



# **RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE 15/2008**

*The Foremost Inter-Disciplinary Defence E-Bulletin*

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**18 July 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

### [500 tons of uranium shipped from Iraq, Pentagon says](#)

*CNN* – 7 July 2008

The United States secretly shipped out of Iraq more than 500 tons of low-grade uranium dating back to the Saddam Hussein era, the Pentagon said Monday. The U.S. military spent \$70 million ensuring the safe transportation of 550 metric tons of the uranium from Iraq to Canada, said Pentagon spokesman Brian Whitman. The shipment, which until recently was kept secret, involved a U.S. truck convoy, 37 cargo flights out of Baghdad to a transitional location, and then a transoceanic voyage on board a U.S.-government-owned ship designed to carry troops to a war zone, he said. The "yellowcake" uranium transfer was requested by the Iraqi government at the encouragement of the U.S. government, Whitman said. The United States approached Canadian company Cameco to bid for the material, according to Cameco spokesman Lyle Krahn. He would not disclose the winning bid amount. Krahn admitted that this was not a "routine transaction," but he said the agreement was approved by the Canadian government and was carefully monitored. The undertaking, named "Operation McCall" by Pentagon officials, was in the planning stages for months and was completed Saturday after the material had been in transit for weeks, according to Whitman. He said yellowcake uranium is a commonly traded commodity used for nuclear power generation. It is not enriched and cannot be used without first going through a complicated enrichment process, he said, but because of the unstable nature of Iraq, the United States and the Iraqi government decided it should be moved out of that country. Iraq has no nuclear power generating plants. The uranium was packed into 110 shipping containers moved by convoy from a facility in Tuwaitha, Iraq, about 12 miles south of Baghdad. The containers were first moved to the secure International Zone in central Baghdad and then to Baghdad International Airport, where they were loaded onto C-17 cargo planes. It took 37 flights to move the shipping containers out of Iraq to a "third country," Whitman said. A Pentagon official who asked not to be named said that third country was Diego Garcia, a British territory in the Indian Ocean where the United Kingdom and the United States operate a joint military base. From that third country, Whitman said, the containers were loaded onto the SS Gopher State, a U.S.-owned crane ship normally used to haul equipment in and out of war zones. The ship carried the uranium to Canada, where it was bought by Cameco, a private firm. The uranium will be sent by truck to two processing plants in Ontario, Krahn said. Once it has been enriched for energy use it will be sold to power plant operators, he said. The United States is Cameco's largest customer, Krahn said, but he did not specify if the Iraq yellowcake would ultimately end up in the United States. Whitman said the Department of Defense's cost of securing and transporting the uranium from Tuwaitha to Canada was \$70 million, and the government of Iraq had agreed in principal to reimburse the United States for part of that cost. He said he could not say how much Iraq intends to repay the United States.

## How Chechnya came to Ingushetia

*The Guardian* – 8 July 2008

The tiny north Caucasus republic of Ingushetia used to be so serene, especially compared with neighbouring Chechnya. The border between Chechnya and Ingushetia was like a dividing line between war and peace. You would cross from war to peace and exhale, "Now, I'll be safe." When did it all change? It started gradually with abuses slowly seeping out of Chechnya into Ingushetia. First, in 2002, began the abductions of Chechen refugees by Russian military and security servicemen who were hunting for Chechen rebels. Then, in 2003, a few Ingush were kidnapped. Some disappeared without a trace. The turning point was in June 2004, when a group of insurgents led by the infamous Chechen rebel commander Shamil Basayev stormed two towns in Ingushetia. The official total of casualties resulting from Basayev's raid was 98 killed and 104 wounded, including law enforcement and security personnel, officials and civilians. For a small republic like Ingushetia, such losses were staggering. In the wake of the raid, people rallied around the government and broadly welcomed counter-terrorism operations. Now, four years later, things have changed so much that is hard to recall. That's largely because, as Human Rights Watch has documented in a new report, those operations turned out to be "Chechnya-style." Young men suspected of involvement with insurgency were hauled off by security services and tortured into incriminating themselves and others. Those who they named when the beatings and the electric shocks became unbearable were also rounded up and tortured. After the hostage-taking atrocity at a school in the North Ossetian town of Beslan in September 2004, these "dirty war" tactics became even more widespread in neighbouring Ingushetia. The "lucky" ones who were tortured but released – as opposed to disappeared or convicted in flawed trials – knew that normal life was over. They were already in the database of the "usual suspects" and would either have to flee Ingushetia, be ready for further detention and torture, or join the rebels for the lack of a better choice. As the Ingush insurgents developed a militant Islamist agenda, the authorities also tagged as a potential insurgent any strictly observant young Muslim. Ingush villages suffered sweeps and targeted raids. Soon after, insurgent attacks became bolder and more frequent. And law-enforcement and security agencies responded with yet more abuse. Some youths suspected of insurgency were shot dead on the spot. Twenty-year-old Islam Belokiev was shot one summer afternoon in a busy car market. He fell to the ground but was still alive. People rushed to his aid, but were blocked by armed security servicemen who surrounded Belokiev and watched him slowly bleed to death. Later, the authorities claimed that Belokiev was a rebel fighter. The youngest victim of such a killing, though, could not be branded an insurgent – Rakhim Amriev was only six years old. Security services erroneously suspected that a terrorist was hiding in his parents' home. They stormed the house at dawn and opened fire without warning. It's been nearly seven months since little Rakhim was killed, but the authorities still have not held those who killed him to account. The child's killing wreaked havoc in Ingushetia. A group of activists and victims' families planned a protest rally. The authorities threatened the organisers, banned the rally and violently dispersed those who dared to show up for it. Two months later, they banned the next opposition rally, claiming there was a "terrorist threat". To silence media coverage of public protests, the Ingush authorities variously detained, kidnapped, expelled, beat and issued death threats against

16 journalists and human rights defenders. Having shut down free speech, the authorities give those grieving for their loved ones and seeking a way to express discontent nowhere to turn. All of these tactics have served only to alienate and even radicalise communities. After four years of counter-terrorism in Ingushetia, the insurgency has only intensified. Those people who once supported the government's counter-terrorism agenda now see the government as the enemy. It didn't have to be this way. And Russia's European partners can help the people of Ingushetia, and the wider region, by using their influence with Moscow to change this policy. Russia can still end impunity for killings, disappearances and torture in Ingushetia. It can work to regain the trust of Ingush communities and starve the insurgency of potential supporters. It can stop Ingushetia from becoming the full-blown human rights crisis that is synonymous with Chechnya.

### [Gunmen kill fourth U.N. driver in Somalia](#)

*CNN* – 9 July 2008

Gunmen in southern Somalia have killed a truck driver carrying relief supplies for the World Food Programme -- the fourth WFP driver killed in Somalia this year, the U.N. aid agency said Wednesday. Ahmed Saalim was part of a convoy of trucks, under contract with the WFP, that was carrying more than 600 metric tons of food Monday. He was shot when fighting broke out between convoy escorts and militiamen at a checkpoint near a village in the Lower Shabelle region. Saalim is the fourth WFP-contracted driver killed this year, the agency said. "WFP food is reaching many people but our drivers are daily risking their lives to deliver it," said WFP Country Director Peter Goossens in a statement. The WFP, the globe's largest humanitarian agency, will feed an average of 2.4 million people a month for the rest of the year in Somalia. Humanitarian workers view Somalia's food crisis as one of the worst in the world. Road travel throughout the country has become increasingly dangerous and time-consuming. It can take weeks to reach people because of armed checkpoints requiring travelers to pay fees. Somalia's last severe famine was from 1991 to 1993. It swept through the nation, devastating crops, killing between 240,000 and 280,000 people and displacing up to 2 million, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The continual armed conflicts in central and southern Somalia have aggravated the situation, and a growing percentage of the population has become dependent on humanitarian aid. In addition to drought and armed conflict, high inflation on food and fuel have also exacerbated the situation.

### [Congo Accord 'Last Chance' to End Conflict, Coordinator Says](#)

*Bloomberg* – 9 July 2008

A peace accord signed in the Democratic Republic of Congo in January represents the last chance to end conflict in the country's restive eastern region, said Apollinaire Malu Malu, the coordinator of the agreement. Representatives from armed rebel factions in the North Kivu province agreed to a cease-fire in January in Goma, the provincial capital. The accord was to end the worst violence in the region since the end of a civil war in 2003. "The Conference of Goma constitutes the last chance given to each armed group which signed the act of engagement," Malu Malu said in comments broadcast on state television today in the capital, Kinshasa. "The reestablishment of a lasting peace remains

the responsibility of each armed group." President Joseph Kabila, who won the central African nation's first democratic elections in four decades in 2006, promised to bring peace to the war-torn eastern region. At least 5.4 million people have died in Congo because of civil war and related disease and starvation since 1998, according to New York-based aid group International Rescue Committee. Fighters loyal to rebel leader Laurent Nkunda, whose National Council for the Defense of the People also signed the deal, massacred at least 36 civilians in a remote location in neighboring South Kivu province during the January talks, according to the United Nations. The CNDP denied the killings. The January accord called for the integration of rebel militias in North Kivu into the national defense force. Intermittent skirmishes between the two sides have hindered the process, according to Congo's army. Malu Malu didn't say what would happen if there was no progress in implementing the accord. Congo is Africa's biggest tin producer. Three-quarters of the metal is exported from Goma.

### [US to 'end Iraq combat next year'](#)

*al-Jazeera* – 10 July 2008

A senior US army officer has said that ground troops will have mostly finished combat operations in Iraq by the middle of 2009. Lieutenant-General James Dubik's remarks came as the White House said it was opposed to setting an "arbitrary" date for pulling out troops, a request made by Baghdad as part of a security agreement currently being negotiated. "The ground forces will mostly be done by the middle of next year," Dubik, who is in charge of training Iraqi troops, told the US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee on Wednesday. However, he said that US forces might still be needed after that point for air support and training. He declined to say when operations for all US troops would be completed, saying it depended on when the Iraqi government completes certain tasks, such as purchasing its own aircraft. "I would not put an X on the calendar, Mr Chairman," Dubik said when asked to name a date when all US forces would complete operations in Iraq. Dubik, who is retiring, said that Iraqi security forces had grown to 566,000 personnel as of May 2008, up from 444,000 in June 2007. The Iraqi military said on Wednesday that the number of "terrorist attacks" in June was down 85 per cent from the same period a year ago. Security gains in Iraq "are dramatic, but can be reversed and can be stymied", Dubik said. "Some form of partnership and assistance ... in my opinion is still necessary." He cautioned that the fast-growing Iraqi force lacked experienced leaders and the ability to train its own troops. Dubik's observations came on a day that Dana Perino, White House spokeswoman, told reporters travelling with George Bush, the US president, in Japan that the US remains opposed to "an arbitrary [troop] withdrawal date". The US believes those decisions should be "based on conditions on the ground" and Iraqi officials agree with that, she said. Iraq's national security adviser said on Tuesday that Baghdad would not accept any security agreement with the US unless it included dates for the withdrawal of foreign forces. But the government's spokesman said any timetable would depend on security conditions on the ground. Their differences underscored the debate in Baghdad over the security pact with Washington that will provide a legal basis for US troops to remain when a UN mandate expires at the end of the year. The White House said the statements from Iraqi officials about a timetable for troop withdrawal partly reflected improvements in the security situation in Iraq. "I think

that is a reflection of first and foremost the positive developments that we've seen recently in Iraq, but in addition to that, the negotiations are intensifying," Perino said. "This is about their future and they want to take on more of their own responsibility, and we want that too," she said. She said she would not put a timetable on when the security pact might be completed. "We want to be able to try to work this out quickly and the main reason that we want this is because our troops are going to be there past the end of this year, that's a fact," Perino said. The US position appears to be at odds with that of Nuri al-Maliki, the Iraqi prime minister, who said on Monday that the pact should include provisions for the withdrawal of US troops. In a meeting with Arab ambassadors in the United Arab Emirates, al-Maliki said Iraq had proposed a short-term interim memorandum of agreement rather than the more formal status of forces agreement the two sides have been negotiating. "Negotiations are ongoing with the US side and the current attitude is to reach a memorandum of understanding either for immediate US forces withdrawal or timetable withdrawal," he said. The memorandum "now on the table" includes a formula for the withdrawal of US troops, he said. "The goal is to end the presence [of foreign troops]," al-Maliki said.

