



Top Stories

France votes no in EU referendum

In an unsurprising result, a 55% majority of French voters voted non in Sunday's European Constitution referendum. Of France's 42m eligible voters, over 70% turned out at the 55,000 polling stations across the country, which were open from 8am to 8pm yesterday (except in Paris and Lyon where voting finished at 10pm).

Mothers, teachers concerned about leukemia deaths at California elementary school

California State Senator Joseph Dunn, school officials, and environmental professionals met with Kennedy Elementary School parents in a town-hall style meeting in Santa Ana Thursday evening. The parents aired their concerns over health issues at schools and workplaces, including a rash of leukemia cases in the student population, and began a dialogue they have been working toward for years.

American Samoa asks again to be removed from U.N. colonies list

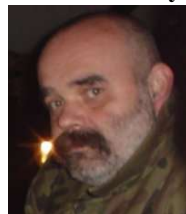
American Samoa's government delivered another message to United Nations representatives asking to be removed from the U.N.'s list of world colonies. American Samoa is asking to be removed from that list, on the grounds that it wishes to remain a freely associated territory of the United States. Its position has remained unchanged since the Lieutenant Governor first asked to be removed from the list in 1993.



Wikipedia Current Events

- A London newspaper reports that Merrill Lynch, New York, is trying to persuade at least seventeen members of the corporate derivatives team of rival investment bank JP Morgan to defect. An anonymous source/headhunter quoted in the newspaper predicted that the seventeen will be working at Merrill Lynch by the end of the summer.
• The French electorate reject the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe by approximately 55% to 45%, igniting a political crisis in the union and dealing a sharp blow to French President Jacques Chirac. All 25 EU member states must ratify the treaty for it to come into effect - 9 have done so to date, but only Spain has previously held a referendum.
• Dan Wheldon won the 89th running of the Indianapolis 500, beating rookie Danica Patrick, who led the race three times and came in an impressive fourth place.
• In Brazil, huge Gay Pride parade begins in Sao Paulo.
• In Taiwan, thousands of mourners attend the funeral of reputed gangster Hsu Hai Ching.
• Three US senators visit Uzbekistan to demand investigation on the crackdown of unrest.

Polish writer Tomasz Pacyński dies



Tomasz Pacyński - Polish fantasy and science fiction author - was found dead in

his garden by his family on May 30, 2005. The cause of death is presumed to be either heart inflammation or myocardial infarction.

Pacyński, born on February 4, 1958, was one of the founders and the main editor of Fahrenheit, the first Polish Internet science fiction fanzine. He published short stories in such magazines as Science Fiction, SFera, and Fantasy, and in Internet fanzines such as Fahrenheit, Esensja, Fantazja and Srebrny Glob. He also wrote articles published in SFera and Science Fiction. He debuted as a fantasy writer with his 2001 novel Sherwood, based on the Robin Hood legend. He published four novels - the Sherwood fantasy trilogy and Wrzesień (September) - a post-apocalyptic political fiction novel, as well as numerous short stories. His humorous stories about Ded Moroz were published in 2005 in Linia ognia (Line of Fire) collection.

U.K. and U.S. bombing raids against Iraq began before war was declared

New revelations surfaced on Saturday, the 28th, that suggest that the US and UK began war operations in Iraq prior to a declaration of war. The ministry of Defence figures, provided in response to a question from Sir Menzies Campbell, the Lib Dem foreign affairs spokesman, show that RAF and US aircraft doubled the rate at which they were dropping bombs on Iraq beginning in May of 2002.

According to military documents shown to the Sunday Express in 2002, the Allies invaded Iraq from Turkey on August 8th, 2002, after an air strike on the 6th that took out a crucial air defence system.

Allied commander Tommy Franks has admitted that this operation was designed to "degrade" Iraqi air defences in the same way as the air attacks that began the

1991 Gulf war, but according to legal guidance appended to the Downing Street memo (dated 23 July 2002) the allied aircraft were only "entitled to use force in self-defence where such a use of force is a necessary and proportionate response to actual or imminent attack from Iraqi ground systems".

