



Top Stories

Kenyan government and opposition agree on power sharing

The heads of the government and opposition in Kenya have signed a power sharing agreement aimed at ending the crisis over



December's disputed elections. The agreement was reached after a day of

talks mediated by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the Chairman of the African Union Jakaya Kikwete.

President Kocharyan declares Armenian state of emergency

President Robert Kocharyan declared a 20-day state of emergency in Armenia Saturday. The declaration comes after police stopped a mass protest stating that the presidential election was rigged.



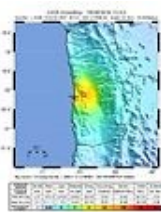
Thousands of Filipinos call for President Arroyo's resignation

Tens of thousands of Filipinos called for President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's resignation in the streets of Manila in the wake of a corruption scandal. Among the protesters were nuns, farmers, students, and even two former Presidents.



Chile struck by moderate earthquake

Iquique, Chile has been struck by a moderate magnitude 5.6



earthquake, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The quake's epicenter was located

approximately 35 kilometers east-northeast of Iquique.

Wikipedia Current Events

At least 35 people are killed in Israeli assaults on the Gaza Strip in response to Hamas rocket attacks.

- Storms in Europe kill four people in Austria, two people in Germany and two people in the Czech Republic.
- The President of Armenia Robert Kocharyan declares a state of emergency following anti-government riots in Yerevan.
- Raúl Reyes, the second person in command in the Southern Bloc of the FARC-EP, a terrorist organization, is killed in a military operation in southern Colombia.

Netscape Navigator support ceases today

Support for one of the earliest popular web browsers, Netscape Navigator, will be discontinued as of today. The browser, now owned by AOL, was once used by 90% of internet users, however the sharp decrease in usage to around 0.06% has lead to all support from AOL being stopped.

The decision was said to be due to "AOL's current business focus and the success of the Mozilla Foundation".

The move was announced in December, and it was said that all support was to cease on February 1, 2008. This was extended until March 1, 2008 in order to allow AOL to "provide tools to ease the migration of existing Netscape browser users to ... alternatives" such as Mozilla Firefox or Flock.

The decision means that there will no longer be any security patch updates, or new functions for the browser.

Iquique, Chile struck by moderate earthquake

Iquique, Chile has been struck by a moderate magnitude 5.6 earthquake, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

The quake's epicenter was located approximately 35 kilometers (21.7 miles) east, northeast of Iquique and had a depth of 35 km (21.7 miles).

According to the USGS, damage could be moderate, but so far there are no reports of damage, injuries or deaths. Iquique has a population of over 227,000 people.

Northrop Grumman and Airbus parent EADS defeat Boeing for \$40 billion US airtanker contract

Northrop Grumman and Airbus parent company European

Aeronautic Defence and Space Company EADS N.V. (EADS) have unexpectedly defeated Boeing for a US\$40 billion (GB£20.1 billion) contract to supply the United States Air Force (USAF) with 179 new aerial refueling tankers at a rate of 15 a year.

It is the biggest contract of its kind since the Joint Strike Fighter program. That contract was fought for between Boeing and Lockheed Martin, Lockheed ultimately winning the contest.

JSA Research defence analyst Paul Nesbit said that Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) operations across the aircraft's fifty-year service life could push the value of the contract as high as \$100 billion. Northrop Grumman CEO Ron Sugar said in an interview "Everyone told us we were crazy, that we had no chance. But we took a big swing and in this case, we hit a home run."

USAF officials said that the contract had been awarded based on competence, track record and competitive pricing, with UBS analyst David Strauss saying "The key decision was the amount of fuel the bigger plane could carry. In the armed services, you can never have too much gas in the air." USAF also denied that creating jobs in the US was a factor; job supply had been the reason Boeing were expected to win, with the airframer promising 44,000 new positions at 300 suppliers in 40 states.

The Northrop Grumman KC-45 tankers - more often known as KC-30s - are based on the Airbus A330 MRTT. The first four aircraft will be assembled at the main Airbus factory in Toulouse, France but by 2010-11 production of the

remainder will be carried out at a facility in Mobile, Alabama. This is thought likely to create 1,500 to 2,000 jobs and support 25,000 others. 60% of the parts will be supplied by domestic manufacturers. EADS had previously announced plans to shift much production to the US due to the current weakness of the dollar.

