

# **RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE 8/2007**

*The Foremost Inter-Disciplinary Defence E-Bulletin*

突破 *Revolucionario* *Revolutionary* *Merevolusikan* *Revolutionär* *Kraantikari*

**30 April 2007**

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## CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT

### [Iraq and the Kurds: Resolving the Kirkuk Crisis](#)

*International Crisis Group – 19 April 2007*

A new approach is urgently needed to settle the status of Kirkuk, where security is deteriorating and an explosion of ethnic tensions could destroy any gains anticipated from the U.S. surge in Baghdad. The report examines the northern Iraqi city and region which are ethnically mixed and rich in oil. Two factors are to blame for growing tensions: Kurdistan Regional Government insistence on a status referendum by year's end, despite bitter Arab and Turkoman community opposition; and exploitation by Jihadi fighters, who have found fertile ground for chaos by exacerbating communal tensions.

### [A Rose-Coloured Exit Strategy](#)

*Foreign Policy – April 2007*

A decision to withdraw all U.S. combat troops from Iraq by late 2008 would profoundly alter the dynamics of the Iraqi insurgency. Whether the outcome would be reconciliation or civil war depends on whether Sunnis and Shiites can be persuaded to give each other one more chance.

### [America's Learning Disability in Iraq](#)

*Carnegie Endowment for International Peace – 6 April 2007*

The United States government is suffering from a curious learning disability when it comes to Iraq. As it begins the painful process of disengaging from Iraq, the U.S. is at risk of repeating the mistakes it made going into the war. This is particularly curious because such a strong consensus has developed about the mistakes made going in. Liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats, defenders and critics of the decision to go to war have all settled on the same list of errors: Not sending enough troops; not anticipating correctly the training and armor that the troops would need; dismantling the Iraqi army; failing to prevent the looting; purging Baath Party members from government jobs, thus leaving thousands of Iraqi families without income and important agencies bereft of critical personnel; misreading the nature of the enemy; underestimating the Sunni-Shiite conflict; misjudging the influence of Iran, Syria and foreign jihadists; squandering reconstruction funds and the catastrophic attempt to micromanage Iraq right after the invasion.

### [Don't Blame Iran for Iraq](#)

*Time Magazine – 27 April 2007*

Administration claims that Iran has been supplying arms to Iraq's Sunni insurgency have never made any sense. Coming soon after Washington initially accused Tehran of arming Shi'ite militias, they have seemed like a weak attempt to remake its case tying the country

to attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq — the vast majority of which are carried out by Sunni, not Shi'a, forces.

### [Inside the Green Zone](#)

*Time Magazine – 26 April 2007*

For those viewing the war in Iraq from afar, reports from inside the Green Zone can make this ravaged city look almost serene. Protected on two sides by the wide, caramel-colored waters of the Tigris and surrounded by high cement walls, the 4-sq.-mi. Green Zone (officially called the International Zone) sits in the middle of Baghdad and is home to thousands of people, including many members of the Iraqi government. Since the ouster of Saddam Hussein, the Green Zone has been the seat of U.S. power in Iraq, first in the form of the ill-fated Coalition Provisional Authority and now the 1,500-person U.S. embassy, the biggest in the world. To most visiting American dignitaries, the placid, palm-lined streets of the Green Zone are the only glimpse of Iraq they see; to Iraqis, it might as well be another continent. "Living here is like living in Europe," says Haider Hassan, a store clerk at the \$280-a-night al-Rasheed Hotel inside the Green Zone. "You miss nothing, starting with electricity, power, water and security. Outside the gates is hell."

### [U.S. Rebuilding in Iraq is Missing Key Goals, Report Finds](#)

*Washington Post – 30 April 2007*

The U.S. project to rebuild Iraq remains far short of its targets, leaving the country plagued by power outages, inadequate oil production and shortages of clean water and health care, according to a report to be issued today by a U.S. government oversight agency. The 232-page quarterly review by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction presents a sobering picture of the challenges of reconstruction in a war zone. It also says the Army has asked Parsons Corp., one of the largest contractors in Iraq, to explain why it should not be barred from pursuing government contracts for up to three years.

## **Counter Terrorism**

### [The Terrorism Index](#)

*Foreign Policy – April 2007*

Six months ago, we launched a groundbreaking new index that asked more than 100 of America's top foreign-policy hands if the United States was winning the war on terror. Their answer? No. Now, surveyed again today, this bipartisan group sees a world that continues to grow more dangerous and a U.S. national security strategy that is failing on several fronts. In the second FOREIGN POLICY/Center for American Progress Terrorism Index, these experts warn that not only is another attack imminent, but that the United States may be distracted from the threats that matter most.

### [The Saudi Arrests: How Big a Plot?](#)

*Time Magazine – 27 April 2007*

The arrest of 172 Islamist militants by Saudi security forces represents another blow to al-Qaeda, but it also sheds light on the group's determination to use its base inside war-torn Iraq to spread its jihadist campaign to Saudi Arabia and the wider Arab world. According to a statement issued by the Saudi Ministry of Interior on Friday, Saudi security forces broke up more than seven jihadist cells that had been engaged in an array of activities against the authorities. The statement did not identify al-Qaeda by name, but described the suspects in typical official codewords for the organization, such as "deviant group" and those who had "adopted the takfiri thought [judging Muslims as infidels] toward Arab and Islamic peoples, governments and leaders."

## **DEFENCE STRATEGY**

### [Malaysia Looks to Joint Patrols of the Strait of Malacca](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 25 April 2007*

Joint patrols of the Strait of Malacca by the region's littoral states may be possible in future, according to Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Dato Sri Najib Tun Razak. Naval and air patrols currently conducted by Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore in the Strait of Malacca region are restricted to home territorial and international waters. This impedes the pursuit and apprehension of pirates, Dato Sri Najib noted at the International Military Operations and Law Conference, held recently in Kuala Lumpur.

