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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

[UN: 34 Aid Workers Killed in Afghanistan](#)

AP – 30 October 2007

The United Nations on Monday said 34 aid workers have been killed in Afghanistan this year and called on Taliban fighters and criminal gangs to stop attacking humanitarian convoys so food can reach millions of needy Afghans before winter. Tom Koenigs, the head of the U.N. Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, also said that insurgents and criminal gangs have abducted 76 aid workers and attacked or looted 55 aid convoys this year. "The attacks on humanitarian aid must stop," Koenigs told reporters in Kabul. "Those responsible for these attacks and for the insecurity are pushing the most vulnerable people outside of our reach," he said. "Those responsible for these attacks need to know that they are attacking the welfare of Afghanistan's most vulnerable communities." The majority of the aid workers killed and abducted in 2007 were Afghan nationals, including doctors, de-miners and engineers, the U.N. said.

[Iraq war deaths show sharp decline](#)

CNN – 30 October 2007

The number of U.S. military and Iraqi civilian deaths has dropped dramatically, according to recent reports, although American military officials said it is too soon to declare a turning point in the conflict. Thirty-seven Americans have died in October, the lowest monthly figure since March 2006 when 31 perished, according to the U.S. military. Three soldiers died Tuesday southeast of Baghdad when a roadside bomb struck a U.S. military patrol. The number of Iraqi civilians killed in September was 844, down from 1,990 in January, according to Iraqi governmental figures provided to CNN. Slain bodies found dumped in Baghdad dropped from 428 in August to 301 in September and 151 so far in October, the Iraqi Interior Ministry said. The numbers mark a decline in fatalities since the war began in March 2003 and point to a decrease in violence after a year of pitched battles and sectarian strife. Still, cautious U.S. and Iraqi military officials aren't ready to proclaim a decisive moment in the war, saying such an outlook would require the Iraqi government to do a better job of promoting political reconciliation and compromise. "Well, I think we're almost there," said Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, the No. 2 U.S. commander in Iraq, interviewed by CNN. "I tell everybody we have momentum. We've not yet created what I consider to be irreversible momentum, but our goal is to create that irreversible momentum."

[Premier Says Separatists in Kosovo Losing Patience](#)

New York Times – 3 November 2007

A Dec. 10 deadline set by the United Nations for determining Kosovo's future is looming, after which Kosovo has vowed to declare its independence. Diplomacy with Belgrade is reaching a dead end and Kosovo cannot delay its declaration for much longer, said Agim Ceku, Kosovo's warrior-turned-prime minister. "We have no more moral right to say we need more time," he said Friday in an interview here. "If Washington asks us to

delay for a short time, we will wait. But if the date is much after Dec. 10, we will say, 'Let us go.'" "It is better to ask for an apology than for permission. The time for a decision has come." Much hangs on the future of this small, bedraggled piece of Balkan real estate. It has become a proxy in relations between the United States and Russia as well as a test of Europe's ability to conduct a united foreign policy. In the absence of an agreement, analysts say, it is likely that Kosovo will declare independence, and de facto partition will take place, with its Serbian enclaves breaking away and joining Serbia. Kosovo's willingness to put off independence for a few more weeks may give the world some limited diplomatic breathing room. But Mr. Ceku said a diplomatic solution with Belgrade seemed hopeless.

[2.3 Million Flee to Elsewhere in Iraq](#)

AP – 6 November 2007

The number of internally displaced people has swelled [to 2.3 million] in Iraq since the beginning of 2007, when the group counted less than half a million. A new report issued Monday by the Iraqi Red Crescent shows that such people now outnumber Iraqis who have fled the country altogether for refuge in neighboring states like Syria and Jordan. The rise came despite a sharp drop in bombings, shootings and other violence more than four months after the U.S. completed a 30,000-strong force buildup here. American and Iraqi death tolls have also fallen dramatically. At least 17 Iraqis were killed or found dead Monday, police and morgue officials said, including a councilman gunned down in a neighborhood next to his own in western Baghdad. On average, at least 56 Iraqis — civilians and security forces — have died each day so far in 2007, according to figures compiled by The Associated Press. Deadly rivalries have forced Shiite and Sunni Muslims to flee once diverse neighborhoods across Iraq's capital, leaving the city with clear boundaries between sects. More than 60 percent of those forced to flee were in Baghdad, the report said.

