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The grenade was wrapped in a dark plaid cloth handkerchief. It was "tossed in the general direction of the main stage" about 1:30 p.m., right after Bush began speaking, and landed less than 100 feet from the podium, Paarmann said. The grenade reportedly bounced off a child's cap and then was removed by a Georgian security officer. The White House initially stated that the president was in no real danger, however the event has lead to a review of security measures at presidential events.

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because of a malfunction. "The activation device deployed too slowly to hit the blasting cap hard enough," agent Bryan Paarmann said. A 20,000 laris (\$10,978 USD) reward is offered for information leading to the arrest of the person responsible.

The grenade was a knock-off of a Soviet-designed RGD-5, which has a lethal range of about 100 feet. "We consider this act to be a threat against the health and welfare of both the president of the United States and the president of Georgia as well as the multitude of Georgian people that had turned out at this event," Paarmann said. It had initially been believed to be a non-explosive model used for military training.

The RGD-5 is an oval fragmentation grenade made for the former Soviet Army that can be thrown a maximum of about 130 feet (40 meters). It weighs 310 grams and contains 110 grams of TNT explosive. It is most dangerous at shorter ranges; its effective fragment radius is 50-65 feet (15-20 meters), with a maximum fragment range of 100 feet (30 meters).

British Columbia votes



The 2005 General Election voting polls have closed, and results are being counted. The CBC has

called the election for the BC Liberal Party, returning Gordon Campbell as premier.

Tropical Storm Adrian forms in Eastern Pacific, threatens Central America



Tropical Storm Adrian, the first named storm of the 2005 Pacific Hurricane Season, formed 440 miles (710 km) southwest of Guatemala and El Salvador on Tuesday, and is expected to track northeast towards Central America

Weather:



Map of Georgia

An FBI official at the US embassy in Georgia confirms that an explosive device was thrown, but due to a malfunction it failed to detonate. "This hand grenade appears to be a live device that simply failed to function due to a light strike on the blasting cap induced by a slow deployment of the spoon activation device," the FBI stated.

The FBI is still investigating the incident. According to their report the device failed to explode

A classic hand grenade has a handle and a removable safety pin that prevents the handle from coming off. After the pin is removed and the handle subsequently released, the grenade will detonate in approximately three to five seconds, depending on grenade type. When the grenade is thrown, a spring throws off the safety lever and rotates the striker into the primer. The primer contains material like the head of a match. When struck by the striker, it ignites and sets fire to the fuse, or powder train. The fuse burns at a controlled rate, providing a time delay (usually 4-5 seconds). When the flame of the fuse reaches the detonator or igniter, it causes action on the filler. A detonator is similar to a small blasting cap. Very sensitive to heat, when the fuse burns into

it, it causes the grenade to explode.

Birds attack people in Houston

Just like a Hitchcock horror movie, birds are on the offensive in downtown Houston. According to the Associated Press, large black grackles are attacking people on a stretch of sidewalk in the city. It is thought that the birds may be trying to protect their young.

The sidewalk, which is in front of the County Administration Building, has been closed off by the authorities.

In 1960 Hitchcock based *The Birds* starring Tippi Hedren on a Daphne du Maurier short story from the early 20th century. Although the locations are different, the main focus of both works is birds that attack people.

"I hit him with a bottle," said Sylvia Velasquez. "The other birds came, and one attacked my blouse and on my back."

Kuwait parliament gives women the vote



On May 17, 2005, the National Assembly of Kuwait passed, by a majority of 35 to 23 (with 1 absetention), an amendment to its electoral law that would allow women to vote and to stand as parliamentary candidates. Commentators predict that this will increase the number of eligible voters from approximately 139,000 to approximately 339,000, out of a population of approximately 960,000.

"We made it. This is history," prominent activist Roula al-Dashti told reporters. "Our target is the parliamentary polls in 2007. I'm starting my campaign from today." Kuwait becomes the fourth Gulf country where women as well as men can vote in elections after Bahrain, Oman and Qatar. Saudi Arabia holds strictly limited, male-only elections. "I hope they are talking about separate ballot boxes and

not the imposition of Islamic dress... which infringes on personal freedoms," Kuwait University academic Nada al-Muttawa said.

