

Today: Mostly sunny.
High 82. Low 62.
Tuesday: Partly sunny.
High 81. Low 67.
Details, B8

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130TH YEAR No. 209 M2 DC MD

A President Besieged and Isolated, Yet at Ease

Bush, Grasping for Answers and Fixated on Iraq, Remains Resolute

By PETER BAKER
Washington Post Staff Writer

At the nadir of his presidency, George W. Bush is looking for answers. One at a time or in small groups, he summons leading authors, historians, philosophers and theologians to the White House to join him in the search.

Over sodas and sparkling water, he asks his questions: What is the nature of good and evil in the post-Sept. 11 world? What lessons does history have for a president facing the turmoil I'm facing? How will history judge what we've done? Why does the rest of the world seem to hate America? Or is it just me they hate?

These are the questions of a president who has endured the most drastic political collapse in a generation. Not generally known for intellectual curiosity, Bush is seeking out

those who are, engaging in a philosophical exploration of the currents of history that have swept up his administration. For all the setbacks, he remains unflinching, rarely expressing doubt in his direction, yet trying to understand how he got off course.

These sessions, usually held in the Oval Office or the elegant living areas of the executive mansion, are never listed on the president's public schedule and remain largely unknown even to many on his staff. To some of those invited to talk, Bush seems alone, isolated by events beyond his control, with trusted advisers taking their leave and erstwhile friends turning on him.

"You think about prime ministers and presidents being surrounded by cabinet officials and aides and so forth," said

See BUSH, A8, Col. 1



BY GERALD HERBERT — ASSOCIATED PRESS

George W. Bush has invited a range of scholars to the White House to discuss his presidency and the currents of history.

Way to Shrink, Grow Fat Is Found

Tests Also Show Link to Stress

By ROB STEIN
Washington Post Staff Writer

Scientists reported yesterday that they have uncovered a biological switch by which stress can promote obesity, a discovery that could help explain the world's growing weight problem and lead to new ways to melt flab and manipulate fat for cosmetic purposes.

In a series of experiments on mice, researchers showed that the neurochemical pathway they identified promotes fat growth in chronically stressed animals that eat the equivalent of a junk-food diet.

The international team also showed that blocking those signals can prevent fat accumulation and shrink fat deposits and that stimulating the pathway can strategically create new deposits — possibly offering new ways to remove fat as well as to mold youthful faces, fir-

Obama Takes Lead In Money Raised

Pressure on Clinton Is Expected to Grow

By JOHN SOLOMON

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