[Suicide bomber kills 50 in northern Afghanistan](#)

Reuters – 7 November 2007

A suicide attack on a parliamentary delegation killed at least 50 people in northern Afghanistan on Tuesday, a provincial official said, in the worst such blast in the country's history. Five members of the Afghan parliament were among the dead and the toll was expected to rise. Schoolchildren were also among the victims in the town of Baghlan in the north of the country which had so far escaped the worst of Afghanistan's worsening violence. "We have recorded 50 people dead so far, but there are still bodies on the streets we have not counted and some of the dead have already been taken away by their relatives," Baghlan provincial security chief Abdurrahman Sayedkhail told Reuters. The shattered and scorched bodies of children and adults lay on the ground amid pools of blood and lumps of flesh as people scrambled to carry away the living and dead. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. A spokesman for the Islamist Taliban said the group was not behind the attack. The Taliban has killed more than 200 people this year in suicide bombings aimed at ousting the pro-Western government and driving out foreign troops.

[Musharraf sets election deadline](#)

CNN – 9 November 2007

Under intense international pressure to restore democracy in Pakistan, President Gen. Pervez Musharraf announced Thursday that parliamentary elections will be held by Feb. 15 and restated his pledge to step down as the country's military leader. "I am on record as saying these things so this is not an issue with me," Musharraf said, speaking after his meeting with the National Security Council. Elections, originally set for mid-January, had been suspended -- along with the country's constitution -- after Musharraf declared a state of emergency on Saturday. His opponents, the target of widespread arrests and detentions, say it amounts to martial law in Pakistan. The state of emergency will remain in place for at least a month, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, president of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League, told CNN Thursday. In addition, Pakistan's government Thursday began lifting the media blackout imposed as part of the emergency order, allowing CNN and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) back on the air.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

[Azerbaijan foils radical Islamist terrorist attack](#)

Jane's Information Group – 30 October 2007

The government of Azerbaijan announced on 29 October that their security forces had thwarted a serious radical Islamist terrorist plot in the country, targets of which apparently included the US and UK embassies in Baku. According to the Azerbaijani National Security Ministry, officers from the National Security Service tracked a group of Islamist militants to the village of Mastaga, 30 km north east of Baku. According to ministry officials, one of the suspects was shot and killed after offering resistance and several others were arrested in an operation carried out on 27 October. Security officials have said they are continuing to hunt for other members of the group. Key targets for the attack appear to have been the US and UK embassies as well as government buildings. Following the arrests, the spokesman for the National Security Ministry Arif Babayev said a "large-scale, horrifying terror[ist] attack was being prepared by member of this group against several state structures in Baku and embassies and missions of countries involved in the international anti-terror[ist] coalition".

[Al-Qaeda is major threat to EU](#)

Reuters – 6 November 2007

Al-Qaeda remains the major terrorist threat to the European Union and a fresh attack by Islamist militants is likely, the bloc's new anti-terrorism chief said. 'An attack perpetrated by local or international networks remains likely,' Mr Gilles de Kerchove, appointed in September to coordinate member states' counter-terrorism policies, told EU lawmakers on Monday. 'Al-Qaeda ... continues to be the most serious terrorism threat to Europe,' Mr de Kerchove told the European Parliament's justice, liberty and security committee. He

said the movement founded by Saudi-born militant Osama bin Laden, who inspired the Sept 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, inspired local radicals. The Belgian official said many EU countries were particularly concerned by radical terrorism in North Africa. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb grew out of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in January, after winning approval from Osama to rename itself an Al-Qaeda affiliate. Since then, the Islamists have launched a wave of attacks targeting Algerian security and Western interests. 'The fact that it has embraced Al-Qaeda's international terrorism, and the Maghreb's geographical proximity to Europe brings terrorism closer to the borders of Europe,' Mr de Kerchove said. Conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan had 'a considerable impact on radicalisation of extremists in Europe', he added. Attack plots with suspected ties to Al-Qaeda were foiled in Germany and Denmark in September. An attack by British Islamist killed 52 people on July 7, 2005 on London's transport network. Prosecutors say the March 2004 attack on Madrid, which killed 191 people, was carried out by a group linked to Al-Qaeda.

