

The Washington Post, 1 March 2008

Clinton Ad Hints Obama Is Unprepared for Crisis

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton launched an across-the-board assault on Sen. Barack Obama on Friday, questioning in a provocative new television ad his ability to keep the nation safe as her advisers sought to raise an array of questions about her rival's ethics and electability. The Obama campaign said it was putting up its own ad, with a similar script but a different ending. Obama advisers continued to argue that Tuesday is Clinton's make-or-break day, her final opportunity to stop her rival's momentum and climb back into contention in the delegate count. The Obama campaign also announced that it had won the support of five more superdelegates, including Sen. John D. Rockefeller

The Washington Post, 1 March 2008

Soaring Food Prices Putting U.S. Emergency Aid in Peril

The U.S. government's humanitarian relief agency will significantly scale back emergency food aid to some of the world's poorest countries this year because of soaring global food prices, and the U.S. Agency for International Development is drafting plans to reduce the number of recipient nations, the amount of food provided to them, or both, officials at the agency said. Officials said they were reviewing all of the agency's emergency programs -- which target almost 40 countries and zones including Ethiopia, Iraq, Somalia, Honduras and Sudan's Darfur region -- to decide how and where the cuts will be made. The Bush administration's 2008 USAID budget request calls for \$1.2 billion in food aid with a supplemental \$350 million to cover assistance in Darfur and critical situations in southern Africa, Kenya and other hot spots.

The New York Times, 2 March 2008

Obama Spends Heavily to Seek Knockout Blow

Taking advantage of his financial edge, Senator Barack Obama is buying large amounts of advertising and building extensive get-out-the-vote operations in an effort to end Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's candidacy with twin defeats Tuesday in Ohio and Texas. The expenditures of the two Democratic presidential candidates, combined with a travel schedule that sent them and their surrogates from border to border in Texas and Ohio, reflect the expectation that the voting this week may be climactic. Mrs. Clinton's advisers have suggested that she will bow out of the race if she falters in either state, after 11 straight losses. Mr. Obama's financial advantage is helping him beyond the airwaves. His campaign flew 200 paid organizers from across the country to 10 campaign offices in Texas right after the Feb. 5 primaries, aides said, when some of Mrs. Clinton's staff members were volunteering to work without pay.

The Washington Post, 2 March 2008

In Search for Peace, a Shrinking White House Role

When Palestinians broke through the barrier dividing the Gaza Strip and Egypt in January and streamed across the border by the tens of thousands, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak faced a moment of crisis. His phone soon rang, but the world leader offering help on the other end was not President Bush -- it was Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Mubarak took the call, resulting in the first such contact between leaders of the two nations since relations were severed nearly three decades ago. As Secretary of

State Condoleezza Rice heads back to the Middle East this week, three months after Bush hosted a peace conference bringing together Israelis and Arabs in Annapolis, prospects for peace have shifted dramatically.

The New York Times, 3 March 2008

Democratic Race Intensifies as Big Day Looms

The presidential candidates set their sights on Texas Monday in a burst of last-minute campaigning before the polls open there and in Ohio, Rhode Island and Vermont on Tuesday morning. Mrs. Clinton began her day in Ohio, where she said she would make no predictions about Tuesday's primaries or comment on what the results might mean for her campaign. She used her press conference to press her campaign's attack on Mr. Obama over his position on the North America Free Trade Agreement, known as Nafta. Both candidates have told voters in Ohio, where the trade treaty is widely blamed for job losses, that they think the treaty is flawed and should be renegotiated.

The Washington Post, 3 March 2008

'Soft' Press Sharpens Its Focus on Obama

During a campaign stop in Ohio last week, ABC's Jake Tapper asked Barack Obama about what he called "an attempt by conservatives and Republicans to paint you as unpatriotic." Tapper's litany: "That you didn't put your hand over your heart during the national anthem, that you no longer wear an American flag on your lapel pin, that you met with some former members of the Weather Underground, and now they are questioning your wife's comments when she said she hasn't been proud of the U.S. until just recently." Obama dismissed the criticism as "nonsense." Obama spokesman Bill Burton maintains the media have "consistently examined both his public and personal record." Burton calls suggestions of soft treatment "a false premise that is advocated by a couple of members of the media and the Clinton campaign.

