



Top Stories

Dutch exit poll: 63% say 'no' to EU constitution

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France gets a new prime minister

President Jacques Chirac of France has accepted the resignation of prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin and has named Dominique de Villepin in his place. The prime minister has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the French government.

Live 8 concert plans announced

In a press conference held at 13:00 UTC today, Sir Bob Geldof, Elton John, and Harvey Goldsmith announced Live 8, a set of simultaneous free concerts to be held in Philadelphia, London, Paris, Rome, and Berlin on July 2, 2005, to raise awareness of Make Poverty History, a campaign to get the richest nations to cancel debt and increase aid to developing countries. The concerts are scheduled to occur just before the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, from July 6 to July 8.



Wikipedia Current Events

Israeli Security Forces thwarted a double suicide bombing attack on Jerusalem, as soldiers arrested 5 Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists and nabbed two explosive belts. The bombers planned to commit twin bombing attacks — one in a Cafe or a synagogue and the second - in a bus.

•Arab residents of the Silwan neighborhood of East Jerusalem protest Israeli plans to destroy 88 of their homes, many of which pre-date the foundation of the State of Israel.

•Dan Halutz, the former Israeli Air Force commander, was appointed as the 18th Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defence Forces.

•At least 20 people are killed and 40 are injured in a bomb blast in the city of Kandahar, Afghanistan.

•Sweden shuts down the Barsebäck 2 nuclear reactor.

•In Australia, embassy of Indonesia was closed after it received a package containing suspected "biological agent".

•In the Netherlands, a national referendum on ratification of the European Constitution results in its rejection by a substantial margin.

•In Bolivia, continuing protests force congress to abandon a key session in the capital La Paz

•In the June 6 issue of TIME Magazine, Wikipedia and its founder Jimbo Wales have been featured in a story on the rise of wiki technology.

•The chairman of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, William Donaldson, announces that he will leave that post at the end of June.

Mount Diablo buckwheat rediscovered in California



View of Mount Diablo. Taken from Dinosaur Hill Park, above Pleasant hill. Photo by User:Leonard G.

The University of California, Berkeley announced that one of its graduate students, Michael Park, rediscovered on May 24 the Mount Diablo buckwheat, a plant not sighted since 1936 and believed to have been extinct.

Found nearly 30 miles east of San Francisco, Park [aged 35] identified the small pink flowering plant said to resemble baby's breath during a routine visit to the mountain. He is currently pursuing his doctorate in integrative biology.

The significance of the find drew comparisons to the recent discovery of the Ivory-billed woodpecker in Arkansas earlier this year in April. The exact location of the flowering plant is, for now, being kept secret. Several botanists have confirmed it along with the nearly dozen or so other plants.

The property is being preserved by the Save Mount Diablo conservation group operating in the Mount Diablo State Park.

Samsung 4GB flash memory begins mass production

South Korean electronics giant, Samsung, has begun mass production of a new 4 gigabit flash memory. This is twice the size of almost all the biggest solid state memory devices currently available.

The firm is using a new 70-nanometer process which enables it to produce the smallest cell on the market, enabling a far

higher density than competitors. The device can write data at 16-megabytes per second, twice as fast as a 90nm 2Gb device.

Possible applications of the new memory will most likely be as a component in MP3 players, top end mobile phones, USB memory sticks, digital cameras and other portable devices.

The new form of EEPROM memory writes and reads data faster than previous versions — up to 16 megabytes per second. The storage of real-time high-definition video is feasible on the chips, according to Samsung. The company also believes their Flash-based disk drives could replace hard drives in laptops since they will work faster, quieter and cooler than drives currently in use.

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As in France, the government was highly pro-treaty, with Dutch Prime Minister, Jan Peter Balkenende, pleading over the past few days with voters not to be influenced by the French 'No' vote. While the citizenship's vote is legally non-binding, Mr. Balkenende and the Dutch parliament have said they will support it.

The major reasons for the 'no' vote appear to be worry over Turkey's inclusion and the rapid expansion of the EU, loss of a national identity, plus inflation and unhappiness with the government.

U.S. Supreme Court overturns Arthur

Andersen conviction

The U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday overturned a witness tampering conviction against accounting firm Arthur Andersen LLP for destroying documents related to now-bankrupt energy giant Enron Corp. The verdict virtually put Andersen, once one of the largest accounting firms in the world and the fifth-largest in the United States, out of business.

In a unanimous opinion written by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, the court threw out the verdict due to serious flaws in the jury instructions. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals had upheld Andersen's June 15, 2002 conviction in Houston.

In the court's view, the instructions allowed the jury to convict Andersen without proving that the firm knew it broke the law or that there was a link to any official proceeding that prohibited the destruction of documents. "The jury instructions at issue simply failed to convey the requisite consciousness of wrongdoing," Rehnquist wrote. "Indeed, it is striking how little culpability the instructions required." Rehnquist's opinion also expressed grave skepticism at the government's definition of "corrupt persuasion"—persuasion with an improper purpose even without knowing an act is unlawful. "Only persons conscious of wrongdoing can be said to 'knowingly corruptly persuade,'" he wrote.

The ruling came very quickly, as oral arguments in the case had taken place on April 27. Justice Department attorneys claimed Andersen employees were instructed "undertake an unprecedented campaign of document destruction" in order to impede a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation into Enron's conduct. Deputy Solicitor General David Dreeben likened Andersen's behavior to "shredding its smoking guns."

However, Maureen Mahoney, arguing for Andersen, countered that the employees involved merely followed the company's policy on destroying unneeded

documents, and that the shredding occurred before Andersen received a subpoena on November 8, 2001. She also claimed that under the government's legal definition of "corrupt persuasion," acquittal was virtually impossible.

