



# **RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE 13/2008**

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Articles from subscriber only sites are available on request. Révolutionnaire is edited by Samuel Chan, with contributions from Bernard Loo and Joshua Ho. The Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) is a key research component of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). It focuses on security research to serve national needs. IDSS' faculty and research staff conduct both academic and policy-oriented research on security-related issues and developments affecting Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific. Its research agenda presently comprises the following programmes: Maritime Security, the Revolution in Military Affairs, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Contemporary Islam, Indonesia and China.

## CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT

### [Somali factions sign peace deal](#)

BBC – 9 June 2008

Somalia's government has signed a peace deal with an opposition bloc aimed at ending 17 years of conflict in the country, the UN envoy to Somalia says. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah said the government and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia agreed to cease hostilities for three months. The deal brokered at UN-led talks in Djibouti, also envisages that Ethiopian troops leave Somalia within 120 days. But some opposition hardliners and Somali rebels have dismissed the talks. The deal does not include many of the armed Somali groups at present fighting the transitional government and the Ethiopian troops backing it. Correspondents say it is not clear if it will have any impact on the clashes which are still killing dozens of people every week. At least 28 people were killed during clashes between Islamist insurgents and Ethiopian troops backing the Somali government over the weekend. On Saturday, BBC Somali service reporter Nasteh Dahir was killed by suspected Islamists in the southern port of Kismayo. The deal was reached after the Somali government team and members of the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia held their first face-to-face talks in neighbouring Djibouti, Mr Ould Abdallah told the BBC. "It took eight days to attend workshops, to live in the same hotel, but avoiding each other. Finally they met... Confidence resumed slowly, and we have to support and nurture that renewed confidence," he said. "The cessation of armed confrontations shall come into force 30 days from the signing of this agreement throughout the national territory," the text of the deal said, according to the AFP news agency. The agreement covers an initial period of 90 days after which it will be renewed. It also envisages that Ethiopian troops will withdraw from Somalia within 120 days, once a UN peacekeeping force is deployed. Some 2,200 African Union troops are in Mogadishu, but have done little to quell the violence which has triggered a humanitarian crisis that aid workers say may be the worst in Africa. The talks in Djibouti were the latest attempt to negotiate an end to the anarchy in Somalia. It is estimated that the conflict has created more than one million refugees. Somalia has experienced almost constant civil conflict since the collapse of Mohamed Siad Barre's regime in January 1991.

### [Islamist rejects Somali peace deal](#)

CNN – 10 June 2008

A leader of Somalia's ousted Islamic movement rejected a U.N.-brokered peace deal between the government and an opposition alliance, saying Tuesday that Islamic insurgents will continue to fight. The Somali government and the opposition Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia agreed late Monday to end months of violence and set a timetable for the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops called into back up Somalia's fragile government. The deal was an important step toward peace, but it remains to if hard-line members of the opposition -- who have denounced those who took part in the U.N.-led talks in Djibouti -- will respect the accord. "The so-called deal is rubbish and inconsequential," Sheik Hassan Dahir Aweys, who is on U.S. and U.N. lists of terrorism

suspects, told The Associated Press. "It will not in any way result in peace." A main sticking point is the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops who have been in Somalia since 2006 to help government forces battle Islamic fighters. The opposition sees the Ethiopians as an occupying force. Under the accord reached late Monday, both sides agreed to "end all acts of armed confrontation" within 30 days and to act within 120 days to remove Ethiopian troops once a U.N. peacekeeping force is deployed. The U.N. Security Council has said it would consider deploying peacekeepers to replace African Union troops if there is improved political reconciliation and security. The AU force is struggling. It is authorized to have 8,000 soldiers but currently has 2,600 from Uganda and Burundi. On Tuesday, Somalis in the capital, scene of seemingly endless death and destruction, held out hope that the deal would bring peace. "We have suffered for so long. We are tired of war," said Fadumo Ali, a businesswoman. "Enough is enough." Members of the Security Council visited Djibouti last week to encourage Somalia's government and the opposition alliance to hold direct peace talks. The opposition ruled out face-to-face talks unless the government sets a timetable for the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops, while President Abdullahi Yusuf said Ethiopian forces would not leave until fighting stops and a U.N. peacekeeping force is deployed. The turning point in talks Monday was not immediately clear. Somalia's shaky transitional government was formed in 2004 with the help of the United Nations but has failed to assert any real control over the chaotic country. The government called in troops from neighboring Ethiopia in December 2006 to oust Islamic militants who had seized control of the capital, Mogadishu, and most of southern Somalia. The insurgency that started soon after remains a potent and disruptive force, and a continuing threat to Yusuf's government, which is backed by both the United States and the European Union. The country also is facing a worsening humanitarian crisis aggravated by high global food prices and drought.

### [Afghan Attorney General Speaks at Camp Eggers](#)

*American Forces Press Service – 10 June 2008*

Afghanistan's Attorney General Abdul Jabar Sabit was guest of honor June 5 at the Camp Eggers celebration of Law Day 2008. Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan's staff judge advocate directorate hosted the event. Sabit addressed 30 U.S. and Canadian legal representatives about rule of law in his country. The event marked the 50th anniversary of the U.S. observance of Law Day. This year's theme, "The Rule of Law -- Foundation for Communities of Opportunity and Equity," mirrors the U.S. and coalition mission of assisting the Afghan government, said Army Col. Robert Teetsel, Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan staff judge advocate. "We could think of no better speaker than Dr. Sabit to talk to us about rule of law development in Afghanistan," he said. Sabit acknowledged that Afghanistan has far to go in establishing rule of law nationwide. "There are infamous warlords who are governors of provinces," he said. "This is the state of rule of law in this country." Sabit discussed factors inhibiting rule of law in Afghanistan, including the war against insurgents; illegal drugs; corruption among police, prosecutors and lawmakers; and laws that prevent him from prosecuting corrupt members of Afghanistan's parliament. The attorney general's personal accounts of his struggles brought to the forefront the immediate need to eliminate corruption, said Army Chief Warrant Officer William Teeple, legal administrator for Combined Security

Transition Command Afghanistan. "I am hopeful and recognize that success cannot just be measured by weighing in daily on our advances and setbacks," Teeple said. "By remaining focused and understanding the principles inherent in the rule of law, we can create a solid foundation of reform and renewed faith in this country." Sabit said one of his successes since becoming attorney general has been the establishment of a program to appoint qualified prosecutors in the provinces and districts. Because of a shortage of lawyers, the government appointed many prosecutors who were not attorneys, but rather were laymen chosen because of their experience or past positions. Last year, 150 new lawyers were recruited, and 233 were recruited this year. Sabit said these lawyers will replace layman prosecutors. After graduating from Kabul University's Faculty of Law, Sabit obtained master's degrees in law and economics in the United States. After serving as legal advisor to the Afghan Ministry of Interior beginning in 2003, Sabit was appointed attorney general by President Hamid Karzai in August 2006.

[World asked for over S\\$13.7 billion for Afghan development: US](#)

*AFP* – 11 June 2008

The world community will be urged to give 'a solid start' to Afghan President Hamid Karzai's US\$50-billion (S\$68.7 billion) development plan at a Paris donors meeting this week, a senior US official said on Tuesday. The conference on Thursday in the French capital is aimed at extracting more than the US\$10.5 billion pledged at the London donors conference two years ago, according to the official, Mr Richard Boucher. 'It's not a conference to fill the US\$50 billion tank,' the assistant secretary of state for south and central Asian affairs told reporters in Washington. 'It's a conference to put on the table a solid amount of money, more than London, to get a solid start on the five years of the Afghan development strategy,' Mr Boucher said. He declined to give exact figures for what he expected the international community or the United States to pledge for the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. But Mr Boucher's deputy Patrick Moon told AFP on Monday that the conference was expected to net a total of US\$15 billion in pledges. Mr Moon said the meeting does not aim to finance Mr Karzai's entire plan, because legislative disparities among donor countries would make it impossible. US donations, for example, need Congress' approval before they can be disbursed. Mr Boucher said the US Congress has approved US\$26 billion for Afghanistan since 2001, with about 70 per cent of it disbursed. He said the development strategy amounts to implementing steps for the long-term goals of the London Compact. 'Afghans will lay out the progress that's been achieved, but also the priority among these goals, among these steps on how to continue to make progress,' Mr Boucher said. The conference will also stress how to use the aid effectively and have Afghanistan lead development. 'Aid effectiveness is ... you might say a double-edged sword. It means, one, using money more effectively by spending it through Afghan government, through the Afghan contractors, through the Afghan trust funds,' he said. 'And, two, it means using money more effectively by improving the Afghan capability to manage projects, to audit projects, to control corruption and other things that detract from the effectiveness of aid,' he added. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said on Monday that the conference is to help show that the international community will not abandon Afghanistan as it did in the past. 'And we saw the results of what happened,' said Mr McCormack, referring to the

September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States by Al-Qaeda, allies of the former Taleban regime. 'So, certainly the United States is not going to repeat that.' First Lady Laura Bush is expected to announce the US contribution at the Paris conference, while Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will give a speech on US policy in Afghanistan. On her brief visit to Kabul on Sunday, Laura Bush announced an US\$80 million aid package for Afghan education projects.

### [Dozens die as battle rages in Afghanistan](#)

*CNN* – 18 June 2008

Two Afghan soldiers and at least 23 militants were killed Wednesday during a military operation to push out Taliban rebels from several villages in south Afghanistan, the country's defense ministry said. Afghan troops, backed by Canadian forces, targeted villages in the Arghandab district of Kandahar province, where 400 militants escaped from prison in a jailbreak Friday. Meanwhile, four British soldiers were killed Tuesday in a separate operation in Lashkar Gah, also in southern Afghanistan. And in another incident on Wednesday, two NATO-led soldiers were killed and 10 wounded during a patrol in southeastern Afghanistan. The incident occurred in the Paktika province, the alliance force said without releasing the nationalities of these troops. Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Gen. Zahir Azimi said thousands of soldiers and police officers -- with reinforcements from the capital city of Kabul -- began moving into Arghandab Wednesday morning. "This clearing operation is a response to a direct Taliban threat to the people of Arghandab district, where insurgents have forced hundreds of innocent Afghans to flee their homes," a statement from NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said. "The operation is expected to be completed within the next three days." The two Afghan soldiers were killed in a gun battle with three Taliban fighters, the defense ministry said. A NATO air raid in the district killed 20 other militants, the ministry said. Even with the operation under way, NATO said it had seen no evidence of an increased Taliban presence in the region. "The scale of the challenge is currently unknown," ISAF spokesman Mark Laity said. "What we failed to find is the large grouping [of militants] that some people claimed." Laity said the reports of militants overrunning villages was Taliban "propaganda precisely to scare people." Throughout the night and into early Wednesday morning, residents reported seeing row upon row of military convoys moving into the district. As the operation got under way, planes and helicopters buzzed overhead. Local elders said hundreds of militants streamed into the villages late Sunday night on motor bikes and pickups. Then, in apparent preparation for an impending military operation, they planted mines, destroyed bridges and forced villagers to stay and fight alongside them, a tribal elder said. NATO aircraft dropped hundreds of leaflets Monday night asking residents to stay inside their homes, saying troops were "coming to remove the enemies of Afghanistan." Locals differed on the number of villages they said the Taliban had seized, with figures varying from five to 13. The villages are about 20 km (12 miles) north of Kandahar, near the prison. Kandahar province is where the Taliban first rose to power and where it made its last stand before being toppled by U.S.-led forces in late 2001. Meanwhile, the British soldiers were killed as they took part in an operation east of Lashkar Gah, the British Ministry of Defense said in a statement. The blast killed three soldiers immediately while a fourth died later,

the ministry said. One of the victims served in the Intelligence Corps. A fifth soldier was wounded and is in stable condition. Prime Minister Gordon Brown mourned the loss in the House of Commons, saying he was proud of them. "They were undertaking the most difficult missions in the most dangerous of countries," he said. "Our troops are second to none, the best in the world. They're on the noblest of missions. They are fighting for freedom for the Afghans in their own country and for the world in protecting us from terrorism." Opposition Conservative Party leader David Cameron agreed. "When people ask us why we're sending our young men and women to fight and possibly die in the heat and dust of Afghanistan, let us be absolutely united in saying that their fight is our fight," he said. "This is a fight against terrorism and extremism, not just in Afghanistan, that affects the safety of our streets and our way of life, too." The explosion occurred a day after Brown announced that Britain would send more troops to Afghanistan. British troops there primarily serve in the southern province of Helmand, where allied forces are battling a resurgent Taliban. Defense Secretary Des Browne said Britain would increase its troop presence in Afghanistan from 7,800 to 8,030 by next spring.

