



### Top Stories

#### **New Zealand, Australia fly in extra personnel to help quell Solomon Island riots**

The New Zealand and Australian Governments are to send reinforcements to the Solomon Islands to support RAMSI following an outbreak of violence after the election of Snyder Rini as the new Prime Minister yesterday.

#### **Native protesters repel police raid in Caledonia, Ontario**

Just before 5 am (0900 UTC) on Thursday, Ontario Provincial Police officers armed with guns, tasers, tear gas, and pepper spray stormed the area that dozens of Six Nations protesters have occupied for the past 52 days.

### Featured story

#### **US allegedly committed acts of violence in Iran using ex-members of MEK during past year**

Different sources claims that US committing acts of violence in Iran. The Internet news publication Raw Story says minority groups in Iran, rather than traditional US soldiers, fight a proxywar for US and that the incursions have been occurring for about a year.

### Wikipedia Current Events

- Following reports of the UK government's hostility to a takeover of Centrica, Russian gas giant Gazprom warns of Europe-

### Wikipedia Current Events

wide supply disruption

- April 2006 Nepalese General strike: Nepali police opened fire on pro-democracy protesters to prevent them from marching into Kathmandu, the capital, killing at least three people and injuring dozens. (Reuters) The United Nations condemns the "the excessive and deadly use of force by members of the security forces against protesters and innocent bystanders".

- The Tamil Tigers have ended peace talks, stating they are not viable indefinitely.

- U.S. test pilot Scott Crossfield dies in an crash of a Cessna 210.

- A vast river system connecting various subglacial lakes is discovered under the Antarctic ice shield.

- U.S. President George W. Bush welcomes the Chinese President Hu Jintao at the White House. A Falun Gong protester — an accredited journalist from The Epoch Times — interrupts Hu's speech at the arrival ceremony before being removed by the Secret Service. The announcer violates protocol by accidentally calling the March of the Volunteers the "National Anthem of the Republic of China".

- German automaker Volkswagen is in talks for a restructuring program to cut costs and make the core unit Volkswagen more profitable.

- Snyder Rini was sworn in as the

### Wikipedia Current Events

new Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands and took office in secret, amid continued post-election rioting targeting ethnic Chinese.

- EA Sports announces Shaun Alexander to be on the cover on Madden NFL 2007.

#### **United Church of Christ communications director criticizes 'Meet the Press' for excluding mainline church voices**

NBC's Meet the Press is wrong to ignore leaders of the nation's 45 million mainline Protestant, Orthodox and African American Christians, says the communications director of the 1.3-million-member United Church of Christ. The Rev. Robert Chase says the annual "Faith in America" installment on Meet the Press, which aired on Easter Sunday, April 16, "totally shut out any representation from the nation's mainline churches."

For at least the second year in a row, NBC's invited panel of religious leaders included no representative from the National Council of Churches or any of its 35 member communions, such as the UCC, Episcopal Church, United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Reformed Church in America, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, among others.

"This issue transcends liberal and conservative, Left and Right," says Chase, who also chairs the National Council of Churches' communications commission. "It's about the continued absence of representation afforded to mainline, mainstream voices. The fact that NBC could have an hour-long conversation about religion in America and think it was permissible to avoid any representation from more than 100,000 mainline Protestant, Orthodox or African American churches is something worth questioning."

Sunday's program on faith and politics, hosted by Tim Russert, included Father Richard J. Neuhaus and Sister Joan Chittister, both Roman Catholics; the Rev. Joel Osteen, Pentecostal pastor of Lakewood Church in Houston; Jewish Rabbi Michael Lerner; Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who is Muslim; and Jon Meacham, Newsweek's religion editor.

Last year's lineup, Chase points out, also failed to include mainline church representation. In 2005, Christian panelists included a Protestant evangelical, a Roman Catholic priest and the president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

While the programs participants were balanced along political lines, Chase says, the "persistent absence" of mainline church representation troubles him.

"At the beginning of the show, Tim Russert asked, 'Were people more religious at the founding of our country and were we more divided on moral issues back then?'" Chase says. "Ironically, there was no one present to represent those historic, mainline Protestant

traditions that have been so prominently at the center of American life since its earliest days."

