



Top Stories



Detainee handling changes at Camp Delta, Guantanamo Bay

US: Iran nuclear weapons initiative ended in 2003

A declassified report shows that Iran stopped its nuclear weapons program in the fall of 2003 under international pressure.

Featured story

Al Sharpton speaks out on race, rights and what bothers him about his critics



Al Sharpton of the National Action Network answers his critics in this exclusive

interview with Wikinews' David Shankbone. In it they discuss Don Imus, Tawana Brawley and the Presidential race.

Wikipedia Current Events

The two Romanian parties supporting President Traian Băsescu, the Democratic Party and the Liberal Democratic Party, announce they will merge to form

Wikipedia Current Events

the Democratic Liberal Party in January 2008.

•The United States Senate approves the United States - Peru Trade Promotion Agreement with a 77 to 18 vote, clearing the way for its implementation.

•Prominent UK paediatric scientist Dr David Southall is barred from practice after a General Medical Council panel finds he has abused his position to make unsubstantiated accusations in court and keep illegal records.

•Indian Finance Minister P. Chidambaram admits suspected terror investments in capital markets.

•President of Turkey Abdullah Gul signs a nuclear energy bill, allowing bids to be made for Turkey's first nuclear reactor.

•United States Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W Patterson is not allowed to meet detained Pakistan Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Aitzaz Ahsan at his residence.

Parts of Newfoundland still without power following weekend storms

Parts of the northeastern coast of Newfoundland, Canada, in particular the Bonavista Peninsula, were hit hard following a Sunday evening storm. Power went out in St. John's Sunday night, but was promptly restored. By Tuesday, around 7500 customers were without electricity on the Bonavista Peninsula alone. However a

spokeswoman with Newfoundland Power Corporation said Tuesday that power had been restored faster than expected in parts of the peninsula.

"Teddy bear teacher" returns to England

The British teacher jailed for letting her students name a teddy bear "Muhammad" as part of a writing project arrived in England after being pardoned - ending a case that set off an international outcry and angered many moderate Muslims.

Gillian Gibbons is back home after serving eight days of a 15-day sentence for allowing her students to name a teddy bear

"Muhammad" as part of a writing project. This angered Sudanese authorities who said it was an insult to the Islamic prophet. She was released after being pardoned by Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir.

In Britain, the obviously relieved Gibbons said she was concerned she might have offended people.

"It has been an ordeal but I would like you to know that I was well-treated in prison and everybody was very kind to me. I was very sorry to leave Sudan. I had a fabulous time there. It is a really lovely place, and I managed to see some of the beautiful countryside while I was there," she said. "The Sudanese people I found to be extremely kind and extremely generous, and until this happened to me, I only had a good

experience."

Gibbons could have received 40 lashes or a six-month jail sentence. After her sentencing last week, hundreds of Sudanese demonstrated for a stiffer sentence, with some calling for her to be executed.

Gibbons' arrest resulted in an international outcry and a tense stand-off between Sudan and Britain. It was also widely condemned by British Muslims. Her release followed the intervention of two Muslim peers, Lord Ahmed and Baroness Warsi who travelled to Khartoum and met Monday with President Omar al- Bashir.

A senior adviser of president Bush said Mr. Bashir insisted Gibbons had received a fair trial.

Developing nations bring technology transfer on agenda against resistance of Canada, Japan and US

A sub-body of the World Climate Change Conference today took up the item of "Development and transfer of technologies" on its Agenda, and subsequently decided to establish a contact group to speed up negotiations. Both the declaration of the new Agenda item, as well as the setting up of the Contact group, came after lengthy discussions that were polarized between the Group of 77 + China (G77+C), which is comprised of about 130 nations with developing industries, and the Umbrella group, which consists of most of the nations with highly industrialized economies, but the EU countries. .

The sub-body, called the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) is, as its name implies, amongst other

things responsible for preparing and implementing decisions of the main body of the UNFCCC, the Conference of the Parties (COP). After having spent a large part of the morning discussing formalities regarding whether or not technology transfer was to be taken up as a separate item, the afternoon session had to be extended till around 9 pm local time. Even then some of the planned agenda items had not been concluded when the session closed.

The cause for discussion in the morning were two different interpretations of a decision the COP made yesterday: Member states of the G77+C believed that the referral of the item of tech transfer by the COP automatically lead to its inclusion on the agenda as a separate item, while the Chairman of the SBI and the US voiced the opinion that to for it to be included, the item would have to be formally agreed upon in the normal manner. Compromise, of one sort or another, could not be reached, and it was only after a legal adviser stated that in his point of view the item indeed was necessarily included on the agenda as a separate item that the matter could be concluded.

