

The New York Times, 1 June 2008

### **After Criticism, Obama Quits His Church**

Senator Barack Obama has resigned his membership in Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ, which he attended for nearly two decades, following months of controversy about pastors and their political views. Mr. Obama said he and his wife, Michelle, wrote a letter on Friday to the church's pastor, the Rev. Otis Moss, explaining that their estrangement from Trinity took root in controversial remarks by the church's former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr., who once was Mr. Obama's spiritual guide. Mr. Obama rejected suggestions that he denounce the church, which is one of Chicago's largest and most socially active black churches, with a wide array of respected social programs. Several of the most prominent black theologians in Chicago attend the church.

The International News, 2 June 2008

### **US, Pakistan to step up cooperation against terrorism**

Pakistan and the United States have agreed to further enhance their bilateral cooperation in the fields of defence and security matters, especially in intelligence sharing and counter-terrorism efforts. The PM said that Pakistan was serious in its commitment to fight terrorism as this scourge was directly and adversely affecting the security of our people and the performance of our economy. Gilani said Pakistan was combating terrorism in its own interest and not for the sake of any other country, he said and added there is no question of negotiating with the militants.

The Washington Post, 2 June 2008

### **Kennedy Doctor Calls Brain Surgery a Success**

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) had surgery today at Duke University to remove a highly lethal tumor that doctors discovered in his brain last month. In a statement released by his office, the 76-year-old Democratic icon said he would fight the grim prognosis he was given in May through a combination of surgery, followed by radiation and chemotherapy. The operation was performed by neurosurgeon Allan H. Friedman of Duke University Medical Center, who issued a statement saying the the 3 1/2 surgery "was successful and accomplished our goals." Kennedy is the second-longest serving member of the Senate, a standard-bearer for liberal Democrats who has forged deep bonds with politicians and government leaders across the political spectrum.

The Washington Post, 3 June 2008

### **Obama Looks to Lock Up Nomination**

Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, confident that the last two primaries on the Democratic calendar would propel him to the party's presidential nomination or persuade uncommitted "superdelegates" to lock it up for him, went before primary voters for the final time in the protracted race today. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign, meanwhile, was sending mixed signals about the New York senator's intentions--preparing to concede the nomination to Obama if he receives the necessary number of delegates even as it denied a news report that she would do so tonight. Clinton planned to hold an election-night event at Baruch College in New York City. Responding to an Associated Press report that Clinton would concede to Obama tonight and effectively end her bid for the presidency, the Clinton campaign issued a terse denial.

The New York Times, 4 June 2008

### **Obama Clinches Nomination; First Black Candidate to Lead a Major Party Ticket**

Senator Barack Obama claimed the Democratic presidential nomination on Tuesday evening, prevailing through an epic battle with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton in a primary campaign that inspired millions of voters from every corner of America to demand change in Washington. The victory for Mr. Obama, the son of a black Kenyan father and a white Kansan mother, broke racial barriers and represented a remarkable rise for a man who just four years ago served in the Illinois Senate. Mr. Obama's victory moved the presidential campaign to a new phase as he tangled with Senator John McCain of Arizona in televised addresses Tuesday night over Mr. Obama's assertion that Mr. McCain would carry on President Bush's policies.

The International News, 4 June 2008

### **Obama pledges support for Israel**

Barack Obama, the US Democratic presumptive presidential nominee, has pledged to safeguard Israel's security if elected president in November. Obama, the first African-American to win the presidential nomination for a major US political party, said that Jerusalem must remain the "undivided" capital of Israel in a speech to the powerful US-Israel lobby group. Obama, who also said he would approve \$30 billion in aid to Israel over the next 10 years, said he was not opposed to holding talks with "appropriate" Iranian leaders using "tough and principled diplomacy". Obama also vowed to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and said he would push for a Middle East peace deal. The Democratic nominee also said he favoured a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but that Hamas should be isolated.

The New York Times, 5 June 2008

### **Clinton Ready to End Bid and Endorse Obama**

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton will endorse Senator Barack Obama on Saturday, bringing a close to her 17-month campaign for the White House, aides said. Her decision came after Democrats urged her Wednesday to leave the race and allow the party to coalesce around Mr. Obama. Howard Wolfson, one of Mrs. Clinton's chief strategists, and other aides said she would express support for Mr. Obama and party unity at an event in Washington that day. One adviser said Mrs. Clinton would concede defeat, congratulate Mr. Obama and proclaim him the party's nominee, while pledging to do what was needed to assure his victory in November. Mr. Obama, not waiting for a formal concession from Mrs. Clinton, announced a three-member vice-presidential selection committee that will include Caroline Kennedy, who has become a close personal adviser since endorsing him four months ago.

