

The New York Times, 1 August 2008

Man Suspected in Anthrax Attacks Said to Commit Suicide

The seven-year investigation into the anthrax attacks that traumatized and baffled the nation just weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks has taken a stunning new turn with the apparent suicide of a scientist who was the prime suspect in the case. With investigators close to filing charges against him, the scientist 'Bruce E. Ivins, 62 apparently took his own life with a prescription painkiller, Tylenol mixed with codeine. He died Tuesday at a hospital in Frederick, Md., about an hour's drive north of Washington.

The Daily Times, 1 August 2008

US sees rise in Pakistani fighters in Afghanistan

A growing number of Pakistani militants who earlier operated only inside Pakistan and Kashmir are joining the intensifying insurgency against United States and NATO forces in Afghanistan, according to US officials. The fighters include guerrillas hardened by years of combat against Indian forces and others from outside the Taliban strongholds in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the officials say. "When we're talking about foreign fighters in Afghanistan, they're primarily Pakistanis," one official said.

The New York Times, 2 August 2008

Debate Is Revived Over U.S. Efforts on Bioterrorism

Until the anthrax attacks of 2001, Bruce E. Ivins was one of just a few dozen American bioterrorism researchers working with the most lethal biological pathogens, almost all at high-security military laboratories. Today, there are hundreds of such researchers in scores of laboratories at universities and other institutions around the United States, preparing for the next bioattack. "We are putting America at more risk, not less risk," said Representative Bart Stupak, Democrat of Michigan, chairman of a House panel that has investigated recent safety lapses at biolabs.

The New York Times, 2 August 2008

Obama Says He Would Agree to Some Drilling

Senator Barack Obama said on Saturday that he would reluctantly consider accepting some new offshore oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico in exchange for stripping oil companies of tax breaks and extending several tax credits to spur the search for alternative fuels. Mr. Obama has until now opposed any new offshore drilling. But in a wide-ranging news conference here on Saturday morning, he noted that there have been 'very constructive' talks between Senate Republicans and Democrats on this issue in recent days, and he applauded this.

The New York Times, 3 August 2008

Immigrants Facing Deportation by U.S. Hospitals

High in the hills of Guatemala, shut inside the one-room house where he spends day and night on a twin bed beneath a seriously outdated calendar, Luis Alberto Jimnez has no idea of the legal battle that swirls around him in the lowlands of Florida. Shooing away flies and beaming at the tiny, toothless elderly mother who is his sole caregiver, Mr. Jim'nez, a knit cap pulled tightly on his head, remains cheerily oblivious that he has come to represent the collision of two deeply flawed American systems, immigration and health care.

The Washington Post, 4 August 2008

Obama Leads, Pessimism Reigns Among Key Group

Democratic Sen. Barack Obama holds a 2 to 1 edge over Republican Sen. John

McCain among the nation's low-wage workers, but many are unconvinced that either presidential candidate would be better than the other at fixing the ailing economy or improving the health-care system, according to a new national poll. Obama's advantage is attributable largely to overwhelming support from two traditional Democratic constituencies: African Americans and Hispanics. But even among white workers -- a group of voters that has been targeted by both parties as a key to victory in November -- Obama leads McCain by 10 percentage points, 47 percent to 37 percent, and has the advantage as the more empathetic candidate.

The New York Times, 4 August 2008

For Obama, Challenge Is Getting Through

This state might be as close as the Democratic Party comes to having haunted ground. And here was another presidential candidate standing after a maybe-not-so-great week talking about trying to push through the attack ads and 'get to' the public. Senator Barack Obama's flame burns coolly ' he betrays no hint of punching pillows in private ' but his words Saturday came with a frosting of frustration.

The Washington Post, 5 August 2008

Obama Urges Opening Up Oil Reserves

Sen. Barack Obama called Monday for using oil from the nation's strategic reserves to lower gasoline prices, the second time in less than a week that he has modified a position on energy issues, as he and Sen. John McCain seek to find solutions to a topic that is increasingly dominating the presidential race. In a speech here, Obama outlined a plan to reduce an addiction to foreign oil that he said is "one of the most dangerous and urgent threats this nation has ever faced." He repeated his call for a \$1,000 "energy rebate" for low- and middle-income families that would be paid for by a windfall-profits tax on oil companies.

