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Caught Iraqis may have Qaida ties

DETENTION COULD BE VITAL TO VERIFYING TERROR LINK

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSUL, Iraq — U.S. forces have captured three members of Osama bin Laden's terrorist network in northern Iraq, a U.S. military commander told The Associated Press on Sunday. If confirmed, it would be the first dis-

closed detention of al-Qaida militants in Iraq.

About 10 members of Ansar al-Islam, an Islamic group U.S. officials believe has al-Qaida links in northern Iraq, also have been arrested by U.S. troops in the past seven months, said Col. Joe

Anderson, commander of the 2nd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division.

Asked if troops had captured members of al-Qaida, Anderson, whose brigade controls Mosul, replied: "Three, two weeks ago."

Anderson said he believed the captured al-Qaida men were Iraqis, who were transferred to Baghdad for further interrogation.

"We take them, we process them

through a detention facility ... and if all the facts wind up they go to Baghdad, and once they go south that's the last I ever hear from them," he told AP in an interview.

It was not immediately possible to confirm the captures.

In recent months, U.S. forces in central Iraq have detained a handful of people suspected of ties to al-Qaida, but U.S. intelligence officials described them as mostly low-level operatives with unclear pur-

poses in the country.

The Bush administration has asserted that bin Laden's terrorist network maintained links with the government of deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. However, U.S. authorities searching Iraq since the invasion, have said they have found little that would suggest links between the two.

On Saturday, the top U.S. commander in Iraq said that although the United States suspects mem-

bers of the network have taken part in attacks on coalition and civilian targets in Iraq, there is no conclusive evidence of its involvement.

"We still haven't conclusively established an al-Qaida operative in this country," Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez told reporters in Baghdad.

Anderson said an array of anti-U.S. groups operate in northern Iraq. "There are cells of different types here that we keep reading through and capturing," he said.

Officials applaud funding proposal

Plan allots \$54M for staff salaries

BY WILL AREY
STAFF WRITER

University officials indicate that creating a fund for staff salary increases, which was identified as a priority in the draft five-year plan for University spending, will be a positive first step in solving the problem of stagnant salaries.

The plan allocates \$54 million for developing a recurring funding mechanism for staff salary raises.

The proposal is crucial because it gives the University an option for putting salary increases into place, said Laurie Charest, associate vice chancellor for human resources. Campus departments now can increase salaries through job reclassification, but they are on their own to fund the increases.

"We don't have any internal allocations that can be used for staff salary increases," she said. "We already have a mechanism, but we don't have any regular way of funding the mechanism itself."

Charest said the plan also is important because it recognizes that staff salaries are an immediate problem, adding that it can help the University become more competitive in the labor market.

Employee Forum Chairman Tommy Griffin said the money eventually would be used to pay employees on the higher end of the scale set by the N.C. General Assembly, which outlines minimum and maximum salaries that employees can be paid depending on a job's specific classification. But Griffin said the money would be used differently in the short term.

"To start with, this money could be used to play catch-up with salaries," he said. "It would also serve as retention and recruiting

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BACK FROM BREAK



DTH/LAUREN PARKER

As the Thanksgiving holiday winds down Sunday, senior Shannan Goss marches up the stairs of Parker Residence Hall with new provisions after returning from her home in Randleman.

Getting back to campus was no easy task for many students, who faced heavy traffic

on Interstate 40 going east and west, as well as other major roadways.

The five-day break provides students with the relaxation needed to survive the last full week of classes. Looming due dates and last-minute assignments will characterize the upcoming week for many at UNC.

Co-speakers forge fragile relationship

Leaders take reins in House's battles

BY CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR.
STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

Under the leadership of Co-speakers Richard Morgan, R-Moore, and Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, the N.C. House last week passed new district maps — its most contentious and hotly contested issue — in two days.

The body also presented its first draft of the budget April 17, a robust pace, especially after two years of historically long sessions.

Many say this quick pace comes from the success of North Carolina's first-ever shared power agreement in the state House.

But some legislators and outside observers assert that the co-speakers' success comes at a cost, as evidenced by last week's redistricting process. Rep. Billy Creech, R-Johnston, said that most legislators had too short a time to review the maps before voting on them and that many were left out of the process entirely.

Additionally, Creech said, the speakers did not accept amend-

ments from House members or let them speak against the maps.

"They just put it together in the back room and penalized people that would not agree," he said. "We were not allowed to amend it, to debate it or anything. We had people with their mics on ready to debate, and they shut them up."

