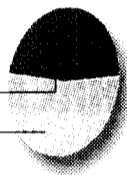
And, if you thought our cities were more cosmopolitan, then figure this — the feeling of vulnerability was much higher in the metros (80 per cent in Delhi, 71 per cent in Mumbai).

In both metros and the smaller cities, however, no one thinks the US is winning its war against terrorism (88 per cent say no in Kolkata, 91 per cent in Patna). And half of the community — whether in Mumbai, or in Lucknow — do not think Islam is being practised in the true spirit. A lot of churning is still ahead.

Survey details on Page 10

11/11/01
Did September 11, 2001, affect your life?

Yes 43%
No 57%



Have the attacks of 9/11 made the Muslim community more vulnerable to hatred?

Yes 63%
No 21%
Can't say 16%



Is US winning its so-called war against terrorism?

Yes 18%
No 75%
Can't say 7%



What percentage (from 0 to 100) of the Indian Muslim community sympathises with the 9/11 attackers?

42%

Do you think America's war against terrorism is actually a war against Muslims?

Yes 55%
No 35%
Can't say 10%



Is Islam today being practised in spirit?

Yes 23%
No 61%
Can't say 16%



UN mocks 'Third World' USA

**Paul Valley
in New York**

Sept. 8. — Parts of the USA are as poor as the Third World, according to a shocking UN report on global inequality.

Claims that the New Orleans floods have laid bare a growing racial and economic divide in the USA have, until now, been rejected by the American political establishment as emotional rhetoric. But yesterday's UN report provides statistical proof that for many — well beyond those affected by the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina — the great American Dream is an ongoing nightmare.

The document constitutes a stinging attack on US policies at home and

abroad in a fightback against moves by Washington to undermine next week's UN 60th anniversary conference which will be the biggest gathering of world leaders in history.

The annual Human Development Report normally concerns itself with the Third World, but the 2005 edition scrutinises inequalities in health provision inside the US as part of a survey of how inequality worldwide is retarding the eradication of poverty. It reveals that the infant mortality rate has been rising in the USA for the past five years — and is now the same as Malaysia. America's black children are twice as likely as whites to die before their first birthday.

The report is bound to

increase the Bush administration as it provides ammunition for critics who have claimed that the fiasco following Hurricane Katrina shows that Washington does not care about poor black Americans. But the

A UN report provides statistical proof that for many — well beyond those affected by the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina — the great American Dream is an ongoing nightmare

370-page document is critical of American policies towards poverty abroad as well as at home. And, in unusually outspoken language, it accuses the USA of having "an overdevel-

oped military strategy and an under-developed strategy for human security".

"There is an urgent need to develop a collective security framework that goes beyond military responses to terrorism," it continues. "Poverty and social breakdown are core components of the global security threat."

The document, which was written by Mr Kevin Watkins, the former head of research at Oxfam, will be seen as round two in the battle between the UN and the USA, which regards the world body as an unnecessary constraint on its strategic interests and actions.

Last month Mr John Bolton, the new US ambassador to the UN, submitted 750 Amendments to the

draft declaration for next week's summit to strengthen the UN and review progress towards its Millennium Development Goals to halve world poverty by 2015.

The report launched yesterday is a clear challenge to Washington. The Bush administration wants to replace multilateral solutions to international problems with a world order in which the USA does as it likes on a bilateral basis.

"This is the UN coming out all guns firing," said one UN insider. "It means that, even if we have a lame duck secretary general after the Volcker report (on the oil-for-food scandal), the rest of the organisation is not going to accept the US bilateralist agenda."

— **The Independent**

New Orleans faces forced evacuation

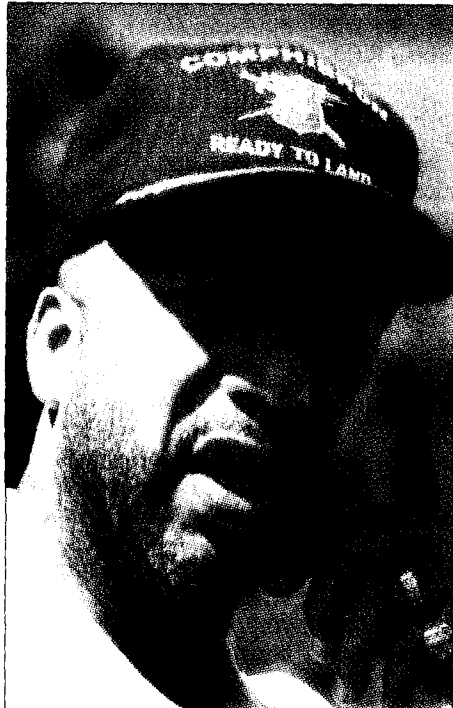
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS, Sept. 7. — To the estimated 10,000 residents still holed up in this ruined city, the mayor had a blunt new warning: "Get out now or risk being taken out by force."

As floodwaters began to slowly recede with the first of the city's pumps returning to operation, mayor Mr C Ray Nagin authorised law enforcement officers and the US military late Tuesday to evacuate all holdouts for their own safety.

He warned that the fetid water could spread disease and that natural gas was leaking all over town.

A senior police officer, Mr Marlon Defillo, said forced removals had not yet begun. "That's an absolute last resort."



Mayor Mr Nagin: 'Get out now or risk being taken out by force.' — AFP

Storm approaches Florida

PALM BEACH, Sept. 7. — Florida's Atlantic coast braced for the arrival of a tropical storm today, two weeks after Hurricane Katrina first hit the state.

Tropical Storm Ophelia threatened to dump heavy rains, prompting tropical storm warnings along a 160-kilometre stretch from Sebastian Inlet to Flagler Beach. Up to 13 centimetres were expected over the next few days from central Florida to southeastern Georgia, with some isolated areas possibly getting 20 centimetres.

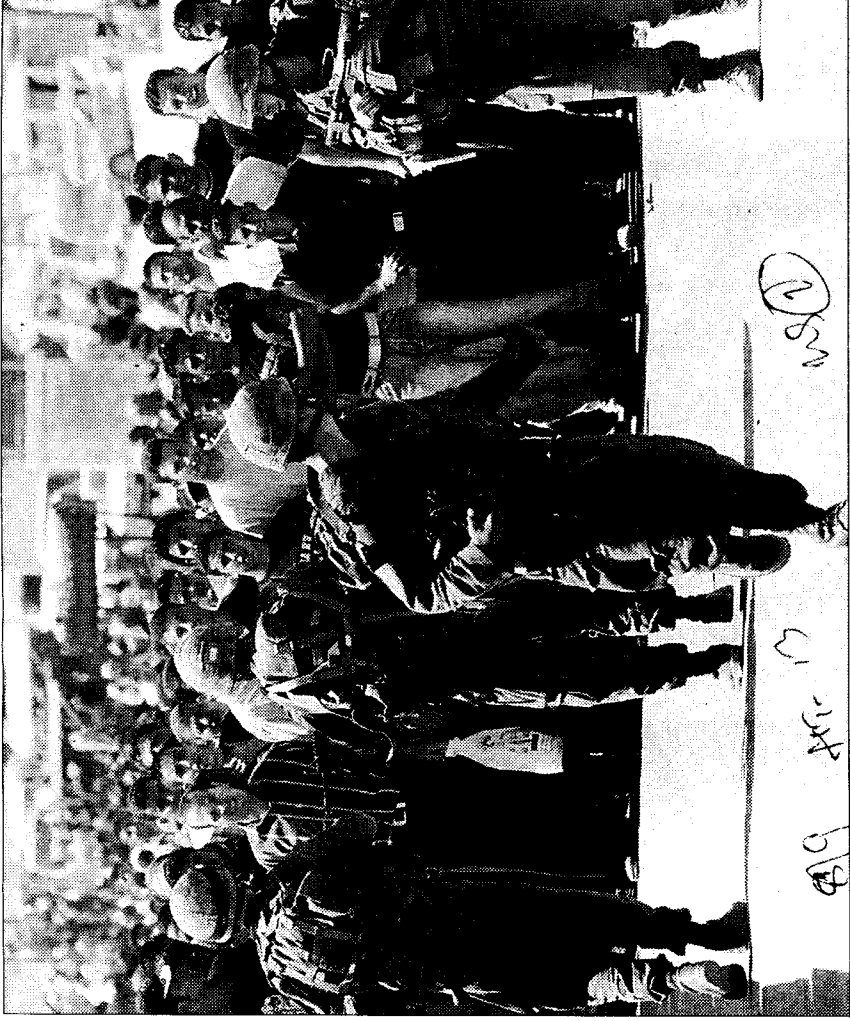
The rain was expected to hit areas affected by last year's Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne. Much of the region has recovered but some homes remain covered in blue tarps as owners await new roofs. — AP

Mr Nagin's directive — which superseded an earlier, milder order to evacuate made before Hurricane Katrina crashed ashore on 29 August — came after rescuers scouring New Orleans found hundreds of people ignoring warnings to get out. They included Mr Dennis Rizzuto (38), who said he had plenty of water, food to last a month and a generator powering his home. He and his family were offered a boat ride to safety, but he declined. "They are going to have to drag me," Mr Rizzuto said.

That was a sentiment Mr Capt. Scott Powell, an official of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, kept hearing as he tried to evacuate people by air boat. "A lot of people don't want to leave. They've got dogs and they just want to stay with their homes. They say they're going to stay until the water goes down."

Workers struggled, meanwhile, to find and count the corpses decaying in the 90-degree (32 Celsius) heat. Even when cadaver dogs pick up a scent, workers frequently cannot get at the bodies without heavy equipment. The mayor has estimated New Orleans' death toll could reach 10,000.

ALL DISQUIET ON THE WESTERN BANK



Police run outside a building looking for snipers in West Bank neighbourhood of New Orleans on Wednesday while (right) Israeli troops close off a main crossing into the West Bank city of Nablus after discovery of explosives.

REUTERS/AFP

Wanted: Heroes to save New Orleans

BRIAN MCGRODY
New Orleans, September 7

IF HOLLYWOOD ever decides to make an epic disaster movie from Hurricane Katrina, screenwriters will have to perform major surgery on the plot. You see, the worst disasters require a cool-headed hero to try to save the day, but in New Orleans and all across the Gulf Coast this past week there hasn't been a high-profile hero to be found.

Which is just another aspect of the Katrina story that makes it unfortunately and unforgettablely unique in American history and culture. This is a country that doesn't so much love its heroes as needs them. They are touchstones, and something more, defining who we are as a people: resourceful, resilient, and redemptive.

Night hadn't yet fallen on September 11, 2001, when the news was filled with images of heroic firefighters and police officers who stormed into the twin towers to help evacuate the workers inside.

Amid the unimaginable, the nation needed as many heroes as it could muster, so the rescue workers who pounded through the rubble searching for survivors day and night were hailed as well. Todd Beamer and the other passengers who stormed the cockpit of United Flight 93 and brought it down into a Pennsylvania field rather than its presumed destination in Washington may have been the biggest heroes of all.

Mayor Rudy Giuliani was lauded for his voice of determination and face of calm.

From the bottom of Jackson's heart

REUTERS
Bahrain, September 7

MICHAEL JACKSON, in seclusion since his acquittal on sex abuse charges, has written a song that he will record to benefit victims of Hurricane Katrina, says his publicist.

Jackson will record the single, *From the Bottom of My Heart*, within two weeks, and plans to enlist other entertainers for the project, spokeswoman Raymone Bain said. "It pains me to watch the human suffering taking place in the Gulf region of my country," Jackson, 47, said in a written statement released on Tuesday. "My heart and prayers go out to every individual who has had to endure the pain and suffering caused by this tragedy." He added: "I will be reaching out to others within the music industry to join me in helping bring relief and hope to these resilient people who have lost everything." Bain said Jackson was hoping to repeat the success he had with *We Are the World*, a 1985 charity single with dozens of the era's top recording stars that raised more than \$60 million for Africa.



Michael Jackson

MISSING IN THE TIME OF ACTION

Even President Bush, ridiculed for his disappearing act on the day of the attack, grabbed a bullhorn atop a mountain of rubble three days later and created one of the indelible moments of the crisis.

Now, New Orleans and the rest of the nation are begging for just a taste, a moment, a hint of heroism, but what they're getting instead is a collection of bungling bureaucrats and incompetent politicians engaged in a full-scale blame game on company time. Karl Rove's strategy for stanching political damage to the Bush administration calls for shifting the blame to officials in Louisiana.

There's been no heroism from Bush, an embarrassment since the first fat raindrops began falling on the coast. He was slow to recognise the crisis, late to arrive at the scene, and has struck the wrong notes since — never worse than on Friday when, as sycophantic followers clapped like trained seals, he turned to FEMA director Michael Brown and said, "Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job." The thousands of starving, frightened, dehydrated people waiting in the fetid convention centre for food, medicine, and hope probably had a different assessment in mind.

Add Michael Chertoff, the director of Homeland Security, and the group exposes that's been the shame of it all.

NYT

India awaits US go-ahead for aid flow

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, September 7

IT'S NOT just on the domestic plane that the US's official machinery has been slow to respond to Hurricane Katrina. Washington is still to give the green light for foreign aid flows as well.

A host of foreign countries, including India, have been waiting in the wings with men and material for the relief effort in New Orleans and other affected areas, but they are still to hear from the US.

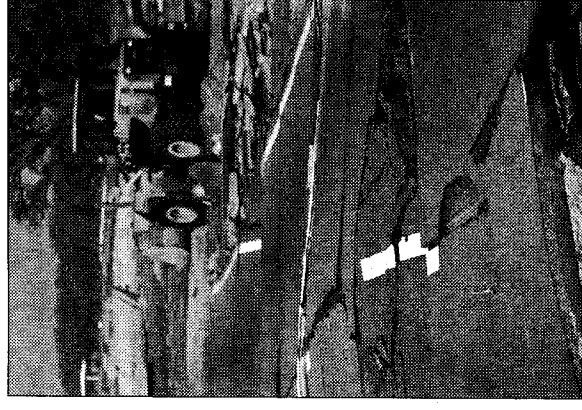
After announcing a \$5 million aid, India also reached an IL-76 aircraft loaded with supplies for its first-ever relief operation to the US. But the plane has not yet taken off because the American bureaucracy is still to get its act together.

A State Department official, when contacted, attributed the delays in US approval to problems of coordination and congestion of airports. He greatly appreciated the gesture of India and other countries that are keen to rush help.

The federal agencies are said to be grappling with aid consignments that have been pouring in from donor organisations, charities, private companies and individuals from across the US.

As in the case of India, a Swedish transport plane loaded with a water purification system and a cellular network has been waiting to take off for four days, but the US flight clearance has failed to materialise. Germany with a telecom system and Canada with two rescue ships are also said to be waiting.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that has drawn flak for its initial sluggish response to the catastrophe has been blamed by some of the foreign representatives as well. "We got zero help, and we lost one week trying to get hold of them," an executive of the Netherlands-based New Skies Satellite told the *Washington Post*.



A payloader clears debris between Gulfport and Biloxi on Wednesday.

AP

PLANS TO PUT EVACUEES IN CRUISE SHIPS POSTPONED; AIRLIFT OUT OF TEXAS PUT ON HOLD

Bush visits disaster zone again

Rupert Cornwell
in Washington

Sept. 6. — President George Bush paid his second visit in four days to the hurricane-shattered US Gulf Coast yesterday in a fresh attempt to show he is capable of handling the natural disaster that threatens to overwhelm his presidency. He and his wife, Laura, visited a church in Louisiana's state capital Baton Rouge, which has become an improvised shelter for refugees from New Orleans, before heading for the Mississippi town of Poplarville, all but laid waste when the eye of Katrina passed over it last Monday.

But neither Mr Bush's travels, nor visits by senior officials, nor the first signs of progress in dealing with the aftermath of the storm have quelled the bitter complaints that the federal government was far too slow in its response to the crisis. "I'm not interested in hand-shaking and photo-ops, this is going to take a lot of money," said Mr Mildred Brown, who has been in the shelter since Tuesday. The President yesterday insisted the government was doing everything in its power to deal with the worst natural disaster in recent US history, which has taken thousands of lives and inflicted up to \$100bn of damage — only a quarter of which will be recovered from



A family is brought to dry land by the Department of Fish and Wildlife of Kentucky after they were reluctantly evacuated from their flooded home in the Garden district of New Orleans. — AFP

insurers. All along the 150 worst afflicted miles of coast, the first of 8,500 regular Army forces and Marines arrived to set up camp and help rescue operations, joining 40,000 National Guardsmen.

Mr George Bush Sr and Mr Bill Clinton launched the Bush-Clin-ton Katrina Fund, which will go towards disaster relief and medical services in Alabama, Louisi-

ana and Mississippi, the states affected. But federal and local authorities, and the two political parties are engaged in a blame game over who was responsible for the initially botched relief operation. Off the record, White House officials criticise the local authorities for failing to organise a proper evacuation, and to provide food, water and shelter for

those left behind. But state and city officials insist they have been let down by central government.

Today, a plan to move some evacuees from the Houston Astrodome because many didn't want to go, and a proposed airlift of refugees out of strained Texas appeared to be on hold after the federal government took over,

adds AP. Officials had planned to begin moving about 4,000 evacuees today to cruise ships docked at ports on the Gulf of Mexico. However, officials of the Hurricane Katrina Houston Response announced that the plan was delayed. Incident Commander Joe Leonard said some people brought to Houston from the Louisiana Superdome want to stay where they are to concentrate on locating loved ones. Others want stability after having to evacuate their homes, being forced to endure squalid conditions in the Superdome and then being moved again to Texas. "The Dome is home for them," Leonard said in a statement. "For residents, another immediate relocation is simply too much, too soon." Governor Rick Perry had said on Sunday that Texas needs other states to help manage the refugee crisis. Officials at Texas relief centres say they are simply running out of room. Officials estimate about 100,000 Louisiana residents are staying in hotels and motels across the state and an additional 139,000 are being temporarily housed in 137 shelters.

An airlift to other states had been expected to begin under the direction of the TNG. However, the Federal Emergency Management Agency took over the operation on Sunday and planes never took off.

America's shame: the aftermath of Katrina

Arvind Sivaramakrishnan

“**A**MERICA'S DIRTY secret.” That is what a British TV news reporter, speaking live from Louisiana, called the underclass of America's poor. A tale of systematic neglect, administrative incompetence, market-driven environmental destruction, and desperate poverty is unfolding in Louisiana. It is exposing squalor that would shame a third-world country, as well as racial and political divisions reminiscent of apartheid South Africa.

The facts themselves are grim enough. As if the rain brought by Hurricane Katrina did not do enough, the dykes and levees built to keep the sea out of the city of New Orleans collapsed for lengths of hundreds of metres. The resultant flooding caused what may well amount to thousands of deaths, untold billions of dollars worth of damage, and rendered the city uninhabitable for what is now estimated to be another two years.

Minimal aid, in the form of basic food and water, is finally reaching those who have survived. It is simply not known how many are still stranded in the upper floors of their homes and apartment blocks, nor how many have perished. Some experts have said the forensic task of identifying the dead will be far harder than that which followed the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as the bodies in Louisiana are decomposing very quickly in temperatures of 35 degrees Celsius. State officials say there is no system for collecting and storing the bodies.

What is most shocking about this disaster is that it has occurred in the world's richest and most powerful country. Yet the questions, no less than they are in poor countries, are political,

A tale of systematic neglect, administrative incompetence, market-driven environmental destruction, and desperate poverty is unfolding in Louisiana.

and this time the survivors are asking them.

To start with, the hurricane warnings predicted an even stronger storm than Katrina turned out to be. Although the effects of such a storm and of a breach in the levees were modelled by officials a year or two ago, the federal government said there was no money to implement a practice response to such an emergency. Further, in 2004 the federal government in Washington stopped funding for maintenance and fortification work on the levees, which were therefore neglected for the first time in nearly 40 years. Environment protection is an easy target for the budget cuts central to neoliberal economics and politics.

In addition, wetlands around New Orleans — which provide vital protection against flooding and tidal surges — have been drained and built upon, and the federal government has tied all environmental funding to the promotion of inter-State commerce. (A similar problem has occurred in southern England, where in some areas planning regulations were abolished for ideological reasons, despite municipal engineers' warnings; building contractors made huge profits on the deregulated floodplains, and the new residents were inevitably the victims of severe winter flooding. Now the owners of the houses cannot get insurance for their properties

and cannot find buyers when they seek to sell.)