### [Presidents Give Green Light For Continuation Of Karabakh Talks](#)

*RFE/RL* – 10 July 2008

The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Serzh Sarkisian and Ilham Aliyev, met for one hour on June 6 on the sidelines of a CIS summit in St. Petersburg to discuss prospects for resolving the Karabakh conflict. It was the first such top-level meeting since Sarkisian's inauguration as president on April 9; Aliyev refused to meet with Sarkisian on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Bucharest several days earlier, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reported on March 31. The two presidents agreed on June 6 that their foreign ministers should continue the ongoing talks on ways to resolve the conflict on the basis of the so-called Madrid Proposals presented to the conflict sides in November 2007 by the three co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group. In an interview with Russia's Vesti-24 television on June 2, Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian characterized those proposals as "a good basis for finding a solution to the conflict." In addition, the co-chairs will travel to Armenia and Azerbaijan at the end of this month for further talks aimed at narrowing the differences between the two sides. Both Nalbandian and his Azerbaijani counterpart, Elmar Mammadyarov, described the June 6 talks to journalists as "constructive" and "positive," RFE/RL's Armenian Service reported. On June 10, the website kavkaz-uzel.ru quoted Mammadyarov as saying that Sarkisian's approach differed slightly from that of his predecessor, Robert Kocharian, in terms of unspecified "nuances." The two ministers also explained on June 6 that the Madrid Proposals were not discussed during the talks, as the approach of both sides requires further evaluation. U.S. Minsk Group co-Chairman and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza made the similar point that the Madrid Proposals "are simply proposals...and the two sides do not agree with them completely," the website day.az reported. "They need to be perfected, and both the mediators and the presidents agreed to continue work to that end," Bryza continued. The written text of the Madrid Proposals has not been made public, but they are reportedly based on the so-called Basic Principles for resolving the conflict that the co-chairmen went public with two years ago. "These principles include the phased

redeployment of Armenian troops from Azerbaijani territories around Nagorno-Karabakh, with special modalities for Kelbacar and Lachin districts [separating Karabakh from Armenia proper]," according to the text posted on June 28, 2006, on the website of the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan. "Demilitarization of those territories would follow. A referendum or popular vote would be agreed, at an unspecified future date, to determine the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh." "An international peacekeeping force would be deployed," added the statement. "A joint commission would be agreed to implement the agreement. International financial assistance would be made available for de-mining, reconstruction, resettlement of internally displaced persons in the formerly occupied territories and the war-affected regions of Nagorno-Karabakh. The sides would renounce the use or threat of use of force, and international and bilateral security guarantees and assurances would be put in place." In a June 5 interview with the Russian news agency Regnum, Bryza said the Minsk Group co-chairs see their task as "developing an agreement or formula that would allow the two sides here -- Armenia and Azerbaijanis -- to agree on the status of Karabakh. I do not know what their agreement will be. All I know is that we need to try to get two sides to get to an agreement on status and that's going to take a long, long time." Bryza acknowledged the risk involved in insisting that Armenian forces be withdrawn from the seven districts of Azerbaijan contiguous to Karabakh that they currently occupy before a firm agreement is reached on the unrecognized republic's future status vis-a-vis the Azerbaijan Republic, noting that the withdrawal will not happen unless the Armenian side feels it has secured from Azerbaijan a concession of comparable magnitude. Similarly, Bryza continued, on the Azerbaijani side there is a political risk to giving to Armenia what Armenia needs to agree to give back the territories. At the same time, Bryza stressed that an Armenian withdrawal would improve the security situation in the conflict zone and lessen the potential for a resumption of hostilities (such as took place in March of this year). He said that "there are many elements of this peace plan that are attractive to Armenia," including the provision of a land corridor (the so-called Lachin corridor) connecting Karabakh with the Republic of Armenia. Such a land link is one of Armenia's three basic requirements from any potential peace plan. While Bryza continues to insist that any solution to the Karabakh conflict will require concessions from both sides, some Azerbaijani officials clearly believe that Baku is in a stronger position to resist any unpalatable concessions in the wake of the adoption in mid-March by the UN General Assembly of a resolution condemning the continued occupation by Armenian forces of Azerbaijani territory. Commenting on the June 5 St. Petersburg talks, Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry spokesman Xazar Ibrahim told journalists in Baku on June 9 that resolution has given rise to "a totally new situation." He also stressed that discussion of Karabakh's final status should not begin until Armenian forces have withdrawn from all the Azerbaijani territory they currently control, and he implied that Baku will insist that the proposed referendum on Karabakh's final status should exclude any variant that would not preserve Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, and that it might not even grant the disputed region autonomy within Azerbaijan. Like Bryza, Ibrahim did not mention any time frame for conducting such a referendum, but the online daily zerkalo.az on May 28 quoted former Russian Minsk Group Co-chairman Vladimir Kazimirov as saying that it should be held no later than five years after the signing of a formal settlement, rather than waiting for 10-15 years. Mammadyarov on June 10 inferred that Azerbaijan's commitment to resolving the

conflict peacefully, rather than militarily, itself constitutes a concession, and that the only other concession it would agree to would be to grant Nagorno-Karabakh any conceivable level of autonomy within Azerbaijan. In that context, the example he cited was that of Tatarstan within the Russian Federation. Nalbandian for his part told journalists in Yerevan on June 11 that he considers it imperative that representatives of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh republic participate in the "final stage" of negotiations on resolving the conflict, Noyan Tapan reported.

### [Insurgents fire at Afghan, Pakistan targets](#)

*ISAF Public Affairs Office – 11 July 2008*

Insurgents simultaneously fired at targets in Afghanistan and Pakistan on the evening of July 10. At about 8:30 p.m., Afghan Border Police and a Pakistani military unit each reported receiving indirect fire. ISAF forces tracked the fire to two points within Afghanistan and returned fire with artillery and one GBU-13 bomb dropped from an F-15 aircraft. All ISAF rounds were verified to have hit the origins of insurgent fire. Reports to ISAF state that four Afghan Border Police officers and eight Pakistani military members were wounded in the insurgent attack. ISAF officials suspect that the insurgents' dual attack was specifically intended to spark a border incident.

### [Lebanon forms unity government with Hezbollah](#)

*Reuters – 11 July 2008*

Lebanon ended weeks of wrangling on Friday and formed a unity government in which Hezbollah and its allies hold effective veto power, as agreed under a deal that ended a paralyzing political conflict in the country. The decisive say granted to the former opposition led by Hezbollah, an ally of Damascus, shows that Syria has succeeded in wrenching back some political leverage in Lebanon, where it was the main power broker until its troops left in 2005. The birth of the government, the first under newly elected President Michel Suleiman, should close a long political crisis that had threatened to plunge Lebanon into a new civil war. But it also marks the start of a challenging new era in which leaders must contain rising sectarian tensions, prepare for a parliamentary election next year and start talks on the fate of Iranian- and Syrian-backed Hezbollah's military wing. A presidential decree announced the cabinet after Suleiman, a Maronite Christian, met Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, a Sunni Muslim, and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a Shi'ite Muslim. "This government has two main tasks: regaining confidence in the Lebanese political system... and securing the holding of a transparent parliamentary election," Siniora told reporters. The new team has one Hezbollah minister in addition to 10 ministers from its Shi'ite, Druze and Christian allies. The opposition was guaranteed 11 of the cabinet's 30 seats under a May deal to defuse a conflict that had sparked some of the worst fighting since the 1975-90 civil war. All major decisions require a two-thirds majority or 20 cabinet votes.

[Concern over Afghan civilian death toll](#)

*BBC – 11 July 2008*

An Afghan parliamentary investigation has found that a US airstrike on Sunday in the eastern province of Nangarhar killed 47 civilians. Regional officials said the casualties were attending a wedding party and that the bride had been killed. The US military has said it has launched an investigation into the incident. On Monday, more than 40 civilians were killed by a suicide car bomb targeting the Indian embassy in Kabul. The UN said last month that nearly 700 Afghan civilians had lost their lives in Afghanistan this year, about two-thirds in attacks by militants and about 255 in military operations. In recent days, international humanitarian organisations have voiced concern about the high number of civilian casualties. Franz Rauchenstein, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Kabul, said: "We call on all parties to the conflict, in the conduct of their military operations, to distinguish at all times between civilians and fighters and to take constant care to spare civilians. "Civilians must never be the target of an attack, unless they take a direct part in the fighting." The inquiry into Sunday's incident in Nangarhar, however, raises tensions between the Afghan government and foreign troops based in the country, whose mandate is to support the Afghan authorities. In the past, President Hamid Karzai has said that no civilian casualties are acceptable. Some local politicians have demanded that charges be brought against those responsible for Sunday's air strike. "The Americans say they can't miss a target of four inches," said Burhanullah Shinwari, the head of the investigating team, who is also deputy speaker of the Afghan senate. "With all their technological advances, how can they not differentiate between a wedding party, women, children and the Taleban and al-Qaeda?" They are also calling for the families to receive compensation, or blood money, which is common in Afghanistan. While international forces do sometimes pay compensation, critics say that the process is not transparent, and more often than not families are left with no answers to why the victims were killed and no money. Civilian casualties are caused by three main players in Afghanistan - the Taleban, international forces, and the Afghan army and police. According to the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), more than 350 civilians have been killed and 800 wounded in Taleban attacks this year, with most victims caught in suicide bombings often aimed at foreign troops.

[US could step up Iraq pullout in Sept](#)

*Reuters – 13 July 2008*

The Bush administration is considering withdrawing additional troops from Iraq beginning in September, The New York Times reported in Sunday editions, citing administration and military officials. The withdrawal, which the Times said would constitute a marked reversal from the war's darkest days of 2006-2007, stemmed partly from the need for more United States troops in Afghanistan to fight the rising insurgency by the Taleban and other fighters. US and allied casualties there have outpaced those in Iraq in recent months. No final decisions have been made, but at least one and as many as three of the 15 combat brigades now in Iraq could be withdrawn, or slated for withdrawal, by the end of the administration in January, the Times said, citing officials.

The White House declined to discuss the withdrawals, but spokesman Gordon Johndroe told the newspaper that while the president hoped to bring more troops home, he would await the recommendation in September of General David Petraeus, the US commander in Iraq, the Times said. 'For now,' Mr Johndroe said, 'we will continue discussions with the Iraqis on our shared goals of a reduced US troop presence,' it quoted him as saying. Despite consensus among officials that fewer forces are needed in Iraq and more in Afghanistan, one senior administration official also cautioned that President George W. Bush would resist deep or rapid reductions if that threatened the prospects for a stable, democratic government in Iraq, the Times said. 'There hasn't really been any discussion of numbers, and it's definitely based on conditions on the ground,' the Times quoted a military officer in Baghdad as saying. Conditions 'are a lot more favourable than in December or April or even two months ago', he added. But Gen Petraeus, who leaves Iraq in September to head the US Central Command, which also has oversight over the Afghanistan war, and has already begun the review of security and troop levels, is expected to be more cautious than some administration and Pentagon officials might want, the Times said. Officials who spoke on condition of anonymity said Gen Petraeus would more likely recommend a smaller reduction. The most optimistic course would be 120,000 to 130,000 US troops in Iraq, the Times said, which would be down from the peak of 170,000 in 2007 after Mr Bush ordered the troop increase. As of July 9, there were 146,000 US troops in Iraq. Iraq is a major issue in November's presidential election battle between Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama. Mr McCain supports the Bush administration's current strategy there, while Mr Obama has called for a timetable for withdrawal. While a reduction of combat brigades in Iraq would free up troops that could be sent to Afghanistan, officials said no additional forces would go until next year, the Times said.

### [China 'is fuelling war in Darfur'](#)

*BBC* – 13 July 2008

The BBC has found the first evidence that China is currently helping Sudan's government militarily in Darfur. The Panorama TV programme tracked down Chinese army lorries in the Sudanese province that came from a batch exported from China to Sudan in 2005. The BBC was also told that China was training fighter pilots who fly Chinese A5 Fantan fighter jets in Darfur. China's government has declined to comment on the BBC's findings, which contravene a UN arms embargo on Darfur. The embargo requires foreign nations to take measures to ensure they do not militarily assist anyone in the conflict in Darfur, in which the UN estimates that about 300,000 people have died. More than two million people are also believed to have fled their villages in Darfur, destroyed by pro-government Arab Janjaweed militia. Panorama traced the first lorry by travelling deep into the remote deserts of West Darfur. They found a Chinese Dong Feng army lorry in the hands of one of Darfur's rebel groups. The BBC established through independent eyewitness testimony that the rebels had captured it from Sudanese government forces in December. The rebels filmed a second lorry with the BBC's camera. Both vehicles had been carrying anti-aircraft guns, one a Chinese gun. Markings showed that they were from a batch of 212 Dong Feng army lorries that the UN had traced as having arrived in Sudan after the arms embargo was put in place. The lorries came straight from the factory

in China to Sudan and were consigned to Sudan's defence ministry. The guns were mounted after the lorries were imported from China. The UN started looking for these lorries in Darfur three years ago, suspecting they had been sent there, but never found them. "We had no specific access to Sudanese government army stores, we were not allowed to take down factory codes or model numbers or registrations etc to verify these kinds of things," said EJ Hogendoorn, a member of the UN panel of experts that was involved in trying to locate the lorries. China has chosen not to respond to the BBC's findings. Its public position is that it abides by all UN arms embargoes. China has said in the past that it told Sudan's government not to use Chinese military equipment in Darfur. Sudan's government, however, has told the UN that it will send military equipment wherever it likes within its sovereign territory. An international lawyer, Clare da Silva, says China's point that it has taken measures in line with the arms embargo's requirements to stop its weapons from going to Darfur is meaningless. "It is an empty measure to take the assurances from a partner who clearly has no intention of abiding by the resolution," she said. Ms da Silva said the BBC's evidence put China in violation of the arms embargo. The UN panel of experts on Darfur has said it wants to examine the BBC's evidence.

### [Al-Qaida draws more foreign recruits to Afghan war](#)

AP – 17 July 2008

Afghanistan has been drawing a fresh influx of jihadi fighters from Turkey, Central Asia, Chechnya and the Middle East, one more sign that al-Qaida is regrouping on what is fast becoming the most active front of the war on terror groups. More foreigners are infiltrating Afghanistan because of a recruitment drive by al-Qaida as well as a burgeoning insurgency that has made movement easier across the border from Pakistan, U.S. officials, militants and experts say. For the past two months, Afghanistan has overtaken Iraq in deaths of U.S. and allied troops, and nine American soldiers were killed at a remote base in Kunar province Sunday in the deadliest attack in years. Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, warned during a visit to Kabul this month about an increase in foreign fighters crossing into Afghanistan from Pakistan, where a new government is trying to negotiate with militants. Two U.S. officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the information, told The Associated Press that the U.S. is closely monitoring the flow of foreign fighters into both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Jihadist Web sites from Chechnya to Turkey to the Arab world featured recruitment ads as early as 2007 calling on the "Lions of Islam" to fight in Afghanistan, said Brian Glyn Williams, associate professor of Islamic history at the University of Massachusetts. Williams has tracked the movement of jihadis for the U.S. military's Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. Local Afghans in the border regions are increasingly concerned about the return of the "Araban" or "Ikhwanis," as Arab fighters are known in the Pashtun language, Williams wrote in a CTC paper. He said there were rumors of hardened Arab fighters from Iraq training Afghan Pashtuns in the previously taboo tactic of suicide bombing. Turkey also appears to have emerged as a source of recruits. Williams estimated as many as 100 Turks had made their way to Pakistan to join the fight in Afghanistan. "The story of Turkish involvement in transnational jihadism is one of the best kept stories of the war on terror," said Williams,

