

NEWS

National and world news in brief

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Rice gives no assurance that prisoner abuse will end

BRUSSELS, Belgium: Condoleezza Rice, U.S. Secretary of State, said in a NATO news conference that there is no guarantee that U.S. international prison detainees will not be abused in the future.

"Will there be abuses of policy? That's entirely possible," Rice also said at the news conference. "Just because you're a democracy it doesn't mean that you're perfect."

She did assure those in attendance, however, that all cases of abuse in the future will be investigated. "That is the only promise we can make," she said.

The meetings were held due to the concerns of the United States' European allies about the conduct of the American government in recent years. Rice refused to answer, however, any questions as to whether the CIA operated secret prisons in Europe in violation of European legal and human rights guarantees or about U.S. treatment of European prisoners.

"There is a difference of opinion between Condoleezza Rice and the Council of Europe because the law of war doesn't exist. We have international conventions. We are fully in favor of the fight against terrorism, but we have to be aware that certain cases can not be accepted," said Rene van der Linden, chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Rice also made statements that claimed that no direct U.S. employees would be participating in the torture of prisoners of the war on terror and avoided the issue of contracting out such work to countries with far looser legal protections against such tactics.

Email scams widespread

WASHINGTON: More than one in four internet email users are recipients of convincing "phishing" scams and pyramid schemes, a recent study concluded.

"What's happening is that more and more people are actually engaging in transactions online that would generate e-mail traffic that the scammers are copycatting," said Tatiana Platt, senior vice president at AOL.

"Phishing" refers to the practice of sending emails that resemble legitimate communications from banks, insurance agencies and businesses that request information that a third party can then use in identity theft or bank transfers.

The study also found that over 81 percent of computers have insufficient protection from spyware and viruses.

Source: CNN.com, Yahoo! News

Ann Coulter calls audience stupid

STORRS, Connecticut: Ann Coulter, a conservative opinion columnist, was the recipient of jeers as she gave a speech at the University of Connecticut.

Coulter, who has had problems with college crowds before, decided to change her plans after getting largely negative crowd reactions to statements about former President Bill Clinton, who she called "an executive buffoon." Instead, she decided to open up a question and answer session with the students.

"I love to engage in repartee with people who are stupider than I am," Coulter told the crowd of 2,600 students and faculty members after the abbreviated speech on Wednesday.

Eric Knudsen, who is a 19-year-old journalism and social welfare major who heads the group Students Against Hate, was upset by the comments Coulter was making during the speech. "We encourage diverse opinion at UConn, but this is blatant hate speech," he said.

Coulter also ran into problems in a highly publicized incident in 2004, when students at the University of Arizona pelted her with custard pies during a speech.

Air Marshals shoot passenger

MIAMI: Federal air marshals on an American Airlines flight to Miami shot and killed a passenger carrying a bag and acting in an agitated state.

Rigoberto Alpizar was a passenger on that flight. The air marshals shot him as he was leaving the plane at the end of the flight, clutching his bag and clearly in a panic. The marshals claim that he was making bomb threats and walking up and down the plane aisles telling people he had a bomb.

"Based on their training, they had to take the appropriate action to defuse the situation to prevent a danger to themselves and also passengers in the terminal," said Dave Adams, a spokesman for the federal Air Marshals service. "He failed to comply with their commands, continued approaching the air marshals claiming he had a bomb in his bag. And then they ordered him again down to the ground. He didn't."

Questions are being raised about the official story, however, because not a single passenger on the flight will confirm it. None recall ever hearing anything about a bomb, nor seeing the victim stalking up and down the aisles announcing it, as the official report claims. Furthermore, Alpizar had bipolar disorder, which caused him to become agitated in periods of high stress. Many passengers recall his wife making statements that he needed his medication, that she was reassuring him that they'd be home soon and that her husband was feeling ill.

"Rigo Alpizar was a loving, gentle and caring husband, uncle, brother, son and friend," said Jeanne Jentsch, Alpizar's sister-in-law. "He was born in Costa Rica and became a proud American citizen several years ago. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him."

Alpizar was shot at least five times as he exited the plane. The air marshals are now on paid administrative leave as an official investigation into the events leading to the shooting continues.

Speaker series tackles globalization

By Justin DeSantis
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The fall semester Speaker Series came to a close Thursday night, and the final choice was no less impressive than any of the last few speakers, just perhaps a little less known.

The speaker series is held by the Sam and Irene Black School of Business. It is sponsored by the activity fee. It is also supported by the Janet Neff Sample Center for Manners and Civility and the Harriet Behrend Ninow Memorial Lecture Series Fund.

This semester has been a blend of celebrities and people who are well respected in certain fields.

On Dec. 7, it was Dr. Joseph Stiglitz who made the trip. Dr. Stiglitz is a Nobel Prize winner and professor. He won the prize in his field of economics. He received a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was a member of the Council of Economic Advisers for former President Clinton from 1993-1995 and then served as the chairman from 1995-1997. He was then named chief economist and senior vice-president of the World Bank.

He brought to the world his "Economics of Information" and has made many contributions to the world of monetary theory and macroeconomics.

Dr. Stiglitz's speech pertained to the world market, also known as globalization. The term comes from the idea that all man-made barriers that separate trade should be taken down. But such was his style that for every point he made; he made sure to express the other side of arguments.

The speech dealt with the system of world

trade and how some of the advanced nations have really hurt smaller, developing nations.

"I came a little late, but I enjoyed it," says Chris Sitter, a senior Economics major. Among the many points stressed, it was clear that Dr. Stiglitz's had hit home.

"I was most [surprised] by how the U.S. is not living up to its agreements," said Sitter. The U.S., according to Dr. Stiglitz, had made some promises that they failed to keep.

Dr. Stiglitz himself said that his speech isn't directed to be anti-American.

"There are two messages to [take] from this lecture: the United States has to move and cope, and many policies have been in the wrong direction," says Dr. Stiglitz.

"The second message is that Americans [sometimes] only see the perspective of the United States and don't have the opportunity to see it from others' points of view," says Dr. Stiglitz.

Fred Langil saw the more social side of Dr. Stiglitz.

"A genuine [sense] of caring; [a] caring for the world order," says Langil, about what he had taken from the speech.

"Every one of us tonight was being mentored," said Langil.

As for the Speaker Series, most agreed it went well with a very balanced mix of entertainers and people who handle "real world" situations.

"I liked the mix. It's good also to get some real issues [of importance]," said Sitter.

As for his experience at Penn State Erie, Dr. Stiglitz was most impressed.

"It was a very enjoyable, enthusiastic student body; they asked a lot of well-thought out questions," said Dr. Stiglitz.

Classifieds

"I expect to pass through life but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again."

~William Penn

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