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CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT

[A Lesson in Iraqi Illusion](#)

The Boston Globe – 8 July 2007

To imagine what Baghdad will look like after the surge, there is no need to project far into the future. Instead, just turn to the recent past. Between September 2006 and March 2007, British forces conducted Operation Sinbad in Basra, Iraq's second largest city. At first, there were signs of progress: diminished violence, criminality, and overall chaos. But these turned out to be superficial and depressingly fleeting. Only a few months after the operation came to an end, old habits resurfaced. Today, political tensions once again are destabilizing the city; relentless attacks against British forces have driven them off the streets; and the southern city is under the control of militias, more powerful and less inhibited than before.

[Nepal's Troubled Tarai Region](#)

International Crisis Group – 9 July 2007

Unrest in the Tarai plains has exposed the weaknesses of Nepal's peace process, could derail elections for a constituent assembly in November and, if not properly addressed, could start a new form of conflict. Madhesis – plainspeople who are some one third of the country's population – have protested, sometimes violently, against the discrimination that has in effect excluded them from public life. Weeks of demonstrations and clashes between political rivals recently left several dozen dead. The government has offered to address issues such as increased electoral representation, affirmative action for marginalised groups and federalism but has dragged its feet over implementing dialogue. Tension had been building for several years but was largely ignored by the political elites and international observers, and the scale of the protest shocked even its own leaders. The problems will only be resolved by strengthening the national political process and making it both inclusive and responsive – starting with free and fair elections to a constituent assembly later this year.

[The Democracy Crusade Myth](#)

National Interest – 1 July 2007

AS ATTENTION in Washington begins to turn to the likely or desired shape of a post-Bush foreign policy, calls for a return to realism are increasingly heard. A common theme is that the United States should back away from what is often characterized as a reckless Bush crusade to promote democracy around the world. Although it is certainly true that U.S. foreign policy is due for a serious recalibration, the notion that democracy promotion plays a dominant role in Bush policy is a myth. Certainly, President Bush has built a gleaming rhetorical edifice around democracy promotion through invocations of a universalist freedom agenda. And many people within the administration have given serious attention to how the United States can do more to advance democracy in the world. Overall, however, the traditional imperatives of U.S. economic and security interests that have long constrained U.S. pro-democratic impulses have persisted. The

main lines of Bush policy, with the singular exception of the Iraq intervention, have turned out to be largely realist in practice, with democracy and human rights generally relegated to minor corners.

[Rethinking Western Strategies Towards Pakistan: An Action Agenda for the United States and Europe](#)

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace – July 2007

Pakistan's military is complicit in the worsening security situation in Afghanistan—including the resurgence of the Taliban, terrorism in Kashmir, and the growth of jihadi extremism and capabilities, says a new report from the Carnegie Endowment. Furthermore, current Western policies reinforce Pakistan's political weakness and contribute to regional instability by allowing Pakistan to trade democratization for its cooperation on terrorism.

[Re-Occupy Iraq?](#)

National Interest – 1 July 2007

THE U.S. occupation of Iraq has reached a dramatic turning point: The costs to America in blood and treasure dictate that a new president from either party will have to take the United States in a dramatically different direction. Admitting privately that there is no Plan B, the current administration appears to have put all its eggs in one basket. U.S. armed forces are implementing a surge of 20,000 in the U.S. troop presence in Iraq. While it could be a step in the right direction, even this "surge and hope" strategy will likely falter soon, as U.S. forces will be unable to clear and hold Baghdad neighborhoods until Iraq's militias are dealt with in a dramatically different way.

[Ahmadinejobless](#)

Foreign Policy – July 2007

Iran's radical president is sinking fast, and he knows it. Now, there's only one man who can keep Mahmoud Ahmadinejad out of the unemployment line: George W. Bush. In Tehran, the mood is quickly shifting. And it's easy to feel it every time you stop to buy a newspaper, have a coffee, or wait in line at the grocery store. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's star is fading fast.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

[UN Convention Against Nuclear Terrorism Comes into Effect](#)

Janes Defence Weekly – 11 July 2007

A new international convention against nuclear terrorism came into force on 7 July. "The convention will help prevent terrorist groups from gaining access to the most lethal weapons known to man," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who described

nuclear terrorism "as one of the most serious threats of our time". The new international treaty, which has 115 signatories, needed 22 ratifications before it became international law. The 22 ratifying parties that have expressed their willingness to implement the treaty are: Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Comoros, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, India, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Mexico, Mongolia, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

DEFENCE STRATEGY

[India and Vietnam Sign Defence Co-operation Agreement](#)

Janes Defence Weekly – 11 July 2007

India has moved closer to the possibility of selling arms to Vietnam after the two countries signed a defence agreement during a recent visit by the Vietnamese prime minister to New Delhi, which ended on 8 July. The defence agreement was one of nine economic and trade pacts made between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his counterpart, Nguyen Tan Dung.

[India Develops Infrastructure on Chinese Border](#)

Janes Defence Weekly – 13 July 2007

India has started infrastructural development along its 4,054 km frontier with China to keep pace with heightened activity on the other side. Senior security officials said the proposed transportation network — involving 72 roads, three airstrips and numerous bridges along the undefined line of actual control — would enable the Indian military to “swiftly” move forces into the region and sustain them logistically in the event of any “untoward trouble or emergency”.