### Taliban forced back in Kandahar offensive

*CNN* – 19 June 2008

Afghan and NATO forces have pushed the Taliban out of several villages in southern Afghanistan they claimed to have seized, the governor of Kandahar province said Thursday. British troops conducting operations against Taliban forces in Kandahar, Afghanistan. More than 100 Taliban fighters were killed or wounded in the operation, said Gov. Assadullah Khalid, and many others have fled. Hundreds of Taliban militants streamed into several villages in Kandahar days ago, after 400 militants escaped from prison in a daring and well-executed jailbreak. In response, NATO aircraft dropped hundreds of leaflets advising residents to stay inside and saying that troops were "coming to remove the enemies of Afghanistan." Then military convoys rolled into the district. Afghan soldiers and police, along with NATO-led forces, started the military operation Wednesday. At least 34 militants were killed and another 60 wounded in the early stages of the assault, Afghan police said. "This clearing operation is a response to a direct Taliban threat to the people of Arghandab district, where insurgents have forced hundreds of innocent Afghans to flee their homes," read a statement from the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force. Watch NATO troops launch their operation near Kandahar. Locals said the Taliban had seized from five to 13 villages, but an ISAF spokesman said reports of militants overrunning villages was Taliban "propaganda precisely to scare people." The villages are about 12 miles (20 km) north of Kandahar, near the prison. Kandahar province is where the Taliban first rose to power and where it made its last stand before being toppled by U.S.-led forces in late 2001. In an earlier operation, two Afghan soldiers and at least 23 militants were killed Wednesday during an attempt to push out Taliban rebels from several villages in south Afghanistan, the country's defense ministry said. Afghan troops, backed by Canadian forces, targeted villages in the Arghandab district of Kandahar province, where 400 militants escaped from prison in a jailbreak Friday. On Tuesday four British soldiers were in a separate operation in Lashkar Gah, also in southern Afghanistan. And in another incident on Wednesday, two NATO-led soldiers were killed and 10 wounded during a patrol in

southeastern Afghanistan. The incident occurred in the Paktika province, the alliance force said without releasing the nationalities of these troops. Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Gen. Zahir Azimi said thousands of soldiers and police officers -- with reinforcements from the capital city of Kabul -- began moving into Arghandab Wednesday morning. "This clearing operation is a response to a direct Taliban threat to the people of Arghandab district, where insurgents have forced hundreds of innocent Afghans to flee their homes," a statement from NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said. "The operation is expected to be completed within the next three days." The two Afghan soldiers were killed in a gun battle with three Taliban fighters, the defense ministry said. A NATO air raid in the district killed 20 other militants, the ministry said. Even with the operation under way, NATO said it had seen no evidence of an increased Taliban presence in the region. "The scale of the challenge is currently unknown," ISAF spokesman Mark Laity said. "What we failed to find is the large grouping [of militants] that some people claimed." Laity said the reports of militants overrunning villages was Taliban "propaganda precisely to scare people." Throughout the night and into early Wednesday morning, residents reported seeing row upon row of military convoys moving into the district. As the operation got under way, planes and helicopters buzzed overhead. Local elders said hundreds of militants streamed into the villages late Sunday night on motor bikes and pickups. Then, in apparent preparation for an impending military operation, they planted mines, destroyed bridges and forced villagers to stay and fight alongside them, a tribal elder said.

### [Iraq goes after Shiite militants near Iran](#)

CNN – 19 June 2008

Iraqi security forces launched an offensive Thursday against Shiite militants in a southeastern province that borders Iran, the government said. The operation aims to "impose the law and confront outlaws," said Maysan province police Col. Mehdi al-Asadi. Curfews were imposed but didn't disrupt daily life, al-Asadi said, noting that markets were active and students were taking exams. Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki had set a Wednesday deadline for "outlaws" in Maysan to hand in their weapons or face an offensive. Under terms set by the government, medium and heavy weapons and explosives could be exchanged for cash rewards until Wednesday. Al-Maliki also offered amnesty until Wednesday to suspects "who do not have the blood of innocent people on their hands," according to his announcement Sunday. Al-Asadi said large amounts of weapons have been seized and some wanted individuals detained over the four-day period. The government is trying to stamp out militants and establish its authority in Shiite-dominated areas, particularly the oil-rich south, where rival Shiite militias have been battling for control. As the spring began, al-Maliki cracked down on militants in the southern city of Basra and in Baghdad's large Sadr City slum. Followers of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr accused the government of trying to weaken their movement ahead of provincial elections. Maysan province and its capital, Amara, are believed to house members of the Mehdi Army -- the armed force of al-Sadr -- who fled Basra and Sadr City after the government crackdowns. The U.S. military said this week that the Amara push is "an Iraqi-initiated and -led operation. Coalition forces will provide support, as needed, much as they have in operations in and around Basra." Al-Maliki also has

stepped up operations against Sunni militants. Iraqi troops in and near the northern city of Mosul have been fighting al Qaeda in Iraq, the Sunni militant group. U.S. forces detained 21 people Thursday in Sunni-dominated areas north of Baghdad. The operations took place in Mosul, Tarmiya, Bi'aj, Baiji and the Balad area. Two roadside bombs were reported in predominantly Shiite areas of Baghdad on Thursday, two days after at least 63 people died in a blast in Hurriya, another Shiite neighborhood in the capital. A bomb killed a civilian and wounded four others in the southwestern neighborhood of Bayaa. A roadside bomb also detonated near a popular restaurant on eastern Baghdad's Palestine Street, but no casualties were reported.

### [Clashes in Chechnya tarnish film week's bid for normality](#)

*Reuters* – 19 June 2008

A week-long film festival in Chechnya had been designed to prove the south Russian republic has ditched its war-torn past. Instead it coincided with an upsurge in rebel attacks. During the seven days of the festival, which ended on Thursday, rebel attacks on Russian military convoys and a raid on a village killed at least six people and injured around a dozen more in the mainly Muslim republic, the authorities said. Not that Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov dwelled on those attacks at his closing speech at the event called "Noah's Ark" which attracted films from Africa, Brazil, the United States and Russia. "It's symbolic that the festival is being held in the Chechen Republic," he said at his fortress-like residence on the edge of the town of Gudermes, about 30 minutes drive east of the capital Grozny where the festival was held. "But unfortunately modern cinema teaches the new generation only violence. Today we need a higher moral content in films." Russian forces have fought rebels in Chechnya since 1994 in two wars. The Kremlin now wants to portray the conflict as finished and has promoted Kadyrov, a 31-year-old wrestling fan and former rebel, to be leader. With Kremlin money Kadyrov has rebuilt Grozny -- once described as one of the most destroyed cities in the world -- and he now promotes it as another peaceful Russian republic. But violence still flares in Chechnya, although the rebel attacks over the last few days have been particularly brazen. The reaction from Chechens to the film festival was mixed. "The staging of the film festival confirms the peace process," 48-year-old lawyer Leila Osmayeva said. "I did not think that in Chechnya I could meet such wonderful directors." Others were more reserved, saying it was premature to hold a film festival in Chechnya.

## **TERRORISM & COUNTER-TERRORISM**

### [Papers give peek inside al Qaeda in Iraq](#)

*CNN* – 11 June 2008

With Christmas 2005 approaching, the princes of al Qaeda's western command were gathering. They'd been summoned for something special: to plot a three-month campaign of coordinated suicide, rocket and infantry attacks on American bases, checkpoints and Iraqi army positions. In al Qaeda in Iraq's hierarchy, prince designates a senior leader, and these princes had been gathered by the most senior among them, the prince of Anbar

province itself. This commander, his name not recorded in al Qaeda's summaries of the meetings and referred to only by rank, spent that December fleshing out his vision for the wave of assaults with the gathered subordinates who would lead his combat brigades. The gathering was a council of war, its meetings remarkably detailed in al Qaeda records. In minutes of their secretive meetings, a grim notation was made: Operation Desert Shield had been approved and would "hopefully commence in mid-January 2006." With the operation approved, the prince of Anbar listened to the briefings of his assembled commanders: the chairmen of both his military and his security committees, plus the various princes from the sectors he controlled -- Falluja, Ramadi, Anbar-West and Anbar-Central. All boundary demarcations strikingly similar to those used by the American soldiers they were fighting. The overall plan, too, was similar to any that the U.S. army would devise. First, the military committee chairman outlined plans to seal off the U.S. targets as much as possible by harassing supply lines, damaging bridges and targeting helicopters and their landing zones, in a bid to restrict reinforcement or resupply. Then the security chairman spoke of the need to maintain strict "operational security," ordaining that only the princes, or leaders, involved in the meetings be informed of the grand strategy, leaving cell leaders and battalion commanders to believe their individual attacks were being launched in isolation. All this would be Phase I, a precursor to the 90 days of attacks of Phase II, to be timed across not just Anbar but across much of Sunni Iraq to stretch and distract America's war commander, Gen. David Petraeus. Flowing from the memo approving Operation Desert Shield, a stream of reports follow. On January 7, 2006, a memo called for Iraqis who'd infiltrated various U.S. bases to conduct site surveys to help identify the camps that would be hit. The two-page note also spoke of placing ammunition stores well in advance of the attacks so the fighters could resort to them during the battles. The January memo also commented on training and rehearsals for the offensive and the extraction routes their fighters would use after the attacks, and it dictated the need to obtain pledges from the foot soldiers of their willingness to die. In another memo, reports were compiled from al Qaeda field commanders recommending which U.S. Army and Marine bases or Iraqi checkpoints or police stations should be targeted. Baghdad International Airport was one of the targets named. Beside each entry were notes on weapons each target would require: Grad surface-to-surface missiles, Katyusha rockets, roadside bombs and suicide bombers. Phase II, the 90-day offensive, commenced around March 2006, with al Qaeda's records from Anbar that month reading like a litany of what the U.S. Army would call AARs, or After Action Reports, listing each attack's successes and failures. It also noted the losses suffered by both al Qaeda or, in what Americans would call Battle Damage Assessments, the losses suffered by the coalition. Al Qaeda's folder on Operation Desert Shield expresses the depth, structure and measure of its military command. It is perhaps the most compelling illustration of how al Qaeda works. Yet the Desert Shield folder is but one found among the thousands of pages of records, letters, lists and hundreds of videos held in the headquarters of al Qaeda's security prince for Anbar province, a man referred to in secret correspondence as Faris Abu Azzam. After he was killed 18 months ago, Faris' computers and filing cabinets were captured by anti-al Qaeda fighters from a U.S.-backed militia, or Awakening Council (the militias made up of former Sunni insurgents, now on the U.S. payroll and praised by President Bush for gutting al Qaeda in Iraq). The Awakening militiamen handed the massive haul of al Qaeda materials to both their U.S handlers from the Navy,

Marine Corps and Army, and to CNN. In all, these Anbar files form the largest collection of al Qaeda in Iraq materials to ever fall into civilian hands, giving an insight into the organization that few but its members or Western intelligence agents have ever seen.

