

# **RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE 5/2007**

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## CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT

### [All is not Lost](#)

*Carnegie Endowment for International Peace – March 2007*

As President George Bush's State of the Union address and Secretary Condoleezza Rice's recent Middle East trips showed, the Bush administration has shifted its public rhetoric back from the democrats- autocrats divide of the freedom agenda to the moderates-radicals distinction of yore. Facing an urgent need to defuse crises in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine, understandably the United States is now focussing primarily on Arab states' foreign policy behaviour and relegating democracy promotion to the background. Although this may seem the worst time for the United States to encourage unpredictable political change in an already chaotic region, abandoning Middle East democracy as a strategic goal would be a tragic mistake, and an unnecessary one.

### [Palestine: Professionalism or Factionalism in the New Government?](#)

*Carnegie Endowment for International Peace – March 2007*

Palestinians have been hoping that Hamas and Fatah will live up to their announced agreement that the government of national unity under formation would not concern itself with negotiations with Israel, which were supposed to remain the purview of President Mahmoud Abbas in his capacity as leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The politicized way in which the new government is taking shape, however, and the fact that Prime Minister Ismail Haniyya is meeting with all Palestinian factions, indicate that these hopes will be disappointed. Haniyya's government will not differ significantly from the age-old pattern relied upon by the PLO in distributing portfolios on a factional basis. Thus it is likely that the new government—like its predecessors—will lack professionalism in providing services to the Palestinian people as well as representation based in electoral politics.

### [Who Wins in Iraq?: Iran](#)

*Foreign Policy – March 2007*

The new Iraq was supposed to be a model for the Middle East and a threat to Iran's theocracy. Instead, Iran has emerged as the biggest winner of the United States' war. There is little stability or democracy in Iraq to impress Iranians. Conjuring more fear than hope, the war did nothing to loosen the grip of clerical rule over the country. Iranians rejoiced in the fall of Saddam, who fought an eight-year war against their country that killed hundreds of thousands of people, many by chemical weapons. For Iran, the war in Iraq turned out to be a strategic windfall, uprooting Baathism and pacifying a nemesis that had been a thorn in its side for much of the 20th century. Iraq's new Shiite—and in good measure, Kurdish—masters enjoy friendly ties with Iran. It was no coincidence that Iran was the first of Iraq's neighbors to recognize its new government and to encourage Iraqis to participate in the political process introduced by the United States.

## [Iran Moves Out of the Isolation Booth](#)

*Time magazine – 12 March 2007*

The fact that U.S. diplomats finally sat down face-to-face with their Iranian and Syrian counterparts in Baghdad on Saturday was significant in more ways than one. Some in the U.S. media saw the security conference called by the Iraqi government, which included representatives of all of Iraq's neighbors as well as the U.S., as a sign of the ascendancy of a realist outlook in the Bush Administration — ending the Administration's taboo on talking to Iran and Syria. But the talks also highlighted the questionable nature of the White House's notion that moderate Arab regimes will rally to its call to isolate Iran.

## **COUNTER TERRORISM**

### [The List: New Insurgents Tactics](#)

*Foreign Policy – March 2007*

Nearly four years into the insurgency, U.S. forces are struggling to respond to a constantly adapting enemy. The insurgents have just added a handful of new tactics to their playbook. In this week's List, FP takes a look at some of these deadly additions.

### [9/11 Mastermind Confesses](#)

*Time Magazine – 14 March 2007*

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the suspected mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks, confessed to that attack and a string of others during a military hearing at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, according to a transcript released Wednesday by the Pentagon. Mohammed claimed responsibility for planning, financing, and training others for bombings ranging from the 1993 attack at the World Trade Center to the attempt by would-be shoe bomber Richard Reid to blow up a trans-Atlantic flight with explosives hidden in his shoes.

## **DEFENCE BUDGET**

### [Chinese Budget Rises in Line with Economic Boom](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 6 March 2007*

China has announced that its official defence budget will rise by a sturdy 17.8 per cent in 2007, continuing a long spell of double-digit growth consistent with the country's booming economy. Jiang Enzhu, spokesperson for China's National People's Congress, told a news briefing on 4 March, ahead of the top legislative body's annual session, that

military spending will grow to CNY350.92 billion (USD44.94 billion) this year. "China has neither the wherewithal nor the intention of entering into an arms race with any country and China won't constitute a threat to any country," he said. The proposed defence outlay represents 7.46 per cent of China's central state budget for 2007, which is up 15.7 per cent from the previous year. National revenues are projected to grow by 13.8 per cent.

### [Committee Urges MoD to Raise UK R&D Spending](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 2 March 2007*

UK operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are having a negative impact upon research and development (R&D) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) needs to argue for increased spending to prevent the gap between the UK and the US widening, according to a parliamentary committee. The UK multiparty parliamentary Defence Select Committee said in a report on the government's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), released on 1 March: "It is inevitable that some research funding will be directed to short-term research [to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan]."

## **DEFENCE STRATEGY**

### [NATO and Japan Agree on Afghan Co-operation](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 9 March 2007*

NATO and Japan finalised on 8 March a framework for co-operation in Afghanistan, NATO spokesman James Appathurai has announced. This will allow Japan to provide humanitarian assistance amounting to several million dollars a year in support of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan, he explained.

### [Russia Looks to Bolster Air Defence](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 7 March 2007*

Russia is developing a new air-defence system that can engage air-breathing targets and space defence (anti-satellite) assets, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov revealed on 27 February. The announcement about this 'fifth-generation' air-defence system - described "as a unique project incorporating new technologies and innovations" - could be a response to either China's launch of its anti-satellite capable missile or simply a countermeasure to the US ballistic missile defence deployments expected in the Czech Republic and Poland.