[Australia, India Finalise Bilateral Defence Accord](#)

Janes Defence Weekly – 13 July 2007

Australia has finalised an agreement with New Delhi to augment bilateral defence ties. The deal marks the overcoming of years of suspicion, during the 1990s, over India’s growing nuclear and military prowess, especially the expanding role of its navy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY

[PackBot SUGV Gets Taser Technology](#)

Janes Defence Weekly – 9 July 2007

iRobot Corporation has created an updated version of its flagship PackBot small unmanned ground vehicle (SUGV) that is capable of being equipped with Taser

electronic control devices. The US company has signed a strategic alliance with Taser International to develop the UGV to “engage, incapacitate and control” suspects.

[Rheinmetall Reveals Plans for RUFUS Armoured Engineer Vehicle](#)

Janes Defence Weekly – 11 July 2007

Germany's Rheinmetall Defence is currently developing a new vehicle called RUFUS (*Rheinmetall Universal Fahrzeug Fuer Unterstuetzungs-Systeme*) to meet emerging user requirements for an armoured engineer vehicle (AEV) to support medium forces. According to the company there is a potential market for different armoured support vehicle types for the home and export markets.

[Thales Offers new Situational Awareness System for the Soldiers](#)

Space War – 11 July 2007

The WBR Soldier Technology Conference in London sees the first public exhibition of MILTRAK, an advanced, compact and lightweight digitised soldier system from Thales UK. MILTRAK will improve the operational effectiveness of front line combat troops by providing commanders with vital situational awareness (SA) information, updated every few seconds.

ENERGY SECURITY

[Seeds of Conflict – Security Risks of the Quest for Biofuels](#)

Janes Intelligence Review – 6 July 2007

When the US, the world's largest oil consumer, begins to look seriously at biofuels as a means of moving away from reliance on fossil fuels, the rest of the world will not be slow to follow. In January, US President George W Bush announced plans to cut his country's "addiction to oil" by reducing oil consumption by 20 per cent by 2017 with the use of biofuels. In addition, the EU has agreed a 10 per cent target for biofuel use in transport by 2020.

[Oiling the Axis – Ties Between Iran and Venezuela](#)

Janes Intelligence Review – 9 July 2007

Venezuela and Iran could barely be two more culturally distant countries, with very few obvious motives to become allies. Yet their two current governments, led by President Hugo Chávez and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad respectively, are forging an ever tighter financial, political, military and perhaps nuclear alliance that intends to shift the balance of world power. This was most recently demonstrated by Chávez' visit to Iran in July, his third such trip in two years. The reasons for their 'strategic alliance', as unusual as it may seem, are multiple.

MILITARY OPERATION

[US to Boost Use of Armed Drones in Iraq and Afghanistan](#)

Space War – 13 July 2007

The US air force announced plans Friday to nearly double the number of combat air patrols over Iraq and Afghanistan by the end of next year using armed Predator drones. The move comes amid a troop surge in Iraq but also intensifying calls for a withdrawal of US combat forces. An air force spokesman would not say whether the accelerated delivery of Predators was prompted by the surge, or other factors.

[Russia Shows US the Central Asian Door](#)

Janes Defence Weekly – 12 July 2007

Defying all of its critics, the Bush administration may still be hanging tough in Iraq, but on another critical front of the 'War on Terror' - Central Asia - Washington appears to be in full strategic retreat. The latest trouble spot is Kyrgyzstan, where the US military presence at the Manas air base has become a bone of contention between regime opponents and the government of embattled president Kurmanbek Bakiyev. In recent weeks, activists have repeatedly protested before the US embassy in Bishkek, calling for a withdrawal of US troops from the former Soviet republic and a disengagement of Kyrgyzstan from coalition operations in favour of a modus vivendi on defence and security issues with the country's traditional patron, Russia. And Kyrgyz officials are taking notice, with a number of key committees in the country's parliament calling for a "review" of Bishkek's ties with Washington.

[Overstretched UK Forces Will Hinder Operational Capability, Says Report](#)

Janes Defence Weekly – 4 July 2007

A UK government committee has warned that the overstretch of UK forces in “specific areas” will hinder operational capability as operations continue to be conducted in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Iraq. Describing “severe” shortfalls in specialist trades, including nursing, linguistics and leading hands, the Public Accounts Committee Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces report, published on 3 July, warned of “routine” breaking of harmony guidelines.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

[UN Inspectors Confirm NKorea Reactor Shut Down](#)

Space War – 15 July 2007

UN inspectors have confirmed that North Korea has shut down its nuclear reactor, the head of the UN nuclear watchdog said Monday. "Our inspectors are there. They verified

the shutting down of the reactor yesterday," International Atomic Energy Agency head Mohamed ElBaradei said.

[Finding the Iranian Weak Spot](#)

Space War – 13 July 2007

Just hours after the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency called Iran's moratorium on its uranium enrichment activities a step in the right direction, an Iranian senior official denied any such delay. "The suspension of Iran's nuclear activities makes no sense and no final decision whatsoever has been taken yet on the issue," the Iranian official was quoted as saying by the Iran Daily.