

Rebuilding in Iraq still far from being complete

BY KRISTIN PRATT
STAFF WRITER

It has been almost two years since President Bush stood in front of the "Mission Accomplished" banner on board the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier.

His mission of restoring control of Iraq to its citizens moved forward with the Jan. 30 elections, but reconstruction efforts are still under way.

"The elections are a major milestone and achievement towards that objective," said Col. Barry Venable, an Army spokesman for the Department of Defense.

"One of the fundamental aims of Iraqi reconstruction and war is to help the Iraqi people transition to a representative self-government," Venable said.

Sgt. Jason Smith, a Marine serving in the VMAQ-4 unit in Iraq, said the elections were a major victory for both the Iraqis and American soldiers. "It's the greatest feeling in the world to defend not only our freedom, but to help another gain the same."

Venable said the Iraqi transitional government will draft a permanent constitution. In October, a referendum will be held to approve the draft constitution. After the constitution is accepted and established, officials said they hope a permanent government will be elected by December 2005.

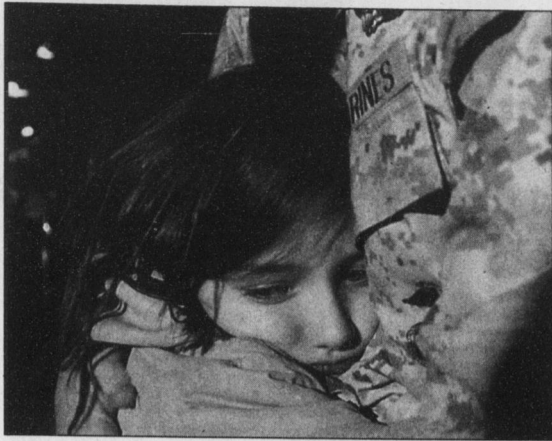
"There's a full-spectrum effort to reconstruct the country," Venable said. "Not to reconstruct the country from the war, but reconstruct from the 30 years of neglect and totalitarianism."

The progress and liberty of Iraq has cost the lives of 1,574 U.S. soldiers since the war began March 20, 2003.

There are 138,000 U.S. troops now serving in Iraq and 22,000 coalition troops representing 27 nations.

The primary goal of the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. troops in Iraq is to help neutralize the insurgency, Venable said. Training Iraqi forces is part of that neutralization process, he said.

"They have to defend their own country," he said.



DTH FILE PHOTO/SARA LEWKOWICZ
Abby Hogan, 8, clings to her father, Maj. Tim Hogan, at the New River Marine Corps Air Station in New River in February after his return from Iraq.

Neutralizing the insurgency will take years, Venable said, and military personnel from North Carolina bases are executing that mission.

There are more than 3,000 Marines representing the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing in Iraq, said Lt. Col. Annita Best, director of the Joint Public Affairs Office at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point.

Members from that wing deployed in February and began their mission in March. They will serve 12 to 14 months in Iraq, Best said.

The various Marine units provide administrative assistance for all those deployed, ground support for aviation combat and protection for friendly aircraft.

There are also two Marine helicopter squadrons and a refueler transport squadron from MCAS New River serving in Iraq, she said.

"I want ... the faculty and students to realize that it's a team effort over here," said Marine Maj. Kyle "Itchy" Rash, a pilot for VMAQ-4. "Regardless of rank, service or age, everyone here is a true professional and patriot. They are placing their needs and desires behind the needs and desires of their country."

But the process of generating peace and liberty in Iraq will take time.

"There's a lot of work ahead," Venable said. "There have been some large gains in the last two years, and there are larger gains to be made."

Although there will continue to be fighting and some deaths, Venable said the military's objectives in Iraq will not change.

"The war will fade out, and democracy will prevail," said Gunnery Sgt. Tate Ulven of VMAQ-4. "These will both take time, and our military presence will do a handover but will not be far away."

Venable said the defense department is not now considering withdrawing from Iraq.

"Success is defined by a self-governing Iraq, capable of maintaining itself as a sovereign nation at peace with, and not a threat to, its neighbors."

"When that occurs, it will mark another major milestone in the global war against terror."

"Operation Iraqi Freedom is not just the 'War in Iraq,'" he added.

"It's only one war in the war against global terror."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Faculty retain Carolina ties

BY KIRSTEN VALLE
SENIOR WRITER

When the University of Georgia offered biology professor Mark Peifer a \$1 million endowment, a chair in genetics and a salary that was twice what he made at UNC, he couldn't help but take a second look.

"It was a really spectacular offer," he said. "(UGa.) was trying to build in the area I work, and it had put together a ridiculously large amount of money to do that. It was a little tempting."

But after some consideration — and a counteroffer from UNC that included a chaired professorship and better research opportunities — he decided to stay.

"This is just a terrific place to do what I do," said Peifer, who has been at UNC for 13 years. "I have terrific colleagues and grad students, and I love the teaching that I do. Everything about this place is perfect."

He added, "I didn't care that much about the salary."

In an era of competition during which UNC is constantly fighting to keep its top faculty members, many professors still are loyally wearing Carolina blue.

Despite significant losses in 2003 — the University lost nearly 70 percent of faculty it tried to retain — UNC is making strides in retention, Executive Associate Provost Steve Allred said.

