



Top Stories

Al Qaeda bomb maker reportedly killed in U.S. airstrike in Pakistan

ABC News is reporting that the key Al Qaeda operative Midhat Mursi was killed in the U.S. airstrike in Pakistan which killed 18 people, including women and children, last week.

Bolivia's Morales announces treason trial for army general

A military scandal involving sending SAM missiles to the United States for destruction will result in a treason trial for former military leader General Marcelo Antezana. The scandal has also led to the resignation of Defence Minister Gonzalo Mendez.

Featured story

Free Software Foundation releases first draft of GPLv3

The Free Software Foundation released the first draft for the next version of the GNU General Public License today. The revisions mark the first changes to the GPL since the second version was released in 1991.

Wikipedia Current Events

- China has recorded its sixth death from the avian flu virus, according to a report on the Chinese Health Ministry's Web site.
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-il says he is committed to a peaceful resolution of the standoff over his country's nuclear ambitions.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Human Rights Watch in its annual report strongly condemns the United States, saying "it became disturbingly clear that the abuse of detainees had become a deliberate, central part of the Bush administration's strategy of interrogating terrorist suspects".
- The U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Gonzales v. Oregon* by a 6-3 vote that Oregon's "Death with Dignity Act" providing for physician-assisted suicide is consistent with the federal Controlled Substances Act.
- The Tokyo Stock Exchange closes 20 minutes early due to a flood of trades overwhelming the capacity of its trading system.
- Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers are attacked by Laurent Gbagbo's "Young Patriots" in Côte d'Ivoire. At least three people have been killed, and the UN has warned that the country is sliding towards war.
- A building collapses on the outskirts of New Delhi on Wednesday, trapping at least 15 people in the rubble.
- Suspected Tamil Tiger rebels have ambushed a navy bus in Sri Lanka's northeast, injuring six sailors and a civilian.
- Two people who conspired to extort money from Wendy's by planting a severed finger in a bowl of chili and then suing the restaurant are sentenced to about ten years each in prison

Australians unite against whaling in Southern Ocean

Anti-whaling protesters have joined forces across Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, and the U.S.A calling for an end to the killing of whales for meat by Japan. Greenpeace organised the international day of action as it continued its efforts to disrupt the hunting of minke whales by the Japanese whaling fleet currently in the Southern Ocean.

The day of action was being marked to protest the actions of the fleet. Despite a global ban on commercial whaling imposed by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 1986, Japan plans to double its annual catch of Minke whales to 935, and to add 10 Fin whales to its quota, which it states are harvested for scientific purposes. The International Fund for Animal Welfare says that over the next two years, Japan plans to kill 50 endangered Humpback whales and an additional 40 fin whales.

Numerous reports of actions taken in Australia and New Zealand focused on public awareness of the Japanese whaling efforts and collecting signatures of people opposed to whaling.

At Sydney's Bondi Beach, anti-whaling campaigners asked bathers to sign a dozen metre-high cardboard whale tails placed in the sand and called for an end to whaling in the Southern Ocean. Signatures from a Sydney petition would be added to tens of

thousands collected elsewhere in the country. They will be handed to the Australian government and Japanese consulate in June.

Waverley mayor Mora Main urged Japanese tourists who enjoyed whale watching in Australia to pressure their government to end whaling.

In Melbourne, protesters collected hundreds of signatures on a seven metre long fabric whale to take to the Japanese consulate. Campaigner Simon Bradshaw said up to 300 people signed the whale within 15 minutes at Flinders Street station.

"Australia is pretty much unequivocally opposed to the whaling hunt on environmental grounds as well as animal rights grounds," Mr Bradshaw said. "People have been rather disturbed and horrified (by the whaling), so I think they're grateful to be given even a small thing they can do to express their opposition to it."

Signatures were also collected in Brisbane and Hobart. In the Tasmanian capital, about 50 people were applauded by bystanders as they marched through the city centre, chanting slogans and waving placards against whaling. Protest organiser Jessica Sheldrick says it is part of a national day of action in four capital cities to educate people about whaling in Australia's Southern Oceans.

"Basically, we're here to support our activists that are down there endangering their lives, just to save our marine mammals," Ms Sheldrick said. "People are, on the whole, totally in support of Greenpeace's stance in whaling in the Southern Oceans. They don't

believe it should be happening."

