



Top Stories

US trade deficit increases to record high in first quarter 2005

The United States trade deficit has increased to its highest level yet: \$195.1 billion (£161 billion) in the first quarter of 2005, according to preliminary U.S. Commerce Department figures. The figure represents the sum of the money gained by the US economy by selling exports, minus the cost of buying imports. The last quarter of 2004 saw a deficit of \$188.4 billion.

Mothers, teachers air more concerns about leukemia cases at California elementary school

On Thursday night, California State Senator Joe Dunn held the second town hall meeting regarding a recent outbreak of leukemia in schoolchildren, at Franklin Elementary in Santa Ana, California. Representatives from the City of Santa Ana, the Santa Ana Unified School District, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) were available to answer the community's questions.

Associated Press published today 6 new "Downing Street Memos" labeled "secret" or "confidential"

The Associated Press has put 6 recently obtained internal British government documents concerning the lead-up to the war in Iraq on its website which are labeled "secret" or "confidential". AP is saying that the memos show; "When Prime Minister Tony Blair's chief foreign policy adviser dined with Condoleezza Rice six months after Sept. 11, the then-U.S. national security adviser didn't want to discuss Osama bin Laden or al-Qaida. She wanted to talk about "regime change" in Iraq, setting the stage for the U.S.-led invasion more than a year later."

Wikipedia Current Events

- Associated press publishes six leaked documents from the UK government related to pre-Iraq war planning and intelligence.
- IDF soldiers foil a terrorist attack on Israel's Kfar Darom settlement. Four terrorists from the Fatah and the Islamic Jihad tried to infiltrate the settlement hours before the meeting of Condoleezza Rice with Abu Ala.
- About 40 million credit card accounts may have been compromised by a hacker. The breach has been traced to an Atlanta, Georgia based payment processing company.
- In Iran, the unofficial results of the 2005 presidential election point to a run-off race to happen on June 24 between Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (20.8%) and Mahmoud Ahmadinezhad (19.3%). This will be the first presidential runoff race in the country's history.

Hotel Rwanda hero tours USA

Paul Rusesabagina visited Atlanta, Ga. and Washington, D.C. this week to address American students and business leaders at schools and conferences centers. His appearances coincide with World Refugee Day events in Washington.

At Sleepy Hollow Elementary School in the Falls Church section of Fairfax County, he spoke to elementary school students who had learned about his accomplishments in the weeks prior to his appearance.

"I thought I was doing the right thing," Rusesabagina said. "You also should do the right thing." He explained the situation he faced in simple terms. "There

were bad people and good people. The good people came to hide in my hotel, I had to give them food. I had to give them shelter and keep away the bad people for two and a half months." When asked if he was scared, he responded "No, fortunately I did not have time to be scared. I did not know that what I was doing was different. I thought other people were doing it."

In Atlanta, speaking with business leaders, he focused on the present and future.

"What is going on in Darfur is exactly what had been going on in Rwanda, the government is killing its own citizens." He encouraged business leaders to bring money into Africa but made it clear that Africa was in need of more than just business interest. "What Africans need as a whole is not only someone who will come and pay their education, but it is also to change the systems in Africa. To help us to change, to find lasting solutions. Africa is ruled by dictators. And those dictators should know that one day they also can be brought to justice," emphasizing the idea that Africa needed a political revamping to stabilize.

Youth forum to submit suggestions to UN

The Never Again youth forum on genocide prevention ended in Kigali, Rwanda with young people from the Great Lakes region and other countries making a string of recommendations for the prevention of genocide.

Following the visit by the World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, during which he promised to give the Never Again network his "moral support" and asked members about their views on what African youth needed, the network will send its ideas to the consultation for civil

society on the U.N. High Level Panel to be discussed in September, which includes bringing in a new principle of Responsibility to Protect into the international framework of sovereignty.

Conference participants called for more local input in international protection work as well as for the international community to listen more to voices on the ground. They accused the international community of failing in their duty by not giving U.N. missions more power on the ground and using the "excuse" that they did not know local languages and therefore did not respond to incitement to violence towards Tutsis broadcast on national radio in the lead-up to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

Many participants criticised the uneven responses given by the international community to different regions. A participant from the Congo called for help to be given to "all citizens in the world, without distinction". Another said: "If our poverty [in Africa] is the cause of our being ignored then I fear for the future. Where there is interest there is energy and I fear we will lose the energy."

The final day also featured intense dialogue on regional conflict in the Great Lakes region and showed the different perspectives on the Burundi/Rwanda refugee story ([link](#)). Discussion groups looked at ways in which the youth could create better international networks and improve critical thinking and communication amongst the youth.