The New York Times, 6 August 2008

McCain at Nuclear Plant Highlights Energy Issue

Senator John McCain toured a nuclear power plant in Michigan on Tuesday to highlight his support for the construction of 45 new nuclear power generators by 2030, a position that he said distinguished him from his Democratic rival, Senator Barack Obama. Mr. McCain, an Arizona Republican, portrayed his support of nuclear energy as part of an 'all-of-the-above approach' to addressing the nation's energy needs at a time of \$4-a-gallon gasoline. He called it 'safe, efficient, inexpensive and obviously a vital ingredient in the future of the economy of our nation and in our mission to eliminate over time our dependence on foreign oil.'

The International News, 6 August 2008

Russia may put bombers in Belarus to counter US

Russia could base bombers and missiles in neighboring Belarus in response to US missile defence plans in Eastern Europe, Moscow's ambassador to Belarus said Wednesday, according to a Russian news agency. "We could be talking about the possible basing of missiles, the possible basing of strategic bombers in Belarus, Kaliningrad and so on," the ambassador, Alexander Surikov said.

The Hindu, 6 August 2008

Mafia don Gotti arrested in U.S.

John A. 'Junior' Gotti has been arrested on charges linking him to three New York murders, said a law enforcement official on Tuesday. Gotti (44) was arrested by the FBI at his Long Island home. Federal authorities in Tampa, Florida, are expected to announce a racketeering indictment, charging Gotti with murder conspiracy in

connection with killings in the late 1980s and early 1990s, according to the official. A separate indictment charges five other men with racketeering.

The New York Times, 7 August 2008

500: Deadly U.S. Milestone in Afghan War

Not long after Staff Sgt. Matthew D. Blaskowski was killed by a sniper's bullet last Sept. 23 in eastern Afghanistan, his mother received an e-mail message with a link to a video on the Internet. A television reporter happened to have been filming a story at Sergeant Blaskowski's small mountain outpost when it came under fire and the sergeant was shot. Since then, Sergeant Blaskowski's parents, Cheryl and Terry Blaskowski of Cheboygan, Mich., have watched their 27-year-old son die over and over. Ms. Blaskowski has taken breaks from work to watch it on her computer, sometimes several times a day, studying her son's last movements.

The International News, 7 August 2008

US calls for 'punitive' measures against Iran

The United States on Wednesday called for 'punitive' measures against Iran over its response to the international offer to persuade it to freeze its nuclear programme. The threat came ahead of new talks between the United States, Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia on the latest Iranian letter to the powers on its controversial nuclear programme. The United States and its allies were to press for new UN Security Council sanctions, according to US media reports. But Russia and China could resist the move, diplomats said.

The New York Times, 10 August 2008

In Loose Style, McCain Leads a Camp Divided

Senator John McCain is so quick to pick up his gold-colored cellphone to solicit advice ' from senators, campaign consultants, even the stray former deputy press secretary ' that aides, concerned about his tendency to adopt the last opinion he has heard, have tried to cut back on the time he has to make calls. Mr. McCain is known to sign off on big campaign decisions and then to march off his own reservation. Two weeks ago, he publicly disagreed with his own spokeswoman, Jill Hazelbaker, after she used a line of attack against Senator Barack Obama that he had approved after careful strategizing within his campaign.

The New York Times, 10 August 2008

Clinton T-Shirts Are Off, Obama's On

Isaac Baker, who was Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's communications director in Ohio, has stashed away the Hillary T-shirts and the campaign's taunting "Meet Me in Ohio" sign. Mr. Baker did end up meeting Senator Barack Obama in the Buckeye State as the sign urged, but not in quite the way he expected. This time it is as part of the Obama campaign. "The mementos stay at home," said Mr. Baker, now the Ohio communications director for Mr. Obama. "I am on board with Senator Obama's campaign, and I am proud to be working here."

AfghanistanNews.net, 11 August 2008

US gives Pak consular access to 'terror suspect' Dr Aafia Siddiqui

US government sources have reportedly said that it has allowed Pakistan consular access to Dr Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani neuroscientist who is being held here after being charged with attempting to kill FBI agents and other US personnel last month while in Afghan custody. According to well informed sources, Faqir Saeed, a counsellor at the Pakistan Embassy in Washington, has arrived here to meet Dr Aafia who was transferred to New York from Afghanistan last Monday. The exact time for

the meeting will be set after consultations with the US authorities, The News quoted the sources as saying.

The New York Times, 12 August 2008

War Puts Focus on McCain's Hard Line on Russia

The intensifying warfare in the former Soviet republic of Georgia has put a new focus on the increasingly hard line that Senator John McCain has taken against Russia in recent years, with stances that have often gone well beyond those of the Bush administration and its focus on engagement. Mr. McCain has called for expelling what he has called a 'revanchist Russia' from meetings of the Group of 8, the organization of leading industrialized nations. He urged President Bush 'in vain' to boycott the group's meeting in St. Petersburg in 2006.