who noted that al-Qaida videos posted on YouTube mention Turks engaging in the insurgency. "The local Afghans whom I talked to claim that the Turks and other foreigners are more prone to suicidal assaults than the local Taliban." Dozens of Turkish Islamic militants have trained in al-Qaida camps in Afghanistan and taken part in attacks there, said Emin Demirel, an anti-terrorism expert in Turkey. He said images of attacks on mosques or Muslim villages provide propaganda for recruiting young Turkish Muslims. "Nowadays, they are effectively using the Internet to communicate with fellow militants, and police have difficulty in keeping tabs on several of the jihadist sites," said Demirel, author of several books on Turkish Islamic militant groups. "Turkish courts sometimes locally block access to one particular site, but it is still accessed outside Turkey. Those Web sites eulogize fallen fighters as martyrs in order to recruit among radical Muslim youths." One example was Cuneyt Ciftci, the German-born son of Turkish immigrants, who took the Arabic nom de guerre of Saad Abu Furqan. In a video obtained last March by the AP, the 28-year-old was shown giving a final hug goodbye to some friends before blowing himself up outside a U.S. military base in eastern Afghanistan. A Turkish news Web site, Uslanmam, said an Uzbek militant group called Islamic Jihad Union claimed responsibility and eulogized Ciftci as "the brave Turk who has left his luxury life in Germany and came here to go to paradise." Just a couple of weeks later, newspapers in Pakistan reported that four Turkish nationals with suspected links to al-Qaida had been arrested by authorities on a bus. They were found with explosives, ammunition and jihadi sites on their laptop computers. Al-Qaida's recruitment drive stems from a slow and steady resurgence that started in 2002, according to Taliban sources. "They are awake," said Qari Mohammed Yusuf, who Afghan authorities confirm is a senior Taliban. "They have people going by different names to other countries. They are coming and going easily. In the last year, they have been organizing more day by day." Al-Qaida has financed the Taliban in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, Yusuf told the AP. In the chaos created by the Taliban groups, al-Qaida has been able to steadily recruit, re-establish its public relations wing, plot new attacks and re-establish areas of operation on both sides of the border. Some new recruits cross into Afghanistan's northern Balkh province or through Iran into Herat province in western Afghanistan, said Nangyal Khosti, a commander loyal to Jalaluddin Haqqani, a wanted terrorist. Those from Iran have often trained in Iraq and are hardened insurgents. The recruits, Yusuf said, head to Afghanistan's Paktika province, where there are roughly 150 Arab militants. In Pakistan, al-Qaida recruits are sent to Waziristan and the lawless regions of the northwest along Afghanistan's eastern border, Yusuf said. Afghan and Western officials say a key route for al-Qaida recruits is from Central Asia into northeastern Kunar and Nuristan provinces, where former U.S. intelligence officials suspect Osama bin Laden is hiding. Both provinces border Pakistan's Bajaur tribal area, where the Taliban hold sway and where the U.S. has targeted al-Qaida's No. 2, Ayman al-Zawahri. The hulking mountains of Kunar and Nuristan soar thousands of feet and are heavily forested, giving militants good cover. Kunar was the location of the war's two deadliest attacks on U.S. soldiers — on Sunday, with the killing of the nine Americans, and in June 2005, when militants shot down a helicopter and killed 16 soldiers. While al-Qaida may be sending most of its trainees to Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is probably also creating cells with the mission of attacking Western countries, including the United States, warned Erich Marquardt, senior editor with the Combating Terrorism Center. "I think we have to accept the fact that al-

Qaida has not taken its sights off the far enemy," he said. "Al-Qaida recognizes that it is fighting in multiple theaters and is therefore likely training fighters for different areas of operation."

## **TERRORISM & COUNTER-TERRORISM**

### [9/11 third tower mystery 'solved'](#)

*BBC* – 4 July 2008

The final mystery of 9/11 will soon be solved, according to US experts investigating the collapse of the third tower at the World Trade Center. The 47-storey third tower, known as Tower Seven, collapsed seven hours after the twin towers. Investigators are expected to say ordinary fires on several different floors caused the collapse. Conspiracy theorists have argued that the third tower was brought down in a controlled demolition. Unlike the twin towers, Tower Seven was not hit by a plane. The National Institute of Standards and Technology, based near Washington DC, is expected to conclude in its long-awaited report this month that ordinary fires caused the building to collapse. That would make it the first and only steel skyscraper in the world to collapse because of fire. The National Institute of Standards and Technology's lead investigator, Dr Shyam Sunder, spoke to BBC Two's "The Conspiracy Files". "Our working hypothesis now actually suggests that it was normal building fires that were growing and spreading throughout the multiple floors that may have caused the ultimate collapse of the buildings."

### [Top spy seriously ill in hospital](#)

*BBC* – 4 July 2008

Britain's top spy, Alex Allan, the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, is unconscious and seriously ill in hospital. The 57-year-old collapsed at his home earlier this week. Government sources say that there is no sign of foul play. BBC security correspondent Gordon Corera understands that there is no police involvement or concern over the reason for his condition. Mr Allan's committee collates information from MI5, MI6 and GCHQ. A Cabinet Office spokeswoman said: "We can confirm that Alex Allan was taken ill on Monday and transferred to a London hospital. "We cannot discuss his condition as it is a private matter." The Metropolitan Police said: "We were made aware of a man in his late 50s who was taken to a London hospital after being taken ill at his home address. "He remains in a serious condition. This is being treated as non-suspicious." The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) is responsible for briefing ministers and officials with intelligence assessments on issues such as security, defence and foreign affairs. It is part of the Cabinet Office, and briefs the prime minister weekly. The JIC chairman collects information from members of the Security Service, MI5, the Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, and Government Communications Headquarters who sit on the committee. The deputy chairman takes over in the absence of the chairman, but Cabinet Office policy is not to publicly name the person. Mr Allan was a civil servant who worked mainly in the Treasury, before becoming principal private secretary to both John Major and Tony Blair when they were prime minister. He took the post of high

commissioner to Australia in 1997. In 1999 he became "e-envoy" for the government, co-ordinating policy on e-commerce among different ministries and departments. He left that post and moved back to Australia a year later before returning to the UK in 2004. Downing Street announced his appointment as the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee and Head of Intelligence Assessment late last year. Mr Allan's artist wife, Katie Clemson, died from cancer last November.

### [Blast at concert injures dozens in Belarus](#)

*IHT* – 4 July 2008

A bomb exploded during an outdoor concert in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, early Friday, injuring dozens of people. The blast, believed to have been caused by a homemade explosive device, occurred about 1:00 a.m. as revelers were celebrating Belarus's Independence day, said Aleksandr Lastovsky, a spokesman for the Minsk police department. More than 20 people were injured, he said, describing the bombing as "an act of hooliganism." Belarus's interior minister said up to 40 had been injured, Interfax news reported. There were no immediate reports of fatalities. No suspects have been identified. "Very shortly we will determine whether this was a terrorist act of something else," Vladimir Naumov, the interior minister, said. Belarus is an autocratic country, saturated with police and security personnel, making such incidents extremely rare. During presidential elections in 2006, police and riot forces aggressively quashed what were for Belarus sizable anti-government protests. Nothing like those protests has occurred since. The opposition Web site Charter '97 posted photos of bloodied victims being carried away by emergency personnel. One witness quoted by the Web site reported hearing a loud bang and feeling a shock wave when the bomb went off. Amateur video circulating on the Internet immediately after the explosion showed ambulances arriving on the scene as music from the concert continued in the background. Belarus's independence day marks the country's liberation from the Nazis in 1944 by the Soviet Army. President Aleksandr G. Lukashenko presided over holiday events earlier in the day but was not present at the time of the explosion. Lukashenko later visited the scene to inspect the damage, Interfax reported.

### [Indonesian terrorists on the run](#)

*AFP* – 6 July 2008

Islamic terrorists in Indonesia are on the run from authorities following recent successful raids, Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said on Sunday, adding that more arrests could follow. 'We are not sure whether we have crippled them, but the fact is that they are on the run,' he said on the sidelines of a meeting of the D8 group of developing nations in Kuala Lumpur. 'We have uncovered various terrorist cells in the past few years, meaning that they are within our reach, and that's why we feel more secure,' he told reporters. Raids last week that yielded ten suspects and a safe house full of bombs and computers were a major blow against South-east Asia's most feared terror network, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Terrorism experts said the arrests appeared to have stopped a dangerous cell with regional links which was poised to launch a massive attack, probably against Western tourists on the island of Sumatra. But they warned it did not mean the end of JI

or its most extreme faction leader, fugitive Malaysian extremist Noordin Mohammad Top, who is blamed for the 2002 Bali bombings. Mr Wirajuda said the subsequent police investigation could yield further arrests. 'But the problem is that since we uncovered their network ... they are operating more and more in independent cells. When we arrest this group it does not automatically lead to others. On the surface they are not well connected,' he said.

### [Police suspect Muslim militants in foiled bombings in southern Philippines](#)

AP – 6 July 2008

Police suspect Muslim militants plotted bomb attacks that were recently foiled in a southern Philippine city to disrupt military assaults on a nearby island or extort money from local companies, a police official said on Sunday. A police ordinance team safely detonated a powerful bomb - packed with about a kilogramme of nails for added lethal effect - that was found by a vendor on Saturday outside the office of an electricity company in southern Zamboanga city, police said. The bomb, which had about a kilogramme of TNT, was attached to a cell phone that had five missed calls, showing the perpetrators' failed efforts to detonate the bomb at about the time employees were arriving at the company, city police Chief Laurimer Detran said. Police also recovered two unexploded homemade bombs found on Friday under a delivery truck by a worker at a soft drink company in the city, he said. Police were investigating the foiled bombings. Among those suspected were militants belonging to the Al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf group and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (Milf), a group engaged in Malaysian-brokered peace talks with the Philippine government, Mr Detran said. The planned bombings may have been intended to disrupt sporadic military assaults against the Abu Sayyaf and the Milf, which have collaborated on nearby Basilan island, or were a part of an attempt by them to extort badly needed funds from local companies, he said. Security has been extra tight in Zamboanga, a predominantly Christian city of more than 750,000 people which was hit by a bomb attack that killed two people and wounded 19 others outside an air force base in May. Police have accused Milf guerrillas of staging that attack. The Milf has denied any involvement. The government's peace talks with the Milf, which has been fighting for Muslim self-rule in the south, stalled in December, raising fears of renewed fighting. The Abu Sayyaf, considered a terrorist group by the US and Philippine governments, has suffered from battle setbacks but continues to plot attacks, the military says.

### [Al-Qaeda-linked militants in Philippines get foreign funds despite crackdown](#)

AP – 7 July 2008

Al-Qaeda-linked militants in the Philippines continue to get significant funding from foreign donors despite a crackdown aimed at stopping the flow of cash that finances bombings and other attacks, two terrorism experts said on Monday. 'There is no evidence that terrorist financial flows to the Philippines have dried up,' Dr Rohan Gunaratna, a Singapore-based terrorism expert, told reporters on the sidelines of a Manila conference on terror financing. But he said the militants also use extortion and kidnappings for

ransom as a means of supplementing the foreign funding, which isn't always enough to carry out all of their planned terrorist attacks in the country. Philippine military and police officials have said that the Abu Sayyaf, a small but brutal group accused of involvement in bombings, beheadings and kidnappings, suffered a major financial setback when its chief, Khaddafy Janjalani, and his presumed successor, Abu Sulaiman, were killed in 2006 and 2007, respectively. The two leaders had established connections with Middle Eastern and Asian financiers, something most other Abu Sayyaf commanders have failed to do, the officials said. The fundraising task, however, has been taken over by a little-known Abu Sayyaf commander, Yassir Igasan, who developed links with Middle Eastern financiers when he went there for terrorist training in the past, said Gunaratna, author of 'Inside Al-Qaeda: The Global Network of Terror.' 'As long as he is alive and as long he is active, the Abu Sayyaf will continue to get money from Saudi Arabia,' Dr Gunaratna said of Igasan. Top Indonesian terrorism suspect Umar Patek, who has been hiding in the southern Philippines, also gets funds from Indonesia-based groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah that are used by the Abu Sayyaf and other Muslim rebel groups for terrorist training and attacks in the Philippines, Gunaratna said. National police chief Avelino Razon declined to comment on Gunaratna's claim, saying a lack of information on terror financing has made it hard for authorities to assess the flow of money to local militants. But he said that in the past some of those funds have been monitored and frozen with the help of foreign intelligence agencies. Mr Razon acknowledged the Abu Sayyaf remains a key security threat. 'They're still a force that we should guard. They will not stop. That means eternal vigilance on our part,' Mr Razon said. Mr Arabinda Acharya, an expert with the Singapore-based International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, told the Manila conference that government efforts to stop the flow of funds to terrorist groups in the southern Philippines have been hampered by militants using informal channels such as couriers, instead of the banking system, to move most of their money. That has led to a sharp drop in the amount of bank-transferred funds being detected in recent years by anti-terrorism officials worldwide, he said.

### [Afghan officials accuse Pakistan of Indian embassy attack](#)

*AFP* – 8 July 2008

Afghan officials accused Pakistan on Tuesday of being behind a suicide blast at the Indian embassy that left 41 people dead, saying the attack had the hallmarks of its intelligence agency. Monday's car bomb ripped into the embassy compound in the capital, killing two Indian diplomats and two Indian guards as well as nearly three dozen Afghans. Nearly 150 people were wounded, Afghan officials said. "We believe firmly that there is a particular intelligence agency behind it," presidential spokesman Homayun Hamidzada told reporters. He would not name the outfit but said it was "very obvious" whom he meant. A senior government official who did not want to be identified told AFP separately: "Pakistan was behind the attack on the Indian embassy." Hamidzada said the attack was "designed outside Afghanistan and it was exported to Afghanistan" with the help of local collaborators. "The sophistication of this attack and the kind of materials used and the specific targeting, everything has the hallmark of a particular intelligence agency that has conducted similar terrorist acts in Afghanistan in the past," he said. Afghanistan regularly accuses circles in Pakistan, a long-time rival of India, of supporting

the Taliban and other militants waging a deadly insurgency in the war-ravaged nation. Pakistan rejects the accusation. Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on Tuesday denied his government was involved in the attack, saying in Kuala Lumpur that it was not in Islamabad's interests to destabilise Afghanistan. A security report to the Afghan cabinet on Monday also accused an unidentified foreign intelligence agency of involvement in the suicide blast, hinting it referred to Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence agency. "The terrorists no doubt could not have succeeded in launching such an atrocity without full support of foreign intelligence," it said, according to a summary of the cabinet meeting released to journalists. The report also said a "big number of puppet and foreign terrorists, the enemies of peace and stability of the Afghan people, have entered the country in the past several months," according to the summary. And in a clear reference to Pakistan, it said "evidence shows that the terrorists have been trained, equipped and financed in professional bases across the border." The cabinet had "decided to raise the issue with Afghanistan's international anti-terrorism partners seriously," the summary said. Kabul and Islamabad are key players in the United States' "war on terror" launched after the September 11, 2001 attacks blamed on Al-Qaeda, which the Taliban regime allowed to operate in Afghanistan. But Afghan and Western officials allege that Islamic extremists have sanctuaries in Pakistan which helped to create the Taliban as an armed militia and was one of only three countries that recognised the hardliners' government. Islamabad officially dropped its support for the Taliban only after the 9/11 attacks but Afghans allege it still wants the new government in Kabul to fail for its own strategic purposes. The Taliban, who have claimed almost all of a wave of suicide attacks as part of their insurgency, again denied involvement and blamed rivalry among regional powers, including Pakistan. "We wish we had carried out this attack ... since India has been the enemy of the Islamic Emirate," spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed told AFP, referring to the 1996-2001 Taliban regime. India had assisted the Northern Alliance, an Afghan faction that fought the Taliban, and was now helping the US-backed government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, Mujahed said. "They send secret military experts to Afghanistan and they train the Afghan army," he said. "Had we carried out the attack, we would have claimed responsibility for it with pride since we have good reasons for it."