A media group took part in the conference and reported it for Wikinews this week. They will now produce a publication which will be translated into Kinyarwandan and distributed vocally as well as on paper as a way of involving young Rwandese from rural areas who have very high levels of poverty and illiteracy.

This article contains first-hand journalism by a Wikinews Reporter.

Sudanese government signs major deal with opposition group

The government of Sudan signed a landmark agreement on Saturday with the opposition group National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Some issues are yet to be agreed upon, but the deal signals progress in resolving decades of civil war in Sudan.

Sudan, the largest country in Africa, has been rocked by two separate periods of bloody civil war, from 1955 to 1972, and from 1983 to this year. More than 2 million refugees have fled the violence. On January 9, a peace deal was signed between the northern government and southern rebels, paving the way for Saturday's conference.

The conference, located in Cairo, Egypt, was attended by both Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir. The treaty was signed by Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Taha and NDA leader Mohammed Osman al-Mirghani. The NDA was formed from 13 political parties in 1989 to oppose Bashir's new regime after he seized power in a military coup.

Many in the international community hope that chances are improving for a settlement in the conflict-torn region of Darfur with the main rebel faction, the Sudan Liberation Army. Groundwork is being laid for elections to take place in three years.

Six killed in Burundi church massacre

Rebels from the Hutu-extremist "Forces Nationales de Liberation" have shot dead six churchgoers in Muhuta district, Bujumbura-Rural, according to army spokesman Adolphe Manirakiza.

"The first criminal attack was committed in one church at Muhuta district where a group of FNL fighters fired in the church and killed six people including a pastor. They also injured seven others",

Manirakiza said.

He said the rebels shot dead a local government official and his brother and also kidnapped a policeman in the same district.

"We don't know yet why these people were killed, they may be executed because they refused to adhere to the FNL ideology, as the area where they have been killed is an FNL stronghold."

Some 300,000 people have been killed since the fighting began in 1993.

Fresh talks between the government and the FNL have raised hopes among diplomats that Burundi can finally lift one of its last big barriers to peace.

Its leader Agathon Rwasa and Burundi President, Domitien Ndayizeye signed on May 15 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, a cessation of hostilities deal seen as a significant step toward finally bringing the rebels into the peace process.

But the rebels and the army have clashed sporadically since the truce.

Tyco executives found guilty

The former CEO of Tyco International, Dennis Kozlowski, as well as CFO Mark Swartz are convicted of taking more than \$600 million from the company. Charges include grand larceny, securities fraud, conspiracy, and falsifying business records.

The first trial ended in a mistrial after one juror received a threatening letter. Nancy Salomon says of the second trial that the "Defense was counting on the jury not reaching a verdict; they had used their challenges during the jury selection process to kick almost every potential juror who had a college degree, or had any business experience or Wall Street experience off the jury ... they were hoping that this case was just going to be too confusing for the jury." While the jury did take 11 days to arrive at their

decision, they found Kozlowski and Swartz guilty on 22 of the 23 counts. To combat the aggressive jury selection strategy undertaken by the defense, the prosecution "basically gave the jury several credit hours worth of an MBA", teaching them about following paper trails and detecting falsification of business records. It paid off during deliberation as the jury requested over 100 documents to review.

Kozlowski and Swartz directly stole approximately \$150 million USD from Tyco and acquired \$430 million more by inflating the company's stock value and then secretly selling company shares. Bail was set at \$10 million each. The two former executives face a minimum of eight years in prison, up to a maximum of 25 years. In addition, Kozlowski is accused of evading \$1 million in sales taxes on six paintings that he bought in 2001 in a separate New York State case, and Swartz faces tax evasion charges in New Hampshire. If convicted in these cases as well, they would face up to 30 years in prison.

Associated Press published today 6 new "Downing Street Memos" labeled "secret" or "confidential".

The Associated Press has put typed copies of six recently obtained internal British government documents concerning the lead-up to the war in Iraq on its website which are labeled "secret" or "confidential". The copies were provided by British reporter Michael Smith, who claims he destroyed the original documents to protect the sources. An anonymous senior British official said the documents appeared authentic.

The documents were leaked on 18 September 2004 to The Daily Telegraph in an article titled "Secret papers show Blair was warned of Iraq chaos". The documents, however, took 9 months to reach the mainstream press.