The New York Times, 13 August 2008

Bush Sends Aid to Georgia

President Bush said Wednesday that the Pentagon has begun a 'vigorous and ongoing' humanitarian mission to ease the suffering in Georgia, and that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice would travel to France and then to Georgia to work for a settlement of the crisis. The president, speaking in front of the White House with Ms. Rice and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, criticized Russia and called on it to 'keep its word and act to end this crisis.'

The Daily Times, 15 August 2008

US proposes to exempt India from N-trade ban

The United States has proposed to waive a ban on critical nuclear trade with India in a draft circulated among member nations of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and unveiled by an arms control advocacy group. The draft, published on the website of the US-based Arms Control Association (www.armscontrol.org) late on Wednesday, will effectively lift a 34-year embargo on nuclear trade with India without tying New Delhi to explicit conditions.

The New York Times, 15 August 2008

Rice Presses for Pullout as Georgia Signs Cease-Fire

With Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice standing by, the Georgian president signed a cease-fire agreement with Russia on Friday. Ms. Rice then declared that all Russian troops must leave Georgian territory immediately. Ms. Rice, who was in Tbilisi to show support for President Mikheil Saakashvili, said that 'with this signature' there had to be 'the immediate and orderly withdrawal of Russian armed forces and the return of those forces to Russia.' At the same time, a column of at least a dozen armored vehicles moved south from Gori, the central Georgian city, to the village of Igoeti, and took up a position there, about 15 miles from Tbilisi, the Georgian capital.

The New York Times, 16 August 2008

Allies Ask Obama to Make 'Hope' More Specific

As Senator Barack Obama prepares to accept the Democratic presidential nomination next week, party leaders in battleground states say the fight ahead against Senator John McCain looks tougher than they imagined, with Mr. Obama vulnerable on multiple fronts despite weeks of cross-country and overseas campaigning. These Democrats "15 governors, members of Congress and state party leaders" say Mr. Obama has yet to convert his popularity among many Americans into solutions to crucial electoral challenges: showing ownership of an issue, like economic stewardship or national security; winning over supporters of Senator Hillary Rodham

Clinton; and minimizing his race and experience level as concerns for voters.

The New York Times, 18 August 2008

Seeing Tougher Race, Allies Ask Obama to Make 'Hope' Specific

As Senator Barack Obama prepares to accept the Democratic presidential nomination next week, party leaders in battleground states say the fight ahead against Senator John McCain looks tougher than they imagined, with Mr. Obama vulnerable on multiple fronts despite weeks of cross-country and overseas campaigning. These Democrats - 15 governors, members of Congress and state party leaders - say Mr. Obama has yet to convert his popularity among many Americans into solutions to crucial electoral challenges: showing ownership of an issue, like economic stewardship or national security; winning over supporters of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton; and minimizing his race and experience level as concerns for voters.

The International News, 18 August 2008

US vows to look into 'ethnic cleansing' charges in Georgia war

The White House said Monday that it will look into charges of ethnic cleansing in the "ugly conflict" between Georgia and Russia. "We have reports, unfortunately, from both sides, because we have charges from both sides," spokesman Gordon Johndroe told reporters as US President George W. Bush spent time on his Texas ranch. "It's clear this was an ugly conflict on the ground," Johndroe said when asked about Georgia and Russia's mutual accusations of ethnic cleansing. "That's a serious charge and we take it seriously and are looking into the matter."

The New York Times, 19 August 2008

Obama Ready to Announce Running Mate

Senator Barack Obama has all but settled on his choice for a running mate and set an elaborate rollout plan for his decision, beginning with an early morning alert to supporters, perhaps as soon as Wednesday morning, aides said. Mr. Obama's deliberations remain remarkably closely held. Aides said perhaps a half-dozen advisers were involved in the final discussions in an effort to enforce a command that Mr. Obama issued to staff members: that his decision not leak out until supporters are notified.

The New York Times, 21 August 2008

Rice Travels to Iraq to Push for Deal on U.S. Forces

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met here with the Iraqi prime minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, on Thursday to discuss the text of a long-awaited security agreement to govern the presence of American troops in Iraq. After the talks with Ms. Rice, the Iraqi foreign minister, Hoshyar Zebari, said the two sides had agreed on a draft, but cautioned that they had not reached a final agreement. It will be presented to the Iraqi Executive Council on Friday; if approved there, it must be passed by Parliament, which reconvenes in September.

