

BRIEF
STATE

INDIANAPOLIS

Bills would define when
life of fetus begins

Two bills pending before the Indiana General Assembly would require doctors to tell women seeking an abortion that life begins at conception and that a fetus could feel pain.

Similar legislation last year passed the House but failed in the Senate. This year, supporters believe the odds of passage are improved.

Arkansas, Georgia, Minnesota and Oklahoma have laws regarding fetal pain, but only South Dakota requires doctors to tell women that life starts at conception.

Betty Cockrum, president and chief executive officer of Planned Parenthood of Indiana, said both points are in dispute. Doctors who testified before a House committee last year said the medical community was uncertain over whether a fetus can feel pain, she said, and science shows life begins when a fertilized egg attaches to the uterine wall, not at conception.

BRIEFS
WORLD

AP PHOTO

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, left, speaks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah on Sunday.

RAMALLAH, West Bank

Rice hears demands
for U.S. hand in peace

President Bush's top diplomat tried to assure Palestinians on Sunday she has heard their demands for a stronger U.S. hand to guide peace efforts with Israel. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, however, offered no new plans and gave few clues to how she views recent initiatives proposed by others.

Seeking to strengthen Abbas in his power struggle with the Palestinian Hamas faction, Rice said it is time "to look at the political horizon and begin to show to the Palestinian people how we might move toward a Palestinian state."

A proposed \$85 million grant to train and equip the historically troubled security service loyal to Abbas would come with strings attached, Rice said.

MOGADISHU, Somalia

African Union members
attend Somalian talks

An African Union delegation was in Somalia's capital Sunday to discuss the deployment of peacekeepers here, as the government struggled to disarm Mogadishu residents reluctant to give up their guns after years of fighting for themselves amid chaos.

The United States, United Nations and the AU all want to deploy peacekeepers to stop Somalia from descending again to anarchy. So far no African governments have responded to the call for an 8,000-strong peacekeeping force, although Uganda has indicated it is willing to send 1,500 peacekeepers as part of a wider mission.

President Abdullahi Yusuf needs to establish enough calm to allow international peacekeepers to deploy in Somalia to protect his government until it can establish an effective police force and army. Last month, the government, with the critical help of Ethiopia's military, drove out an Islamic militia that controlled much of southern Somalia since summer.

THE WAR IN IRAQ

Bush stands alone

President still
planning to send
more troopsBY BEN FELLER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Digging in for confrontation, President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney say they will not budge from sending more U.S. troops to Iraq no matter how much Congress opposes it.

"I fully understand they could try to stop me," Bush said of the Democrat-run Congress. "But I've made my decision, and we're going forward."

As the president talked tough in an interview that aired Sunday night, lawmakers pledged to explore ways to stop him.

"We need to look at what options we have available to constrain the president," said Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., a possible White House candidate in 2008. Democrats remain wary, though, of appearing unsupportive of American troops.

A defiant Cheney, meanwhile, said Democrats offered criticism without credible alternatives. He pointedly reminded lawmakers that Bush is commander in chief.

The aggressive White House reaction came as the House and Senate prepare to vote on resolutions opposing additional U.S. troops in Iraq.

As the White House watched even some GOP support peel away for the war plan, it went all-out to regain some footing.

Bush gave his first interview from Camp David, airing Sunday night on CBS' "60 Minutes." It was his second prime-time opportunity in five days to explain why he thinks adding U.S. troops can help stabilize Iraq and hasten the time when American soldiers can come home. He addressed the nation from the White House last Wednesday evening.



AP PHOTOS

President Bush departs the White House in Washington for a trip to Wisconsin and Colorado on Feb. 20. Bush said he will not budge from sending more U.S. troops to Iraq.

Bush more isolated than ever in plans for Iraq

BY JENNIFER LOVEN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

President Bush once said he was determined to stick with the Iraq war even if his wife and his dog were the only ones left at his side.

It's moving in that direction.

People in the United States already were angry about the war before Bush said he would try to bring unrelentingly violent Iraq back from the brink by adding 21,500 more U.S. troops to the 132,000 there now.

Polls show the U.S. public overwhelmingly does not like the idea. Democrats always in opposition were joined very publicly by some Republicans in dissent. Even Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-

ANALYSIS

Maliki had to be persuaded to go along with a larger U.S. presence in Baghdad.

"He is as isolated as a president can be," said Julian Zelizer, a political historian at Boston University.

Lawmakers did authorize the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Today, however, the Democratic-controlled Congress is poised to produce votes against a policy that, although nonbinding, will reverberate into the 2008 elections.