[Hundreds of Taliban escape in Afghan prison bombing](#)

*CNN* – 14 June 2008

Hundreds of Taliban fighters captured over the past six years escaped late Friday after militants attacked the main prison in Afghanistan's Kandahar province, authorities said. The militants used suicide truck bombs loaded with about two tons of explosives to blast holes in the mud brick walls of the Soviet-era prison, a Taliban spokesman said. A gun and rocket battle between the militants and prison guards lasted several hours and ended with dozens of militants rushing inside on motorcycles to free all prisoners inside -- including about 400 Taliban fighters, the Taliban spokesman said. The prison, located on the western outskirts of Kandahar city, held a number of arrested Taliban figures. Several had recently embarked on a hunger strike. A Justice Ministry official said about 1,000 inmates were inside the prison. Nine guards, seven prisoners and one civilian were killed in the attack, according to Ahmad Wal Karzai, the brother of Afghan President Hamid Karzai. Checkpoints were set up around the prison in an attempt to catch the escapees, one police officer said. Authorities had also requested assistance, such as a helicopter, from nearby Canadian forces. The government announced a state of emergency for the province and urged residents to stay home. Earlier Friday, about 100 Taliban militants launched an attack against coalition troops, an assault a U.S. military official called the "largest" this year so far by the Taliban. The incident occurred in southern Afghanistan's Uruzgan province. The coalition said militants attacked Afghan and coalition forces with small arms and rocket-propelled grenades, then fled to a village. "Coalition aircraft engaged the positively identified enemy position with a precision airstrike," the U.S.-led coalition said in a statement. The fighting began Thursday when Taliban militants ambushed a U.S.-Afghan patrol. "While investigating an area used by militants... the combined patrol was ambushed by militants with small arms and indirect fire. The combined patrol returned small-arms fire, and the militants moved into a fortified position near an orchard. "The combined patrol observed numerous noncombatants fleeing the area. Once the area was assessed to be clear of noncombatants, the combined patrol confirmed positive identification of the militants' position and requested support from coalition aircraft. Coalition forces directed one precision airstrike, followed by air-to-ground gunfire on the positively identified enemy positions," the coalition said. Troops stayed in the area overnight "to provide security for the local populace," and the 100 militants then launched its attack. Also on Thursday, two British soldiers were killed and a third was wounded in neighboring Helmand province when they were assaulted by insurgents, the British Defense Ministry said. A Romanian soldier was killed on Friday during violence in the Qalat district of the southern province of Zabul, the country's Defense Ministry said. Three other Romanian soldiers were injured. The soldiers are part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

[Taleban 'capture Afghan villages'](#)

*BBC* – 16 June 2008

Some 500 Taleban fighters have taken over several villages in southern Afghanistan, local officials say. The villages are in the Arghandab district, near the main regional city of Kandahar. The reports come three days after about 350 Taleban fighters escaped from a jail in Kandahar. Afghan and Nato officials have said they are redeploying troops to respond to "any potential threats" from the escaped rebels. It was not immediately clear if the freed Taleban inmates were among the fighters who seized the villages on Monday. A former Taleban stronghold, Kandahar is one of the key battlegrounds of the rebel insurgency against Afghanistan's government and troops from Nato and a US-led coalition. In a separate development, Afghanistan's ambassador to Pakistan was summoned to the foreign ministry to receive a formal protest over remarks by President Hamid Karzai. Mr Karzai said on Sunday that Afghanistan had the right to send troops across the border to chase militants taking shelter in Pakistan. The Afghan ambassador in Islamabad was given a "strong protest" over the comments, Pakistani officials said. The US says cross-border raids from Pakistan are a growing problem.

[Car bomb kills at least 51 Iraqis, official says](#)

*CNN* – 17 June 2008

In one of the deadliest attacks in Baghdad in months, at least 51 Iraqis were killed and 75 were wounded Tuesday in a car bombing, an Iraqi Interior Ministry official said. The bomb ripped through a garage and a bus stop, hitting an outdoor market and apartments, the official said. The blast in Hurriya, a predominantly Shiite neighborhood in northwestern Baghdad, was one of the deadliest to hit the Iraqi capital in months. Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki blamed it on "the defeated remnants of terrorism" and called it an attempt to revive the sectarian warfare that wracked the country for more than a year. In a statement issued by his office, al-Maliki said "terrorists" and Islamic militants "returned to their old failing bet in trying to incite the sectarian strife" after defeats in Baghdad and other cities. "This crime will not affect our determination and our commitment to fully defeat the terrorists and preserve the security triumphs achieved by the armed and security forces," the prime minister said. "This will add to our determination to rid the capital and the provinces from the remnants of the terrorists, murderers and criminals." And U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon offered his "heartfelt condolences," his office said. "The secretary-general condemns, in the strongest of terms, the terrorist bombing in northern Baghdad today which has reportedly killed over 50 people and left scores more injured," a U.N. statement said. The blast came as officials tried to tamp down violence in Shiite areas, where U.S. and Iraqi forces have battled militias. Earlier Tuesday, four civilians were killed in a suicide attack in northern Baghdad targeting a predominantly Sunni group opposed to al Qaeda in Iraq, an Interior Ministry official said. The suicide attack is the latest in a flurry of strikes targeting the groups of predominantly U.S.-allied Sunni fighters known as the Awakening Councils or Sons of Iraq. Al Qaeda in Iraq is believed to be responsible for many of these assaults. The suicide bomber was driving a motorcycle that struck a checkpoint in the predominantly Sunni Suliekh neighborhood. The four victims were Awakening members manning the checkpoint. Two others were

wounded. In other violence Tuesday, gunmen killed an employee of the Council of Ministers and wounded his father in western Baghdad, the Interior Ministry said. The man was driving and his father was in the passenger seat when gunmen in another vehicle shot them. Also Tuesday, a bomb killed a municipal police chief in a volatile Shiite region south of Baghdad, police said. Col. Saleh Mehdi Kuneihar, the chief of Aziziya, and another police officer were killed and two others were wounded when a roadside bomb struck their car on a road between Wasit and Diyala provinces. Iraq's government battled Shiite militants in the southern city of Basra and Baghdad's Sadr City this spring. The government is in the first stages of an operation in the southern province of Maysan, where Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki announced a Wednesday deadline for "outlaws" to turn in their weapons. The move is al-Maliki's latest effort to stamp out militants and establish central governmental authority in the oil-rich southern region. Iraqi security forces also are fighting al Qaeda in Iraq militants in the northern city of Mosul. Much of the fighting in Baghdad and Basra has been between Iraq security forces and members of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's Mehdi Army militia. Maysan province and its capital of Amara are believed to house Mehdi Army members who fled Basra and Baghdad after the earlier push.

### [Abu Qatada released from prison](#)

*BBC – 17 June 2008*

The radical Islamist preacher Abu Qatada has been released from jail. Abu Qatada, 47, was freed from Long Lartin Prison, in Worcestershire, at about 20:20 BST after winning his fight against deportation from Britain. A senior judge earlier signed papers authorising the release of Abu Qatada, previously described as Osama Bin Laden's right-hand man in Europe. The Palestinian-Jordanian preacher will be subjected to a 22-hour home curfew and tight restrictions on his liberty. Home Secretary Jacqui Smith has said she is "disappointed" with the decision to release him, and says the government will appeal. Abu Qatada was once described by a judge as a "truly dangerous individual at the centre of al Qaeda's activities in the UK". Last month the Court of Appeal blocked his deportation to Jordan, where Abu Qatada has been convicted in his absence of involvement in terror attacks. Appeal Court judges feared evidence gained from torture could be used against Abu Qatada in a future trial. Mr Justice Mitting of the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC) granted Abu Qatada bail on Tuesday with strict conditions. He must wear an electronic tag and must not attend a mosque or lead prayers or religious instruction. Abu Qatada must also stay in his west London home for at least 22 hours a day, and cannot attend any kind of meeting. He is also forbidden from using mobile phones, computers or the internet. Police have special permission to enter and search his home while Abu Qatada is banned from having guests other than family and solicitors. Among the people he is banned from meeting in London is al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. Others include bin Laden's deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri and Rachid Ramda, who has been convicted in France of masterminding a series of bombings in 1995. Also named is hate preacher Abu Hamza. Ms Smith said she was disappointed that Abu Qatada had been granted bail, even though the conditions were strict. She added: "I am appealing to the House of Lords to reverse the decision that it is not safe to deport Qatada and the other Jordanian cases. "The government's priority is to protect public

safety and national security and we will take all steps necessary to do so." Abu Qatada became one of the UK's most wanted men in December 2001 when he went on the run, on the eve of government moves to introduce anti-terror laws allowing suspects to be detained without charge or trial. In October 2002 the authorities tracked him down to a council house in south London and took him to Belmarsh Prison. He was eventually freed on bail in March 2005, but was made the subject of a control order to limit his movements. In August that year he was taken back into custody pending the extradition to Jordan.

## **DIPLOMACY & DEFENCE STRATEGY**

### [Pakistan fury over U.S. 'hot pursuit' attack](#)

*CNN* – 11 June 2008

Pakistan summoned the U.S. ambassador Wednesday to protest a U.S. airstrike that it says killed 11 of its forces who were cooperating with the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan. Ambassador Anne Patterson met with Pakistani Foreign Secretary Bashir, according to State Department spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos. "The United States regrets that actions in Mohmand Agency the night of June 10 resulted in the reported casualties among Pakistani forces, who are our partners in the fight against terrorism," the embassy in Islamabad said in a statement after the meeting. "We express our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives." The U.S. military said it carried out an airstrike and fired against "anti-Afghan forces" shortly after they attacked coalition forces in Afghanistan's Konar province Tuesday. The military statement did not say where the airstrike occurred but stressed that coalition ground forces did not cross into Pakistan. A U.S. official said Tuesday's airstrike targeted suspected militants who had fled into Pakistan after conducting an ambush on the Afghan side of the border. The official said Pakistani military officials worked with U.S. forces to track the militants as they fled across the border into Pakistan. He said the mission was permitted under the rules of engagement, which allow "hot pursuit" across the border of suspected militants when locations are verified. But Pakistan's military -- which described the airstrike as a "completely unprovoked and cowardly act" -- had a much different account of what happened. The top spokesman for Pakistan army's Gen. Athar Abbas said the airstrike happened after U.S. forces were called in by Afghan troops who had engaged in a border clash with Taliban forces. The Taliban forces fired on the Afghan troops as they tried to set up a checkpoint in a disputed area along the Afghan-Pakistan border, Abbas said. The Afghan troops then called for help from the U.S.-led coalition forces, which carried out an airstrike on positions where Pakistani frontier corps forces were stationed, Abbas said. Muhammad Amir Rana of the Institute of Peace said NATO troops also came to the area to assist Afghan soldiers. Abbas said the airstrike killed 11 Pakistani troops, including a high-ranking major, and wounded seven others, he said. Pakistan's military and Foreign Ministry have issued an official protest with the Tripartite Commission -- a group made up of senior military and diplomatic representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States -- condemning the attack, Abbas said. A Pakistani military statement said the strike "hit at the very basis of cooperation and sacrifice with which Pakistani soldiers

are supporting the coalition in war against terror." According to the U.S. military, the incident started when "anti-Afghan forces" fired on coalition forces in Afghanistan's Konar province during an operation that Pakistan knew about. An unknown number of "anti-Afghan forces" about 200 meters inside Konar province pummeled the coalition forces with small-arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire, and the coalition forces "returned fire in self defense," the military statement said. When the "anti-Afghan forces" attacked coalition forces near a checkpoint in Gora Prai, the coalition alerted Pakistan's army, the statement said. Gora Prai is in the disputed Mohmand Agency near the Afghan border. Mohmand is claimed by both Pakistan and Afghanistan. An unmanned drone identified anti-Afghan forces "joining the attack against coalition forces," the statement said. Coalition forces opened fire on them, followed by an airstrike, the military said. It did not say where the strike took place, noting that the investigation into the incident is ongoing. The unnamed U.S. official said it was not clear whether the U.S. aircraft entered Pakistani airspace when they carried out the airstrikes. U.S. and Pakistani military officials tracked the militants as they fled into Pakistan, and their location was verified by a U.S. drone flying overhead, he said. Two U.S. Air Force F-15E aircraft dropped three 500-pound bombs and a single laser-guided bomb inside Pakistan, he said. Also, he said, a B-1 bomber dropped six 500-pound bombs on the target. He added that U.S. ground forces inside Afghanistan fired artillery toward the fleeing militants as they fled into Pakistan. Earlier, a spokesman for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan said that ISAF forces were fired on near the border with Pakistan and that they responded. The U.S. official said initial reports that indicated seven people were killed on the ground, but the U.S. military cannot confirm their identities. He said the investigation will attempt to determine whether Pakistani troops were among those killed either there or at nearby points where border clashes are common. In recent months, Pakistani officials have blamed U.S.-led forces of launching missile strikes into its territory from Afghanistan. One such attack in the tribal region of Bajaur killed 14 people May 14. The Pakistani army has said that such attacks only make the job of securing the border more difficult. "It's not fair," Abbas said. "The kind of effects it creates -- it's not only local. It's also within the country. And that is not good for any coalition. "An act of this kind it certainly creates difficulties for both sides," he said. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan are key U.S. allies in America's "war on terrorism." Each is battling a common foe: Islamic militants who have launched deadly attacks targeting troops and civilians in both countries. Pakistan's newly appointed ambassador to the United States, Husain Haqqani, said that despite the "unacceptable" incident, Pakistan will continue to fight extremists within its own borders. "We will continue to cooperate with our partners while trying to get to the bottom of this particular incident and to make sure that no such incidents take place in the future." He noted that Pakistan has "offered considerable sacrifices," including casualties as a result of the "fog of war," and would like "greater recognition of what we have already done." "We all need to work together as partners and not accuse each other, blame each other and get upset with each other." Pakistani officials summoned U.S. ambassador Anne Patterson to their express outrage, U.S. officials said. U.S. State Department spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos described the airstrike as "regrettable" and said it was "a reminder that better cross-border communications between forces is vital." "We are sure that military on both sides will look into the matter

and review how to prevent recurrence and how to prevent extremists from using this area," he said.