### [Pakistan denies hand in suicide bombing outside Indian Embassy in Kabul](#)

AP – 8 July 2008

Pakistan's prime minister on Tuesday denied that his country's intelligence agency had any hand in the suicide bombing that killed 41 people outside the Indian Embassy in the Afghan capital. Pakistan Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani told reporters during a visit to Malaysia that his country has no interest in creating chaos in neighbouring Afghanistan, when both countries are fighting the common enemy of Islamic terrorism. The Afghan Interior Ministry has hinted that Monday's attack was carried out with help from Pakistan's intelligence service. Asked to comment on Afghanistan's view, PM Gilani said: 'Why should Pakistan destabilise Afghanistan? It is in our interest to have a stable Afghanistan.' 'We want stability in the region. We ourselves are a victim of terrorism and extremism.' 'Maybe there are those who want to destabilise the region and those who are a threat to the world,' said PM Gilani on the sidelines of a summit of eight developing Islamic nations. He did not elaborate. On Monday, Pakistan Foreign Minister

Makhdoom Shah Mahmood condemned the attack. But Gilani's comment is the first high-level denial of involvement by the government. Monday's blast was carried out by a suicide car bomber, who followed a diplomat's vehicle and detonated the explosives at the building's main entrance, only 30 meters from where dozens of Afghans had lined up to apply for visas. Among the 41 dead were four Indians, including the military attache and a diplomat. The blast was the deadliest in Kabul since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. Afghanistan often accuses Pakistani intelligence of supporting the Taliban insurgency, a charge denied by Islamabad. But suspicions run deep in the US-backed government in Afghanistan because of historical reasons - Pakistani intelligence helped create the Taliban militia, many of whose leaders and recruits studied at religious schools in Pakistan. Despite international condemnation of the Taliban regime's fundamentalist rule in Afghanistan from 1996-2001, Pakistan was one of the few countries that gave it diplomatic recognition, underscoring the importance to Pakistan of having a strong ally in power in its neighbour. Pakistan formally abandoned its support for the Taliban after Sept 11 attacks on New York and Washington. Still, Taliban leaders are suspected to getting continued shelter and support in Pakistan, and maintaining links with the Pakistani intelligence agency.

### [Russia 'backed Litvinenko murder'](#)

*BBC* – 8 July 2008

The murder of former Russian agent Alexander Litvinenko was carried out with the backing of the Russian state, Whitehall sources have told the BBC. A senior security official told Newsnight there were "very strong indications it was a state action". Mr Litvinenko, who was a fierce critic of former Russian President Vladimir Putin, was poisoned in London in 2006. UK investigators suspect former KGB agent Andrei Lugovoi of the murder, but he has always denied any involvement. The BBC has been told that Russia's internal security organisation, the FSB, operated under Mr Putin with far more autonomy than the organisations usually entrusted with foreign espionage operations. Our source said: "We very strongly believe the Litvinenko case to have had some state involvement." Newsnight has also learned that officers at MI5 believe they thwarted an attempt last summer to kill another Russian dissident, Boris Berezovsky. The BBC's source said the Berezovsky incident showed "continued FSB willingness to consider operations against people in the West". And they claimed the targeting of Russian government critics in the UK had serious diplomatic repercussions, saying: "[It] messes up the relationship big time." In November, head of MI5 Jonathan Evans expressed concern that there had been "no decrease" in the number of Russian covert intelligence officers operating in the UK since the end of the Cold War. The service believes there are around 30 operating from Russian diplomatic missions here. In May 2007, the Crown Prosecution Service formally submitted an extradition request to Moscow for Mr Lugovoi to stand trial in Britain. That request remains current, but Russia has refused to cooperate saying it would be against its constitution to do so. UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown is thought to have raised the case as he held his first face-to-face talks with new Russian president Dmitry Medvedev at the G8 summit in Japan.

[Turkey consulate attack 'terrorism,' says U.S. envoy](#)

*CNN* – 9 July 2008

The shootout outside the U.S. consulate in Istanbul which left six people dead was an "obvious act of terrorism," the U.S. ambassador to Turkey says. Speaking to reporters in the Turkish capital of Ankara, Ross Wilson said he had asked Turkey to implement additional security measures after gunmen Wednesday pulled up in a car and opened fire at a police security checkpoint at the consulate entrance. "I'm not in a position to speculate on who this is or why they have carried out this action," Wilson said. "But any time there is an attack on diplomatic establishment... (it) is more or less by definition is an act of terrorism." "Our countries will stand together to confront this as we have confronted some other problems in the past," he added. Three police officers and three assailants were killed in the shootout near the U.S. consulate in Istanbul, the city's governor said. Two other police officers were wounded in the attack. A U.S. consulate official said no American citizens or employees were hurt. Gunmen pulled up in a white car and opened fire at a police security checkpoint at the outer entrance of the consulate, Istanbul Gov. Muammer Guler told reporters at the scene. Police fired back, resulting in a three- to five-minute gun battle, Ivan Watson, a journalist with National Public Radio reporting from the scene, told CNN. Guler said the dead included three police officers and three assailants. Authorities did not immediately know whether the attackers were affiliated with any organization, he said. People waiting to obtain visas inside the heavily fortified building were not hurt. The outer entrance is more than 30m (100ft) from the main building which sits atop a hilltop. At least three bodies remained on the ground as ambulances pulled up and police cordoned off the area with yellow tape and waved off onlookers. The most recent attack on a foreign mission in Turkey was in November 2003 when a string of bombings in Istanbul targeted the British consulate, along with two synagogues and a British-owned bank. The blasts killed more than 70 people, including the British consul general, and wounded hundreds. Turkey is a secular country that is predominantly Muslim. There has been a lot of tension in the country between secularist and traditional Muslims, and the state has been battling Kurdish separatists for many years.

[Al Qaeda calls for tourist kidnappings in Yemen: Web](#)

*Reuters* – 9 July 2008

An al Qaeda Yemeni wing called in an Internet posting on Wednesday for kidnappings of tourists in the Arab country to press for the release of jailed militants. "It is a duty that detainees be freed through any rough way such as kidnapping tourists, who are numerous, or through various other ways," an article in the e-magazine of al Qaeda in the South of the Arabian Peninsula read. The group said it was pained some militants "had turned themselves in voluntarily to the ruling regime to improve their situation", in an apparent reference to a Yemeni-American thought to be a major figure in the bombing of U.S. warship Cole in 2000, who turned himself in to Yemeni authorities in 2007. Jaber Elbaneh was allowed to walk free after surrendering but a Yemeni court sent him back to jail this year. His release had irked Washington, which had complained to Yemen. Dozens of al Qaeda militants are serving jail terms in Yemen for attacks on Western and

government targets. Scores of holidaymakers and foreigners working in Yemen have been kidnapped over the past decade by tribesmen demanding better schools, roads and services, or the release of prisoners. Most hostages have been freed unharmed, but in 2000 a Norwegian diplomat was killed in crossfire and in 1998 four Westerners were killed during a botched army attempt to free them from Islamic militants who had seized 16 tourists. Yemen, which joined the U.S.-led war on terror after the September 11 attacks on U.S. cities, is seen in the West as a haven for Islamist militants.

[China: 5 'Olympic terror groups' smashed](#)

*CNN* – 10 July 2008

China says it has destroyed five terrorist groups in a mainly Muslim autonomous region on suspicion of plotting to attack the Olympic Games, which start in less than a month. Authorities have arrested 82 suspected terrorists in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in the past six months, according to state-run media quoting Chen Zhuangwei, head of the Public Security Bureau in the regional capital of Urumqi. Asked about the report, a Human Rights Watch analyst raised concerns that China may be using the Olympics as an excuse to crack down on ethnic groups in Xinjiang. "It's clear that the police are simply adding cases of people who they think are engaging in activities that are critical of Chinese rule," Nicholas Bequelin told CNN. The police also banned illegal preaching or "Holy War" training at 41 locations in the western Xinjiang province, the Xinhua report said. Bequelin said those jihadist training camps described in Xinhua are most likely unsanctioned mosques. "Obviously these are just places where people are just practicing religion out of the state-controlled mosque," he said. Muslims in China are allowed to practice their religion only in mosques that are approved by the Chinese government "with imams designated by the state on the basis of religious scripture approved and printed by the government," Bequelin said. "Anything that takes place outside this is deemed illegal," he noted. In addition, police cracked down on followers of the Falun Gong spiritual movement, arresting 25 "criminal suspects." The arrests wrap up the first phase of China's Olympic Security Protection and the country now embarks on the second phase, Chen said. "From today on, all police officers must urgently get into action and once again get into the various works of Olympic Public Security Protection," he said. The Xinjiang autonomous region is home to about 19 million people, most of whom are Muslims and other minorities. Many of them oppose Beijing's rule. Along with Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International has raised concerns about the crackdown. Earlier this year, China announced dozens of arrests in Xinjiang that it said were part of a plot by Islamic terrorists to attack cities -- including Beijing and Shanghai -- ahead of the Summer Olympic Games, which begin on August 8. China said the plots were linked to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement Organization, a terrorist group based outside China that sent its leader, Aji Mai Mai Ti, to China late last year "to accelerate the preparation on terrorism activities" targeting the Beijing Games. The terrorist leader planned to target hotels in Beijing and Shanghai that were frequented by foreigners, as well as government buildings and military bases, according to a statement from the Ministry of Public Security. The terrorist cell inside China, led by Aji Mai Mai Ti, carried out tests on poisonous meat, poisonous gas and remote explosive devices as part of their plans, the ministry said. The group also planned to kidnap foreign journalists, tourists and Olympic

athletes "to make influences on international communities to undermine the Beijing Olympics," the ministry said. Bequelin noted that China "very conveniently" blames the East Turkestan Islamic Movement Organization, or ETIM, for the alleged militant activity in Xinjiang without providing any proof. "There is a lot of skepticism of whether ETIM actually exists," he said. "We know it existed at some point in the early '90s." He raised concerns at a report released this week from China state-controlled media that Chinese police shot and killed five "holy war militants" in Xinjiang's capital, Urumxi. "The description was that there were 15 people ... in a room, armed only with knives, (and) police had no other choice (but) to shoot," Bequelin said. "It's highly suspect because it looks more like a botched police operation." He said that HRW is not discounting the possibility of radical Islamist groups in Xinjiang, but noted that "very clearly we have to take with a pinch of salt China's claims of real terrorist groups targeting the Olympics." "What the government appears to be doing is to conflate terrorism with criminal acts and other cases of dissent," he said. "But there is no evidence any kind of organization or militant activity in Xinjiang."

### [One million on US govt terror watch list](#)

*AFP/AP* – 15 July 2008

A watch list of suspected and known terrorists, compiled by the United States authorities, has ballooned and contains more than one million names, the American Civil Liberties Union said. The ACLU said on Monday it derived that figure from a Justice Department report on the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center, which consolidates terrorist watch list information. The Center 'had over 700,000 names in its database as of April 2007 and that the list was growing by an average of over 20,000 records per month', according to a report by the Justice Department Inspector General, the rights group said. 'By those numbers, the list now has over one million names on it,' the ACLU said in a statement. Among those on the watch list are deceased people, such as former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein who was hanged in 2005, decorated war veterans, and US Senator Ted Kennedy, the ACLU said. Nobel Peace Prize winner, former South African president Nelson Mandela, was also on the list until an act of Congress removed his name - the only way, according to the ACLU, to get off the list. 'The watchlist is a perfect symbol for what's wrong with the administration's approach to terrorism: it's unfair, out of control, incompetently administered, a waste of resources, and is a very real impediment in the lives of billions of travellers,' the director of the ACLU Technology and Liberty Program, Mr Barry Steinhardt, told reporters in Washington. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) flatly denied the allegation that the list contained one million names. 'Assumptions about the list are just plain wrong,' the TSA said in a posting on its website, estimating that there were less than 450,000 people on the watch list. US Justice Department's former top criminal prosecutor says the terror watch list likely has caused thousands of innocent Americans to be questioned, searched or otherwise hassled. The government calls its watch list one of the most effective tools in its fight against terrorism. It was created after the Sept 11, 2001 attacks to consolidate 12 existing lists and make sure no terrorists slipped through the cracks - whether when entering the country or if otherwise stopped for questioning. Last year, congressional investigators found 'general agreement that the watch list has helped to combat terrorism'. Other audits

of the watch list over the last several years, however, have concluded that it has mistakenly flagged innocent people whose names are similar to those on it. More than 30,000 airline passengers had asked the Homeland Security Department to clear their names from the list as of October 2006. Additionally, as many as 20 suspected terrorists were left off the list as of last year due to a technology glitch.

#### [Four Madrid bomb convicts cleared](#)

*BBC* – 17 July 2008

Spain's Supreme Court has overturned the conviction of four people found guilty of involvement in the Madrid train bombings in 2004. The four were among 21 people convicted last year over the attacks, which killed 191 people. The court also upheld the acquittal of an Egyptian suspected of masterminding the attacks, because he had already been convicted of the offence in Italy. However it convicted and jailed one of those originally found not guilty. The Spanish man, who was sentenced to four years in prison, had earlier been cleared of helping to supply the explosives used in the Madrid attacks. The Egyptian man, Rabei Osman Sayed Ahmed, had been cleared of involvement in the bombings in October. As he had already been sentenced to eight years in prison in Italy for belonging to a terrorist organisation, the court ruled he could not be convicted again for the same crime. Prosecutors had argued that Sayed was appealing against the Italian judgement and technically had not been convicted. Sayed's lawyers in that case are challenging key evidence - a recording in which he apparently boasts of masterminding the bombings. They say the voice heard is not his, and that it has been mistranslated. Last October, a Spanish court cleared three men of masterminding the attack and acquitted seven others, while convicting 21 people for involvement in the attack. Many victim support groups were angered by the acquittals and said the sentences handed down were much lower than those requested by the state attorney. The decision to overturn some of those convictions will not please these groups, says the BBC's Danny Wood in Madrid. The Madrid bombing - in which 10 rucksack bombs tore through four packed commuter trains on 11 March 2004 - was Europe's most deadly terror attack since the 1988 Lockerbie bombing. Analysts say the attacks changed the course of Spanish politics because in an election three days later voters ditched a conservative government that at first blamed the bombs on the Spanish separatist group Eta. Spanish investigators said the bombers were part of a local Islamist militant group inspired by al-Qaeda, but had no direct links to the terror organisation. They had acted to avenge the presence of Spanish troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, said investigators.