The New York Times, 22 August 2008

Obama and McCain Seek a Common Touch

Barack Obama and John McCain ripped into each other on Thursday over how many houses, fireplaces and even wine cellars they own, using allusions to net worth to deride each other while portraying themselves as able helmsmen for a faltering economy. With both candidates convinced that financially pinched voters might hold the electoral key in November - especially in swing states like Ohio and Pennsylvania - Senators Obama and McCain are taking new, vivid steps to empathize with struggling middle-class and working-class Americans, a tricky task given their own

personal wealth

The International News, 22 August 2008

Obama camp slams McCain's foreign policy

The campaign of White House hopeful Barack Obama on Wednesday warned his Republican foe John McCain would pursue a 'reckless' and 'trigger-happy' foreign policy, and shoot first and ask questions later. The Democrat's camp lashed out at the Arizona senator and escalated an already fierce row over national security, which has seen Obama claim his patriotism is being maligned and that McCain is questioning his rival's judgement. Senior Obama foreign policy advisor Susan Rice said McCain had a 'long track record of supporting a reckless and extreme foreign policy' and complained he was attacking her boss's patriotism.

The Hindu, 23 August 2008

India says NSG clearance is U.S. responsibility

The United States 'inability to deliver a key part of its side of the July 2005 nuclear bargain with New Delhi became apparent on Friday as the Nuclear Suppliers Group ended an extraordinary plenary meeting without reaching agreement on a proposal to waive its restrictive export guidelines for India. More crucially, the fact that India will now be asked to accept changes in the draft waiver that could conceivably limit the scope of nuclear cooperation or place conditions on it of one kind or another suggests the three-year-old nuclear deal could well be approaching its most serious break point to date.

The New York Times, 23 August 2008

Obama Chooses Biden as Running Mate

Senator Barack Obama has chosen Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware to be his running mate, turning to a leading authority on foreign policy and a longtime Washington hand to fill out the Democratic ticket, Mr. Obama announced in text and e-mail messages early Saturday. Mr. Obama's selection ended a two-month search that was conducted almost entirely in secret. It reflected a critical strategic choice by Mr. Obama: To go with a running mate who could reassure voters about gaps in his résumé, rather than to pick someone who could deliver a state or reinforce Mr. Obama's message of change.

The New York Times, 26 August 2008

U.S. Diplomat Attacked in Peshawar

Three gunmen who attacked the vehicle carrying the chief American diplomat in the northern city of Peshawar on Tuesday morning were armed with assault rifles and wore long hair and beards like the Taliban, the provincial police chief said. The bulletproof Land Cruiser carrying the diplomat, Lynne Tracy, the principal officer at the United States consulate, was stopped by the three men who got out of an S.U.V. and fired, according to the police official, Naveed Khan, inspector general of police in the North West Frontier Province.

VOA News.com, 26 August 2008

Clinton Urges Democratic Party Unity Ahead of Convention

Former U.S. democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton is calling on her supporters to back nominee Barack Obama ahead of the party's national convention. Senator Clinton urged party unity Monday in remarks to delegates from her home state of New York. Clinton made her comments in Denver, Colorado, where the party's national convention is taking place. Resentment among many Clinton backers still remains coming into the convention, although the U.S. senator

and former first lady has said she will release her delegates in a gesture of unity.

The Daily News, 27 August 2008

US diplomat escapes gun attack

Gunmen opened fire on the car of a senior US diplomat in Peshawar on Tuesday, but she escaped unhurt, police and US officials said. US Consulate Principal Officer Lynne Tracy was on her way to the consulate when a vehicle suddenly appeared and blocked the road, local police officials said. The US consulate issued a brief statement saying: 'There was a security incident in Peshawar this morning involving a US consulate vehicle and three employees. There were no injuries and minimal damage to the vehicle. We are co-ordinating with Pakistani authorities investigating the incident.'

The New York Times, 27 August 2008

Clinton Rallies Her Troops to Fight for an Obama Victory

With her husband looking on tenderly and her supporters watching with tears in their eyes, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton deferred her own dreams on Tuesday night and delivered an emphatic plea at the Democratic National Convention to unite behind her rival, Senator Barack Obama, no matter what ill will lingered. Mrs. Clinton, who was once certain that she would win the Democratic nomination this year, also took steps on Tuesday 'deliberate steps, aides said "to keep the door open to a future bid for the presidency".