AP is saying that the memos show; "When Prime Minister Tony Blair's chief

foreign policy adviser dined with Condoleezza Rice six months after Sept. 11, the then-U.S. national security adviser didn't want to discuss Osama bin Laden or al-Qaida. She wanted to talk about "regime change" in Iraq, setting the stage for the U.S.-led invasion more than a year later."

"U.S. scrambling to establish a link between Iraq and al-Qaida is so far frankly unconvincing," British Foreign Office political director Peter Ricketts said in one of the memos. "For Iraq, 'regime change' does not stack up. It sounds like a grudge between Bush and Saddam." Ricketts said.

Another memo addressed to Foreign Secretary Jack Straw says, "But even the best survey of Iraq's WMD programs will not show much advance in recent years on the nuclear, missile or CW/BW (chemical or biological weapons) fronts: the programs are extremely worrying but have not, as far as we know, been stepped up."

The memos express concern about breaking international law but Blair is shown as being determined to go to war as America's ally regardless.

An Iraq expert at the University of London, Tony Dodge said; "The documents show what official inquiries in Britain already have, that the case of weapons of mass destruction was based on thin intelligence and was used to inflate the evidence to the level of mendacity. In going to war with Bush, Blair defended the special relationship between the two countries, like other British leaders have. But he knew he was taking a huge political risk at home. He knew the war's legality was questionable and its unpopularity was never in doubt." Dodge also said the memos show that Blair was aware that postwar instability was likely for Iraq.

In one of the memos, David Manning, who was Blair's chief foreign policy adviser, reported on a meeting in

Washington with Rice; "It is clear that Bush is grateful for your (Blair's) support and has registered that you are getting flak. I said that you would not budge in your support for regime change but you had to manage a press, a Parliament and a public opinion that was very different than anything in the States. And you would not budge either in your insistence that, if we pursued regime change, it must be very carefully done and produce the right result. Failure was not an option."

A March 22 memo from Ricketts to Foreign Secretary Straw said, "We have to be convincing that: the threat is so serious/imminent that it is worth sending our troops to die for; it is qualitatively different from the threat posed by other proliferators who are closer to achieving nuclear capability (including Iran)."

Mothers, teachers air more concerns about leukemia cases at California elementary school

On Thursday night, California State Senator Joe Dunn held the second town hall meeting regarding a recent outbreak of leukemia in schoolchildren, at Franklin Elementary in Santa Ana, California. Representatives from the City of Santa Ana, the Santa Ana Unified School District, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) were available to answer the community's questions.

Senator Dunn started off the meeting by thanking the panelists and parents for showing their support by attending. "We are trying to address a very, very important issue. What's the issue? We have high rates of cancer, leukemia, and respiratory problems in our children. Why are our kids sick? This is a very difficult question," he said. "What's causing the sickness in our children, and how can we avoid it? We can all agree that no one wants to see another sick child in Santa Ana." The audience applauded. "Three weeks ago, we heard from two parents and a teacher, they told us about some deaths."

The previous town hall meeting was held to address concerns of the community about a steel plating manufacturing plant that applied to the AQMD for a permit to expand its facilities to increase pollution emissions. Parents and teachers were concerned over the facts that the plant was located directly adjacent to Kennedy Elementary School, and that their children were experiencing high levels of lead, respiratory problems, excessive nose-bleeding, and leukemia.

"How many businesses in Santa Ana are required to obtain permits for [emissions] of hazardous pollutants?" This question Dunn posed at the last meeting was answered by the AQMD and the Orange County Sanitation District, who provided maps of Santa Ana with green flags indicating where businesses with emissions permits were located. "I can tell you one thing, at the end of the meeting, we won't have all of the answers... but we'll certainly have another Town Hall meeting.

Initial concerns were raised when five boys attending Franklin Elementary were diagnosed with the same type of leukemia in Spring 2002. Attempts to gain an investigation from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) into possible causes were not successful as the Center told parents that the cases "were in an acceptable range". Parents, teachers, public officials, and doctors remain unconvinced. In the past three years, 19 mothers living in an apartment building a block away from Franklin were also diagnosed with leukemia.

Dunn then introduced a teacher at Franklin, Tammy Sanchez. Tammy said, "In December 2002, we received some very disturbing news. One of my students was diagnosed with leukemia. Then, more children at Franklin were diagnosed with leukemia. I later found out that three kids at a nearby apartment building were diagnosed with leukemia. Sanchez then explained about more cancer-related deaths near Franklin, including 19

mothers all living in the same apartment building who were diagnosed with leukemia, which took over three minutes. "To me, this is way too much," said Sanchez.