In New Zealand, whaling has been condemned at an Auckland beach protest. A mock graveyard of black minke whale tails, symbolic of those killed in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary, was displayed on an Auckland beach.

Greenpeace New Zealand say the tails represent the more than 900 whales killed by Japan this season. More than 100 people turned up at Mission Bay beach to mark the International Day of Action against Whaling. Around 250 wooden whale tails were placed in the sand and a giant whale tail of sand was made on the beach by children and their parents.

The New Zealand Greens Party say diplomatic measures have failed to stop the whaling and the government should explore legal options, including the Antarctic Treaty which allows observers to inspect research ships.

The Southern Ocean Sanctuary was designated by the IWC as a sanctuary for whales in 1994.

Japan abandoned commercial whaling in 1986, in line with an international moratorium, yet resumed whaling the following year for what it says is "non-lethal scientific research". Japan's whaling program includes fin and humpback whales, both of which are on the World Conservation Union's list of threatened species.

Japan's Institute of Cetacean Research says its whaling is legal and scientifically necessary for sustainable resource management.

International Whaling Commission rules permit the research hunt, but Australia and other anti-whaling countries say it is

commercial whaling in disguise as the meat collected from the "research" is later sold in Japan. Critics say Japan is off-loading whale meat for consumption in restaurants and supermarkets.

Meanwhile, Australia, Britain, Brazil, France and Germany were among 17 countries calling on Japan this week, to halt to its Antarctic whaling program. "The fact that 17 countries supported this representation, shows how important this issue is, and the depth of feeling around the world," British fisheries minister Ben Bradshaw said in a statement.

The statement calls on Japan to "cease all its lethal scientific research on whales," and was delivered to Japan's foreign and farm ministries.

"We urge Japan to reconsider its positions and end this unjustified and unnecessary slaughter which is regarded by many countries as a means to by-pass the IWC (International Whaling Commission) moratorium," Bradshaw said.

Other signatories of the statement were Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

Japan opposes a ban on whaling, insisting it is part of the country's traditional culture, and has continued to hunt whales for scientific research since the International Whaling Commission introduced a moratorium on commercial whaling in 1986.

More than 6,800 Antarctic Minke Whales have already been killed in Antarctic waters since Japan began its Whale Research Program

18 years ago. Meat from whales killed for research is later consumed at Japanese restaurants.

The Japanese government has defended its whaling activities, saying that whales are caught for research purposes only. They have also said that they are not breaking international law, in a statement issued by Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe.

"I understand that Japan's research whaling follows international rules and is done for the purpose of research on whales' ecosystem," Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, the government spokesman, told reporters.

The Japanese whaling industry's Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) claim serious violations of maritime laws during the recent anti-whaling actions. "Already, there are serious violations that provide reasons for concern in terms of safety and international maritime law," ICR director-general Dr Hiroshi Hatanaka said in a statement.

The ICR said Greenpeace had not stopped the whaling fleet from conducting its research. "The issue of sound management and sustainability of whale stocks are far too important to be sidetracked by a D grade public relations campaign," Dr Hatanaka said.

Gavin Carter, an adviser to the ICR, a nonprofit Japanese research organization, said Japanese quotas for whale kills are well below the mammals' reproductive rates.

"The purpose of this research," said Mr Carter, "is to create a knowledge bank, which the government can then use to

facilitate a regulated whaling industry." Mr Carter urged critics of commercial whaling to be sensitive to other nations' cultural differences, noting that Japanese have "used whales for centuries. They eat the whole thing. They use every part. Who are we to tell them what to eat, or what not to kill?" he asked.

The Greenpeace vessel Arctic Sunrise has been shadowing the Japanese whaling fleet for several weeks in a bid to disrupt Japan's annual whale hunt, prompting many heated exchanges. Canadian activist Texas Constantine was thrown out of a small inflatable boat that had been manoeuvring between a harpooner and a minke whale. He spent several minutes in the icy waters before being hauled back on board.

The harpoon killed the minke whale and its tow rope threw into the water Greenpeace activist Joe Constantine, who was able to climb back aboard the boat to safety, the environmental watchdog said.