Due to the stalling in the mornings session, discussions on the actual item of technology transfer began after what would have been the scheduled closing time. South Africa made the proposal to set up a contact group for the item, so that it could be discussed in a setting with less participants in an informal way. A number of G77+C nations (including China and Nigeria) spoke out in support of this proposal, emphasizing that rapid progress was needed on the issue. Japan, and the US made critical statements, noting that

they believed that the scope of the contact group should first be established, and that it would be more sensible to establish the contact group in 2008. After it was found that the group would nevertheless be established, the Chairman asked for suggestions for Co-chairs of the group, as one from the Annex I and one from the non Annex one would be required. The non-Annex I having already decided that they supported Prof. Philip M. Gwage from Uganda as Co-chair, the Annex I countries decided that Jukka Uosukainen from Finland would be the Co-chair on their behalf after brief deliberations. The decision being reached provoked some applause from delegates and observers, and the session was closed shortly thereafter.

Climate change threatens world's poorest says Oxfam

The anti-poverty group Oxfam says global warming is altering the human food supply and threatening some of the world's poorest people with hunger. At the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Bali, the group argued developed countries should pay to address the problem, and costs could top \$50 billion a year.

Climate change, which many scientists believe is fuelled by human activities, alters rain cycles and causes increased droughts and flooding. Rising temperatures mean some traditional crops do not grow as well as they used to. The United Nations predicts that in some African countries, crop yields could fall by half.

Oxfam researcher Kate Raworth says coping with these issues will be expensive.

"Oxfam has estimated that for all developing countries to adapt to

climate change will cost at least \$50 billion a year," she said. "And for that to be done with justice we believe that the rich and the most polluting countries should pay the vast share of the money to make possible for those countries most vulnerable and least responsible for causing the problem to cope with the new realities they have to deal with."

A report released by Oxfam at the conference on Tuesday says some countries are already feeling the effects of a warming planet. In South Africa, farmers are planting faster-maturing crops to adapt to unpredictable rainfall.

Bangladeshis are creating floating vegetable gardens that can thrive in spite of floods. But Mozaharul Alam, who heads Bangladesh's climate adaptation effort, says overall improvements to the food system still leave many families vulnerable.

"Most of the agriculture is subsistent in nature," said Alam. "So if [there is] any failure of the crop on the ground, even if there is food available in the market, unless the people has the buying capacity, that availability of the food in the market has no meaning to the vulnerable family."

Oxfam argues the United States, the European Union, Japan, Canada and Australia should be among the major sources of funds to help developing countries solve their climate change problems.

These countries have agreed in principle, but one task of the Bali Conference is to find out how much individual countries are willing to spend on climate-related issues. It also aims to begin deciding how to divide those resources between prevention of

further climate change, and adaptation to the changes that are already taking place.

The conference involves thousands of scientists, government officials and development group representatives, and runs for another 10 days.

US Congress debates Iraq funding

The United States Congress has returned from a two-week recess to face a busy agenda before it completes its session later this month. President George W. Bush is urging lawmakers to approve his funding request for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as a first priority.

President Bush renewed his criticism of majority Democrats in Congress who want to tie a timetable for the withdrawal of United States troops from Iraq with approval of more funds for the war effort.

"It's unconscionable to deny funds to our troops in harm's way because some in Congress want to force a self-defeating policy - especially when we're seeing the benefits of success," said President Bush.

Mr. Bush says progress made on the battlefield as a result of a boost in the number of troops in Iraq this year would be undermined by a troop withdrawal timeline.

The President has requested US \$196 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The House of Representatives has approved US \$50 billion of that. But in the Senate, Republican blocked a similar funding package last month because it included a timetable for a troop withdrawal.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Nevada Democrat, said the failure of the Senate to approve the war funding should not be blamed on the Democrats.

"If not for the stubborn refusal of the president and his Republicans enablers to work with us, we would have accomplished a lot more," said Senator Reid.

Although Mr. Bush had warned that the Pentagon would be forced to begin laying off civilian employees if the funds are not received soon, Senator Reid said the Pentagon could shift funds for the war effort from other accounts.

Besides funding for the war, Congress must also pass legislation funding government agencies and programs. In addition, lawmakers may also try to revise a wiretapping law that expires in two months.

A battle between AMD and Intel takes place at 2007 Taipei IT Month

On the third day of the 2007 Taipei IT Month in Taiwan yesterday, notebook computers and desktop computers built with AMD's Phenom processor and Intel Penryn processor openly battled for the consumer-market after each company launched their quad core processors.