Rep. Ed McMahan, R-Mecklenburg, called the redistricting session "a blow to democracy" primarily because of the amount of time representatives had to evaluate the maps.

"How can you pass out a map to the body and say, 'You have 50 minutes to debate it?'" he said. "Our Republican group did not even caucus to speak on the map. ... It was strictly done by the speakers and their staff."

Black and Morgan could not be reached for comment Sunday night but said in a redistricting press conference that they spoke with House members about the

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DTH FILE PHOTO/GABI TRAPENBERG

Co-speakers Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg (left), and Richard Morgan, R-Moore, have evolved into two of the powerful forces in the N.C. House.

Proposed districts sever old ties

BY EMMA BURGIN
ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

The redistricting maps proposed by the N.C. General Assembly last week have left some state senators searching for ways to reach out to new constituents who could decide whether they return to Raleigh in 2004.

The proposed maps cut some long-established ties among counties and also bind new ones. The maps now will go to the N.C. Supreme Court for approval before the 2004 elections.

In the middle of the proposed map is a district change that would end a 30-year link between Orange and Person counties.

The new maps would place Sen. Ellie Kinnaird, D-Orange, in a district that includes Orange and Person counties, the latter of which has been paired with Durham County since the 1960s.

"The communities of interest have really been split," she said.

"It's been very sad for people.

"A lot of people in Chatham County work in Orange County, and a lot of people in Person County work in Durham."

Kinnaird said it will be hard for her to shift her focus to Person County given the fact that she has represented Chatham for the past seven years.

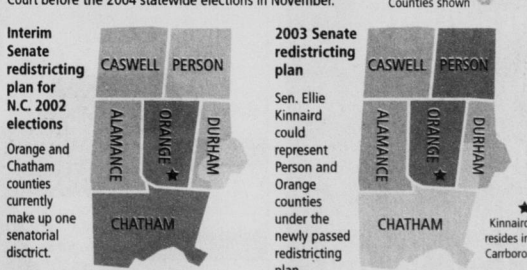
"I know Chatham County very well," she said. "I know people in Chatham even better. Now we have to get to know new people."

The most difficult thing legislators face when their districts shift is separating the needs of current and new constituents, said Ferrel Guillory, director of UNC's Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life.

"It's a balancing act," he said. "They've got their eyes on two districts. It means they have to go out at night and go to civic clubs and meet people. There's no magic to it — it's just hard work."

PROPOSED N.C. SENATE REDISTRICTING PLAN

Redistricting plans must be approved by the state Supreme Court before the 2004 statewide elections in November.



The proposed Senate maps keep 88 counties whole and split another 12 counties into more than one district. The interim maps used in the 2002 midterm election split 16 counties, leaving only 84 whole.

The Senate map also changed district lines significantly in eastern

North Carolina, including altering District 11, giving Sen. A.B. Swindell, D-Nash, all of Wilson and Nash counties. Swindell now represents a portion of Vance County and all of Franklin and Nash counties.

SEE KINNAIRD, PAGE 6

Innocence project gives inmate hope

BY STEPHANIE M. HORVATH
SENIOR WRITER

James Parker is lucky. Lucky that Joshua Myerov, a second-year UNC graduate student in journalism, was intrigued by his case and decided to investigate it for his thesis.

Lucky that The Charlotte Observer was willing to invest four months in a story about Parker's possible innocence.

Lucky that a Charlotte defense lawyer took his case pro bono.

But once, Parker was very unlucky. Twelve years ago, he was convicted in one of North Carolina's largest sexual abuse cases and sentenced to three life terms plus 60 years.

Myerov's research showed that Parker probably did not commit the crimes. He now has a chance of being freed.

Housed at the Piedmont Correctional Institution in Union County, Parker is 42 years old. He's a big man, well over 6 feet tall with broad shoulders, large brown eyes and an uncertain smile. His voice is deep, steady and quiet.

"I thought at least the judge was going to see the truth after I went to court," he said in an interview. "But didn't nobody see the truth. But now the truth came out, and they still dragging, won't let me go home."

He spends his days reading the newspaper, working in the laundry and exercising. And he prays. "I ain't going to bore you with a lot of religious talk, but I believe in God and ask for his strength. ... It's hard, and I got through changes, but I don't let nobody see it."

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INSIDE

TEA TIME

PlayMakers' latest production, "Hobson's Choice," brings the English countryside to Chapel Hill PAGE 2

SPORTS

REACHING THEIR GOAL

The Tar Heels advance to the NCAA semifinals for the 22nd consecutive year after a win Friday PAGE 14

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