General Arthur Lichte, head of USAF's Mobility Command, said it is hoped the first aircraft can be tested in 2010 and in operation three years afterwards. USAF's chief of staff General Duncan McNab stated "The tanker is the number-one procurement priority for us right now. It is the first step in our critical commitment to recapitalize our aging fleet to move, supply, and position assets anywhere."...

At a time when our economy is hurting, this is a blow not only to our state, but more than 40 states across the country who would help build this national plane. ...

—Washington politicians

There is still a possibility of Boeing challenging the decision; Boeing themselves were successfully challenged by Lockheed and Sikorsky in 2006 over a \$10 billion contract to supply search and rescue helicopters to the Pentagon. A statement by Boeing given by Boeing spokesman William Barksdale said "Obviously we are very disappointed... Once we have reviewed the details behind the award, we will make a decision concerning our possible options."

Washington senator Patty Murray, who hails from the same state where Boeing bases their

commercial airliner operations, said in a critical statement "We are shocked that the Air Force tapped a European company and its foreign workers to provide a tanker to our American military. At a time when our economy is hurting, this decision to outsource our tankers is a blow to the American aerospace industry, American workers and America's military."

Washington representative Norm Dicks said he too was "shocked", releasing a statement saying "This decision is even more disappointing because the Air Force had previously favored the Boeing 767 tanker and we were prepared to move forward with the production of 100 tankers in 2003, before the process was halted due to the Boeing scandal. I regret that it has taken so long to respond to what was—and is—an urgent need to replace these older aircraft. And even more regrettable is the decision to award the contract to Airbus, which has consistently used unfair European government subsidies to take jobs away from American aircraft workers."

Kansas senator Sam Brownback said "It's stunning to me that we would outsource the production of these airplanes to Europe instead of building them in America. I'll be calling upon the Secretary of Defense for a full debriefing and expect there will be a protest of the award by Boeing." Todd Tiahr, a Kansas representative, said "We should have an American tanker built by an American company with American workers. I cannot believe we would create French jobs in place of Kansas jobs."

A group of Washington politicians released a joint statement saying "We will be asking tough questions

about the decision to outsource this contract... At a time when our economy is hurting, this is a blow not only to our state, but more than 40 states across the country who would help build this national plane."

Alabama Governor Bob Riley said "To say this is a great day for Alabama is a monumental understatement. This will go down in history as one of our greatest days." Ralph Crosby, EADS's North America CEO and ex Northrop executive commented the business has "committed our full resources to support this vital program for our prime contractor, Northrop Grumman, the Air Force, and the war fighters that this system will serve for decades to come. We already have begun the work necessary to expand our U.S. industrial footprint in support of this important program."

EADS chief executive Louis Gallois commented "This major selection is a win-win for our customers, for allied industrial cooperation and for EADS. It signals a quantum-leap forward in our commitment to the US defence customer, reflects and supports our global strategy to increase EADS's industrial presence in key markets and our goal to balance the company's defence and commercial portfolios." General Arthur Lichte said "This will be an American tanker, flown by American airmen with an American flag on its tail and, every day, it will be saving American lives.

Boeing had initially agreed to lease 100 tankers, but in 2003 a scandal erupted when it emerged that Boeing executive Michael M. Sears arranged a job for USAF official Darleen Druyun while negotiations were still underway. Both served jail sentences for corruption charges

and a competition was opened up to award a new contract.

Negotiations between Athens and Skopje lead to deadlock

The first part of the bi-lateral negotiations regarding the naming-dispute between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, under the United Nations mediation, ended without agreement in New York. As the U.N. mediator Matthew Nimetz stated earlier there are "substantial differences" - and therefore important disagreements - between the two governments on his proposal made on 19 February, adding that during his separate meetings with the two ambassadors Vassilakis and Dimitrov on Friday, he was listened to the two sides' questions and views on the issue.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer will visit Athens on Monday morning and he will meet with the Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis regarding the name-dispute between Greece and FYRO Macedonia. The Greek government has made clear that if there is no agreement between the two sides (over the official use of the name 'Macedonia') Athens will veto FYRO Macedonia's process in becoming a member of NATO. Yesterday, Karamanlis stated in a Parliament speech that Greece's "will for a mutually accepted solution is genuine. Our position 'no solution-no invitation', is clear. If no solution is reached, then our neighbouring country's aspiration to join NATO will not be materialized. And this because the principle of good neighbourly relations is a fundamental condition for relations among allies".