"We were out defending the whales. We had been out there for about an hour. I was driving our boat and we were in a good position and the whaler fired its harpoon," Constantine said in a statement. "All of a sudden the harpoon line came down on us trapping us between the whale and the catcher," he said. "The line came tight at that point and threw me from the boat into the water. It was a few minutes before our boat was able to come over and pick me up out of the water."

The Institute of Cetacean Research in Tokyo accused Greenpeace of taking increasing risks in harassing the whaling fleet. "The fact that the rope fell onto their

inflatable and one of the activists fell into the water is entirely their fault," the institute's director general Hiroshi Hatanaka said Sunday.

Bolivia's Morales announces treason trial for army general

President-elect Evo Morales, who will assume office on Sunday January 22, announced on Wednesday that General Marcelo Antezana will face trial for treason after sending 28 aging Chinese-made missiles to the U.S. for destruction at the request from the U.S.

General Antezana, who was dismissed from his position this Wednesday 18, told Bolivian media that Washington had requested the missiles amid fears that Evo Morales would win the presidency. Days later, he retracted his comments. The Defence Minister, Gonzalo Mendez, resigned over the scandal.

Morales' political party, Movement for Socialism, has petitioned the Public Ministry to bring the transitional president Eduardo Rodriguez to trial on charges stemming from their investigation.

Rodriguez, interim president appointed after Carlos Mesa resigned in June, said that he had authorized the destruction, but not the transfer of the weapons, which were the only ones of its kind in Bolivia. The missile handover was an unapproved arrangement between local soldiers and the U.S. military, according to Rodriguez. He made a formal protest to the U.S. embassy on Tuesday, he said.

Rodriguez said his decision to get rid of the weapons was based on recommendations from United Nations and the Organization of

American States. The army also reported they were a safety hazard. The obsolete surface-to-air missiles were destroyed in the U.S last October.

A U.S. State Department spokesman said that a campaign to eliminate portable arms in Latin America has been on-going in an effort to keep them from falling into the hands of terrorists.

Al Qaeda bomb maker reportedly killed in U.S. airstrike in Pakistan

ABC News is reporting that a key Al Qaeda operative was killed in the U.S. airstrike in Pakistan which killed 18 people, including women and children, last week.

An Egyptian chemist, Midhat Mursi, 52, also known as Abu Khabab al-Masri, was identified by unnamed Pakistan officials to ABC news. The sources said he was among one of three known senior al Qaeda members present at the compound that was hit.

"He's the man who trained the shoe bomber, Richard Reid and Zacharias Moussaoui, as well as hundreds of others," said former FBI agent Jack Cloonan.

Mursi had a \$5 million dollar bounty on his head and is well know for his chemical weapon expertise, strange alias and red beard.

Two Pakistani officials also reported the son-in-law of Al Qaeda's No. 2 leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, was also among those killed in the U.S. airstrikes.

Abu Ubayda al-Misri, Abd al-Rahman al-Maghrebi who was Zawahiri's son-in-law, and Mustafa Osman another Egyptian who was an associate of Zawahiri, are

thought to be among those terrorists that were killed. U.S. officials also say that Khalid Habib, another senior Al Qaeda operative, may have been at the site of the attack.

Pakistani officials have been searching for the gravesights of the 4 or 5 terrorists killed in the attack where three houses were destroyed, but so far have been unsuccessful. Provincial authorities say that sympathizers took the bodies to be buried in the mountains to prevent their identification.

U.S. counterterrorism officials had no immediate comment on the report. The White House, as of Tuesday, has not made mention of any U.S. connection with the attack, but called Pakistan a valuable ally in the war against terrorists.

Sharp declines in Intel, Yahoo lead tech stocks lower

Sharp declines in technology bellwethers Intel and Yahoo dragged down the tech laden Nasdaq Composite Index Wednesday. The index finished at 2279.64, a drop of 23.05 points or 1 percent. The Dow Jones Industrial Average and S&P 500 Index ended the day with losses of 0.38 percent and 0.39 percent to end at 10,854.86 and 1277.93 respectively.

The world's largest chipmaker fell nearly \$3 or 11 percent to \$22.60. Internet software giant Yahoo was down nearly \$5 to close at \$35.18 a loss of nearly 12 percent. Analysts blamed disappointing sales forecasts for the first quarter for today's selloff.