The International News, 5 June 2008

### **Congress notifies delivery of F-16s to Pakistan**

The US Congress on Tuesday notified delivery of 10 refurbished F-16 fighter aircraft to Pakistan. Of the 12 refurbished planes, Pakistan is getting from the United States, two have already been delivered to it. The country will receive eight jets over two months, four each in June and July this year, while the remaining two F-16s will be delivered subsequently. Pakistan is receiving the planes as a major non-Nato ally of the United States and their provision signifies close defence relations between the two countries. Pakistan also signed an agreement with the United States in 2006 for purchase of 18 new F-16 C and F-16-D aircraft.

The New York Times, 7 June 2008

### **Ending Her Bid, Clinton Backs Obama**

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton formally threw her support behind Senator Barack Obama on Saturday, clearing the way for Mr. Obama to head into the general election with a plan to challenge Senator John McCain in typically Republican

states. Mrs. Clinton, speaking here to an audience of advisers and supporters who had been invited to attend from across the country, used the final rally of her presidential campaign to end her barrier-breaking bid for the presidency and endorse Mr. Obama. She pledged that she would do what it takes to help Mr. Obama win the White House. Mrs. Clinton offered nothing less than a full-throated endorsement for and embrace of Mr. Obama and his candidacy.

The New York Times, 8 June 2008

### **Obama Maps a Nationwide Push in G.O.P. Strongholds**

Senator Barack Obama's general election plan calls for broadening the electoral map by challenging Senator John McCain in typically Republican states 'from North Carolina to Missouri to Montana ' as Mr. Obama seeks to take advantage of voter turnout operations built in nearly 50 states in the long Democratic nomination battle, aides said. With Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton now having formally bowed out of the race and thrown her backing to him, Mr. Obama wants to define the faltering economy as the paramount issue facing the country, a task probably made easier by ever-rising gasoline prices and the sharp rise in unemployment the government reported on Friday. Mr. McCain, by contrast, has been emphasizing national security more than any other issue and has made clear that he would like to fight the election primarily on that ground

The International News, 8 June 2008

### **"US is the world leading jailer"**

The United States has 2.3 million people behind bars, more than any other country in the world and more than ever before in its history, Human Rights Watch said late on Friday. The number represents an incarceration rate of 762 per 100,000 residents, compared to 152 per 100,000 in Britain, 108 in Canada, and 91 in France, HRW said in a statement commenting on Justice Department figures also released on Friday. The newly released figures show a sharp racial imbalance in the US prison population, with blacks outnumbering whites by six to one. Nearly 11 per cent of black men aged 30-34 are in prison, according to Justice Department figures.

The International News, 9 June 2008

### **US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte has "criminal record", says Venezuelan foreign minister**

Venezuela's troubled relations with the United States took a turn for the worse on Tuesday, June 3, when Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro lashed out at US Deputy Secretary of State John D. Negroponte, calling him a 'petty official with a criminal record.' At the annual meeting of the General Assembly of the Organisation of American States (OAS) in the Colombian city of Medellin, Maduro accused Negroponte of being 'responsible for tortures and deaths in Central America and in several other parts of the world.' He further termed him a 'character of the worst kind.'

The New York Times, 9 June 2008

### **Obama Deals With Economy and McCain's Views**

Calling Senator John McCain's approach to economic issues, 'a full-throated endorsement of George Bush's policies,' the presumptive Democratic nominee, Senator Barack Obama offered a preview of his plan for restoring the health of the American economy. In a speech in Raleigh, North Carolina today Mr. Obama made an appeal to those Americans who are suffering the most because of the economic downturn, proposing a \$50 billion jolt of fiscal stimulus as well as an expansion of unemployment benefits. Mr. Obama also renewed his call for a \$10 billion Foreclosure

Prevention Fund to help those at risk of losing their homes and pledged a 'get tough' approach to predatory mortgage lenders.

