

# RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE 15/2007

*The Foremost Inter-Disciplinary Defence E-Bulletin*

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**15 August 2007**

## **Contemporary Conflict**

- After Gaza
- Ecuador: Overcoming Instability?
- Democracy and Demagoguery in the Middle East
- Taliban Release 2 Korean Hostages

## **Counter-Terrorism**

- NYPD: Domestic Terror Threat Major
- Feeding the Tiger – How Sri Lankan Insurgents Fund Their War
- Irregular Warfare Group Dissects Terrorist Strategy

## **Defence Strategy**

- Russia and US Discuss Missile-Defence Strategy
- Canada Uses Exercise to Uphold Arctic Sovereignty

## **Defence Technology**

- 'Sandblaster' Gives Helicopter Pilots Hope for Safer Landings
- SWORDS Armed Robots Join Combat Team in Iraq
- DARPA Studies Ways to Protect DoD Networks from Attacks

## **ENERGY SECURITY**

- Cold Affront - Icy Reaction to Russia's Arctic Exploration
- Storing Electricity- It Looks Good on Paper
- A Flurry of Good Intentions
- Germany and Russia Joined at the Pipe

### **Military Operation**

- UK's 'Operation Banner' Draws to a Close in Northern Ireland
- Fiber Optic Cables Help Special Operators Stay Concealed
- Overstretched UK Forces Will Hinder Operational Capability, Says Report

### **Nuclear Proliferation**

- India's PM Dares Left to Withdraw Support over US Nuclear Deal
- 123 Agreement is not Acceptable

## CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT

### [After Gaza](#)

*International Crisis Group – 2 August 2007*

Hamas's takeover of Gaza and President Abbas's dismissal of the national unity government and appointment of one led by Salam Fayyad amount to a watershed in the Palestinian national movement's history. Some paint a positive picture, seeing the new government as one with which Israel can make peace. They hope that, with progress in the West Bank, stagnation in Gaza and growing pressure from ordinary Palestinians, a discredited Hamas will be forced out or forced to surrender. They are mistaken. The Ramallah-based government is adopting overdue decisions to reorganise security forces and control armed militants; Israel has reciprocated in some ways; and Hamas is struggling with its victory. But as long as the Palestinian schism endures, progress is on shaky ground. Security and a credible peace process depend on minimal intra-Palestinian consensus. Isolating Hamas strengthens its more radical wing and more radical Palestinian forces. The appointment of Tony Blair as new Quartet Special Envoy, the scheduled international meeting and reported Israeli-Palestinian talks on political issues are reasons for limited optimism. But a new Fatah-Hamas power-sharing arrangement is a prerequisite for a sustainable peace. If and when it happens the rest of the world must do what it should have before: accept it.

### [Ecuador: Overcoming Instability?](#)

*International Crisis Group – 7 August 2007*

Ecuador has been Latin America's most unstable democracy for a decade. Starting with the ousting of President Abdalá Bucaram by Congress and street protests in 1997, weak, temporary governments have been the rule. In 2000, Jamil Mahuad was toppled by a civilian-military coup, and in 2005 protests brought down Lucio Gutiérrez, who had helped oust Mahuad. The government of Rafael Correa of the Alianza País (AP) movement, who took office in January and enjoys record-high approval ratings, is applying "shock therapy" to overwhelm the discredited opposition and pave the way for a constituent assembly (CA) intended to produce "profound, radical and fast change". This triggered one of the sharpest clashes between branches of government since the return to democracy in 1979, including the Electoral Court's firing of 57 opposition members of Congress in March, accompanied by street violence. To restore stability to the troubled country, Correa will need to pay more attention to upholding the rule of law, ensuring a level CA playing field and building consensus for fundamental reforms.

### [Democracy and Demagoguery in the Middle East](#)

*The National Interest – 13 August 2007*

One of the more puzzling aspects of the Iraq misadventure has been President Bush's serene confidence of ultimate success amid the mounting evidence that the mission is crumbling. We now have some important insights into Bush's thinking from a recent interview with *National Review* editor Rich Lowry and other conservative journalists.

Lowry quotes the president extensively regarding prospects for democracy in the Middle East.