Secondly, officials at all levels were very slow to see the scale of the disaster, and President George W. Bush and his immediate circle are being openly accused of neglect or even indifference. It took the President two days to curtail his holiday and make a flight over New Orleans in his official jet, and when he did make a ground visit he kept well away from the worst-hit areas. In his public statements, he has shown none of the spontaneity he showed when he — again after some days — appeared at the ruins of the World Trade Center in New York in September 2001. He has struggled to express any shred of emotion about the Louisiana disaster. Not for President Bush the ordinary compassion shown by Senator Edward Kennedy, who in 1971 tramped knee-deep in mud through the refugee camps on the Indian side of the India-Bangladesh border. Further, having said in purported justification of the invasion of Iraq that “the American way of life is not negotiable,” he has been shown on TV pleading with those in Louisiana who could drive not to use too much petrol.

As to other senior federal officials, Vice-President Dick Cheney is still on holiday in Wyoming, and as the disaster took place Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was publicly seen in Manhattan shopping for shoes at \$7,000 a pair.

Meanwhile worldwide television was showing, for example, dead bodies of victims in wheelchairs abandoned in sports stadia and convention centres, pushed against walls and left. Other TV news reports showed outbreaks of violence, with gangs looting every shop they could, and at one point relief helicopters turned back because they were being shot at. Even the initial relief effort, slow as it was, was hampered by the fact that some 10,000 of the Louisiana State Guard are in Iraq, pursuing a war which very large numbers of Americans are now questioning very deeply.

The U.S. political system is also showing the characteristic reactions of rich countries when faced with refugees. Politicians in the State of Texas, to which about 100,000 refugees have fled from Louisiana, are saying they cannot take any more and that they need federal government help from Washington DC. They openly cite the fact that Texas, one of the most extreme Republican States, has no public services worth the name. Texas is most of the size of Europe, is soaking rich with oil money, and has a population of 22 million. It is not known if the Texan exchequer has offered any aid, but Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, a socialist, has offered \$1 million as aid via the Red Cross, and Cuban President Fidel Castro, a communist, has offered 1100 doctors and 26 tonnes of medicines.

Dealing with refugees

Bit by bit too, the potential long-term costs of the disaster are starting to emerge. The economy of Louisiana itself has suffered incalculable damage. The neighbouring State of Mississippi, which has some of the worst poverty in the United States, is faced with the collapse of the tourist business on which it depends. Other southern States are faced with the costs of housing hundreds of thousands of refugees for two years or more; the refugees are just that, with nothing left but the clothes they stand in. Maintaining the levees of New Orleans would have cost a few tens of millions of dollars, loose change for a country that has already spent \$170 billion on its war in Iraq and is subsidising private agribusiness corporations to the tune of \$180 billion.

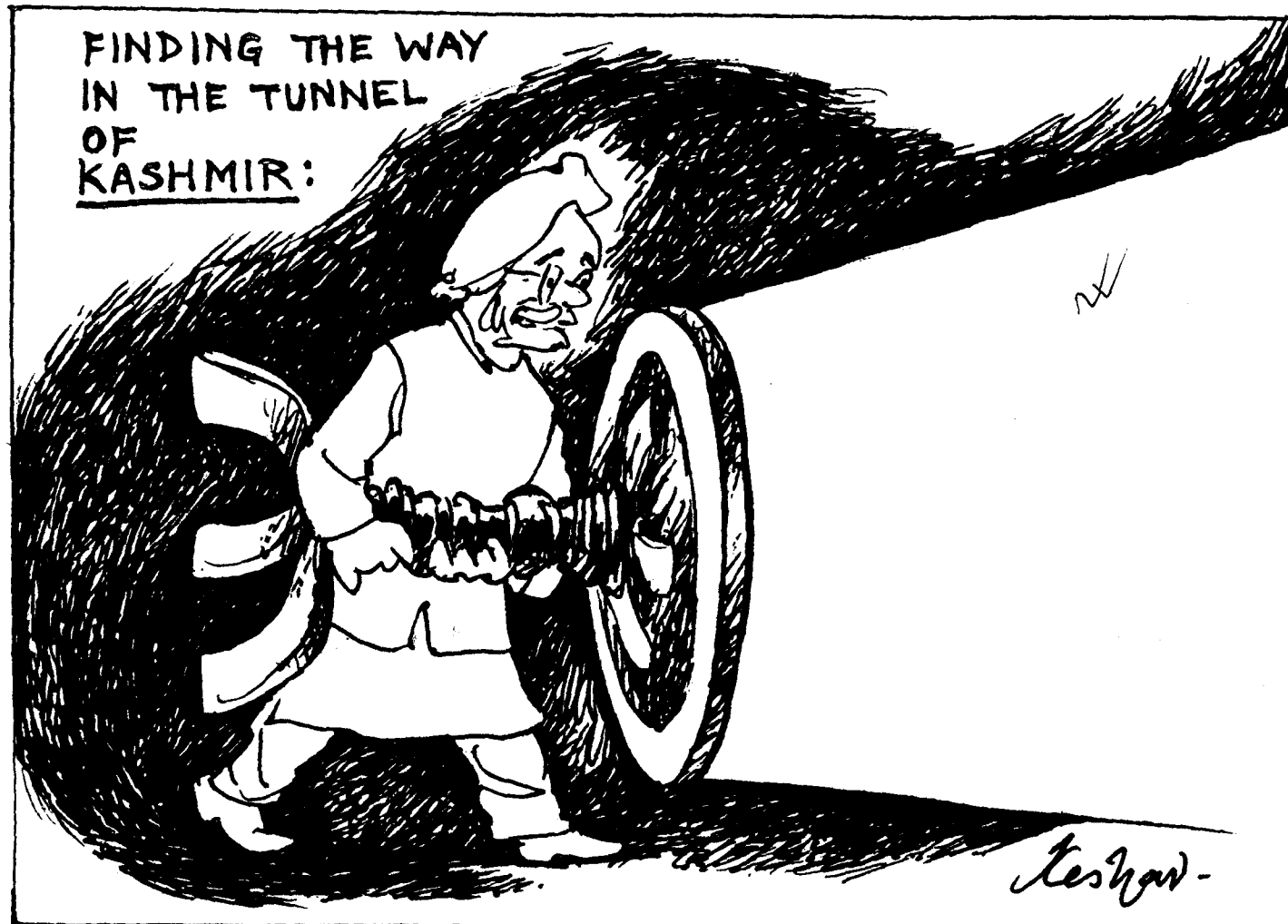
Among the most significant of the political issues is the very status of the victims themselves. The overwhelming bulk of them are poor and black. For centuries they have had next to no voice in the politics of the U.S., and it has even been said that, since the start of the Reagan presidency in 1980, significant Supreme Court rulings and federal tax cuts (such as the impending abolition of death duties on estates) have been intended to harm them and to favour the rich, who are overwhelmingly white.

Even African-Americans' access to the most formal elements of the political system has been severely restricted. Byzantine voter-registration procedures, many of which in the southern States were designed to make it as hard as possible for black voters to register, mean that African-Americans are hugely underrepresented on the States' electoral rolls. They are people whom, it seems, America does not want to think about. They are the single poorest group in the U.S., large proportions of them are not on the voting lists, and even if they are and even if they vote, they certainly do not vote Republican. Indeed it is not even clear if President Bush and his Republican cohorts regard them as Americans at all.

The flood waters of Louisiana may now be a gigantic open sewer, riddled with disease and with sharks, alligators, and snakes swimming through city streets, but the political secrets now being washed up may be even dirtier.

(Dr. Sivaramakrishnan is lecturer in politics at Taunton's College, Southampton, U.K.)

CARTOONSCAPE



Fresh violence erupts in New Orleans



Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS, Sept. 5. — As authorities struggled to keep order in the ruined city, the continuing strain from Hurricane Katrina erupted when gunmen opened fire on a group of contractors and the state's largest newspaper lashed out at the federal government's response.

Despite the tensions, rescue of stranded residents continued yesterday as Coast Guard helicopters picked up refugees and the floodwater began to recede, leaving behind the grisly task of collecting bodies.

Federal officials urged those left in New Orleans to leave for their own safety. Large-scale evacuations were completed at the Superdome and Convention Centre.

The death toll across the Gulf Coast was not known. But bodies were everywhere; floating in canals, slumped in wheelchairs, abandoned on highways and medians and hidden in attics. "I think it's evident it's in the thousands," Mr Health and human services secretary Mr Michael Leavitt said yesterday on CNN, echoing predictions by city and state officials last week.

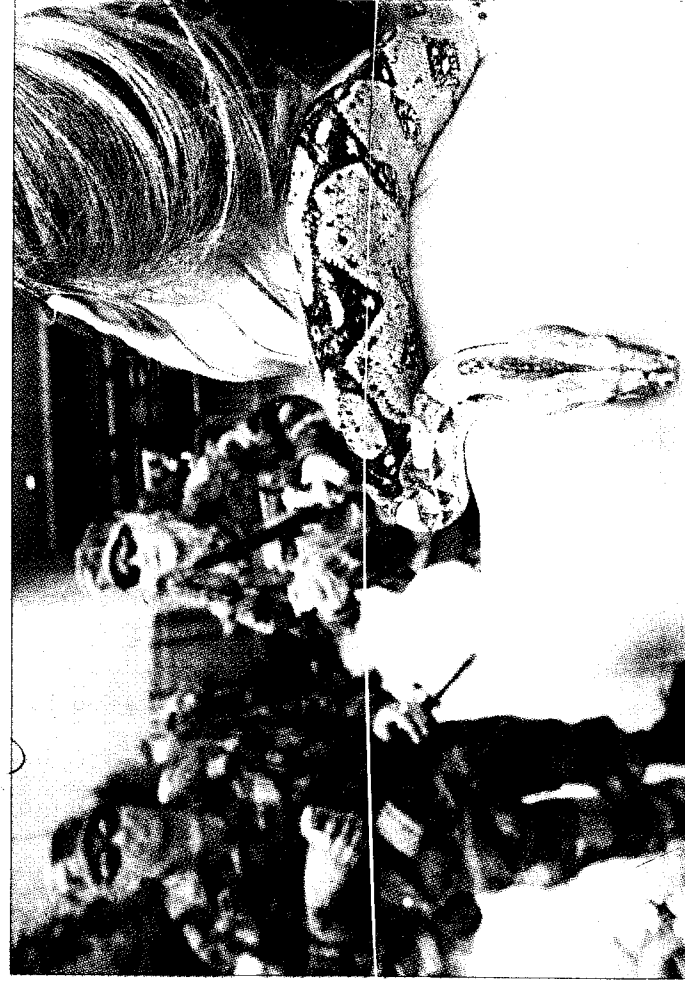
The *Times-Picayune*, in an open letter to President Mr George W Bush, called for the firing of officials at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, saying they failed to rescue thousands of citizens stranded by Katrina.

"We're angry, Mr. President, and we'll be angry long after our beloved city and surrounding parishes have been pumped dry," the editorial said. "Our people deserved rescuing. Many who could have been were not. That's to the government's shame. Every official at the Federal Emergency Management Agency should be fired, especially director Mr Michael Brown," the letter said. "No expenses should have been spared. No excuses should have been voiced." One bright spot in the crisis was to the west, where neighbouring Jefferson Parish was to allow residents to return today - as long as they showed a valid ID proving residency, bring food, have a full tank of gas and don't drink the water.

Parish president Mr Aaron Broussard warned the 460,000 residents that they would find all traffic signals destroyed, no open stores and a dusk-to-dawn curfew. He recommended women not to come alone.

Fourteen contractors on their way to help plug the breach in the 17th Street Canal came under fire as they travelled across a bridge under police escort, said Mr John Hall, a spokesman for the Army corps of engineers. Police shot at 8 people carrying guns, killing five or six, deputy police chief Mr WJ Riley said. None of the contractors were injured, authorities said.

New Orleans' police also have to deal



(LEFT) Vehicles under water on a street in New Orleans on Sunday. (ABOVE) Denyka Powell (26) asks military police whether she can leave the city, but not without her snake. — AFP & PTI

with suicides in their ranks. Two officers took their lives, including the department spokesman, Mr Paul Accardo, who died yesterday, according to Mr Riley. Both

shot themselves in the head, he said.

"I've got some firefighters and police officers that have been pretty much traumatised," Mayor Mr Ray Nagin said.

Stubbornness, silence greet rescuers

'I Don't Feel I Am In The US. I Feel As If Am In A War. All The Guns, The Chaos'

By Jere Longman

New Orleans: The boat pulled up to the living room window on Read Boulevard early Sunday afternoon, and a volunteer rescuer, Stanley Patrick, began yelling: "Mr Robert! Mr Robert! Can you hear me?"

There was no sound in response, only the lapping of water in this reeking New Orleans East neighborhood, where the rooftops of cars were still covered nearly a week after a levee broke and the city was inundated.

Patrick grabbed a sledgehammer, broke through the window of the tidy brick house and sloshed down a hallway into a back bedroom. It seemed unlikely that he would encounter anyone alive in this toxic water, in this foetid heat.

He found what he expected to find, an 83-year-old man, floating face down in stagnant water that had risen three-and-a-half feet into the home. A Louisiana state trooper asked that the man not be identified in full because his family had not yet been notified.

Rescuers were told there might be a woman in the house, too. "I didn't see her, but if he's dead, she's dead," Patrick said. "If he didn't leave, she didn't leave."

As rescue operations went on, the frustrations of the police and volunteers continued to mount on Sunday, as a growing number of those who had stayed in their homes seemed to be dead, and many of those who remained alive refused to leave. But Col. Terry Ebbert, director of the New Orleans Office of Homeland Security, said he expected that nearly everyone would be removed from the city by Tuesday, as rescuers made block-by-block searches. He said he thought there were fewer than 1,000

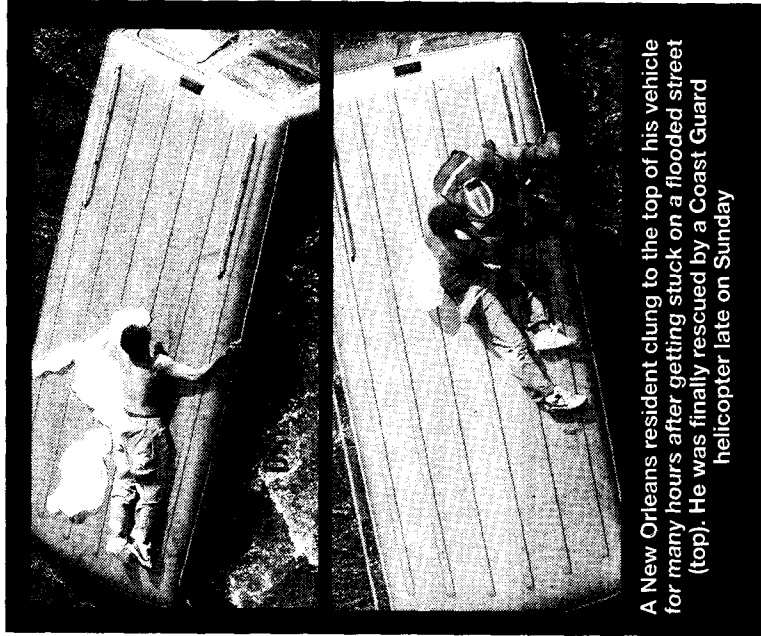
residents left in the city. "We're going to remove them," he said.

"People don't want to come out," said Capt. Tim Bayard, commander of the narcotics division of the New Orleans Police Department, who is supervising the water rescue effort. "They say they have enough water and food to sustain themselves. They don't understand. It's going to take six to eight weeks before the electricity comes on."

The water has receded only about a foot in many places, he said, adding that it was still 20 feet deep in spots. "They need to come out," Captain Bayard said. But some residents fear that if they leave, their houses will be ransacked by looters, he said.

"They've already lost their cars," he said. "All they have left is their house. They don't want those animals stealing from them. Write that, animals. Anybody that would take advantage of this is hardly better than animals. Not the people who are taking food and water and clothing. Those stealing TVs and shooting at police. What can you do with a TV? There's no electricity."

Police have said that early rescue efforts were hampered when they encountered gunfire. It was also difficult to get enough of boats in the water because of bureaucratic foul-ups, Captain Bayard said. One day, as many as 300 boats were in the water,



A New Orleans resident clung to the top of his vehicle for many hours after getting stuck on a flooded street (top). He was finally rescued by a Coast Guard helicopter late on Sunday

ed to disease, he said. But if ordered to remove residents, he would do so, he said.

A volunteer rescuer, Morgan Lopez, said he and colleagues had all but forced four people from a home at Dwyer and Bundy Roads on Sunday, where a sea of raw sewage had reached the steps of the house. A woman, an 8-year-old child and the child's grandparents finally agreed to leave, Lopez said. "We acted like we were cops," Lopez said. "We were not letting them stay in that stuff. They had a lot of new clothes. Maybe they were trying to protect that."

Boulevard to look for what they thought was an older couple. A shot-gun rested in the boat next to Lovett, who said shots had been fired near him on occasion during the past week. "I don't feel like I'm in the US," Lovett, the guns, the chaos."

In coming days, the boat searches will shift from primarily a rescue mission to a recovery mission, once a sufficient morgue can be established, Captain Bayard said. Still, he said, the police, volunteers and the army would continue to look for survivors, and military trucks would patrol the streets in case those who had insisted to remain changed their minds—perhaps, he said, once they ran out of food or could no longer stand the smell of decay.

More than 10,000 people have been evacuated by boat, Captain Bayard said. Captain Bayard said he was reluctant to force anyone to leave against their will. If a boat capsized in a struggle, police officers and evacuees could drown or be subject-

N.Y.T. News Service

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SEARCH FOR LIFE ■ As Bush faces harshest criticism of second term, thousands evacuated from two major shelters in the Big Easy

More troops to New Orleans as refugees flee chaos

MARK EGAN
NEW ORLEANS, SEPTEMBER 4

PRESIDENT George W. Bush ordered more troops to secure New Orleans on Sunday as rescuers evacuated thousands of desperate refugees and closed two huge shelters plagued by murder, rape and chaos.

Under fire for his government's slow response to hurricane Katrina, which wrecked the city of jazz and Mardi Gras and may have killed thousands of people, Bush said he will send 7,200 additional active-duty troops over three days.

Another 10,000 National Guard troops will be sent to Louisiana and Mississippi, raising the total to 40,000. A total of 54,000 military personnel are now committed to relief efforts.

"Many of our citizens are not getting the help they need, especially in New Orleans, and that is unacceptable," said Bush, who will return to the stricken region on Monday, a week after Katrina hammered an area the size of Britain.

After days of broken promises,



A rescue worker from Vancouver, Canada, walks down a street wrecked by the forces of hurricane Katrina in Chalmette, east of New Orleans. Reuters

US troops started moving emergency supplies into New Orleans and were trying to halt widespread looting and horrific violence even as they fed evacuees and moved them to shelters in Texas.

Thousands of survivors were evacuated from the two major shelters in New Orleans—the Superdome arena and a convention center—where they endured brutal conditions.

Chinook helicopters holding up-wards of 20 people took off and landed as fast as National Guard troops could load people at the convention center. And dozens of buses loaded up with 50 people at a

plained security forces sent to guard them were trigger happy and killed innocent people.

"They killed a man here last night," Steve Banka (28), said. "A young lady was being raped and stabbed. And the sounds of her screaming got to this man and so he ran out into the street to get help from troops, to try to flag down a passing truck of them, and he jumped up on the truck's windshield and they shot him dead."

Those who fled the city and found shelter elsewhere described horrific scenes in New Orleans' neighborhoods before they escaped.

"There were bodies floating everywhere. Lots of them. Some had bullets in them," said Michael Davis (18), as he described his escape from a neighborhood that was immersed in more than 10 feet of water earlier this week. He ultimately found refuge at a domed arena in Lafayette, Louisiana.

There was blistering criticism at home and abroad of the slow, badly organized response to one of the worst natural catastrophes to hit the world's richest and most powerful country. The administration

'Katrina claims at \$40 bn'

LONDON: The Lloyd's of London insurance market estimates hurricane Katrina will cost insurers \$40 billion, Britain's *Observer* newspaper reported on Sunday, citing sources within Lloyd's. The paper said insurers' customers faced a huge hike in insurance premiums following Katrina, and which some in the industry, such as German reinsurance company Hannover Re, expect to be the most costly natural disaster in history. The *Observer* said a document circulating the market's syndicates, written by a secretive department at Lloyd's, predicted destruction had been as bad as its worse-case scenario. Forecasters produced the study two years ago to model the effect of a major hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico—where Katrina struck last Monday. **REUTERS**

time on streets nearby.

