



Top Stories

European Union calls for release of British crewmen in Iran

The European Union has released a statement calling for the release of all 15 British sailors and marines being detained in Iran and that "appropriate measures" will be taken if Iran refuses to release them.



First Guantánamo Bay prisoner sentenced

Australian David Hicks is sentenced to nine months in prison after pleading guilty to providing material support to the Taliban. Hicks has been detained for more than 5 years as an unlawful combatant.



Featured story

Mouse makes nest in cash machine, eats money

In Estonia, a mouse made it's nest in a cash machine and spent the weekend eating thousands of pounds worth of bank notes. The critter was discovered after a customer making a withdrawal got half-eaten bills from the machine.



Wikipedia Current Events

- Insurgency in Somalia: Violence continues in Mogadishu for a third day, in what the Red Cross calls "the worst fighting in more than 15 years."
- Telecom New Zealand shuts down its 025 D-AMPS cellular network.
- 2007 Chinese Sandstorms: After severe sandstorms caused communication and transportation problems in Hohhot and other regions of Inner Mongolia, the first severe sandstorm of the year hits Beijing and the surrounding regions of Liaoning, Xinjiang and Tianjin.
- The United States rules out exchanging five Iranian officials seized in Irbil, Iraq, in January 2007 for the 15 Royal Navy sailors seized by Iran.
- Iran's ambassador to Russia tells Russian TV channel Vesti-24, "It is possible that the British soldiers will go on trial for taking this illegal action."
- The St. Louis Cardinals and Cleveland Indians play in Major League Baseball's inaugural "Civil Rights Game" at AutoZone Park in Memphis, Tennessee, instituted to honor the history of civil rights in the United States.

NHL: Avalanche defeat Wild 2-1

The Colorado Avalanche beat the Minnesota Wild 2-1 with goalie Peter Budaj's 10th win in March, keeping their playoff hopes alive.

for the Wild only 1:21 into the first period, but answered goals from Justin Lilles and Peter Stastny in the second period lifted the Avalanche to victory.

With the win, the Avalanche tied a team record with 11 wins in a month. Budaj had a 10-0-2 record this March, tying the franchise record for wins in any month. It was set by the Quebec Nordiques's Daniel Bouchard in February 1981.

Colorado is five games behind the Calgary Flames in the race for the 8th spot the Western Conference, the last spot for the playoffs. The Flames play the Vancouver Canucks Saturday night and play Colorado Tuesday night.

Minnesota lost its third straight game, jeopardizing their chances in their close race with Vancouver for the Northwest Division title.

2007 Cricket World Cup: Bangladesh vs Australia

Australia beat Bangladesh today by 10 wickets in the Super 8 phase in the World Cup at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, North Sound, Antigua and Barbuda.

This was Bangladesh's first game in the Super 8 stage, which they entered pointless after defeat to fellow group qualifiers Sri Lanka. Australia already led the Super 8 group with 4 points on the board, thanks to their victory over the West Indies and group stage win over South Africa.

Marian Gaborik scored the opener

The match was reduced to a 22

over game due to delays from the wet outfield.

Glenn McGrath became the leading wicket taker in World Cup history with his 3 wickets here, taking him past Wasim Akram.

Toss: Australia won, and elected to field first.

Sydney has one hour blackout

Many lights in Sydney, Australia's largest city, were turned off for one hour at 19:30 local time (09:30 UTC) on March 31, 2007 to raise awareness of climate change. This Earth hour, which was organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), received support from the government of New South Wales, many environmental groups and some businesses.

Many famous buildings such as the Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge and Luna Park took part.

Organisers also hoped the event would encourage Australian's to conserve energy, claiming if various electronics were switched off when they were not in use the country's greenhouse gas emissions could reduce by up to 5%.

US Naval officer temporarily relieved for "possible supremacist activities"

On March 7, 2007, the US Navy has relieved Lieutenant Commander John F. Sharpe of his duties pending an investigation into allegations that he was involved in supremacist activities.

