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Contemporary Conflict

- Pakistan's New Odd Couple?
- Don't fail Afghanistan
- Al-Sadr Suspends Militia Activity in Iraq
- Somalia: Heavy Clashes Break Out in Capital
- Bush seeks another \$50bn for Iraq 'surge'
- UN fears armed refugees joining Darfur violence
- 'MNLF men being used to fight other Moro rebels'

Counter-Terrorism

- An Inside Look at France's Mosque Surveillance Program
- FARC commander says no to hostage release outside of Colombia
- Bush: Iran 'the world's leading supporter of terrorism'
- U.S. restricts embassy staffers in Yemen, warns of imminent attack
- Skinhead Violence Rising in Russia
- Singapore beefs up military presence to hackle terrorist threats

Defence Strategy

- SCO conducts final stage of joint anti-terror drill
- Australia keen on ties, but not at China's cost
- Indo-US Defence Co-operation: Forging Ahead

Defence Technology

- New destroyers enhance European navies

Energy Security

- China sets route for second West-East natural gas pipeline
- Analysis: Iraq war cut energy security

Military Operations

- Helmand: A Kinder, Gentler Taleban?
- Taleban release S Korean hostages

Nuclear Proliferation

- Russian Generals' Intentions of Stationing Nuclear weapons in Belarus
- Russia Has No Need to Counter Europe Missile Shield, U.S. Says
- U.S. reaffirms N.K. terrorism list removal depends on denuclearization

CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT

[Pakistan's New Odd Couple?](#)

TIME - 23 August 2007

Even in a country with a history of fierce political rivals coming together for their own survival, the idea of a union between Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf and exiled former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto seems preposterous. After all, they hate each other with an undisguised passion. She has a phobia about military dictators--her politician father was executed by one--and has described General Musharraf as an incompetent ruler who indulges in "puerile brinkmanship." In his view, she and Nawaz Sharif, another former Prime Minister, epitomize the weak, deeply corrupt democracy he overthrew in a bloodless 1999 coup. Just the mention of their names can spoil his mood; Musharraf once told a television interviewer that he would like to "kick them."

[Don't fail Afghanistan](#)

Los Angeles Times - 28 August 2007

Iraq may be hopeless, but Afghanistan is worth defending. Here's why and how. The United States is now at risk of "losing" Afghanistan, the predictable result of committing insufficient troops and money to that catastrophically failed state after the rout of the Taliban in 2001. U.S. forces are suffering sharply higher casualties as Taliban fighters surge back in, and drug lords are coming to dominate the political and economic landscape. The collapse of the noble nation-building experiment in Afghanistan would destroy U.S. credibility in the eyes of the world, shake global security and condemn millions of people to another generation of warfare and terrorism. And it would be all the more devastating if accompanied by U.S. defeat in Iraq. Yet the effort to build a stable nation atop the wreckage of Afghanistan can still, with great effort, be salvaged.

[Al-Sadr Suspends Militia Activity in Iraq](#)

Associated Press - 29 August 2007

Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr has ordered a six-month suspension of activities by his Mahdi Army militia in order to reorganize the force, an aide said Wednesday. The aide, Sheik Hazim al-Araji, said on Iraqi state television that the goal was to "rehabilitate" the organization, which has reportedly broken into factions, some of which the U.S. maintains are trained and supplied by Iran.

[Somalia: Heavy Clashes Break Out in Capital](#)

Shabelle Media Network (Mogadishu) - 29 August 2007

Fierce gun battle has broken out this evening in some parts of Mogadishu particularly in Hodan district in Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia. The sound of mortars and automatic rifles echoed through some parts of the capital tonight. According Some Hodan residents the exchange of mortars and RPG (rocked Propelled grenades) could be heard

through all parts of Hodan district, like KPP neighborhood to Suqa khudarta (vegetable market) At Bakara market, and its surrounding areas. The gun battle is believed to be the heaviest according to the previous nights,

[Bush seeks another \\$50bn for Iraq 'surge'](#)

Telegraph (UK) - 30 August 2007

President George W Bush plans to ask the US Congress for an extra \$50 billion (£25 billion) for Iraq once a highly anticipated report on the war's progress has been received next month. The request would seek to pay for the current troop "surge" and is a sign that Mr Bush expects to prevail in a showdown with the Democrat-controlled Congress, which has been pushing for troop withdrawal. If approved, the money would bring US spending on the Iraq war to more than £1.5 billion per week.