Intel with partners like Acer, Genuine, ASUS, and Lenovo promoted their desktops with Core 2 Quad and notebooks with Centrino Duo, even though Intel didn't plan to exhibit in IT Month. Intel's Taiwan division is holding two road shows for DIY experts. One was on December 1 while the second will be on December 8.

AMD, on the other hand, put on a

showcase for IT Month with a "Bee Movie" booth-style exhibit at halls 1 and 3 of the Taipei World Trade Center. AMD's subsidiary company ATI showcased HDMI and Full HD with a demonstration of a new graphic card named "Radeon HD2000".

As the two rivals postured over factors like performance and high-definition, Wikinews reporter Rico Shen interviewed some of their partners. BenQ and Micro-Star International both said: "No matter whether the consumer chooses a computer with AMD or Intel, the consumer should consider it based on functionality and practically before purchasing. For example, some low-price notebook computers (EeePC, OLPC) were launched before the show because notebook computer manufacturers had considered and evaluated what a consumer really want. Sincerely, I recommend a consumer not be fooled by its price but to consider its functionality first!"

Standard Operating Procedure changes at Camp Delta, Guantanamo Bay

In an investigation reported on first by Wikinews, Wikileaks today revealed another chapter in the story of the Standard Operations Procedure (SOP) manual for the Camp Delta facility at Guantanamo Bay. The latest documents they have received are the details of the 2004 copy of the manual signed off by Major General Geoffrey D. Miller of the U.S. Southern Command. This is following on from the earlier leaking of the 2003 version. Wikileaks passed this document to people they consider experts in the field to carry out an analysis trying to validate it. Following this, they set out to assess what had changed between 2003 and 2004;

including attempts to link publicly known incidents with changes to the manual.

Wikinews obtained the document and did an in depth analysis. The American Civil Liberties Union made a request previously to view and obtain copies of the SOP, but were denied access to them.

One of the first prominent changes to the document relates to the detainees themselves. Previously they read the camp rules during admission processing. Rules are now posted around the camp in detainees' languages. The English version of the rules is as follows:

- "
1. Comply with all rules and regulations. You are subject to disciplinary action if you disobey any rule or commit any act, disorder, or neglect that is prejudicial to good order and discipline.
 2. You must immediately obey all orders of U.S. personnel. Deliberate disobedience, resistance, or conduct of a mutinous or riotous nature will be dealt with by force. Be respectful of others. Derogatory comments toward camp personnel will not be tolerated.
 3. You may not have any articles that can be used as a weapon in your possession at any time. If a weapon is found in your possession, you will be severely punished. Gambling is strictly forbidden.
 4. Being truthful and compliance will be rewarded. Failure to comply will result in loss of privileges.
 5. All trash will be returned immediately to U.S. personnel when you are

finished eating. All eating utensils must be returned after meals.

6. No detainee may conduct or participate in any form of military drill, organized physical fitness, hand-to-hand combat, or martial arts style training.
7. The camp commander will ensure adequate protection for all personnel. Any detainee who mistreats another detainee will be punished. Any detainee that fears his life is in danger, or fears physical injury at the hands of another person can report this to U.S. personnel at any time.
8. Medical emergencies should be brought to the guards' attention immediately.

Your decision whether or not to be truthful and comply will directly affect your quality of life while in this camp."

Of concern to groups such as Amnesty International who campaign for the camp's closure, or Human Rights Watch pointing out prisoner handling under the prisoner of war aspects of the Geneva Convention, it's the fact that policy for newly admitted detainees still allows for up to 4 weeks where access to the detainee by the International Committee of the Red Cross may be denied. In addition, guards are not to allow ICRC staff to pass mail to detainees.

A new process has been formed which allows guards to determine whether or not a detainee receives awards, or is punished. The form is called a GTMO Form 508-1 (pictured to the right). According to the manual, the form "is used to determine which rewards the detainee will lose or gain," but

"special rewards" can also be earned, outside of the process. One special reward is time allowed outside. Another special reward is a roll of toilet paper, but the detainee cannot share it with others. Doing so will result in "punishment" and confiscation of the roll. If the detainee already has a roll of toilet paper, he is not allowed to have another.

"Guards need to ensure that the detainee doesn't receive additional toilet paper when the detainee already has it. The amount given to the detainee will be the same amount as normally distributed to the detainee," states the manual.

No matter how bad a detainee may act, "haircuts will never be used as punitive action" against them, but they can have hair removed for health reasons. They will however; be segregated from other detainees.