"This is a historic moment for women," Sheikha Suad al-Sabah, a member of the ruling family said.

Landless Workers Movement marches to Brasilia in protest



MST members in Brasilia. Photo: Valter Campanato/ABr.

Brasilia, Brazil – Thousands of members of the Brazilian Landless Workers' Movement (MST) completed their march to Brasilia yesterday, having started their 238 km journey on May 1. They demanded President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva meet land reform promises, and protested against the US government and President George W. Bush.



MST members burning American flag among garbage in front of US Embassy in Brasilia. The text in red reads, "Bush: the head of the worldwide terrorism." Photo: Marcello Casal Jr./Abr

The Brazilian government news agency Agencia Brasil reported that about 12,000 members of MST protested in front of the US Embassy in Brasilia. The group gathered garbage and burnt with it an American flag. According to Rosana Fernandes, an MST representative, they were protesting against American culture, politics and corporations.



Brazilian president receives MST representatives. Photo: Ricardo Stuckert/PR.

Representatives of MST also met with Brazilian President Lula da Silva. According to Agencia Brasil, they presented four demands to the government: the restructuring of the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Incra), the execution of the National Plan for Agrarian Reform announced in 2003, the creation of a special line of credit, and changes in the definition of unproductive land for expropriation. MST claims that they reached an agreement with Lula, and that he agreed to spend about half, or 700 million reais (\$282 million USD), of the land reform budget he froze in 2005. Agrarian Reform Minister Miguel Rosseto denied that a deal had already been made, but said that the meeting had been positive and a proposal would be offered to the MST on Wednesday.



MST and police entering in conflict. Photo: Valter Campanato/ABr.

During the protests some members of MST conflicted with police forces in Brasilia. According to the police, 20 policemen were badly injured and were hospitalized. Also according to the police, the incident started after some MST members attacked a police car near the Palace of Justice. A police officer that left the car to talk to the crowd was assaulted with punches and kicks. The mounted police came to help the trapped

officers and dispersed the crowd. MST reported 32 for their members injured in the incident, although independent news sources report around 20.

The MST march to Brasilia was organized by Via Campesina, an international organization in support of rural worker's rights and sustainable agriculture.

The MST's leader João Pedro Stedile said that the MST must return home with their batteries recharged and increase the occupation of land in Brazil.

Tropical Storm Adrian forms in Eastern Pacific, threatens Central America



Image of Tropical Storm Adrian as of 17:45 UTC

Tropical Storm Adrian, the first named storm of the 2005 Pacific Hurricane Season, formed 440 miles (710 km) southwest of Guatemala and El Salvador on Tuesday, and is expected to track northeast towards Central America. The government of El Salvador has upgraded the tropical storm watch to a tropical storm warning and a hurricane watch for all of El Salvador. A tropical storm watch remains in effect for the entire Pacific coast of Guatemala. The government of Honduras has issued a tropical storm watch for the Pacific coast of Honduras, including the Gulf of Fonseca.

As of 5pm Pacific Time on Wednesday (0000 UTC on Thursday), it was moving northeast at 8 mph (13 km/h) with maximum sustained windspeeds of 60 mph (95 km/h). It is expected to strengthen slightly, possibly becoming a minimal hurricane at landfall.

The current location of the center of the storm is 11.1° N, 92.1° W; about 260 miles (420 km) southwest of San Salvador.

Additional strengthening is expected over the next 24 hours; outer rain-bands containing gusty winds and locally heavy rainfall are already affecting the costal areas of Guatemala, and should begin affection El Salvador tonight. Rainfall accumulations of 6 to 10 inches, with isolated higher amounts of up to 20 inches in the mountains, can be expected in association with Adrian. This system also has the potential to produce torrential rainfall over other portions of Central America during the next few days, triggering flash flooding and mudslides.

Meteorologists expect the storm to be in the Carribean by Friday.

Former Pasqua aide claims Iraq intended to reward Charles Pasqua, denies having received oil

A former aide to French senator Charles Pasqua, whose name was cited by a recent report by a United States Senate investigation panel, has admitted that the Iraqi government had intended to reward Mr Pasqua with a grant of oil through the oil for food program.