[Over 150 terrorist attacks happen in Pakistan in 2007](#)

Xinhua – 6 November 2007

Some 667 people were killed and 1,821 others were injured in 157 terrorist attacks this year in Pakistan, which reflects the grim picture the country has to confront, according to Interior Ministry spokesman (Retd) Brig. Javed Iqbal Cheema. At a weekly briefing here Tuesday, Cheema said that the state security apparatus was not idle. Although it prevented many possible attacks with timely detection and action, he said, the enormity of the challenge posed by the planners and executors of suicide bombings was too complex and difficult to overcome completely and rapidly. The spokesman said that the difficulties were compounded by a lack of understanding in the higher echelons of the judiciary that the law enforcement and security agencies needed a little more room and leeway to deal with the extraordinary situation. Cheema said that the measures taken by the country's leadership last Saturday came after thorough deliberations. He said that there was no other option but to act firmly to avert the mounting dangers to national security and integrity.

['Lyrical Terrorist' Samina Malik guilty](#)

Telegraph – 8 November 2007

A Heathrow shop assistant who dubbed herself the "Lyrical Terrorist" has become the first Muslim woman in Britain to be found guilty of terrorism offences. Samina Malik, who worked air-side for WH Smith, posted a series of poems on websites across the internet about killing non-believers, pursuing martyrdom and raising children to be holy fighters. She was described as a "committed Islamic extremist who supports terrorism and terrorists" and had a library of material for that purpose. Malik, 23, who was born and brought up in Southall, West London also called herself "Stranger Awaiting Martyrdom" in messages to other extremists on the internet. She burst into tears in the dock at the Old Bailey as a jury found her guilty of possessing records likely to be used for terrorism by a majority of 10 to one.

[Home-grown terrorist recruitment rising, says British spy chief](#)

Christian Science Monitor – 8 November 2007

It was not that long ago that the British government would refuse to acknowledge that MI5 even existed. Nowadays, public speeches by the head of Britain's domestic intelligence are almost de rigueur. This week, MI5 chief Jonathan Evans signaled that the service wants to raise public vigilance to the terrorist threat, and to stress that intelligence agents alone cannot solve the Islamist extremist problem. It was followed quickly by British and European Union officials pushing plans for tougher enforcement measures. Counterterrorism experts say Mr. Evans's speech Monday was remarkable for three things: he raised sharply the numbers of active terrorist supporters from 1,600 to 2,000 and suggested there could be as many as another 2,000 unknown sympathizers; he warned that the problem has not yet reached its peak; and he hinted at a need for greater public understanding of the work MI5 does. "The security services are unhappy that they believe that there is a real threat but that no one in the public shares that view," comments Peter Neumann, a terrorism expert at King's College, London. As if to underscore the point, police arrested 14 Algerians and Tunisians Tuesday in a Europe-wide antiterrorism operation led by Italian authorities. Two men in Britain were arrested, police say, for forging documents to facilitate the illegal entry into Italy of recruited suicide bombers to be sent to Iraq and Afghanistan,"

DEFENCE STRATEGY

[US spy budget, at \\$43.5 billion, is no secret now](#)

Straits Times – 31 October 2007

THE Bush administration said it had spent US\$43.5 billion (S\$63.6 billion) on spying in fiscal 2007, as it bowed on Tuesday to a law ordering disclosure of a figure the government has kept secret for most of the past 60 years. 'Disclosure of the amount of the budget is a good first step toward accountability,' said Steven Aftergood of the Federation of American Scientists, which has campaigned for publication of the annual intelligence budget. The figure, which is roughly equal to the entire economy of Croatia or Qatar, dwarfs the estimated intelligence budgets of any other country including the closest US ally, Britain, which spends about 10 per cent of the amount, he said. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence published the figure for overall US intelligence spending in fiscal 2007, which ended last month. Congress mandated the disclosure in a law passed in August to implement recommendations of a commission that investigated the Sept 11, 2001 attacks. The intelligence office said it would keep secret other details about the budget. Intelligence agencies had long resisted disclosing their budgets on the grounds that enemies could learn from the information. The US\$43.5 billion is about what outside experts had expected, Mr Aftergood said, and is about 50 per cent more than the government is believed to have spent in 2001. 'That's a large increase in spending that is difficult to spend wisely,' Mr Aftergood said. He said the figure does not include an estimated US\$10 billion or more in military intelligence spending. The CIA, which previously oversaw all US intelligence gathering, released a budget total of US\$26.6

billion in 1997, including for military intelligence, in response to a suit by the federation. Including the CIA there 16 US agencies that are considered to be involved in intelligence gathering, such as the National Security Agency.