A number of research firms including Citigroup and UBS handed downgrades to Intel stock

today. This followed the company's failure to meet analysts' and its own expectations for revenue and earnings during its fourth quarter earnings release yesterday.

Thomas Thornhill lowered his stock rating to "neutral" and commented on Intel's competitive situation with arch rival Advanced Micro Devices. "AMD is likely to remain a serious competitor to Intel and Intel's longer-term risk profile is now higher than we previously believed"

New Zealand Prime Minister won't visit Waitangi marae

The New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark will be attending Waitangi Day commemorations on February 6th; however she will not visit the lower Te Tii Marae, which has been a focal point for protest in recent years.

Her office has said that she would attend a reception hosted by the Governor General on the eve of Waitangi Day and the next morning she will attend the Waitangi Day dawn service before doing a walkabout on the Treaty Grounds.

The Prime Minister hopes her attendance will be trouble free.

The Leader of the Opposition Dr Don Brash is also to attend the attend a reception hosted by the Governor General and the Dawn Service the next morning. In 2004 Brash was was showered with mud at the entrance of the lower Te Tii Marae.

Although this is New Zealand's national day, the commemoration has often been the focus of protest by Maori activists, and is often marred by controversy.

This year co-ordinators will allow

all media to attend the Waitangi Day commemorations. In 2003 and 2004 all Non-Maori media were banned from the Marae.

UK Mobile Data Network Collapses

London, UK -- The Vodafone GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) Mobile Data Network within the UK was off the air for several hours, but Vodafone staff were unable to supply any details as to how or why this had happened. The incident seems to have originated within Southern England, but spread "nationwide" within a short period.

Customers were therefore unable to access data services for a protracted period, including WAP browsing from mobile phones, email from personal devices like Blackberries and Windows Mobile Messengers, and full access over data cards from laptops.

Some criticism has been levelled at the company for failing to provide an easy source of information on the problem, with the only realistic option being to queue for a response from a call centre, as no information could be found on their public-facing website. This practice, whilst far from unique to Vodafone within the telecommunications industry, contrasts poorly with the common practice for most ISPs (Internet Service Providers), who conventionally provide a "system status" page on their website.

Dogs rescue owner during diabetic attack

In Centerton, Indiana a man is alive thanks to his 2 dogs.

Bill Burns was taking his nightly stroll with his dogs, Butch and Dusty, when he had a severe diabetic attack in a cornfield.

His dogs immediately reacted.

Morgan County sheriff's Deputy, Steve Hoffman, was on a rural road just finishing with a traffic stop, when he noticed a light shining from a cornfield. "I noticed what appeared to be an illumination or a light that was flickering and facing my direction," Hoffman said. When he got out of his car and walked to where he saw the light, he found Butch was holding a flashlight like he would a bone, in his mouth, turning the flashlight on and off. Meanwhile, Dusty had stretched himself across Mr. Burns to try and keep him warm.

Hoffman said he then noticed that Mr. Burns was wearing a diabetic medical bracelet and immediately took him to the hospital.

Burns says that he does not remember the ordeal, but thinks that Hoffman even seeing the light is remarkable enough for him.

"It's got to be just fate or faith, one or the other," Burns said.

The dogs are "definitely are the heroes in the story," said Hoffman.

Burns was in the hospital nearly 4 days before he had been released.

"Had he not had the dogs with him that evening, I think the outcome would have been a lot worse," Hoffman said

Eurozone initiative to challenge US internet technology dominance

Quaero is being termed eurozone's response to the US-based internet search giants such as Google, Yahoo and MSN. The project includes the French and German governments along with a host of

European technology companies such as Thomson, France Telecom and Deutsche Telekom. It is scheduled to be submitted to France's Agency of Industrial Innovation later this month. The agency which has a budget of €2 billion (\$2.41 billion) hasn't specified how much of this money will be spent on Quaero.

President Jacques Chirac announced the launch of Quaero during the French-German ministerial conference in April of last year. It is the latest in a series of initiatives by the Europeans to compete with US dominance in technology. Europe launched the Galileo satellite navigation system last month aimed at rivaling a similar system already available in the US. French broadcasters are also planning an international television network, CFII aimed at presenting the French view on world events. The network is slated to begin broadcasting in French and English to Europe, the Middle East and Africa sometime next year.