Tens of thousands of evacuees have already been taken to stadiums and other shelters in Texas and northern Louisiana. But military officials said up to 80,000 people were still stranded in New Orleans. Many at the convention center described nights at the mercy of rapists and murderers. They com-

was to send Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to the region on Sunday.

Some suggested Washington would have moved more quickly if rich Whites were in danger. "George Bush doesn't care about Black people," Black rapper Kanye West alleged during an NBC benefit concert on Friday night for Hurricane Katrina victims. The Bush administration has rejected accusations of racial bias in the response to the hurricane.

Michael Brown, director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said rescue teams were collecting bodies and sending them to morgues, but declined to discuss a body count. "We are starting the collection of bodies, treating them with respect, getting them into morgues and tagging them," he said.

The US Army Corps of Engineers said it would take between 36 and 80 days to remove floodwaters that swamped New Orleans. Work crews gained control over one of the breaches in the levee and expected to have another major gap closed on Sunday, said Brig. Gen. Robert Crear. —*Reuters*

Bush on shaky ground after flood

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WSJ

Long-term Threat Seen To Presidency Following Poor Disaster Response

Washington: Faced with one of the worst political crises of his administration, President Bush overhauled his September schedule over the weekend as the White House scrambled to gain control of a situation Republicans said threatened to undermine his second-term agenda and the party's long-term ambitions.

Bush made a rare Saturday appearance in the Rose Garden before live TV cameras to announce that he was dispatching additional active-duty troops to the Gulf Coast. He struck a more sombre tone than he had at times on Friday during a tour of the disaster region, when he had joked at the airport in New Orleans about the fun he had had in his younger days in Houston. His denouement on Saturday was similar to that of his most sombre speeches after the 9/11 attacks.

"The magnitude of responding to a crisis over a disaster area that is larger than the size of Great Britain has created tremendous problems that have strained state and local capabilities," said Bush, slightly exaggerating the stricken land area. "The result is that many of our citizens simply are not getting the help they need, especially in New Orleans. And that is unacceptable."

The President was flanked by de-

fence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, homeland security secretary Michael Chertoff and Gen Richard B Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. US vice-president Dick Cheney and Karl Rove, the President's senior political adviser, listened on the sidelines, as did Dan Bartlett, Bush's overseer of communications strategy. Their presence underscored how seriously the White House is reacting to the political crisis. "Where our response is not working, we'll make it right," Bush said, as Bartlett, script in hand, followed closely.

His speech came as analysts and some Republicans warned that the White House's response to the crisis, which has been widely seen as slow and ineffectual, could further undermine Bush's authority at a time when he is already under fire.

Chertoff said on Saturday: "Not an hour goes by that we do not spend a lot of time thinking about the people who are actively suffering. The United States, as the President has said, is going to move heaven and earth to rescue, feed, shelter" victims of the storm. The last-minute overhaul of the President's plans reflected what analysts and Republicans said was a long-term threat to Bush's presidency. NYT NEWS SERVICE



A stranded couple sends messages from their rooftop at St Bernard Parish

Govt on damage control with black leaders

Washington: Taking note of the allegations of racism following the poor disaster response, Bush's top aides, led by homeland security secretary Michael Chertoff, met over the weekend with black leaders.

Representative Elijah E Cummings, past chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, said he believes the administration was partly interested in

offering assurances during the meeting that any missteps in getting relief to the victims would be corrected.

"I think a lot of people in the African American community—and others, by the way—share Bush's view that the results of his efforts have been unacceptable," Cummings said after the meeting at the White House.

"I think they wanted to make sure

that the leaders of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Urban League and the NAACP knew that they were very sensitive to trying to make sure that things went right from here on out.

And I think they wanted to try to dispel any kind of notions that the administration did not care about African American people—or anyone else," are." Agencies

Animals better off than people

New Orleans: Other than an alligator on the loose, a couple of dead otters and a host of shell-shocked animals, denizens of the New Orleans zoo, came through deadly Hurricane Katrina relatively unscathed. Dan Maloney, general curator of the Audubon Zoo, was however quick to play down fears that the zoo posed a fresh danger to New Orleans. Residents need not worry about dangerous animals prowling through the wreckage of the city, he said, stressing all were accounted for except for the single errant alligator.

"We were very fortunate," said Maloney, who weathered the storm and its aftermath in the zoo that is home to around 1,500 animals from over 350 species from around the world.

Because it is built on high ground, the zoo avoided flooding. "We lost a pair of young river otters," said Maloney upset over the loss of life.

Some animals went missing after the storm and flooding hit on Monday, but most returned and were found soundly in the zoo, including a black vulture who was found happily munching on cattle egrets. "We also had a flamingo that was traumatised. We thought he would die but he has returned to the flock. "I'm sure the alligator will return too," said Maloney.

The big cats were kept well fed. "We invite journalists in, lock the gates and then they are never heard of again," he joked. In fact the lions and other felines had bellfulls of meat thanks to a two-week supply kept in massive freezers powered by generators.

For years, the zoo has been preparing for just such a storm, reinforcing concrete structures that house most animals during the hurricane, organising emergency supplies and preparing for the potential evacuation of staff. Dozens of zoo officials and wardens sat out the storm and the horrific aftermath alongside the animals they love in what they have now nicknamed 'Camp Katrina'. Agencies



A man detained by guards

New Orleans slides deeper into chaos

**Governor warns of shoot-to-kill policy;
Senator fears 10,000 deaths**

Gary Younge

MOBILE (ALABAMA): United States President George W. Bush arrived on Friday night in the ravaged Gulf coast region amid mounting criticism of his handling of the crisis and a prediction by one Senator that the death toll in Louisiana alone could top 10,000 people.

As thousands of people sat on the streets of New Orleans, having spent their fourth day waiting to be rescued, the city fell deeper into chaos, with gangs roaming the city and corpses rotting in the sun.

Kathleen Blanco, the Governor of Louisiana, threatened looters with a shoot-to-kill policy.

"These troops are battle-tested. They have M16s and are locked and loaded," she said. "These troops know how to shoot and kill and I expect they will."

Fire in apartment

Plumes of thick black smoke rose after an explosion rocked an industrial area hit hard by Katrina and an apartment complex in the city centre was also in flames. The explosion was later said to have taken place in a chemical storage facility.

Stunned residents stumbled around bodies that lay rotting and untouched.

Others trudged along flooded and debris-strewn streets toward the Superdome football stadium where they hoped to be taken to safety.

Calling for the immediate deployment of combat troops in New Orleans, David Vitter, a Louisiana Republican Senator said: "My guess is that it [the death toll] will start at 10,000." He said this estimate was not based on any official death toll or body count.

Even before he set off, Mr Bush was forced to admit that the relief effort had been inadequate: "The results are not acceptable," he said.

Later he said: "I am not looking for-

ward to this trip. It's as if the entire Gulf coast were obliterated by the worst kind of weapon you can imagine."

Aid convoys arrive

An emergency military convoy of aid supplies arrived in New Orleans on Friday to help in the relief of tens of thousands of refugees made desperate in the aftermath of the hurricane.

Live television broadcasts showed a queue of military vehicles loaded with crates making their way through the flooded streets. Troops with rifles rode in the convoy.

In another sign of aid finally getting through, commercial aircraft carrying supplies were arriving at an increased rate of four per hour at New Orleans international airport, the department of transport said. The planes were evacuating displaced residents.

New Orleans has descended into anarchy since it was devastated by Katrina on Monday.

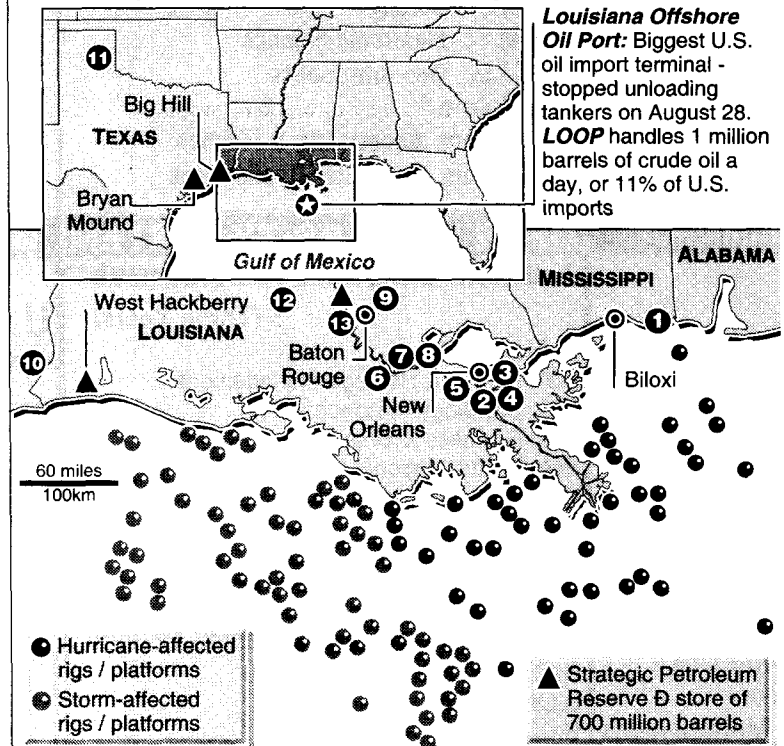
Standing alongside the Governors of Alabama and Mississippi at his first stop in Mobile, Alabama, Mr Bush said: "We have a responsibility to clean up this mess. What is not working right, we're going to make it right." He then went on to Biloxi, Mississippi, where he spoke to victims before heading to New Orleans.

On Friday, the U.S. Congress broke away from its holiday to implement a \$10.5-billion aid package, while the Pentagon promised 1,400 National Guardsmen a day to stop looting in the city. But these moves did little to quell the mounting anger of the hurricane's victims and local officials, particularly in New Orleans.

At the increasingly unsanitary convention centre, the crowds swelled to about 25,000 as people sought food, water and attention, while dead bodies lay in wheelchairs or wrapped in sheets both inside and outside the centre. — ©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2005

Hurricane impact on U.S. oil industry

Nine U.S. refineries in Louisiana and Mississippi, shut down by Hurricane Katrina, may not resume processing oil for several weeks, possibly months. A further five are operating on reduced capacity. At least 20 rigs or platforms are reported adrift, listing, sunk or missing



Louisiana Offshore Oil Port: Biggest U.S. oil import terminal - stopped unloading tankers on August 28. LOOP handles 1 million barrels of crude oil a day, or 11% of U.S. imports

Refineries	Shut down	Capacity ('000 barrels per day)	
1 Chevron Pascagoula	325		Serious damage
2 ConocoPhillips Bell Chasse	247		
3 Exxon/PDVSA Bell Chalmette	190		
4 Murphy Meraux	120		Minor damage
5 Valero St. Charles	260		
6 Motiva Convent	235		
7 Marathon Garyville	245		
8 Motiva Norco	227		
TOTAL 1.9 million barrels per day			
Operating at reduced rates			
9 ExxonMobil Baton Rouge	494		
10 Total Port Arthur	285		
11 Premcor Memphis	180		
12 Valero Krotz Springs	85		
13 Placid Port Allen	49		

Sources: Energy Information Administration, International Petroleum Encyclopedia © GRAPHIC NEWS

0 2 SEP 2005

New Orleans Mayor Sends 'Desperate SOS' ■ Gunfire, Corpses On Streets ■ Troops Told To Kill Looters ■ Rapes, Beatings At Refugee Camps ■ Public Anger Mounts At Govt

New Orleans descended into anarchy as corpses lay abandoned in streets, fights and fires broke out, cops turned in their badges and the governor declared war on looters.

"They (troops) have M-16s and they're locked and loaded," Gov Kathleen Blanco said of 300 National Guards who landed in New Orleans fresh from duty in Iraq. "These troops know how to shoot and kill, and they are more than willing to do so, and I expect they will."

President Bush called for "zero tolerance" of looters as plans were made for him to visit the hurricane-hit South. But four days after Hurricane Katrina inflicted potentially thousands of deaths, fear, anger and violence mounted on Thursday. "I'm not sure I'm going to get out of here alive," said Canadian tourist Larry Mitzel, who gave a reporter his business card in case he goes missing. "I'm scared of riots. I'm scared of the locals. We might get caught in the crossfire."

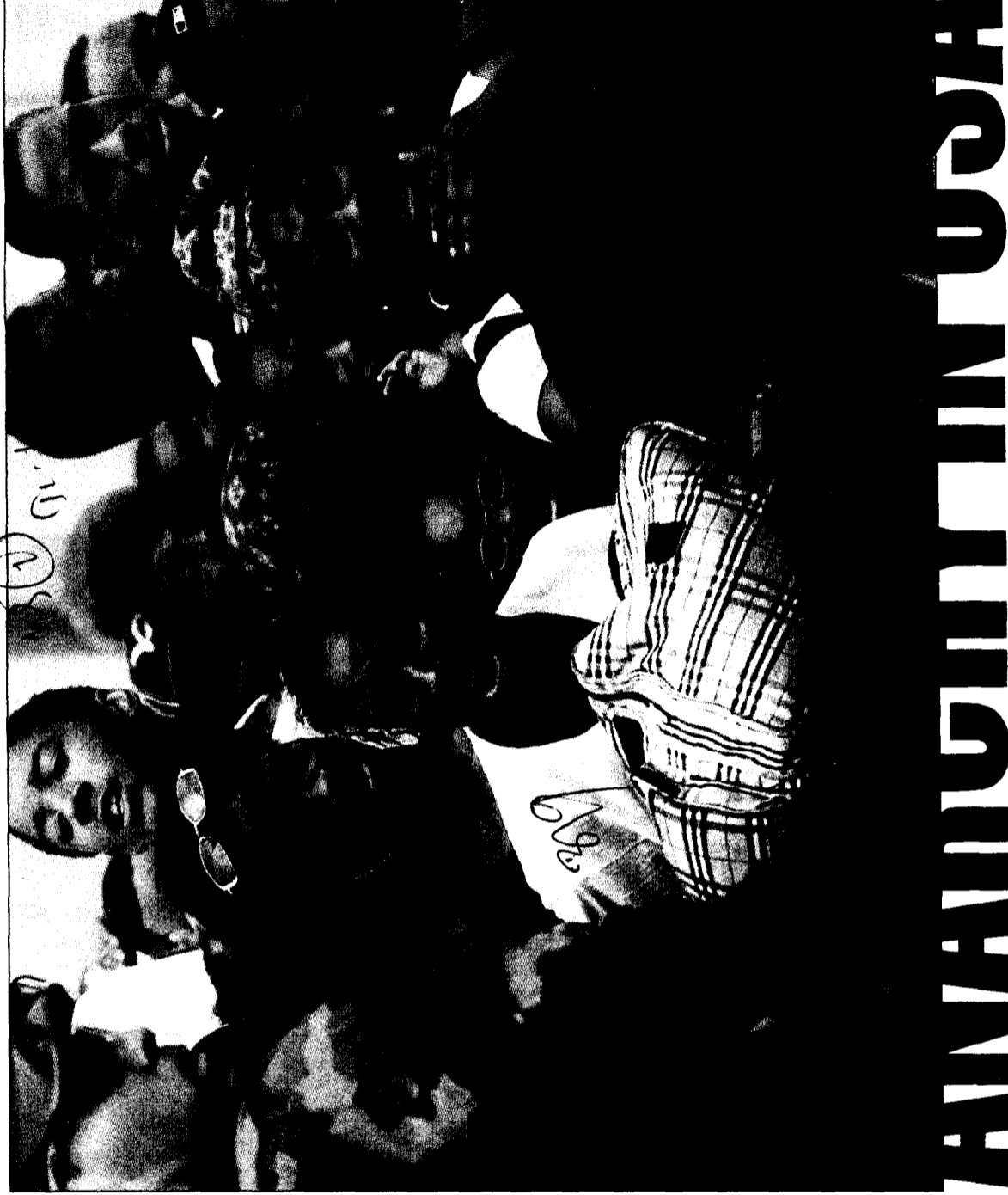
The chaos deepened despite the promise of 1,400 National Guardsmen a day to stop the looting, plans for a \$10 billion recovery bill in Congress and a government relief effort President Bush called the biggest in US history. New Orleans' top emergency management official called that effort a "national disgrace" and questioned when reinforcements would actually reach the lawless city.

About 15,000 to 20,000 people sheltering at the city's convention centre grew ever more hostile after waiting for buses for days amid filth and dead. Police Chief Eddie Compass said, "We have individuals who are getting raped, we have individuals who are getting beaten. Tourists are walking in that direction and getting preyed on."

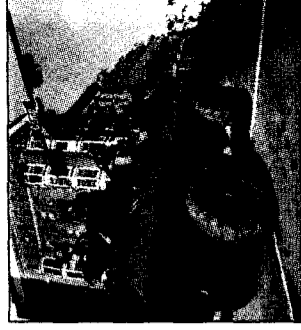
Col Henry Whitehorn, chief of the Louisiana State Police, said numerous New Orleans police officers were turning in their badges. "They had lost everything and didn't feel that it was worth them going back to take fire from looters and losing their lives," Whitehorn said.

"This is a desperate SOS," mayor Ray Nagin said. "Right now we are out of resources at the convention centre."

"You can do everything for other countries, but you can't do anything for your own people," said 47-year-old Daniel Edwards. "You can go overseas with the



Where have all the guards gone? Iraq



Washington: George W Bush was facing a major political crisis on Thursday night as New Orleans lay crippled, while the men who could help most were thousands of miles away in Iraq. It emerged that 6,000 of the 18,000-strong local National Guard—the military force specially trained to deal with such disasters—were in camps west of Baghdad fighting an increasingly unpopular war. Not only are those troops the most highly trained of the Guard, but they have with them much of the specialised equipment vital to dealing with the devastation wrought by a hurricane.

With the President's approval rating at a record low, anger was growing at the failure to mobilise guardsmen within hours of Katrina striking on Monday. With the death toll rocketing, people are furious that the National Guard was not sent in as soon as Katrina had moved on. The three worst affected states, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, all have thousands of their best-trained guardsmen in Iraq, with smaller numbers in Afghanistan.

Americans have traditionally relied on the National Guard to handle natural disasters, halt looting, rescue victims and distribute food and water. David McGinnis, a military analyst, said: "The problem for these affected states isn't just how many troops are in Iraq, but also the kind of soldiers that are there. They are combat brigades, which are the types of units you need in these situations." Left behind are the less trained and less well-equipped soldiers. However, on Thursday, Bush said he would not pull back troops from Iraq to help deal with the crisis.

A year ago, the US army corps of engineers proposed to study how New Orleans could be protected from a catastrophic hurricane. But the Bush administration ordered that the research not be undertaken. Daily Mail

US open to aid, won't ask for it

Washington: The USA, reeling from the death and destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina, said on Thursday it would accept any offers of assistance, as the world community rallied to its aid.

"We are open to all offers of assistance from other nations, and I would expect we would take people up on offers of assistance when it's necessary," said White House spokesman Scott McClellan. But asked whether this was a request for foreign aid, McClellan sharply replied: "No."

The signal by the US, the world's only superpower, marks an extraordinary reversal of roles for the country that is more used to coming to the assistance of others.

President Bush said in a TV interview that America did not need the help of other countries. "I'm not expecting much from foreign nations because we haven't asked for it. But this country is going to rise up and take care of it. We love help, but we are going to take care of our own business as well," he said.

The international community immediately extended its hand, with the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Canada and even Venezuela all publicly offering to send assistance to the stricken US Gulf Coast. The United Nations has also offered all possible assistance to the US. The US thanked the world body but did not seek any immediate assistance.

Pointing out that the damage was "far worse than any of us imagined at first", UN secretary general Kofi Annan said the American people who have been the most generous in responding to disasters in other parts of the world have themselves suffered a "grievous blow". Agencies

A temporary disruption: Bush

Washington: Hurricane Katrina will be a temporary setback for the US economy and the energy sector, Bush said after he met with his economic team and Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan. "In our judgment, we view this storm as a temporary disruption that is being addressed by the government and by the private sector," said Bush. He acknowledged, however, "it's going to be hard to get gasoline to some markets." He added: "Don't buy gas if you don't need it." Reuters

and fires erupted.

Those lucky enough to get out and wait for buses told tales of rapes, child molestations, shootings, a man who jumped off the roof and a fire. A near-riot broke out in the scramble to get on buses. Agencies

► 'Nothing could be worse', Page 27



military, but you can't get them down here."