Today, according to information presented in the News of the Greek TV station Mega Channel, the United States are pressing the Greek side for a quick solution in order to avoid any problems regarding the NATO invitation to Skopje. It should be noted that the government of FYRO Macedonia insists in the use of its constitutional name (Republic of Macedonia) while Greece suggests a composite name which would include a geographic term. A demonstration of nationalists was organized a few days ago in Skopje, while next week the right wing Greek party LAOS organizes a rally in the city of Thessaloniki asking for national referendum and calling the government to use the right of veto.

Wikinews interviews Jon Greenspon, independent candidate for US President

While nearly all coverage of the 2008 Presidential election has focused on the Democratic and Republican candidates, the race for the White House also includes independents and third party candidates. These parties represent a variety of views that may not be acknowledged by the major party platforms.

Wikinews has impartially reached out to these candidates, throughout the campaign. We now interview independent Presidential candidate Jon Greenspon, a veteran and small business executive.

Interview

Why do you want to be President? In all honesty, it's about principles. The United States was founded on the principles of a government FOR the people, BY the people, and OF the people. For the last couple of decades, however, it become more and more the

government for the corporations, by the hidden agenda, and of the special interest. This needs to stop, and the citizens need to regain control of their house. I am running, not to make a grandiose statement or to become another American potentate, but so that the American people have a government under their control and auspices.

Have you ever run for political office before? Have you ever been a member of a political party? Have you ever campaigned for another political candidate? Nope. I've never run for public office before. During the 1980s, when there was a functioning conservative Republican party, I was a member of the Republicans. I've never campaigned for another person before.

What is your current job? What skills or ideas do you bring from this position, or previous positions, that will benefit the Oval Office? I am a small business executive, and a veteran of the US Military. Unlike our present Democratic candidates, I HAVE worn and walked in the shoes of the grunt in the field; so I have a decidedly marked advantage in that I know what these people fear and respect. I also have the understanding of how to work within a budget, and can effectively deal with problems within an organization.

Obviously, the next American President and his or her administration will face many diverse issues. But if you were to narrow identify the three most important issues, what would they be? How will you address these issues?

I think three of the most important issues that really face the next President aren't Iraq, Universal

Healthcare or Gender issues. We need to focus on core American issues: National Security, the Economy, and Congressional control.

On National Security, America is a sovereign nation and needs to treat itself as one. While globalization is grabbing a foothold around the world, America is losing its own identity in the mix. We need to deal with this problem in its basest forms. First, we need to bring illegal immigration, foreign worker visas and outsourcing of our jobs to a halt. I applaud Arizona, Oklahoma and Georgia in their efforts to stem the illegal worker situations in their states, and would enjoy seeing other states follow suit. Second, we need to bring a fast stop to the loss of American jobs to corporate greed and the use of semi-skilled, cheap imported labor through a failed H and L series visa program. I'm not saying to abandon it, but it needs to be reviewed and regulations placed making it more important to bring American workers onboard, rather than give free rides to every other countries citizens. Lastly, America needs to look at itself and be more commanding of a made in America, supported by American labor approach to work. Let's get some of the 2+ million jobs we sent overseas in the last ten years back here.

Regarding our Economy, let's just say we're not so good here.

Presently we have three choices in dealing with the mounting oil crisis we're under. 1. We can actively, and emphatically, start to look into alternative fuels, energy sources and conservation techniques to reduce the usage and emissions we are generating; 2. We can temporarily stem the costs incurred in our waste by accessing the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and Colorado oil

reserves, buying us both time to develop alternate systems, and reduce our costs from \$100+/barrel in crude, as well as giving Americans some breathing room in their wallets; or 3. We can look at OPEC and other petroleum regions and say either start a 1970's style rationing system, or bankrupt ourselves by meeting foreign controlled prices. I prefer 1 and 2 over the third option.

Similarly, we need to pare down the national deficit. This isn't going to be easy or pretty. Congress has worked extremely hard at wasting taxpayer monies, and they really don't have a clue on how to balance a checkbook, let alone a national bank account.

Lastly, the Congress. When was the last time you could honestly say that Congress was looking out for the interests of the American people? It's hard to believe they aren't working against the common interest when the Congress is dealing with legislation that includes granting amnesty to all illegal immigrants (when 87% of the public is vocally opposed), spending million of taxpayer dollars on a highway between two towns in Alaska (a highway that will be impassable for more than half the year), or trying to wrangle a million dollars on a museum to a 1960's music event. Personally, I think those monies would have been better spent on trying to balance the budget, or given back to the states for programs that more directly affect the population. Face it, our federal legislators don't want to fix problems, they are more interested in making the American public afraid of issues and then telling you who's to blame... I'll come right out and tell you who's to blame. We are. We've left the henhouse unguarded for too long.