### [Karzai appeals for Afghanistan aid](#)

*CNN* – 12 June 2008

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has appealed to world donors for massive, long-term aid for reconstruction and boosting food security. Karzai has also pledged to fight pervasive corruption that has hobbled aid efforts since the 2001 ouster of the Taliban. He told international donors in Paris on Thursday that "Afghanistan needs large amounts of aid." But he added that "how aid is spent is just as important." He said boosting farmers and making them less dependent on the drug trade is crucial to Afghanistan's future. The Afghan government is hoping to secure \$15 billion to \$20 billion at the conference. U.S. First Lady Laura Bush says world donors must not turn their backs on Afghanistan. She says Afghanistan has reached "a decisive moment for its future" and has confirmed that the United States is pledging \$10.2 billion in aid at the donors conference in Paris. Mrs. Bush opened Thursday's conference along with Karzai, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Sarkozy says the world's rich nations need a new strategy for aiding Afghanistan. Sarkozy, opening the international donors conference for Afghanistan, says aid to the troubled country must be more effective. He says aid must be accompanied by security efforts and should focus more on agriculture. He also says Pakistan should do more to help make Afghanistan a safer and less desperately poor place.

### [World donors rally to Afghanistan's call](#)

*CNN* – 12 June 2006

World donors sought to bolster Afghanistan's fragile leadership Thursday with pledges of more than \$17 billion in aid as the need to help secure and feed the country overshadowed concerns about pervasive corruption. Afghan President Hamid Karzai pleaded for aid at a daylong donors conference in Paris aimed at reminding rich countries how much Afghanistan still needs them. The United States led the way, promising \$10.2 billion, with more pledges expected. "Afghanistan has reached a decisive moment for its future. We must not turn our back on this opportunity," first lady Laura Bush told the conference. The new pledges are in addition to \$25 billion pledged by the international community since 2002. However, only \$15 billion -- 60 percent -- of those previous pledges has been honored so far. That is because it is almost impossible to police how and where the aid is spent. Security questions loom over every Afghan aid project because Karzai's Western-backed administration has only a shaky grip on much of the country. The heroin trade is a key part of the economy, as is corruption. Most Afghans lack proper sanitation, and 80 percent have no electricity in their homes, despite \$15 billion in international aid since the Taliban's ouster from power in 2001. Life expectancy remains less than 50 years, and food shortages over the past year have pushed many Afghans to the brink. The Taliban still recruit in desperately poor rural areas. Their insurgency continues to claim lives more than six years after U.S.-led troops invaded following the September 11 terrorist attacks, blamed on al Qaeda, a group the Taliban

harbored. The still-tenuous security climate was highlighted by tensions over U.S. airstrikes that may have killed friendly fighters in Pakistan along the Afghan border. The bombings Tuesday fueled anti-U.S. sentiment in Pakistan and could set back efforts to stem violence in the lawless region. Meanwhile, Defense Secretary Robert Gates was expected to push NATO allies in Brussels, Belgium, to send more troops and police instructors to Afghanistan. NATO's mission in Afghanistan has more than doubled, to 51,000, over the past two years, but commanders say it still lacks units for critical tasks such as air transport and intelligence. Karzai promised to fight the graft that bleeds aid dollars and that the World Bank says is crippling the legitimacy of his government. "Afghanistan needs large amounts of aid, but precisely how aid is spent is just as important," Karzai said. The Afghan government is hoping to secure up to \$20 billion in pledges at the conference from the 80 countries and organizations present. Donors agreed that the needs are urgent and enormous and won't be solved immediately. "The vast majority of the work is still to be done. It will be difficult; it will take time," Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith said. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the host of the conference, urged a new international strategy for aid that would include handing more responsibility for managing the aid to Afghans. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on donors to coordinate and intensify their efforts to aid Afghanistan, and to insist on better governance by the Afghans. Karzai said that giving farmers alternatives to growing opium poppies and trafficking drugs is crucial to Afghanistan's future. "Opium is about survival" for these farmers, he said. Noting the "major transformation" Afghanistan has gone through since 2001, he presented a development plan to the donors that says his country needs \$50 billion over the next five years to boost an economy shattered by a quarter-century of war. U.N. representative Kai Eide, looking at Afghanistan's progress in recent years, said, "It is a very fragile success, and it must be consolidated." Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the U.S. is dedicating \$10.2 billion over two years for Afghan development. The money is a mix of what Congress already has approved for this year and next, and what the Bush administration is still seeking before it leaves office. Other major donors included the Asian Development Bank, \$1.3 billion; the World Bank, \$1.1 billion; Britain, \$1.2 billion; and the European Union, \$775 million. A similar donors' conference in 2006 garnered pledges of \$10.5 billion. The United States is the single largest donor to Afghanistan, not counting the cost of the ongoing war against insurgents. That war is unlikely to end soon: The Afghan government, in its development strategy unveiled Thursday, envisions peace by 2020.

### [Challenges Remain in Afghanistan, General Says](#)

*American Forces Press Service – 13 June 2008*

Though statistics indicate the insurgency in Afghanistan is not expanding, multiple challenges remain there, the U.S. officer who just finished his tour as commander of NATO troops in Afghanistan said here today. "I do not share the view that many do that this thing is spreading; it's not," Army Gen. Dan K. McNeill told reporters at a Pentagon news conference. "The empirical data doesn't support that," McNeill emphasized. McNeill, who recently wrapped up a 16-month duty tour in Afghanistan as commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force, shared his experiences and thoughts about his prior command. He is preparing to retire from the Army after a 40-year career.

Army Gen. David D. McKiernan assumed command of NATO's ISAF from McNeill. The current situation in Afghanistan "sort of goes against those who say the insurgency is spreading," McNeill observed. "I'm not sure that it is; I think it is staying roughly in the same places." Statistics compiled over the past two years, McNeill said, show that most insurgent attacks continue to occur in just 10 percent of Afghanistan's territory, confined mostly in the southeastern provinces. Intelligence estimates, McNeill noted, indicate there are between 5,000 and 20,000 insurgents in Afghanistan. About 48,000 international troops are serving with ISAF in Afghanistan, including about 18,000 U.S. troops. The more than 3,000 U.S. Marines dispatched to Afghanistan earlier this year already are making an impact, McNeill said, especially 2,000 of those Marines working with British forces to put the squeeze on Taliban militants in a previously unpatrolled section of Helmand province. "We knew it was a dark hole and we had to get to it; we simply didn't have the force" until the Marines arrived to exert pressure on the insurgents, McNeill recalled. A much-ballyhooed Taliban spring offensive didn't materialize this year, McNeill noted, citing stepped-up efforts of U.S. and NATO forces, as well as the contributions provided by increasingly capable Afghan soldiers and police. There are now about 60,000 Afghan soldiers, the general noted, up from about 20,000 soldiers available last year. Security has improved in Afghanistan, McNeill said, as provincial reconstruction teams' efforts continue across the country. Myriad roads, schools and hospitals have been built across the country, he said, and Afghanistan's infant mortality rate has fallen. Yet, whatever occurs in Afghanistan is really a regional issue, McNeill emphasized. Afghanistan's neighbors, some of which may cast a fearful eye at its fledgling democratic government, can be of immense help, he said. "Anybody who wants to have a view of Afghanistan, and who does so only in the context of Afghanistan, in my belief, will opine incorrectly about Afghanistan about 99 percent of the time," McNeill said. "If you cannot see it as a regional issue, you will not see it clearly." Pakistan's federally administered tribal area in the country's remote northwest region offers a sanctuary and training area for terrorists, according to senior U.S. officials. Regions like the tribal areas and other places adjacent to Afghanistan, McNeill said, present a "great risk" of collusion between Taliban militants and transnational terrorists such as al-Qaida. Terrorists, he said, are known to enter Afghanistan from Pakistan from points along the two countries' long, porous border. The illegal cultivation of poppy plants, McNeill said, is another serious issue that threatens Afghanistan as well as the region. The powerful illegal narcotic heroin is derived from poppy plants, and insurgents in Afghanistan are heavily involved in the poppy-producing business to fund their activities. "It is something that the Afghans have to take on," McNeill said. "I don't think the international community can do this for them. We can support them, and we can back them up, but if they want [southern Afghanistan] a little calmer, they're going to have to take on this business of narcotics."

### [Gates Speaks from Heart in Effort to Spur NATO Nations](#)

*American Forces Press Service – 13 June 2008*

It was going to be a typical NATO defense ministers working dinner until Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates threw away his script. Gates spoke from his heart last night during a dinner at which ministers discussed the NATO mission in Afghanistan.

According to a U.S. official who was there and later spoke with reporters on background, Gates “was on fire.” The secretary had a 10-page speech prepared, but that went out the window as he began to speak. Gates started by saying he is particularly impassioned about Afghanistan “because in May, U.S. casualties in Afghanistan exceeded our casualties in Iraq for the first time.” Gates has been pushing for months for NATO nations to follow through on promises made earlier to increase their participation in Afghanistan. But the alliance’s International Security Assistance Force is still short three battalions of troops. The NATO effort, which is providing security for Afghanistan, also needs trainers and enablers, such as helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles. “I know I’ve been a big nag, and I know I’ve been a pain, ... but for NATO to continue to be tied up in politics and issues between governments that are irrelevant to whether we are making progress in Afghanistan, I just don’t have patience any more,” Gates told his NATO counterparts. “I really have limited patience for these kinds of surrogate debates.” Gates said U.S. expectations are simple: “that government decisions and actions match their rhetoric.” Nations must fulfill the commitments that political leaders have made at the summit level. Their failure to do so has caused gaps in security in Afghanistan, Gates said. “We’ve got kids dying because of the gaps,” he said. The official said Gates listed the issues that NATO must immediately deal with, and troop shortages are first and foremost on that list. The Afghanistan effort also needs military trainers and police trainers. NATO countries also must do all they can to ensure the success of Norwegian diplomat Kai Eide, the new representative of the United Nations secretary general for civilian reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Eide has been in office for two months, and his mission is crucial to cementing gains in governance, the rule of law and the economy in place. Eide will help Afghan leaders tie together NATO, European Union and U.N. reconstruction efforts, the U.S. official explained. The official said Gates went on to tie the need to deal with Afghanistan’s illegal poppy trade to the alliance’s efforts in Afghanistan. Counternarcotics “is not a tangential job,” Gates said. Narcotics feed corruption in local, provincial and national governments in Afghanistan. The Taliban exists off the drug profits. Gates is pushing for ISAF to do more against labs and traffickers, the official said. Pakistan also must be a concern to European NATO leaders, the official said NATO told the alliance’s defense ministers. “It’s important for the Pakistanis to hear as loudly from Europeans that the security challenges there are a threat to Europe in addition to being a threat to Afghanistan,” he said. One defense minister spoke about his nation suffering its first death in operations in Afghanistan. Gates told the ministers that U.S. medics have made enormous advances in recent years in prosthetics and in dealing with traumatic brain injuries. “If you are interested in working together on these issues, write me and let’s see what we can do,” Gates said. “We’re all in it together. We’re a family, and we should work together on these kinds of issues as well.”