The justices seemed to indicate which way they were leaning very early in oral arguments, as they peppered the government lawyers with hostile remarks.

Justice Antonin Scalia called the government's theory of prosecution "weird." Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was particularly troubled by the trouble the jury initially had sifting the evidence. "If this thing is so confusing," she asked, "how is a businessperson supposed to know? How is a lawyer supposed to know?"

Andersen's appeal was backed by the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. In a friend-of-the-court brief, the association claimed that the government's broad definition of "corrupt persuasion" put defense lawyers at risk for prosecution simply for advising clients of their rights to assert legal privileges or review document retention policies.

Despite the ruling, which returns the case to the Fifth Circuit, it is highly unlikely Andersen will ever return as a viable business. It lost nearly all of its clients after its indictment, and was forced to shut down its American accounting practice due to federal laws that forbid convicted felons from auditing public companies. The firm still faces more than 100 civil suits related to its audits of Enron and other companies. Once 28,000 employees strong, the Chicago-based Andersen is now down to around 200 employees who are largely occupied with handling the civil suits and other details of winding down the partnership.

\$1,000 reward offered for answer from US President

A progressive blog, Democrats.com, is offering a \$1,000 reward to anyone who can get United States president George

W. Bush to answer a question about pre-Iraq war intelligence. The contest comes after Bush has declined for a full month to answer any questions about a leaked secret British memo, which states, in reference to the Bush administration, that "the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy". Neither the US or UK government are disputing the document's accuracy. The \$1,000 question is:

"In July 2002, did you and your administration "fix" the intelligence and facts about non-existent Iraqi WMD's and ties to terrorism - which were disputed by U.S. intelligence officials - to sell your decision to invade Iraq to Congress, the American people, and the world - as quoted in the Downing Street Minutes?"

The contest will also reward anyone who asks the question to Mr. Bush with \$100 dollars (video evidence is required). The reward money was generated from small donations to the website.

The contest comes during renewed criticism and pressure on the administration from citizens, members of congress, retired politicians, and constitutional lawyers, generated from the recent leak of the minutes and other British documents.

Earlier this month, White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters that the White House saw "no need" to respond to a letter from Congress asking questions about the memo. He also stated that "If anyone wants to know how the intelligence was used by the administration, all they have to do is go back and look at all the public comments over the course of the lead-up to the war in Iraq, and that's all very public information. Everybody who was there could see how we used that intelligence."

One of the pre-war claims used by the Bush administration to justify the war was that Iraq possessed "weapons of mass destruction". After a thorough search, none were found. Senators on the Senate Intelligence Committee consider three possible causes for the apparent falsity of this claim: The WMD's were moved

sometime between the war and the search for them. The intelligence produced by the CIA community was bad.

The intelligence was satisfactory but was mis-handled by the Administration.

The last of these possibilities has not been formally investigated by the committee.

Brazilian Minister of Culture says he smoked marijuana until the age of 50



*Brazilian Minister of Culture Gilberto Gil.
Photo Rose Brasil/Abr (file photo).*

The Brazilian Minister of Culture Gilberto Gil, aged 62, said that he smoked marijuana until he was 50. In addition he defended the decriminalization of drug's consumption.

Gil took part in a press conference with journalists of Folha de São Paulo on Monday (May, 30). During the interview the Brazilian minister asked: "Why do they [drugs] should be forbidden?" He added that the drugs problem should be handled as a matter of public health. Gil had already defended the idea of decriminalization during a interview with Brazilian magazine *Veja*.

Gilberto Gil, and the drummer Chiquinho Azevedo, were arrested in 1976 in Florianópolis because they were carrying marijuana.

There is no consensus on decriminalization among Brazilians. Some people, like this Brazilian Anti-drugs website, believe that psychoactive drugs are dangerous and can lead to health problems, including chemical dependence.

Former FBI Second-In-Command says he was "Deep Throat"

In an interview by John D. O'Connor for

the American magazine *Vanity Fair*, it was revealed that W. Mark Felt, a former associate director of the FBI during the Nixon Administration, was the anonymous informer called "Deep Throat". "Deep Throat" helped journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein bring down then-president Richard Milhous Nixon through the exposure of the Watergate scandal.

Previously bound by a pledge not to reveal "Deep Throat's" identity until after his death, Woodward and Bernstein at first refused to confirm the "Vanity Fair" report. However, in a story posted late today on the Washington Post website, they verified that Felt was "Deep Throat."

However, one of Richard Nixon's biographers, Jonathan Aitken, believes that at least one of "Deep Throat's" tips could not have been known by Felt. The Post first reported on the famous 18 1/2 minute gap in a crucial tape at a time when only six people were aware of its existence -- none of them Felt. This raises the possibility that "Deep Throat," though mainly based on Felt, may be a composite character.

Felt has been mentioned as a leading candidate for "Deep Throat" by many that have tried to solve the mystery. An article published in the *American Journalism Review* last fall claimed Carl Bernstein's son once exposed Felt as the mysterious informer. But until now, Felt, Woodward, Bernstein and the Post's former editor Ben Bradlee have all denied it.

Felt, 91, has reportedly been in poor health in recent years. His family says Felt admits to being the source and described him as feeling proud of his role in history and having "a big grin" when told of the "Vanity Fair" article.

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Today in History

- 455 - The Vandals plundered Rome.
- 1800 - The first smallpox vaccination was administered in North America.
- 1865 - Forces under General Edmund Kirby Smith became the last Confederate army to surrender in the American Civil War.
- 1946 - Birth of the Italian Republic: Italy became a republic and abolished the monarchy, exiling Umberto.
- 1953 - Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom, the first to be televised.

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