Campaigning for the American

presidency is one of the most expensive exercises in the world. How do you deal with the cost and fundraising?

Very carefully. As opposed to the major candidates, all of whom have access to vast monetary resources and matching funds, an independent's campaign requires a coordinated effort to even obtain a basic monthly operating fund.

Do you have a running mate yet? Who are they? What are you/were you looking for in a running mate? I have not selected a running mate for the 2008 election at present. As an independent/third-party candidate, I have aligned myself with a minor party, and we are conducting a party ballot. I will be more than eager to work with a running mate of the party's selection. If given the open opportunity, my personal selections for a running mate would include either William Owens (former Governor of the State of Colorado) or Frank McEnulty, who is himself another third-party/independent candidate.

Can you win the 2008 Presidential election? Can any third party or independent candidate ever win? I believe anything is possible. Presently, a great majority of citizens of this great country are rapidly becoming fed up with the corrupt variant of politics currently going on in our nation's capital. It should be remembered that in 1860, the Republican Party was effectively a third party, with only minor political success at the national level, this was the party of Lincoln, and unfortunately, this Republican Party no longer exists.

If you can't make it into the Oval Office, who would you prefer seeing taking the presidency? If I were unable to obtain the popular vote and someone else

were to make it to the Oval Office, I believe the best alternative would be either Michael Bloomberg (present Mayor of New York City), or Lou Dobbs (Commentator for CNN). While neither gentleman shares my views on all issues of interest to me, both are extremely capable individuals with similar stances on a range of topics.

What should the American people keep in mind, when heading to the polls this November? American voters should be conscious of the fact that regardless of the present "quality" of our elected officials, the concept of term limits for Congressional posts was established in 1787. I am referring to the ballot, and your vote. If you cannot truly say that your Representative/Senator has done a job that reflects your core values and beliefs, then it's time to "hire" a new representative. Congress was never meant to be a lifetime job for anyone. While the Supreme Court has struck down the Congressional Term Limits Act, they cannot strike down the ballot box. People should make their voices known that it's time for a fresh start, truly a second American Revolution.

FARC second-in-command killed by Colombian military

Raúl Reyes, senior guerrilla commander and international spokesman of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), has been killed by Colombian security forces in the southern province of Putumayo, the government said Saturday.

Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos confirmed his death in a press conference. He said that 16 other FARC rebels and one Colombian soldier were killed in the skirmish, which took place in a

rebel stronghold near the border with Ecuador.

"It is the hardest blow to FARC in all of its history", Santos said. Colombian security analyst Alfredo Rangel added, "This could hit morale [of the FARC] because the myth of the invulnerability of the bosses is over."

The military was able to locate the rebels by intercepting one of their satellite communications, he said. After launching an air strike on the rebel base, the Colombian military came under fire from the guerrillas. The military fired back, killing Reyes while in Ecuadorian territory. The bodies of the dead were then taken to Colombia.

"Once the camp was bombarded, Colombian forces were ordered in to secure the area and neutralize the enemy. The police was also asked to keep it secure until Ecuadoran authorities arrived," Santos said.

Colombian president Alvaro Uribe, who was monitoring the operation, contacted Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa to inform him of the incident. "It appears the FARC entered Ecuadorean territory," Correa said. "The incident must be clarified a bit." Correa said he will send troops to the area for an investigation.

According to the Associated Press, Reyes, whose real name was Luis Edgar Devia Silva, was considered a contender for becoming leader of FARC. Their current leader, Manuel Marulanda, is believed to be in poor health.

Also killed in the fighting was Guillermo Enrique Torres, known by the alias of "Julián Conrado". He was a senior member of FARC who composed and performed

revolutionary songs.

FARC is considered a terrorist organization by Colombia, the United States, and the European Union. The group has been accused of drug trafficking, extortion, and kidnapping, among other illegal activities. The U.S. Department of State had offered a \$5 million bounty for information leading to the arrest of Reyes, as well as the other 6 members of the FARC's highest governing body.

Gordon Brown makes speech as part of Labour Party conference

The UK Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, has made a speech to UK Labour party members as part of his party's spring conference. In the speech he made several commitments, which he said he would "work tirelessly" to achieve.

On the subjects of employment and welfare, Mr. Brown said that his party "will offer new entitlements to the carers that serve this country [the UK] so well. He continued by saying that since Labour came to power in 1997, three million new jobs have been created. He also said that Labour will attempt to get 100,00 people back to work.