The Washington Post, 5 March 2008

Clinton Wins in Ohio While Texas Race Remains Tight

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton defeated Sen. Barack Obama in Ohio today, a crucial win in a swing state. The two Democrats remained locked in a tight race in Texas. With more than half of the precincts reporting in Ohio, Clinton led Obama 57 percent to 41 percent. The vote had not yet been reported in Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), a heavily African American area expected to strongly favor Obama. Clinton's campaign has made no secret that it would be next to impossible to continue the race without strong showings in Ohio and Texas, and there were signs in the run-up to today's votes that Clinton's aggressive attacks on Obama's trade policies and experience as a government leader were having some effect.

The New York Times, 5 March 2008

McCain Clinches Race as Foe Concedes; Democrats Battle Over 2 Crucial States

Senator John McCain, a one-time insurgent whose campaign was all but dead seven months ago, locked up the Republican presidential nomination on Tuesday night after he defeated former Gov. Mike Huckabee in the Texas and Ohio Republican primary and Mr. Huckabee conceded the race to Mr. McCain. Mr. McCain's advisers said he had a steady

schedule of fund-raising through March, in New York, Palm Beach, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Denver." I think my major theme of this campaign is that I have the judgment to lead,"Mr. McCain said. "And you gain that ability and capability with years of experience, knowledge, background and being engaged."

The New York Times, 5 March 2008

Editorial : A Clean, Fair Fight

If recent history is any guide, this fall's presidential election will be marred by vote suppression and cynical dirty tricks. Congress still has time to stop some of the worst offenses. The Senate is considering two bills, one to outlaw so-called vote caging and another to rein in duplicitous robo-calls. Congress should pass both bills well before Election Day.Minority voters have been especially victimized. In an infamous case in Louisiana, a Republican political operative boasted that a vote-caging program "could keep the black vote down considerably."Senator Dianne Feinstein, Democrat of California, has introduced legislation that would restrict political robo-calls in the run-up to an election, limiting an organization to no more than two such calls to the same phone in a single day. It would also require the call to begin with a clear disclosure of the group that was placing it.

The New York Times, 6 March 2008

Clinton Success Alters Delegate Race's Dynamic

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's victories in the primaries on Tuesday barely dented Senator Barack Obama's lead in delegates, but they seemed to slow the Democratic Party establishment's move in his direction while giving her campaign time to try to turn the race in her favor.Mr. Obama now has 1,299 delegates, compared with 1,180 for Mrs. Clinton, based on a count of pledged and projected delegates prepared by The New York Times. Mr. Obama said he planned to be more aggressive in going after Mrs. Clinton in response to her attacks, setting the groundwork for a tough competition that made some Democrats nervous that the party would bloody itself.

The New York Times, 6 March 2008

Lesson of Defeat: Obama Comes Out Punching

Senator Barack Obama woke up on Wednesday talking of his delegate lead and of taking the fight to Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. But after defeats in two of the most populous states, he also sounded like a chastened candidate in search of his lost moment.In Ohio, Mr. Obama failed to make much headway with voters who live paycheck to paycheck and feel the economic walls closing in, a troublesome sign as he heads to Pennsylvania.But his challenge now is about more than demographics. He must reassure supporters, and party leaders who had started to rally to his side, that he can absorb the lessons of Tuesday's defeats.Mr. Obama retains significant advantages, including his lead among pledged delegates and a record-setting fund-raising operation.

The Washington Post, 6 March 2008

Even in Victory, Clinton Team Is Battling Itself

For the bruised and bitter staff around Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Tuesday's death-defying victories in the Democratic presidential primaries in Ohio and Texas proved

sweet indeed. They savored their wins yesterday, plotted their next steps and indulged in a moment of optimism. "She won't be stopped," one aide crowed. The depth of hostility toward Penn even in a time of triumph illustrates the combustible environment within the Clinton campaign, an operation where internal strife and warring camps have undercut a candidate once seemingly destined for the Democratic nomination. One of Clinton's favorite books is "Team of Rivals," Doris Kearns Goodwin's account of Abraham Lincoln's Cabinet, and she assembled her own team of advisers knowing their mutual enmity in the belief that good ideas come from vigorous discussion.