Pentagon officials initially denied there had been any military action or incursion, but when challenged with specific military details a spokesman called back two hours later issuing the terse statement: "We can't comment on current or future operations."

Amnesty International urges international investigations of top U.S. officials

On Thursday, the 26th, Amnesty International has urged foreign governments to investigate high-level U.S. government officials for human rights violations committed in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. William Schulz, the executive director of the U.S. branch of Amnesty International, says that governments have an obligation under international law to conduct investigations into alleged human rights violations.

Amnesty International released a list, which Schulz read in his speech: Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, former CIA Director George Tenet, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, former commander of US forces in Iraq and current commander of the Joint Task Force Guantanamo, and Douglas Feith, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

Shulz said:

"The refusal of the U.S. government to conduct a truly independent investigation into the abuses at Abu-Gharib and other detention centers is tantamount to a white-wash, if not a cover-up of these disgraceful events. It is a failure of leadership to prosecute only enlisted soldiers and a few officers while protecting those who designed a deliberate government policy of torture

and authorized interrogation techniques that constitute torture or cruel and degrading human treatment. The government investigation must climb all the way to the top of the military and civilian chains of command. If the U.S. government continues to shirk their responsibility, Amnesty International calls on foreign government to investigate senior U.S. officials. If those investigations support prosecution, the governments should arrest any official who enters their territory and begin legal proceedings against them,"

In 1998, General Pinochet of Chile was arrested in London after a Spanish judge issued an international arrest warrant. Schulz claims that similar measures could apply to members of the current U.S. administration such as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld or Attorney General Alberto Gonzales.

White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan has described recent criticisms of the United States regarding alleged human rights abuses as "unsupported by the facts."

Huge Gay Pride parade held in Brazil

In what may possibly be the largest Gay Pride parade in the world, hundreds of thousands of people marched along the streets of São Paulo, Brazil today in the Parada do Orgulho GLBT de São Paulo. Many marchers were demanding the legalization of same-sex marriage.

Brazil is the largest Roman Catholic country on Earth, and the Roman Catholic Church has consistently opposed the legalization of same-sex marriage in the country. The National Congress of Brazil has debated legalization for 10 years, and such civil marriages are currently only legal in Rio Grande do Sul. The original bill was drafted by former mayor of São Paulo, Marta Suplicy. The proposed legislation, after being amended, is now in the hands of Roberto Jefferson. Protestors hope to collect a petition of 1.2 million signatures to present to the National Congress in November.

People carrying flags and banners, some dressed in lavish carnival costumes, walked and danced in the ninth annual Gay Pride parade, stretching for 3.5 kilometres along Avenida Paulista. Traffic was diverted throughout most of the city, and drinks and snacks vendors took advantage of the barriers across many streets. Prominent people joining the parade were the actor Sergio Mamberti, representing the Culture Minister Gilberto Gil, and senator Eduardo Suplicy.

Organizers stated that 2.5 million people attended, and police stated that there were 1.9 million — figures which would make the event the largest of its kind in the world — including 700,000 visitors from other cities and countries. This was an increase from 2004, when police stated that 1.5 million people attended.

Class of 9/11 graduates West Point



This year's West Point class of U.S. Army cadets graduated on Sunday and were commissioned as Second Lieutenants. Known as the "Class of 9/11", they joined West Point just weeks before the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack and decided to stay.

General Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that this class is "one of the few since the early days of the Vietnam War who came to West Point in peace time, saw the nation transition to war and chose to stay, knowing you would raise your right hand and take an oath and swear to defend the constitution of a nation that was still at war."

By coincidence, there are 911 students in the class. Within a year from now, about 70% of them are expected to be serving in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Wikinews Back Page



Today in History

- 1678 - The Godiva procession in Coventry, England, began.
- 1889 - Johnstown Flood: A flood killed over 2200 people in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, United States.
- 1916 - German and British navies clashed in the Battle of Jutland, the largest naval battle of World War I.
- 1974 - Syria and Israel signed a disengagement agreement to resolve the Yom Kippur War.
- 1977 - The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System was completed.

May 30 is Independence Day in South Africa (1910), and World No Tobacco Day

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