And Bush's problem with Washington's politicians is not only the product of the new partisan divide.

Moderate Democrats who had the president's back on the war are jumping

ship. The din of disapproval is heard even among some conservative Republicans. The time when only a few GOP lawmakers gingerly would criticize the president's leadership on the war has given way to the kind of no-holds-barred rhetoric heard the day after Bush's Wednesday night speech.

"The most dangerous foreign policy blunder in this country since Vietnam," said Sen. Chuck Hagel, R-Neb., a presidential aspirant and persistent war critic. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., until now a war supporter, said, "I have not been told the truth."

GOP Sen. John McCain of Arizona, one of the holdouts on Bush's side who wants more troops, acknowledged it was anyone's guess whether most Republicans will back the president when the votes are called.

Iraqi official calls for release of detainees

BY KIM GAMEL
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq

The Iraqi foreign minister called Sunday for the release of five Iranians detained by U.S. forces in what he said was a legitimate diplomatic mission in northern Iraq, but he stressed that foreign intervention to help insurgents would not be tolerated.

The two-pronged statement by Hoshiyar Zebari highlighted the delicate balance facing the Iraqi government as it tries to secure Baghdad with the help of American forces while maintaining ties with its neighbors, including U.S. rivals Iran and Syria.

"Any interventions — or any harmful interventions to kill Iraqis or to provide support for insurgency or for the insurgents should be stopped by the Iraqi government and by the coalition forces,"



U.S. and Iraqi army soldiers take positions during a fire fight with insurgents in Baqouba, Iraq, on Sunday.

Zebari said in an interview with CNN's "Late Edition."

But he also stressed Iraq has to keep good relations with its neighbors in the region.

"You have to remember, our destiny, as Iraqis, we have to live in this part of the

world. And we have to live with Iran, we have to live with Syria and Turkey and other countries," he said. "So in fact, on the other hand, the Iraqi government is committed to cultivate good neighborly relations with these two countries and to engage them constructively in security cooperation."

The U.S. military said the five Iranians detained last week in the Kurdish-controlled northern city of Irbil were connected to an Iranian Revolutionary Guard faction that funds and arms insurgents in Iraq. It was the second U.S. raid targeting Iranians in Iraq in less than a month.

The military said the Quds Force faction of the Revolutionary Guard, a hard-line military force that reports directly to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is "known for providing funds, weapons, improvised explosive device technology and training to extremist groups attempting to destabilize the Government of Iraq and attack Coalition forces."

Clinton,
Bayh visit
KabulSenator seeks truth
about state of affairsBY JASON STRAZIUSO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KABUL, Afghanistan

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton ate breakfast with soldiers from New York and Indiana at the main U.S. base in Afghanistan on Sunday before meeting with the top American general in Afghanistan and Afghan President Hamid Karzai, officials said.



CLINTON

Clinton, a Democrat from New York who is considering running for president, came from Iraq with Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind., and Rep. John McHugh, R-N.Y. All three are members of armed services committees.

On Friday, Clinton said she was hearing "increasingly troubling reports out of Afghanistan" and would be searching for "accurate information about the true state of affairs" militarily and politically on her trip.

The Taliban last year launched a record number of attacks, and some 4,000 people, most of them militants, died in insurgency-related violence, according to a tally by The Associated Press based on reports from Afghan, NATO and coalition officials.



BAYH

Lawmakers
propose
farm bill

Law would support farmers

BY LIBBY QUAID
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Lawmakers begin work on a new multibillion-dollar farm bill at odds with President Bush over whether big changes really are needed.

The two sides are far apart. Just how far, farmers saw for themselves during the American Farm Bureau Federation's recent meeting in Salt Lake City.

"I think the bill could look a lot like what we have now. What I think we're going to end up doing, you could say, is extending the farm bill," Rep. Collin Peterson, D-Minn., chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, told farmers.

Contrast that with Bush's agriculture secretary, Mike Johanns, who said at the meeting that farm programs need an overhaul.

"I will be the first to argue that the 2002 farm bill was good policy for its time," Johanns said. "But the agricultural and economic realities that influenced the development of the '02 farm bill — they simply don't exist."

The farm bill, really a series of federal programs, gives farmers payments and other help to supplement their incomes, support crop prices and manage supplies.

Near \$18 billion in public money was spent on these programs last year. The current farm bill, written in 2002, expires at the end of this year.

Congress and the administration disagree mightily on what the new farm bill should look like.

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