The New York Times, 9 March 2008

Bush's Veto of Bill on C.I.A. Tactics Affirms His Legacy

President Bush on Saturday further cemented his legacy of fighting for strong executive powers, using his veto to shut down a Congressional effort to limit the Central Intelligence Agency's latitude to subject terrorism suspects to harsh interrogation techniques. The veto deepens his battle with increasingly assertive Democrats in Congress over issues at the heart of his legacy. As his presidency winds down, he has made it clear he does not intend to bend in this or other confrontations on issues from the war in Iraq to contempt charges against his chief of staff, Joshua B. Bolten, and former counsel, Harriet E. Miers. Mr. Bush said the agency should not be bound by rules written for soldiers in combat, as opposed to highly trained experts dealing with hardened terrorists.

The New York Times, 9 March 2008

Obama in Senate: Star Power, Minor Role

Senator Barack Obama stood before Washington's elite at the spring dinner of the storied Gridiron Club. In self-parody, he ticked off his accomplishments, little more than a year after arriving in town. They were the two competing elements in Mr. Obama's time in the Senate: his megawatt celebrity and the realities of the job he was elected to do. He went to the Senate intent on learning the ways of the institution, telling reporters he would be 'looking for the washroom and trying to figure out how the phones work.' But frustrated by his lack of influence and what he called the 'glacial pace,' he soon opted to exploit his star power.

The Washington Post, 9 March 2008

Influential Democrats Waiting to Choose Sides

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's trio of victories over Sen. Barack Obama last week appears to have convinced a sizable number of uncommitted Democratic superdelegates to wait until the end of the primaries and caucuses before picking a candidate, according to a survey by The Washington Post. Obama's victory in yesterday's Wyoming caucuses gave him an additional seven delegates, bringing his total to 1,578. Clinton won five delegates, bringing her total to 1,468, according to the Associated Press. Obama had 61 percent of the votes to Clinton's 38 percent. To win the nomination, Obama or Clinton will need a total of 2,025 pledged delegates and superdelegates. That is, unless Michigan's and Florida's delegations, now barred because the states violated party primary rules, end up being seated at the convention.

The New York Times, 10 March 2008

McCain Uses Breathing Room to Focus on Coiffers

Sewing up the Republican presidential nomination while the Democratic candidates continue to battle each other has given Senator John McCain a valuable commodity: time he can use to unite a fractured Republican Party, ramp up his lackluster fund-raising and transform his shoestring primary operation into a general election machine. The McCain campaign will also try to give incentives to its fund-raisers by bestowing them with honorary titles, each coming with new perks and levels of status, in much the same way the Bush campaign did by naming its biggest fund-raisers Rangers and Pioneers. One of the challenges Mr. McCain now faces will be how to preserve some of the spirit of the insurgent, underdog campaign that carried him to the nomination even as his campaign builds into a national operation with all the attendant trappings.

The New York Times, 10 March 2008

Sniping by Aides Hurt Clinton's Image as Manager

The morning after Senator Barack Obama shook the Clinton campaign by winning five contests in one weekend, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's new campaign manager - Maggie Williams, who had taken over in a shake-up the night before - assembled the curious if demoralized staff. Ms. Williams's demand was dismissed as wishful thinking by some in her weary audience. But in the view of many Clinton supporters, it accurately reflected the urgent need to overhaul a campaign that at that point had set itself apart for its level of disorder and dysfunction. Over the last month, Mrs. Clinton, of New York, has become much more involved in the day-to-day operation of her campaign. Mrs. Clinton's top advisers said that while her management style might be untidy, it showed her to be comfortable with conflicting ideas among her aides. They said she had pronounced herself 'ready to learn' from her mistakes.

The New York Times, 11 March 2008

8 U.S. Soldiers Killed in 2 Iraq Bomb Attacks

A man walked up to a group of American soldiers on foot patrol in an upscale shopping district in central Baghdad on Monday and detonated the explosives-filled vest he was wearing, killing five soldiers and wounding three others and an Iraqi interpreter who accompanied them. The attacks underscored how fragile security in Iraq remains despite a recent drop in violence and statements by American military officials that Sunni insurgents were on the run. Military officials did not release details of the attack or explain how the suicide bomber was able to approach the soldiers so easily.