The United Church of Christ is increasingly calling media outlets to task for failure to air the religious perspectives of mainline religious groups. The UCC has created an online advocacy site <[accessibleairwaves.org](http://accessibleairwaves.org)> to encourage mainline Christians concerned about their increasing invisibility in the media, despite their prominence in America's town squares.

According to Media Matters, prominent leaders of the Religious Right (Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, James Dobson, Chuck Colson, Gary Bauer and Richard Land) have amassed as many as 40 appearances on the major Sunday morning talk shows during the past eight years. Meanwhile, the media watchdog group says the principal leaders of the historic mainline Christian denominations have not appeared once.

The United Church of Christ, the largest Protestant church in New England, was formed in 1957 with the union of the Congregational Christian Churches in America and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Eleven signers of the Declaration of Independence were from UCC-predecessor traditions, and more than 10 percent of present-day UCC congregations were formed prior to 1776, with the earliest still-operating church founded in 1616.

In 1773, Old South UCC in Boston helped inspire the Boston Tea Party and, in 1777, Old Zion Reformed UCC in Allentown, Pa., hid the Liberty Bell from occupying British forces. Today, the UCC's membership includes six U.S.

senators.

### **Native protesters repel police raid in Caledonia, Ontario**

Just before 5 am on Thursday, Ontario Provincial Police officers armed with guns, tasers, tear gas, and pepper spray stormed the area that dozens of Six Nations protesters have occupied for the past 52 days.

"People were pepper sprayed...another man was shot in the back with a Taser and we were told more police officers would be coming back," said protester Hazel Hill.

"The police just completely swarmed the territory," said protester Mike Desroches, adding that the officers entered with guns drawn. No shots were fired.

"They swarmed every which way, I couldn't even hazard a guess how many cops," said another man, Clyde Powless. The protesters have been unarmed since the beginning of the occupation.

OPP Deputy Commissioner Maurice Pilon confirmed that 16 people were arrested before protesters called in reinforcements that caused police to retreat. A spokeswoman for the protesters, Janie Jamieson, made it clear that the confrontation was not over. "We're prepared ... for however long it takes," she said.

Protesters started a huge tire fire to block the road in an attempt to prevent a further incursion by the police. A dump truck was also stopped astride the road and roadblocks set up to prevent the passage of traffic.

Protesters expect more natives to support them in the near future.

### **UK Political Parties discuss green issues in run up to local elections**

The main political parties in the United Kingdom have been battling fiercely over environmental issues in the run up to the local council elections on May 4th. David Cameron, the new leader of of the Conservative Party, has been talking up his party's green credentials under the slogan 'vote blue to go green', ahead of his 'fact-finding' trip to Norway to see a shrinking glacier. Meanwhile, Chancellor Gordon Brown, widely considered to be the next Labour leader, has been discussing green issues and policies ahead of his trip to the US, where he will deliver speeches at the UN, G7 and IMF. The Liberal Democrat party, who have the longest track record of supporting green policies, haven't been quite as active, with leader Ming Campbell criticised for being slow to give up his 'gas-guzzling' car.

The political wrangling between Labour and the Tories intensified after Labour produced a party political broadcast, shown on tv, which portrayed David Cameron as a chameleon, changing his colours to appeal to his audience but remaining blue underneath. Margaret Beckett MP, Labour's Environment Secretary, accused Cameron of a 'flip-flop', criticising him for voting against the Cleaner Neighbourhoods and Environment Act. The Liberal Democrats suggested that Cameron is merely 'posturing' and said the government has done nothing on issues like aviation emissions.

The Green Party, which has no MPs but has MEPs and London Assembly members, said that Cameron "gave tokenism a bad name" and was fooling no-one. Green Party speaker Keith Taylor

attacked Cameron's record on actual green policies, contrasting his rhetoric of the environment being a "top priority" with his support for airport expansion and road-building.

Cameron has also hinted that he is unsure about the idea of building new nuclear power stations, which the Tories have long supported, but with Blair still claiming not to have made his mind up on the issue either, the political debate on this issue is yet to get really started.