The Daily Times, 10 June 2008

### **"US faces severe consequences if Taliban havens not eliminated"**

The United States and its NATO allies will face 'crippling, long-term consequences' in their efforts to stabilise Afghanistan if Taliban sanctuaries in neighbouring Pakistan are not eliminated, a report published on Monday said. Funded by the Defence Department, the study, 'Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan', has claimed that NATO officials have uncovered several instances of Pakistani intelligence agents providing information to Taliban fighters, including information on 'the location and movement of Afghan and coalition forces'. However, Pakistan denies that it supports the insurgents. "Whenever these kinds of places [of infiltration] are identified or pointed out, action is taken against these places," said military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas. "Therefore, we reject this claim of sanctuaries being aided by Pakistan's army or intelligence agencies."

The International News, 10 June 2008

### **Bush says Turkey should be a member of EU**

Turkey should be allowed to join the European Union, U.S. President George W. Bush said on Tuesday. "We strongly believe Turkey should be a member of the EU," Bush told a news conference after a summit with the 27-nation bloc's top officials in Slovenia. Turkey started EU accession talks in 2005, but their progress is slow, with some EU leaders opposing its membership.

The Washington Post, 10 June 2008

### **The Reformers As Fundraisers**

Sens. Barack Obama and John McCain are turning their undivided attention to the general election this week, loading their schedules with fundraising events that will fuel their campaign through the summer. But advisers to the White House hopefuls are also working feverishly to square their carefully crafted images as campaign finance reformers with the need to gather tens of millions of dollars. For McCain (R-Ariz.), that meant opening his fundraising events to reporters and television cameras for the first time, ending what had been a strict closed-door policy when the candidate mingled with donors. For Obama (D-Ill.), it meant passing up the chance to sock away funds for the general election and continue to collect only half the amount he is legally allowed as he dashes to fundraisers in New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Los Angeles and Jacksonville, Fla., in the next two weeks.

The New York Times, 11 June 2008

### **Pakistan Says U.S. Airstrike Killed 11 of Its Soldiers**

The Pakistani government on Wednesday condemned American air and artillery strikes that it said killed 11 Pakistani paramilitary soldiers during a clash on the Afghan border Tuesday night. The Pakistani soldiers appear to have been caught up in a firefight between coalition forces and Taliban fighters in Kunar Province, on the Afghan side of the border. A spokesman for the Taliban said their forces had attacked an American and Afghan position near the border and said eight of their fighters had been killed and nine wounded in the fighting. The American military in Afghanistan and Pentagon officials said that coalition forces responded to fire from anti-Afghan forces, their name for insurgents who frequently cross the border from sanctuaries in Pakistan to mount attacks in Afghanistan.

The International News, 11 June 2008

### **"US army informed Pakistan before attack on Mohmand Agency"**

The US army has claimed that Pakistan was informed before making an attack in the border area of Pakistan and this claim has been released by the US army in Kabul. The US-led coalition in Afghanistan admitted in the statement that an air strike was carried out in Pakistan Wednesday but said it targeted militants. The coalition said during an operation in Afghanistan's eastern Kunar province it informed the Pakistani army it was coming under fire from "anti-Afghan" forces in a wooded area near a checkpoint in Pakistani territory. Unmanned drone aircraft identified the militants and "in self defence" the coalition fired artillery rounds and then used close-air support "until the threat was eliminated."

The International News, 12 June 2008

### **US wants Musharraf to go gracefully**

US wants President Pervez Musharraf's exit in a dignified manner, said US Ambassador in Pakistan Anne W. Patterson here on Thursday. "Times have changed and now we want to see beyond Pervez Musharraf," she declared. She said US has no regret over policies it pursued during President Pervez Musharraf regime.

The New York Times, 12 June 2008

### **Justices Rule Terror Suspects Can Appeal in Civilian Courts**

Foreign terrorism suspects held at the Guant'namo Bay naval base in Cuba have constitutional rights to challenge their detention there in United States courts, the Supreme Court ruled, 5 to 4, on Thursday in a historic decision on the balance between personal liberties and national security. The justices rejected the administration's argument that the individual protections provided by the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005 and the Military Commissions Act of 2006 were more than adequate.

The Daily Times, 14 June 2008

### **Pakistan and US to jointly probe strike**

The United States and Pakistani armed forces have agreed to conduct a joint investigation into an American airstrike that killed 11 Pakistani soldiers in the Mohmand Agency this week, US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher said on Friday. "There is an understanding between the militaries that they will conduct a joint investigation and the foreign ministers agreed that this was the right way to go," Reuters quoted him as telling reporters after a meeting between US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on the sidelines of a conference on Afghanistan.