[UN fears armed refugees joining Darfur violence](#)

ABC News - 30 August 2007

United Nations emergency relief coordinator John Holmes says the refugee camps in Darfur have been militarised and many of the 1.2 million refugees there are armed. He says there are many thousands of young disaffected men cooped up in refugee centres throughout the area. Mr Holmes says there is a real possibility the weapons inside the camps will be used in the future. "That's why it's so urgent to find a political solution," he said.

['MNLF men being used to fight other Moro rebels'](#)

ABS-CBN - 30 August 2007

Former fighters of the Moro National Liberation Front that were turned into military integreees are now being used to hunt fellow Moro rebels, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) said Monday. The MILF's Web site www.luwaran.com quoted Khaled Musa, the group's deputy chairman for committee on information, as saying that MNLF integreees "are being used to fight [other Moro rebels] in Sulu." Turning Moro rebels against their own people "is a bitter lesson that the MNLF should [have] learned and should not be repeated," he added. Musa said the remark should be taken by the MNLF as a form of brotherly concern.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

[An Inside Look at France's Mosque Surveillance Program](#)

Terrorism Monitor (Jamestown Foundation) - 22 August 2007

France's counter-terrorism strategy is to disrupt terrorist networks before they are able to engage in violent action. Thus far, the strategy has worked since the last terrorist attack on French territory dates back to 1996. In the past few years, despite increased threats emanating from al-Qaeda and the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat

(recently renamed Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), French intelligence services have successfully thwarted a number of plots and disrupted several cells recruiting French volunteers to fight in Iraq. Since radical mosques have played a critical role in the radicalization process of terrorists in the past, the Renseignements Généraux (RG), the French internal intelligence service, have been monitoring mosques, their clerics and their sermons since the mid-1990s. This article explores the current process of monitoring mosque sermons and assesses the program's strengths and weaknesses.

[FARC commander says no to hostage release outside of Colombia](#)

Associated Press - 26 August 2007

Colombia's largest guerrilla group will only agree to a prisoner exchange within Colombian territory, a top rebel commander said in an interview published Sunday. The FARC holds hundreds of hostages, including former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt and three U.S. defense contractors, whom they say they will free in exchange for the release of imprisoned guerrillas and a temporary demilitarized zone inside Colombia.

[Bush: Iran 'the world's leading supporter of terrorism'](#)

Guardian Unlimited - 28 August 2007

George Bush stepped up the rhetoric over Iran today as he threatened to confront the hardline regime "before it's too late". The US president - speaking hours after the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadenijad, said his regime was ready to fill the power vacuum in Iraq - accused the Tehran government not only of being behind Shia insurgents in Iraq but also of supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan. Mr Bush said Iran's nuclear programme would cast the Middle East "under a shadow of nuclear holocaust" and said the regime was the "the world's leading supporter of terrorism".

[U.S. restricts embassy staffers in Yemen, warns of imminent attack](#)

World Tribune - 29 August 2007

The State Department has warned of a new Al-Qaida plot in Yemen and has imposed new restrictions on staffers based in there. The U.S. embassy in Sanaa has ordered staffers to avoid virtually all areas where Westerners and other foreigners congregate. The embassy has also banned travel outside Sanaa without authorization. "For the immediate future, the U.S. embassy has instructed its employees to avoid all Sanaa restaurants, shopping areas, hotels, and tourist attractions," the embassy said on Aug. 26. "The embassy continues to approve travel outside of Sanaa on a case-by-case basis."