[Putin says Russia threatened by "Unipolar World"](#)

Reuters – 4 November 2007

On a holiday created to unite his country, Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a veiled warning that foreigners were seeking to split up the vast country and plunder its resource wealth. "Some people are constantly insisting on the necessity to divide up our country and are trying to spread this theory," Putin told military cadets during a speech in Moscow on Sunday, Russian news agencies reported. "There are those who would like to build a unipolar world, who would themselves like to rule all of humanity," Putin said, a phrase he has used over the past seven years of his administration to mean the United States. Putin, who has a black belt in Judo, the Japanese martial art that stresses calm, emotionless and powerful shifts of an opponent's weight and balance against himself, also said Russia was well respected by admirers as a stabilizing world factor. "Some minor countries, under pressure from larger ones, are having a hard time figuring out how to defend their own interests. And Russia has played and will continue to play a positive, stabilizing role in the world," he said.

[Chinese arms and African oil](#)

United Press International – 5 November 2007

China has been promoting arms-for-oil deals with Africa as the continent is becoming one of its major sources of oil. Since last year, top Chinese leaders and military officers have made frequent visits to Africa. And at the Zhuhai Air Show under way this week in southern China's Guangdong province, military delegations from African countries including Sudan, Angola and Zimbabwe have made frequent appearances. In 2005, Angola exported to China nearly 17.5 million tons of crude oil, becoming China's second largest oil supplier after Saudi Arabia. Oil from Angola makes up nearly 14 percent of China's annual oil imports, valued at \$6.58 billion. In the months of January and February last year, Angola surpassed Saudi Arabia to become China's largest supplier of crude oil, providing 456,000 barrels per day. China's influence in Angola is becoming increasingly noticeable. The residences of many of the country's top leaders were built by Chinese workers. In June last year, China Petrochemical Corp., the SINOPEC Group, signed a \$1.4 billion deal with the Angolan Sonangol Co. to develop new oil fields. China also offered Angola a loan of \$3 billion to help rebuild its economic infrastructure, destroyed by years of civil war. At the Zhuhai Air Show, which opened last Thursday, military delegations from Angola and Sudan were allowed to make very careful examinations of FC-1 fighters and K-8 trainer aircraft. Angola and Ethiopia were the first African countries to receive Su-27 SK fighters; Angola has ordered eight.

[Iran may change U.S. missile plans: Fried](#)

Reuters – 5 November 2007

The United States intends to proceed with a radar and missile shield in central Europe despite Russian objections, a senior U.S. official said on Monday. "We are continuing negotiations with those countries (Poland and the Czech Republic)," Daniel Fried, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, told a news conference in Baku. "We hope to succeed, and if we succeed, we will proceed with the development of a radar system for the Czech Republic and missiles for Poland," he added. The plan for a radar in the Czech Republic and interceptor missiles in Poland to avert potential missile strikes from Iran has angered Russia, which says the defense shield would threaten its security. But Fried, who spent two days in Azerbaijan negotiating with the leaders of the Caucasus republic, made clear recent Russian counter proposals would not stop Washington's shield plans. Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has compared the U.S. plans with Moscow's decision to deploy nuclear missiles in Cuba in 1962, proposed using the Qabala radar it hires in Azerbaijan instead of the European facilities. Fried said the United States wanted to cooperate with Russia, but reiterated the Qabala radar could only be an addition rather than a replacement for installations in Poland and the Czech Republic -- an idea Russia rejects.

[Bush Pledges To Help Turkey Fight Kurds](#)

CBS News – 5 November 2007

President George W. Bush on Monday pledged fresh help to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in fighting Kurdish rebels, declaring them "an enemy of Turkey, a free Iraq and the United States." In an Oval Office session, Bush offered intelligence sharing to help combat the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. Bush also said top military figures from the United States and Turkey would be in more regular contact in an effort to track the movement of the guerrilla fighters. "I made it very clear to the prime minister that we want to work in a close way to deal with this problem," Bush told reporters. With Turkish troops massed on the border of his country, Erdogan is weighing a major cross-border attack against PKK rebels in northern Iraq. The guerrillas have killed more than 40 Turks in the past month in cross-border raids, and pressure is growing on Erdogan to hit back. The White House worries a Turkish incursion into Iraq could bring instability to what has been the calmest part of Iraq, and could set a precedent for other countries, such as Iran, that have conflicts with Kurdish rebels.