### [Karzai issues warning to Pakistan](#)

*CNN* – 15 June 2008

Afghan President Hamid Karzai warned Sunday his troops would take their battle against Taliban extremists across the border into Pakistan to prevent them launching attacks in his country. Karzai told reporters in Kabul on Sunday that Afghan soldiers had the right to enter Pakistan because insurgents crossing the border to attack Afghan targets "gives

us the right to go back and do the same." The Afghan president has previously urged Pakistan and its U.S.-led coalition allies to do more to tackle extremists holed up in Pakistan's remote border regions, but this is the first time he has indicated taking matters into his own hands. Karzai said his administration's "patience was running thin." He said the cross-border attacks have destroyed homes and schools. "This is a two-way road, and Afghans are good in two-way road journeys," he said. "We will complete the journey, we will get them and we will defeat them. And we will avenge all that they have done in Afghanistan for the past so many years." Karzai's comments came as Afghan and coalition forces killed more than 15 insurgents and captured five while searching for militants who escaped in a daring jail-break in the southern city of Kandahar. The jail breakout, which saw hundreds of Taliban fighters take flight, has come as major blow to efforts to suppress the extremists, just as coalition forces appeared to be gaining the upper hand. In his address Sunday, Karzai named several militant leaders by name -- including Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the Pakistani Taliban. Mehsud had been identified by Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's administration as the mastermind behind last year's assassination of former prime minister and opposition leader Benazir Bhutto. The CIA reached the same conclusion. Last month, Pakistan's new government said it was negotiating a deal with the Mehsud tribes of South Waziristan that involved exchanging prisoners and withdrawing Pakistani forces. Amid the negotiations, Baitullah Mehsud declared a cease-fire. "Baitullah Mehsud should that know we will go after him and hit him in his house," Karzai said. He added: "The Pakistani government should know it. We will come and hit him there, wherever he is." The issue of cross-border raids came to the forefront last week after a U.S. military airstrike inside Pakistan soil killed 11 Pakistani troops. A U.S. official with knowledge of the incident told CNN that Tuesday's airstrike targeted suspected militants who had fled into Pakistan after conducting an ambush on the Afghan side of the border. The official said the mission was permitted under the rules of engagement, which allow "hot pursuit" across the border of suspected militants when locations are verified. The top spokesman for the Pakistan army, Gen. Athar Abbas, told CNN that the airstrike occurred after U.S. forces were called in by Afghan troops who had engaged in a border clash with Taliban forces. The Taliban forces fired on the Afghan troops as they tried to set up a checkpoint in a disputed area along the Afghan-Pakistan border, Abbas said. The Afghan troops then called for help from the U.S.-led coalition forces, which carried out an airstrike on positions where Pakistani paramilitary forces were stationed, Abbas said.

### [Hamas announces 6-month truce with Israel](#)

*CNN – 17 June 2008*

A truce between Israel and Gaza's Hamas leaders will take effect Thursday and last for six months, Hamas officials said Tuesday. Israeli officials, however, stopped short of confirming that a cease-fire agreement has been reached. "It's still early to announce an agreement of calm," Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said in a statement. "When it starts, if it starts, it's hard to say how long it will last. The test will be how it's implemented." Hamas senior official Mahmoud Zahar and Hamas negotiator Khalil al-Hayya announced the Egyptian-brokered agreement at a news conference in Gaza. They said it will begin at 6 a.m. Thursday (11 p.m. Wednesday ET). On Sunday, Israel

gradually will start to open its border crossing terminals, the Hamas officials said. Asked about initial reports of a cease-fire, one Israeli official would not confirm whether an agreement had been finalized but said any truce would involve a sequential process. The official said Israel would reopen some of its terminals along the Gaza border after calm had been established. He said Israel is still calling for the release of Cpl. Gilad Shalit as part of a broader cease-fire. Gaza militants kidnapped Shalit in June 2006. Egypt has been trying to broker a truce between Hamas and Israel for months. Militants in Hamas-controlled Gaza have pummeled Israel with thousands of rocket and mortar attacks, prompting Israeli military operations in the Palestinian territory. Referring to the Egyptian mediation efforts, Barak said, "It's important to exhaust the possibility. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is prepared for any developments, but it is important to attempt to achieve a period of calm to bring back the peace and quiet for the [Israeli] people who live around Gaza in Sderot and Ashkelon and to try and renew negotiations for the release of Gilad Shalit." Militants in Gaza have launched more than 2,300 mortars and rockets since the start of 2008, more than the 2,000 launched in all of last year, according to Israeli military figures. While most of the attacks do not result in casualties, three Israelis have been killed in rocket and mortar strikes in recent weeks. The Israeli military responds to the attacks by carrying out airstrikes and ground operations in Gaza that target militants, but many times lead to civilian casualties -- further inflaming the Palestinian leadership. Israel also has restricted supplies of gasoline, diesel and electricity to Gaza, limited the amount of food and other goods entering the strip and made it virtually impossible for manufacturers and farmers in Gaza to export anything to the outside world. Hamas seized control of Gaza last year after routing Palestinian security agencies under the control of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his Fatah movement. The ouster forced Abbas to dissolve the Fatah-Hamas unity government, but Fatah still controls the West Bank. Representatives from the rival factions met recently in Senegal for talks aimed at restoring the political and territorial split. Earlier this month, Abbas called for "national unity" talks with Hamas with the goal of producing new elections for the Palestinians, who elected a Hamas-led Palestinian Authority government in a U.S.-backed vote in 2006. Meanwhile, Abbas' Western-backed government is working toward a peace agreement with Israel. The Bush administration has said it wants the two sides to reach an agreement by the end of the year.

### [Gas field milestone for China and Japan](#)

*Straitstimes* – 19 June 2008

and Japan yesterday took their recently improved ties to a new high by agreeing to set aside a sensitive territorial dispute in order to jointly develop natural gas fields in the East China Sea. The significance of the agreement went well beyond a 'win-win' energy deal, and represented the most concrete breakthrough to have emerged from the two Asian neighbours' attempts at repairing ties strained by wartime history and modern rivalry. 'This is a good example of how it is possible to reach agreement despite the difficult problems we face,' Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura said yesterday. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Jiang Yu said likewise in a statement, noting that the agreement was 'beneficial to the healthy and steady development of Sino-Japanese ties'. Under the pact, Japanese firms are to invest in the Shi-rakaba gas field, which the

Chinese call Chunxiao, the development of which has already been started by two Chinese oil companies. Profits for the Japanese side will be in proportion to the amount of investment made, but details have yet to be announced. Both countries have also agreed to conduct joint exploration on a 50-50 basis in an area south of the Asunaro gas field, which the Chinese call Longjing. Current estimates for the amount of natural gas in the East China Sea vary widely, though the prospect of undiscovered deposits makes the region a strategically important one for energy-hungry China and Japan, both highly dependent on imported energy. Negotiations for yesterday's deal had been anything but easy due to the locations of the gas fields, which sparked tense arguments over extraction rights and questions about how the maritime boundary delineating the two countries' exclusive economic zones (EEZ) should be drawn. Japan maintains that the boundary should be the median line between both countries, whereas China insists that its EEZ should extend right to the edge of its continental shelf, which is far south of the median line. Tokyo is also upset with Chinese attempts to develop the Chunxiao gas field, which is near the median line, before the EEZ issue is resolved, saying that this would siphon gas from the Japanese side. The agreement indicated that Beijing and Tokyo had decided to shelve these tricky matters for now. But they continued to maintain a cautious if vague stance over the sensitive issue of territory for fear of a domestic backlash. Ms Jiang stressed that the agreement did not 'harm the respective legal stances of both sides'. Hours before her announcement, a small crowd held a rare protest outside the Japanese Embassy in Beijing to oppose the imminent deal. 'The Chinese people will not let Japan steal any fortunes from our East China Sea,' the group of about 20 young and middle-aged men said in a statement. Analysts in Beijing said such outbursts were not surprising, and suggested that the authorities should be able to contain them. 'Both countries cannot end up doing nothing just because there are criticisms of some decisions,' said Professor Bu Ping, a Chinese historian who has been leading a joint study of Sino-Japanese history. Bickering over wartime history, the Yasukuni shrine and the East China Sea gas fields plunged Sino-Japanese ties to their lowest point in 2005 before ties improved. Professor Shi Yinhong of the People's University likened the gas deal to the clearing of a major hurdle for bilateral ties. He said: 'If there had been no progress or if the dispute had worsened, then it would negatively impact the improving relations.'

## **DEFENCE ACQUISITION AND TECHNOLOGY**

### [Authorities Find More Than 1,200 Flaws in F-15K Parts](#)

*The Chosun Ilbo* – 30 May 2008

More than 1,200 flaws have been found in F-15K parts since the Korean Air Force began flying the state-of-the-art fighter jet in 2005. Concerns are mounting as to the jet's operational capability as defects are still being found. The Defense Acquisition Program Administration on Thursday said that between October 2005 to December 2007, a total of 1,200 flaws were discovered in 505 kinds of F-15K

parts purchased from the U.S. The total value of the defective parts is approximately W100 billion (US\$1=W1,030), enough to buy a complete F-15K. The defective parts and tools have been repaired or replaced for free under an agreement between DAPA and Boeing, the jet's manufacturer, which stipulates two years of free repair or in-kind compensation. After the two-year warranty expires, Korea has to pay for defective items to be repaired in the U.S. The Air Force has so far procured 34 of the next-generation fighter jets under a plan to purchase 40 by the end of 2008. One crashed into the East Sea in June 2006, killing two pilots. DAPA plans to acquire an additional 21 F-15Ks, one of which will be provided for free, between 2010 and 2012 at a cost of W2.3 trillion. Controversy arose over Boeing's agreement to provide a free jet when DAPA decided to purchase the second batch.

### [Too many dollars, too few Army investigators](#)

*AP* – 12 June 2008

Double-billing. Bribes. Kickbacks. Military contracts are big targets for serious crimes — and there aren't nearly enough investigators to catch them all. The Army's contracting budget has exploded since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began — from \$46 billion in 2002 to \$112 billion in 2007. Yet the number of people who hunt down crooked companies and corrupt officials has stayed about the same, according to Associated Press interviews and research. Army investigation chiefs told the AP they need a dramatic increase in agents to fight contract fraud. In combat zones, deals can be made quickly, often with foreign companies in countries where bribes are a routine part of doing business. Yet to monitor those billions in contracts, just under 100 civilian agents are assigned to the Army Criminal Investigation Command's procurement fraud office. Even with more fraud police, there would be no guarantees. Flaws in how the Army awards and manages contracts, especially overseas, also need repairs to curb criminal activity. "It's sort of like an assembly line for cars and having more checkers at the end of the line when the people aren't building the cars right," said Jacques Gansler, a military acquisition expert. "What we really need to eliminate the abuse is people doing it right in the first place." Until that happens, the Army's procurement fraud team faces an increasingly complex workload that requires frequent overseas travel and specialized training to spot foul play in mountains of arcane paperwork. "There's obviously more going on out there today than there was five years ago, but I have the same number of people," said Wes Kilgore, director of the command's Major Procurement Fraud Unit. There are 95 ongoing investigations into Army contract irregularities in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait. An additional 500 fraud cases have been launched in the United States, but most of those are not related to wartime contracts. Under a proposal now being reviewed by senior Army officials at the Pentagon, Kilgore's staff would increase by 143 agents