The Washington Post, 11 March 2008

Spitzer Linked To Prostitution Ring by Wiretap

New York Gov. Eliot L. Spitzer's political future was thrown in doubt yesterday after he was identified as an anonymous client heard on a federal wiretap arranging to pay money and buy train tickets for a high-priced New York prostitute to meet him at a downtown Washington hotel. A person familiar with the case said Spitzer was one of the unnamed clients of a New York area prostitution ring mentioned in federal court documents unsealed last week. "I have acted in a way that violated the obligations to my family and that violate my, or any, sense of right and wrong," Spitzer, 48, said in a terse public

statement, with his wife, Silda Wall Spitzer, at his side.

The New York Times, 12 March 2008

Obama Is Victorious in Mississippi

Sen. Barack Obama won the Mississippi Democratic presidential primary decisively last night, adding to his overall lead in delegates as he and Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton plunged into a six-week battle ahead of a showdown in Pennsylvania. With the Democratic nomination still up for grabs after two months of voting, despite Obama's clear lead in delegates, the campaigns continued to debate the merits of holding do-over contests in Michigan and Florida. Their delegates are barred from the Democratic National Convention because their state parties violated rules governing the scheduling of their primaries. The Clinton campaign had said that Obama was expected to triumph in Mississippi, where African Americans were expected to make up more than half of the primary voters.

The Washington Post, 12 March 2008

Fed Hopes to Ease Strain on Economic Activity

Impelled to take extraordinary measures for the second time in less than a week, the Federal Reserve moved on Tuesday to subdue the deepening crisis in credit markets by stepping up as lender of last resort. The move, which was coordinated with central banks in Europe and Canada, came on the heels of two similar actions on Friday, in which the Fed offered up to \$200 billion in 28-day cash loans to banks and big financial institutions. But where investors were unimpressed by last week's efforts, which took place as the government announced that the number of jobs was falling, they were jubilant on Tuesday. The Fed's hope is to relieve some of the pressure on institutions to sell at fire-sale prices, easing the strains on economic activity and making the credit markets feel more comfortable in buying mortgage bonds again.

The New York Times, 13 March 2008

Democrats Face Racial Issue Again

After the Democratic primary in South Carolina turned racially divisive in January, Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama essentially declared a truce and put a stop to fighting between their camps. But this week, race has once again begun casting a pall over the battle between the two. Mr. Obama, speaking to reporters on Wednesday, said he did not believe that there was 'a directive in the Clinton campaign saying, 'Let's heighten the racial elements in the campaign.' 'I certainly wouldn't want to think that.' Mrs. Clinton's advisers and former President Bill Clinton suggested that black candidates like Mr. Obama had done well in South Carolina because of support among African-Americans there.

The Washington Post, 13 March 2008

Spitzer to Step Down as N.Y. Governor

New York Gov. Eliot L. Spitzer, a rising Democratic Party star who won election 16 months ago as a crusading reformer against corruption, announced his resignation Wednesday after being ensnared in a federal investigation that exposed his double life as a longtime regular client of high-priced prostitutes. Spitzer's resignation still leaves him in

legal limbo, with prosecutors having given no public signals whether he might face prosecution. Spitzer's fall was all the more stunning because he had been elected in November 2006 with 69 percent of the vote, the most ever in a New York gubernatorial race, and some Democrats even said he could possibly become the country's first Jewish president.

The Washington Post, 13 March 2008

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The New York Times, 14 March 2008

U.S. Soldier Killed by German Police

German police shot and killed a United States Army soldier in Bavaria after he took a former girlfriend hostage, the local police said Friday. When police officers attempted to arrest him, the soldier threatened them with his gun, leading them to open fire, according to an official statement released by the Unterfranken district police. The Army said in a news release that it "takes incidents of this nature extremely seriously and will continue to work with the German authorities to maintain community safety."

The Washington Post, 14 March 2008

Plan Aims to Restore Faith in the Economy

The nation's top economic policymakers unveiled a far-reaching plan yesterday to fortify the U.S. financial system, aiming to prevent a repeat of the credit meltdown that has roiled global markets since the summer. The continuing toll of upheaval in the credit markets was underscored yesterday when the government reported that consumers curtailed spending in February. The dollar fell to record lows against the euro and below 100 yen for the first time since 1995. Crude oil rose above \$111 a barrel for the first time.

