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Contemporary Conflict

- Anti-US, Anti Karzai Riots in Kabul
- Nepal: From People Power to Peace?
- Defence Begins in Saddam Trial

Counter-Terrorism

- Canada Views Terrorist Threat to Transportation
- Israel – Protection and Survivability: Shield of David

Defence Industry

- Halutz Says Cutbacks Leave IDF Mediocre

Defence Strategy

- Get Serious about China's Rising Military
- NATO and Japan Seek to Deepen Relations

Defence Technology

- Modular Wings Extend Jumpers' Travel Distance
- Saab Unveils Wearable Command Unit

Energy Security

- A Zero Energy Home in Oklahoma
- The H Prize

Military Operations

- Center Deploys Acquisition Risk Tools
- U.S. Army Shifts Training Focus to Stryker Teams

Nuclear Proliferation

- Russia and the Iranian Nuclear Crisis
- Envoy Says No Progress on North Korea Talks
- A Realist Case for Conditioning U.S.-India Nuclear Deals

Regional Development

- Forces Move in as East Timor Seeks Help
- Singapore Deploys Personnel to Deal with Natural Disasters

Space Warfare

- Pentagon Endorses Space Missile Plan

CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT

[Anti-US, Anti-Karzai Riots in Kabul](#)

South Asia Analysis Group – 30 May 2006

An accident caused to a US Army convoy moving through Kabul due to a technical problem (jamming of brakes) faced by one of the vehicles in the convoy triggered off nearly two hours of violent demonstrations against the US and President Hamid Karzai in some parts of Kabul on May 29, 2006. The accident damaged a number of vehicles not belonging to the US army and resulted in the death of one passer-by. At least four to six more were killed subsequently due to firing by the Afghan and allegedly by the American security forces too to bring the riots under control. Many vehicles on the roads were damaged or set on fire by the demonstrators.

[Nepal: From People Power to Peace?](#)

International Crisis Group – 10 May 2006

King Gyanendra's capitulation on 24 April 2006 in the face of a mass movement marked a victory for democracy in Nepal and, with a ceasefire between the new government and the Maoists now in place, the start of a serious peace process. Forced to acknowledge the "spirit of the people's movement", Gyanendra accepted popular sovereignty, reinstated parliament and invited the mainstream seven-party alliance to implement its roadmap – including election of a constituent assembly to rewrite the constitution in line with the parties' five-month-old agreement with the Maoists. The international community lost credibility by attempting to pressure the parties into an unworkable compromise with the king and must now work hard to support a difficult transition and peace process while avoiding similar mistakes.

[Defence Begins in Saddam Trial](#)

World Press – 16 May 2006

The defence has presented its first witnesses in the trial of Saddam Hussein and seven co-defendants a day after the judge formally charged them with crimes against humanity. The charge carries a possible death penalty. Only three low-ranking defendants were in the court - Abdullah Kadhim al-Ruwayyid, his son Mizhar and Mohammed Azzawi - as the first witness took the stand on Tuesday, testifying from behind a curtain to protect his identity. Under the Iraqi system, the announcement of charges against Saddam and his seven co-defendants in effect puts the burden of proof on the defence to dismiss the accusations. The charges represent the accusations that the panel of five judges believe that the evidence has supported. Chief judge Raouf Abdel-Rahman read the charges on Monday after months of hearing prosecution witnesses describe torture at the hands of former intelligence agents and documents allegedly tying the former Iraqi leader

to a crackdown against Shia in the town of Dujail in 1982, in response to a failed assassination attempt.

Counter-Terrorism

[Canada Views Terrorist Threat to Transportation](#)

FAS Secrecy News – 24 May 2006

"On 12 November 2002, Osama Binladen issued a public statement which specifically targeted Canada for the first time for its collaboration with the United States in attempting to dismantle Al Qaida," a 2002 Canadian intelligence report noted. With that statement in mind, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) conducted classified studies on the terrorist threat to Canadian transportation systems. Two of those classified studies have now been declassified and released in redacted form. The declassified studies were obtained under Canada's Access to Information Act by former Canadian intelligence officer and author Stéphane Lefebvre, who provided copies to Secrecy News. At least some of the many redactions seem silly, for example: "Surface transportation presents a degree of vulnerability to terrorist attacks," one study begins. The missing word is probably not "low" or "negligible."