and 30 support personnel between 2010 and 2015. Army leaders approved a request last year to add 36 employees, including 23 agents. Those extra hands are still being hired or trained, however. Overall, the 166 new agents would cost about \$21.5 million a year. If the latest request is approved, Kilgore's unit would eventually have 260 agents to uncover and prevent contract fraud. "We're concerned, and that's why we've pushed so hard on getting these numbers ramped up rather than sitting on our hands," said Daniel Quinn, the command's chief of staff. "It's the same reason why police departments will put cops out on a beat or patrol cars flooding an area. If you have a higher chance of getting caught, you're not going to be out there committing a crime." Criminal Investigation Command officials rarely grant interviews. The decision to speak with a reporter reflects how critical the new hires are to them. It's not just the enormous flow of wartime money, it's the speed with which contracts are awarded that lures the cheaters. Location is key, too. In Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait, supplies such as bottled water, shipping containers, food and transportation might be needed quickly from local vendors. If only a few suppliers can fill the order, the choices may be limited. But the potential for a crooked deal is not. Army Col. Joe Ethridge, commander of the 701st Military Police Group, likens the situation to buying a plane ticket for travel to a remote location the day before a holiday weekend. "The vendors know going in (the customer is) going to want this really fast and there's not going to be a lot of competition," said Ethridge, whose military police group includes Kilgore's procurement fraud unit. Another pitfall of overseas contracting — known in military circles as contingency or expeditionary contracting — is the expectation of bribes. In the Middle East and other parts of the world, they're often assumed to be part of the deal. "The threat and the opportunity of money passing hands is always there," Ethridge said. "So it's a pretty tough environment to do contracting in, and it's a pretty tough environment to do oversight." Ethridge and other command officials said they didn't anticipate how reliant the Army would be on contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan. Private companies get paid to provide base security, drive trucks, operate warehouses and serve meals. Contracts for these and other services can be difficult to manage. "This is a change in how we operate and creates threats that we're going to have to address," Ethridge said. The investigation command has procurement fraud offices in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan. The Iraq office opened in December 2005, two years after the U.S.-led invasion, and the others followed. In retrospect, the command should have dispatched its fraud agents more quickly, says Quinn, the command's chief of staff. "They (didn't) have to be with the 1st Armored Division moving up the highway," he said. "But we probably should have sent our fraud guys in there early on." The concern, and need for more people, is shared by other oversight organizations. In a March 31 report to Congress, the office of the Pentagon inspector general said its ability to adequately audit and investigate military activities and budgets has become strained because staffing levels haven't increased. The gap, the report said, means a greater chance for fraud, waste and abuse. The Pentagon inspector general and the Army criminal investigation command are separate organizations, although their agents often work together. The March report was made public last month by the Project on Government Oversight, a public interest group in Washington. Each new agent costs about \$130,000 a year in salary, benefits, training, and equipment. Army investigation command officials say the investment pays big returns. With fewer than 100 agents, the procurement fraud unit now generates about \$130 million a year in recoveries, about \$10 million more than the

command's annual operating budget. The pitch for more investigators has to be weighed against an ongoing effort to expand and improve the Army's contracting corps. In October, an independent panel sharply criticized the Army's ability to award and manage contracts, especially for overseas combat forces. That panel, chaired by Gansler, a former Pentagon acquisition chief, said the Army's contracting employees were "understaffed, overworked, undertrained, undersupported and, most important, undervalued." The criticisms led the Army to order a major overhaul of the way it buys gear and supplies for the troops. Chief among the moves is the formation of a new contracting command to better manage military purchasing and the addition of 1,400 contracting personnel.

### [S. Korea to set up 2 new defense research centers](#)

*People's Daily* – 17 June 2008

South Korea on Tuesday opened up a new defense research center that will develop ways to apply the country's advanced nanotechnology to develop new precision and micro weapons systems, the defense procurement agency said. The new specialized research center has a 13-billion-won (12.5 million U.S. dollars) budget to develop the new technology until 2016 under the supervision of Kim Do-hyang, professor of materials engineering at Seoul's Yonsei University, according to the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA). Another specialized center will be opened later this week at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), it said. "The defense-specialized centers aim to secure stable development of new defense technology and training of research personnel through a long-term college support program," the DAPA said, adding the country plans to increase the number of such research centers to 20 by 2015. Seoul currently operates nine specialized defense research centers, which are mostly at colleges or state-run institutes.

### [S. Korea pushes for Russian helicopter purchase](#)

*The Hankyoreh* – 17 June 2008

The South Korean military is pushing for its plan to buy 32 Kamov (KA-32) helicopters from Russia at a date earlier than anticipated to support landing and infiltration operations for marines ahead of the planned takeover of wartime operational control from the United States. A military source said on June 16. To cope with the retake of wartime operational control, the military recently allocated 930 billion won (US\$894 million) to buy 32 helicopters for landing operations for the Marine Corps, by changing the project to an urgent demand from a long-term one. The budget was included in a mid-term defense plan set between 2009 and 2013. If the Defense Acquisition Program Administration announces the results of its feasibility study, the project to buy helicopters for the marines would start from 2013 and be completed by 2019, as opposed to the previous deadline of late 2020. The aircrafts are expected to be deployed in Dokdo-class amphibious assault ships (Landing Platform Helicopter) or landing ships (Landing Ship Tank). In case of emergency, the helicopters are optimized to fly the marines through the

sky to infiltrate enemy territory, allowing the Marine Corps to conduct landing operations both ashore and in mid-air. At present, the Marine Corps has no aircraft battalion and could exercise air-infiltration operations with the help of Army helicopters, so the project has been cited as the top priority for the Marine Corps. Regarding the helicopter models to be used in the project, the Navy and the Joint Chiefs of Staff are moving to buy 32 Kamov KA-32 helicopters from Russia via a loan repayment program known as The Third Brown Bear Business. Since April, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have been in negotiations with Russia after having placed the KA-32 model on top of its wish list of things to bring from Russia as part of the repayment program. However, some military and defense industry officials oppose the deployment of Russian helicopters, saying it could pose a negative impact to another military plan to develop its own attack helicopters. They also say that it will cost a great deal to remodel the aircrafts because the KA-32 helicopters were developed to meet civilian aviation needs. An official at a defense technology company said, "In 2012, South Korea will start mass production of the Korean-style utility helicopter. If foreign helicopters were deployed, it would cost some 1 trillion won in lost sales." In order to develop devices that are protected against salt-induced erosion, and remodel them into foldup helicopters that can be carried by the Dokdo-class assault ships, a significant amount of time and money would be needed. The Korea Forest Service and an Air Force battalion, both of which have already used the KA-32 choppers, were believed to have conveyed the opinion that the "KA-32 costs two or three times more in terms of maintenance than helicopters from Western countries because of its short replacement cycle for parts and high fuel consumption level." Another worrisome issue is that it may be difficult to identify an enemy combatant during joint operations between South Korean and U.S. forces because North Korea also owns the Russian helicopters. In response, a military official said, "The introduction of the KA-32 is an issue under consultation with Russia. It has not been given final confirmation."

### [US Air Force may reopen \\$35B tanker bid](#)

*CNN* – 18 June 2008

Congressional auditors urged the Air Force to reopen bidding for a new fleet of aerial tankers Wednesday, finding the service made "significant errors" in awarding the \$35 billion contract to Northrop Grumman. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) opinion is a major victory for aerospace giant Boeing, which protested the February decision to award one of the largest contracts in U.S. military history to its rival. The Air Force said it is reviewing the decision, which was welcomed not only by Boeing, but also by several members of Congress with Boeing (BA, Fortune 500) plants in their states. "What we have been saying for a number of weeks - that this competition has brought forth a wrong decision - has been validated by the GAO in a very, very strong way, and that is good news for American workers," said Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash. Sue Payton, the assistant Air Force secretary for acquisitions, said the service would decide what to do "as soon as possible." "The Air Force will do everything we can to rapidly move forward so America receives this urgently needed capability," Payton said in a written statement. "The Air Force will select the best value tanker for our nation's defense, while being good stewards of the taxpayer dollar." And in another written statement, Boeing Vice President Mark McGraw said, "We look forward to working with the Air Force on

next steps in this critical procurement for our warfighters." The decision to award the tanker contract to Northrop Grumman (NOC, Fortune 500), which plans to use an airframe from European manufacturer Airbus, surprised many defense industry observers. The Air Force wants to replace 179 tankers under the program, which could expand to nearly 500 aircraft and more than \$100 billion. "We respect the GAO's work in analyzing the Air Force's tanker acquisition process," Northrop Grumman spokesman Randy Belote said. "We continue to believe that Northrop Grumman offered the most modern and capable tanker for our men and women in uniform. We will review the GAO findings before commenting further." Boeing's proposed design was based on its 767 commercial airliner. Northrop and its partner, the European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company (EADS) - parent company of Boeing archrival Airbus - offered a model based on the larger Airbus A330, variants of which are already used by Australia's air force. Air Force officials said in February that they chose Northrop because it "clearly provided the best value to the government." But the GAO found the service "made a number of significant errors that could have affected the outcome of what was a close competition," wrote Michael R. Golden, the GAO's managing associate general counsel for procurement law.

## **NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY**

### [Russia blames U.S. for global financial crisis](#)

*Reuters – 7 June 2008*

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev blamed "aggressive" United States policies on Saturday for the global financial crisis and said Moscow's growing economic muscle could be part of the solution. "Failure by the biggest financial firms in the world to adequately take risk into account, coupled with the aggressive financial policies of the biggest economy in the world, have led not only to corporate losses," Medvedev told Russia's main annual event for international investors in St Petersburg. "Most people on the planet have become poorer." The Kremlin leader said investment by cash-rich Russian companies abroad, promotion of Moscow as a major financial centre and use of the ruble as a reserve currency were part of the answer. These could help solve problems created by what he said was a gap between the United States' leading global economic role and "its true capabilities". The Kremlin leader said economic nationalism had played a big part in triggering the current crisis, which he compared to the Great Depression of the 1930s. "No matter how big the American market and no matter how strong the American financial system, they are incapable of substituting for global commodity and financial markets," Medvedev told the St Petersburg International Economic Forum.

### [Oil slips after record \\$11 surge to new high](#)

*Reuters – 9 June 2008*

Oil slipped on Monday as traders took profits from crude's biggest one-day jump ever, but OPEC's resistance to pumping more oil kept prices near their latest record high. U.S. light, sweet crude for July delivery fell 93 cents to \$137.61 by 12:09 a.m. EDT, softening as the dollar rebounded and the threat of economic damage from high costs mounted. But

traders gave up little of the unprecedented \$10.75 surge on Friday, when oil hit a new record of \$139.12 amid frenetic buying triggered by the slumping dollar and comments by an Israeli minister about a possible attack on Iran, the world's fourth-largest producer. A forecast by investment bank Morgan Stanley that oil prices could top \$150 a barrel by the July 4 U.S. holiday added to Friday's speculative fever, taking two-day gains to more than \$16 a barrel and reversing two weeks of losses. Oil's six-year-long rally has gathered pace this year, with prices rising about 40 percent since January as funds hedge against the dollar and some bet that long-term oil supplies will struggle to keep up with demand in the decades ahead. "What's driving this ultimately is compound consumption. You can't put 40 million cars a year on the road and think we're going to consume less," said Greg Smith, who manages \$500 million in futures as the head of fund Global Commodities in Australia. Oil's direction has also become increasingly intertwined with the dollar, which edged up against the yen on Monday. The greenback slumped on Friday after data showed the U.S. economy lost jobs for the fifth straight month and the unemployment rate shot up to its highest in more than three years.

### [China consuming twice what its ecosystems can supply: WWF](#)

*AFP* – 10 June 2008

China is now consuming more than twice as much as what its ecosystems can supply sustainably, having doubled its needs since the 1960s, a new WWF report said on Tuesday. China now utilises 15 per cent of the world's total biological capacity, said the report, which is published jointly by the WWF and the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development. The report found that the Chinese had an average ecological footprint of 1.6 hectares in 2003, the most recent year for which figures are available. This means that each person needs 1.6 hectares of biologically productive land to support their lifestyle demands. While this is still lower than the world average of 2.2 global hectares per person, it 'nonetheless presents challenges, considering China's large population and the robust economic development,' said the report. 'If China were to follow the lead of the United States, where each person demands nearly 10 hectares of productive area, China would demand the available capacity of the entire planet. 'This is likely to be a physical impossibility for China, and for the other nations of the world,' said the report. If on the other hand China could, in its development, also balance environmental needs, it could 'lead the way for the world as a whole,' the report added. 'It's a critical period in the coming 20 years for China to realise its sustainable development, which is determined by important indicators including the balance between the utilization efficiency of natural resources and the Earth's regeneration capacity improvement,' said Zhu Guangyao, secretary general of the Chinese council.