The New York Times, 14 June 2008

### **Bush Says Iran Spurns New Offer**

President Bush accused Iran on Saturday of rejecting a new set of incentives to stop enriching uranium, only hours after the proposal received a cold shoulder when it was delivered by Western diplomats in Tehran. "I am disappointed that the leaders rejected this generous offer out of hand," Mr. Bush said during a joint news conference here with President Nicolas Sarkozy of France. "It is an indication to the Iranian people that their leadership is willing to isolate them further. Our view is we want the Iranian people to flourish and to benefit."

The New York Times, 15 June 2008

### **Nuclear Ring Reportedly Had Advanced Weapon Design**

American and international investigators say that they have found the electronic blueprints for an advanced nuclear weapon on computers that belonged to the

nuclear smuggling network run by Abdul Qadeer Khan, the rogue Pakistani nuclear scientist, but that they have not been able to determine whether they were sold to Iran or the smuggling ring's other customers. The plans appear to closely resemble a nuclear weapon that was built by Pakistan and first tested exactly a decade ago. But when confronted with the design by officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency last year, Pakistani officials insisted that Dr. Khan, who has been lobbying in recent months to be released from the loose house arrest that he has been under since 2004, did not have access to Pakistan's weapons designs.

The Daily Times, 15 June 2008

### **US senator takes negative view of Pakistan**

"Political instability, a growing insurgency, a demoralised army and an intensely anti-American population are the hallmarks of today's Pakistan," according to Senator Thomas Cooper. He told a Senate hearing (partly reported earlier) that most security experts agree that Pakistan is the most dangerous country in the world today. Billions of US dollars poured into Pakistan have not helped secure its border with Afghanistan because the US failed to link assistance to specific policy goals. US policies have also failed to stop or even mitigate anti-Western militants or extremist elements in Pakistan. The safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is of the utmost importance and preventing it from falling into the wrong hands should remain the top priority.

The Daily Times, 16 June 2008

### **2 US helicopters violate Pakistani airspace**

Two American gunship helicopters entered Pakistan from Afghanistan near the Torkham border, flying low over a four-kilometre area above the Torkham, Pasid Khel and Landi Khana villages for six or seven minutes, locals and officials said on Sunday. Assistant Political Agent Ghulam Habib Khan and an official of an intelligence agency confirmed that US helicopters had violated Pakistani airspace on Sunday.

sudhir ahmad afridi

The New York Times, 16 June 2008

### **Obama Calls for More Responsibility From Black Fathers**

Addressing a packed congregation at one of the city's largest black churches, Senator Barack Obama on Sunday invoked his own absent father to deliver a sharp message to black men, saying "we need fathers to recognize that responsibility doesn't just end at conception." In an address that was striking for its bluntness and where he chose to give it, Mr. Obama directly addressed one of the most delicate topics confronting black leaders: how much responsibility absent fathers bear for some of the intractable problems afflicting black Americans. Mr. Obama noted that "more than half of all black children live in single-parent households," a number that he said had doubled since his own childhood.

The New York Times, 17 June 2008

### **Gore Endorses Obama as a Solver of Problems**

Former Vice President Al Gore made his debut appearance in the presidential campaign here Monday evening, offering a vigorous endorsement of Senator Barack Obama and urging Democrats to keep in mind the consequences of not taking the general election with grave seriousness. Mr. Gore had purposefully stayed on the sidelines during the long Democratic primary fight. He announced his endorsement of Mr. Obama a few hours earlier on Monday in a message to supporters on the former vice president's vast e-mail list. Their appearance here touched off a flurry of curiosity among Democrats, with many quietly asking if Mr. Gore would be on Mr.

Obama's list of prospective running mates.

The New York Times, 17 June 2008

### **How Close McCain Is to Bush Depends on the Issue**

The Democrats like to say that electing Senator John McCain would usher in the third term of George W. Bush, and they do not mean it as a compliment. The Republicans counter that calling the senator 'McBush' is political spin and that Mr. McCain is his own man. A look at Mr. McCain's 25-year record in the House and Senate, his 2008 campaign positions and his major speeches over the last three months indicates that on big-ticket issues "the economy, support for continuing the Iraq war, health care " his stances are indeed similar to Mr. Bush's brand of conservatism. Mr. McCain's positions are nearly identical to the president's on abortion and the types of judges he says he would appoint to the courts. On the environment, American diplomacy and nuclear proliferation, Mr. McCain has strikingly different views from Mr. Bush, and while he shares the president's goals in Iraq, he was at times an outspoken critic of the way the war was managed.