See ["International and National Terrorist Threats to Surface Transportation,"](#) CSIS Study #2002-3/26 (redacted) (3 MB PDF).
and ["The International Terrorist Threat to Maritime Transportation,"](#) CSIS Study #2003-4/02 (redacted) (2.7 MB PDF).

[Israel – Protection and Survivability: Shield of David](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly– 17 May 2006

The Israel Defence Forces's (IDF's) current fiscal limitations mean that efforts to provide an optimum integrated survivability solution are riding on Merkava development. From its inception, the Merkava programme incorporated a vigorous strategy of incremental improvements to the tank's survivability, firepower and mobility. "We adopted a telescopic process in the development of the Merkava; the lessons learned from the initial tank delivery are applied to newer MBTs [main battle tanks] and retrofitted to earlier models. The telescopic method is a very economic way to develop an MBT," Brigadier General Amir Nir, head of the Israel Ministry of Defence's Tank Programme Management Directorate (MANTAK), told Jane's.

DEFENCE INDUSTRY

[Halutz Says Cutbacks Leave IDF Mediocre](#)

World Press – 31 May 2006

Ongoing cuts such as this week's NIS 510 million reduction in the defense budget will turn the IDF into a mediocre military, Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Dan Halutz has warned in an exclusive interview. And a mediocre military, he added, is something the State of Israel cannot afford. "Overall, the way the defense budget is handled by people outside the defense establishment is unprofessional," a fuming Halutz told *The Jerusalem Post* in an interview on the eve of Shavuot, a date marking his first anniversary in the job. "I don't want to sound apocalyptic, but the way the budget is now and the way they want it to be will turn the defense establishment into a mediocre establishment."

DEFENCE STRATEGY

[Get Serious About China's Rising Military](#)

The Washington Post – 25 May 2006

The Pentagon's annual report to Congress on China's military power, released this week, reveals that Beijing's buildup has advanced well beyond what most analysts considered likely just 10 years ago. Some highlights: The new arsenal of the People's Liberation Army includes more than 700 missiles deployed opposite Taiwan, a fleet of sophisticated diesel electric submarines, a growing nuclear submarine capability and advanced destroyers armed with lethal anti-ship cruise missiles. By making the potential cost of any U.S. intervention in the Taiwan Strait extraordinarily high, Beijing has accomplished its decade-long goal of establishing a credible military threat to Taiwan -- as well as a deterrent to the United States. The question is, what next?

[NATO and Japan Seek to Deepen Relations](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly – 11 May 2006

A Japanese minister has addressed the North Atlantic Council (NAC), NATO's highest decision-making body, for the first time - a further sign of deepening relations between NATO and Japan. Visiting NATO headquarters in Brussels on 4 May, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso said Japan is interested in establishing regular contact with the NAC. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer told the NAC, which he chairs, that NATO and Japan "have far too much in common to allow our geographical separation to prevent us working together closely . . . [the] allies and Japan not only share many interests, but also face common security challenges".

DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY

[Modular Wings Extend Jumpers' Travel Distance](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly – 24 May 2006

ESG - Elektroniksystem-und Logistik-GmbH and Dräger, part of the SPELCO consortium, has revealed plans to develop a special operations parachute system allowing operatives to cover up to 200 km during flight. Originally designed for use by the German Army, the parachute system has been in use with the regular army since 2003, but with a modular wing in development, soldiers will be able to travel much further after jumping from an altitude of more than 30,000 ft. Currently a typical high-altitude high-opening jump, without the modular wing system, allows a jumper to travel around 48 km after exiting an aircraft at around 27,000 ft. The modular wing, equipped with guiding and stabilisation systems, will be able to reduce any impact of wind conditions on the jumper and will also allow operatives to travel up to 40 km carrying an equipment load of 100 kg. Trials of the modular wing are due to finish by the end of 2006 with the entire system expected to be available during 2007.