When discussing crime in the speech, Mr. Brown claimed that his party has "already cut crime by 32%." He also made promises of community policing across the UK.

At the end of the speech, Mr. Brown said that the United Kingdom should not ignore poverty in third world countries, he said that the Labour party will work to enable all children in the world to have an education.

Mystery surrounds ricin discovery in Las Vegas hotel

On February 14, a man staying at the Valley View Extended Stay America hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada was hospitalized after experiencing respiratory distress. The man lapsed into unconsciousness and has been at the hospital ever since.

Since the bills at the hotel were going unpaid, Extended Stay America began to evict the man from the room. Another man, described as either a friend or relative, went to the hotel on Thursday to collect the personal belongings of the hospitalized man.

According to Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Deputy Chief Kathy Suey, he found several vials of a white substance. He brought them to the attention of the hotel manager, who called police.

Initial tests, which further tests confirmed on Friday, the substance was the deadly toxin ricin, an extremely dangerous biological agent. Ricin is extracted from castor beans through the waste produced in the manufacture of castor oil. It is currently being used in cancer treatment research. There has been research for its use as a chemical/biological warfare agent. An amount smaller than the point of a pin will kill a human being. It is estimated to be several thousand times more toxic than cyanide and there is no known antidote.

Police cordoned off the area around Valley View between Flamingo Road and Harmon Avenue. Three employees and the man who made the discovery were taken to the hospital as a precaution. So were three police

officers. They are all reported to show no signs of poisoning.

Nevada National Guard and other emergency services responded to secure the area. Residents at the Extended Stay America were allowed back into the building late Thursday. The hotel reopened fully on Friday after the room and other areas of the hotel were decontaminated.

The man who's room it was "is in critical condition and he is unable to speak with us right now. We have no indication why the ricin was in that room," said Deputy Chief Suey.

"Usually, if [ricin victims] survive the first three to five days, they usually do fine," Dr. Lawrence Sands told CNN. However, survivors often have long-term organ damage.

At least three pets were found in the room. "Two of those pets are fine. One of the pets is deceased or was put down," Suey said. "The dog that was in there was without food and water for a week," she added that there was no reason to suspect it was exposed to ricin. Castor beans were also found in the room.

Officials have also recovered from the room a firearm, as well as an "anarchist" text containing an article on ricin.

Federal Bureau of Investigation spokesperson Richard Kolko said the incident is being treated as a criminal matter and did not appear to be related to terrorism "based on the information gathered so far."

Captain Joe Lombardo of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department said that ricin is not

illegal to own unless it is intended for the poisoning of a person, adding that "We did have enough ricin to be of concern."

In 2003, a man committed suicide in Las Vegas using ricin. There have also been a few incidents where ricin powder was found in the mail. Also in 2003, the United Kingdom had the Wood Green ricin plot which in the end found no ricin.

In 1978, Bulgarian defector Georgi Markov was famously assassinated in London with ricin injected with the tip of an umbrella.

Wikileaks.org restored as injunction is lifted

The website wikileaks.org has been brought back online following the lifting of a court injunction forcing the site to be taken down. According to a Wikileaks press release from when the site was taken offline, the injunction stated that "Dynadot [Wikileaks host] shall immediately clear and remove all DNS hosting records for the wikileaks.org domain name and prevent the domain name from resolving to the wikileaks.org website or any other website or server other than a blank park page, until further order of this Court."

Wikileaks has described the lifting of the injunction as a "blow to Bank Julius Baer." Wikileaks also claims that Judge White lifted the case because he realized the injunction "trampled the First Amendment."

The injunction, which a Wikileaks user described as 'blind' and 'unlawful' was granted in the California Northern District Court in San Francisco, California. The case was regarding several documents allegedly obtained from

a whistleblower of the Bank Julius Baer & Trust.

Matt Zimmerman from the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) has said that "We're [the EFF are] very pleased that Judge White recognized the serious constitutional concerns raised by his earlier orders." He continued by saying that "attempting to interfere with the operation of an entire website because you have a dispute over some of its content is never the right approach. Disabling access to an Internet domain in an effort to prevent the world from accessing a handful of widely-discussed documents is not only unconstitutional - it simply won't work."

In the first press release from Wikileaks after the injunction was removed, Wikileaks started by just saying "Wikileaks wins :)," followed by a series of web links. Wikileaks did, however, release more information in a future press release.