## **DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY**

### [Digital Eyes Gain Closer Capture, Greater Clarity](#)

*National Defense Magazine – March 2007*

Two companies in California have found a way to substantially improve high-powered digital binoculars for troops in the field. PixonImaging and DigiVision of San Diego have melded software and hardware to capture an image of a target as if it were twice as close. Their product also minimizes glare and haze, and boosts signal contrast in low light, says a spokesman. The upshot is the ability to tell friend from foe at considerable distances.

### [Thin Air Yields Gallons of Drinking Water](#)

*National Defense Magazine – March 2007*

Water drawn from the atmosphere is being provided by a new technology originated by Aqua Science Inc. of Miami Beach, Fla. The 20- and 40-foot machines extract drinking water from the air via a system that does not entirely depend on condensation dehumidification, which is the route previous commercial producers used.

### [Compact Weather Station for Drones](#)

*National Defense Magazine – March 2007*

A lightweight, portable weather station that is crafted for unmanned aerial vehicle ground controllers is being produced by Climatronics of Bohemia, N.Y. TACMET II, a self-contained system, offers weather information in real-time. It is also protected against electromagnetic interference, says a spokesman. The mast-mounted stations contain an internal flux gate compass that aligns wind direction to North. They require low power and can be energized by AC and DC power sources.

### [Navy Begins Work on Next-Generation Bomb Disposal Robot](#)

*National Defense Magazine – March 2007*

Robots have been credited with saving countless lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. In light of this success, the Navy has embarked on an ambitious program to build its next generation of counter-explosives machines. The robots perform for their human operators the most dangerous task: neutralizing improvised explosive devices by going down range to serve as a specialist's eyes to check out suspicious sites. Without them, EOD technicians would be forced to inspect potential bombs up close.

### [Army Simulation Tracks Special Operators' Physical, Mental Reactions](#)

*National Defense Magazine – March 2007*

In a mountainous landscape, software engineer Jason Mohr guides a virtual U.S. soldier to a narrow wooden bridge, where an Afghan leader meets him. He greets the villager and tries to negotiate passage across the bridge. As they converse, an instructor monitors the scenario from another computer that receives Mohr's physiological and psychological states from a special wireless headset worn by the player. Red and blue lines chart escalations in his physical and mental responses as Mohr repeatedly is denied permission to cross the bridge. Such technology is being integrated into a training simulation

developed by North Carolina-based Virtual Heroes Inc., for the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg.

## **MILITARY OPERATIONS**

### [Successful Iraq Rebuilding Effort Could End in 18 Months](#)

*American Forces Press Service – 1 March 2007*

Barring additional requests and funding from the government of Iraq, U.S. reconstruction work in Iraq could draw to a close within 18 months, the top U.S. military official for reconstruction said yesterday. Army Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division, told bloggers in a conference call from Iraq that, with roughly \$3.5 billion in U.S. reconstruction funds remaining, he foresees enough work to extend the U.S. effort about one and a half more years.

### [Iraqis Helping Troops Find Weapons Caches, General Says](#)

*American Forces Press Service – 9 March 2007*

Iraqis in the country's north, fed up with ongoing violence, are leading U.S. and Iraqi forces to some of the largest weapons and bombs caches found in the region to date, the commander of Multinational Division North told Pentagon reporters today. This comes as U.S. troops in that area are handing off most counterinsurgency missions to Iraqi forces, allowing U.S. troops to focus on killing or capturing those who finance, make and emplace the deadly improvised explosive devices, said Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin Mixon, commander of Multinational Division North and the 25th Infantry Division.

## **NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION**

### [A Way Out of Iran's Nuclear Impasse?](#)

*Time Magazine – 14 March 2007*

Javad Zarif, Iran's polished U.N. ambassador, is noted for being unexpectedly jovial for a person with such a difficult job. But soon after I arrive for a visit to his Manhattan office a few days ago, he turns rather serious and nods at a pad of paper for me to take notes. He wants to go on the record, which is unusual. When he invited me to see him, I thought it was to say farewell. A law professor turned diplomat, he is not a supporter of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Instead, he has been aligned with the more pragmatic elements in Iran, and last month he was told that he was being recalled. But upon arriving, I find that he has been given a reprieve (or, perhaps, an extension of his sentence) by leaders in Tehran. They want him to stay for one last attempt to resolve the dispute over Iran's nuclear program. The U.S. insists there should be no direct negotiations until Iran suspends its uranium-enrichment program. To break that impasse, Zarif argues that both sides should discuss what their final aims would be. "We could start with two premises," he says. "One, that Iran has the right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Two,

that Iran should never move in the direction of building nuclear weapons." Yes, but how to guarantee that the technology is not used for illicit purposes? Zarif builds on an approach that Iran floated last October. "Iran could agree that its nuclear facilities, including all of its enrichment plants, could be jointly owned by an international consortium. All countries with concerns, including the U.S., could participate in that consortium. Their people and other foreign nationals could come and go to work at the facilities, which would allow for the best type of monitoring."

### [New Iran Resolution May Go to Security Council](#)

*Space War – 15 March 2007*

Major powers say they hope to present the Security Council with a package of new UN sanctions against Iran Thursday amid expectations that a vote would take place next week. Ambassadors of Security Council's permanent members, Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States, along with Germany have been trying for the past 10 days to nail down agreement on a draft that would tighten the sanctions slapped on Iran in December over its disputed nuclear program.

### [North Korea Deal Faces First Test](#)

*Space War – 13 March 2007*

The head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency embarked on a two-day tour of North Korea Tuesday in a litmus test for implementing a landmark deal on ending the communist country's nuclear weapons programs. During the visit, Mohammed El-Baradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, will try to coax North Korea to allow his inspectors back into the country. He is also expected to seek a list and details of all its nuclear sites.