### [Massive drug bust made in Afghanistan](#)

*CNN* – 11 June 2008

Afghan police this week seized a massive stockpile of hashish, a stash that weighed as much as 30 double-decker London buses, NATO's International Security Assistance Force said on Wednesday. An Interior Ministry police unit received a tip on Monday about a drug stockpile in the Spin Buldak area of Kandahar province, and found the 236.8

metric tons (261 tons) of hash hidden in several trenches. The region is about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the Pakistani border. ISAF officials said the hash has an estimated regional wholesale value of \$400 million. Officials believe the Taliban, which finances its operations in part from the illegal drug trade, would have made about \$14 million from the sale of the drugs. "The Afghan National Police Special Task Force has made a huge step forward in proving its capability in curbing the tide of illegal drug trade in this country," said Gen. David McKiernan, ISAF commander. "With this single find, they have seriously crippled the Taliban's ability to purchase weapons that threaten the safety and security of the Afghan people and the region." Afghan Deputy Interior Minister Ab-Hadi Khalid called the Spin Buldak seizure "a new record for the war against narcotics." "We here at the Ministry of Interior of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan note the continuing improvements and professionalism of our Afghanistan National Police," Khalid said. "It is due to the education and training they are receiving through the help of the international community." The Interior Ministry also said police grabbed about 5,108 kilograms (5.6 tons) of opium, which has an estimated value of \$30 million, and detained 13 suspected drug dealers in the Helmand province.

### [Oil at record near \\$140 a barrel](#)

*BBC – 16 June 2008*

The price of crude oil has hit a new high of close to \$140 a barrel in New York trade, despite Saudi Arabia agreeing to increase output in July. US light crude rose to \$139.89 a barrel, surpassing the previous high of \$139.12 on 6 June. The price later fell 25 cents to \$134.61 at the end of New York trade. On Sunday, Saudi Arabia said it would boost production by 200,000 barrels a day next month to meet growing worldwide demand. That would make a total rise of 550,000 barrels a day, or over 6%, since May and would take Saudi output to its highest monthly rate since August 1981. The news was announced after UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon met Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi in Jeddah for talks on the high oil price. Last month, Saudi Arabia increased its production by 300,000 barrels a day. The country is thought to be the only oil producer with the ability to pump substantially more crude. It argues that the current high prices are caused by speculators rather than any shortage of crude oil. Oil prices had fallen by almost \$2 on Friday after reports that Saudi Arabia might boost oil production but many believe that this pledge is too little too late to bring down oil prices. "If they'd have said this six months ago, it might have had some effect," said oil industry expert John Hall. "But the market has got it in its head that we are about to run out of oil, and is looking for negative news." "The market is extremely volatile at the moment," he added. "Any disruption to supply is immediately jumped on." Speculation about the future of oil prices has been rife recently, with some analysts predicting oil could jump to as much as \$200 a barrel during the next 18 months. Israeli threats to strike Iran over its nuclear programme have also helped fan the flames. Movements in the currency markets on Monday also triggered the latest price spike, with the dollar weakening against the euro and subsequently making oil cheaper for investors dealing in other currencies. Meanwhile, Norwegian oil firm StatoilHydro saw oil and gas production temporarily abandoned when a fire broke out on the 90,000 barrel a day North Sea platform.

[Somali crisis 'worse than Darfur'](#)

*BBC* – 16 June 2008

The number of people in Somalia in need of emergency food aid is likely to rise to about 3.5m in the coming months, the United Nations has warned. Mark Bowden, the UN's humanitarian co-ordinator for the region, says the food crisis is dramatically worsening. Somalia faces a worse situation than Darfur, Mr Bowden says. Contributing to the crisis are fighting between rival militias, successive droughts, sharply rising food prices and a collapse of the Somali currency. Mr Bowden says that during the course of the next three months the number of people needing emergency food relief will climb by about one million from the current 2.5m. Aid agencies trying to get food into Somalia face extreme difficulties. The task is made more difficult because fighting and violence has displaced a million Somalis from their homes. Mark Bowden says Somalia has become one of the world's most challenging humanitarian crises. He fears that there is now a sense of fatalism about what is happening to the country.

[French minister claims success on immigration plan](#)

*AFP* – 20 June 2008

France's first immigration minister claimed success Thursday for his no-nonsense policy on illegal immigration, saying the number of expulsions increased 80 percent this year while the number of people living illegally went down. Brice Hortefeux said he expected the Europe Union to follow France's example and adopt an immigration pact to coordinate policies when France assumes the rotating presidency July 1. He said the pact would include an accord among the 27-member body not to undertake a mass legalization of migrants. On Wednesday, the EU parliament adopted new rules for expelling illegal immigrants. However, the measures do not address issues like asylum, prevention or tackling problems at the source — all encompassed in the French pact. Hortefeux, among the most controversial members of the government, insisted that Europe largely shares French concerns over illegal immigration. France seeks to choose its immigrants with an emphasis on those with skills and visas enabling them to work. Their ranks were up by 36.7 percent over the past year, Hortefeux said at a news conference marking his first year on the job. France wants half of its immigrants to be entering for professional reasons by 2012. He said France expelled 80 percent more illegal immigrants in the first five months of 2008, compared with the same period last year. From June 2007 to May 2008 it expelled 29,729 illegal aliens. The number of voluntary departures was up 374 percent over the past year, and 38 percent so far in 2008, Hortefeux said, suggesting that immigrants living in France without papers "now understand our rules." "France is managing to calmly master this migratory flux," he said. Overall, he estimated there are 8 percent fewer illegal aliens in France today than before he took office. Officials say there are 200,000 to 400,000 people living in France illegally. Hortefeux was optimistic about the EU's adoption of a French-proposed immigration pact, saying it could happen as early as October — halfway into the French presidency. Hortefeux's ministry also aims to preserve the French national identity and to attack the migratory flux in countries that are the source of illegal immigration. France has signed development pacts with five African countries this year — Tunisia, Senegal, Benin, Gabon and the Republic of Congo.

## **MILITARY / PEACEKEEPING / HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS**

### [Suicide bombing brings British toll in Afghanistan to 100](#)

CNN – 8 June 2008

Three British paratroopers were killed Sunday in a suicide bombing in Afghanistan, bringing the British death toll there to 100, the Ministry of Defense reported. The attack occurred near a British base in the southern Helmand province around 11 a.m. Sunday. A fourth soldier wounded in the attack was expected to survive, the ministry reported. "My thoughts at this time are also with the loved ones of each and every one of the 100 courageous members of the British armed forces who have now lost their lives in Afghanistan," Defense Secretary Des Browne said in a statement. "They gave their lives securing freedom and stability, not just for the people of Afghanistan but, as the tragic events of 9/11 showed, for all of us," Browne said. The troops killed Sunday were from the 2nd Battalion of Britain's Parachute Regiment. One was dead on arrival at a military hospital, while the other two died of their wounds there. The British contingent in Afghanistan is among the most active NATO units in the nearly seven-year-old war with the Taliban, the Islamic movement that ruled most of Afghanistan before its al Qaeda allies attacked New York and Washington in 2001. A U.S.-led invasion the following October drove the Taliban from power, but U.S. and allied troops have been fighting its remnants in the country's mountainous south ever since. A total of 824 coalition troops have been killed in the Afghan conflict, including more than 500 Americans. In a joint statement with Browne, Air Chief Marshal Jock Stirrup, the British military's chief of staff, offered his sympathy for the deaths, but said British troops "are engaged in a most worthy and noble endeavor, and they are making good progress." "Our Armed Forces are resolute in doing what their country asks of them," Stirrup said. "These deaths, though hard to bear, remind us all of the extraordinary sacrifices they and their families make on our behalf -- and of the price of failure if we falter in Afghanistan. We continue to owe them a great debt of gratitude." He said British troops had put the Taliban "on the back foot" in Helmand province and improved the lives of ordinary Afghans in the process. "Make no mistake, the Taliban influence is waning, and through British blood, determination and grit, a window of opportunity has been opened," he said. At least 14 others were killed Sunday in suspected Taliban attacks across southern Afghanistan, including six police officers in Ghazni province, and a district official and three of his bodyguards in Khost, officials said. An Afghan journalist working for the British Broadcasting Corporation was found dead Sunday, a day after he was abducted in southern Afghanistan, network and Afghan officials said. Gunmen abducted Abdul Samad Rohani in southern Helmand province Saturday, said Ahmad Nabi Jan, an official with provincial police. His body was found stabbed and shot in a cemetery near the provincial capital.

### [Pakistan blames U.S. coalition for deaths in 'cowardly' attack](#)

CNN – 11 June 2008

Pakistan's army is blaming the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan for the deaths of at least 11 Pakistani soldiers killed after a confrontation near the country's border with Afghanistan. A military statement condemned the "completely unprovoked and cowardly act" that killed 11 members of a Pakistani paramilitary force on Pakistani soil. It said the coalition's action "had hit at the very basis of cooperation and sacrifice with which Pakistani soldiers are supporting the coalition in war against terror." The statement said the attack took place at a "Frontier Corps border check post at Gora Prai in Mohmand Agency" near the Afghan border. A spokesman for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan said its forces were fired upon near the border with Pakistan and they responded. The spokesman said additional information was unavailable. The Pakistani statement said the military had lodged a strong protest and reserved "the right to protect our citizens and soldiers against aggression." Local media earlier reported that coalition jets -- some mentioned a drone -- violated Pakistani air space and bombed two areas inside Pakistan. Pakistan's Frontier Corps uses recruits from tribal areas and is overseen by army officers. Another 40 troops were missing, according to local news reports. Several Pakistani news outlets and field observers with the Pakistan Institute of Peace said Afghan troops attacked a checkpoint in Mohmand Agency, a disputed region named for a Pashtun tribe, the Mohmands. The tribe exists in large numbers both in Pakistan and southeastern Afghanistan, and both countries often claim Mohmand as part of their territory. Pakistani troops tried to re-take the checkpoint, and the two sides clashed, the institute said. Muhammad Amir Rana, an institute spokesman, said NATO troops came to the area to assist Afghan soldiers. Troops from both countries have engaged in skirmishes stemming from border disputes several times in recent years. In recent months, Pakistani officials have blamed U.S.-led forces of launching missile strikes into its territory from Afghanistan. One such attack in the tribal region of Bajaur killed 14 people on May 14. The Pakistani army has said that such attacks only make the job of securing the border more difficult. "It's not fair," said General Athar Abbas, the army's top spokesman, in an interview with CNN. "The kind of effects it creates -- it's not only local. It's also within the country. And that is not good for any coalition. "An act of this kind it certainly creates difficulties for both sides," he said. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan are key U.S. allies in America's "war on terror."

### [Sexual Violence Threatens Stability, UN Council Says](#)

*Bloomberg* – 19 June 2008

Sexual violence against women and girls in war zones impedes the restoration of peace and security, the United Nations Security Council agreed today at the urging of U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. "For years there has been a debate about whether or not sexual violence against woman is a security issue for this forum to address," Rice said as she opened the Security Council meeting. "I am proud that today we have responded to that lingering question with a resounding yes. We affirm that sexual violence profoundly affects not only the health and safety of women but the economic and social stability of their nations." Rice cited the rape of girls as young as 8 years of age by soldiers in Myanmar, also known as Burma. At the same time, she noted that Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi remained under house arrest today, her 63rd birthday, as she has been for 12 of the past 18 years. British Attorney General Patricia Scotland decried

recent attacks on women in Zimbabwe by what she described as "hired thugs" of President Robert Mugabe, and the murder yesterday of the wife of the newly elected mayor of the capital, Harare. Scotland also pointed to violence against women in the Darfur region of Sudan and Somalia. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and representatives of more than 60 nations attended the meeting, which concluded with the adoption of a U.S.-written resolution committing the council to new steps to combat sexual violence against women. The U.S. overcame resistance from China, Russia, Indonesia and Vietnam to hold the meeting and win a 15 to 0 vote for the measure. "Violence against women has reached unspeakable and pandemic proportions in societies attempting to recover from conflict," Ban told the Security Council. "When you adopt resolutions with strong language on sexual and gender-based violence, the UN can respond more forcefully." Ban reiterated the UN's determination to eliminate incidents of sexual abuse perpetrated by peacekeeping troops, which have been reported in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other war zones. Six soldiers who served in Sudan and the Congo were sent back to their home countries for possible prosecution for sexual misconduct in the past two years.