Sharpe served as public affairs officer for the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, which is currently undergoing repairs in Newport News, Virginia.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) says Sharpe runs the Legion

of St. Louis and IHS Press, organizations that allegedly espouse anti-Semitic views.

Football: Crouch hat-trick lifts Liverpool to victory

Three goals by Peter Crouch gave Liverpool a comfortable 4-1 win over rivals Arsenal on Saturday at Anfield. The two teams are in a battle for third place in the league at the moment, and both are in need of points to guarantee a Champion's League berth for next season. Liverpool's win puts them in third for the time being, but Arsenal have a game in hand still to be played out against Manchester City. Saturday's match acted as a return to the Premiership for Peter Crouch after his broken nose kept him out for several games, and he played as a lone striker with Steven Gerrard acting as close support from midfield. Arsenal meanwhile played two strikers with Emmanuel Adebayor returning from suspension being paired with Julio Baptista.

Liverpool started the game very strongly, with Peter Crouch scoring after only four minutes. A back heeled one-two between Pennant and Arbeloa release Arbeloa on the right side, and his low cross found Crouch, who slotted the ball past Jens Lehmann. Arsenal responded positively with a header by Adebayor, but the ball flew just over the crossbar and landed on top of the netting. Baptista then had a chance on goal for Arsenal after he was found open by Adebayor, but the Brazilian's shot was scuffed well wide of the net and failed to trouble Jose Reina. Arsenal would be made to pay for their missed chances minutes later as Crouch bagged his second of the afternoon when he headed in a cross from Fabio Aurelio.

Jens Lehmann was awarded a

yellow card during the halftime break for allegedly spitting water at a Liverpool supporter, but the game continued without further incident. Steven Gerrard had the first of the chances in the second half, but his shot from just outside the box was directly at Lehmann. Arsenal then had their best chance through Adebayor, but he was unlucky to see his low drive cannon off the base of the post with Reina well beaten. Liverpool then increased their lead on sixty minutes when Agger directed Aurelio's curling free kick into the back of the net past a diving Lehmann. Adebayor continued to threaten Liverpool's goal however, and if not for a fingertip save from Reina, he would have pulled one back for Arsenal off a header. Arsenal would pull one back minutes later through William Gallas as he tapped home a corner from Cesc Fabregas. Arsenal put on pressure for a few minutes in an attempt to force a grandstand finish, but it was to be Liverpool who would score next. Germain Pennant's cross into the box found Crouch, and after some good control and a flick between his legs, the tall Englishman powered his third into the back of the net, sealing the victory for Liverpool.

Liverpool now travel to Holland to take on PSV Eindhoven in the Champions League, the team that dropped Arsenal out of the same competition. Arsenal meanwhile have no competitions left but the Premiership to take part in, and their next game is at home to strugglers West Ham United.

Israeli website reports speculation over U.S. attack on Iran in April

Reports from the Israeli website Debka.com, which reports on intelligence matters, say that the United States is planning to launch

air strikes on Iran targets on Good Friday, April 6 at 4:00 a.m. local time (UTC+3:30), citing unnamed Russian intelligence officials. "Russian intelligence has information that the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in the Persian Gulf have nearly completed preparations for a missile strike against Iranian territory." —Russian intelligence official

The Under Secretary for Political Affairs at the United States State Department, Nicholas Burns, however, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Thursday that diplomacy was the "best and preferred" course of action in dealing with Iran, adding "I do not believe a military confrontation with Iran is either desirable or inevitable."

Another newspaper, the Russian weekly "Argoumenty Nedeli" (Sunday Arguments) is quoted by the Russian Information Agency (RIA) Novosti as saying that the attack is planned for a single continuous attack of 12 hours from 4am to 4pm, with the choice of the Easter holidays in many Western countries likely since "Western opinion" will be "on holidays". Friday 6 April is cited by Novosti as a likely, though not definite, date. Another RIA Novosti report written in French and dated March 30 states that the US military command is ready to make an attack during the first fortnight of April, but that any final decision will be made by US political leaders.

