



## In Case You Missed

## Shiftless George!

Beneath the photo from the Reagan diaries is an actual quote that former US president Ronald Reagan wrote about George Bush recently edited by author Doug Brinkley and published by Harper Collins.



"A moment I've been dreading. George brought his n'er-do-well son around this morning and asked me to find the kid a job. Not the political one who lives in Florida; the one who hangs around here all the time looking shiftless. This so-called kid is already almost 40 and has never had a real job. Maybe I'll call Kinsley over at The New Republic and see if they'll hire him as a contributing editor or something. That looks like easy work."

From the Reagan diaries (entry dated May 17, 1986)

## In Focus

## 2 Arrested Over Karzai Attack

Afghan authorities have arrested two men accused of involvement in last week's attack on a military parade attended by President Hamid Karzai.

One worked for the Defense Ministry and the other for the Interior Ministry, intelligence chief Amrullah Saleh said.

He said the government still believed that Pakistan-based militants linked to Al-Qaeda were behind the attack, which killed three people.

The Taleban said they were responsible. President Karzai escaped unharmed.

Security forces whisked him away as shots rang out. An MP and a 10-year-old child were among the dead.

## ► Pakistan Blamed

"Al-Qaeda's role and involvement in the attack is very clear," Saleh told reporters in Kabul on Sunday.

He added that those responsible had bases in Pakistan, where he said they faced "little and sometimes no pressure".

Pakistan, which has seen attacks by militants, says it does all it can to crush Al-Qaeda and other militants on its soil.

After the attack, a Taliban spokesman said the group had not targeted Karzai directly, but wanted to show how easily they could get access to such events.

The Taliban have vowed to target Kabul as part of a drive to overthrow the government and expel more than 55,000 foreign troops stationed in the country.

## ► Accidental Blasts Claim 6 Lives

Three accidental explosions in the Afghan capital have left six people dead and more than 20 wounded, including some counter-narcotics police, officials said Monday.

According to AP, a policeman dropped a rocket-propelled grenade that exploded as his unit set off from Kabul on Monday on an opium poppy eradication mission north of the city, said Interior Ministry spokesman Zemarai Bashary.

One policeman was killed and at least eight were wounded, said Ahmad Zia Aftali, chief of the hospital where the injured were taken for treatment.

Also Monday, three children died and two others were wounded when an old artillery shell they were playing with exploded, Bashary said.

Another police official, Sayed Ekramudin, said two civilians were killed and 13 others wounded in an explosion Sunday at a refuse dump in the city's northern outskirts.

Ekramudin said a truck had hit a buried explosive.

## 6 Killed in Sadr City

At least six people were killed in overnight fighting between American forces and Mahdi Army fighters in Baghdad's Sadr City, Iraqi security and medical officials told AFP on Monday.

It was not immediately known whether the dead were combatants or civilians.

The officials said that another 40 people, including women and children, were wounded over the same period.

A girls' school which has been shut for more than a month because of the fighting was also damaged in overnight violence, they said.

Iraqi and American forces and fighters, mostly from anti-US cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr's Mahdi Army, have been battling each other since the government launched a crackdown on militias on March 25.

Hundreds of people have been killed in the violence, which began in the southern port city of Basra and quickly spread to other Shiite areas of the country--particularly Sadr City where the death toll has been the highest.

In other news, the US military said that 11 Al-Qaeda insurgents were killed over the weekend in central and northern Iraq, after a powerful roadside bomb killed four Marines Friday in the deadliest attack in months in the former Al-Qaeda stronghold of western Anbar province.



## News Diary

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7



■ MOSCOW - Dmitry Medvedev takes over from Vladimir Putin as Russia's new president.



■ GENEVA - World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council meeting (to May 8)

## Yemen Peace Talks Underway Amid Clashes



► Yemeni policemen and tribesmen inspect the wreckage of a car that was hit by a suicide car bomb in restive northern region of Mareb city.

New peace talks are underway between the Yemeni authorities and Zaidi rebels to try to contain renewed clashes that have left at least 52 people dead since Friday, the rebels said on Monday.

"We met in Saada on Sunday in the presence of the Qatari mediators," the rebels' chief negotiator Saleh Habra told AFP by telephone from the northern province which has been a rebel stronghold.

A further 19 rebels were killed in clashes with the army in Saada province on Sunday, raising the weekend death toll to 52, a local official said.

Meanwhile, Yemen's army has warned rebels led by Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi that it will move to subdue them if they fail to implement a truce brought to the verge of collapse by a mosque bombing and days of clashes.

Qatari mediators returned to Yemen's volatile northern province of Saada on Sunday, hoping to salvage the ceasefire agreement that ended six months of fighting between government forces and the rebels last June, Reuters reported.

A senior Yemeni military official blamed Houthi and his followers for the bombing--a

charge the rebel leader denies.

The official warned in a statement on Yemen's state news agency that unless Houthi abides by the truce "the state would be forced to assume its responsibility to spread the sovereignty of the regime and its law across all areas of Saada province."

Fighting has raged on and off in Saada since a conflict broke out in 2004 between government forces and Houthi's rebels.

The rebels, who oppose the government's alliance with the United States, say they are defending their villages against what they call government aggression.

## ► Warning

Houthi meanwhile warned that his group will escalate its fight against the government if the army continues an offensive that has left almost 20 rebels and soldiers dead over the past two days.

Six rebels and six soldiers were killed in clashes overnight Sunday in and around the mountainous rebel stronghold of Saada in northern Yemen, according to a security official and an eyewitness. A day earlier, three soldiers and four rebels were killed in similar clashes, AP said.

## ► Truce Mechanism

The Qatari-mediated ceasefire agreement committed Yemen to rebuilding rebel areas and required rebels to give up heavy arms but did not include a clear mechanism for implementation.

The rebels fear that if they give up their weapons and prisoners first, they will be attacked.

Ali Abu Halaqa, head of the government delegation, said that a mechanism was now being drawn up.

"We affirm that the political authority wants to resolve this problem in a peaceful way," he told Yemeni television. "The first step is to end the clashes between the two sides."

A source close to Houthi said the Qataris along with the government delegation had met the chief rebel negotiator Saleh Habra on Sunday evening, raising hopes that a deal could be reached on implementing the ceasefire after a bloody week.

Hundreds of people have been killed and thousands have fled their homes in Saada since the conflict began in 2004.

One of the poorest countries in the Middle East, Yemen is also grappling with dwindling oil and water resources, unemployment, corruption and a large community of Somali refugees.