At the hot and stinking Superdome, where 30,000 were being evacuated by bus to the Houston Astrodome, fistfights

SIGNS OF NEW ORLEANS SLIPPING INTO CHAOS

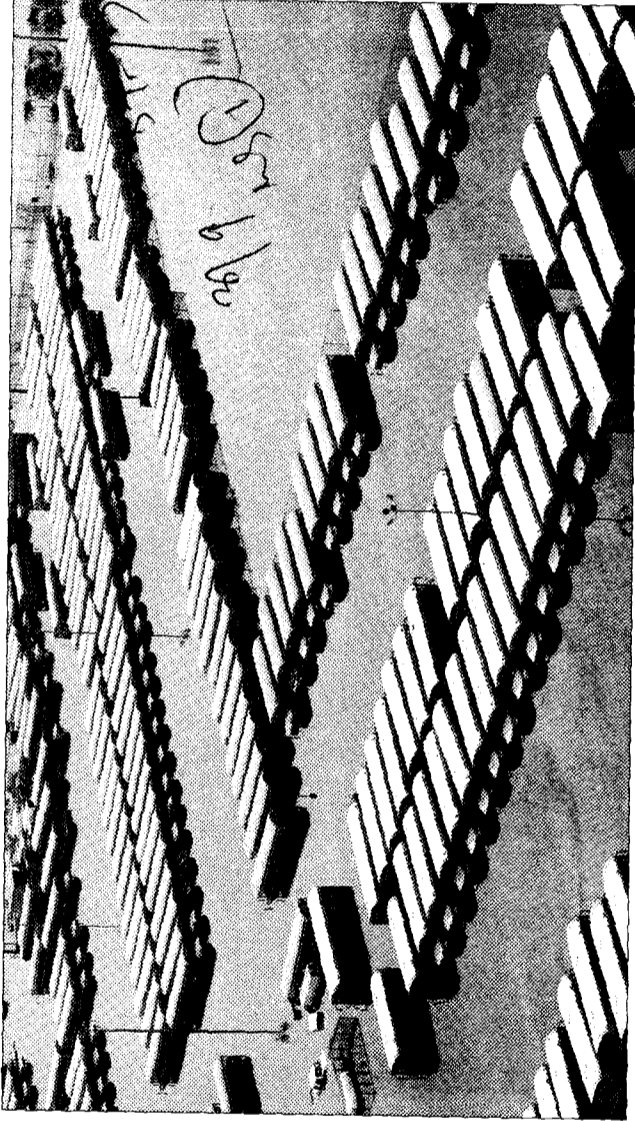
A city pulled in two directions

Andrew Buncombe
in New Orleans

Sept. 2. — On the bridges into New Orleans yesterday the human flow was going both ways. Heading into the city sheathed in a haze was a seemingly endless convoy of emergency vehicles and rescue boats, police and military personnel. Heading out of the city was a stream of desperate and bedraggled people, the number of which seemed equally endless. Some were in cars or packed tightly into the back of trucks; most were on foot, carrying or dragging their belongings or else pushing what they could in shopping carts.

It was clear authorities were doing their best to get a grip on the situation by ferrying in supplies, emergency vehicles, flat-bottomed boats and personnel in considerable number. At one point yesterday, driving in the opposite direction to one convoy, it took minutes for the emergency vehicles to pass, the numbers were such.

But alongside these efforts, there were signs that the city was slipping into chaos, a visible fear among residents and police. Nothing summed this up more than the suspension of the evacuation of people held in the city's



SUBMERGED: An aerial view of school buses partly under water on Thursday after hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans. — PTI

hospital next to us was attacked so we have had to have armed guards."

Sitting in his patrol car outside one locked-up chemist's and general store, one police officer said

he and his colleagues were desperately trying to keep some sense of order. The officer, who asked not to be named, had been working around the clock since the storm struck on Monday morning.

"The stores that have already been hit, I'm not bothering with," he said. "We're not stopping people taking food and water. We're just trying to make sure there is a presence here." As he spoke he picked up a shotgun he had tucked beside him next to the hand-break of his patrol car. "I've brought this from home," he said.

The officer, who was 7 years old when the notorious hurricane Betsy struck the city in 1965, con-

Authorities face resistance

NEW ORLEANS, Sept. 2. — The effort to rescue some 200,000 people left stranded and hungry in the sinking city of New Orleans ran the risk of catastrophic breakdown last night as under-prepared and under-resourced authorities faced the hostility of heavily armed residents bent on shooting their way out of the city.

Authorities suspended the airlift of tens of thousands of people clustered in and around the Superdome stadium following a report of gunfire directed at a Chinook military chopper, a major blow to rescue efforts.

— Andrew Buncombe & Andrew Gumbel/The Independent

firmed that many people stranded in the city had been unable to leave. "There were some people who could not. They did not have the basic means to leave and I blame the city for that," he said. The officer, who was black, continued: "There was no plan. There really should have been a plan for a deal like this. [The ones who could not leave] were poor folks mostly, most are blacks." — The Independent

Crisis in New Orleans intensifies

Desperate refugees clamour for food, water and attention amid dead bodies

Joseph B. Treaster and Deborah Sontag

NEW ORLEANS: Despair, privation and violent lawlessness has grown so extreme in New Orleans that the flooded city's Mayor issued a "desperate SOS" and other local officials, describing the security situation as horrific, lambasted the Federal Government as responding too slowly to the disaster.

Thousands of Hurricane Katrina refugees from the flooded city boarded buses for Houston, but others quickly took their places at the filthy, teeming Superdome, which has been serving as the primary shelter.

Unsanitary centre

At the increasingly unsanitary convention centre, crowds swelled to about 25,000 and desperate refugees clamoured for food, water and attention while around them dead bodies, slumped in wheelchairs or wrapped in sheets, lay in their midst.

"Some people there have not eaten or drunk water for three or four days, which is inexcusable," acknowledged Joseph W. Matthews, the director of the city's Office of Emergency Preparedness.

"We need additional troops, food, water," Mr. Matthews begged, "and we need personnel, law enforcement. This has turned into a situation where the city is being run by thugs."

Three days after the hurricane hit, bringing widespread destruction to the Gulf Coast and ruinous floods to low-lying New Orleans, the White House said President George Bush would tour the region later on Friday. Citing the magnitude of the disaster, Federal officials defended their response so far and pledged that more help was coming. The Army Corps of Engineers continued work to close a levee breach that allowed water from Lake Pontchartrain to pour into New Orleans.

The effects of the disaster spilled out over the country. In Houston, the city began to grapple with the logistics of taking tens of thousands of refugees into the Astrodome, and San Antonio and Dallas each braced for the arrival of 25,000 more. Baton Rouge overnight replaced New Orleans as the most populous

city in Louisiana and was bursting at the seams.

The devastation in the Gulf Coast also continued to roil oil markets, sending gasoline prices soaring in many areas of the country. In North Carolina, Governor Michael F. Easley called on citizens to conserve fuel while two big pipelines that supply most of the state's gasoline are brought back on line. "Citizens should not panic," he said. "But it is critical that we continue to conserve our fuel while Washington is developing a national strategy for this problem."

Throughout the stricken region, scores of frantic people, without telephone service, asked for help contacting friends or relatives whose fates they did not know. Some ended up finding them dead. Others had emotional reunions. Newspapers offered toll-free numbers or Web message boards for the searches.

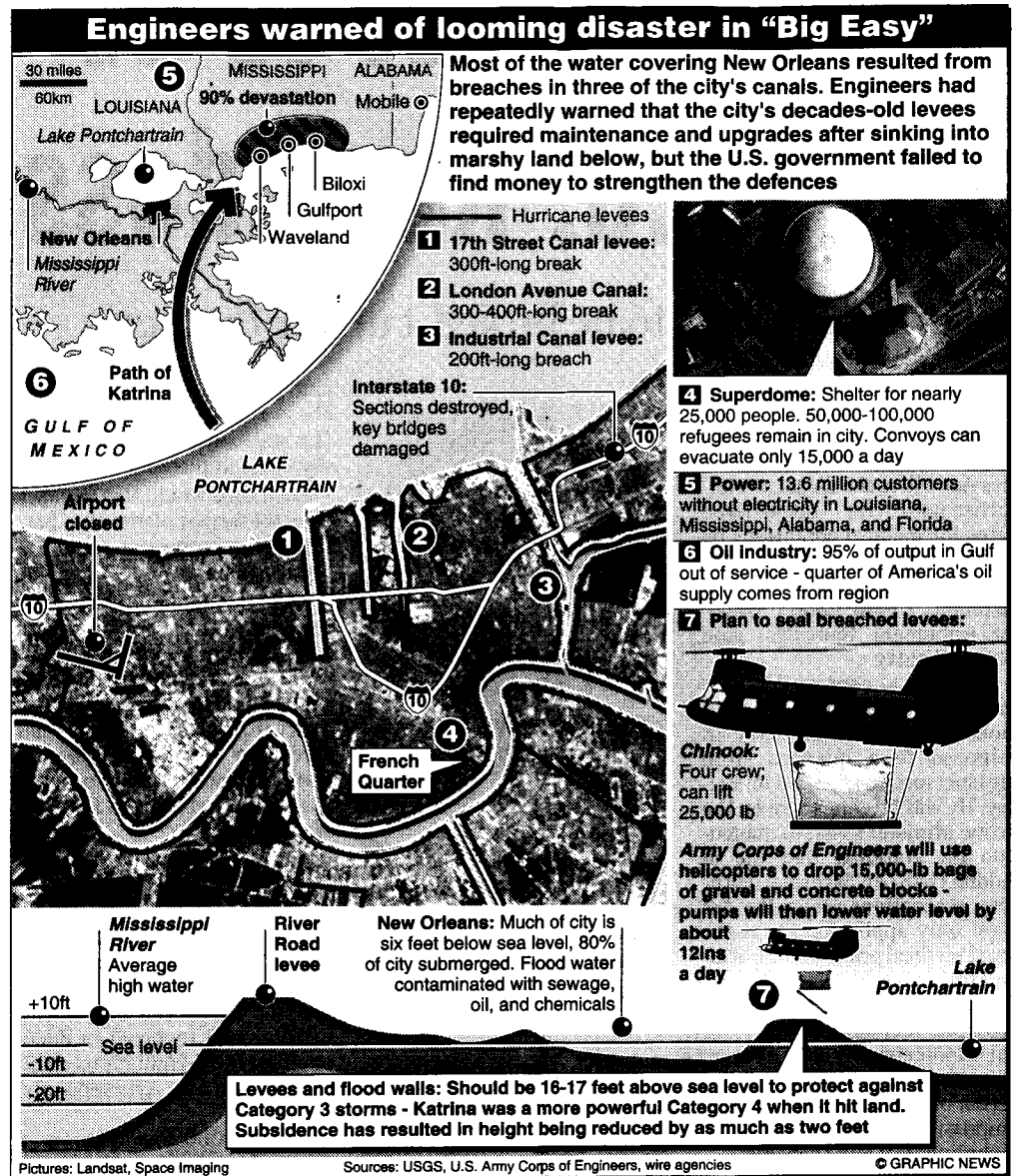
Meanwhile the situation in New Orleans continued to deteriorate. Angry crowds pressed for help, while some rushed chaotically at helicopters trying to bring in food. Though Mayor C. Ray Nagin speculated that thousands of people might have died, officials still had no clear idea of the scope of the toll.

"We're just a bunch of rats," said a refugee who stood waiting in a throng of 10,000 outside the Superdome, waiting in the blazing sun for buses to take them away from the city. "That's how they've been treating us."

Chaos and gunfire hampered efforts to evacuate the Superdome, and, the New Orleans police superintendent said, armed thugs had taken control of the secondary makeshift shelter at the convention centre. The thugs repelled eight squads of 11 officers each that he sent to secure the place, said the superintendent, P. Edwin Compass III, adding that rapes and assaults were occurring unimpeded in the neighbouring streets as criminals "preyed upon" tourists.

Tenuous city

Mr. Compass said the Federal Government had taken too long to send in the thousands of troops — as well as the supplies, fuel, vehicles, water and food — needed to stabilise his now "ve-



ry, very tenuous" city.

Col. Terry Ebbert, director of homeland security for New Orleans, concurred, and was particularly pungent in his criticism. Asserting that the whole recovery operation had been "carried on the backs of the little guys for four goddamn days," he said that "the rest of the goddamn nation can't get us any resources for security".

"We are like little birds with our mouths open, and you don't have to be very smart to know where to drop the worm," he said. "It's criminal within the confines of the United States that within one hour of the hurricane they weren't force-feeding us. It's like FEMA has never been to a hurricane." FEMA is

the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Federal officials took pains to defend their efforts, maintaining that supplies were pouring into the area even before the hurricane struck, that thousands of National Guard members had already arrived to help secure the city and that thousands more would join them in coming days.

Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco of Louisiana said some 300 National Guard members from Arkansas were flying into New Orleans with the express task of reclaiming the city. "They have M-16s and they are locked and loaded," she said.

Squatter camp

On the receiving end in Hous-

ton, though, the Astrodome looked at times like a squatter camp in a war-torn country.

The refugees from Louisiana, many dirty and hungry, wandered about aimlessly, checking bulletin boards for information about their relatives, queuing up for supplies and payphones, mobbing Red Cross volunteers to obtain free T-shirts.

Many found, much to their dismay, some conditions similar to those that they left behind at the Superdome, like clogged toilets and foul restrooms.

The Senate has convened a special session to pass an emergency supplemental spending bill providing \$10.5 billion for relief efforts. —New York Times News Service

Hunger and looting in New Orleans

ROBERT D. McFadden
& RALPH Blumenthal
New Orleans, September 1

CHAOS GRIPPED New Orleans on Wednesday as looters ran wild, food and water supplies dwindled, bodies floated in the floodwaters, the evacuation of the Superdome began and officials said there was no choice but to abandon the city devastated by Hurricane Katrina, perhaps for months.

US President George W. Bush pledged vast assistance but acknowledged, "This recovery will take years."

As survivors struggled with a disaster that left damage of up to \$25 billion, a gargantuan relief effort began. Ships, planes, helicopters and convoys of supplies and rescue teams converged on the Gulf Coast, and Pentagon officials said 30,000 National Guard and active-duty troops would be deployed by this weekend in the largest domestic relief effort by the military in the nation's history.

With police officers and National Guard troops giving priority to saving lives, looters brazenly ripped open gates and ransacked stores for food, clothing, television sets, computers, jewellery and guns, often in full view of helpless law-enforcement officials. Dozens of carjackings, apparently by survivors desperate to escape, were reported, as were a number of shootings. On Wednesday night, Mayor Nagin ordered 1,500 police officers, most of the city's force, to turn from search and rescue to stopping the looting.

Some frightened homeowners took security into their own hands.

John Carolan was sitting on his porch in the thick, humid darkness just before midnight Tuesday when three or four

KATRINA AFTERMATH

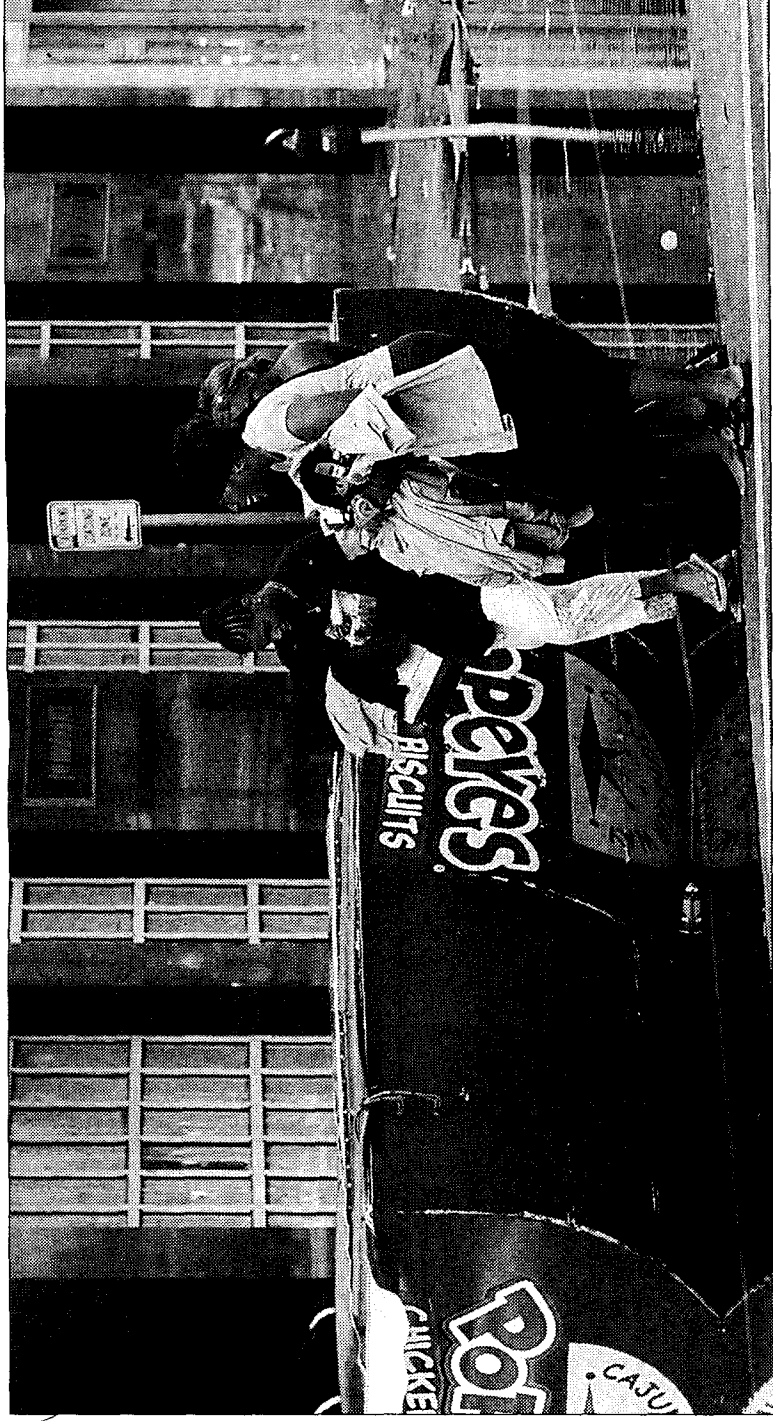
young men, one with a knife and another with a machete, stopped in front of his fence and pointed to the generator humming in the front yard, he said. One said, "We want that generator," he recalled. "I fired a couple of rounds over their heads with a .357 Magnum," Carolan recounted. "They scattered."

Hundreds of New Orleans residents were still huddled on rooftops or isolated on patches of ground, where they have awaited rescue for two days without food or water. An armada of small boats was out, rescuing many from flooded areas in the city's poorest sections. Other people wandered aimlessly, on land and through shallows, pushing shopping carts of belongings. Some perched on sections of Interstate 10 that were above water.

Across the region, there were tales of misery, with hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses destroyed, with roads washed away and airports shut down, with power grids shattered and five million people in four states lacking electricity.

And to the rising toll of victims killed, injured or homeless and jobless were added other plagues: possible epidemics; overwhelmed hospitals and sanitation facilities; lost communications and transportation systems; and almost everywhere hellish scenes of wreckage strewn communities. Officials said that it would be weeks or months before the city could be pumped dry and that it would take years to rebuild its homes and businesses, streets, highways and other infrastructure.

The New York Times



Three women hurry down Canal Street in New Orleans, arms full of clothes they plundered from a nearby shop.

Thousands may be dead, says mayor

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, September 1

THE DEATH toll in New Orleans, following the floods triggered by Hurricane Katrina, may well run into "thousands", says Mayor Ray Nagin.

"Minimum, hundreds. Most likely, thousands," the mayor stated on Wednesday in what is Katrina's victim toll in New Orleans. If the mayor's projection comes true, Katrina would rank

as the US's deadliest natural disaster since the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906 that killed more than 6,000 persons.

As a full-scale evacuation of New Orleans got under way, the authorities have sent out another grim message that it will be three or four months before the half million residents can possibly come back to the city.

Evacuation of marooned residents got under way on Wednesday evening as buses started ferrying out the people who had

taken refuge in the Superdome. A total of nearly 500 buses will transport some 23,000 people to the Astrodome in Houston, 320 miles away.

One positive message on Thursday was that the water level had stopped rising. But nearly 80 per cent of the city continues to be under water, up to 20 feet deep in some places. Since New Orleans is a bowl-shaped city, the water will not drain away on its own, but will have to be pumped out, the officials said.