[Saab Unveils Wearable Command Unit](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly – 31 May 2006

Saab Systems has unveiled a versatile communications and command system package, originally developed for emergency services but with wide military application. The Wearable Command Unit (WCU), revealed at the recent Defence Services Asia 2006 Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur, has applications for armed forces involved in disaster relief, post-conflict operations or homeland defence, where co-ordination with civilian or non-government organisations is required. Essentially an intelligent information switch box, the WCU is a software package that enables the exchange of information between individuals and information systems, along with access to different databases. The web-based WCU communicates over systems such as GPRS, UMTS and TETRA or commercial satellite systems such as Iridium or Inmarsat.

ENERGY SECURITY

[A Zero Energy Home in Oklahoma](#)

ZDNet – 15 May 2006

A Zero Energy Home (ZEH) is connected to the utility grid, but at off-peak time periods, it generates more power than it uses by combining renewable energy technologies with advanced energy-efficient construction. As a result, a ZEH lowers the power demand on its utility provider. It produces about as much energy as it consumes during a year, so it is considered to achieve "net zero" energy consumption.

The H Prize

The Economist – 18 May 2006

WHETHER for God, glory, or simply the cash, big prizes often inspire tremendous feats of courage and innovation. But is there a modern-day “Lucky” Lindbergh lurking in obscurity, hoping to cash in on the promise of a \$100m “H Prize”? That is the potential payout from a scheme now working its way through Congress, that its sponsors hope could help break America from its “addiction” to foreign oil. Congressman Bob Inglis, a Republican from South Carolina and head of the House of Representatives’ Hydrogen Caucus, is sponsoring the H Prize, in an effort to spur development of a hydrogen-based economy. On May 10th his bill was voted through the House by 416-6 votes, and it now awaits approval by the Senate and the president. If the H Prize succeeds, it would not be the first time that the promise of prize money motivated an assault on a daunting technological challenge. A \$25,000 prize offered in 1919 convinced a barnstormer named Charles Lindbergh to attempt a solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927. Seventy-seven years later, the \$10m “X Prize” provided the impetus for Burt Rutan’s *SpaceShipOne* to make a pair of manned flights into space.

MILITARY OPERATIONS

Center Deploys Acquisition Risk Tool

US DoD News – 17 May 2006

The Air Force has a new tool in its acquisition arsenal, one which allows decision makers to better evaluate risks involved before starting up or changing weapon system programs. Aeronautical Systems Center helped develop that tool – called the Probability of Program Success model – and has already begun deploying it to acquisition wings, groups and squadrons.

U.S. Army Shifts Training Focus to Stryker Teams

US DoD News – 30 May 2006

The U.S. Army 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team continues to transform with five new units and a fleet of new, highly mobile, survivable and lethal Stryker vehicles. Similarly, the brigade’s 5th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, is continuing to transform training by shifting from individual soldier tasks to Stryker team building exercises. Recently, the first Strykehorse Stake Challenge, which involved a series of exercises covering four days, concluded at the brigade’s 5th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment. Soldiers executed water combat survival skills, foot marches, call for fire and enter-and-clear enemy building scenarios, and casualty evaluations that graded teams on how quickly they could complete obstacles, as well as teamwork.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

[Russian and the Iranian Nuclear Crisis](#)

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace – 23 May 2006

At first glance, Russia's current position on the Iranian nuclear crisis is quite controversial. Its basic features were formulated by Russian President Vladimir Putin during his visit to Israel in April 2005. He said that just enhancing IAEA safeguards over the Iranian peaceful nuclear program was not enough - Iran had to abandon plans for the development of the full nuclear fuel cycle and place the rest of its peaceful nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. In support of this position, Russia reached an agreement in 2005 with Iran on the return of spent nuclear fuel from the Bushehr nuclear power plant to Russia for reprocessing. Russia also tried (up to now unsuccessfully) to get Tehran's consent for launching a joint venture on an international uranium enrichment center on Russian territory, which would provide a guaranteed supply of LEU for the Iranian nuclear energy industry.