The New York Times, 28 August 2008

Obama Wins Nomination; Biden and Bill Clinton Rally Party

Barack Hussein Obama, a freshman senator who defeated the first family of Democratic Party politics with a call for a fundamentally new course in politics, was nominated by his party on Wednesday to be the 44th president of the United States. The unanimous vote made Mr. Obama the first African-American to become a major party nominee for president. It brought to an end an often-bitter two-year political struggle for the nomination with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York, who, standing on a packed convention floor electric with anticipation, moved to halt the roll call in progress so that the convention could nominate Mr. Obama by acclamation.

The International News, 28 August 2008

US mulls scrapping nuclear pact with Russia

The White House said Thursday that it was considering scrapping a US-Russia civilian nuclear cooperation pact in response to Moscow's actions in Georgia. "I don't think there's anything to announce yet, but I know that that is under discussion," spokeswoman Dana Perino said when asked whether Washington might drop the May 6 accord over the conflict in the former Soviet republic. The agreement aims to allow US and Russian companies to form joint ventures in the nuclear sector and gives the go-ahead for exchanges of nuclear technology between the two countries, according to officials on both sides. Russia would also be able to reprocess spent nuclear fuel originating in the United States, which accounts for most of the world market, in a move that has raised fears of Russia being turned into a nuclear dump.

The New York Times, 29 August 2008

Putin Suggests U.S. Provocation in Georgia Clash

As Russia struggled to rally international support for its military action in Georgia, Vladimir V. Putin, the country's paramount leader, lashed out at the United States on Thursday, contending that the White House may have orchestrated the conflict to

benefit one of the candidates in the American presidential election. Mr. Putin's comments in a television interview, his most extensive to date on Russia's decision to send troops into Georgia earlier this month, sought to present the military operation as a response to brazen, cold war-style provocations by the United States. In tones that seemed alternately angry and mischievous, he suggested that the Bush administration may have tried to create a crisis that would influence American voters in the choice of a successor to President Bush.

The Washington Post, 29 August 2008

McCain Introduces Alaska Governor Palin as Running Mate

Republican presumptive presidential nominee John McCain introduced first-term Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as his running mate here Friday at a raucous rally before thousands of his supporters. Citing her "strong principles, fighting spirit and deep compassion," McCain said the 44-year-old Palin is "exactly who I need; she's exactly who this country needs to help me fight the same old Washington politics of me first and country second." "In Alaska, Governor Palin challenged a corrupt system and passed a landmark ethics reform bill. She has actually used her veto and cut budgetary spending," the campaign said. "She put a stop to the 'bridge to nowhere' that would have cost taxpayers \$400 million dollars."

The New York Times, 30 August 2008

Campaigns Shift as McCain Choice Alters the Race

Senators John McCain and Barack Obama began recalibrating their strategies for the presidential campaign 'and reconsidering some of their basic assumptions about which states and voters were in play ' in a contest recast by Mr. McCain's unexpected selection of Gov. Sarah Palin of Alaska as his running mate. The Obama campaign and the Democratic Party had prepared advertisements and lines of attacks directed at the two men who had been most prominently mentioned as vice-presidential possibilities for Mr. McCain, Mitt Romney and Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, but had not considered Ms. Palin a likely enough choice to do the same for her. A new advertisement linking President Bush to Mr. McCain was quickly put together, but it contained only a fleeting mention of Ms. Palin.

The Daily Times, 30 August 2008

US prepares military blitz against Iran's N-sites

Strategists at the Pentagon are drawing up plans for devastating bombing raids backed by submarine-launched ballistic missile attacks against Iran's nuclear sites as a 'last resort' to block Tehran's efforts to develop an atomic bomb, the Sunday Telegraph reported on Friday. The British newspaper reported that US Central Command and Strategic Command planners had been identifying targets, assessing weapon-loads and working on logistics for an operation. "This is more than just the standard military contingency assessment," the newspapers quoted a senior Pentagon adviser as saying. "This has taken on much greater urgency in recent months."

The New York Times, 31 August 2008

Thousands Stream From New Orleans Ahead of Storm

Tens of thousands of residents streamed out of New Orleans on Sunday after heeding orders from officials to evacuate the city ' the first mandatory evacuation since Hurricane Katrina flooded the city three years ago ' as Hurricane Gustav grew into what the city's mayor called "the storm of the century" and moved toward the Louisiana coast. Mayor C. Ray Nagin said Hurricane Gustav was larger and more

dangerous than Hurricane Katrina, and he pleaded with residents to get out or face flooding and life-threatening winds.