The impact of Katrina began to be felt far and wide as oil prices surged dramatically. In the Washington area, gasoline prices were well above the \$3 a gallon mark in some places, prompting complaints of price gouging. The price surge came in the wake of the damage to some offshore drilling rigs and a drop in production caused by preventive shutdown of refining operations in the Gulf of Mexico region, which accounts for nearly a third of the US's gasoline production.

ABANDON THE CITY

New Orleans Mayor Says Thousands Dead. Looters Rampage Cities. Man Kills Sister Over Bag Of Ice. Bush Says It Will Take Years To Repair The Damage

New Orleans: With thousands feared drowned in what could be America's deadliest natural disaster in a century, New Orleans' leaders all but surrendered the streets to floodwaters and began turning out the lights on the ruined city—perhaps for months.

Looting spiraled so out of control on Wednesday night that Mayor Ray Nagin ordered virtually the entire police force to abandon search-and-rescue efforts and focus on the brazen packs of thieves who have turned increasingly hostile.

Looters used garbage cans and inflatable mattresses to float away with food, blue jeans, tennis shoes, TV sets - even guns. Outside one pharmacy, thieves commandeered a forklift and used it to push up the storm shutters and break through the glass. The driver of a nursing-home bus surrendered the vehicle to thugs after being threatened.

Nagin also called for an all-out evacuation of the city's remaining residents. Asked how many people died, he said: "Minimum, hundreds. Most likely, thousands."

With most of the city under water, US army engineers struggled to plug New Orleans' breached levees with giant sandbags and concrete barriers, and authorities drew up plans to clear out the tens of thousands of remaining people and practically abandon the below-sea-level city.

Nagin said there will be a "total evacuation of the city. We have to. The city will not be functional for two or three months." And he said people would not be allowed back into their homes for at least a month or two.

If the mayor's death-toll estimate holds true, it would make Katrina the worst natural disaster in the US since at least the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, which were blamed for anywhere from 500 to 6,000 deaths. Katrina would also be the nation's dead-



REMAINS OF THE DAY. A woman carries whatever is left of her belongings from her home in Waveland, Mississippi (top). Shelia Dixon, of Gentilly, LA, weeps as she holds her 18-month baby, Emily

liest hurricane since 1900, when a storm in Galveston, Texas, killed between 6,000 and 12,000 people.

In Mississippi, bodies are starting to pile up at the morgue in hard-hit Harrison County. Forty corpses have brought to the morgue already, and officials expect the death toll in the county to climb well above 100.

Tempers were beginning to flare. Police said a man fatally shot his sister in the head over a bag of ice in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

President George W Bush flew over

New Orleans and parts of Mississippi's hurricane-blasted coastline in Air Force One. Turning to his aides, he said: "It's totally wiped out. ... It's devastating, it's got to be doubly devastat-

New Orleans and parts of Mississippi's hurricane-blasted coastline in Air Force One. Turning to his aides, he said: "It's totally wiped out. ... It's devastating, it's got to be doubly devastat-

ing on the ground."

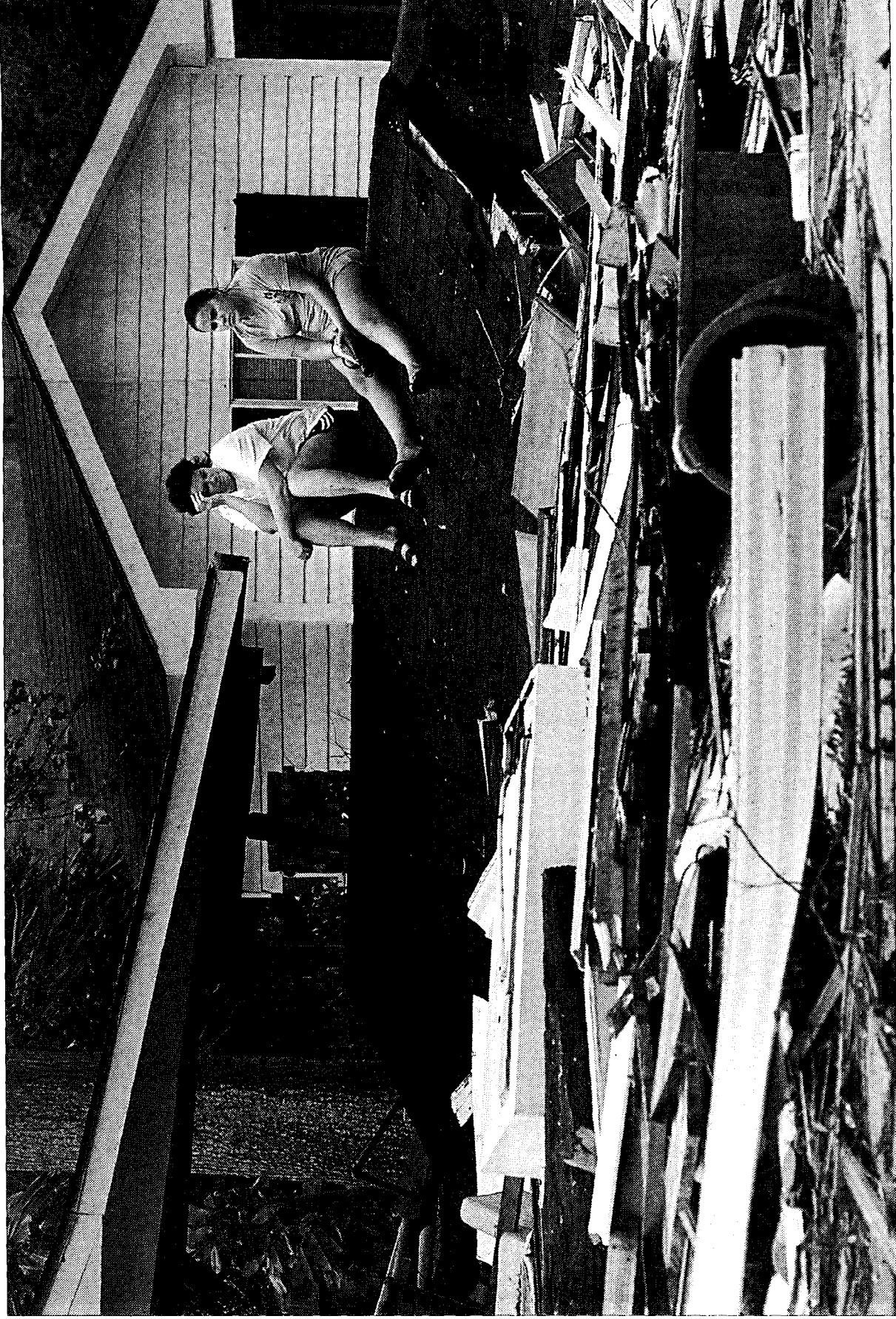
"We're dealing with one of the worst national disasters in our nation's history," Bush said later in a televised address from the White House, which most victims could not see be-

cause power remains out to 1 million Gulf Coast residents.

"This recovery will take a long time. This recovery will take years," he said, pledging the full support of the US government in rescuing and giving assistance to the tens of thousands people made homeless by the storm. On some of the few roads that were still open, people waved at passing cars with empty water jugs, begging for relief. Hundreds of people appeared to have spent the night on a crippled highway. Agencies

Survivors sought as hurricane claims 80

8/17 2018 9:50



Melanie Seaman sits with daughter Miranda amid the wreckage of her home on Washington Avenue in Pascagoula, Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina hit the town.

Gulfport, August 30

AS DAWN broke over the ravaged Gulf Coast on Tuesday, rescuers in boats and helicopters searched for survivors of Hurricane Katrina. The Governor said the death toll in one Mississippi county alone could be as high as 80.

"The devastation down there is just enormous," Governor Haley Barbour said on NBC's *Today* show, the morning after Katrina howled ashore with winds of 145 mph. Barbour said there were unconfirmed reports of up to 80 deaths in Harrison County, which includes Gulfport and Biloxi, and the number was likely to rise.

"We know that there is a lot of the coast that we have not been able to get to," the Governor said. "I hate to say it, but it looks like it is a very bad disaster in terms of human life."

Tree trunks, downed power lines and trees, and chunks of broken concrete in the streets hampered rescue efforts. Swirling water in many areas contained hidden dangers. Crews worked to clear highways. Along one Mississippi highway, motorists themselves used chainsaws to remove trees blocking the road.

Officials said it could be a week or more before many of the evacuees are allowed back. They warned people against trying to return to their homes while the rescue and recovery are still going on.

"I don't want anyone not in the city to come back. What we're doing is trying to make the best of a bad situation and we need people to cooperate," New Orleans police chief Eddie Compass said. More than 1,600 Mississippi National Guardsmen

were activated to help with the recovery, and the Alabama Guard planned to send two battalions to Mississippi.

"We know that last night we had over 300 folks that we could confirm were on tops of roofs and waiting for our assistance. We pushed hard all throughout the night. We hoisted over 100 folks last night just in the Mississippi area. Our crews over New Orleans probably did twice that," Capt. Dave Callahan of the Coast Guard Aviation Training Center in Mississippi said.

Late on Monday, Harrison County emergency operations center spokesman Jim Pollard said about 50 people had died in the county, with some 30 of the dead at a beach-side apartment complex in Biloxi. Three other people were killed by falling trees in Mississippi and two died in a traffic accident in Alabama, authorities said. In Louisiana, officials said people in some swamped neighbourhood were feared dead, but gave no immediate numbers.

"All I know is when my people go out, they tell me there are a lot of people awaiting rescue. I hear there are hundreds of people still on their rooftops," said Gen. Ralph Lupin, commander of National Guard troops at the Superdome in New Orleans, where some 10,000 people had taken shelter.

In New Orleans, residents faced a second threat as two levee breaches sent water from Lake Pontchartrain coursing through city streets on Tuesday.

Col. Rich Wagenaar of the Army Corps of Engineers said a breach in the eastern part of the city was causing flooding and "significant evacuations" in Orleans and St. Bernard parishes.

USA Today

31 AUG 2005 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Death toll heavy as hurricane slams U.S. Gulf Coast

HD-15
8/8
28/1

Thousands of houses flooded; a million persons in three States left without power



RENDERED IMPASSABLE: Rescue workers take residents to a ramp on interstate highway 10 in New Orleans on Monday. - PHOTO: AP

Joseph B. Treaster and
Kate Zernike

NEW ORLEANS: Hurricane Katrina pounded the Gulf Coast with devastating force at daybreak on Monday, sparing New Orleans the catastrophic hit that had been feared but inundating parts of the city and heaping damage on neighbouring Mississippi, where it killed dozens, ripped away roofs and left coastal roads impassable.

Packing 145-mph winds as it made landfall, Katrina left more than a million persons in three states without power and submerged highways even hundreds of miles from the centre of the storm.

Officials reported at least 55 deaths, with 50 alone in Harrison County, Mississippi, which includes Gulfport and Biloxi. Emergency workers feared that they would find more dead among persons trapped in their

homes and in collapsed buildings.

Jim Pollard, a spokesman for the Harrison County emergency operations centre, said a number of persons were found dead in an apartment complex in Biloxi. Seven others were found in the Industrial Seaway.

While Katrina proved to be less fearsome than had been predicted, it was still potent enough to rank as one of the most punishing hurricanes ever to hit the U.S. Insurance experts said damage could exceed \$9 billion, which would make it one of the costliest storms on record.

In New Orleans, most of the levees held but one was damaged and flood waters rose to rooftops in one neighbourhood. Katrina's howling winds stripped 15-ft sections off the roof of the Superdome, where as many as 10,000 evacuees were sheltered.

Some of the worst damage reports came from east of the his-

toric city of New Orleans with an estimated 40,000 homes reported flooded in St. Bernard Parish. In Gulfport, Mississippi, the storm left three private hospitals without working emergency rooms, beachfront homes wrecked and major stretches of Mississippi's coastal highway flooded and impassable.

"It came on Mississippi like a ton of bricks," the state's governor, Haley Barbour, told a midday news conference "It's a terrible storm."

Top priority

In Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, the governors declared search and rescue their top priority, but said that high waters and strong winds were keeping them from that task, particularly in the hardest hit areas.

The Governors set out police and National Guard after reports of looting, and officials in some

parts of Louisiana said they would impose a curfew.

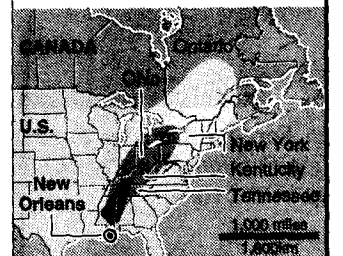
Katrina was downgraded from Category 5 — the worst possible storm — to Category 4 as it hit land in eastern Louisiana just after 6 a.m., and in New Orleans, officials said the storm's slight shift to the east had spared them somewhat. The city is below sea level, and there had been predictions that the historic French Quarter would be under 18 or 20 ft of water.

Still, no one was finding much comfort here, with 100 mph winds and water surges of 15 feet. Officials said early in the day that more than 20 buildings had been toppled. "I can't say that we've escaped the worst," said Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco. "I think there is still damage that can be inflicted on the city. We don't even know what the worst is."

Beyond the property damage caused by flooding and the high

Katrina slams U.S.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center projects Katrina, which has killed at least 55 people, will head through Tennessee, Kentucky and Ohio on Tuesday and Wednesday, then western New York state and Ontario. Maximum sustained winds will reach 60 mph



Probability that centre of tropical cyclone Katrina will pass within 75 miles



Source: NOAA

© GRAPHIC NEWS

winds, Katrina also dealt a blow to the oil industry and the lucrative casinos that have been the economic engine for the region.

The storm pounded New Orleans for eight hours straight. Flooding overwhelmed the levees built to protect the city from the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, sending muddy water swirling into the narrow and meandering streets downtown. Wide stretches of lowlands beyond the city were transformed into lakes.

Windows had blown off condominiums, hotels, office buildings, and Charity Hospital, sending shards of glass into the winds. Fires broke out despite torrential rain, some sparked, by residents who lit candles after the electricity went out.

Nuclear plants safe

Two nuclear plants near the path of Katrina appear to have weathered the storm without major damage, and a third shut down on Saturday, in anticipation of the hurricane, according to Entergy Nuclear, which owns all three. The extent of damage to the plant that shut down, Waterford, 32 kms west of New Orleans, was still unknown late Monday afternoon because the wind was blowing too hard to go out and look, said Diane Park, a spokeswoman. —New York Times News Service

SUPREME COURT ■ Republicans' favourite has enigmatic record, difficult for Democrats to attack

Bush picks conservative for SC

TODD S. PURDUM

WASHINGTON, JULY 19

US PRESIDENT George W. Bush nominated John G. Roberts, a federal appeals court judge with a distinguished resume and a conservative but enigmatic record, as his first appointment to the Supreme Court. On Tuesday night, moving to replace Justice Sandra Day O'Connor with a candidate he hopes will be hailed by the Right and accepted by the Left.

"He has the qualities that Americans expect in a judge: experience, wisdom, fairness and civility," Bush said announcing the nomination.

The announcement ended more than two weeks of speculation set off by Justice O'Connor's surprise retirement.

Among the frantic rumours around the decision came hints from some Republicans that he might choose a woman to succeed the Supreme Court's first female justice.

Justice O'Connor had long ago emerged as the fulcrum of the current court, a pivotal vote on abortion, affirmative action, the death penalty and religion. Judge Roberts's detailed views on many of those issues are less known. But he arouses nothing like the opposition that conservatives leveled at another potential nominee, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales.

By the same token, Judge Roberts will be more difficult for Democrats to attack than his friend and fellow appellate court judge, J. Michael Luttig, one of the more conservative among those mentioned for the job.

Bush repeated his wish to have Justice O'Connor's successor confirmed by the time the Supreme Court begins its next term on the first Monday in October, and went out of his way to emphasise the past bipartisan support Roberts has enjoyed.

In his own remarks on Tuesday night, Judge Roberts offered no substantive comments, but told how he "always got a lump in (his) throat" when he appeared before the Supreme Court as a lawyer.

Judge Roberts is widely regarded as personable, no small consideration for a president who has said he wanted to take the personal measure of any nominee to the court. The bipartisan lawyers' letter supporting his nomination to his current job described him as "one of the very best and most highly respected appellate lawyers in the nation."

—New York Times



Reuters

Democrats swallow Republican choice

■ **WASHINGTON:** When President Bush's lawyers made a list of potential nominees to the Supreme Court, they put John G. Roberts Jr. at the top. The appeals court judge was seen as smart, conservative in his leanings, but not a brash ideologue. And he was seen as a persuader, someone whose personable approach and intellect could make him a leader on the Supreme Court.

He was also the clear favourite of Washington's Republican legal establishment for the Supreme Court. Predictably, Republican senators quickly embraced Roberts' Tuesday nomination to the Supreme Court, but Democrats reserved judgment, saying he would trigger neither immediate opposition nor instant acceptance.

Democrats—who acknowledged that their ability to challenge any nominee is limited—appeared unable or unwilling to highlight weaknesses in Roberts' background. But they vowed to press him to explain his views on civil rights, abortion and other issues, warning that anything less than full disclosure could lead to a bruising fight on the Senate floor.

"I really do not expect any issues that go to the qualifications, the honesty, the integrity and the fairness of a Supreme Court justice to be off-limits," said Sen. Patrick Leahy, the Judicial Committee's ranking Democrat.

The Senate plans to vote in September on whether to confirm Roberts, the first high court nominee in 11 years. —LAT_WF

A progress report & contradictions

R. JEFFREY SMITH & JO BECKER

WASHINGTON, JULY 20

IN 1991, John G. Roberts Jr., then deputy solicitor general in the first Bush administration, told Supreme Court its historic decision supporting a woman's right to abort was "wrongly decided and should be overruled".

In 2003, when Roberts was up for a judgeship, he played down his earlier statement, explaining that he only made the administration's case against Roe v. Wade because that was his responsibility as its lawyer.

After 11 years in government service and 10 years at one of Washington's largest law firms, Roberts has earned a reputation as a brilliant litigator who argues his clients' positions passionately.

The question the Senate will debate as it decides his appointment is which of those positions are also his own.

As a long-standing member of the Republican National Lawyers Association who gave Republican governor Jeb Bush private legal advice during the 2000 presidential election recount in

Florida, Roberts' political loyalties are plain. As a former clerk to then-Associate Justice William Rehnquist, a protégé of former solicitor general Kenneth Starr and a member of the Federalist Society, his conservative credentials are solid.

However, Roberts' short time on the bench, coupled with the relative paucity of his writings, leaves critics and potential supporters with little by which to judge how he will vote on the Supreme Court. In his confirmation hearings for a federal judgeship in April 2003, Roberts main-

tained that he always separates his personal beliefs from his duty to follow the law. "The positions a lawyer presents on behalf of a client should not be ascribed to that lawyer," he said at the time.

Roberts' journey to the federal bench did not leave him unscathed. He never came up for a vote the first time he was nominated to the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit by the first President Bush. And his nomination to the same court by the second President Bush attracted opposition from the liberals. —LAT_WF

Who's Justice Roberts



- *Summa cum laude* Harvard graduate
- Clerk to William H. Rehnquist, who was then an associate justice on SC
- Public career begins with Reagan administration as aide to Attorney General William French Smith from 1981 to 1982, then associate White House counsel
- 1986-89, 1993-03: Private practice
- Advisor to Jeb Bush during Florida recount
- 2003: Current post on the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit

21 JUL 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS

FORMER FBI OFFICIAL WAS WATERGATE SCAM SOURCE

Deep Throat revealed

Andrew Buncombe
in Washington

June 1. — Having finally revealed himself as "Deep Throat", former FBI agent Mr Mark Felt today faced both praise and condemnation for having leaked to reporters details of President Richard Nixon's corrupt and illegal activities.

Yesterday it emerged that Mr Mark Felt, a former senior FBI official and a man long touted as the likely source has finally confirmed those suspicions. "I'm the guy they used to call Deep Throat," he says in the forthcoming edition of *Vanity Fair*.

Deep Throat was the name given to this anonymous government source by Bob Woodward, a *Washington Post* reporter, who in partnership with colleague Carl Bernstein helped bring about the downfall of Republican President Richard Nixon. Their reporting — much of



STEPPING OUT OF THE SHADOWS: Former FBI official Mr Mark Felt at his home in Santa Rosa, California. — AFP

it based on tips provided by Deep Throat in late night meetings at an underground car-park — revealed Nixon's involvement in the Watergate affair and other dirty tricks against the Democratic Party. Nixon was subsequently forced to resign in August 1974.

Mr Felt's family said they believed he was an "American hero". Many agreed but others accused

Mr Felt, now aged 91, of nothing less than treachery. A raft of Nixon-era officials — among them several who served prison time for their own behaviour — claimed Mr Felt had breached professional ethics.