Designers hope that Quaero will be the world's most advanced multimedia search engine to locate and translate video and audio over the internet. A pretty ambitious goal even by the admission of people involved "Yes, it's highly ambitious," said Jean-Luc Moullet, who oversees the Quaero project at Thomson. "There's nothing to compare it to."

However details remain scant and mostly shrouded in secrecy. None of the key players has commented on cost and last week, Thomson, removed access to the page on its corporate web site devoted to Quaero and instructed its executives not to give any interviews for the project.

Most industry experts remain skeptical and fear that the program would be costly and unwieldy to administer and would produce no tangible commercial advances. "I'm not too confident that Quaero will be able to produce anything that the private sector isn't already offering or will develop on its own in the future," said John Lervik, chief executive of Fast Search & Transfer, a Norwegian software company that provides search solutions to businesses for data stored on their corporate networks.

Gore criticizes use of unwarranted domestic wiretaps

In a forceful speech Monday, former Vice President Al Gore criticized the use of unwarranted domestic wiretaps by the National Security Agency.

Gore called the wiretapping program, which the White House insists is vital to the defense of America, "a threat to the very structure of our government" and urged the Attorney General to appoint a special counsel for investigation into the matter. He additionally recommended Congress to hold comprehensive hearings and for telecommunications companies who are assisting in the program to stop doing so, and suggested the administration is using the threat of terrorism as a means to amass power in the executive branch.

"Is America in more danger now than when we faced worldwide fascism on the march - when our fathers fought and won two World Wars simultaneously?" He added, "Once violated, the rule of law is in danger. Unless stopped, lawlessness grows. The greater the power of the executive grows,

the more difficult it becomes for the other branches to perform their constitutional roles."

The Republican National Committee responded to Gore's statements, saying, "Al Gore's incessant need to insert himself in the headline of the day is almost as glaring as his lack of understanding of the threats facing America." They continued, "While the president works to protect Americans from terrorists, Democrats deliver no solutions of their own, only diatribes laden with inaccuracies and anger."

On Tuesday, White House press secretary Scott McClellan also responded, saying that the Clinton administration had authorized an FBI search of double agent Aldrich Ames without a warrant. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales made similar remarks earlier. Regarding Gore, McClellan said, "I think his hypocrisy knows no bounds."

Opponents of the wiretapping program say this is an inaccurate comparison. On Monday's edition of Larry King Live, New York Times reporter James Risen said that "under the rules at that time the Attorney General could authorize a warrantless physical search of a house. After the Ames case," he added, "Congress changed that and closed that loophole and so that now that kind of search couldn't be done under the law."

Responding to the White House and Attorney General's comments, Gore said, "The Attorney General is making a political defense of the President without even addressing the substantive legal questions that have so troubled millions of Americans in both political parties. There are...problems with the Attorney General's effort to focus attention on the past instead of

the present Administration's behavior. [As] others have thoroughly documented, his charges are factually wrong. Both before and after the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act was amended in 1995, the Clinton/Gore Administration complied fully and completely with the terms of the law."

Heavy selling leads to shortened session at Tokyo stock exchange

Heavy selling in internet firm livedoor sparked a sharp selloff in Japanese stocks Wednesday. The exchange had to shorten the trading session as the number of transactions threatened to exceed the system capacity. The Tokyo stock exchange has a capacity to handle 4.5 million trades per day.

Wednesday's trading problems have added to recent woes with the trading system at the exchange. A glitch halted trading for almost a full day late last year. Tokyo stock exchange plans to offer its own shares for listing.

Prosecutors raided the Tokyo offices of livedoor on Monday, following allegations the company had violated Japanese securities laws. livedoor has denied that the company broke market rules by giving misleading information to shareholders. Shares in the company dived on Tuesday, dragging the overall index lower. One of Japan's best known internet companies, livedoor has grown rapidly through a series of takeovers and stock splits before Tuesday's share price fall.

Missing asylum seekers found off Cape York

Australia's coastwatch has found a missing boat which with more than 40 passengers after it had left Indonesia's Papua province,

reportedly bound for Australia.

Initial reports say the vessel has been spotted off Cape York, three days after it was reported missing. The Australia West Papua Association (AWPA) says the boat was carrying people who left for security reasons as a campaign against Indonesian rule of the Melanesian province continues.

