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12/21/2005 9:21:00 AM -0500

Newstrack: More than 140 towns and villages in Belarus were without power Sunday following a heavy snowfall, Itar-Tass reported. The first family feasted on free range turkey and corn bread dressing for Christmas lunch, the White House said. Al-Arabiya has aired a new tape of Osama bin Laden's top aide, Ayman al-Zawahiri, praising the Taliban and its fight in Afghanistan. U.S. Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Peter Pace said the military is in the midst of a delicate balancing act when it comes to troop levels in Iraq. U.S. Sen. David Vitter, R-La., said the United States has a real chance to try new, innovative ideas as it rebuilds Katrina-devastated New Orleans. Car bombs exploded in Baghdad Sunday, killing two U.S. soldiers and injuring several Iraqi police, soldiers and civilians. The Rev. Marek Bozek celebrated midnight mass in at St. Stanislaus Kostka church despite St. Louis Archbishop Raymond Burke prohibiting the service. Roman Catholic cardinals celebrated midnight mass in several U.S. cities calling

on the faithful to focus on God to see them through troubled times. An express train derailed as it headed to Niigata, Japan, Sunday, killing two women and leaving 30 other people injured. Ending a weeks-long diplomatic impasse, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a \$3.79 billion budget for 2006-07.

NewsTrack

Jesus is taboo for U.S. military chaplains

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21 (UPI) -- A U.S. Navy chaplain has begun a hunger strike in Washington to protest a military policy that bans mentioning Jesus in Christian prayer.

Navy Lt. Gordon Klingenschmitt believes he may lose his job next month and be evicted from military housing, because during the summer of 2004 aboard the USS Anzio, he preached an evangelistic sermon at the funeral of a Catholic sailor in a base chapel. The lieutenant said he was reprimanded by two senior chaplains and, in March, sent ashore to Norfolk.

Official military policy allows any sort of prayer, but Klingenschmitt told The Washington Times that in reality, evangelical Protestant prayers are censored.

The American Center for Law and Justice has gathered 173,000 signatures on a petition seeking an executive order, and 73 members of Congress have signed on, saying in an Oct. 25 letter to the president: "In all branches of the military, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Christian chaplains to use the name of Jesus when praying."

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[Policy Watch: Iran and Central Asia](#)

By MARK N. KATZ

12/25/2005 10:26:00 AM -0500

Iran's new president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, appears to many in the West as an extremist. His statements calling for Israel to be wiped off the map and ...

[Tsunami aid -- one year on.](#)

By BRANDON THURNER

UPI Correspondent

12/23/2005 10:37:00 AM -0500

One year after a devastating tsunami struck Southeast Asian coastal areas, the major obstacles to recovery remain water sanitation and the need for jobs.

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