Jemaah Islamiyah leader Mas Selamat escapes from Singapore prison

Interpol has released an "Orange Notice" for leader of the Southeast Asian Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist group Mas Selamat bin Kastari, who escaped from a detention center Wednesday.

Singapore Home Affairs Minister Wong Kan Seng told Parliament that a "security lapse" is what led to Selamat's escape. While waiting to visit his family, he escaped after being granted permission to use the washroom. The escape led to Mr. Wong apologizing for the incident and the beginning of an island-wide manhunt for Selamat.

"When it comes to escapes, the first hours are crucial," said Jean-

Michel Louboutin, Interpol's executive director of police services. "The state of Singapore has put into operation everything that's needed to be done. It's a small country, so it's easy to cross and leave."

Selamat, 47 and a father of 5, was once accused of plotting to hijack a plane and crash it into Singapore's international airport. He is "someone who presents a potential physical danger to others, but also a potential danger by organizing future bombings," Louboutin said.

After the Orange Notice was released, Selamat's picture and fingerprints were released to Interpol's 186 member countries. He remains at large.

Thousands of Filipinos call for President Arroyo's resignation; former presidents join protest

Tens of thousands of Filipinos called for President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's resignation in the streets of Manila in the wake of a corruption scandal. Among the protesters were nuns, farmers, students, and even two former Presidents.

Former Presidents Corazón Aquino and Joseph Estrada, known for being bitter rivals, joined the group in demanding that President Arroyo resign.

"I thought my work was done because I am already old," said Aquino, 75. "But this is what the times ask for, for us to unite so that the deceit will end and we will find out the truth. Thankfully there are still many of us shouting, 'Gloria, enough, resign already.'"

Aquino was one of Arroyo's most loyal supporters until breaking away in 2005 amid allegations that

she had rigged the 2004 election.

Soldiers and policemen were on high alert, setting up checkpoints at major highways as demonstrators gathered in Manila's financial district. Police estimated there to be about 15,000 protesters, while organizers estimated the crowd at about 80,000.

Arroyo has been described as an "evil person" because her husband had attempted to influence the approval of a \$330 million government contract with the Chinese company ZTE to build a broadband network connecting government offices.

Guatemalan bus crash kills 57, wounds 40

An overcrowded double decker bus crashed into a gully Friday, killing 57 people and injuring 40 more, authorities say.

The bus crashed about 30 miles from Guatemala City while carrying roughly 100 people towards San Salvador.

Journalist Martin Austurias says that a makeshift morgue was created along the highway so that relatives of the passengers could identify the victims.

Austurias noted that several policemen and firefighters were working to uncover bodies from the wreckage.

Iraqi archbishop from Mosul kidnapped, three aides killed

A Chaldean Catholic archbishop was kidnapped from the Iraqi city of Mosul Friday after a shootout killed three of his aides.

Archbishop Faraj-Farraj Rahhu was walking home from mass when he was seized after a shootout that

took place in the eastern al-Nur district and left Rahhu's driver and two bodyguards dead, said Brigadier General Khalid Abd al-Sattar.

Pope Benedict XVI quickly condemned the kidnapping, calling it a "despicable" and "atrocious act which touches the whole of the church [in Iraq]".

Rahhu is the latest in an long line of clerics that have been kidnapped since the 2003 Iraq invasion led by the United States. Rahhu's predecessor, the Syrian-Catholic Archbishop of Mosul, Monsignor Basil Georges Casmoussa, was kidnapped in January of 2005 and was held for one day before he was released.

Other officials were not so lucky. Last June Chaldean priest Ragheed Ganni and three of his assistants were shot and killed outside the Holy Spirit Church in Mosul.

Last June, Pope Benedict commented to George W. Bush about the plight of Iraqi Christians. "Particularly in Iraq, Christian families and communities are feeling increasing pressure from insecurity, aggression and a sense of abandonment," he said.

Mosul is the third-largest city in Iraq, behind al-Basrah and Baghdad, and is a center of the oil industry. An ethnically and religiously mixed city, Mosul has roughly 50,000 Christians. The Chaldean church descended from the Nestorian Church. The church's traditional liturgical language is Syriac, which is a descendant of Aramaic, which was supposedly spoken by Jesus and his disciples.

Wild Canadian Goose tests positive for H5N1 in England

The H5N1 Avian Flu Virus has been

found in a dead wild Canadian Goose in Abbotsbury Swannery in Dorset, England. This is the 11th case of the virus turning up in wild birds. The goose was found on February 25, 2008.