[Hizbollah gives Israel more clues in new strategy](#)

Reuters – 6 November 2007

Lebanon's Hizbollah has conducted manoeuvres in south Lebanon, the group's deputy chief said, a move security and political sources said aimed to deter Israel from invading as it did during their 2006 war. Two pro-Hizbollah newspapers had reported that the Shi'ite Muslim group, which fought a 34-day war with Israel last year, staged one of its biggest manoeuvres over the weekend under the direct supervision of its leader, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah. Hizbollah's deputy chief Sheikh Naim Kassem confirmed on Monday

that a large-scale manoeuvre had taken place in response to what he said was a major Israeli manoeuvre. 'Hizbollah must be ready and prepared so that it won't be taken by surprise,' Kassem said on a Lebanese television channel, adding there was no armed presence in the exercises. The dailies had said the exercises involved thousands of unarmed guerrillas in the area of operations of United Nations peacekeepers near the border with Israel but the Lebanese government said they were merely 'simulations on paper'. The UN force said it shared the government's view. Security sources confirmed the manoeuvres, albeit not on the scale reported by the newspapers. They said the exercises showed Hizbollah had relaxed a long-held policy of military secrecy, letting Israel know more about its capabilities in a new deterrence strategy. Hours after news of the manoeuvres, Israeli warplanes dropped flares over south Lebanon's coast, illuminating the night sky. A political source close to the group, which is backed by Syria and Iran, said regardless of how serious the manoeuvres actually were, their leak to the media was part of a change of strategy by Hizbollah. 'During its review of last year's war, its reasons and conduct, Hizbollah reached the conclusion that it was a mistake to build up its capabilities in total secrecy,' said the source, who requested to remain anonymous. 'The Israelis didn't know the strength of Hizbollah and rushed to war, making the major miscalculation that they could crush the group in a few days,' he said.

DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY

[European defense contracts](#)

United Press International – 5 November 2007

A new French scheme that will come out early next year will have to boost its national weapons exports from around \$7.23 billion a year to \$10.12 billion a year by 2010. The plan, laid out by French Defense Minister Herve Morin in an interview with *Les Echos*, should launch France back into competitiveness with its sales rivals the United States and Russia. The plan comes on the back of another major setback when France failed to seal the deal on the sale of its Rafale fighter jets to Morocco last month. This prompted President Nicolas Sarkozy to establish a high-level sales team consisting of the president, several ministers and the armed forces chief of staff. Morin hopes to match the 2006 sales total of \$7.23 billion this year and boost sales by another \$2.89 billion over the next three years. "We absolutely have to improve our organization and make sure France speaks with only one voice," Morin said. "We need better cooperation between the industry and the state and make sure information is transmitted in real time." Insiders blamed the failure with Rafale, which has yet to be sold to anyone but the French armed forces, to a lack of coordination and reactivity on the part of French authorities when the United States made a highly attractive offer to the Moroccan government, according to Yahoo! News France.

[DSTO announces new data-records tool](#)

United Press International – 5 November 2007

The Australian Defense Department announced the Defense Science and Technology Organization has developed a handheld information tool to help soldiers. The DSTO announced the development of a Synchronized Handheld Information and Local Observation information tool for soldiers in an effort to operate more effectively using local knowledge during deployments overseas. Officials say the SHIRLOC device, which runs on personal digital assistants technology, was developed for Australian troops in Timor-Leste to help them in compiling information on local criminal elements and illegal activities, the Australian Defense Department reported. “In complex war fighting and peacekeeping operations, where local knowledge is becoming increasingly important, SHIRLOC improves awareness of mission-relevant information to assist troops in carrying out their dangerous tasks,” acting Australian Chief Defense Scientist Nanda Nandagopal said in a statement. “SHIRLOC consists of a database with a large number of records that can be readily referenced during patrols, providing soldiers with an enormous amount of information not previously accessible.” With cross-reference links to associated people, locations, events, groups and even vehicles based on records stored in the SHIRLOC database for persons of interest, searches can be carried out using variables of names and alias, age and group. “SHIRLOC is a flexible system and a recent successful usability trial and evaluation in Timor-Leste means that its capability could be extended to other theatres of operation,” Nandagopal said.

