

D-DAY FOR WINSTON

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The Birmingham News

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N. Korea gets final chance

U.N.'s nuclear agency puts off taking matter to Security Council

By HOWARD WITT
Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON — As diplomatic efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear standoff

intensified Monday, the United Nations nuclear watchdog agency gave Pyongyang a final chance to renounce its weapons programs before taking the issue before the Security Council

and triggering possible international sanctions.

Meanwhile, diplomats from Japan, South Korea and the United States gathered in Washington for two days of meetings to try to coordinate their increasingly divergent strategies for confronting North Korea. The South Koreans were presenting a plan to ease the ten-

sions between Pyongyang and Washington over when, or even whether, talks might begin.

The Bush administration insists that North Korea must halt all efforts to build nuclear weapons and abide by previous nuclear nonproliferation agreements before it will enter into negotiations with the Stalinist regime. The North Koreans are

demanding that Washington negotiate a nonaggression pact and promise not to attack them before they will abandon their weapons programs.

President Bush noted Monday that he had already given such a promise last year, during his visit to South Korea.

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State fails in tobacco prevention programs

No clean indoor air bill called 'major deficiency'

By VIVI ABRAMS
News staff writer

In the school of healthy lungs, Alabama flunked Monday.

The American Lung Association graded the states and awarded Alabama straight Fs after analyzing state cigarette taxes, laws to protect people from secondhand smoke, measures to stop children from smoking and spending on anti-tobacco programs.

This report echoes a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report released in April, which ranked Alabama third lowest in the nation on anti-smoking funding.

Also receiving straight Fs were Georgia, Kentucky, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia. Vermont had the highest grades with three Bs and an A.

"Certainly on some of those we've earned our Fs," said Don Williamson, Alabama's state health officer.

Alabama is the only state in the country that has no indoor clean air bill, a "major deficiency," he said.

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Personnel Board woes worse than thought

Employees not qualified, ignored rules, receiver says

By VICKII HOWELL
News staff writer

The Jefferson County Personnel Board's problems are deeper than imagined, according to a federal judge who controls the system and the receiver he appointed to fix it.

Receiver Ronald R. Sims said most board employees aren't qualified to do their jobs, some ignored board rules and regulations or made them up as they went along and its computer system can't handle thousands of civil servant files.

Those are some of the initial findings he reported to U.S. District Judge Lynwood Smith who made Sims, a Maryland college professor with expertise in turning around troubled organizations, the board's receiver.

He gave Sims broad powers to overhaul the civil service system in 18 months and to develop fair job selection procedures and hiring tests, all because the board failed to do so in more than 20 years of trying.

The Personnel Board governs hiring and promotions for most Jefferson County municipalities, the Sheriff's Department, the Health Department and the County Commission. They have

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Ronald R. Sims

108TH CONGRESS

Alabama's three freshmen take oath of office today in capital

By MARY ORNDORFF
News Washington correspondent

WASHINGTON — Alabama's three freshman congressmen take the oath of office today at a formal swearing-in ceremony wedged between a stream of receptions.

Today's pomp will turn quickly to official business, however, when the 108th Congress kicks off by cleaning up last year's loose ends on the federal

budget and plunging into tax cuts, prescription drug benefits, welfare and other issues.

The one new Democrat and two new Republicans keep Alabama's House delegation at a 5-2 Republican majority, but there's also a new dean and a new chemistry to a group that has long prided itself on bipartisanship when it came to helping Alabama.