## **DIPLOMACY & DEFENCE STRATEGY**

#### [Bush, Medvedev clash on missile defence](#)

*AFP* – 7 July 2008

US President George W. Bush praised Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Monday as a 'smart guy' who means what he says, even as they clashed on US missile defence plans. The two leaders, holding their first face-to-face meeting since Medvedev took the

reins from Vladimir Putin in May, also highlighted their cooperation in diplomatic efforts to resolve nuclear disputes with Iran and North Korea. 'There are topics on which we are making progress, such as Iran and North Korea, but there topics on which we diverge, such as the missile shield and European matters, but there are possibilities for agreement,' said Mr Medvedev at the meeting on the fringes of a summit of rich nations in Japan. 'While there's some areas of disagreement, there's also areas where I know we can work together for the common good,' said the US president. 'I found him to be a smart guy who understood the issues very well.' 'Iran is an area where Russia and the United States have worked closely in the past and will continue to work closely to convince the regime to give up its desire to enrich uranium,' he added. Seven years after Mr Bush declared he had looked into Mr Putin's eyes at their first meeting, seen his soul, and deemed him trustworthy, the US president declined to offer a similar assessment of the new Russian leader. 'I'm not going to sit here and psychoanalyse the man, but I will tell you that he's very comfortable, he's confident,' said Mr Bush. 'You may not agree with what he tells you, but at least you know it's what he believes.' Later, Mr Medvedev's diplomatic adviser, Mr Sergei Prikhodko, said the Russian president had warned Mr Bush that installing part of a missile defence shield in Lithuania was 'absolutely unacceptable'. Thus-far inconclusive US talks with Poland on basing 10 missile interceptors there have fuelled media reports that Washington may be looking at other possible sites, including Lithuania. 'Any missile defence installation, no matter where in Europe, is not a threat to Russia,' said White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe, who called any discussion of bases in Lithuania rather than Poland 'premature'. Mr Bush leaves office in fewer than 200 days and is here at his last Group of Eight (G8) summit, while Mr Medvedev took office in May and is making his debut at the elite gathering of leaders of wealthy nations. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is due next week in the Czech Republic to sign a deal to deploy an anti-missile radar, and may stop in nearby Poland to sign a pact to base 10 missile interceptors there, US officials say. The United States wants to deploy the shield in the central European nations by 2011-2013 amid concerns about the impact on ties with Russia, which denounces the plan as a threat to its own security.

### [Iran urges U.N. to help free kidnapped diplomats](#)

*Reuters* – 8 July 2008

Iran called on the United Nations on Monday to help secure the release of four Iranians kidnapped in Lebanon more than quarter of a century ago, whom Tehran says are being held in Israel. Israel has denied holding the four -- three diplomats and a journalist -- who were seized north of Beirut by Lebanese Christian militiamen during Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. They were traveling by car to the Lebanese capital from Syria. Christian warlords have said they were abducted by the Lebanese Forces militia then allied with Israel and killed shortly afterward. Israel has said they were killed by the militia. But in a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Iran's U.N. Ambassador Mohammad Khazaee repeated Tehran's long-standing assertion that they were handed over to Israel and remain imprisoned there. "No credible piece of evidence has ever been presented to indicate the martyrdom of the said Iranian officials to date," said the letter, written two days after the 26th anniversary of the abduction and obtained by Reuters. It urged Ban and the Security Council "to live up to their responsibilities under the U.N.

charter without further delay by reacting to the illegal abduction and continued unlawful detention of Iranian diplomats and journalist by the Israeli regime, and by helping secure their safe and immediate release." Last week, Lebanon's Iranian-backed Hezbollah group said that, as part of a U.N.-mediated prisoner swap with Israel it expected to take place in mid-July, a German negotiator would receive a report from Israel on the fate of the four Iranians. The four are Seyyed Mohsen Mousavi, then charge d'affaires of the Iranian Embassy in Beirut, military attache Ahmad Motevaselian, embassy technician Taghi Rastegar Moghadam and journalist Kazem Akhavan of the official news agency IRNA.

### [Iran says would strike Israel, US navy if attacked](#)

*AFP* – 8 July 2008

Iran would "set on fire" Israel and the US navy in the Gulf as its first response to any American attack over its nuclear programme, an aide to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned on Tuesday. "The first US shot on Iran would set the United States' vital interests in the world on fire," said Ali Shirazi, a mid-ranking cleric who is Khamenei's representative to the naval forces of the elite Revolutionary Guards. "Tel Aviv and the US fleet in the Persian Gulf would be the targets that would be set on fire in Iran's crushing response," he said, according to the Fars news agency. The United States and its top regional ally Israel have never ruled out attacking Iran over its nuclear drive, which the West fears could be aimed at making nuclear weapons. There has been concern an attack against Iran could be imminent after it emerged Israel had carried out manoeuvres in Greece that were effectively practice runs for a potential strike against Iranian nuclear facilities. Shirazi said "the Zionist regime is pressuring the White House leaders to plan a military assault on Iran" and Iran would react "if they commit such a stupidity." It was not clear if he was referring to Tel Aviv as a city or as shorthand for the Jewish state as a whole, which the Islamic republic does not recognise. His comments came as the Revolutionary Guards embarked on a new round of war games to sharpen their combat readiness amid continued tensions in the Iranian nuclear crisis. The Great Prophet III manoeuvres by the missile and naval sections of the Revolutionary Guards are aimed at "improving the combat capability" of the forces, Fars reported. The Guards are responsible for Iran's most significant ballistic missiles including the Shahab-3 missile, whose range puts Israel and US bases in the Gulf within reach. However diplomatic efforts are also continuing. Iran has responded to an offer from world powers to end the nuclear crisis and diplomats are analysing what is said to be a complex answer from Tehran. The offer from world powers proposes that Iran suspends uranium enrichment -- the process which they fear could be used to make a nuclear weapon -- in exchange for technological incentives. But in the latest sign that Iran is not willing to compromise on the key question of enrichment, its envoy to London said world powers were "wasting their time" by insisting on this issue. "The question of suspending uranium enrichment has become part of history and the West is just wasting its time by insisting on this illegal and illogical demand," Rassoul Movahedian told the official IRNA news agency. There had been speculation that Iran was softening its hardline stance after several officials sounded optimistic notes about the package from world powers. The comments calmed oil markets which had seen crude prices surge to record levels over fears that OPEC's number two producer was about to be the target of an attack. Iran's response is a

"complicated and difficult letter that must be thoroughly analysed," EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, who presented the package, said on Monday. He said he did not want to "give the impression of being too optimistic". Meanwhile, the United States said that the different responses by Iranian officials showed there was debate within its system over how to answer the package. It appears that "from... the varying public responses from various parts of the Iranian government that there is clearly a debate, or at least a discussion, going on within the Iranian government on how to respond," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said. Iran rejects the Western accusations and insists its nuclear programme is aimed solely at generating energy for a growing population whose fossil fuel reserves will eventually run out.

### [Iran sends missile test warning](#)

*BBC – 9 July 2008*

Iran has test-fired what it called a new version of the Shahab-3 missile, which is capable of reaching its main regional enemy Israel, state media say. The missile, said to have a range of 2,000km (1,240 miles), was one of nine launched from a remote desert site. Iran has tested the Shahab-3 before, but the latest launch comes amid rising tensions with the US and Israel over the country's nuclear programme. The US denounced the test and called on Iran to abandon its missile programme. Iran should "refrain from further missile tests if they truly seek to gain the trust of the world," White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said. The aim of the early morning launch of the "upgraded" Shahab-3 missile was to demonstrate Iran's "determination and power to the enemies who have used aggressive language during recent weeks", state media reported. "We are ready to defend the integrity of the Iranian nation," said the commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards' air force, Brigadier General Hoseyn Salami. Two other types of missile with shorter ranges were also fired as part of the Great Prophet III war games being staged by the Guards. "Our missiles are ready for shooting at any place and any time, quickly and with accuracy," Gen Salami added. "The enemy must not repeat its mistakes. The enemy targets are under surveillance." The BBC's Jon Leyne in Tehran says this is a clear warning from Iran. It is a response to a recent military exercise by Israel, which was seen as a rehearsal for an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, he says. On Monday, an adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader said it would respond to any military attack by hitting the Israeli city of Tel Aviv. Other commanders have threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, through which a large part of the world's oil flows, and to target the US and its allies around the world if Iran comes under attack. However, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad later insisted his country had no intention to attack Israel. He also said Iran did not fear an attack by the US or Israel over its nuclear activities, dismissing the possibility as a "funny joke". Mr Ahmadinejad said the economic, political and military situation would dissuade US President George W Bush from any such move. "I assure you that there won't be any war in the future," he said during a visit to Malaysia on Tuesday. The missile test came shortly after the US Treasury announced new financial sanctions on Iranian officials it suspected of involvement in the country's nuclear programme. Among those targeted were a senior scientist at the defence ministry, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh-Mahabadi, and three companies believed to be related to the arms industry. It came as G8 leaders called for Iran to halt uranium enrichment. Western

leaders have been attempting to convince Tehran to stop enriching uranium, which it has continued despite the imposition of sanctions by the UN and the European Union. Iran denies Western assertions that it is developing nuclear weapons and insists its nuclear programme is intended for peaceful purposes. The US also signed on Tuesday an agreement with the Czech Republic to build a radar station near Prague as part of a defence shield to shoot down incoming missiles from what Washington calls "rogue states" such as Iran. The move drew immediate criticism from Russia, which warned that it would proceed with its own military deployments.

[Ahmadinejad: Iran ready to help resolve disputes among African states](#)

*IRNA – 9 July 2008*

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Wednesday that Iran is ready to help resolve disputes in African continent. According to the Presidential office, President Ahmadinejad made the remark in a meeting with his Senegalese counterpart Maitre Abdoulaye Wade on Wednesday. Iran sees no limit on transfer of its experiences and achievements in various fields mainly in oil, petrochemical and energy industry to all Muslim nations and Senegal in particular. Referring to ample opportunities existing in Islamic countries grouped in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), he lauded the endeavor of the Senegalese president and rotating chairman of the OIC for his role in resolving regional issues particularly those pertaining to world Muslims. He expressed the hope that brotherly ties between Iran and Senegal would further be deepened. The Senegalese president, for his part, outlined the latest developments in the region along with issues pertaining to the Muslim world and thanked Iran for its all-out support for African countries particularly friendly and Muslim states. The Senegalese president also thanked Iran for implementing big economic programs in his country in areas of petrochemical, oil refinery as and auto production.

[D-8 Leaders Give Thumbs Up For Summit, Says Abdullah](#)

*Bernama – 8 July 2008*

The Group of Eight Islamic Developing Countries (D-8) summit concluded here Tuesday on a successful note with leaders agreeing to practical projects that member countries can undertake in efforts to increase trade and investment. To this end, the private sector must be deeply involved in a wide variety of programmes as outlined in the roadmap agreed to by the leaders in the next 10 years (2008-2018), Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said. Abdullah, who hosted the one-day summit, told a joint press conference after the summit that the D-8 Roadmap which was accepted and approved by D-8 leaders aims to foster a pragmatic and results-oriented approach to strengthen operation among member states. Among leaders alongside him was Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Bangladeshi chief adviser to the government Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed and Pakistani Prime Minister Syed Yousof Raza Gilani. Among other things, the roadmap touched on calls for the ratification of Preferential Trade Agreement by D-8 members as soon as possible and the setting up of an energy database plus a proposal for a working group on mining and minerals. Malaysia, as the new chair of the D-8 having taken over from Indonesia, will steer the direction of grouping for the next two years. The

D-8, set up in 1997, comprises Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Nigeria, Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey. Under the roadmap, Abdullah said D-8 countries would endeavour to raise agricultural production of major crops to reduce the import bill as well as promote fisheries and livestock development. They would also plan strategies for production and the input of services to eliminate current constraints of agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, seeds and agro-chemicals. They would also exchange experiences and information on producing, labelling and marketing halal food among D-8 countries. Leaders also agreed to ease visa requirements to facilitate hassle-free travel for businessmen in efforts to boost intra D-8 trade.