The targets will be "Iranian nuclear installations" that will be "designed to be devastating enough to set Tehran's nuclear program several years back," said the website quoting unnamed Russian intelligence officials.

United States forces completed a large-scale series of military exercises in the Persian gulf off the Iranian coastline this week, involving 15 ships, 125 aircraft and 13,000 sailors. Naval commanders said the exercises were meant to demonstrate United States' commitment to security in the region, including keeping sea-lanes open for oil shipment and were defensive in nature.

Despite the claims by the Russian official, Iran does not think that the U.S. can "pressure" the U.S. tax payers into another war.

"U.S. officials are under pressure from Americans. I don't think the U.S. is in a position to mount its pressure on the U.S. taxpayers," said Manuchehr Mottaki, Iran's Foreign Minister.

The Gulf Cooperation Council has called on its member nations - Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, all home to U.S. forces in the region, to not take part in an attack on Iran. Qatar and the Emirates have already said that they would not.

"Russian intelligence has information that the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in the Persian Gulf have nearly completed preparations for a missile strike against Iranian territory. The Pentagon has drafted a highly effective plan that will allow the Americans to bring Iran to its knees at minimal cost," said the unnamed Russian intelligence official as reported by RIA Novosti a Russian based news agency.

The strike force is allegedly going to be composed of the "USS Nimitz and its support ships" which will join forces with the John C. Stennis strike group when it leaves the U.S. on April 2.

Although the Nimitz is scheduled to relieve the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, all three ships will remain in the Persian Gulf if the 15 British sailors and marines being detained by Iran are not released and will also remain if any armed conflict begins between the two nations.

The USS Bataan and USS Boxer will also be part of the strike force.

The Nimitz strike force will be "composed of the USS Princeton guided-missile cruiser, four guided missile destroyers - the USS Higgins, USS Chafee, USS John Paul Jones and the USS Pinckney. The strike force is armed with two helicopter squadrons and a special unit for dismantling sea mines and other explosive devices," said Debka according to Russian intelligence officials.

Despite the claim, Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov says that the situation will be resolved "peacefully."

"We are constantly working on how to resolve the situation around the Iranian nuclear program and other conflicts peacefully. This policy is unchanged and we will pursue it in the future," said Lavrov.

Russian intelligence officials also say that the recent U.S. military exercise in the Gulf on March 27 was "practice" for the strike in April and that it will be up the U.S. "leadership" to give the go ahead as by April, the military is expected to be ready for the strike.

Different sources agree that the attack is allegedly only going to take place by air and will last 12 hours. No attack by land is expected. The attack is allegedly going to be called "Operation Bite."

Russia's Defense Ministry refuses to comment on the reports.

Hicks to serve 9 months in Australia

David Hicks of Australia has been sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment following his guilty plea. However, all but 9 months of that sentence has been suspended per the military judge. Hicks has already spent 5 years at Guantánamo. The United States will send him home by May 29. Hicks is first person convicted at Guantánamo since detainees began arriving in 2001.

Today in History

1318 - The Scottish re-took Berwick upon Tweed from the English.

1957 - Eight million viewers watched the television programme Panorama, prompting several of them to contact the BBC the following day and ask for instructions on how to grow spaghetti trees.

1970 - U.S. President Richard Nixon signed a law putting "the Surgeon General" on cigarette packages.

1997 - Cartoonists of popularly syndicated comic strips swapped cartoons for the day.

April 01 is Palm Sunday in Christianity (2007); Independence Day in San Serriffe (1967); April Fools' Day; Assyrian New Year.

Quote of the Day

Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread. ~ Alexander Pope

Word of the Day

mumpsimus; n

1. A person who obstinately adheres to old ways despite clear evidence of being wrong.
2. An obvious error that is obstinately repeated despite correction.

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