Socorro Molina, whose son Diego, a student at Franklin, is undergoing treatment for his leukemia, had this to say: "My son has leukemia. I'm worried, because there are many kids. Children who played with my son died from leukemia. They should do some investigations of these companies." Senator Dunn responded, "Thank you, Socorro. I know it's difficult to share that privately, and you have shared this with us publicly on two occasions."

Senator Dunn then said, "at the end of that [previous] meeting, we were requested by a parent for a map of all businesses releasing toxic materials. We asked the AQMD for a map that showed every single business [in Santa Ana] that releases harmful materials into our air. This is that map. The heaviest concentration of these businesses are, guess where? Near Franklin. This map is striking. The OCSD gave us a map showing all businesses that release toxic materials into our sewers. The largest concentration of these businesses are, guess where? Near Franklin and Kennedy [Elementary Schools]." Senator Dunn promised that at the next town hall meeting, he will have a panel of scientists present to determine if the substances released by these businesses pose a health risk to residents of the area. "We are going to keep at this until we find out what is making our kids sick," he said.

Santa Ana City Council member Jose Solorio said that "the city has been following the media's attention. I got to tell you, this is a very complex issue. The city has jurisdiction over land use; they can issue restrictions. We, as elected officials, need to know more." Solorio then introduced the city's planning director and other city officials. Solorio added, "the mayor of Santa Ana, Miguel

Pulido, is a board-member for AQMD." Miguel Pulido has not attended any of the town hall meetings, and has not spoken about this issue at any time.

Dunn then introduced the next panelist, Santa Ana Unified School District board member Rosemary Avila. She said, "the school board is looking into this. I've talked to some teachers on the phone I believe the federal disease organization has been contacted about this." The Center for Disease Control was notified by parents of the leukemia cases in Santa Ana, but stated that they were "within the acceptable range". Avila then introduced some school board officials, and said, "there has been some concern in the past, and we have looked into that. As a school district, we really have to act not out of fear, but with facts."

Jill Whynot of the AQMD noted that "there are 515 facilities [in Santa Ana] that we issue permits to". Barry Wallerstein, Executive Officer of the AQMD said, "we appreciate the forum. There appears to be a need for closer air quality monitoring. So, I propose that we make Santa Ana a high priority and closely monitor air quality in your community." That statement was met with much applause from the audience.

Senator Dunn responded, "we thank the AQMD for being here and answering our questions. We will be sure to let everybody know about any updates. When I looked at the map, I was struck. There are 515 permitted businesses in Santa Ana. We will bring some scientists in at the next town hall meeting to determine which businesses are releasing carcinogenic pollutants," he said. "When I look at the maps, there are two pockets of permitted facilities in Santa Ana. Do you [AQMD] look at the cumulative impact of facilities grouped together [when considering issuing a permit]?" Dunn posed.

Senator Dunn, responding to Dr. Wallerstein's comments, said "if we need to give AQMD more power in terms of

cumulative impact of permitted facilities, then we will introduce legislation to give them that power." The Senator then asked City Councilman Solorio, "does the city in any way look at what type of business it is, or its cumulative impact [when approving a business]?"

Solorio responded, "one of the main things the city does is make a General Plan, and unlike Irvine or Newport Beach, we are an older city." Solorio went on to talk about how in the future, the city could pass litigation limit permits, and said that "we all need to do our part". Referring to concerns about the steel plating plant next to a school, he said, "Markland came into an industrial area, so they have a legal right to set up shop".

Dunn asked Solorio if the city is now looking at regulation to limit this, and Solorio responded, "We always have opportunities to look at our General Plan, and we need to have solid facts to make those descisions". Dunn asked Dr. Wallerstein, "what about this pocket of businesses in south Santa Ana, is that unusual?" Wallerstein responded, "Senator, I don't think that's an issue".

"Your job is to know if this is going to give kids leukemia. I'm very disappointed."

Dunn then opened up the floor to public questions and comments. One mother of three asked, "when are we going to have answers?", while a younger woman said, directed toward the AQMD, "your job is to know if this is going to give kids leukemia. I'm very disappointed". One woman said, "I live in Heninger Park, where all of the kids are getting Leukemia. I've been trying to tell the city and Code Enforcement about illegal underground painters and mechanics who leave paint and fumes behind; which is causing residents to leave".

There was intense debate over the public officials' efforts to investigate health quality at the location in question. Parents

expressed their concerns about water quality and illegal activities in the community; and spoke about their children's various health problems, from high copper and lead levels in the bloodstream, to respiratory and lung problems, and cancer.