The aide, Bernard Guillet, was arrested in April 2005 and was put under formal criminal investigation on April 28 by French judge Philippe Courroye, under the charges of egregious influence peddling and of being an accessory to an abuse of corporate belongings. He is suspected of having received vouchers for buying Iraqi oil from the regime of Saddam Hussein, which he then allegedly sold to oil companies, to an amount of 5 million barrels. Mr Pasqua would, according to some sources, have been the beneficiary of 10.8 million barrels. According to a CIA report, the profit would have been between 0.15€ and 0.85€ per barrel.

Results of 2005 British Columbia, Canada General Election

At 8 p.m. local time today (04:00 UTC 18 May), the polls closed in the British Columbia general election, 2005. Results are still coming in, and no party has won an overall majority in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia yet. At 9:05 p.m. PST (5:05 a.m. UTC 18 May) the CBC called the election for the BC Liberals.

Held in conjunction with the general election was the British Columbia electoral reform referendum, 2005, where voters were asked to decide whether to switch from the First Past the Post electoral system to the Single Transferable Vote electoral system.

A 60% Yes vote as well as a simple majority in 48 of the 79 ridings are needed for the measure to pass.



Gordon Campbell Leader of the Liberal Party

Election scorecard:

BC Lib	NDP	Green
46	33	0
STV	Yes: 57%	No: 43%

Air France to launch new daily flight from Paris to Bucharest



Air France has announced that it will launch its fifth daily flight on the Paris-Bucharest route on June 6. Air France currently flies to from Paris (Charles de Gaulle) to Bucharest (Henri Coandă) and back four times a day, under a codesharing agreement with TAROM, Romania's largest airline.

The extra flight will be operated with an Airbus 318 aircraft, which has a capacity of 94 passengers. Air France will also adjust its Paris-Bucharest timetable so that possibilities for transfer at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport can be maximised. This will enable passengers flying from Bucharest to Paris to connect to destinations such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo or Buenos Aires with very little waiting time. The fifth daily flight will also be run under a codesharing agreement with TAROM - the two carriers have decided to allow the transferability of tickets between them.

Traffic to be restricted on Romanian National Road 66



Romania's National Road 66 (DN 66) will face traffic restrictions between the cities of Târgu Jiu and Petroșani, in the southern part of the country, between May 17 and November 15 due to hydroelectrical operations on the Jiu river. The traffic restrictions will mean that traffic will not be able to access the road on Tuesdays and Thursdays of every week, between the hours of 22:00 and 06:00.

The National Company of Motorways and National Roads issued a press release informing motorists of alternative routes to take, including the route Târgu Jiu-Râmnicu Vâlcea-Brezoi-Sibiu-Simeria-Hațeg-Petroșani, Târgu Jiu-Drobeta Turnu Severin-Caransebeș-Hațeg-Petroșani and Târgu Jiu-Filiași-Drobeta Turnu Severin-Orșova-Caransebeș-Hațeg-Petroșani.

VISA opens regional office in Bucharest



VISA has opened a regional office in Bucharest, Romania that will represent and co-ordinate the activities of the company in Romania and Bulgaria. The Bucharest bureau is the eighth office in the Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa (CEMEA) region, made up of 84 countries.

The use of VISA cards in Romania is currently growing at a fast rate, with VISA having 21 member banks in Romania who have issued a total of 2.8 million cards. The general director of VISA Southeastern Europe and North Africa, Tony Brogna, said that VISA cards embedded with chips would soon be launched on the Romanian market. This comes at a time when several Romanian banks have stated that they are planning to start issuing chip-embedded cards from June this year. Additionally, seven of the eight Central European and Baltic states which joined the European Union in 2004 already use VISA cards embedded with chips.

Romanian parliament ratifies EU accession treaty



Romania's EU accession treaty was ratified by the Romanian Parliament

The Romanian parliament yesterday ratified the country's accession treaty to the European Union, which was signed in Luxembourg on April 25 of this year. The ratification occurred under a joint session of both chambers of the Romanian parliament. The treaty was approved unanimously, all 434 parliamentarians voting in favour of it.



Tăriceanu: "The ratification of the treaty is a turning-point in Romania's political history."