Any application for possible asylum can only be submitted to the Australian authorities if they reach the Australian mainland. Australia operates a detention centre in Nauru to process people intercepted at sea while trying to reach Australia illegally.

The AWPA said the group had been forced to flee Papua by boat because the usual way of leaving the province — by crossing the eastern border into Papua New Guinea — had been made more difficult by increased surveillance. "No one (has) come from West Papua in boats before like this, seeking political asylum," said a spokesperson for AWPA.

Fears for the safety of the asylum-seekers mounted over the weekend after the group failed to turn up on Australia's Cape York Peninsula after leaving Papua's Merauke port on Friday morning.

The group had reportedly been making the 250 kilometre journey across the Torres Strait in a 25-metre traditional boat.

"A vessel fitting the information reported was located by Coastwatch at about 2pm at Cape York," an immigration department spokeswoman told AFP.

Customs and government officials were on their way to meet the boat, she added.

40 Asylum seekers missing off Torres Strait

More than 40 asylum seekers are missing after fleeing the Indonesian province of Papua, bound for Australia. Coastwatch is searching the Torres Strait for the 25m boat. Four children are among the 43 people believed to be on board. The 25-metre traditional boat is believed to have left the port of Merauke, Papua, on Friday headed for Australia's Cape York peninsula.

Convenor of the Australia West Papua Association Louise Byrne says the group included some of Papua's leading independence advocates. She said they were forced to undertake the journey by boat because the usual means of escaping Papua — crossing the border into Papua New Guinea — had become increasingly difficult.

"The border has tightened up a lot in recent times," she said on ABC radio. Ms Byrne said sheer desperation had forced the group to flee Papua. "Although it hasn't been announced, I think the Indonesian Government has changed its policy and is now realising that ... autonomy isn't working and I think they're about to implement a military solution," she said.

Ms Byrne could not say whether she believed Australian authorities should prepare for an influx of asylum seekers from the region. Ms Byrne was told of the group's escape from Papua in a phone call last week. She said fears were growing for the safety of those on board the boat, which was now three days overdue.

"They're not anywhere, so I'm concerned for where they are and that's why the National Search and Rescue have started looking this

morning," Ms Byrne said. "We've been spending a rather frantic weekend looking for them because it's not far across the Torres Strait," she said. "It should have taken them a maximum of 15, 16 hours."

The Australian immigration department says surveillance flights in the Torres Strait have failed to locate the boat. A department spokesman says Coastwatch surveillance flights in the Torres Strait region have been adjusted to search for the boat but it has not been sighted.

Australian Greens Senator Kerry Nettle has written to Foreign Minister Downer requesting that he make inquiries with the Indonesian Government to establish if they have intercepted the missing asylum seekers.

"I am concerned that the boat carrying West Papuan asylum seekers could have been intercepted by Indonesian authorities en route to Australia," said Senator Nettle. "If the Indonesians have intercepted this boat it would be a relief that they have not sunk at sea, but I am concerned about their fate at the hands of Indonesian authorities given recent arrests of West Papuan activists and ongoing human rights abuses.

Aboriginal communities in Cape York are being put on alert. Federal and Queensland Government authorities are monitoring the situation.

Australian senate inquiry receives 4,000 submissions on abortion pill

The Australian Senate has been flooded with submissions into an inquiry about the possible use of the abortion drug Mifepristone

(known as RU486) in Australia.

The senate committee is to consider a private members bill, introduced by a group of female senators and MPs to strip the Australian health minister of his control over the drug. If successful the drug would then have to be approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration before it would be allowed to be used in Australia.

Senator Fiona Nash of the Nationals argues that the bill is not about abortion but about process. She said "What's been put forward here is who is best able to judge the quality, safety and efficacy of this particular drug and who is best able to judge whether it should be used in Australia".

Ms Nash believes that the TGA should be responsible for allowing or denying the use of drugs in Australia, not the health minister.

Lyn Elisson, leader of the Democrats said that only around 2,000 of the submissions would be considered as the remainder do not meet the senate's terms of reference. She also said "This bill is not about the morality or legality or abortion.

"It's really about whether the Minister for Health should have the power of veto over an alternative to legal surgical abortion."

National's senator Barnaby Joyce argues that all opinions should be taken into account and that the enquiry should be conducted for at least a week.