"The finding of more cases in wild birds is not unexpected ... We are currently considering whether any additional restrictions are necessary in the area," said the United Kingdom's Health Ministry in a statement to the media.

As a result of the finding, poultry movement has now been restricted by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in the areas surrounding the Swannery. The removal of all birds, dead or alive from any property now requires a license. DEFRA says the restrictions will expire no earlier than 31 days.

10 other cases of the virus have appeared in dead birds, all Mute Swans from the same area.

Wikinews interviews U.S. Constitution Party presidential candidate Max Riekse

Wikinews held an exclusive interview with Max Riekse, one of the candidates for the Constitution Party nomination for the 2008 U.S. presidential election.

Riekse is a retired decorated U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel who served in both the Vietnam and Iraq wars. He is also a former public school teacher and Assistant Professor of Military Science at Western Michigan University. He has a B.A. in Political Science and International Relations from the University of South Florida as well as two M.A.s, one in Political Science and International Relations, the other in Education and History. Both are from

Western Michigan University.

We asked him if he thinks he has a good shot at winning the Constitution Party nomination and ultimately the presidency. He replied, "I will give it my best shot because I think I can do better than all previous Constitution Party presidential candidates....As to being in the White House in 2009, realistically, its a long shot; but so was Abe Lincoln in the new Republican Party."

When asked about America's public school system he said, "Local school boards and the people they are responsible to are the best judge of what is needed; this with state oversight, will help boost public school quality & education."

Riekse is running for president because he has been "very tired of our Republican and Democratic choices for president for many years. With a population of some 300 million people to draw from, I would think we could do much, much better then we have been doing in regards to having a choice for president."

Interview

Wikinews: Why do you want to run for president?

Lt. Colonel Riekse: Why am I running for President: the ultimate & definitive answer is on my web site; the short answer is that I have been very tired of our Republican and Democratic choices for president for many years. With a population of some 300 million people to draw from, I would think we could do much, much better then we have been doing in regards to having a choice for president. The best presidents we have had were George Washington, truly a great man; a great leader, and a great

president. He lead the way. I'm a member of the Society of the Cincinnati which was formed by former officers who served under him.

Thomas Jefferson was good, but Teddy Theodore Roosevelt was also a great President who really cared about the average person even though he was born to wealth and privilege. You need to learn what he did with his life prior to becoming President to truly understand and appreciate him. Lastly, I would like to say that JFK could have been another great president if he had lived. When you get past his womanizing, he was concerned with taking on the new world order; the Federal Reserve which is not Federal, but a private self-serving banking establishment with over half of its members based in Europe whose interest are not that of the American people and the United States of America, but rather increasing their own wealth, power and influence.

We need to end the lock on this countries domestic and foreign policy that the military industrial complex, the international banks, multi-national corporations, big oil, and even Israel has on our country to the detriment of the people of America. I am not anti-military, but I am totally against endless wars for the wealthy elite, going back to the Spanish American War. We can have \$1.00 a gallon gas; I can do it. This is America. When all is said and done, I think that I will be a reasonable and informed choice for the millions of American voters who will not like to vote for either the Democrat or Republican in November. I'm qualified and ready to serve.

WN: If elected, how would you handle America's public school system?

Lt. Colonel Riekse: I retired out of

the Michigan Public School system with over 23 years of service; K-12; I can help bring our public schools to a higher level of achievement. First, eliminate all illegal aliens from the system. We have no duty or obligation to feed or educate them. None what so ever. They have help destroy most of our inner city public school systems. They have stressed out our public schools and local school can not deal with them. They do pay the taxes needed to support our schools and don't greatly appreciate the free education they get; also, we need to reduce by around 90% the amount of Federal education money we collect and then send back to the states for education. The huge amount of Federal paperwork is also stressing out our public schools and we need to end it.

Local school boards and the people they are responsible to are the best judge of what is needed; this with state oversight, will help boost public school quality & education. I support public school education, along with schools of choice and home schooling. The Federal government has done little to increase the quality of education. For the most part, it has been a waste of money.

WN: How would you handle abortion?

Lt. Colonel Riekse: Push this issue back to the states. I remember when the states controlled the issue of abortion, there was very little of it; When the Federal government got involved, millions of the unborn died. As President, I would not spend or authorized one red cent for abortion. This is a state issue; period. There will always be some states that will allow it to some degree, but that is up to the people of that state to decide, not the federal government or Fed. Courts.