The New York Times, 18 June 2008

### **Bush Calls for End to Ban on Offshore Oil Drilling**

President Bush urged Congress on Wednesday to end a federal ban on offshore oil drilling and open a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil exploration, asserting that those steps and others would lower gasoline prices and 'strengthen our national security.' In recent years, the president said, "scientists have developed innovative techniques to reach Anwar's oil with virtually no impact on the land or local wildlife," referring to the wildlife refuge by its acronym. He continued, "I urge members of Congress to allow this remote region to bring enormous benefits to the American people". President Bush also urged Congress to approve the extraction of oil from shale on federal lands, something he said can be done far more economically now than a few years ago, and to speed the approval process for building new refineries.

The Hindu, 18 June 2008

### **Indians held in U.S.; immigration racket busted**

With the arrest of seven Indians, U.S. authorities have claimed to have busted an immigration racket run by an information technology company owner who charged tens of thousands of dollars from expatriates by fraudulently sponsoring their H-1B work visas. Niles Dasondi, 41, was arrested last week on multiple counts of visa fraud involving Cygate Software and Consulting Inc. which run offices in India and Canada.

The New York Times, 19 June 2008

### **Obama Forgoes Public Funds in First for Major Candidate**

Senator Barack Obama announced on Thursday that he would not participate in the public financing system for presidential campaigns. He argued that the system had collapsed, and would put him at a disadvantage running against Senator John McCain, his likely Republican opponent. With his decision, Mr. Obama became the first candidate of a major party to decline public financing - and the spending limits that go with it - since the system was created in 1976, after the Watergate scandals. Mr. Obama made his announcement in a video message sent to supporters and posted on the Internet. While it was not a surprise - his aides have been hinting that he would take this step for two months - it represented a turnabout from his strong earlier suggestion that he would join the system. Mr. McCain has been a champion of public financing of campaign throughout his career.

The Daily Times, 19 June 2008

### **"US will continue to deal with Musharraf"**

President Pervez Musharraf is the head of the state and the United States will continue to deal with him, US State Department Deputy Assistant Secretary Donald Camp said during a meeting of the Pak-American Congress in New York on Wednesday. According to Geo News, Camp said US President George W Bush had also met with Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani in Egypt and that the US would also deal with him. Camp denied the US was against the reinstatement of the sacked judges in Pakistan saying the Pakistani parliament and the people of Pakistan had to make decisions on the issue themselves. He ruled out the possibility of a war between Afghanistan and Pakistan. A bill in this regard would be tabled in the US Congress 'very soon', he said. He said the present US administration was trying to ensure US aid to Pakistan would continue during the next set-up in Washington, and that he hoped ties between the two countries would remain friendly in future. daily times monitor

The New York Times, 21 June 2008

### **Obama's War Chest Drives a 50-State Strategy**

Senator Barack Obama is drawing up plans for extensive advertising and voter-turnout drives across the nation, hoping to capitalize on his expected fund-raising advantage over Senator John McCain to force Republicans to compete in states they have not had to defend in decades. Less than three weeks after securing the Democratic nomination, Mr. Obama is already dispatching paid staff members to all 50 states, an unusual move by the standards of modern presidential campaigns so often fought in just a contained group of contested territories. His aides and advisers said they did not believe Obama necessarily has a serious chance of winning in many of the traditionally Republican states, but rather that he can at least draw Mr. McCain into spending time and money there while also swelling the rolls of Democratic voters and supporting other Democrats on the ballot.

The New York Times, 21 June 2008

### **South Korea and U.S. Reach Deal on American Beef**

More than 10,000 people rallied in central Seoul on Saturday night to protest beef imports from the United States, despite an announcement hours earlier that Seoul and Washington had agreed to restrict the shipments to allay South Koreans' concerns about mad cow disease. Although the protest was smaller than a June 10 rally that drew at least 100,000 people, it indicated that President Lee Myung-bak had a long way to go before regaining public confidence. American trade envoys agreed to restrict beef exports to cattle less than 30 months old, officials said earlier in the day. Younger cattle are considered to pose less risk of mad cow disease, a fatal brain illness that is sometimes transmitted to humans. In Washington, Ms. Schwab's office confirmed the new deal. It characterized the new agreement as a 'transitional measure to improve Korean consumer confidence in U.S. beef.'