Peter Slipper, MP for the Liberal party claims that the proposed legislation can not be separated from the RU486 issue. He told ABC radio "I believe it would be a negation of our responsibility if we

were to flick the decision to an unelected body, an unaccountable body, such as the TGA."

It is believed that only 100 submissions are from those supporting the use of RU486.

The inquiry has received international attention with submissions from the US, New Zealand and Austria. This pill is available for use in France since 1988, in Switzerland since 1999.

Polish journalist imprisoned for libelling municipal employee

Small town journalist Andrzej Marek in the town of Police in north-western Poland was imprisoned on January 15, on the start of a three month sentence.

Marek is editor of a regional weekly newspaper, the *Wiesci Polickie* (news from the town of Police). In February 2001 he published an article alleging that a local municipal employee, who privately ran an advertising agency, had a conflict of interests in which he profited from his position to obtain business for his advertising agency.

In November 2002 he was found guilty of defamation and on appeal in November 2003, had a three-month prison sentence, suspended on the condition that he apologised to the libellee. He refused to apologise, he applied for a presidential pardon in March 2004, but this was eventually refused. On March 23, 2004, a court in Szczecin suspended the application of the sentence by six months due to problems in his wife's pregnancy.

Reporters sans frontières claims that Poland is the only European Union country in which prison

sentences are imposed for "offences of opinion" and that this is the first such occurrence in the European Union. On July 18, 2003, Dorota Nieznalska was sentenced to six months of community service for having published an art work showing a penis on a cross, and on January 5, 2005, Jerzy Urban was sentenced to a fine of 20,000 złoty (about 5000 euros) for having insulted Pope John Paul II, who qualified for legal protection against insults due to his role as a visiting head of state, but neither of these were prison sentences.

Websites in Polish cyberspace are calling for appeals to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights protesting the prison sentence.

Pakistani Official claims 'foreign terrorists' among civilians killed in U.S. airstrike

Reports from Pakistan say that at least four or five terrorists were killed in last Friday's airstrike. The attack took place in the village of Damadola in the semi-autonomous agency of Bujar, a tribal region bordering Afghanistan.

According to unnamed Pakistani intelligence officials, top Al-Queda operative Ayman al-Zawahiri was invited to a dinner in the village at the time of the strike, but failed to show up.

"According to the available information at least 4 to 5 foreign elements had also been killed in the incident," the Political Agent Fahim Wazir of Bujar said Tuesday. He added that 10 to 12 foreign extremists had been invited to dinner at the compound that Zawahiri was supposed to attend, but did not show up and that the "dead bodies have been taken away by their companions to hide

the real reason of the attack."

This is the first official statement by Pakistani authorities indicating that foreign militants were killed in the attack, which officials have said also killed innocent civilians. Women and children were among the 18 people that were killed in the airstrike. "It is regrettable that 18 local people lost their lives in the attack, but this fact also cannot be denied, that 10 - 12 foreign extremists had been invited on a dinner," the statement also said.

There has been no announcement regarding the names of those terrorists killed and DNA tests are still being done on the victims to make a final decision. Media reports say that most if not all of the terrorists were Egyptian.

U.S. news networks have reported that, according to unidentified intelligence officials, the attack was carried out by unmanned drone aircraft which launched missiles at the target location.

In the wake of two days of protests that erupted across Pakistan after the strike, the ruling party demanded an apology from the United States.

The protesters are opposing the government participation in the U.S.-led war on terror, and the recent series of U.S. attacks along the frontier that killed civilians. Shahid Shamsi, a spokesman for the anti-American religious coalition that organized the rallies announced more and bigger protests in the days to come. He said "Pakistani civilians, including children, were killed," and explained that "principles cannot be broken in the name of (fighting) terrorism."

Today in History

1839 - The Royal Marines landed at Aden to stop pirates from attacking British shipping to and from India. Aden was to remain under British control until 1967.

1935 - Coopers Inc. sold the world's first briefs, a new style of men's undergarment.

1977 - Iva Toguri, allegedly a Tokyo Rose, was granted a full pardon.

1983 - Apple Computer introduced the Apple Lisa, their first commercial personal computer with a graphical user interface and a computer mouse. It had 1 MB of RAM, and was priced at US \$9,995.

Quote of the Day

"They who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night." ~ Edgar Allan Poe

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