"If a detainee has committed an offense that requires segregation time, even if a segregation cell is not available, the detainee will receive a shave and a haircut for hygiene and medical reasons. If the detainee is IRFed, the haircut and shave will follow the decontamination process," adds the manual. Barbers are also part of cell searches.

Despite these changes, a great deal of effort has gone into ensuring the furore over detainee abuse does not recur. Rules governing the use of pepper spray (Oleoresin Capsicum, or OC) appear at an earlier point in the manual with considerable expansion. Infractions such as spitting, throwing water at, or attempting to urinate on guards appear as explicitly listed cases where pepper spray may not be used. Extensive decontamination

procedures are included in the document, including immediately calling for a medical check on any detainee exposed to pepper spray. This was not previously present.

As a counter to the clearer instructions on use of pepper spray, Wikileaks asserts that many of the stricter rules for guards (referred to as Military Police or MPs in the 2003 manual) aim to reduce fraternisation that may improve detainee morale and adversely influence any interrogation process. Guards are informed in the manual not to take personal mail and parcels within the detention blocks or at any other duty stations. All electronic devices except issued materiel are prohibited, and guards may face disciplinary action should they keep detainees apprised of current affairs or discuss issues in their personal lives.

Additional restrictions on the detainees' chaplain are included in the revised document. Wikileaks speculated that many of these changes might have stemmed from the widely publicised case of James Yee. Captain Yee, a West Point graduate, served at the Guantanamo Bay base as a Muslim chaplain to the detainees and received two Distinguished Service medals for his work. Following discovery of a list of detainees and interrogators by U.S. Customs in Florida Yee was charged with sedition, aiding the enemy, spying, espionage, and failure to obey a general order. Eventually all charges were dropped with national security concerns being raised should evidence be released.

The most notable changes surrounding the role of the chaplain include the removal of a permanent position on the facility's

Library Working group and exclusion from the decision process on appropriate detainee reading material. Wikileaks contacted lawyers representing detainees in the camp to perform their own analysis. Their opinion of the changes were that the library operation had been considerably tightened up. Duplicate books are required for the individual four camps to prevent covert use of books to communicate between camps. Periodicals, dictionaries, language instruction books, technology or medical update information, and geography were additions to the prohibited material. Instructions indicate such books must be returned to the source or donor.

The revised SOP manual makes considerable progress on documenting procedures, even those that are remote possibilities. A lengthy addition details rules to follow in the event of an escape or escape attempt. Laced throughout this procedure is an emphasis on having any such incident fully documented and - wherever possible - filmed. The procedure is explicit in how to recapture an escaped detainee with minimal use of force. One additional procedure covers the admission of ambulances to the main base area. A detailed security protocol to ensure only expected and authorised traffic gains access is included; a procedure streamlined to ensure the ambulance arrives on the scene as quickly as possible.

Unchanged from the 2003 manual is the set menu of four MREs (Meal, Ready-to-Eat) issued to detainees. However, additional steps are to be taken called "MRE Sanitization"; supply personnel must remove anything that can damage waste disposal systems -

presumably a military term for toilets. Under normal camp conditions detainees should be fed hot meals as opposed to MREs, no details on the variety of menu are included.

Wikinews attempted to get feedback on this. US Southern Command passed a query on to Rick Haupt, Commander, U.S. Navy Director of Public Affairs, Joint Task Force at Guantanamo who responded; questions were forwarded along with a request to authenticate the leaked document; a response is pending." At this time no response to emails has been received from the ICRC or Human Rights Watch.

The Pentagon has requested that the document be removed from Wikileaks because "information with the FOUO (For Official Use Only) label is not approved for release to the public." They then state that the document can be "made available through a Freedom Of Information Act request through official channels."

Today in History

1492 – Christopher Columbus became the first European to set foot on the island of Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic).

1590 – Niccolò Sfondrati became Pope Gregory XIV, succeeding Pope Urban VII who died two months earlier.

1766 – In London, James Christie opened what is today the world's leading art business and fine arts auction house.

1933 – Prohibition of alcoholic beverages in the United States officially ended when the Twenty-first Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified.

1945 – Flight 19, a squadron of five Avenger TBM torpedo bombers of the U.S. Navy, disappeared in

the area now known as the Bermuda Triangle.
December 05 is Father's Day in Thailand, St Nicholas's Eve in various European countries.

Quote of the Day

Leadership means that a group, large or small, is willing to entrust authority to a person who has shown judgement, wisdom, personal appeal, and proven competence. ~ Walt Disney

Word of the Day

- inevitably; adv
1. In a manner that is impossible to avoid or prevent; as expected. As usual; predictably.

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