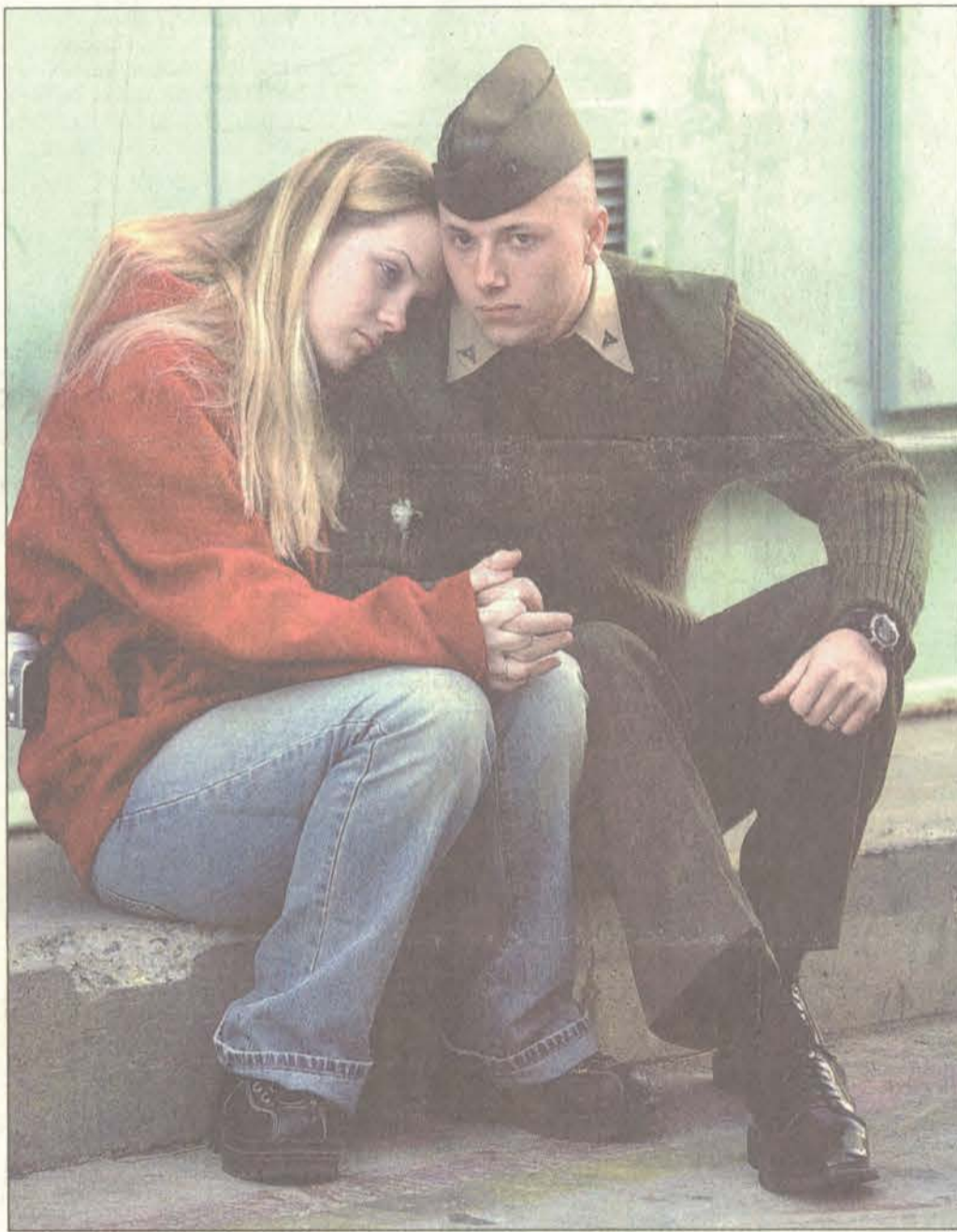
"What really strikes me about this delegation is that all of us

have an appreciation of the fact you can't sell the whole of Alabama without being able to sell all of its parts," said Rep.-elect Artur Davis, D-Birmingham, one of the freshmen. "You can't sell Alabama until you find a way to sell the Black Belt, northwest Alabama, or the struggling counties of south Alabama. I think there's going to be a very high level of cooperation."

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100,000 U.S. troops in the Gulf by month's end | 200,000 by end of February

Military build-up continues amid uncertainty about Iraq



Lance Cpl. John Sanger of Cincinnati visits with his wife, Ange, before departing from San Diego aboard the USS Tarawa. Thousands of Marines, sailors and soldiers headed for the Persian Gulf region Monday, shipping out from California, Maryland and Georgia.

Searchers' lack of success poses a problem for Bush

By TOM RAUM
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.N. inspectors have yet to turn up any sign of prohibited weapons in Iraq, complicating the Bush administration's task of justifying an armed invasion. Allies already are expressing misgivings, and the inspectors' first comprehensive report, due Jan. 27, could further cramp the timing of any attack.

Even as the Pentagon presses ahead with a massive military buildup in the Gulf, U.S. and British officials are assessing the potential consequences should the report prove inconclusive. That could force the White House into accepting more delay — or risk the wrath of allies by going it alone.

President Bush asserted Monday that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein does not appear to be complying with U.N. demands that he disarm. "But he's got time," Bush said.

Iraq says it has no weapons of mass destruction. The Bush administration and Britain insist it does, and is merely concealing them.

In London, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw suggested the possibility of war had slipped below 50-50. With the North Korean crisis taking international attention, some support for armed conflict with Iraq seemed to be fading.

Further complicating matters for the United States and Britain

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Jefferson County Sheriff Jim Woodward

Indicted on charges of using federal and state databases to run criminal checks on voters.

Woodward faces second conspiracy trial

Appeals court rules dismissal wrong

By CHANDA TEMPLE
News staff writer

Jefferson County Sheriff Jim Woodward and his election lawyer will face another trial on conspiracy charges after a federal appeals court ruled Monday that the judge who threw out the charges against the men in 2000 was wrong.

In October 2000, U.S. District Judge Inge Johnson dismissed charges that claimed Woodward illegally used federal and state crime databases to gather information for his contest of the 1998 sheriff's election, which he initially lost but later won after a court fight. Bert Jordan, an attorney who handled election matters for Woodward, was also charged.

Johnson ruled that Woodward and Jordan could not have a fair trial after constant recesses while lawyers argued over access to documents, notes and grand jury transcripts. The jury heard only three days of testimony after lawyers made opening

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