### [Israeli Defense Minister Barak: Israel isn't afraid to take action against Iran](#)

*Haaretz* – 10 July 2008

Defense Minister Ehud Barak said Thursday he favored the use of diplomatic pressure and sanctions against Iran's nuclear program but cautioned that Israel was "not afraid to take action". "Currently, the focus is international sanctions and vigorous diplomatic activity, and these avenues should be exhausted," Barak said during his speech at a Labor Party meeting, adding: "Israel is the strongest country in the region and has proved in the past it is not afraid to take action when its vital security interests are at stake." Barak's remarks came hours after Iran test launched a second round of missiles in the Persian Gulf before dawn Thursday. On Wednesday, the Islamic republic tested nine ballistic missiles it claimed were capable of striking Israel. Wednesday's tests prompted the United States to declare that it would defend its allies at all costs. Meanwhile, Israel said Thursday it would exhibit an advanced aircraft capable of spying on Iran. The Israel Aerospace Industries has planned an in-house exhibit Thursday of its Eitam airplane, unveiled a year ago and equipped with sophisticated intelligence-gathering systems. On Thursday, Iranian state radio reported: "Deep in the Persian Gulf waters, the launch of different types of ground-to-sea, surface-to-surface, sea-to-air and the powerful launch of the Hout missile successfully took place." Iranian satellite channel Press TV said Hout was a torpedo. Israeli experts have said that the missile launched as part of large-scale military exercise in Iran on Wednesday is not a more capable version of the Shahab-3 ballistic missile. Revolutionary Guard Commanders said that the nine missiles tested were medium and long-range weapons including some that are capable of striking Israel. General Hossein Salami, head of the Revolutionary Guards Air Force, claimed on Iranian television that a Shahab-3 long-range ballistic missile had been tested, which is capable of traveling longer distances, with greater accuracy, and with a larger payload. "Our finger is always on the trigger, and our missiles are always ready to launch," he said. However, Uzi Rubin, who was a program director of Homa, under which Israel developed the Arrow anti-missile system, is convinced that this was not a new version of the Iranian ballistic missile. "From what I saw, this is an old version of the Shahab-3, and contrary to their claims, it is not capable of reaching 2,000 kilometers, only 1,300 kilometers," he said on Wednesday. Rubin raised the possibility that a version of Shahab-3 with a 2,000 km range has still not been tested or is still not operational. "Without being hasty, I note that the Iranians have a tendency to exaggerate to a certain extent the capabilities of their missiles," he said. The test-firing of missiles was aimed at showing Israel and the U.S. that Tehran is capable of responding to threats against its nuclear

installations. Experts say that the Shahab-3 is based on a liquid fuel rocket that requires fueling prior to launch, a time consuming process that leaves the weapon vulnerable to being identified from the air. But Dr. Nathan Farber of the Technion in Haifa says that the Iranians are in the process of developing a more advanced version of the Shahab, known as the Ashura, with a range of 2,000 km. According to Farber's assessment, the new missile uses solid propellants, which makes it easier to launch, although unlike the Shahab-3, its flight time to Israel is estimated at 14 minutes, compared to 11 of the older missile. Intelligence analysts estimate that Iran has several hundred Shahab-3 in its arsenal, but a much larger stockpile, of several thousand shorter range missiles (up to 400 km) capable of targeting U.S. forces in Iraq or their allies in the Persian Gulf. In Israel, even though the heads of the defense establishment do not often detail in public their preparations to counter a possible Iranian attack, a number of recent developments received center stage in Western media. Most recently, a large-scale air force exercise, comprising approximately 100 aircraft, carried out a sortie to a distance of 1,500 kilometers over the Mediterranean - the same distance from Israel to some of Iran's nuclear installations in Isfahan. The air armada included fighters, aerial tankers, electronic warfare aircraft, and search and rescue helicopters. On a number of occasions in recent months, defense officials stressed the need to bolster the "long arm" of the IDF through the air force. Recently retired air force chief Major General Eliezer Shkedi has called for the procurement of advanced strike aircraft, and Israel is expected to acquire F-35 stealth fighter bombers. Israel has asked the U.S. to consider moving forward the delivery date for such aircraft. In parallel, Israel is preparing to carry out significant upgrades to the Arrow anti-missile system. The Arrow-3, which is funded in a multi-year program entitled Tefen, will be capable of intercepting ballistic missiles higher and further away from Israel. One area in which Israel does not seem to be altering its preparations is on ways of preparing the home front for the possibility of missile strikes from Iran. A senior officer in the Home Front Command explained this week that plans for dealing with Iran's ballistic missiles are identical to the possibility that rockets or shorter-range missiles will strike Israel from Syria or Lebanon.

### [Georgia recalls ambassador from Moscow](#)

*Xinhua* – 10 July 2008

Georgia has decided to recall "its ambassador to Russia from Moscow" for consultations, Russian news agencies reported Thursday. The move came shortly after Russia admitted it had sent aircraft to monitor the situation in South Ossetia earlier this week due to fears of a Georgian invasion of the self-proclaimed republic. "We are very much indignant at Russia's aggressive policy. We will take some forceful diplomatic steps in order to respond adequately to Russia's actions. From today, we are recalling our ambassador to Russia for consultations," Georgian Foreign Minister Eka Tkeshelashvili told a news briefing in Tbilisi. Earlier in the day, the Georgian Foreign Ministry summoned Alexander Smagu, the minister-counselor at the Russian Embassy in Tbilisi, and handed him a note of protest in connection with the recent flights. Georgia's breakaway regions have long been a source of tension between Russia and Georgia. Bilateral relations were further strained recently after Moscow deployed additional peacekeepers in Abkhazia.

[Iran missiles prove U.S. shield not needed: Russia](#)

*Reuters* – 11 July 2008

Russia said on Friday Iran's missile tests showed there is no military justification for U.S. plans to deploy missile defenses in eastern Europe because Tehran's rockets cannot travel that far. Iran this week test-fired missiles which it said were capable of reaching Israel and U.S. bases in the Middle East. Washington says the shield in Europe is needed to defend against any missile attacks from countries such as Iran. Russia says the U.S. plans are a direct threat to its security. "The tests in Iran have only confirmed that Iran at the moment has rockets with a range of up to 1,243 miles. That confirms what we have said before," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told a news briefing. "That is that the current idea of deploying a U.S. ... missile shield in Europe, with its parameters, is not needed to monitor and react to these particular rockets with this range." "We continue to be convinced of the invented nature of discussions about the Iranian rocket threat as a motive for the deployment of the missile shield in Europe," Lavrov said after talks with Jordanian Foreign Minister Salaheddin Al-Bashir. The United States and European powers suspect Iran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon, using its civilian nuclear program as a cover. Tehran denies any such intention and says its nuclear program is exclusively to generate electricity. The United States has refused to rule out military action against Iran over the nuclear issue, although it says it is committed to finding a diplomatic solution. Lavrov said negotiations, not threats, were the only way to resolve the dispute. "Overall we are in favor of any problems which are linked to Iran being resolved through negotiations, political and diplomatic methods, by bringing Iran into a mutually respectful and concrete dialogue," Lavrov said. "Not through threats that are voiced periodically that 'force will be used so that, once and for all, all the problems are resolved'. That will not work." Tehran said on Friday Iran's chief nuclear negotiator will meet European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana on July 19 to talk about a package of incentives to persuade Iran to comply with international demands over its nuclear program. "We take the view that these proposals are comprehensive enough, deep enough, contain enough positive stimuli that it will be possible, as a result of these talks, to create the conditions for subsequent negotiations," Lavrov said.

[Uribe and Chavez hail 'new era'](#)

*BBC* – 12 July 2008

President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and his Colombian counterpart Alvaro Uribe say they want to promote closer ties, after months of political tension. Speaking after a one-day meeting in Venezuela, Mr Chavez said that a new era of co-operation was dawning. For his part, Mr Uribe said the two countries could resolve their disputes. Relations hit their lowest point in March, when Mr Chavez sent troops to the border following a Colombian raid against a rebel camp inside Ecuador. Analysts say improving links will be of political and economic benefit to both. Although the two countries are major trading partners, relations have suffered because their two leaders come from opposite ends of the political spectrum. Mr Uribe is a right-winger who is a close ally of the United States, while socialist Mr Chavez regularly denounces Washington and has allied himself with Cuba. The two men also differed sharply over Colombia's Farc rebel group,

with Mr Uribe seeking military action against it, while Mr Chavez gave them some ideological support. But the freeing of 15 high-profile Farc hostages - including former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt - by the Colombian army last week has strengthened Mr Uribe's position, correspondents say. Before meeting Mr Uribe in the northern Venezuelan town of Punto Fijo, Hugo Chavez said he would treat his Colombian counterpart as a "brother". After their talks, Mr Chavez said: "As of now, a new era begins with Colombia." "We can completely turn the page on a stormy past." At the height of their dispute earlier this year, Bogota accused President Chavez of funding the Farc - the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. Mr Chavez denies the claims, saying any contact was related to negotiations to secure the release of hostages it was holding. President Chavez has distanced himself from the Farc in recent weeks, calling on them to end their campaign of violence. The BBC's Jeremy McDermott in Colombia says that despite the political differences between their leaders, the two neighbours need to get on for their mutual political and economic health. Mr Chavez's open support for the Farc was not popular in Venezuela and he wants his supporters to do well in November's elections for the National Assembly, our correspondent says. Mr Uribe is still basking in international praise since the Colombian army freed Ms Betancourt and 14 other prominent hostages from the guerrillas this month, he adds. The two presidents are expected to sign a number of accords on trade, taxes and border co-operation. Colombia is Venezuela's second-largest trading partner after the United States, and enjoys a trade surplus with its neighbour.

### [U.S. reverses course, will send envoy to talks with Iran](#)

CNN – 16 July 2008

The Bush administration has decided to break with previous policy by sending one of its most senior diplomats to engage Iran's top nuclear official, the White House announced Wednesday. The move could dramatically alter the three-decade stand-off between the U.S. and Iran. Some western nations and Israel suspect Iran is intent on developing nuclear weapons and want Tehran to suspend uranium enrichment. Iran says it wants to develop nuclear power to produce electricity. Undersecretary of State William Burns will accompany a European Union delegation during a meeting with Saeed Jalili, Iran's top nuclear official, in Switzerland on Saturday, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said. The delegation meeting with the Iranians will be led by the European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana. The delegates will discuss an incentives program meant to encourage the Islamic republic to drop its nuclear enrichment program, Perino said. But State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters Wednesday that the president and his national security team decided only recently to send Burns to the meeting. Perino said the "one time" participation of the United States in the meeting is meant to show the United States and other permanent members of the United Nation's Security Council are united in the "long standing principle that Iran -- in order to take advantage of the incentives package that was quite generous -- has to halt its nuclear enrichment."

[Beirut welcomes freed prisoners](#)

*BBC* – 16 July 2008

The Israelis handed over the prisoners, along with the remains of 200 Lebanese and Palestinian fighters, in exchange for the remains of two of soldiers. The soldiers' capture in 2006 sparked a brief war between Israel and Hezbollah. Greeting the returnees at a huge rally in Beirut, Sheikh Nasrallah said the "age of defeats" was over. Tens of thousands of Hezbollah supporters, some travelling by car or scooter, converged on the south of city to celebrate the prisoners' release and listen to Sheikh Nasrallah speak. Earlier, Lebanese President Michel Suleiman and other politicians from across the country's religious and political divide greeted the five men at Beirut airport. Fireworks lit up the night sky and the crowds waved yellow Hezbollah flags. Some threw rice as they mobbed the cars carrying the ex-prisoners to the rally in the city's southern suburbs, Hezbollah's stronghold. The most prominent of the ex-prisoners is gunman Samir Qantar, jailed in 1979 for killing a four-year-old Israeli girl and two other people. It is clear Hezbollah means to extract the maximum possible publicity from this event, the BBC's Crispin Thorold reports from the rally. The release, which has caused so much pain in Israel, is being treated as a triumph in Lebanon, by supporters and opponents of Hezbollah alike, he adds. The ex-prisoners crossed into Lebanon in an exchange mediated by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Changing into combat fatigues, they stopped briefly in the coastal town of Naqoura before being flown to Beirut. Sheikh Nasrallah's message, delivered in his first public appearance since September 2006, was that Lebanon could not be defeated. He expressly linked the prisoners' release to "victory" over Israel in July 2006. "The true, original and permanent identity of our region's peoples and our nation is that of resistance," he told the crowds. "It is an identity of the will and culture of resistance and of the rejection of humiliation and occupation, regardless of who the occupiers, the tyrants and the powerful are."

[Nasrallah 'most admired' Arab leader](#)

*J-Post* – 16 July 2008

Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah is the most admired leader among the Arab public, a survey released Wednesday showed. Twenty-six percent of respondents in six countries selected Nasrallah as their most admired leader, compared to 16% who chose Syrian President Bashar Assad and 10% who picked Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, according to the survey published by the the Saban Center at the Brookings Institution in Washington. The poll was published the same day Israel completed a lopsided prisoner swap with Hizbullah that is likely to further boost Nasrallah's standing in the Arab world. The Shi'ite Hizbullah leader was also the top pick in predominantly Sunni countries such as Egypt, Morocco and Jordan. Ninety-nine percent of Lebanese Shi'ites polled said Israel was weaker than it looked and that it was only a matter of time before it was defeated. The numbers are up from 59% in an identical survey two years ago. The 2008 survey found that 39% of all Lebanese shared this view, compared to 32% who said no one could tell if Israel would get stronger or weaker, and 20% who said Israel would use it power to consolidate its position. Shibley Telhami, the author of the study, attributes the nearly unanimously negative Shi'ite view of Israel to a unification of the Shi'ite

position following internal struggles in Lebanon over the last two years, as well as the massive media exposure to Hizbullah and its Iranian backers. The survey was carried out among nearly 4,000 (non-Palestinian) Arab respondents in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. The results of the survey came as no surprise, according to Prof. Rafi Israeli of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. "It turns out that the most murderous and barbaric leaders are also the champions of the Arab world," he said Wednesday. Israeli said a similar poll broadcast on Al-Jazeera shortly after the 2001 attacks on the United States found that Osama bin Laden was the No. 1 leader in the Arab world. "In our dealings with the Shi'ite world, including Iran, both the West and Israel have been acting in a state of dhimmitude," he said. "Muslims, and especially Shi'ites, take this as a sign of weakness and submissiveness."

### [Israel concerned by U.S. plans to meet with Iranian envoy](#)

*Haaretz* – 17 July 2008

Israel is concerned by American plans to send a senior envoy to meet with a senior Iranian representative to discuss Iran's nuclear program. "There is a bad feeling in Israel and dissatisfaction with the U.S. move," Israel told senior Washington officials, according to a source in Jerusalem. "There can be no concession on the demand to end uranium enrichment as a precondition to negotiating with Iran," Israel added. UN Security Council members, Germany and the European Union have been holding regular meetings with Iranian representatives, and U.S. Under Secretary of State William Burns, considered No. 3 in the State Department, will be participating for the first time. The U.S. informed Israel of its plans to send Burns to the talks, emphasizing that this is a one-time meeting and not a change in policy. The source said the Americans considered the talks "feelers" to test whether it should be speaking with Iran. The U.S. also claims it is sending an envoy to the talks because it "doesn't trust" the reports from EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, the liaison with the Iranians. The Americans said Solana "pulls the wool over our eyes," according to the source in Jerusalem. Israel emphasized to the U.S. that "there is great importance in maintaining the international demand to suspend uranium enrichment, as mandated by the UN resolution, as a precondition to entering negotiations with Iran. We believe there can be no concession on this demand," the source said. The Americans responded that "the condition remains."