In 2003-04, UNC kept 43 of the 69 faculty to whom it made counteroffers, he said. In the College of Arts and Sciences, UNC kept 70 percent of its faculty who received counteroffers.

"It's not surprising (that institutions often seek out UNC professors)," Allred said. "Frankly, it's a compliment. We have such good faculty, and we compete with the best institutions nationally."

Provost Robert Shelton said the key to retaining faculty is working quickly. "The magic word is proactive," he said. "We have to jump in before someone has an offer. If they've thought about it to that extent, they may have already left Chapel Hill mentally."

While financial incentives are difficult to come by, factors such as the quality of life, quality of people and opportunity for spousal hires can convince faculty to stay, Shelton said.

According to UNC's 2004 study on faculty retention, faculty come to

UNC — and stay — because of the quality of colleagues, research support, academic rank and institutional or departmental prestige. More than 70 percent of respondents to a faculty survey rated colleagues as "very important" in both coming to and staying at the University.

"Most faculty here like the students they teach and like the colleagues in their departments," said Lloyd Kramer, chairman of the history department. "A lot of faculty really believe in the mission of a public university, and they like being at Carolina because it's a public university that attracts quality students."

The downside of being public is that UNC can't offer the same salary and benefits other institutions can, Kramer said. "The University is trying hard to address this issue, but some factors are beyond our control," he said.

And competing universities take advantage of that. Peter Coclanis, a history professor-turned-administrator who has been at UNC for more than 20 years, almost got away — twice. Boston University offered him a department chair, a pay raise and a thriving urban locale. Case Western Reserve University dangled before him a dean position and more department funding. It went down to the wire, but Coclanis decided to stay at UNC.

"I considered both offers seriously," said Coclanis, whose first job was at the University. "It was a close call, but in the end I thought it'd be a better idea to stay at UNC."

Coclanis said his main reasons for staying were the quality of his students and colleagues, the counterproposals UNC made and his family's love for Chapel Hill. Still, the University remains in danger of losing good professors, he said.

"Good faculty get inquiries all the time, and our best faculty could get much more elsewhere," he said. "If the right approach is made, they'll listen. Most people that are here are pretty happy, but they get frustrated, at times, with the money situation — not just their salaries, but the money that goes into their department."

Judith Wegner, chairwoman of the faculty and author of the retention report, said money was a major factor in UNC's losses. "Constrained salary structures make us a target for other schools," she said. "It's difficult for state universities to compete

with private institutions."

According to the report, almost two-thirds of faculty respondents said their salaries do not correspond to their contributions to the University. While salary was the seventh most-cited factor in connection with hiring, it is in the top few related to remaining at UNC.

UNC isn't alone in its faculty-retention challenges. "This is a time when many great universities around the country are fighting to retain folks," Wegner said. And UNC has even been able to lure professors from other schools.

"We do the same thing," Allred said. "We do hire faculty from other institutions."

Allred said the ever-shifting faculty rosters of today are more a product of the people than the universities. "Faculty retention is an issue for all institutions, but what's different is that faculty now have an expectation that they might change jobs in the future," he said. "What we hope is that faculty who come here want to stay here — and a whole lot of them do."

Peifer said faculty constantly are offered positions and constantly are turning them down. "The whole thing is a weird process, but welcome to America, right?" he said, laughing. "Everything's a market. I hate that."

University administrators are finding it increasingly important to gain control over that market.

"The quality of the University is dictated by the quality of the people, and those people are faculty, students and staff," Shelton said. "Once you lose one component, the rest go downhill."

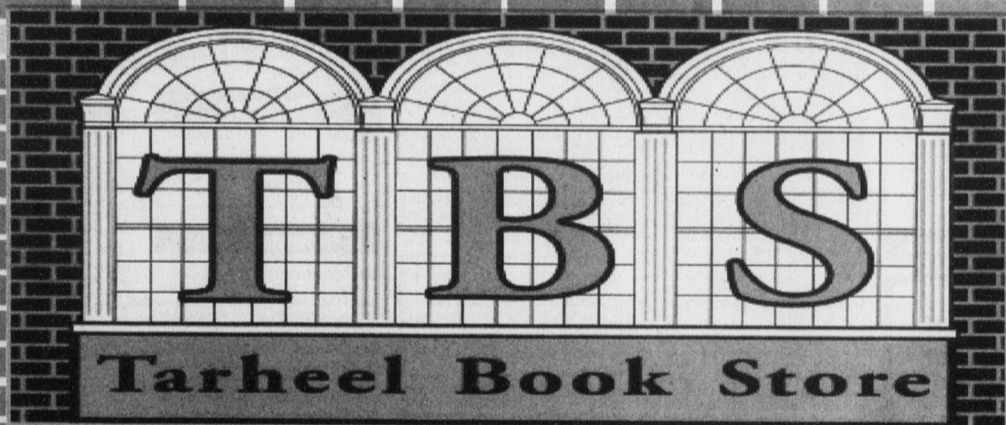
In the end, losing faculty also hurts morale, Wegner said.

"It isn't good practice to only have old professors; you need a reasonable mix," she said. "But if some old professors start to leave, it can have a cascading effect. If some people leave, others think they might not want to spend their futures here."

Luckily for UNC, some professors' blood will always run Tar Heel blue. Peifer, for one, said he plans to stay in Chapel Hill for the rest of his career.

"I really love it here. And I have 35 acres out in the country. I'm not going anywhere."

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