### [Taliban Release 2 Korean Hostages](#)

*The New York Times – 13 August 2007*

Two women who were among 23 South Koreans kidnapped by the Taliban in mid-July were freed today and were later in South Korean custody, in the first major breakthrough in the hostage case in nearly a month. The two women, identified as Kim Ji Na, 32, and Kim Kyong Ja, 37, were going through a medical checkup “in a safe location” after they were handed over from the Taliban, said Cho Hee Yong, spokesman for the South Korean Foreign Ministry in Seoul.

## **COUNTER-TERRORISM**

### [NYPD: Domestic Terror Threat Major](#)

*The Times – 15 August 2007*

Average citizens who quietly band together and adopt radical ways pose a mounting threat to American security that could exceed that of established terrorist groups like al-Qaida, a new police analysis has concluded. The New York Police Department report released Wednesday describes a process in which young men — often legal immigrants from the Middle East who are frustrated with their lives in their adopted country — adopt a philosophy that puts them on a path to violence.

### [Feeding the Tiger – How Sri Lankan Insurgents Fund Their War](#)

*Janes Intelligence Review – 7 August 2007*

The ethnic separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is the only known insurgent organisation with its own army, navy and now even a rudimentary air force. With the group having undertaken three air strikes since March this year, the LTTE has shown that it has access to financial resources and weapons that not only prolong its campaign, but also give it the luxury of introducing bold, new dimensions to the conflict.

### [Irregular Warfare Group Dissects Terrorist Strategy](#)

*National Defense Magazine – August 2007*

Al-Qaida’s strategy for establishing a grand caliphate is laid out in seven specific steps. But without a clear understanding of this plan, the U.S. military will fail to counteract it, said Brian Berrey, a retired Navy SEAL and government contractor. Berrey is working for a specialized unit within the Defense Department’s technical support working group — called the irregular warfare support program — to study, understand and counteract terrorist teachings. “We’re falling into their objectives by not analyzing the strategy with enough detail to provide a counter strategy to attack them,” said Berrey, who spoke at a Lodestar Group special operations conference.

## **DEFENCE STRATEGY**

### [Russia and US Discuss Missile-Defence Strategy](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 6 August 2007*

Russia and the US have conducted the first round of meetings on missile-defence strategy. The US interagency delegation headed by Assistant Secretary for International Security and Non-proliferation, John Rood, met with the Russian delegation led by the deputy foreign minister for arms control monitoring, Sergei Kislyak, in Washington, DC, for two-day talks on 30 July.

### [Canada Uses Exercise to Uphold Arctic Sovereignty](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 13 August 2007*

As strategic competition grows in the Arctic Ocean, Canada is pursuing an assertive new policy in its far north. Since 2002, the Canadian Forces (CF) have been holding annual exercises in the north in order to improve their operational skills in the harsh environment as well as to establish presence. This year, from 7-17 August, the CF are conducting Operation 'Nanook 2007': a sovereignty exercise in and around Iqaluit and the Baffin Island Coastal and Hudson Strait areas. The joint operation involves 600 personnel from the army, navy, air force and Rangers (a locally recruited reserve force), as well as the Canadian Coast Guard and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

## **DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY**

### ['Sandblaster' Gives Helicopter Pilots Hope for Safer Landings](#)

*National Defense Magazine – August 2007*

Landing a helicopter in sandstorms, dust, or snow typically produces a dense cloud that can disorient and blind pilots. In military operations, these treacherous “brownout” conditions often are to blame for costly mishaps. The Army has for years been pursuing technologies to help pilots see through blowing dust during landings, but no silver bullet has yet emerged. As early as this fall, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency will be testing a new landing system for military helicopters that promises safer flying in brownouts.

### [SWORDS Armed Robots Join Combat Team in Iraq](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 13 August 2007*

The US Army's armed ground robot has made its debut in Iraq, representing a new milestone for unmanned systems. The Special Weapons Observation Remote reconnaissance Direct action System (SWORDS) is a version of the Foster Miller 3B

robot that is outfitted with the Telepresent Rapid Aiming Platform (TRAP) remotely operated weapon station made by Precision Remotes. SWORDS can carry a 5.56 mm M249 Squad Automatic Weapon, a 7.62 mm M240 machine gun or an M109 Barrett .50-cal sniper rifle.