Although the approval of the treaty in the Romanian parliament was considered a ceremonial step, since it was expected to be ratified by a very wide margin, it was seen as yet another important step on Romania's road towards the European Union. The speaker of the parliament, Adrian Năstase, who was also Romania's Prime Minister between 2000 and 2004, said, "This is a historic moment for Romania", while current Prime Minister Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu stated, "The ratification of the treaty is a turning-point in Romania's political history."

Romania's parliamentary ratification of the treaty comes after Bulgaria, which also signed the treaty in Luxembourg, ratified it on May 11. Alongside Bulgaria and Romania, the treaty has already been ratified by seven current member states of the European Union. In order for it to come into effect, it must be approved by all EU members.

Both Bulgaria and Romania, which are currently accession countries of the European Union, are set to join the EU on January 1, 2007.

Tense panel discussion on Srebrenica held in Belgrade



A panel discussion titled "Truth about Srebrenica" held at the law school at the University of Belgrade yesterday almost turned into a physical fight between panel participants and several dozen protesters.

The panel was organized by a nationalist

student organization Nomokanon to mark what they consider, according to their promotional posters, "the anniversary of the liberation of Srebrenica." According to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Bosnian Serb forces murdered more than 7,000 Bosniaks in 1995 in Srebrenica, during the war in Bosnia.

General Radislav Krstić was convicted for his involvement to serve 46 years in prison. Two other suspects, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić are still on the run.



Ratko Mladić commanded Serbian forces in Srebrenica

Protesters included activists of political parties Civic Alliance of Serbia, G17+ and Social Democrat Union as well as Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) Women in Black, Kapiraj-Kopiraj and Youth Initiative. Their activity delayed the start for half an hour. Organizations which protested this forum claim that Serbia should face its involvement in Bosnia and should not deny allegations of crimes committed by Serbian forces.

Many of the participants were wearing t-shirts with pictures of Radovan Karadžić followed by text "Serbian hero." Some wore t-shirts of the Serbian nationalist organization Obraz.

The panel began at 19:30 local time, but the first ten minutes passed in a verbal fight between protestors and participants. Protesters were booing, and participants responded by calling them Ustashe, faggots, Soros' workers, and traitors. Most protesters then left the room.

According to B92, one young man who

protested said that security was "very unpleasant". He was quoted as saying: "[Security] told us things like: 'What's up, Croats' and 'Faggots, we will beat you up now.'"

Four speakers took part in the panel: Milivoje Ivanišević, the president of the Center for Research of Crimes Against Serbs, Radovan Radinović, a retired army general, Dragoslav Ognjanović, Milošević's attorney, and journalist Ljiljana Bulatović.

Participants said that there was no genocide in Srebrenica but that only Muslim soldiers were killed, which was misrepresented to the public to bring international military action against Serbs. One participant said that only 2,500 people were killed, and that only 500 of them could have been shot in a fusillade, since there were only so many blindfolds found next to bodies.

One of the speakers congratulated Nomokanon for talking about "the truth, so nobody can force us to be ashamed of what deserves our respect."

University of Belgrade's Faculty of Law postponed the panel once and did not officially endorse it.

Cuba to embrace free software



On Tuesday, Juventud Rebelde reported that the Central Administration of Cuba is organizing a migration to free and open source software. The announcement was made during a free software workshop organized at the "Convención Internacional Informática 2005" by the director of the state office of information technology, Roberto del Puerto.

The plan is to use the Linux operating system as a base, though the administration currently uses Microsoft

Windows. The transition is planned to be slow and involves organizational changes, development and creating a legal framework.

The Linux user base in Cuba is around 1,500 people and has its own Linux distribution. Cuba also has some free software developers and the University of Information Science, with over 6,000 students, has committed one department for the development of programs for Linux.

Today in History provided by Wikipedia:

1536 - Anne Boleyn, the second wife and queen consort of Henry VIII of England, was beheaded for adultery.

1649 - The Rump Parliament passed an act to formally establish the Commonwealth of England.

1802 - The Légion d'honneur was first instituted by Napoléon Bonaparte, First Consul of the French Republic.

1921 - The U.S. Congress passed the Emergency Quota Act, establishing national quotas on immigration to the United States.

1922 - The Young Pioneer Organization of the Soviet Union was founded.

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