Gordon Liddy, a Nixon operative who engineered the 1972 break-in at the Democratic National Campaign headquarters in the Washington's Watergate

building and served four and a half years in jail for doing so, said: "If he possessed evidence of wrongdoing, he was honour-bound to take that to a grand jury... (but) not to selectively leak it to a single news source." Chuck Colson, the head of White House communications in 1972 and another official who served prison time, claimed that Mr Felt could have helped America avoid a wrenching political crisis had he gone through different channels.

But Mr Felt received as much praise as he did criticism. In its editorial *The Washington Post*, which found itself effectively scooped by *Vanity Fair* magazine on a story it "owned", said: "Had Mr Felt remained quiet, Nixon might have succeeded in one of the most serious abuses of power ever attempted by an American President."

— **The Independent**

02. JUN 2005

THE STATESMAN

US averts historic clash

Washington, May 24 (Reuters): Fourteen Senate moderates struck a deal across party lines yesterday to avert a historic confrontation and pave the way for confirmation of several of President George W. Bush's stalled judicial nominees.

The deal, which pointedly urges the White House to consult the Senate in picking judicial candidates, was reached with less than a day to spare before a showdown vote on a possible rule change so controversial it has been dubbed the "nuclear option".

Republican leaders had threatened to strip the minority Democrats of their power to block Bush's candidates for the federal courts.

Had Republicans prevailed — and it was unclear whether they had the votes — Democrats vowed to retaliate by rais-

Senate reaches deal on Bush judicial nominees

ing other obstacles that could have tied the Republican-led, 100-member chamber into knots.

"Armageddon has been avoided. Thank God," said Senator Charles Schumer, a New York Democrat.

Signed by seven Democrats and seven Republicans, the "memorandum of understanding" declares that procedural roadblocks known as filibusters against judicial nominees will only be used in the future "under extraordinary circumstances".

"Each signatory must use his or her own discretion and judgement in determining whether the circumstances exist," the 14 senators agreed.

The issue has assumed major political significance because at least one retirement is expected from the Supreme Court in the near future.

Special-interest groups from across the spectrum had joined the battle, as the federal courts decide many cultural and social issues, such as abortion rights and gay rights.

The group of moderate senators committed to clearing the way for confirmation votes on three long-stalled nominees to the federal appeals courts — Priscilla Owen, Janice Rogers Brown and William Pryor. Their backers have long maintained that they have majority support,

but Democrats called them too conservative.

The group explicitly did not commit to allow votes on two other nominees, William Myers and Henry Saad, so they may have to be scuttled.

With some conservative and liberal groups opposed to compromise, Senator Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican and one of the negotiators, said, "People at home are going to be upset at me for a while."

In their agreement, the 14 lawmakers urged the White House to consult members of both parties before submitting judicial nominees for consideration. "Such a return to the early practices of our government may well serve to reduce the rancour that unfortunately accompanies the 'advise and consent' process in the Senate," they wrote.

2 MAY 2005 THE TELEGRAPH

Pentagon to close down 180 military bases

WSJ
11-16

Rumsfeld plan to save \$49 billion over 20 years



FLYING INTO HISTORY: A U.S. airman performs a pre-flight inspection on a C-130H cargo plane at the Air Reserve Station in Niagara Falls, New York, on Friday. This air base is to be shut under a Pentagon plan. — PHOTO: AP

Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon is proposing to shut down some 180 military installations including 33 major bases, a move that is expected to bring about a major battle between the Defence Department and Congress.

Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is keeping many other installations including 29 major bases open but with fewer troops. A few bases will see a gain in troop strength.

According to Mr. Rumsfeld his plan will save about \$ 49 billions over a 20-year period and is making the point that this re-structuring will make the military mobile and better suited to tackle the war on terrorism.

But overall the Defence Secretary's plan would result in a net loss of about

29,000 military and civilian jobs at the domestic installations. The latest bases closure will have to be approved by a Federal base closing commission and then signed on to by Congress and President.

This is a well-drawn-out process, which will last into the fall, it is said. The political battles on base closures will be tough as members of Congress are keeping and eye on their constituents and communities which will be disadvantaged.

One of the proposed closures of the Defence Secretary is the Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, the home to the B-1B bombers and where the half the fleet is based. That has brought about an immediate response from freshman Senator John Thune who has called the Pentagon thinking "flat wrong".

Major blow to Bush over Bolton U.N. nomination

U.S. can do better than him,
says Republican Senator

Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON: In a major blow to U.S. President George W Bush, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has sent the nomination of John Bolton as Ambassador to the U.N. to the full Senate floor for a vote but without the customary recommendation.

The committee voted 10 to 8 with all Republicans voting in favour and all Democrats opposing.

The White House nominee would have been rejected but for the key vote of Ohio Republican George Voinovich who said while he opposed Mr. Bolton he did not want to stand in the way of a full Senate vote. A 9 to 9 vote would have killed the nomination.

"It doesn't appear that Mr. Bolton has the confidence of the majority of this committee," said ranking Democrat Joseph Biden. Mr. Bush should take note of the development, he said.

A second blow to the White House came later when Senator Barbara Boxer put on hold the nomination which means that the Senate cannot take this up for a vote.

Filibuster

Also the Democratic leadership has not made it known if there will be a filibuster should the full Senate take up the nomination. Republicans are confident that a vote could be scheduled before the Memorial Day recess.

What surprised many Democrats is the manner in which Mr. Voinovich opposed the nomination and his stinging remarks. "I have come to the determination that the United States can do better than John Bolton," he said and added that he was not going to be "arrogant" to impose his judgment on the full Senate by blocking the nomination

"Quite frankly, much of what I was going to say was going to be redundant — and not as elegant — as what we just heard," said Mr. Biden of Mr. Voinovich's observations.

14 MAY 2005

THE HINDU,

Bolton faces key Senate panel vote

Republican on committee non-committal

Bob Deans

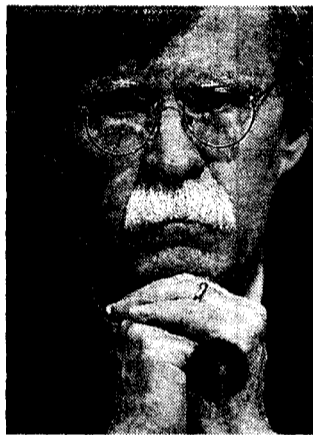
WASHINGTON: The White House and Senate Republicans were confident on Wednesday that President George Bush's controversial nominee John Bolton would win approval on Thursday from a key committee to be the next U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Democrats meanwhile were trying to determine whether they could delay the vote by the sharply divided Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Approval by the panel, where Republicans have a 10-8 majority, would send Mr. Bolton's nomination to the full Senate. That would set the stage for his almost certain confirmation, since Republicans control the Senate by a 55-44 margin.

Thursday's vote is a test of Mr. Bush's political clout on Capitol Hill and follows an extraordinary battle over Mr. Bolton, who was nominated two months ago.

Committee aides from both parties have examined 29 witnesses in testimony that has filled 1,000 pages of transcripts. They've also reviewed some 830 documents from the State Department, the U.S. Agency for



John Bolton

International Development and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Exhaustive check

"It has been more exhaustive than any single nomination I can remember in 29 years on the committee," said committee Chairman Sen. Richard Lugar.

At least one of the panel's 10 Republicans was still on the fence — at least publicly — on Wednesday and all eight Democrats planned to oppose Mr. Bolton. A single Republican defection could have put the committee on a tie. —New York Times News Service

13 MAR 2006 THE HINDU

Bolton committee widens inquiry

Julian Borger

WASHINGTON: The U.S. Senate committee assessing John Bolton's nomination as the next U.S. ambassador to the U.N. has widened its inquiry to interview several more potentially hostile witnesses, in a fresh blow to the White House.

Only months after winning re-election, George Bush's authority is being challenged on several fronts.

Bush prestige at risk

President has risked his prestige with his adamant support for Mr. Bolton, even after some Republicans on the foreign relations committee voiced doubts about his temperament.

According to an official on the committee, most of the two dozen officials and former officials the Senators plan to interview in the next 10 days are thought to have clashed with him, or to

have witnessed some of the heated rows for which he earned a reputation in his former job at the State Department. "Most of them are witnesses to some of the controversies we've been talking about," the official said.

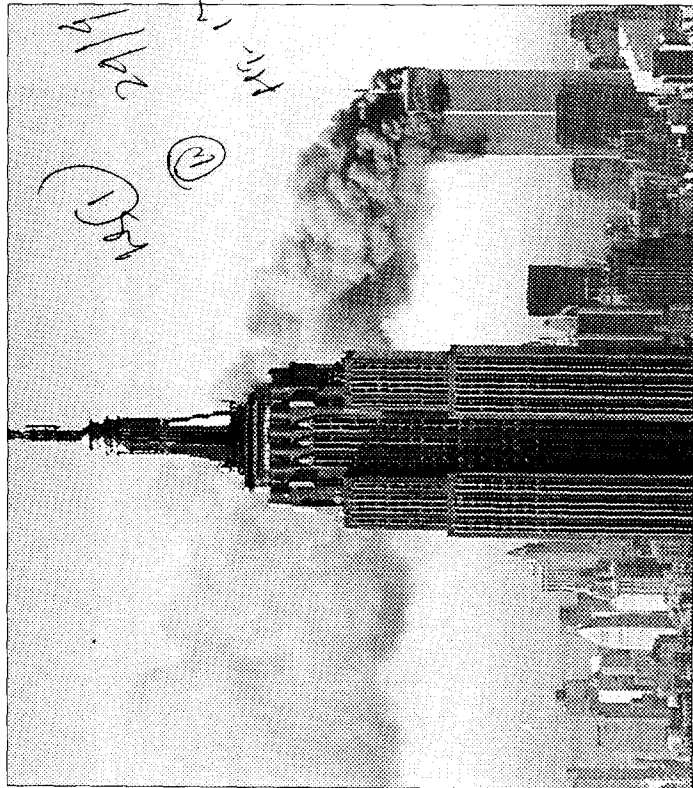
Mr. Bush is taking a similar risk in demonstrating Oval Office backing for an embattled congressional leader, Tom DeLay, accompanying him to a public event on board Air Force One at a time Mr. DeLay, a fellow Texas Conservative, is facing multiple charges of ethics violations.

Meanwhile, the pension reform programme he has made the priority of his second term is languishing amid lukewarm support from many Republicans, and its merits are being debated by a deeply divided Senate panel. Mr. Bush has refused to back down on any of these tests of strength. — ©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2005

29 APR 2005

THE HINDU

1st conviction: 9/11 accused pleads guilty



The World Trade Center on fire after the second plane hit it.

Associated Press
Virginia, April 23

WITH THE first US conviction from a September 11 case in hand, federal prosecutors face a new battle over whether Zacarias Moussaoui should receive the death penalty. Although he pleaded guilty as expected on Friday, Moussaoui told US district judge Leonie Brinkema: "I will fight every inch against the death penalty." Just last week, he had told her he would plead for execution. That was among several surprises as the defendant voluntarily admitted his guilt on six counts of conspiring with al-Qaida leaders and the September 11 hijackers to wreak havoc on Americans. Four counts carry a possible death penalty.

Moussaoui also declared for the first time in public that Osama bin Laden personally instructed him to fly an airliner into the White House. The target date was not clear.

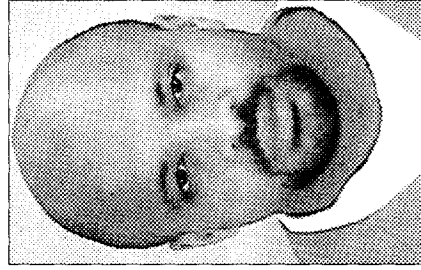
Over the objection of his lawyers, Moussaoui admitted guilt as he appeared in a courtroom a few miles from where one of four hijacked planes crashed into the Pentagon in September 2001. The others crashed into New York's World Trade Center towers and a Pennsylvania field, taking nearly 3,000 lives.

After Brinkema accepted Moussaoui's pleas, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales told a news conference that prosecutors would seek the death penalty for him. But the nearly hour-long court proceeding

made clear that would produce a legal battle.

Moussaoui attributed his reversal to a conversation with Brinkema this week that he said gave him a clearer understanding of his rights. Brinkema carefully pointed out to Moussaoui in court that his guilty pleas did not waive his right to continue fighting to obtain potentially mitigating evidence from three top al-Qaida leaders in US custody. Moussaoui said he was prepared to go to the Supreme Court for access to those prisoners, although the high court earlier declined to overturn a plan to give him just unclassified summaries of what the trio said.

A jury will almost certainly have the final say on death, life in prison or



Zacarias Moussaoui

something less. All sides and the judge would have to agree to leave the decision to a judge, and that's not likely. This new struggle by the 36-year-old French citizen of Moroccan descent could ignite protests in Europe, where the death penalty

has less support.

Moussaoui told the judge he had not been promised a lighter sentence. "I don't expect any leniency from the Americans," Moussaoui admitted to conspiring with the 19 hijackers and al-Qaida leaders in a broad plot to kill Americans using commercial airliners as weapons. The overall conspiracy included the 9/11 attacks.

In a "statement of facts" compiled by prosecutors and signed in court by Moussaoui, he acknowledged knowing about the plot to fly planes into prominent US buildings, then lying to federal agents after his arrest in August 2001 to avoid exposing the plot. But Moussaoui hinted at a possible death penalty defense as

he tried to distance himself from the specific events of 9/11. He told the court that nothing in the statement he signed declared he was "specifically guilty of 9/11."

Moussaoui was arrested in August 2001 for overstaying his visa after drawing suspicion at a Minnesota flight school because he wanted to learn to fly a Boeing 747 even though he had no pilot's license.

Outside the courthouse, family members of September 11 victims expressed satisfaction with the outcome. Dominic J. Puopolo Jr. of Miami Beach, whose mother died on American Airlines Flight 11 that crashed into the World Trade Center, said he had "a tremendous feeling justice is being served."

U.S. Senate passes \$81-billion war spending bill

WSD
 119-15
 2/28/05

Funds also for domestic security

WASHINGTON: The U.S. Senate passed an \$81.3 billion spending bill to keep U.S. combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan running and to provide additional help to last December's tsunami victims.

By a vote of 99-0, the Senate passed on Thursday the emergency spending bill that also funds some new domestic security measures, including the hiring of additional border agents.

The Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman, Thad Cochran, a Republican, said the bill would "continue to support the additional funding that's needed for this fiscal year for our troops in the field, for those who are deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere in the world." The fiscal year ends at the end of September.

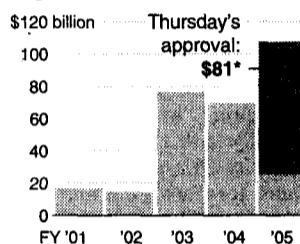
Last month, the House of Representatives passed its own measure to speed delivery of funds the President, George W. Bush, sought for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The two chambers will try to work out their differences quickly and send the legislation to Mr. Bush for signing.

New Baghdad embassy

One major area of disagreement is over the administration's plans to build a new embassy in Baghdad. The House deleted money for the construction project, largely due to concerns about record U.S. budget deficits. The Senate has included

Approved supplemental appropriations for Iraq and Afghanistan



* Overall Senate version would cost \$81.3 billion

NOTE: Includes money to protect U.S. cities, military bases and for rebuilding Iraq and Afghanistan; fiscal years begin Oct. 1

SOURCE: Congressional Research Service AP

\$592 millions for the project, which would be the largest U.S. embassy in the world. There are also differences over immigration reform, including new hurdles for foreigners seeking asylum and prohibitions on driver's licences for illegal aliens which were embraced by the House.

Related to December's Indian Ocean tsunami, the Senate provided about \$907 millions in additional funding, slightly below Mr. Bush's request.

The money would be used to reimburse the U.S. military for some of its emergency relief efforts and to provide about \$656 millions for a tsunami recovery and reconstruction fund, as well as money for improving a U.S. early warning system for detecting tsunamis. — Reuters

Vote reflects questions on Bolton's fitness for U.N.

U.S. Senate decision takes Bush Administration by surprise

Bob Deans

WASHINGTON: A divided Senate committee has decided to delay for at least three weeks a vote on John Bolton's nomination as the next U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, a surprise move reflecting deepening questions about his fitness to serve in the post.

In the interim, Mr. Bolton, the under secretary of state for arms control and international security, might be called back for a second round of questioning by committee members, said the panel's Republican Chairman, Richard Lugar.

Mr. Lugar made the decision to postpone Tuesday's scheduled vote after Sen. George Voinovich, Republican, threatened to break ranks with the party and not support Mr. Bolton, which would have prevented his nomination from being passed out of the committee.

"I've heard enough today that I don't feel comfortable about

voting for Mr. Bolton," Mr. Voinovich said during a committee meeting, throwing a wrench in Republican members' plans for approving the nomination on a party-line vote.

The move seemed to take the White House by surprise, but spokesman Scott McClellan said the President, George Bush, stands by Mr. Bolton, whom he tapped for the U.N. slot last month.

"Unfounded allegations"

"There are some Democrats on the committee who continue to raise unfounded allegations," said Mr. McClellan.

"John Bolton is exactly the person we need at the United Nations. ... We'll look forward to addressing any questions that members on the committee might have."

Mr. Bolton had appeared to be headed toward committee approval on a party-line vote before fresh allegations surfaced over the weekend by a woman

who accused Mr. Bolton of harassing and intimidating her a decade ago.

Allegations also surfaced that he selectively withheld important national security information from the former Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and his former deputy, Richard Armitage.

And on Tuesday, *The New York Times* quoted the man who served as Mr. Powell's chief of staff at state saying that Mr. Bolton would make an "abysmal ambassador" to the United Nations.

Mr. Bolton's backers have defended his management style as "tough," saying the Yale-educated lawyer has the skills and temperament to press an aggressive reform agenda at the United Nations.

In a second sign that Mr. Bolton's nomination could face uphill sledding, however, a second Republican Senator, Chuck Hagel, said he would vote for Mr.

Bolton in the committee, "but that doesn't mean that I will support his nomination on the floor" of the full Senate.

Yet another Republican on the committee, Lincoln Chafee, has said he wants to support Mr. Bolton but has not yet made up his mind.

Democrats' strategy

Democrats see the committee as their best chance for derailing Mr. Bolton's nomination.

The panel has eight Democrats, all of whom are expected to vote against him, and 10 Republicans, meaning a single GOP defection would result in a tie vote, which would fall short of passage out of the committee.

Mr. Bolton could expect a friendlier reception on the floor of the full Senate, which has 55 Republicans, 44 Democrats and 1 Independent.

Mr. Voinovich is a swing-state conservative with close personal and political ties to Mr. Bush. — *New York Times News Service*

Schiavo dies after bitter battle

Associated Press
Pinellas Park, March 31

TERRI SCHIAVO, the severely brain-damaged woman who survived on a feeding tube for 15 years, died on Thursday, 13 days after the tube was removed. She was 41.

Schiavo died at the Pinellas Park hospice where she lay for years while her husband and parents fought over her fate in the nation's most bitter — and most heavily litigated — right-to-die dispute.

The feud between the parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, and their son-in-law continued even after her death. Brother Paul O'Donnell, an adviser to the Schindlers, said the Schindler family was denied access at the moment of Schiavo's death. "They have been requesting, as you know, for the last hour to try to be in there and were denied access by Michael Schiavo. They are in there now, praying at her bedside," he said.

Schiavo suffered severe brain damage in 1990 after her heart stopped because of a chemical imbalance that was believed to have been started by an eating disorder. Court-appointed doctors ruled she was in a persistent vegetative state, with no real consciousness or chance of recovery.

