

ISSUES & IDEAS



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Support the troops — give them a raise

BY DAVID S. BRODER
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On this Memorial Day weekend when Americans pause to think about their debt to the men and women who fight our wars, a battle of a different kind is going on — a struggle between the White House and Congress over pay for the armed forces.



BRODER

The difference seems small. President Bush proposed a 3 percent, across-the-board increase for all ranks. The House has passed a 3.5 percent increase, and the Senate, also under Democratic control, seems inclined to go along with the higher figure.

In a May 16 memo outlining a series of objections to the House version of the defense authorization bill, the White House Office of Management and Budget termed the 3.5 percent increase “unnecessary.” It said that, “when combined with the overall military benefit package, the president’s proposal provides a good quality of life for service members and their families.”

That came as news to Rep. Carol Shea-Porter, a freshman Democrat from New Hampshire. She told her colleagues in the House that when her husband was an Army officer during the Vietnam War, “I was a military spouse, and I lived on military pay. It is very difficult to do that. But we do that with honor and with gratitude for the chance to serve this country.”

But Shea-Porter said she had to wonder at the values of a president who supports billions of dollars in tax cuts but balks at raising the pay of the soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen. “How much does this really mean?” she asked. “For an

•TURN TO BRODER, 5L

Once again, Iran is taking hostages

BY TRUDY RUBIN
Philadelphia Inquirer

Recently I wrote about a 67-year-old Iranian-American scholar of renown named Haleh Esfandiari who was imprisoned May 8 in Tehran.

This drama has become more bizarre since Monday, when Iranian television announced she had been charged with “seeking to topple the ruling Islamic establishment.”



RUBIN

These charges are laugh-out-loud ludicrous to anyone who knows Esfandiari — a petite, soft-spoken grandmother who came on her biannual visit to an ailing 93-year-old mother. As head of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars in Washington, Esfandiari was known as an apolitical expert devoted to promoting U.S.-Iranian dialogue.

The malice behind the charges points in a more political direction — an effort by hard-line Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his KGB-like intelligence sector to push back against more pragmatic Iranian leaders. The pragmatists are open to direct talks with the United States and more exchanges between countries. Groundbreaking U.S.-Iran talks are set for May 28 over stabilizing Iraq.

The charges against Esfandiari are purportedly linked to the \$75 million in democracy-promotion money the Bush administration

•TURN TO RUBIN, 5L

NEW ORLEANS



BRINGING BACK

BROADMOOR



RONNA GRADUS/MIAMI HERALD STAFF (TOP); LEE CELANO/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

HANGING ON: At top, Jack Swerdloff, with Miami-Dade Florida Task Force 1, talks to Samson Thomas and Wayne Williams at their home in New Orleans' Broadmoor district after Katrina hit in 2005. Above, Jocelyn Lagerman is one of the district's residents who are rebuilding.

ONE NEIGHBORHOOD STANDS OUT AS NEW ORLEANS SLOWLY TRIES TO RECOVER FROM HURRICANE KATRINA

BY TYLER BRIDGES
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NEW ORLEANS — Jocelyn Lagerman leaned against an exposed wood beam, beside a Mardi Gras bead hung over a nail.

She only briefly contemplated the question: Why was she spending \$200,000 to renovate a home drowned by Hurricane Katrina?

“I wouldn’t give up on here,” Lagerman said, over the hammering of two laborers. “There’s no other place I want to be.”

Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in August 2005, but

swaths of the city look as if Katrina washed through only days ago: boarded up homes, vacant lots where houses were demolished, abandoned businesses, crooked street signs.

But Broadmoor, an integrated, middle-class neighborhood of 7,200 residents in the center of New Orleans, is coming back, thanks to residents like Lagerman. Researchers say Broadmoor’s success serves as a recovery template for other neighborhoods in New Orleans and could provide a model for other cities struck by future

disasters — such as Miami and Fort Lauderdale.

The model requires the fierce determination of residents to return, ordinary folks to organize in a grass-roots effort and a willingness to bridge existing racial or ethnic barriers.

Over and over again, Broadmoor residents say, they are not letting anything keep them from returning home. Not fears of the levees breaking again. Not the paucity of government aid. And not

•TURN TO NEIGHBORHOOD, 3L

“We said, ‘Our community will return. We will make it return. We can’t wait on government. We have to do it ourselves.’”

— LATOYA CANTRELL, Broadmoor Improvement Association

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Cubans in Cuba ‘excluded from everything,’ says reader



THE CUBA PUZZLE

■ Readers found The Miami Herald’s comprehensive Cuba Puzzle series – which involved reporters who fanned out across Cuba, South Florida and the hemisphere – eye-opening and informative.

BY LUISA YANEZ
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South Florida responded with a blend of praise and weariness to “The Cuba Puzzle,” a multimedia series about the watch-and-wait game for democratic change in

Cuba. The series, which ran May 11-20, sparked vigorous response from readers, via e-mail, Internet postings and telephone calls.

Dozens of reporters, photographers and videographers from the The Miami Herald and El Nuevo

Herald teamed up and fanned out across Cuba, the hemisphere and South Florida to report the series.

Their assignment: to gauge and dissect events that have occurred on both sides of the Florida Straits since July 31, when Fidel Castro ceded power temporarily to his brother Raúl.

•TURN TO REACTION, 2L