## **DEFENCE ACQUISITION AND TECHNOLOGY**

### [New Cluster Bomb Policy Aims to Reduce Collateral Damage](#)

*American Forces Press Service* – 9 July 2008

The Defense Department today announced new standards for cluster bombs to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure from the unintended consequences of unexploded munitions. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates signed the policy that aims to reduce collateral effects of cluster munitions used to pursue legitimate military objectives. The new policy is designed to eliminate the number of bomblets dispersed by cluster bombs that don't explode on impact, explained Air Force Lt. Col. Almarah Belk, a Pentagon

spokeswoman. It sets new safety standards that, by 2018, would require 99 percent of all bomblets to explode on contact. The military will begin reducing its inventory of cluster bombs that don't meet that standard as soon as possible, and will stop using them altogether by 2018, the policy notes. The new policy is designed to eliminate the chance that the bombs could remain active and pose a potential threat to civilians on the ground after the hostilities, Belk said. A State Department white paper attributed fewer than 400 casualties to cluster bombs in 2006. Intent on reducing these numbers, the Defense Department launched a year-long review of its previous cluster munitions policy, Belk said. The new policy strikes a critical balance between operational requirements and safety concerns, she said. "The United States believes that the new cluster munitions policy will provide better protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure following a conflict, while allowing the retention of a legitimate and useful weapon," she said. Belk noted that cluster bombs offer distinct advantages against a range of targets while reducing risks to U.S. forces and saving U.S. lives. Defense Department officials view the new policy as a viable alternative to a complete ban on cluster bombs, as proposed last month by the Oslo Process in Dublin, Ireland, she said. With no alternative to cluster munitions, she said, eliminating them altogether would create a critical capability gap. "This would make the wholesale elimination of cluster munitions unacceptable," Belk said. Future adversaries are likely to use civilian shields for military targets — for example, by placing a military target on the roof of an occupied building, she noted. Under circumstances like that, she said, cluster bombs would cause fewer civilian casualties and damage than other, far more destructive weapons. The United States will use the policy in its negotiations toward an international agreement at the U.N. Convention of Conventional Weapons that began July 7. The United States hopes to see a new cluster bomb policy completed by the year's end.

### [Japan to conduct 1st test-firing of missile interceptor in US in Sept](#)

AP – 12 July 2008

Japan will conduct its first test-firing of a land-to-air missile interceptor in the United States in September to ensure that a missile shield for the Japanese capital will function properly if it falls under attack, the Defence Ministry said. The PAC-3 Patriot interceptor will be fired at White Sands Missile Range in the state of New Mexico during the week of Sept 15, according to a ministry statement obtained on Saturday. The test comes as Japan and the US accelerate their joint missile defence programme following North Korea's missile and nuclear tests in 2006. The planned test 'aims to confirm the functions of the Patriot system that has been upgraded with ballistic missile defence capabilities', the ministry said. Japan has deployed four PAC-3 systems - each including several launchers, a radar vehicle and a control station - around Tokyo to protect the capital region, including the country's largest naval base in nearby Yokosuka, also the homeport of the US Seventh Fleet. Japan has been aggressively augmenting its missile defense capabilities amid concerns about a possible threat from North Korea. Japan plans to deploy the PAC-3 defence system at several more bases around the country by March 2011.

[Boeing 'pleased' with U.S. decision to re-open disputed tanker deal](#)

*Forbes* – 14 July 2008

United States aircraft maker Boeing Co insisted it is happy with a decision by the U.S. government to re-open a \$35 billion refuelling tanker deal originally won by rival EADS, despite failing to have all its complaints upheld. Boeing said it was 'very pleased to have the opportunity' to re-compete for the contract for 179 aircraft, which will replace the U.S. Air Force's ageing existing fleet of tankers. U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said last week that the Pentagon would re-open the deal after Chicago-based Boeing complained about the air force's decision to award it to EADS and U.S. partner Northrop Grumman Corp. Boeing said the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) upheld only eight of the 15 major issues that it raised. The GAO said the air force should have done extra studies on a further two issues, Boeing added. EADS claimed at the weekend that Boeing had been unsatisfied about the outcome of the appeal, accusing the U.S. group of having wanted the GAO to re-open the competition in its entirety, rather than on the basis of specific issues. The European aerospace group also criticised Boeing's proposal for the tanker replacement, dubbing it 'a cobbled-together multi-configuration' of the U.S. company's 767 passenger jet.

[Alenia and Eaton to share work on F35 fighter](#)

*Reuters* – 16 July 2008

Finmeccanica unit Alenia and U.S. manufacturer Eaton Corp have agreed to share work on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft. The deal involves the design, development and production of hydraulic, fuel and power thermal management system (PTMS) tubes for the wing assemblies of the conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) variant of the F-35, the companies said in a statement.

[Chinese company seals deal with Bombardier at Farnborough Air Show](#)

*Xinhua* – 17 July 2008

The Canadian company Bombardier Aerospace has sealed a deal with China's Shenyang Aircraft Corporation (SAC) at the on-going Farnborough International Air Show. Under the contract signed on Tuesday, China's SAC, a subsidiary of the state-owned aviation industrial entity China Aviation Industry Corporation (AVIC I), will supply the center fuselage on the newly launched Bombardier CSeries aircraft by taking part in the design, manufacture, assembly and relevant testing as well as after market support of four major work packages. "AVIC signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Bombardier in April 2007. AVIC I attaches great importance to and supports the CSeries project and is willing to participate in this project as a risk-sharing supplier," said Wang Yawei, vice president of Commercial Airplane at AVIC I. "I am confident that the cooperation between AVIC I and Bombardier will further promote the development of the commercial aircraft business of our two companies and contribute to the development of the global aviation industry," Wang added. Shenyang has a long and proud history as an industrial base in China, with aerospace being one of the major priorities.

## NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY

### [Somalis flood to Yemen for refuge](#)

BBC – 4 July 2008

More than 20,000 Africans have fled across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen this year, twice as many as during the same period in 2007, an aid agency has said. Medecins Sans Frontieres said that almost 700 people had died so far as they attempted to reach Yemen by boat. Security in Somalia has been deteriorating, causing more and more people to flee the country. Ethiopian troops, in Somalia to support the government there, said they killed at least 71 insurgents this week. Dozens of people have been reported killed in heavy fighting in Somalia this week. Islamist insurgents clashed with government forces and their Ethiopian allies in the capital, Mogadishu, and the central location of Mataban and Guri Eal near the border with Ethiopian. Some of the insurgents are remnants of the Islamist administration, which ruled much of southern Somalia in 2006, while others are nationalists who see the Ethiopians as invaders. Many of those displaced have risked the hazardous boat trip across the Gulf of Aden. Dozens of Somalis have been arriving each week in the Kharaz refugee camp in the south of the country, the BBC's Stephanie Hancock reports from southern Yemen. Isolated in a barren desert valley, the camp is a place nobody would come to by choice, she says. One refugee, Faduma Ahmat Hassan, said her husband and son had been killed coming out of a mosque, and she had gone to collect her son's body. "As I cried next to his corpse the troops took me away," she said. "They raped me for 24 hours and when they brought me back, I was unconscious." Another refugee was struggling to look after his two infant children after his wife died from dehydration on the boat ride over. "The children always ask me where their mother is but I haven't told them the truth yet," he said. Recent violence in Somalia has come despite a ceasefire pact signed by the government and opposition Islamist groups last month. Some factions rejected the deal. This week's battles in Somalia involved a large group of Ethiopian troops - one well-informed source told the BBC it may have been as many as 1,200 soldiers. Reports from the area say destitute local people - many of whom had earlier fled Mogadishu and see Ethiopia as partly responsible for their plight - refused to co-operate with the foreign troops and that heavy clashes followed. The insurgents say they killed 10 Ethiopian troops. The Ethiopians say they killed 71 of their opponent attackers, including a well-known member of Union of Islamic Courts, known as Asparo. Somalia has experienced almost constant civil conflict since the collapse of Mohamed Siad Barre's regime in January 1991. The UN has warned that nearly half of Somalia's population is likely to require aid later this year.

### [2 retired Turkish generals formally arrested for alleged coup](#)

AP – 7 July 2008

Two retired generals were jailed in connection with an alleged plot to topple Turkey's Islamic-rooted government, the highest-ranking ex-soldiers detained as part of the probe, a news report said. The two, arrested late on Saturday, were among 21 people rounded up in the past week in the investigation into an alleged pro-secular and nationalist network called 'Ergenekon,' the state-run Anatolia news agency said. Ret Gen Hursit Tolon, who

once headed the paramilitary force, and former top army commander Sener Eruygur, who helped organize a series of anti-government rallies last year, were being held at an Istanbul jail on Sunday. No charges have been filed, and details about the alleged plot were sketchy Sunday. Some newspapers close to the government have said the suspects were plotting a series of events - such as mass demonstrations and violent clashes with police - that would lay the ground for an army takeover. Labour Minister Faruk Celik urged reporters to wait for their indictments. 'We have to trust the republic's prosecutors,' he said on Sunday. 'I believe that as soon as the indictment is released, we will all learn what it is about.' Critics have denounced the arrests as an attempt to silence government opponents. In Ankara, hundreds held a peaceful demonstration to denounce the arrests. 'The day will come when the AKP will be forced to account!' the protesters shouted, referring to the ruling by its Turkish acronym. Similar protests were staged in other Turkish cities. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Islamic-rooted party has been locked in a power struggle with secular groups supported by the military and other state institutions, including the judiciary. Secularists see themselves as the defenders of the modern secular ideology espoused by Turkish national founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, and oppose groups they say want to impose Islam on society. Earlier in the week, the Constitutional Court heard allegations against the ruling party of anti-secular activity. The prosecutor wants the party disbanded, and Erdogan and 70 other party members banned from joining a political party for five years. The prosecutor cited the government's attempt to permit Islamic-style head scarves at universities - which the Constitutional Court last month ruled unconstitutional. Erdogan's party, formed in 2001 by politicians who once belonged to Turkey's Islamic movement, denies it has an Islamic agenda, noting that it has backed reforms to help Turkey start EU membership negotiations. The investigation into 'Ergenekon' was launched last year after hand grenades issued to security forces were found at the Istanbul home of a retired military officer. The chairman of Ankara's chamber of commerce also was arrested on Saturday, and a prominent journalist with a pro-secular newspaper was released pending trial. 'Those who believe in Ataturk, in the secular republic, are under attack,' said Mr Deniz Baykal, leader of the opposition Republican People's Party.

### [Oil price slides as sell-off continues](#)

CNN – 16 July 2008

Oil prices tumbled Wednesday, extending a steep and unusually volatile slide into a second day, after the government reported a surprising spike in U.S. crude and gasoline supplies. Light, sweet crude for August delivery dropped \$4.50 to \$134.24 a barrel in morning trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Prices fell \$6.44 Tuesday in the biggest one-day drop in dollar terms since the Gulf War. The two-day slide marks a dramatic turnaround in crude prices, which as recently as Friday traded at record highs above \$147 a barrel. But even with this week's sell-off, prices remain about 80 percent above where they were a year ago and up about 40 percent from the start of the year. Perhaps just as significant as the declines is the sudden increase in volatility. Prices whipsawed by more than \$10 Tuesday and by more than \$7 Wednesday. The Energy Information Administration reported that U.S. crude oil supplies rose by 3 million barrels, or 1 percent, last week. That is the opposite of the 3 million barrel draw analysts

surveyed by energy research firm Platts expected. Gasoline supplies also leapt unexpectedly. Industry observers cautioned that oil prices could still bounce back, just as they have following large drops in recent weeks. Yet concerns are growing that high energy prices are leading to real shifts in consumer behavior that could cause demand to shrivel considerably.

[UN blames global food crisis for S\\$4.59 billion shortfall in humanitarian aid](#)

*AP* – 17 July 2008

UN officials say higher food and fuel costs, along with natural disasters and worsening conflicts, are producing a US\$3.4 billion (S\$4.59 billion) global shortfall in emergency humanitarian aid. UN humanitarian chief Mr John Holmes says so far US\$2.9 billion has been raised, only about 46 per cent of what is needed this year to respond to the world's most severe crises. He said on Wednesday that the main focus is on Sudan's troubled Darfur region, where nearly US\$2 billion is needed to help 2.5 million people driven from their homes. Mr Holmes says new donors must step forward in government and the private sector beyond the mainstays, the United States and the European Union. He says 'the donors will need to dig deep into their pockets' to find the money

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

[UN fury at Darfur militia ambush](#)

*BBC* – 9 July 2008

UN chief Ban Ki-moon has condemned an ambush which left seven members of the joint UN-African Union peace mission to Sudan's Darfur region dead. Twenty-two others were injured, seven critically, in one of the deadliest assaults on UN forces in recent years. The UN says its peacekeepers fought for over two hours to repulse suspected Janjaweed fighters, who were armed with mortars and rocket-propelled grenades. Only 10,000 of a planned 26,000-strong peacekeeping force have been deployed. Correspondents say the UN-AU mission, which began work this year, lacks the military hardware, including attack helicopters, needed to operate effectively in a region roughly the size of France. Khartoum, which wants predominantly African peacekeepers, has been accused of slowing down the deployment of the force by repeatedly raising objections. About 40 armoured vehicles ambushed the peace force while it was on patrol in North Darfur on Wednesday. Ten vehicles from the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (Unamid) were destroyed, Sudan's state media reported. A spokeswoman for UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said he "condemns in the strongest possible terms this unacceptable act of extreme violence". The BBC's Laura Trevelyan at the UN in New York says that UN officials suspect Janjaweed militia loyal to Sudan's government were to blame. She says diplomats are wondering whether the timing of the attack could be linked to the fact that top Sudanese officials could be indicted for war crimes at the International Criminal Court next week. The Janjaweed has long been hostile to UN troops in Sudan, fearing they could be used to arrest anyone indicted by the court at the Hague, our correspondent says. Since the conflict began in Darfur five years ago, the UN estimates that some 300,000

people have died and two million have fled their homes. The conflict began when rebels took up arms in protest at alleged government discrimination against the region. Pro-government Arab militias have been accused of widespread atrocities against the black African population.