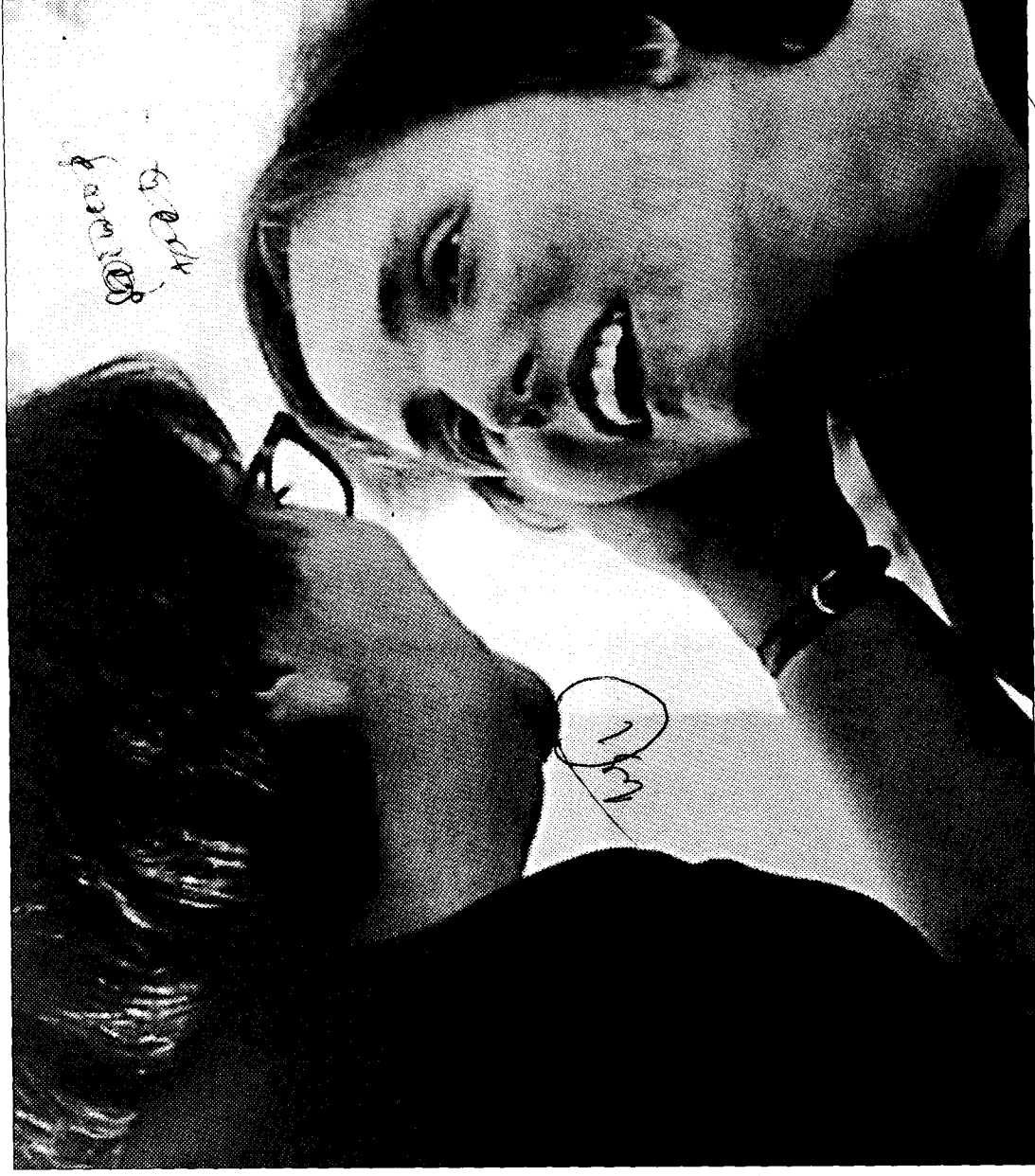
The feeding tube was re-

moved with a judge's approval on March 18 after Michael Schiavo argued that his wife told him long ago she would not want to be kept alive artificially. His in-laws disputed that, and argued that she could get better with treatment. They said she laughed, cried, responded to them and tried to talk.

During the seven-year legal battle, Florida lawmakers, Congress and US President George W. Bush tried to intervene on behalf of her parents, but state and federal courts at all levels repeatedly ruled in favour of Michael Schiavo. The case focused national attention on living wills, since Schiavo left no written instructions in case she became disabled.

After the tube was disconnected, protesters streamed into Pinellas Park to keep vigil outside her hospice, with many arrested as they tried to bring her food and water. The Vatican likened the removal of her feeding tube to capital punishment for an innocent woman. The Schindlers pleaded for their daughter's life, calling the removal of the tube "judicial homicide".

Dawn Kozsey (47), among those outside Schiavo's hospice, wept when she got the news of her death. "Words cannot express the rage I feel," she said. "Is my heart broken for this? Yes."



A Reuters file photograph of Schiavo with her mother Mary at her hospice in Pinellas Park, Florida.

A shy woman thrust into the spotlight

Reuters

Miami, March 31

TERRI SCHIAVO was shy and self-conscious as a child and hated attention, friends and relatives said.

Born Theresa Marie Schindler in December 1963, she grew up in a Roman Catholic family in a suburb of Philadelphia, the eldest of Bob and Mary Schindler's three children. Chubby as a child, she lost weight dramatically in early adulthood — by some accounts going from more than 90 kg to just over 45 kg.

Doctors say a severe potassium imbalance caused cardiac arrest in

1990 that deprived her brain of oxygen, putting her in a persistent vegetative state.

"She was quiet," childhood friend Sue Pickwell, who was a bridesmaid at Schiavo's wedding, told the *Washington Post*. "She didn't like the limelight. How ironic is that?"

Friends described her as a sweet, fun girl who giggled a lot, liked to hang out at the mall, watch *Starsky and Hutch* on TV and travel to Disney World. Terri graduated from a Catholic high school in 1981 and met her future husband, Michael Schiavo, in a sociology class at Bucks County Community College.

They were married on November 10, 1984, when she was 20, and moved to Florida's west coast in April 1986.

At first, the families were very close. Schiavo's parents and sister moved to Pinellas County around the time Michael and Terri did and the families lived together and shared expenses on and off, according to court records.

But things changed in the early hours of February 25, 1990. Schiavo's heart stopped beating. She was rushed to a hospital where doctors said she had suffered severe brain damage due to a lack of oxygen. Schiavo was discharged from the hospital

about two weeks later and was taken to a rehabilitation facility. Michael Schiavo was appointed her guardian on June 30, 1990, with no objection from her parents.

In August 1992, she was awarded \$250,000 in an out-of-court malpractice settlement.

Three months later, a jury in another malpractice case awarded about \$750,000 for her care and another \$300,000 to her husband for loss of consort.

It was shortly afterward, courts have found, that relations between Michael and the Schindlers began to fray in a dispute over the money.



An AP file photograph of Schiavo before she suffered brain damage.

AD-10 157

A GRATUITOUS SNUB

AD-10 158

UNITED STATES PRESIDENT George W. Bush begins his second term by promising to follow a multilateral approach to international affairs. Then he nominates a strident unilateralist, John Bolton, for the post of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. This is a new standard in Orwellian double-speak even for an administration that often insists black is white. As Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs during Mr. Bush's first term, Mr. Bolton spearheaded efforts to wreck weapons control initiatives such as the anti-ballistic missile treaty. If Mr. Bolton does become envoy to the U.N., he will have a platform from which he can endlessly proclaim his disdain for international institutions. After all, this is the person who once declared "there is no such thing as the United Nations." What is even more disturbing is that this particular nomination appears emblematic of a further shift towards unilateralism in U.S. foreign policy. While Colin Powell as Secretary of State made at least a pretence of following an inclusive approach, his successor, Condoleezza Rice, is likely to give fuller rein to the administration's hawkish impulses. The hope that one of the 10 Republicans on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will join the eight Democrats in rejecting Mr. Bolton's nomination seems rather futile since the White House will do its utmost to avert a defeat.

Most member states agree that the United Nations system needs reform. The U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, had set up a High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which studied ways to revamp the institutional mechanisms, especially the Security Council, for ensuring global peace. While the report submitted by this panel might not be taken as the template for change, its recommendations are likely to provide substance for a vigorous debate. Given its recent

record, the U.S. is likely to oppose the panel's view that preventive wars against non-proximate threats are illegal. However, the panel's report outlined a doctrine to justify external intervention in the internal affairs of countries where the governments are unable or unwilling to prevent serious violations of international humanitarian law. It also did not invalidate the practice followed by some countries of forming short term alliances to achieve common political objectives. Washington is likely to make a determined effort to string together recommendations of this sort into an argument that would justify armed interventions by "coalitions of the willing" in future. As a true believer in the manifest destiny of the U.S., Mr. Bolton can be expected to throw himself wholeheartedly into these efforts if he does become his country's representative to the U.N.

A Senate confirmation of Mr. Bolton's nomination will deal a body blow to the hopes of countries currently striving for an expansion of the permanent membership of the Security Council. On one occasion, he expressed the opinion that there should be only one permanent member because "that is the real reflection of the distribution of power in the world." While the Bush administration has not taken a clear position on Security Council reforms, the Bolton nomination signals that it is unlikely to be accommodating. More immediately, this move also suggests that the U.S. will actively pursue efforts to have sanctions imposed on North Korea, Iran, and Syria since Mr. Bolton was its pointman in recent diplomatic campaigns against these countries. However, there is little likelihood that the U.S. will be successful in these efforts so long as the other permanent members refuse to go along. Given these circumstances, the Bolton nomination can only be described as a gratuitous snub to the rest of the international community.

THE HINDU

16 MAR 2005

US defence missile fails test again

Washington: The US administration's effort to build a missile defence system has suffered another embarrassing setback with an interceptor missile failing to launch during a test, Xinhua reports.

This was the second failure in less than two months. Pentagon officials said the cause of the failure of Monday's test was under investigation, but early indications showed a malfunction of ground support equipment, instead of problems with the missile.

In the test, a mock ballistic missile was fired from Kodiak Island, Alaska. But the interceptor missile meant to shoot down the target missile did not take off from Kwajalein Island in the Pacific Ocean, the Pentagon said.

This was the second test failure since December 15, when the first flight test of the system in two years was aborted because the interceptor missile failed to launch. It will certainly give new fuel to critics who say the missile defence system is too expensive and its reliability not proven. JANS

US seeks defence rise

Washington, Feb. 7 (Reuters): President George W. Bush today called for a 5 per cent boost in US defence spending to \$419.3 billion next year, making the Pentagon one of the budget's few winners though facing a slowdown in growth after post-September 11, 2001, surges.

The request to speed modernisation of the Cold War military, sent to the US Congress in a \$2.5 trillion fiscal 2006 federal budget, would boost Pentagon spending by 4.8 per cent and is sure to create heated debate among lawmakers.

The Pentagon budget also does not include funding for US military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Those tens of billions of dollars would come later from separate "supplemental" requests to lawmakers. "We've got a healthy increase (request) for the year," a senior defence official

said. "Since 2001, we're up 41 per cent in the defence budget." But the request for the slightly more than \$18 billion in new Pentagon spending is smaller than the 7 per cent boost Bush asked for in fiscal 2005.

More than half of the proposed increase would be swallowed by basic spending on "operations and maintenance" to keep warplanes,

ships and other equipment in the world's premier military ready for combat. That "operations and maintenance" figure would rise by \$10.8 billion to \$147.8 billion in 2006. The cost of military personnel would also rise \$4.9 billion to \$108.9 billion, most of that for a 3.1 per cent pay raise for the troops.

Defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the fight against terrorism sparked by the 2001 attacks on the US requires heavy spending to create a high-tech force. The six-year US defence plan beginning next year also includes anticipated increases to \$443.1 billion in fiscal 2007, \$462.4 billion in 2008, \$482 billion in 2009, \$492.1 billion in 2010 and \$502.3 billion in 2011.

The military budget for the year beginning next October 1 calls for higher spending for expansion of elite forces to fight the US war on terrorism.

Iraq violence

Baghdad, Feb. 7: Suicide bombers killed at least 27 people in attacks in two Iraqi cities today in the worst bloodshed since the country's historic election eight days ago. Al Qaida's wing in Iraq claimed responsibility for both blasts and vowed to carry out further attacks on "apostates and their masters".

US plans revamp of nuke arsenal

WILLIAM J. BROAD
NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 7

WORRIED that the nation's ageing nuclear arsenal is increasingly fragile, US scientists have begun designing a new generation of nuclear arms meant to be sturdier and more reliable, federal officials and private experts say.

Officials say the programme could help shrink the arsenal and the high maintenance cost. Critics say it could possibly ignite an arms race.

So far, the quiet effort involves only \$9 million for warhead designers at the nation's three nuclear weapon laboratories, Los Alamos, Livermore and Sandia. Federal bomb experts at these heavily guarded facilities are now scrutinising secret arms data gathered over a half century for clues about how to achieve new reliability goals.

The relatively small initial programme, involving fewer than 100 people, is expected to grow and produce finished designs in the next five to 10 years. Most important, officials say,

the effort marks a fundamental shift in design philosophy.

For decades, the bomb makers sought to use the highest technologies and most innovative methods. The resulting warheads were lightweight, very powerful and in some cases so small that a dozen could fit atop a slender missile. Other nations, behind the atomic curve, settled for less.

Now, US designers are studying how to reverse course and make arms that are more robust, in some ways emulating

their rivals in an effort to avoid the uncertainties and deteriorations of nuclear old age. Federal experts worry that critical parts of the arsenal, if ever needed, may fail.

In late November, Congress approved a small, largely unnoticed budget item that started the new design effort, known as the 'Reliable Replacement Warhead Programme'. Federal officials say the designs could eventually help recast the nuclear arsenal with warheads that are more rugged and have much longer lifetimes.

New York Times

INDIAN EXPRESS

08 FEB 2005

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CONTROLLING Mr. BUSH

13-1
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GEORGE W. BUSH appears determined to carry the adventurism that characterised his first four years in office into the second term. In his State of the Union Address, he followed up on the theme that formed the core of his speech at his second inaugural — of spreading liberty to benighted corners of the world. This statement of intent must be read along with the United States President's skewed understanding of the idea of freedom. The repeated invocation of the term 'liberty' is grotesque when juxtaposed against the reality of the U.S. invading and occupying sovereign nations — and devastating the lives and livelihood of their people — with little compunction. With Iran and Syria apparently marked out as the next targets of Washington's drive to promote democracy, there is understandable apprehension that these two countries could be attacked in the next few years. However, concern on this score might turn out to be overblown since the U.S. military forces are so overstretched by the ongoing operations in Iraq that they are not likely to be available for action anywhere else. In a recent interview, Vice-President Dick Cheney aired the thought that Israel might be tempted to take out Iran's nuclear facilities. While this statement could be interpreted as signalling prior approval, even Mr. Cheney was apparently aware of the disaster that would follow if America's most faithful ally were to act in the belief that the task has been outsourced to it. For the moment at least, the U.S. might have no choice but to let the European Union go ahead with its effort to persuade Iran to abandon plans to acquire nuclear weapons.

The Bush administration might also need to give up its penchant for adventurism overseas, for the simple reason it is likely to be caught up in an intense domestic battle over plans to revamp the system of Social Security. While Mr.

Bush did touch upon the various items on his domestic agenda in his State of the Union address, he clearly perceives Social Security 'reform' as a priority. Many American politicians and economists seem to believe that flaws in the system must be corrected so as to ensure that future generations are not deprived of post-retirement benefits. Right-wing ideologues close to Mr. Bush take the view that the crisis in the system warrants a radical overhaul. One of their major proposals is that working people below the age of 55 should be given the option of depositing a part of their Social Security contributions in personal investment accounts. The funds so deposited could be invested not only in Government bonds, which are preferred instruments under the existing system, but also in the shares of private companies. Critics argue that this route is fraught with risk since the intended beneficiaries will be left at the mercy of the share market and its vagaries.

Mr. Bush has displayed unbelievable *chutzpah* in defending policies that have gone horribly wrong. He appears further emboldened to follow this approach since he could get away with it in the presidential election campaign. At present, the Democratic Party is significantly weaker than it was before the November 2 election; its numbers are down in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. However, Democrats, stung by the triumphalism of their adversaries as much as by their own reverses, seem to be more alert to the dangers of the President's ideology-driven approach. Republican moderates also fear the public will turn against them should the Bush administration unthinkingly tinker with a key component of the welfare state. Democrats will look for help from sober elements of the Republican Party as they try to rein in a President on the rampage.

THE HINDU

07 FEB 2005

Americans on terror law receive

25 JAN 2005

BASANT RAWAT

Ahmedabad, Jan. 24: American legal experts are in Gujarat to find fodder for their campaign against a draconian anti-terror law enacted in their country after 9/11.

A five-member team from the Bar Association of New York City that is spearheading a campaign against the USA Patriot Act arrived here on Saturday to study the "misuse" of the now-repealed Prevention of Terrorism Act.

One of the people they met is 66-year-old Habib Karim. Picked up by the crime branch of Ahmedabad police in April 2003, he was "held hostage" for seven days. He was given no reason for the detention and was allowed to go only after he signed on some blank papers.

Karim was not told either that his 28-year-old son, Kalim, had been picked up on the same day from his TV/radio repair shop in connection with the May 2002 tiffin bomb blast, which left 12 injured, and an ISI conspiracy case.

Although his son was taken into custody in Ahmed-

abad on April 3, 2003, the arrest was recorded on April 26 from Hyderabad, Karim told the team, which includes sitting federal district court judge Jed Rakoff and two non-resident Indians, Mamta Kaushal and Anil Kalhan.

Karim and Kalim were two of about 400 people rounded up in April-May 2003 and detained for periods ranging from three days to three weeks.

Gujarat police have booked 217 people under the anti-terror law — 50 of them are from Hyderabad, arrested in connection with the tiffin bomb blast Haren Pandya's murder and the Akshardham temple attack. All 94 Godhra train carriage accused have been booked under the anti-terror law.

The American team is touring the country to look at instances of human rights abuse under the anti-terror law that was repealed after the Mamohan Singh government came to power.

Yasmin Sheikh, 33, revived her trauma before the delegation. The resident of the city's Dariapur locality recalled that police picked up her brother-

THE USA PATRIOT ACT

- Expands terrorism laws to include "domestic terrorism" which could subject political organisations to surveillance and wiretapping
- Allows secret searches, Internet access to personal information
- Easy permission to the FBI to investigate American citizens, citing "intelligence purpose"
- Permits non-citizens to be jailed based on suspicion. They can be denied re-admission to the US for engaging in free speech



in-law Mohammed Yasin when her husband, Mohammed Hanif, a 34-year-old small-time businessman, was away at Himmatnagar in north Gujarat.

They were told that though

Yasin was innocent, he would not be released till Hanif wanted in connection with the tiffin bomb blast case, was arrested.

After the arrest of her husband, who was the family's

main earning member, Yasin was stunned by relatives and did not have money to pay her children's school fees or even provide proper meals.

Jakia Johwer, a human rights activist, said the repeal

of the terror law has not helped. She claimed that 34 families of those accused under the act have been completely ruined. "We are where we were."

Advocate Mukul Sinha, who has taken up the case of riot victims and has been campaigning against the terror act, said he is disappointed with the United Progressive Alliance government for its failure to repeal the act with retrospective effect.

Human rights activists want the Centre to drop Section 32 of the act under which confessions before police are treated as evidence. "Neither the new Anti-Terrorist Act nor the country's Criminal Procedure Code treat the statements before the police as evidence," Sinha pointed out.

Godhra probe

The Nanavati Commission, probing the Godhra train carnage and subsequent communal riots in Gujarat, has said the U.C. Banerjee committee's interim report terming the Godhra train blaze an accident was "not the final word" and it could have been an "act of terror".

518 TWO AMERICAS 261 Inaugural ceremonies reveal Bush's disconnect

SOON after President Bush scared Americans into voting for him, he appears to have chased away the ghosts of Iraq, Osama bin Laden or the "axis of evil" from the inaugural speech for his second term, not having occasion to mention them even once. Instead there were expensive fancy dress parties. It would be too much to expect the current American administration to demonstrate solidarity with suffering Iraqis or Asian tsunami victims, but an all-time high of \$40 million was expended on the presidential inauguration at a time when US budgets have gone bust, the country is at war and American soldiers are dying in Iraq. Americans were supposed to be pragmatists, but the extravagant pomp of the inaugural ceremony suggests, perhaps, a disturbing propensity on the part of the Bush administration to conjure up its own reality and give the go-by to the real world. Or it may indicate America's growing class divide — one reality for the rich, partying in Washington hotels, and another for the poor, whose lot it is to contend with growing social security cuts or fight and die in distant lands.

This, rather than the rhetorical invocations of "liberty" in Bush's speech, may be the defining characteristic of Bush's second term. US governments have backed liberty abroad about as seriously as Indian governments have been pro-poor, and Bush's first term rolled back liberty even within the USA. Bush did not mention what implications the renewed American commitment to liberty will have for its relations with China, Saudi Arabia or Pakistan. But one couldn't possibly lose any money by betting there will be none. Saudi Arabia is where the oil comes from, too much money is invested in China, and Pakistan, perhaps, will serve as a springboard for military adventures in Iran. Americans traditionally close ranks when a president is voted in, but it is a sign of the times that Bush's inauguration was accompanied by widespread protest marches, while his approval ratings dipped to 49 per cent during what should have been his honeymoon period. This is reminiscent of the Nixon era: Nixon beat McGovern decisively in 1972, against the backdrop of the Vietnam war and a deeply divided America. But Nixon's fortunes plunged soon thereafter, America, and the world, will outlive Bush and his neo-conservative crew.