[Skinhead Violence Rising in Russia](#)

The Nation - 29 August 2007

Beheadings posted on the Internet used to be a trademark of Chechen separatists in this part of the world. But on August 12 a video surfaced on several neo-Nazi Russian websites showing the brutal execution of two men from ethnic groups frequently targeted

by Russia's ultranationalists--one of whom had his head sawn off with what appeared to be a Russian army knife. Both victims came from southern Muslim regions: one from Tajikistan, the other from the Russian republic of Dagestan, which borders Chechnya. The video marks the first time that neo-Nazis--in this case, a previously unknown group calling itself the National-Socialist Party of Russia--have turned to copying the sorts of radical-Islamist beheading videos that have come out of Chechnya, Pakistan and Iraq in recent years.

[Singapore beefs up military presence to hackle terrorist threats](#)

People's Daily Online - 29 August 2007

Singapore on Wednesday beefed up its military presence on the country's four major facilities as part of its efforts to deal with possible terrorist threats in the future. According to Channel NewsAsia reports, Singapore's Defense Minister Teo Chee Hean on Wednesday invoked an order under the amended Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) Act to deploy troops in helping the Singapore police force with security operations.

DEFENCE STRATEGY

[SCO conducts final stage of joint anti-terror drill](#)

People's Daily Online - 17 August 2007

The final stage of the "Peace Mission 2007" anti-terror drill, sponsored by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), was conducted Friday in Chelyabinsk in Russia's Ural Mountains region. Leaders and defense ministers from the SCO's six member countries gathered in the Chebarkul military range near Chelyabinsk in the morning to observe the drill, which was due to end later in the day. After being briefed by the general commanders of the joint drill about the exercise, the SCO leaders took their seats at the reviewing stand. The general conception of the exercise is: under the support of an international terrorist organization based in the north border of country N, a terrorist organization of country A launched an anti-government movement. At the headquarters of the joint drill, commanders from the six SCO members decide to annihilate the terrorists.

[Australia keen on ties, but not at China's cost](#)

The Times of India - 21 August 2007

Australia might not be in favour of a quadrilateral security dialogue with India, US and Japan in the Asia-Pacific region to avoid antagonising prickly China, but it certainly wants to boost bilateral military cooperation with India. Close on the heels of Australian defence minister Brendan Nelson's visit to India last month for talks on sharing counter-terrorism, maritime security and other "classified" information, his Navy chief is now in town to take the bilateral defence agenda forward. With both India and Australia agreeing that there is "a confluence of interests" between them, especially in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), vice-admiral Russell Edward Shalders held talks with Navy chief Admiral

Sureesh Mehta, Army chief General J J Singh, IAF chief Air Chief Marshal F H Major and defence secretary Vijay Singh on Monday.

[Indo-US Defence Co-operation: Forging Ahead](#)

Asian Tribune - 30 August 2007

Defence cooperation has many dimensions today including the sale, purchase and joint development of military equipment, transfer of technology, intelligence sharing and coordination for counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation, cooperation in jointly providing relief and succour after natural calamities, coordination in transnational anti-drug trafficking activities and the joint patrolling of sea lanes of communication against piracy and terrorism. India shares good defence relations with several friendly countries. Indo-US defence cooperation has also gained prominence in recent years due to the shared interests that emerged after the end of the Cold War.

DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY

[New destroyers enhance European navies](#)

Global Power Europe - 18 August 2007

In recent years, many European navies have undergone quiet but nonetheless impressive enhancements. A number of imposing new aircraft carriers, landing platforms, warships and submarines have been introduced, particularly in the Royal Navy, the French Marine Nationale, Italy's Marina Militare, the Deutsche Marine, the Armada Española, and the Koninklijke Marine of the Netherlands. These vessels of war hold some of the most lethal and advanced naval weaponry and radar equipment in the world—on par or exceeding that of even the United States Navy; some ships have even left American observers 'shaken and shocked'. In fact, so many new classes have been recently completed, laid down, and ordered, that it would be inappropriate to deal with all of them all at once. In this entry, therefore, we shall deal with what are perhaps the most stunning two classes of warship, the Type 45 'Daring' class and the Horizon class—both potent destroyers—which will enter service with the British, French and Italian navies in the next few years.