[Air Force grounds entire Boeing F-15 fighter jet fleet](#)

AP – 6 November 2007

The US Air Force has indefinitely grounded all Boeing F-15 fighter jets after a plane flown by the Missouri Air National Guard crashed last week during a training exercise. 'The cause of that accident is still under investigation, however, preliminary findings indicate that a possible structural failure of the aircraft may have occurred,' the Air Force said in a statement released late on Sunday. Major Cristin Marposon, an Air Force spokesman, said on Monday that the country's fleet of 676 F-15s, including mission critical jets, were grounded on Nov 3 for 'airworthiness concerns'. While the F-15 is grounded, the Air Force said it would rely on Lockheed Martin's F-16 fighter jet, and other aircraft, for routine missions. However, the F-15 will remain available for combat or other emergency situations, Maj Marposon said. F-15s were scrambled in domestic airspace on Sept 11, 2001. The Air Force said it will produce an investigative report on Friday's crash near Salem, Missouri, within 60 days.

ENERGY SECURITY

[Egypt to build nuclear power plants to meet energy needs](#)

Los Angeles Times – 30 October 2007

President Hosni Mubarak announced yesterday that Egypt, which lacks the oil reserves of some of its Middle East neighbors, would build several nuclear power plants to meet rising energy demands. The statement was made in a nationally televised address and seemed to have twin purposes: overhaul an energy policy to keep pace with economic growth and support his son, Gamal, who has stressed the need for nuclear power and who many analysts regard as a front-runner to succeed the 79-year-old president. "We believe that energy security is a major part of building the future of this country and an integral part of Egypt's national security system," Mubarak said in remarks at an electrical power plant under construction outside Cairo. "We have to face the fact that oil and gas are not renewable energy sources. And we also have to admit that we are facing a great challenge to meet increasing consumption." The president said the program would seek the backing and help of the United Nations's International Atomic Energy Agency and countries such as the United States, which gives Cairo nearly \$2 billion annually in military and economic aid. Egypt's nuclear announcement comes as Washington has imposed new economic sanctions on Iran for its nuclear program, which the Bush administration says is seeking atomic weapons to destabilize the region. Tehran says its program is for civilian purposes only.

[Taskforce set up to coordinate energy efficiency efforts](#)

Channel News Asia – 30 October 2007

A new funding scheme, managed by a new taskforce called the Energy Efficiency Programme Office, may be set up to promote projects that are energy efficient. Singapore has become more energy efficient over the years, but the National Environment Agency (NEA) said it is time to take a more integrated approach. It is setting up a taskforce to coordinate efforts between the five biggest energy-consuming sectors – power generation, industries, transport, buildings and households. These sectors are represented by the NEA, the Building and Construction Authority (BCA), the Economic Development Board (EDB), the Energy Market Authority (EMA), the Land Transport Authority (LTA) and the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR).

[Climate change is public health issue: US experts](#)

Reuters – 7 November 2007

Climate change should be treated as a public health issue, especially by the United States, the world's biggest long-term emitter of greenhouse gases, health and ecology experts said on Tuesday. An Earth transformed by climate change could lead to more climate-related diseases, especially those transmitted by insects and those borne by water supplies, the experts said at a meeting of the American Public Health Association. The United States and other rich countries bear special responsibility because their climate-warming emissions will have a disproportionate impact on poor countries that emit the

least and have the fewest resources to deal with public health problems, said Jonathan Patz of the University of Wisconsin. Health hazards related to climate change include severe heat waves and droughts, which can affect the food and water supply; more severe storms; and more ground-level ozone, also known as smog, which is sensitive to temperature and can affect people with breathing problems such as asthma.