The International News, 22 June 2008

### **Obama supports Israeli stance**

US presidential candidate Barack Obama said that Israel is justified in providing for its security amid the 'extraordinary threat' posed to it by Iran. He spoke after The New York Times quoted unnamed US officials as saying that Israel had carried out a large military exercise this month that appeared to be a rehearsal for a potential

bombing attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. Obama, a Democrat who is running against Republican John McCain in the November election, was asked at a news conference in Jacksonville, Florida whether Israel was right to carry out the exercise. "Without access to the actual detailed intelligence, I want to be careful about characterizing what was done and whether it was appropriate or not," Obama, an Illinois senator, said. But he added that the Jewish state was right to be concerned about the anti-Israel comments of the Iranian President and about Tehran's support for Hizbullah and Hamas.

The Washington Post, 23 June 2008

### **Obama Moves To Reintroduce Himself to Voters**

In the opening weeks of the general-election campaign, Sen. Barack Obama has moved aggressively to shape his campaign and offered a clear road map for the kind of candidate he is likely to become in the months ahead: an ambitious gamer of the electoral map, a ruthless fundraiser and a scrupulous manager of his own biography in the face of persistent concerns about how he is perceived. Obama's early maneuvers suggest a clear understanding within the campaign of his strengths and weaknesses. He bought air time in 18 states, a sure sign that he hopes to expand Democrats' traditional electoral map. He opted out of the public campaign-financing system -- revealing his determination to press his financial advantage, even at the cost of handing his Republican opponent the opportunity to raise questions about the sincerity of his rhetoric on reform.

The New York Times, 23 June 2008

### **Obama Camp Closely Linked With Ethanol**

When VeraSun Energy inaugurated a new ethanol processing plant last summer in Charles City, Iowa, some of that industry's most prominent boosters showed up. Leaders of the National Corn Growers Association and the Renewable Fuels Association, for instance, came to help cut the ribbon and so did Senator Barack Obama. Mr. Obama is running as a reformer who is seeking to reduce the influence of special interests. But like any other politician, he has powerful constituencies that help shape his views. And when it comes to domestic ethanol, almost all of which is made from corn, he also has advisers and prominent supporters with close ties to the industry at a time when energy policy is a point of sharp contrast between the parties and their presidential candidates.

The New York Times, 24 June 2008

### **Report Sees Illegal Hiring Practices at Justice Dept.**

Justice Department officials over the last six years illegally used 'political or ideological' factors to hire new lawyers into an elite recruitment program, tapping law school graduates with conservative credentials over those with liberal-sounding resumes, a new report found Tuesday. The blistering report, prepared by the Justice Department's inspector general, is the first in what will be a series of investigations growing out of last year's scandal over the firings of nine United States attorneys. It appeared to confirm for the first time in an official examination many of the allegations from critics who charged that the Justice Department had become overly politicized during the Bush administration. The inspector general is still investigating other issues related to alleged politicization of the Justice Department, including the central question of why nine United States attorneys were fired in late 2006. Those findings have not been made public.

The New York Times, 24 June 2008

### **Baghdad Blast Kills Four Americans**

An explosion apparently caused by a bomb inside a district council building in the Sadr City neighborhood of Baghdad on Tuesday killed two American soldiers and three civilians working for the United States military, the American command said. Six Iraqis also died in the blast, The Associated Press reported. Ryan Crocker, the United States ambassador to Iraq, identified one of the victims as Steven Farley, an employee of the State Department who was working with a provincial reconstruction team. Mr. Crocker said the explosion also killed two Army soldiers and two civilian employees of the Department of Defense. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, speaking in Berlin, said the deaths of the civilian employees were 'a terrible reminder of the dangers' faced by Americans working in Iraq, The Associated Press reported.

The New York Times, 24 June 2008

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The New York Times, 25 June 2008

### **Supreme Court Rejects Death Penalty for Child Rape**

The Supreme Court ruled, 5 to 4, on Wednesday that sentencing someone to death for raping a child is unconstitutional, assuming that the victim is not killed. "The death penalty is not a proportional punishment for the rape of a child," Justice Anthony M. Kennedy wrote for the court. He was joined by Justices John Paul Stevens, David H. Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen G. Breyer. The court overturned a ruling by the Louisiana Supreme Court, which had held that child rape is unique in the harm it inflicts not just upon the victim but on society and that, short of first-degree murder, no crime is more deserving of the death penalty. "Society's desire to inflict death for child rape by enlisting the child victim to assist it over the course of years in asking for capital punishment forces a moral choice on the child, who is not of mature age to make that choice," Justice Kennedy wrote.