The Washington Post, 17 March 2008

White Male Vote Especially Critical

In the fierce campaign between Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama, a battle dominated by questions of race and gender, white men have emerged as perhaps the single critical swing constituency. The competition for the support of white men, particularly those defined as working class, will shape the showdown between Clinton and Obama in Pennsylvania's Democratic presidential primary on April 22. Obama (Ill.) won majorities among those voters in what appeared to be breakthrough victories in Wisconsin and Virginia last month. But he badly lost working-class white men to Clinton (N.Y.) in Ohio and Texas two weeks ago, keeping the outcome of the Democratic race in

doubt indefinitely.

The New York Times, 17 March 2008

Paterson Is Sworn In as New York's 55th Governor

Lt. Gov. David A. Paterson gathered with leaders of New York State's Legislature and judiciary in the Assembly chamber at the State Capitol in Albany at 1 p.m. and then took the oath of office as New York State's 55th governor. In a 26-minute inaugural address ' the first half of which was devoted to humor-filled acknowledgments of dignitaries and family members "he warned that "our economy appears to be headed toward crisis," . "We are looking at an economy that is reeling and I must say to all of you in government and all of you in business that you must meet with me in the next couple of weeks and adjust our budget accordingly," Mr. Paterson said, suggesting that budget austerity may be needed.

The New York Times, 18 March 2008

Behind Closed Doors, Democrats Seek Answers

The public phase of the Democratic presidential race will now pause, briefly, for a back-to-the-future experiment in back-room deal-making. There have been disputed delegations, and rules challenges, since the post-1968 reforms in the Democratic nominating process. But none combined the combustible elements of large states, a live nomination fight and the electoral version of instant replay. To Tad Devine, a veteran of Democratic nomination fights since the Carter era, that is more practical and cost-effective than staging a new contest that, like other big primaries this year, is not likely to produce a huge shift in delegates.

The Washington Post, 19 March 2008

McCain Mixes Up Iraqi Groups

Sen. John McCain, in the midst of a trip to the Middle East that he hoped would help burnish his foreign policy expertise, incorrectly asserted Tuesday that Iran is training and supplying al-Qaeda in Iraq, confusing the Sunni insurgent group with the Shiite extremists who U.S. officials believe are supported by their religious brethren in the neighboring country. Standing with two of his Senate colleagues at the Citadel, a set of ancient ruins in downtown Amman, McCain told reporters that he is concerned about Iran's influence in Iraq and cited a recently discovered cache of weapons that he said could be particularly lethal in being used to target Americans in the country.

The Washington Post, 19 March 2008

Obama, Trying to Bridge America's Racial Divide

"Nobody gets into politics to give those speeches," said Pat Schroeder, the former Colorado congresswoman. But there was Barack Obama in Philadelphia yesterday, flanked by American flags, wading into the charged subject of race, which has divided Americans since the country was founded. He had been pushed to this moment by a controversy over video snippets of sermons given by his former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright. While condemning Wright for comments that were "not only wrong but divisive," Obama also sought to put the minister and the black church in context.

The New York Times, 20 March 2008

Bush Defends Iraq War in Speech

President Bush used the fifth anniversary of the start of the war in Iraq on Wednesday to make the case for persevering in a conflict that could have many more anniversaries. Democrats accused him of lacking a strategy to win and withdraw. The anniversary starkly illustrated the divide between Mr. Bush and Democrats, who control Congress - and between the Republican presidential candidate, Senator John McCain of Arizona, and the two senators seeking the Democratic nomination, Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton. Mr. Bush announced the war's start from the Oval Office on the night of March 19, 2003, declaring that the United States would 'not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder.'

The New York Times, 20 March 2008

Clinton's Schedules as First Lady Are Released

All 11,000-plus pages of Hillary Rodham Clinton's schedules as first lady are now available in a Times interactive graphic, which can be searched by keyword or date. More than 11,000 pages of Hillary Rodham Clinton's schedules as first lady, records sought by a conservative watchdog group and by journalists, have been released by the National Archives and the Clinton Presidential Library. More than 4,400 of the pages have parts blacked out to protect the privacy of third parties. Virtually every day contains an entry for a "private meeting" that gives no clue as to whom she was meeting.