## **NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION**

### [Iran rules out nuclear halt despite powers' offer](#)

*Reuters* – 15 June 2008

Iran again ruled out suspending sensitive nuclear work on Saturday, despite an offer by six world powers of trade and other benefits to try to coax it into stopping activities the West fears are aimed at making bombs. European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana re-affirmed the six powers behind the package wanted Iran to suspend enrichment during talks on the offer - a precondition the Islamic Republic has repeatedly rejected. 'The proposals we have made offer substantial opportunities for political, security and economic benefits to Iran and the region,' their foreign ministers said in an accompanying letter. 'We are convinced that it is possible to change the present state of affairs. We hope that Iran's leaders share the same ambitions,' they said. The incentives offer agreed by the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany last month is a revised version of one rejected by Iran in 2006. Diplomats have played down prospects for a breakthrough in a dispute that has helped send oil prices to record highs. The United States and its European allies have warned of broader sanctions against Iran if it rejects the proposal and presses ahead with atomic activities which can have both civilian and military uses. Mr Solana said he expected a reply soon from Iran, which says it will not stop a nuclear programme it says is for generating electricity so that the world's fourth-largest oil producer can export more crude and natural gas. He said he hoped the powers' overture, tailored to coax Teheran into stopping pursuit of enrichment ability, a possible pathway to atom bombs, would be a springboard to negotiations. 'We continue to ask for suspension,' Mr Solana told a news conference after presenting the incentives package to Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki. The offer included help for Iran to develop a civilian nuclear programme with light water reactors - seen as less prone to diversion into bombmaking than technology Teheran now has - and legally-binding nuclear fuel

supply guarantees. 'We are offering a proposal which we would like to be the starting point for real negotiations,' Mr Solana said. The six powers were ready to fully recognise Iran's right to have nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, he said. Flush with record oil revenues that have helped it withstand UN sanctions imposed over its nuclear defiance, Iran has long ruled out ending its quest for its own enrichment industry. 'Iran's view is clear: any precondition is unacceptable,' government spokesman Gholamhossein Elham said when asked about the batch of sweeteners. 'If the package includes suspension it is not debatable at all.' Although Iran has not officially rejected the offer, US President George W. Bush said he was disappointed when asked about Mr Elham's statement during a visit to Paris. 'I am disappointed that the Iranian leaders rejected this generous offer out of hand,' Mr Bush told a joint news conference with French President Nicolas Sarkozy, adding it was a sign that Iran's leadership was willing to isolate its people further. Sources on both sides said Iranian officials and Mr Solana had still agreed to resume efforts to find a diplomatic solution. Mr Mottaki suggested Iran was ready to engage in negotiations, but said its response to the major powers' incentives depended on their reaction to Teheran's own package of proposals aimed at defusing the row, submitted to the EU and others last month. Diplomats say Iran's proposals failed to allay concerns about its uranium enrichment programme. Iran's refusal to stop enriching uranium, which can be used as fuel for power plants or provide material for bombs, has drawn three rounds of UN sanctions since late 2006. The United States says it wants a diplomatic solution but has not ruled out military action as a last resort.

### [McCain Plans to Almost Double U.S. Nuclear Reactors](#)

*Bloomberg* – 19 June 2008

Republican presidential candidate John McCain will push to almost double the number of nuclear reactors in the U.S. as part of a broad plan to address the nation's energy woes. McCain, on a two-week campaign swing to promote his energy security proposal, told an audience in Springfield, Missouri, yesterday that he would increase research in so-called clean-coal technology and push to add 100 new nuclear reactors, almost double the 104 nuclear plants now in use. "I will set this nation on a course to building 45 new reactors by the year 2030, with the ultimate goal of 100 new plants to power the homes and factories and cities of America," McCain said. "This task will be as difficult as it is necessary. We will need to recover all the knowledge and skills that have been lost over three stagnant decades in a highly technical field." McCain's remarks build on a speech June 17 in Houston in which he laid out the elements of his energy strategy. One aspect of his plan is expansion of offshore drilling for oil and natural gas, a proposal that is under fire from his Democratic rival, Illinois Senator Barack Obama, and environmental groups. "One obstacle to expanding our nuclear-powered electricity is the mindset of those who prefer to buy time and hope that our energy problems will somehow solve themselves," McCain said, noting that Obama's home state of Illinois has more nuclear reactors than any other. McCain, an Arizona senator, also vowed to spend \$2 billion on research into clean-burning coal. "This single achievement will open vast amounts of our oldest and most abundant resource," McCain, 71, said. "It will deliver not only electricity but jobs to some of the areas hardest hit by our economic troubles." McCain's energy plan also includes spending on renewable resources such as wind and solar power. McCain

was joined at the forum by Michael Chesser, chairman and chief executive officer of Kansas City, Missouri-based Great Plains Energy, and Greg Boyce, chairman and CEO of St. Louis-based Peabody Coal, the largest U.S. coal producer. They said a patchwork of state and federal regulations is hampering their ability to build new power generators. "We need to have a regulatory compact in place," Chesser said. "There are definitely things you could do as president to facilitate that environment." McCain also touted his environmental bona fides at a fundraiser in Chicago last night. In a 10-minute film preceding his appearance at the Drake Hotel, McCain made an appeal to outdoorsmen. "Our ability to hunt and fish and enjoy the great national treasures of America is something I'd like to preserve," McCain said in the film. "I'm committed to preserving the enjoyment of the great national treasures of the most beautiful nation in the world." Obama, 46, has said he supports exploring greater use of nuclear power as part of the U.S. energy mix. He says McCain's plans don't go far enough to address environmental threats such as global warming. Democratic Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, speaking today on an Obama campaign-hosted conference call, accused McCain of abandoning his prior views and embracing "failed" energy policies. "John McCain has had quite a week," Kerry, the 2004 Democratic presidential nominee, told reporters. "It really has become sort of a double-talk dance."

### [US Cites Signs of Progress on North Korean Nuclear Issue](#)

*Voice of America* – 19 June 2008

Officials at the US State Department declined to elaborate on an assertion by Secretary Rice that North Korea will "soon" make the long-awaited declaration on its nuclear program. But at the same time, they say recent diplomatic contacts on the issue are giving rise to at least cautious optimism that the six-party process - now more than six months behind schedule - may soon be moving again. North Korea agreed last year to eventually scrap its nuclear program, including weapons, in return for energy aid and diplomatic benefits from the other parties to the talks-the United States, China, Russia, Japan and South Korea. The current phase of the process was to have been capped at the end of last year by a North Korean declaration of all its nuclear holdings and activities, including any involvement in proliferation. Secretary Rice told Washington's conservative Heritage Foundation late Wednesday that North Korea will soon hand over the declaration to China, the chair of the talks, and that the United States would be ready to reciprocate by removing North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism and dropping related sanctions. In a talk with reporters, State Department deputy spokesman Tom Casey refused to say what specifically was behind Rice's assertion but spoke of a generally hopeful mood in recent Korea diplomacy. "I think this is just the result of a lot of extensive discussions and work, and I think an increasing confidence that we're getting to the end of this particular phase," he noted. "But I am hesitant to declare any kind of certainty on this, and I think as she [Rice] said one has to remain fairly skeptical in this process as we move forward. We will know that we have a declaration when we actually have it." U.S. diplomacy on the issue is accelerating. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, the chief U.S. delegate to the six-party talks, consulted Thursday in Tokyo with his Japanese and South Korean counterparts and is to go on to similar meetings with Chinese officials in Beijing. The six-party process is also expected to be a

key issue for Secretary Rice, who attends a meeting of G-8 foreign ministers next week in Japan, and continues on to South Korea and China. Spokesman Casey said in addition to political talks with Chinese officials in Beijing, Rice will pay a condolence visit to Chengdu, the central Chinese city ravaged by last month's earthquake. The Secretary begins the week-long foreign trip next Monday in Germany. In a related issue, spokesman Casey rejected an assertion in a Washington Post story Thursday that the Bush administration, focused on the nuclear talks, has "largely forgotten" about the case of a Korean-born U.S. permanent resident abducted by North Korea. The Post said U.S. resident Kim Dong-shik, a Christian missionary, was abducted by North Korean agents in northeastern China in 2000, after apparently angering the Pyongyang government by helping North Koreans flee their homeland. Casey said U.S. officials remain aware of, and continue to pursue the case of Kim, which he noted is prominently mentioned in the State Department's annual global reports on both human rights and religious freedom. Casey also said the six-party process is not intended to resolve every problem in U.S.-North Korean relations. He said even if it leads, as envisaged, to normal relations, there will still be hundreds if not thousands of outstanding issues between the two countries.

### [Ahmadinejad says West fails to break Iran's nuclear determination](#)

AP – 19 June 2008

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Thursday the West failed to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear program, even as the country's foreign minister said Tehran was considering an international offer of incentives on the controversial issue. Ahmadinejad's remarks were his first since the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany offered Iran the new incentives package to suspend uranium enrichment. "In the nuclear case, bullying powers applied all their power, but they could not break the will of the Iranian nation," state radio quoted Ahmadinejad as saying in a speech to clerics in the city of Qom. Iranian officials have repeatedly said they will not agree to suspend uranium enrichment. The United States and many of its allies accuse Iran of using its nuclear program as a cover for weapons development — a claim Tehran denies and maintains the program is exclusively for electricity-producing purposes. However, the Web site of the state broadcaster on Thursday quoted Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki as saying that Iran was considering the package and would answer at a convenient time. Mottaki spoke to reporters during a visit to Kampala, Uganda. "We have informed them — the West — of our readiness to negotiate," Mottaki said. He reiterated that Iran's nuclear issue should be treated by the international atomic energy agency, not the U.N Security Council. Mottaki also said that Washington should stop interfering in the case. "The United States is not in the position to be happy or unhappy with our nuclear activities ... or instruct other nations to have nuclear energy or not," he said. Also Thursday, the official IRNA news agency said the Iranian ambassador to Moscow, Gholam Reza Ansari, expressed hope that nuclear talks between Iran and the West would "begin as soon as possible." The remarks by Mottaki and the ambassador likely reflected an attempt to show Iran was willing to talk. But it was impossible to gauge what Iran's official response to the package would be or whether it would deflect from its steadfast refusal to abandon enrichment. The Security Council has imposed three sets of limited sanctions on Iran for its refusal to suspend enrichment and the West has

warned of more, stricter sanctions. The latest proposal was presented to Iran last Saturday, during a visit to Tehran by EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana. It gives Tehran the opportunity to develop alternate light water reactors, trade and other incentives, in return for dropping the enrichment.

[Indo-French nuclear accord 'technically ready'](#)

*The Hindu* – 20 June 2008

French Ambassador Jerome Bonnafont declared here on Thursday that a bilateral agreement between France and India on civilian nuclear energy cooperation was “technically ready” and it could be signed as soon as the IAEA safeguards pact was okayed and the Nuclear Suppliers’ Group granted exemption. In an interview to *The Hindu*, he said it was France which “originated” the idea in 1998 that there was need for a specific status for India as far as civilian nuclear energy cooperation was concerned. The set of agreements that India was discussing with the IAEA, NSG, France, Russia and the U.S. was the direct consequence of “this conviction of ours” that as India was a responsible nuclear power (even if it is not a member of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), there had to be a special regime for it to have sustainable development. “We are in favour of the IAEA agreement if India decides to do so, to enter into force.” France had repeatedly said that it was in favour of NSG exemption for India. Mr. Bonnafont said it was impossible to have an agreement without IAEA nod and NSG exemption as it was against international law. “We believe that it is not up to us to talk for India, but if we look at our experience of civilian nuclear energy, the decisions we have made had enhanced our sovereignty, increased our energy independence and at the same time put us in the best position in Europe to fight climate change. We believe it is a win-win situation for India and the world to go in that direction.” Describing the relations between India and France as excellent, he said it was “very old friendship” that had developed into a strategic partnership, which meant that France and India shared the same view of what the world should become. On bilateral trade, he was optimistic of meeting the target of doubling the existing two-way trade of more than 6 billion euros to 12 billion euros by 2012 as envisaged by French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Mr. Bonnafont described the joint building of Scorpene submarine as a flagship project that involved technology transfer, cooperation from company-to-company and strategic vision of relationship. On the education front, he said France planned to triple in the next few years the number of students visiting it from 1,000 to 1,500 at present. Two more French consulates would be opened by the end of the year — in Bangalore and Kolkata. The Bangalore consulate would cover both Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, he said.