MILITARY / PEACEKEEPING / HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS

[Israel's Barak warns of nearing Gaza military operation](#)

AFP – October 30, 2007

Israeli defense minister Ehud Barak Tuesday warned of an impending military operation in the Gaza Strip against Palestinian militants and rocket infrastructure. "Every day that passes brings us closer to a broad operation in Gaza," Barak told reporters in northern Israel while visiting the army's biggest exercise since last year's war in Lebanon. "We are not happy about it, and we would be happy if circumstances would prevent it, but the day is definitely nearing," the former chief of staff said, a day after an Israeli soldier was killed in an incursion in southern Gaza. The army carries out regular airstrikes and ground operations in Gaza, which the Islamist Hamas movement has ruled since June, in an effort to curb daily rocket fire against southern Israel. Despite the Israeli military pressure, defiant militants have continued to fire rockets, with two projectiles landing in Israeli communities Tuesday, causing damage to one building, but no injuries. Israel's attorney general Monday suspended a government decision to reduce badly-needed electricity supplies to the densely-populated Palestinian territory in a bid to put pressure on militants. The Israeli army carried out a massive five-month ground operation in Gaza after militants abducted a soldier in a cross-border raid on an army outpost in June 2006, but were unable to recover him.

[AU Official Says Hybrid Force Significant For Peace In Darfur](#)

Voice of America – 3 November 2007

The Africa Union (AU)/UN hybrid mission in Darfur (UNAMID), set up to replace the AU's African Mission in Sudan (AMIS), on Wednesday inaugurated its operational base in the town of El Fasher. When fully in place, the force, which was established by the Security Council in July 2007, will comprise more than 19,000 military and close to 6500 police personnel. It is widely hoped that the hybrid force will be more effective in protecting civilians in Darfur than AMIS, which was only 7000 strong. The troops will be made up of personnel from several countries, including Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Senegal. Sam Ibok is Ambassador and Advisor to AU Special Envoy Salim Ahmed Salim. From Sirte, Libya, where he is attending the Darfur peace talks, he explained to Akwei Thompson of Nightline Africa the significance of the hybrid force in the larger context of bringing peace to the region.

Pakistan's Ousted Top Judge Urges Revolt

Chicago Tribune – 5 November 2007

Pakistani police arrested hundreds of lawyers, human-rights activists and opposition politicians Sunday in an apparent bid to ward off protests over President Pervez Musharraf's weekend declaration of a national state of emergency and firing of the country's Supreme Court chief. Pakistan's lawyers, who have become leading players in the country's pro-democracy movement this year, said they are planning rallies at Islamabad's Supreme Court and at district courts nationwide Monday to protest Musharraf's suspension of the constitution and what they called his coup against the country's high court, which had been expected to rule next week on whether the president's recent election to another term was constitutional. Opponents had challenged whether Musharraf, who seized power in a bloodless military coup, was allowed to run for president while serving as army chief. The situation has resonance outside the nation. Musharraf is considered a key ally in the U.S.-led war on terrorism. Islamic militants have gained strength in recent months as he has been engulfed in a political crisis.

Rana Sana Ullah Khan, an opposition politician and lawyer in Faisalabad, said police carried out at least 150 overnight raids in Pakistan's third-largest city, arresting nearly 100 lawyers and opposition figures, but those like him who had so far evaded the sweep were planning to travel to Islamabad on Monday, or to protest at district courts if they could not reach the capital.

US, Pakistan to keep up joint Afghan border ops: Pentagon

AFP – 6 November 2007

Washington and Islamabad will keep up joint military operations along the border with Afghanistan despite the turmoil rocking Pakistan, US defense officials said Monday. "As far as I know, with respect to our borders operations coordination, our military operations, that continues. That said, I wouldn't want to speculate for the future," said Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman. "We are reviewing all of our assistance programs, but we need to be mindful not to hurt the counter-terrorism relations," he added, repeating the same message given by US Defense Secretary Robert Gates earlier Monday during a visit to Beijing. Funding for Pakistan's operations under operation Enduring Freedom represent "about 80 million dollars a month," he said. "So far 5.3 billions have been repaid to Pakistan" since the beginning of the operation. The Pakistani military is also due to receive some 300 million dollars for the 2008 fiscal year, as well as about two million dollars designated for military training. Other US assistance goes towards funding anti-drugs and weapons non-proliferation programs. Islamabad also benefits from sales of American arms, Whitman said, adding that in 2006 the US Congress approved the sale of 36 F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan, although he was unsure if they have arrived yet.