### [China Seeks Joint Military Exercise With ASEAN Countries](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 16 April 2007*

Under a bold policy initiative yet to be made public, China is seeking to expand its political and economic ties with the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) through organising a first multilateral military exercise. Sources told *Jane's* that the Chinese proposal, which is still at an early stage, involves a joint naval drill. Beijing opened discussions at the start of 2007 with the aim of conducting the exercise around mid-2008. The initiative appears to have been presented to ASEAN members individually rather than collectively through the group's secretariat. The response is not yet known, but sources indicate that the proposal remains under active consideration.

### [NATO Begins Defence Missile Discussions](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 20 April 2007*

NATO began political discussions on developing its own territorial missile defence system on 19 April. At the same time the alliance separately sought to reassure Russia that the US deployment of parts of its own system in Europe did

not constitute a threat. The North Atlantic Council (NAC), NATO's highest decision-making body, reinforced by experts from NATO capitals, received briefings from senior US, Czech and Polish officials about plans to base 10 interceptors in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic.

## **DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY**

### [Airborne Observatory Completes First Test Flight](#)

*New Scientist* – 27 April 2007

The SOFIA flying infrared observatory successfully completed its first test flight on Thursday. The flight was the first in a series leading up to astronomical observations that could begin in late 2008 or early 2009. The Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy is a 747 jumbo jet that will be used to haul a 2.5-metre telescope weighing 20 tonnes into the sky. Flying 12 kilometres above the ground, the observatory will be above more than 99% of the atmospheric water vapour that obscures the sky at infrared wavelengths.

### [Maiden Flight Killer Bee UAV](#)

*Space War* – 19 April 2007

The Killer Bee fourth generation Unmanned Aircraft System (KBUAS) flew for the first time at Yuma Proving Grounds (YPG) in Yuma Arizona. Developed by Swift Engineering of San Clemente, CA, the all new KB4 unmanned aircraft (KB4 UA) flew for 70 minutes and became the latest success story in the company's family of blended wing UAS.

### [USAF Study Recommends Pursuing New UAV](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly* – 24 April 2007

The US Air Force (USAF) issued a contract notice on 19 April seeking technologies for a new, multirole, 'hunter-killer' unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). The branch of the air force in charge of the project, the Air Force Research Laboratory, declined to elaborate, saying it is too early in the development process to do so.

### [US Military Looks to Fill Gaps in GPS Navigation](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly* – 20 April 2007

The US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is funding an effort to develop navigation technology that will work when signals from the satellite-based GPS are unavailable. Two industry teams - one led by Boeing, another led by Argon ST - have won DARPA contracts for the Robust Surface Navigation programme, which aims to

identify ways to tap "signals of opportunity" to provide precise navigation data. The objective is to find ways to use other sources - television antennas, cell phone towers or satellites - to fix a location when GPS is blocked by jamming or interference.

### [Radio Controlled Toys Serious Threat to Security Says NATO Official](#)

*Space War – 27 April 2007*

NATO is concerned by the easy access to drone technology in the world, which is in particular used in radio controlled toys, a NATO deputy assistant secretary general said Thursday. Guy Roberts told a Moscow nonproliferation conference that 18 months ago, a father and son built a small unmanned airplane in Vermont, U.S., which flew nonstop from New Hampshire to the U.K. with a five-kg load, eventually landing 10 meters from the target place. Roberts said the flight was possible with the help of open commercial technology which is potentially very dangerous.

## **MILITARY OPERATIONS**

### [Modern Mission Relies on Languages, Cultural Awareness, Official Says](#)

*American Forces Press Service – 27 April 2007*

The Defense Department needs more servicemembers who understand other languages and cultures to meet current and envisioned 21st-century challenges, a senior official said at a Capitol Hill hearing. "Foreign language and regional expertise, which includes cultural awareness, are emerging as key competencies for our 21st-century Total Force," Gail H. McGinn, deputy undersecretary of defense for plans and the department's senior language authority, said in her prepared statement submitted to members of the Senate Armed Services Committee's emerging threats and capabilities subcommittee April 25.

### [Officials Take Step Forward Toward Renewable Energy](#)

*Air Force News– 25 April 2007*

The groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of North America's largest solar photovoltaic power system took place here April 23. The Nellis solar energy system, once operational, will generate 25 million kilowatt-hours of "clean" electricity for the base. The project is scheduled for completion in early 2008.

## **NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION**

### [Replacement Warhead Program Poses Challenges for Weapons Complex](#)

*Space War – 25 April 2007*

An independent study group, convened by AAAS's Center for Science, Technology and Security Policy, has issued a report on the proposed Reliable Replacement Warhead

(RRW) and its role in the future U.S. nuclear weapons program. Bruce Tarter, head of the study group and a former director of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, discussed the report in a teleconference with reporters on Tuesday, 24 April. The panel concluded that most of the anticipated benefits of the proposed RRW program -- more easily maintained nuclear weapons with enhanced performance margins, improved safety and security properties, and greater ease of manufacture -- would occur in the long term subsequent to modernization of the weapons production complex.

### [Mutual Destruction Danger in US Anti-Missile Plan Says Putin](#)

*Space War – 27 April 2007*

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday warned that US plans to deploy an anti-missile system in eastern Europe sharply increase the danger of mutual destruction. In comments laden with Cold War imagery, the Kremlin leader accused the United States of misrepresenting the true aim of the limited missile shield, which is to be based in NATO members Czech Republic and Poland.