[Envoy Says No Progress on North Korean Talks](#)

Reuters – 25 May 2006

The U.S. envoy to negotiations on dismantling North Korea's nuclear program held talks with his Chinese counterpart on Thursday, but said there could be no progress until Pyongyang agrees to come back to the table. U.S. negotiator Christopher Hill said he and China's Wu Dawei agreed on the need to get back to six-party talks but that North Korea was still not prepared to resume the process it has refused to rejoin since an inconclusive session in November. "We had some discussion about the fact that we need to get going on this and that it is not helpful the DPRK has continued to boycott the talks," Hill told reporters, referring to North Korea by the initials for its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

[A Realist Case for Conditioning U.S.-India Nuclear Deal](#)

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace – 15 May 2006

The debate over the nuclear deal negotiated by the Bush Administration and the government of India is too narrow. This is ironic in as much as the best argument for the deal is that it advances big strategic goals. Some administration officials admit privately that the purported nonproliferation benefits of the deal are thinner than the paper it's not yet written on, and they hope to convince Congress that even if there are no nonproliferation gains, the grand strategic benefits still make the deal worth supporting. Strangely, nevertheless, the debate focuses on the nonproliferation aspects of the deal and leaves larger strategic questions relatively unexamined.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

[Forces Move In as East Timor Seeks Help](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly –26 May 2006

Some 2,000 security personnel from four countries began deploying to East Timor on 25 May after the government called for foreign assistance to re-establish order following armed clashes in the capital, Dili. The security situation has been deteriorating since rioting broke out in April after around 600 Timorese troops, nearly half the 1,400-strong regular army, were sacked on airing grievances against the government. This dissident force appears to have since gained further strength through clan loyalties, with the ex-soldiers largely Loromonu people from the country's western regions while remaining security personnel are mainly Lorosae from eastern regions. "We have officially asked for help from Australia, New Zealand, Portugal and Malaysia," East Timorese Foreign Minister Jose Ramos Horta announced on 24 May. An advance party from the Australian Defence Force (ADF) was on the ground the next day, with other troops due to follow, but the pace of events has generated some confusion.

[Singapore Deploys Personnel to Dual Natural Disasters](#)

Jane's Defence Weekly –30 May 2006

The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) have simultaneously deployed military personnel in support of relief operations in two neighbouring countries after severe flooding hit northern Thailand and an earthquake struck central Java, Indonesia. The flash floods and mudslides in Thailand on 22 May, the worst in some 60 years, affected over 150,000 people, leaving at least 73 dead. The SAF operation in support of 1,000 Thai army troops involved in recovery operations involves three CH-47D Chinook helicopters, which were already in the country for training. These were deployed to Phitsanulok on 26 May to assist in search-and-rescue missions and casualty evacuation together with the transportation of humanitarian aid, equipment and personnel.

SPACE WARFARE

[Pentagon Endorses Space Missile Plan](#)

Reuters –10 May 2006

The Pentagon's top weapons buyer has endorsed a plan that could lead to a multibillion-dollar U.S. missile defense component in space and strain ties with China, Russia and other countries. At issue is what the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency calls a space-based "test bed." It would initially involve as few as one or two interceptor missiles designed to shoot down ballistic missiles possibly tipped with nuclear, chemical or germ warheads. "I'm supportive of creating a test bed," Kenneth Krieg, undersecretary of defense for acquisition,

told Reuters in an interview Tuesday. “And then we’ll see what we do with it afterwards.” The Missile Defense Agency plans to seek \$45 million in seed money to start building the experimentation center in the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1, 2007.