Pakistan's Ousted Top Judge Urges Revolt

AP – 6 November 2007

Pakistan's deposed chief justice called on lawyers Tuesday to revolt against President Gen. Pervez Musharraf's imposition of emergency rule and a crackdown on the opposition that has left thousands under arrest. The government considered a delay in parliamentary elections despite Western demands they be held on schedule in January to bring democracy to a nuclear-armed country dogged by political uncertainty and rising Islamic militancy. Fragile security in the northwest - cited by officials as a reason for the suspension of the constitution - deteriorated further as pro-Taliban militants seized a town from outnumbered security forces. While Musharraf says emergency powers are needed so the government can better fight Islamic extremists, his crackdown has been aimed at lawyers and liberal political activists opposing his rule. The Supreme Court, in particular, had chipped away at his powers this year.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

Israel and China stick to positions on Iran sanctions

Reuters – 30 October 2007

China and Israel emerged from talks on Iran's nuclear future on Tuesday with each side sticking to divergent positions on whether additional U.N. sanctions would help defuse the standoff. Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni was in Beijing seeking to persuade China to back tougher economic restrictions on Tehran unless it curtails nuclear activities that Western powers say are aimed at making nuclear weapons. "We believe that there's a need to enhance the sanctions in order to stop Iran," Livni told a news conference after meetings with senior Chinese officials. "We believe that there is a need for more sanctions in the United Nations Security Council". Responding to Livni's message, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman underscored his country's stance that a negotiated settlement was still viable. "We believe that a peaceful resolution of the Iran issue through negotiation is the best choice," spokesman Liu Jianchao told a regular news conference. "China has always maintained that in international relations sanctions should not be rashly applied."

Mainland against Taiwan's development of nuclear weapons in any form

Xinhua – 31 October 2007

The Chinese mainland expressed strong opposition to Taiwan's development of nuclear weapons in any form, a mainland spokesman said here Wednesday. Yang Yi, spokesman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, made the comment at a press conference in response to a journalist question on Chen Shui-bian's related remark that Taiwan will not develop nuclear weapons but needs to improve its defense capability. "We have noticed the related reports," Yang said. "We are uncompromisingly against Taiwan's development of nuclear weapons or nuclear weapon capability in any form," he said.

[North Korea starts disabling nuclear facilities](#)

AFP – 6 November 2007

North Korea on Monday started an unprecedented disabling of its nuclear programme under the supervision of a US team of experts, US officials said. The North, which staged its first nuclear test in October 2006, has agreed with five negotiating partners to declare and disable all its programmes by year-end in return for energy aid and major diplomatic benefits. In July it took the first step by shutting down its reactor at Yongbyon. Disablement aims to make the reactor and other plants unusable for at least a year while talks on total denuclearisation continue. The North will receive energy aid worth hundreds of millions of dollars in return for disablement. The aim of disablement is to avoid a re-run of what happened in 2002, when a 1994 denuclearisation pact with the United States fell apart. Despite an eight-year shutdown the North quickly resumed production of plutonium and now has an estimated 45-65 kilogrammes - enough to build several bombs.

[Air strikes first, questions later](#)

Asia Times – 7 November 2007

More than two months after Israeli warplanes conducted a mysterious raid in northeast Syria, there is a growing consensus among US government and independent analysts that the suspicious target was a nuclear facility. But the evidence they are relying on - a series of satellite photos showing a building and an adjacent pumping station near the Euphrates River - is anything but definitive, given how closely guarded US-Israeli discussions have been. With the exception of several highly classified one-on-one briefings about the incident to a handful of US congressional leaders, the George W Bush administration has kept mum. Western analysts say a tall, boxy building on the site may have contained a nuclear reactor under construction similar to a North Korean design, but the structure itself was razed after the September 6 air raid. They say that the secret nuclear reactor may be several years old. Whether or not the facility was nuclear, the episode - and Israeli, Syrian and US silence over the issue - raises even more questions as to the actual threat posed by the facility, the timing of the raid, and what the unilateral action portends for the nuclear ambitions of Israel's regional neighbors. Syria is required to inform the IAEA of any activities relating to nuclear activities. The air strike unequivocally shows that the US and Israel have decided to circumvent the UN's monitoring of nuclear proliferation situations in the Middle East, according to analysts.