ENERGY SECURITY

[China sets route for second West-East natural gas pipeline](#)

Xinhua - 27 August 2007

China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) announced on Monday the route of China's second West-East natural gas pipeline has been decided to pipe gas imported from Central Asia to the Pearl River and Yangtze River delta areas. The pipeline would cross 13 Chinese regions, carrying natural gas from central Asian countries, including Turkmenistan, and northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to eastern and southern China, including Shanghai and Guangdong Province. The main line would

measure 4,859 kilometers long, and the total length, including branch lines, would exceed 7,000 kilometers, said CNPC, the sole investor in the project and the country's largest oil company. Construction would begin in 2008 and gas supply in 2010. The designed annual transmission volume would be 30 billion cubic meters.

[Analysis: Iraq war cut energy security](#)

United Press International - 28 August 2007

Americans feel they have a less secure supply of energy because of the Iraq war, according to respondents in a new UPI/Zogby Interactive poll. A majority also opposes the war and says it has decreased stability in the region, where much of the world's oil is located. Of the 6,711 adults polled, 56.3 percent said the Iraq war has made the U.S. energy supply "less secure." Only 11 percent said the war has made the country "more secure." Another 27.4 percent said it "made no difference" and 5.2 percent were "not sure."

MILITARY OPERATIONS

[Helmand: A Kinder, Gentler Taleban?](#)

Institute for War and Peace Reporting - 21 August 2007

Musa Qala, in the north of Helmand province, Afghanistan, is unusually peaceful these days. Children are getting ready to go to newly-opened schools, and farmers in this opium-rich region are busy preparing their fields for autumn planting. In contrast to the rest of Helmand, security is good in Musa Qala. There is little crime, and the bitter battles that have scarred surrounding areas seem far away. Nor do residents live in fear that the Taleban are coming – they are already here.

[Taleban release S Korean hostages](#)

BBC - 29 August 2007

Taleban rebels in Afghanistan have freed three more South Korean hostages from a group of 19 they have been holding for more than a month. The three hostages, all women, were released near the edge of the central town of Ghazni, a BBC reporter at the scene said. The three, said to be in good health, were later handed to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Koreans, who work for a Christian charity, were kidnapped in July.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

[Russian Generals' Intentions of Stationing Nuclear weapons in Belarus](#)

Charter '97 - 29 August 2007

Russia should deploy tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus in return to deployment of the US antimissile system components in the Czech Republic and Poland, president of the Geopolitical Academy Colonel General Leonid Ivashov considers. "The necessity of such actions results from the threats caused to Russia and Belarus by the NATO countries. Belarus also needs the new Russian military facilities to be deployed on its territory as it was mentioned several times by president Alyaksandr Lukashenka", Ivashov declared to the Interfax-ABN.

[Russia Has No Need to Counter Europe Missile Shield, U.S. Says](#)

Bloomberg - 29 August 2007

Russia has no need to counter the Bush administration's proposed missile shield in eastern Europe, the U.S. State Department said, after a report that Russia planned to deploy nuclear missiles in neighboring Belarus. "It's simply untrue to try and assert that the placement of a radar installation and 10 interceptors requires any kind of strategic counter on the part of Russia or any other government that has a substantial nuclear arsenal," State Department spokesman Tom Casey said at a briefing in Washington yesterday.

[U.S. reaffirms N.K. terrorism list removal depends on denuclearization](#)

The Korea Times - 30 August 2007

The United States will talk to North Korea next week about terms for removing it from the list of terrorism-sponsoring nations, a key demand made by Pyongyang in their negotiations toward denuclearization and diplomatic normalization, the top U.S. nuclear envoy said Wednesday. Christopher Hill, assistant secretary of state, would not give any time frame on when North Korea might be delisted. But he said he and his North Korean counterpart would discuss what Pyongyang needs to do and how far North Korea's denuclearization should progress to meet the criteria for removal