Bush begins on a "combative" note

By Julian Borger

WASHINGTON, JAN. 21. George Bush yesterday began his second presidential term with a call to American action abroad, committing the United States to the spread of global democracy and "ending tyranny in our world."

In arguably the most combative inauguration speech for half a century, Mr. Bush made clear that the Afghan and Iraqi conflicts had not diminished his determination to take the "war on terror" to America's enemies. He saw them as only part of a much broader mission, which he phrased in almost messianic terms.

"By our efforts, we have lit a fire in the minds of men. It warms those who feel its power, it burns those who fight its progress, and one day this untamed fire of freedom will reach the darkest corners of our world," Mr. Bush said on the steps of the Capitol building.

Religious language

The speech, much of it couched in religious language, was addressed first to the rest of the world and only secondly to the American people. In it, Mr. Bush portrayed a planet consumed by the struggle between liberty and tyranny, in

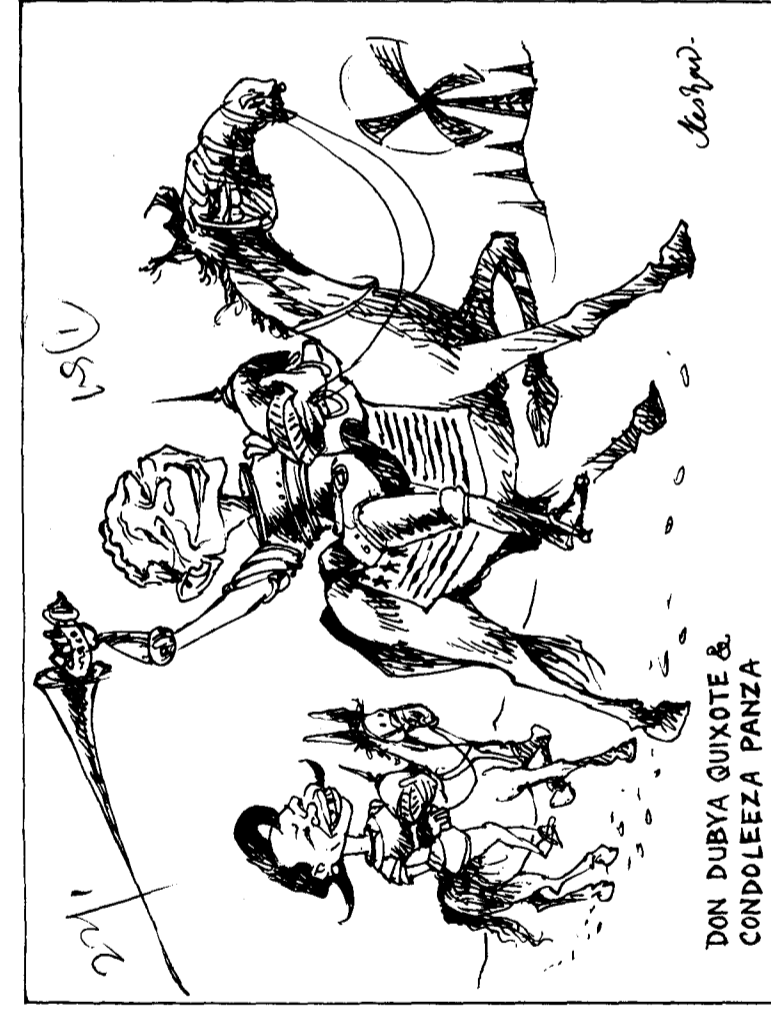
concerned at the U.S. death toll in Iraq, he argued that the only way to defend the country was to promote democracy overseas and thus uproot the source of threats to the homeland.

"History has an ebb and flow of justice, but history also has a visible direction set by liberty and the author of liberty," he said. The deliberate use of language, familiar to evangelical Christians, won more cheers from the crowd than any other phrase in the speech.

Radical address

With this radical address, Mr. Bush nailed his colours once and for all to the "neoconservative" mast, committing himself to an activist foreign policy. He went out of his way to reject the more traditional "realist" Republican philosophy associated with his father, which argues that democracy cannot be exported to regions like the Middle East (West Asia) and that U.S. foreign policy should be guided by narrowly defined national self-interest.

In its call for selfless service by young Americans, the speech was reminiscent of John Kennedy's 1961 inaugural address, in which he pledged Americans "shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend,



DON DUBYA QUIXOTE & CONDOLEEZA PANZA

which the U.S. would not stand the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world," he said.

The confrontations to come would not necessarily be "the task of arms," he insisted, but movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with over his second-term plans for

Iran, the newly re-elected President did not exclude the possibility of further battles.

He pledged: "We will defend ourselves and our friends by force of arms when necessary."

To the American people,

oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

The second half of yesterday's address was aimed at domestic policy. The Bush administration would also pursue the spread of freedom at home, by promoting an "ownership society" built on private ownership of homes, private pension schemes and health insurance.

"By making every citizen an agent of his or her own destiny, we will give our fellow Americans greater freedom from want and fear and make our society more prosperous and just and equal," he said.

The president's message was embraced by an overwhelming, supportive crowd who had flown in from around the country to witness an event many saw as the triumph of a new strain of Christian conservatism.

Scott Hennen, a radio talk-show host from Fargo, North Dakota, had been in Washington for Mr Bush's 2001 inaugural address. "I think there is a certain wind at the back of the president that was not there the last time," he said. "He has a big agenda. This president is not marking time. He is here to get things done." — ©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2005

Second coming?

Bush is hatching some scary ideas

Seymour Hersh, the Pulitzer prize winning journalist who exposed the My Lai massacres and American torture in Abu Ghraib, comes up with another troubling expose with implications for Delhi. According to him, the Pentagon has commandos in Iran to locate underground nuclear installations, and President Bush has cut a Faustian deal with General Musharraf whereby AQ Khan and fellow scientists will be awarded immunity from questions on their nuclear proliferation activities, in exchange for Islamabad offering all help, including intelligence on neutralising Iran's nuclear weapons programme.

Hersh's report is corroborated by independent reports, pointing to American and British commandos in exercises in Karachi, because it resembles Iranian cities. Bush has promised a big agenda for his second term, and the use of the military option against Iran is on the table. His report also satisfactorily explains why Musharraf is getting so much out of Bush while giving, apparently so little satisfaction in return.

Islamabad has received billions of dollars in addition to the status of a non-NATO military ally, which in effect means that F-16s could be in the pipeline, while it does nothing about Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, AQ Khan, or democracy. The real answer to the nagging puzzle could well be some such covert arrangement whereby the neo-conservative obsession with Iran is satisfied, as well as the Pakistani military keeping nuclear secrets.

It would appear that Washington has not learnt any of the lessons from the Iraq fiasco, as defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld and President Bush still appear of the view that a limited strike on Iran, which takes down its military and nuclear infrastructure, will weaken the unpopular clerical regime, showing people that it is vulnerable. This fantasy persists to this day. First, the Iranian nuclear programme, if any, is likely to be located in dispersed underground sites, and the quality of American intelligence has so far been very poor.

It is very unlikely that they will manage to find any of Iran's nuclear programme. Second, massive US air strikes targeting Iran's programme are the one thing that will make Iranians, who are intensely nationalist, rally to the mullahs' side. Iran could walk out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and as long as it has scientists and oil money it can rebuild its nuclear programme. With its people aroused it will also rebuild its military. US strikes would thus end up strengthening the Iranian regime, while the consequences of Shia outrage would be felt in Lebanon, Iraq, Pakistan and elsewhere.

The Iraqi resistance is mainly Sunni, imagine its power if majority Shias join forces with it. Musharraf would be a marked man, as far as Pakistani Shias are concerned. Delhi needs to brace itself for the shock, and have some contingency plans in hand, because Bush will not change!

149-117
111

Mixed reactions to Bush inauguration

By Adam Nagourney
and Janet Elder

WASHINGTON, JAN. 20. Even as George W. Bush assumes office for the second term, most Americans say they do not expect the economy to improve or that American troops would be withdrawn from Iraq by the time Mr. Bush leaves the White House, and many have reservations about his signature plan to overhaul Social Security, according to the latest *New York Times*/CBS News poll.

Seventy per cent, however, said they thought Mr. Bush would succeed in changing the Social Security system. And the poll found that 43 per cent of respondents expect most forms of abortion to be illegal by the time Mr. Bush leaves the White House, given his expected appointments to the Supreme Court. The poll offered the kind of conflicting portrait of the nation's view of Mr. Bush that was evident throughout last year's presidential campaign.

Nearly 60 per cent of respondents said they were generally optimistic on the eve of the swearing-in about the next four years, but clear majorities disapproved of Mr. Bush's management of the economy and the war in Iraq. Nearly two-thirds said a second Bush term would leave the country with a larger deficit, while 47 per cent said that a second term would divide Americans.

Focus on social security
Americans said that they

did not expect any improvement in health care, education, or in reducing the cost of prescription drugs for the elderly by January 2009. Just under 80 per cent, including a majority of those who said they voted for Mr. Bush in November, said it would not be possible to overhaul Social Security, cut taxes, and finance the war in Iraq without increasing the budget deficit.

The findings suggest that Mr. Bush does not have broad popular support as he

embarks on what the White House has signalled would be an ambitious second term. That could undermine his leverage in Congress, where even some Republicans have expressed concern about major aspects of Mr. Bush's Social Security plans. Mr. Bush's job approval rating is at 49 per cent as he heads into his second term — significantly lower than the ratings at the start of the second term of the last two presidents who served eight years, Bill Clinton and Ronald

Reagan. And 56 per cent said the country has gone off on the wrong track, about as bad a rating Mr. Bush has received on this measure since entering the White House. Still, as Mr. Bush enters what the White House views as a critical two-year window before his power begins to wane, the poll suggests that Mr. Bush's effort to lay the groundwork to reshape the Social Security system has had some success. — *New York Times News Service*

Protests to greet Bush inauguration

Associated Press
Santa Cruz, January 19

WHILE US President George W. Bush's supporters celebrate his inauguration on Thursday, thousands of protesters around the US aim to hit the streets with demonstrations and rallies against the returning administration. "There are some in this country who are just not in the mood to let the President have his day in the sun," said James Hudnut-Beumler, dean of Vanderbilt University's Divinity School and an expert in protest movements.

Although Bush was met with protesters when he was sworn in 2001, inaugural protests are rare historically, Hudnut-Beumler said. "Presidents are usually given an opportunity in their inauguration address to try to claim the affections and interests of the whole nation, including people who didn't vote for him." But in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Seattle, organisers expect thousands of demonstrators to gather on Thursday for speeches and rallies. In dozens of smaller communities rallies, marches and demonstrations are also planned. Former Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern is the

featured speaker at a demonstration planned for Santa Cruz.

For some demonstrators, the reasons to protest are simple. "We're objecting to Bush being reinstalled as President of the US. He's illegitimate," said Carol Brouillet of Palo Alto, California, who plans to spend on Thursday in San Francisco displaying huge panels of photographs of soldiers killed in Iraq. Brouillet, who believes Bush used the 9/11 terror attacks as a pretext for an illegal war, has shown the photos at various demonstrations.

Others said they were seeking comfort in numbers. "We don't feel that Bush's supposed mandate represents us. Maybe this is just therapy for us for feeling helpless and hapless," said veterinarian Paul Makidon of Michigan. In addition to street protests, some anti-Bush groups are calling for a daylong economic boycott, pressing critics to stay home from work and not spend any money. "We've tried marching in the streets to stop the war, we tried writing letters, we tried initiatives on the Web, but Bush doesn't listen. It seems to us the only thing Bush and the Republicans will listen to is money," said another protester.

Security alert near White House

AN UNIDENTIFIED man who sparked a security alert by parking his van near the White House and making threats about igniting a "substance" has surrendered without incident to the police, officials said. The white, grey-haired man surrendered on Wednesday after provoking a tense standoff with secret service agents and police as Washington gears up security for President George W. Bush's inauguration on Thursday. A policeman at the scene had earlier said the man had informed police he had a "substance that he could ignite" inside the van.

AFP, Washington

রবার্ট জোয়েলিক পূর্বতন মার্কিন উপ-বিদেশসচিব

নিজস্ব প্রতিনিধি, ওয়াশিংটন, ৮
জানুয়ারি: মার্কিন বিদেশ দফতরের
দ্বিতীয় প্রধান ব্যক্তি হিসেবে রবার্ট
জোয়েলিকের নাম ঘোষণা করেছেন
প্রেসিডেন্ট জর্জ বুশ। পূর্বতন
বিদেশসচিব কলিন পাওয়েলের
জায়গায় এ মাসেই দায়িত্ব নিচ্ছেন
কন্ডোলিজা রাইস। পাওয়েলের
ডেপুটি হিসেবে রিচার্ড আর্মিটেজ
ছিলেন ভারতীয় উপমহাদেশ বিশেষত
দিল্লি ও ইসলামাবাদের পরিচিত মুখ।
ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে নানা
সময়ে সমঝয়ের জন্য এই দুই দেশেই
এসেছেন আর্মিটেজ।

বুশ বলেছেন রাইস ও
জোয়েলিক, দু'জনে মিলে একটি
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উপযোগী হবেন তা নিয়ে দিল্লির
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কঠোর নীতি প্রয়োগ করেছেন। ২০০৩
সালে কানকুনে বিশ্ব বাণিজ্য সংস্থার
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ভারতকেই দায়ী করেছিলেন তিনি।

ভারত থেকে কাজের
আউটসোর্সিং নিয়ে যখন আমেরিকা
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বাণিজ্যমন্ত্রী অরুণ জেটলিকেও কড়া
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নয়া বুশ প্রশাসনে জোয়েলিকের
ক্ষমতা বাড়ায় দিল্লি যথেষ্ট উদ্বিগ্ন।

BUSH'S VICTORY

Conservative Consolidation Of A Republican President

By SUBRATA MUKHERJEE

In the recent US presidential election, President George W. Bush consistently charged his Democratic challenger, Senator John Kerry, with being a liberal and out of tune with the majority conservatism of the American people. The election verdict revealed that Bush as a conservative prevailed over a liberal Kerry by a thin margin. It also helped Bush to consolidate his rule by polling a majority of popular votes, which eluded him in 2000.

It is an irony of history that in 2000 Bush could win, because the US constitution was framed as a liberal constitution with the aim of limiting state power. This is evident from the invention of the electoral college for electing the President and by equal representation of all the states. This arrangement may be good for working out the details of a negative federation but in spirit it is anti-democratic. The continuation of a dual role of a head of state and the head of government in a single individual is also a continuance of a medieval practice of consolidation and not of dispersal of power.

Black and white

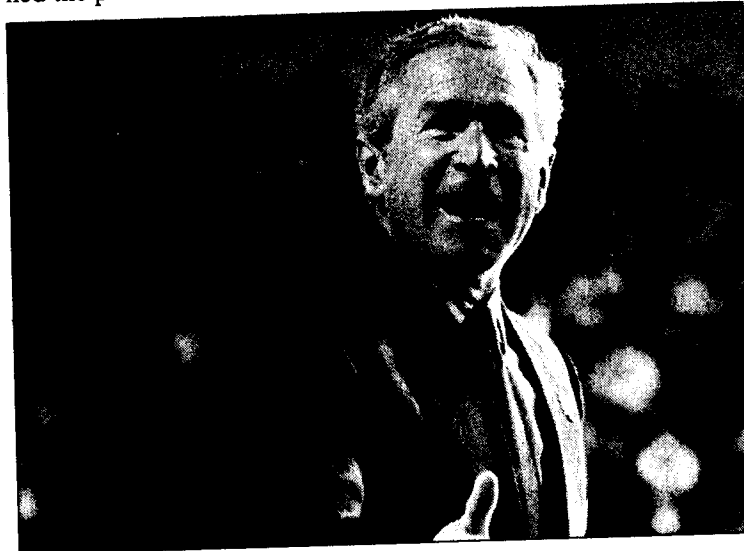
The anti-liberal tirade by Bush is a logical continuation of his oft-repeated quote of John Foster Dulles at the height of Cold War that if one is not with him, then one is against him. The world for Dulles at least, in rhetoric, is black and white and with no shades of grey. In such a situation, respect for the views of others or of dissenters is a taboo. It is at odds with the entire liberal tradition of the US, which is exemplified by the Jeffersonian phrase of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is also a negation of a liberal Jefferson's hope that even if entire Europe becomes authoritarian, the Republican frame would be alive in the US.

This conservative consolidation of a Republican President can best be understood in the conduct of a bipartisan foreign policy in the US after the shock of 11 September. The US, which has never suffered the costs of a war or of massive devastation because of its strategic geographic location and one reinforced by the promulgation of the Mon-

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roe Doctrine in 1818 as "America for the Americans" has been able to insulate itself within a framework of an isolationist policy. It was helped by the fact that, in the absence of a feudal past, US politics always remained the politics of minor contra-

cular is very profound and long. The clergy discusses political matters from the pulpit and the church provides the institutional infrastructure for political mobilisation. It is also important that church officials take partisan stands on important public



dictions with economic well-being as being more important than divisive political issues. It is because of this that there has never been a meaningful development of a social democratic formation, one which has created a very different political culture in Western Europe by marginalising forces of extremes, both on the Right and on the Left. The continued existence of organisations like Ku Klux Klan and the religious predominance in the US politics has taken care of the void created by the absence of a social democratic intervention and organised trade unions.

Sidney Verba and his associates have found out that in the US non-political institutions like the family, school, institutional affiliation of adult job and religious organisations add significantly to the acquisition of politically relevant resources. Religious and church activities teach ordinary people civic skills and communication abilities and, in inculcating these important political attributes, religion plays a crucial role.

Church and state

Verba categorically asserts that despite the formal separation of the Church and the state, religious organisations in the US in general and the role of the church in US politics in parti-

insulated parochial culture. This feeling was so overwhelming that the fact of going to war in Iraq to find weapons of mass destruction was forgotten and the President was forgiven for telling a lie. The mind of an average American is convinced about the uniqueness of the American enterprise, its invincibility and unchallenged leadership and that tilted the scales in Bush's favour. This gulf in the perception of an average American and that of the world at large, including Western Europe, is so wide that had the entire world voted, then Bush would have lost by 2 to 1.

Popular vote

An analysis of the Bush victory reveals he was elected with the majority support by way of popular vote. The last time a President in the US was elected with majority support by way of popular vote was in 1988 when George Bush Senior was elected President. However, it is also a fact that, despite this majority support, Bush as a sitting President has won with the smallest margin of victory, namely three per cent in terms of the percentage of the popular vote. Till now, it was Woodrow Wilson as a sitting President who had the smallest margin, that of 3.2 per cent. This conservative triumph of Bush may be much more short-lived than it appears now. The close contest itself is astounding, as after 11 September, Bush had a record support of 90 per cent putting him on par with John F Kennedy's popularity after the Cuban missile crisis. However, this overwhelming support plummeted to a mere 51 per cent, with the Democratic challenger just three per cent behind in the final election result.

The rise of Bush is a new version of Reagan's new right which ran out of steam with the collapse of communism and also led to the denial of George Bush his second term, despite winning the Gulf war then along with other coalition forces. However, 11 September and the unexpected turn of events since then gave a lease of life to a military solution and aided by race and religion helped Bush achieve his victory. The larger question, in the context of US politics, is whether this eclipse of liberalism is transient or permanent.

issues like abortion and gay or lesbian rights

With a higher rate of church attendance than Europe, religion plays a distinctive role in American politics. This was taken note of by Alexis de Tocqueville in the early 19th century. In the absence of organised trade unions and think-tanks like the British Fabian Society, the church plays a vital role in guiding and motivating citizen activity in politics. The role of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr, in the civil rights movement is an indication of the role of the southern black church is well known. Similarly, the white fundamentalist Protestant Church, which supports conservative causes, played a decisive role in Bush's victory blunting the edges of a more liberal and less religious though a Catholic John Kerry. It is this efficient coordination of conservative church networks with the help of the modern media and communication techniques that allowed Bush to win in a territorially and often racially divided American political set-up.

The sub-cultural isolation and hostility helped consolidate the power base of a President who is busy protecting American interests in an adversarial anti-American culture abroad. Bush emerged as a saviour of this