This article contains first-hand journalism by a Wikinews Reporter.

Third major earthquake rocks California

Southern California was shook by a sizeable earthquake for the third time this week. The quake occurred at 1:53 p.m. Pacific Time on Thursday, and reached most parts of Southern California by 1:54 p.m. The 4.9-scale tremor, appearing to have originated 79 miles east of Los Angeles, comes on the tail of two other quakes, including a 7.2 quake off the coast of Northern California which briefly triggered tsunami warnings Tuesday night.

Geologists at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) affirmed that the quake was too weak to cause structural damage to buildings. In Orange County, the quake lasted 5 seconds and rattled objects on shelves.

Geologists expressed concern at the occurrence of three earthquakes so close together in time and space; other Pacific earthquakes, including one in the Aleutian Islands and another in Chile, have also occurred in recent days.

40 million credit cards compromised

MasterCard International announced Friday that multiple instances of fraud have been tracked back to CardSystems Solutions, Inc., a company that processes credit card transactions and other payments. Customer names, banks, and account numbers of up to 40 million cardholders have been exposed, of which about 13.9 million are MasterCard-branded cards, the company said. Visa and American Express cards were also affected.

"The breach appears to be the largest yet involving financial data," said David Sobel, of the Electronic Privacy Information Center.

CardSystems issued a statement late on Friday that said it learned of the potential breach 26 days ago, but that the FBI told the company not to advise the cardholders nor the public at large. A spokesperson for the FBI said that the agency had asked CardSystems not to disclose information that could compromise the investigation, but that it had not asked CardSystems to fail to disclose the breach at all.

Michael A. Brady, C.F.O. of CardSystems, told the Associated Press that "we're absolutely blindsided by a press release by the association," when speaking of MasterCard's release. A MasterCard spokesperson said that the company was obligated to inform its customers of the breach.

MasterCard spokesperson Sharon Gamsin said that CardSystems was hit by a virus-like computer script that stole customer data for the purpose of fraud. She said MasterCard does not know how the script got into the CardSystem network.

Sobel said this theft "indicates that this is a shadowy industry where the consumer never really knows who is going to be handling and using their personal information. Presumably, the affected consumers thought they were dealing with MasterCard." Having a third-party process credit card transactions is common practice in the industry.

Wiltshire constabulary issues European arrest warrant for Hayley Richards murder

In a statement today, Senior Investigating Officer Detective Superintendent Mike Veale named Hugo Quintas aged 23 of Seymour Court, Trowbridge, former boyfriend of Hayley Richards, as being wanted for her murder; and stated that a European warrant had been issued for his

arrest. Richards, aged 23 and pregnant at the time of her murder, was found in her flat in Carders Corner, Trowbridge on the afternoon of Saturday June 11, 2005, with her throat slit. DS Veale stated that it was known that Quintas boarded a plane from Bristol Airport on Saturday afternoon, bound for Portugal, but that his present whereabouts are unknown.

DS Veale stated that Joaquim Sergio Da-Cunha, aged 29 who shared a house with Quintas, was arrested two days ago, and today appeared in court charged with perverting the course of justice, where he had been remanded in custody until June 24, 2005, when he will appear at Swindon Crown Court.

DS Veale also released a photograph of Quintas for publication and broadcast, and appealed for help from the public in connection with a car, an L-registered black Rover 200 SLI, which is now in the possession of the Wiltshire constabulary. He stated that he knew that it was in the Trowbridge area in the days leading up to the murder, and needed to know where it was during the period from the evening of Friday June 10, 2005, to the following afternoon.

DS Veale urged anyone who can help in connection with this particular line of enquiry to contact Wiltshire Police on +44 1380 735735 or (within the United Kingdom only) call Crimestoppers anonymously on +44 800 555 111.

Today in History

- 1846 - The first baseball game (using modern rules) was played in Hoboken, New Jersey.
- 1865 - The Emancipation Proclamation reached Galveston, Texas, beginning the tradition of Juneteenth celebrations.
- 1867 - Maximilian I of the Second Mexican Empire was executed by firing squad in Querétaro.
- 1953 - Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were executed as Soviet spies.
- 1961 - Kuwait declared independence from the United Kingdom.
- 1978 - Garfield made his debut in a comic strip.
- June 19 is Father's Day in various countries (2005)

Quote of the Day

"I observed, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment.' It is not only 'the first and great' command, but all the commandments in one. 'Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise,' they are all comprised in this one word, love. ~ John Wesley

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