### [DARPA Studies Ways to Protect DoD Networks from Attacks](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 8 August 2007*

The US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is studying new ways of monitoring the Department of Defense's (DoD's) computer networks for malicious attacks. The Scalable Network Monitoring (SNM) programme will examine new approaches to monitoring DoD computer networks independent of the network size.

## **ENERGY SECURITY**

### [Cold Affront - Icy Reaction to Russia's Arctic Exploration](#)

*Janes Intelligence Review – 15 August 2007*

On 28 July, with an associated blaze of publicity in Russia, the Russian research ship Akademik Fyodorov sailed with a nuclear-powered ice-breaker from Murmansk on a two-week mission to the Arctic. Russian ice-breakers are often active in this area for research into climate change and to map the seabed for military purposes. However, the Akademik Fyodorov's mission has a far more competitive and geopolitical bent, with the potential exploitation of major oil and gas reserves in the Arctic Ocean the goal.

### [Storing Electricity- It Looks Good on Paper](#)

*The Economist – 14 August 2007*

ELECTRICITY-storage devices are getting more flexible, in a literal sense as well as in their design. This week sees the unveiling of the most robust but flexible battery ever. Pulickel Ajayan and his colleagues at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York made it by mixing carbon nanotubes (cylindrical, electrically conductive molecules made of carbon atoms) with cellulose, the stuff of paper. The result, which they report in this week's *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, is an energy store that is cheap, flexible and paper-thin.

### [A Flurry of Good Intentions](#)

*The Economist – 9 August 2007*

WHEN in doubt about energy policy, build more windmills. That, in short, was the thrust of the energy bill approved by the House of Representatives on August 4th. The legislators disagreed about a proposal to reduce the fuel-thirst of American cars. Surprisingly, they also passed up the opportunity to lavish more subsidies on ethanol. They did not even bother to consider a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade scheme for greenhouse gases. But they did give the nod to an amendment that would require utilities

to generate 15% of their power from clean sources, such as windmills and solar panels, by 2020.

### [Germany and Russia Joined at the Pipe](#)

*Space War – 10 August 2007*

Germany's special energy relationship with Russia threatens energy security in Europe, critics say. Others argue Europe's largest economy needs to build up strong ties with Europe's biggest energy importer. Energy security has become an increasingly important topic in European politics of the past years; domestic resources of oil and gas were scarce to begin with, and they are dwindling as consumption increases.

## **MILITARY OPERATION**

### [UK's 'Operation Banner' Draws to a Close in Northern Ireland](#)

*Janes Defence Weekly – 8 August 2007*

The UK Armed Forces ended its longest-running military operation, 'Operation Banner', in Northern Ireland on 31 July 2007. The 38-year-long operation, in support of the police, is the longest continuous deployment of UK Armed Forces in its history. It marks the conclusion of active engagement of UK troops to the region. More than 300,000 personnel took part. A total of 763 UK military personnel were killed during the campaign.

### [Fiber Optic Cables Help Special Operators Stay Concealed](#)

*National Defense Magazine – August 2007*

Fiber optic cables that connect tactical radios to antennas up to 10 kilometers away or farther can be useful tools in covert operations, said an industry expert. The technology replaces shorter, heavier cables that can be more easily detected by enemy forces. "The enemy knows antennas mean command and control," said Raymond Madonna, vice president of Syntonics LLC, a supplier of military communications equipment.

## **NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION**

### [India's PM Dares Left to Withdraw Support over US Nuclear Deal](#)

*Space War – 11 August 2007*

India's prime minister has dared the government's communist allies to withdraw their support if they are unhappy with the landmark Indo-US nuclear technology deal, a report said Saturday. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh insisted in an interview published in the

Calcutta-based Telegraph newspaper that the civilian nuclear agreement with Washington will not be renegotiated.

[123 Agreement is not Acceptable](#)

*CPIM People's Democracy – 12 August 2007*

THE Left parties have consistently held that the nuclear cooperation agreement should not be seen in isolation from the overall strategic tie up with the United States. The nuclear cooperation deal is an integral part of the July 2005 joint statement, which has political, economic and strategic aspects. It is also closely linked to the June 2005 military framework agreement signed with the United States.