WN: Do you think you have a good shot at winning the Constitution Party nomination? If so, do you think that you could be in the White House this time next year?

Lt. Colonel Riekse: I will give it my best shot because I think I can do better than all previous

Constitution Party presidential candidates. I urge those that believe in my candidacy and understand what I have said and believe to contact their state party chairman's and go to the convention in April in KS city and lend their hand in supporting me there.

As to being in the White House in 2009, realistically, it's a long shot; but so was Abe Lincoln in the new Republican Party; and this year, we have a Democrat and a Republican who will keep our troops in Iraq for another four years. This is very true for the Republican and I don't care what the Democrat who will be, both will also keep our troops in Iraq for another four years; along with starting another war with Iran. Enough. Lets end this madness. Its time to take back America; send them a message; and change the way we vote and think; for a better America. To take a line from Ron Paul, who I admire, and give hope to America, Mad Max for President.

WN: There are thousands reading this right now. What could you say to convince them to give you their vote?

Lt. Colonel Riekse: I urge them to go to my web site and read it. If they agree with me even 80%, i.e. on what I have put on my web site, they will want to consider voting and supporting me. No one will agree with me 100%; that would be strange if they did. But I think my political philosophy and stands on issues make me stand far apart from the Democrat &

Republican that will be nominated; and also, our party, the Constitution Party is the one closest to the average American and their way of thinking. By going by the Constitution, we will have a stronger American; a stronger economy for all Americans; and people will live better with a sound health care, pension system and social security system that will take a lot of stress off peoples daily lives. I know and believe in my heart that I and we, working together, can do it.

The price of gas and diesel fuel is going up for our cars and trucks. Mexican truckers, as per the new world order types, are right now taking over the jobs of American truckers. The price of food is going up; the price of oil and natural gas to heat our homes and factories is going up with no end in sight. Our national supply of food stocks has been depleted and is at the lowest level in 50 years. If you like to eat, thank an American family farmer. And know this, NO ONE overseas is going to send us food if we run out of food. We need to take care of ourselves. We now have very little food in our national reserve to tide us over in years of bad crops, etc. We have lost millions of good paying jobs to unfair, free trade; the tax on our social security and hard earned pensions continues. The price of health care keeps going up; the stock market has gone down, along with it the income of millions of people who depend on that income for their retirement. The dollar has went down against the Euro; now what part of that do you not understand? Neither of the two leading Democrats or the leading Republican will give us real change, but more of the same, just more talk, talk and eye wash. Cheap talk don't pay the bills or help families keep up with the price of gas, food, health

care, rising taxes, etc. We need real, substantive change to turn around & un-stress America and all Americans.

What I say I will do, I will do my best to do. Again, to use a line from Ron Paul, I am the Hope for America; Ron Paul is done & back to running for Congress. My ancestors on my mothers side came to this land in 1638 and on my fathers side, in the 1880's. We have had people here in uniform for over 300 years. I'm an American first, as my ancestors have been for generations. I will do the right thing once I'm in the White House in 2008/12. I'm in this race to help God save America.

Are 'you' ready to vote for another Dem or Pub in November 2008 for yet more of the same? My answer is NO!

Today in History

1836 – Texas Revolution: At a convention in Washington-on-the-Brazos, the Mexican state of Texas adopted a declaration of independence from Mexico, establishing the Republic of Texas.

1865 – Second Taranaki War: Protestant missionary Carl Sylvius Völkner died at the hands of Hauhau militants in Opotiki for working as an agent for George Grey, Governor-General of New Zealand.

1943 – World War II: Australian and American air forces attacked and destroyed a large convoy of the Japanese Navy at the Battle of the Bismarck Sea in the Bismarck Sea north of the island of Papua New Guinea.

1970 – Rhodesia formally broke its links with the British crown and declared itself a republic.

1978 – Aboard the Soviet spacecraft Soyuz 28, Czech Vladimír Remek became the first person not from the Soviet Union or the United States to go into

space.

March 02 is Mothering Sunday in the United Kingdom, Laetare Sunday in Western Christianity, and Maslenitsa begins in Russia (2008); Independence Day in Morocco.

Quote of the Day

I'm telling you this 'cause you're one of my friends.
 My alphabet starts where your alphabet ends!
 ... So, on beyond Z!
 It's high time you were shown
 That you really don't know
 All there is to be known.
 ~ Dr. Seuss ~

Word of the Day

pedagogic adj

1. Relating to teaching, pedagogy.
2. Haughty and/or formal.

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