The New York Times, 26 June 2008

### **Obama and Clinton in Talks to Unify Party**

With the help of one of Washington's best-connected lawyers, Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton are negotiating a thicket of complicated issues, like how to repay Mrs. Clinton's campaign debt and her role at the Democratic convention. The talks come as they try to leave behind their intense rivalry and work out a plan to cooperate this fall. At Mrs. Clinton's request, the lawyer, Robert B. Barnett, who has brokered multimillion-dollar book deals for clients including Mr. Obama, Mrs. Clinton and Bill Clinton, is working to hash out questions large and small as the two camps work toward a political merger. Perhaps the thorniest question "what to do about Bill Clinton, who friends say continues to refight the bitter primary fight " has yet to be raised by either side, advisers said.

The International News, 26 June 2008

### **US to help Pakistan meet food, energy challenges**

The United States on Wednesday reaffirmed its commitment to forge a strong and sustained partnership with Pakistan with a senior diplomat stating that the new government is at the core of Washington's strategy in dealing with the South Asian country. "We want the Pakistani government to succeed," Richard Boucher, the top American official for South Asia, told a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, chaired by key Democratic Senator Joseph Biden. He welcomed Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani's reiteration of his government's resolve to address the problem of violent extremism through a multi-pronged strategy. ' That is very important and we look forward to working with Pakistan.'

The Washington Post, 27 June 2008

### **Obama, Clinton Join Together in Show of Unity**

Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton showered each other with praise yesterday in their first joint appearance since the end of the Democratic presidential primary season at an event in which the senator from New York urged hundreds of her top donors to get behind the party's presumptive nominee. Clinton spoke first at the event at a Washington hotel, telling her disappointed supporters that Democrats "are a family, and we have an opportunity now to really demonstrate clearly we do know what's at stake, and we will do whatever it takes to win back this White House." Obama hailed his former rival and her backers. "I recognize that this room shared the same passion that a roomful of my supporters would show. I do not expect that passion to be transferred. Senator Clinton is unique, and your relationships with her are unique." But he added: "Senator Clinton and I at our core agree deeply that this country needs to change."

The Hindu, 27 June 2008

### **Ackerman hopes India will complete internal processes**

Ahead of his visit to New Delhi next week, senior U.S. Congressman Gary Ackerman has said he is looking forward to Indian government completing its internal processes on the historic nuclear deal so that the accord can be approved by the American Congress. Maintaining that it will be foolish to squander away the gains in the bilateral relationship of the last decade, especially over the last three years, the New York Democrat, who is Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee on Middle East and South Asia, said he strongly supported the 123 Agreement, which would operationalise the nuclear deal.

The New York Times, 29 June 2008

### **Occupation Plan for Iraq Faulted in Army History**

Soon after American forces toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003, Gen. Tommy R. Franks surprised senior Army officers by revamping the Baghdad-based military command. The decision reflected the assumption by General Franks, the top American commander for the Iraq invasion, that the major fighting was over. But according to a new Army history, the move put the military effort in the hands of a short-staffed headquarters led by a newly promoted three-star general, and was made over the objections of the Army's vice chief of staff. "The move was sudden and caught most of the senior commanders in Iraq unaware," states the history, which adds that the staff for the new headquarters was not initially "configured for the types of responsibilities it received."

The New York Times, 30 June 2008

### **Amid Policy Disputes, Qaeda Grows in Pakistan**

Late last year, top Bush administration officials decided to take a step they had long resisted. They drafted a secret plan to make it easier for the Pentagon's Special

Operations forces to launch missions into the snow-capped mountains of Pakistan to capture or kill top leaders of Al Qaeda. The new plan, outlined in a highly classified Pentagon order, was intended to eliminate some of those battles. And it was meant to pave a smoother path into the tribal areas for American commandos, who for years have bristled at what they see as Washington's risk-averse attitude toward Special Operations missions inside Pakistan. They also argue that catching Mr. bin Laden will come only by capturing some of his senior lieutenants alive. But more than six months later, the Special Operations forces are still waiting for the green light. The plan has been held up in Washington by the very disagreements it was meant to eliminate. A senior Defense Department official said there was "mounting frustration" in the Pentagon at the continued delay.