### **White House press secretary McClellan resigns; advisor Rove reassigned**

White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan announced his resignation on Wednesday, and advisor Karl Rove has given up his policy-making duties, continuing a series of personnel changes in the administration of U.S. President George W. Bush.

"I have given it my all sir and I have given you my all sir, and I will continue to do so as we transition to a new press secretary," said McClellan, who has served as press secretary since July 2003. He is expected to remain on the job until his replacement is named. Among people under consideration to replace McClellan include Fox News anchor Tony Snow, former Treasury spokesman Rob Nichols, and former Pentagon spokeswoman Victoria Clarke.

Rove, who was instrumental in managing Bush's two presidential campaigns, will serve as a deputy chief of staff and senior advisor to President Bush, focusing on long term strategic planning, according to CNN, which quoted a senior White House official. Joel Kaplan, the acting deputy budget director

of the Office of Management and Budget, has been named to succeed Rove.

McClellan's departure comes shortly after the resignation of longtime Chief of Staff Andrew Card and the appointment of Josh Bolten, former director of the Office of Management and Budget, as Card's replacement. More personnel changes are expected in the next few weeks.

Bush announced Tuesday that trade representative Rob Portman will assume Bolten's former position as head of the OMB.

### **President Bush receives anti-free speech award**

George W. Bush, president of the United States of America was awarded the first place Jefferson Muzzle, anti-free speech award for 2006, by the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression. The NSA warrantless wiretapping that was authorized by a secret executive order by him was cited as the primary reason for this distinction.

According to their website: "...the Jefferson Muzzles are awarded as a means to draw national attention to abridgments of free speech and press and, at the same time, foster an appreciation for those tenets of the First Amendment."

The commonly accepted legal use of electric surveillance of U.S. citizens is when the government gets a warrant from the United States Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. The court was established by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978. However, the Bush Administration maintains that they are allowed to conduct warrantless eavesdropping under the Authorization for Use of Military

Force of 2001.

"Our position is that the authorization to use force, which was passed by the Congress in the days following September 11th, constitutes that other authorization, that other statute by Congress, to engage in this kind of signals intelligence," Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said on December 19, 2005.

### **George Galloway exposes News of the World 'fake sheikh'**

George Galloway, an MP in the British Parliament for Bethnal Green and Bow, has won a court battle allowing him to publish photos of the infamous News of the World "fake sheikh", undercover reporter Mazher Mahmood famed for setting up high-profile figures. George Galloway had a meeting with the reporter after being approached via a contact. Over dinner at the Dorchester hotel, Mazher is said by George Galloway to have asked leading questions over political party funding and to have solicited anti-semitic remarks. George Galloway became ever more suspicious, especially after seeing that the reporter's driver had a 'mouthful of gold teeth', as described in journalist Andrew Marr's book.

After threatening to release a photograph of the reporter, who has in the past tried hard to keep his identity secret, the News of the World sought an injunction against publication, claiming that they feared for his safety, and lost.

In a post on the Guardian newspaper's Comment is Free weblog, George Galloway said that Mazher "has crossed the cusp of reputable journalism into seeking to procure criminal acts".

### **Today in History**

- 753 BC - Romulus and Remus founded Rome, according to the calculations by Varro Reatinus.
- 1836 - Texan forces led by Sam Houston defeated General Antonio López de Santa Anna and his Mexican troops in the Battle of San Jacinto, the decisive battle in the Texas Revolution.
- 1960 - Brasília, a planned city based on principles of Le Corbusier, was officially inaugurated as the capital of Brazil.
- 1966 - Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia visited Jamaica and was greeted by more than a hundred thousand Rastafarians.
- 1970 - The Hutt River Province Principality "seceded" from Australia.
- April 21 is Good Friday in Eastern Christianity (2006), Tiradentes Day in Brazil.

### **Quote of the Day**

"This grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere; the dew is never all dried at once; a shower is forever falling; vapor ever rising. Eternal sunrise, eternal sunset, eternal dawn and gloaming, on seas and continents and islands, each in its turn, as the round earth rolls." ~ John Muir

### **Word of the Day**

*gauche; adj*

Definition

1. Awkward or lacking in social graces.
2. Having a bumbling or faltering manner.

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