[Abkhazia rejects proposed int'l force](#)

*AFP* – 9 July 2008

The breakaway Georgian republic of Abkhazia has rejected a U.S. proposal to deploy an international police force there, its leader said Tuesday. The regional government, which is not internationally recognized, instead pledged to keep Russian peacekeepers on the ground, despite Georgia's accusations that they are fomenting tensions. The U.S. State Department said Monday that Abkhazia "urgently" needs an international police presence in areas where recent bombings killed four people and wounded five. It also called on Abkhazia to resume peace talks with Georgia. "We are not going to listen to any recommendations from the State Department, which always has a unilaterally pro-Georgian position," Abkhazia's leader Sergei Bagapsh told journalists. He also refused to resume talks unless Georgia stops what he called "terrorist attacks." Russia, meanwhile, proposed a resolution at the U.N. Security Council in New York that urges the council to express concern over the bombing. Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin told reporters he had reason to believe the blasts were "of Georgian origin" to whip up tensions in the area and derail peacemaking. The proposed resolution would also require Georgia to take "urgent steps" to prevent unauthorized troops from entering Kodori Valley on the border between Georgia and Abkhazia. Russia recently increased its peacekeeper contingent in Abkhazia — a move Georgia claimed was part of a Moscow plan to annex the region. Russia also supports separatists in another breakaway Georgian region, South Ossetia, and most people in both regions carry Russian passports. Abkhazia claims the explosions are part of a Georgian government effort to retake control of the regions by force. Georgian officials deny responsibility for the bombings and call them provocations. South Ossetia authorities said they detained four Georgian officers in the border area. The officers were released Tuesday evening, Georgian Defense Ministry spokeswoman Nana Intskirveli said. Separatist government spokeswoman Irina Gagloyeva said the soldiers were collecting reconnaissance data for Georgian artillery. But Georgian Gen. Mamuka Kurashvili said the detained officers were visiting friends and were illegally captured by a militant group. Last week, Georgian forces shelled several South Ossetian towns, killing two people and wounding 11 others. The Georgians said their troops had to fire back because the separatists attacked them. Abkhazia and South Ossetia — which split off in a separatist war in the 1990s — have become a focus of Russia's efforts to thwart pro-Western Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili's drive to take his country into NATO.

[Half of UK forces 'ready to quit'](#)

BBC – 10 July 2008

Almost half of UK military personnel are ready to leave the forces, a Ministry of Defence survey suggests. Some 47% of Army and Royal Navy respondents and 44% of those in the RAF said they regularly felt like quitting. Among the concerns raised by the 9,000 servicemen and women surveyed were the frequency of tours, levels of pay and the quality of equipment and housing. The Ministry of Defence said the survey revealed "areas of concern" but that conditions were being improved. The first survey to assess attitudes across the Army, Royal Navy, Royal Marines and the RAF revealed high levels of concern over morale, equipment and pay. The Regular Army is already short of some 5,000 soldiers, amid worries that experienced young officers and senior NCOs are leaving at an increasing rate. A sense of overstretch was reflected in all three services, with 36% saying they were not happy with the level of separation from family and friends. Asked whether the frequency of tours had an impact on whether to leave or not, 38% of the Army said it had increased their intention to leave, while 59% overall said operation commitments and stretch made them more likely to leave. Overall, 37% believed operational tours came too often, though well over half believed the level was about right. Questioned about morale within their service as a whole, 59% of the Army rated levels as "low" or "very low". In the Royal Navy that was 64%, and the Royal Marines 38%. Within the RAF, 72% said morale across the service was low. Patrick Mercer, Tory MP for Newark and an ex-officer, said the findings reflected the pressures faced by military personnel. "I think the tempo of operations has produced such a level of stress on the families that it is no wonder so many are thinking of leaving," he added. However, 59% of the armed forces overall said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their own job. Some 69% of Army officers were satisfied with the sense of achievement they got from their work, compared with only 51% of soldiers. Only 37% of Royal Marines said that they regularly thought about quitting. The survey frequently showed wide differences between the levels of satisfaction expressed by officers in all services compared with other ranks. For example, 73% of Army officers said they had job satisfaction, compared with 57% of soldiers; 71% of Royal Marine officers compared with only 50% among other ranks, and 70% of RAF officers compared with 50 percent of other ranks. As many as 64% of Royal Navy officers said they had job satisfaction, but only 48% of other ranks agreed that they were satisfied with their jobs. Asked if they felt valued within their service, 49% of ratings in the Navy said they did not, along with 44% of soldiers and 53% of airmen.

[Darfur rebels vow to protect civilians, aid workers](#)

Reuters – 11 July 2008

Two of the main rebel groups in Darfur pledged on Friday to protect civilians and aid workers in the western Sudanese region where a dire humanitarian situation has worsened amid escalating insecurity, a joint statement said. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement Unity faction also said that they would improve the flow of aid and intercept any stolen relief supplies or hijacked vehicles that move through their territories. They vowed not to target civilians, destroy their property,

or recruit children. Rapists would also be prosecuted. "We strongly denounce all attacks on humanitarian workers, car-jacking and condemn the recent attack on UNAMID," the rebels said in a statement issued after a two-day meeting in Geneva. A joint United Nations-African Union (UNAMID) peacekeeping mission was ambushed this week by militia in North Darfur who killed seven peacekeepers and wounded 22 in the worst direct attack since its forces began work on Dec 31. International organisations in Sudan tightened security on Friday fearing a violent backlash if the International Criminal Court seeks an arrest warrant for President Omar Hassan al-Bashir as expected on Monday. The U.N. declined to comment on preparations, but an urgent security notice sent to U.N. staff in Khartoum seen by Reuters there urged staff to "upgrade their personal security measures." Up to 200,000 people have fled violence in Darfur this year, while 164 humanitarian vehicles have been stolen, according to the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue which hosted the talks.

### [UN prepares to pull staff from Darfur](#)

*AFP* – 15 July 2008

The United Nations prepared on Tuesday to fly non-essential staff from Darfur as supporters of Sudan President Omar al-Beshir planned protests in Khartoum to denounce the world court prosecutor's call for him to be arrested for alleged war crimes. On Monday, the chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Court asked for an arrest warrant against Mr Beshir, accusing him of 10 counts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur. The African Union-United Nations peacekeeping mission announced the staff 'relocations' as Sudan promised it would do its utmost to protect peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, but said there could be no security guarantee. Sudanese and Western officials have widely predicted that the ICC move - seen by many in Sudan as an assault on national sovereignty - could spark violent retaliation against Western embassies and UN peacekeepers. 'It's not an evacuation. We're temporarily relocating staff, some non-essential staff. This will probably begin today,' said Ms Josephine Guerrero, spokeswoman in Darfur for the UN-led peacekeeping mission. 'UNAMID is not pulling out. All the forces are going to be on the ground and humanitarian operations are continuing,' she added, referring to the joint UN-African Union force. A UN official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the move, ordered by UNAMID force commander Martin Agwai, affected only about 1,800 police and 1,000 civilians who are to leave the country temporarily in coming days. A UNAMID statement linked the move to an ambush by heavily armed militia last Tuesday in which seven peacekeepers were killed and 22 others wounded. The Sudanese capital was bracing for angry protests against the ICC move, after Mr Beshir's National Congress Party announced on Monday it would organise a demonstration starting at 1000 GMT (6 pm Singapore time).

[U.N. peacekeeper slain in Darfur](#)

*CNN* – 16 July 2008

Another U.N. peacekeeper has been killed in the Darfur region of Sudan, the United Nations said Wednesday. The death comes as U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called efforts to resolve the five-year-old conflict in the region "deeply disappointing." The slain peacekeeper's nationality was not immediately disclosed. U.N. spokeswoman Marie Okabe said he was shot and killed while on patrol in the territory, where Sudan's government has waged a brutal counter-insurgency campaign in response to a 2003 rebel uprising. The latest attack follows the deaths of seven peacekeepers from the U.N.-African Union Mission in Darfur force in an ambush last week. "Investigations are ongoing, and further information will be made available. UNAMID condemns all acts of violence against its peacekeepers," Okabe said. The Security Council condemned last week's attack on UNAMID troops as "premeditated, deliberate and intended to inflict casualties" Wednesday. In a presidential statement, the council said that attack involved more than 200 fighters "using sophisticated weaponry and tactics," and warned that attacks on peacekeepers can be considered war crimes under international law. "The Security Council welcomes the U.N. investigation under way and the government of Sudan's statement to assist the U.N. investigation," the statement said. "It calls on the government of Sudan to do its utmost to ensure that the perpetrators of the attack are swiftly identified and brought to justice." Concerns about the peacekeeping mission have also been fueled by Monday's decision by the head of the International Criminal Court to file genocide charges against Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir in connection with the Darfur campaign. About 8,000 peacekeepers have been deployed to Darfur, Okabe said -- about 40 percent of the force's projected strength. "The parties continue to pursue the path of military confrontation instead of dialogue," she said. "Deployment of UNAMID is still behind schedule. Sexual- and gender-based violence continues with impunity, and heightened insecurity and banditry has severely hampered the ability to provide life-sustaining humanitarian aid." John Sawers, the British ambassador to the United Nations, said the Security Council is discussing whether to extend UNAMID's mandate for another year. But he said the absence of "any cooperation" by Sudan's government in Khartoum has complicated matters.

## **NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION**

[Iran responds to big powers' nuclear offer](#)

*Reuters* – 5 July 2008

Iran responded on Friday to an incentives package offered by six world powers aimed at resolving a standoff over its disputed nuclear ambitions. There was no word on the content of Iran's reply - submitted to EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana - to the offer of talks on economic and other benefits if Teheran halts nuclear work the West suspects is aimed at making bombs. Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Mr Saeed Jalili, told Mr Solana by telephone that Teheran had prepared its response by concentrating on common ground between the two sides and with a 'constructive and creative outlook'. The two agreed to

hold further discussions later this month, Iranian state radio said. Iran's official IRNA news agency said the country's ambassador to Brussels presented its reply to Mr Solana, whose office later confirmed it had received it. The offer of trade and other incentives proposed by the United States, China, Russia, Germany, Britain and France was presented to Iran by Mr Solana last month. The six powers have told Iran that formal negotiations on the offer, which includes help to develop a civilian nuclear programme, can start as soon as it suspends uranium enrichment. Iran has said it is willing to enter talks about the package but has repeatedly rejected demands to stop such nuclear work, which can have both civilian and military uses. The dispute over Iran's nuclear activities has sparked fears of a military confrontation and contributed to oil prices rising to record highs. Analysts and diplomats say they detect a softer tone from Iran towards the nuclear incentives offer, but that this may be a bid to buy time rather than a shift to accept world powers' key demand of a halt to uranium enrichment. They say it is also uncertain whether Iran might accept a 'freeze-for-freeze' idea to get preparatory talks going. Such a step would involve Teheran freezing expansion of nuclear enrichment in return for world powers halting moves to add to three rounds of United Nations sanctions already imposed. Enriched uranium can be used as fuel for power plants but also, if refined much more, provide material for nuclear bombs.

[N. Korea received nuclear components from Pakistan, says scientist](#)

AP – 5 July 2008

Pakistan's army under President Pervez Musharraf oversaw the shipment of key nuclear components to North Korea in 2000, the architect of Pakistan's nuclear programme said. The allegation was made by scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, who was sacked and disgraced after his 2004 confession that he was solely responsible for spreading nuclear technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya. The retired scientist's comments could prove deeply embarrassing for Pakistan, which has repeatedly denied its army or government knew about Mr Khan's proliferation activities. In a telephone interview on Friday, Mr Khan said centrifuges - uranium enrichment equipment - were sent from Pakistan in a North Korean plane that was loaded under the supervision of Pakistani security officials. Mr Khan said the army had 'complete knowledge' of the shipment of used P-1 centrifuges to North Korea and that it must have been sent with the consent of Mr Musharraf, the then-army chief who took power in a 1999 coup. 'It was a North Korean plane, and the army had complete knowledge about it and the equipment,' Mr Khan said. 'It must have gone with his (Musharraf's) consent.' Mr Musharraf's spokesman, Mr Rashid Qureshi, rejected Mr Khan's claims. 'I can say with full confidence that it is all lies and false statements,' he said. In a speech on Friday, Mr Musharraf himself made no mention of Mr Khan's allegations, but said he would not quit the presidency - as political opponents have been demanding - as he still had a valuable role to play. After his 2004 confession, Mr Khan was pardoned by Mr Musharraf but he has effectively been kept under house arrest at his spacious villa in Islamabad. Since a new civilian government took power after February elections, eclipsing Mr Musharraf, the scientist has increasingly spoken out in the media. However, previously he has not implicated anyone or explicitly said the army was aware of nuclear shipments. Asked why he had taken sole responsibility for the nuclear proliferation, Mr Khan said he had been persuaded that it was in the national interest by

friends. Mr Khan said in return he had been promised complete freedom, but 'those promises were not honoured'. In his autobiography, *In the Line of Fire*, Mr Musharraf says in 1999, a year after becoming army chief, he became suspicious of Mr Khan and questioned him over reports that North Korean nuclear experts had arrived at his laboratories for secret briefings on centrifuges. Mr Khan denied it, according to Mr Musharraf. Mr Musharraf recounts authorising a raid on a charter aircraft going to North Korea for conventional missiles after receiving reports it would be carrying some 'irregular' cargo on Mr Khan's behalf. Mr Khan's people were tipped off before the raid and never loaded the cargo, Mr Musharraf wrote. It was not clear if he was referring to the same shipment as Mr Khan. 'No flight, no equipment could go outside without the clearance from the ISI and SPD and they used to be at there at the airport, not me,' Mr Khan said, referring to the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence agency and the Strategic Planning Division that manages Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

[Solana: breakthrough on Iran nuclear issue "difficult"](#)

*Xinhua News* – 7 July 2008

European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Javier Solana has said he is not optimistic about the prospects of a breakthrough with Iran over its nuclear program. Solana, who is here to attend a conference on boosting EU-NATO ties, told reporters on Monday he hoped to hold talks with Iran's chief negotiator Saeed Jalili before the end of the month. On Friday, Iran delivered a letter of response to a package of incentives proposed by six countries, aimed at persuading Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities. The response from Iran was a "complicated and difficult letter that must be thoroughly analyzed," said Solana. "I hope that we will be able to continue the dialogue in the coming weeks.... We'll see, but I don't want to give the impression of being too optimistic... It's difficult." Solana said he hoped the six major countries -- permanent UN Security Council members Britain, France, China, Russia and the United States, as well as Germany -- could respond to the letter soon. Solana had handed over an updated package of incentives proposed by the six countries and a letter from their foreign ministers and himself to Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki during a visit to the country in early June. Iranian leaders have said that the country will not give up uranium enrichment as it has the right to develop a nuclear program for civilian use.