The New York Times, 21 March 2008

Richardson Endorses Obama

Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico delivered a forceful endorsement of Senator Barack Obama for president on Friday, urging Democrats to unite behind his candidacy to move the nation beyond its racial and partisan divide. Mr. Richardson, who sought to become the nation's first Hispanic president, dropped out of the Democratic race in January after finishing behind Mr. Obama and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton in the opening contests of Iowa and New Hampshire. As the nation's only Hispanic governor, Mr. Richardson could become a champion for Mr. Obama among Hispanic voters, who have been a key voting bloc for Mrs. Clinton in the primaries thus far. And his endorsement is also notable because he is a friend and admirer of Mrs. Clinton, and was widely viewed as a possible running mate for both her and for Mr. Obama.

The New York Times, 21 March 2008

Passport Files of 3 Candidates Breached, Officials Say

The State Department said on Friday that it was investigating several incidents in which the passport files of all three presidential contenders were improperly accessed by employees. The breaches involved electronic files that contained personal information about Senators Barack Obama, Hillary Rodham Clinton and John McCain. A State Department spokesman declined to say what was in those files, but said they likely contained biographical information and passport applications. Mr. Obama learned of the passport situation while he was flying from West Virginia to Oregon on Thursday night. He declined to comment.

The Washington post, 22 March 2008

In New York, a Turf War in the Battle Against Terrorism

Not long after Sept. 11, 2001, as New York City began to build a counterterrorism effort to rival those of most nations, Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly decided to put an end to the department's reliance on the FBI for classified data coming in from Washington. A thousand NYPD officers are assigned full time to operations drawing on the traditional missions of the CIA and the FBI. The department's liaison officers have been deployed from Nairobi to Singapore, while its networks of domestic informants stretch across the five boroughs of New York City.

The New York Times, 24 March 2008

JPMorgan in Negotiations to Raise Bear Stearns Bid

JPMorgan Chase was in talks on Sunday night for a deal that would quintuple its offer for Bear Stearns, the beleaguered investment bank, in an effort to pacify angry Bear shareholders, according to people involved in the negotiations. Under the terms being discussed, JPMorgan would pay \$10 a share in stock for Bear, up from its initial offer of \$2 a share ' a figure that represented a mere one-fifteenth of Bear's going market price.

The New York Times, 26 March 2008

Iraqi and U.S. Forces Battle Shiite Militia

Heavy fighting broke out Tuesday in two of Iraq's largest cities, as Iraqi ground forces and helicopters mounted a huge operation to break the grip of the Shiite militias controlling Basra, and Iraqi forces clashed with militias in Baghdad. The fighting threatened to destabilize a long-term truce that had helped reduce the level of violence in the five-year-old Iraq war. In the weeks leading up to the operation, Iraqi officials indicated that part of the operation would be aimed at the Fadhila groups, which are widely believed to be in control of Basra's lucrative port operations and other parts of the city.

The New York Times, 27 March 2008

U.S. Has Moral Responsibility in Iraq, McCain Says

Senator John McCain made his case for continuing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, saying on Wednesday that those countries are at the core of a region extending from the Middle East to Southeast Asia. Despite the continuing violence in Iraq, he said the troop increase known as the surge is producing results. "Political reconciliation is occurring across Iraq at the local and provincial grassroots level," he said. He advocated greater cooperation among democratic nations, even when they do not follow American policies. "When we believe international action is necessary, whether military, economic or diplomatic, we will try to persuade our friends that we are right," he said.

The New York Times, 29 March 2008

U.S. Airstrikes Aid Iraqi Army in Basra Siege

The American military conducted airstrikes Thursday and Friday to back up stalled Iraqi forces in Basra and battle Shiite militias in Baghdad as continued violence and political infighting worsened the prospects for any timely reconciliation among Iraq's warring factions. In Baghdad, American helicopters exchanged fire with Mahdi Army militia

members in the Shiite neighborhood of Sadr City, and rockets crashed into the office of Iraq's Sunni vice president in the heavily fortified Green Zone, killing a security guard. The need to call in the American-led forces raised questions about the Iraqi Army's ability to wage a successful campaign on its own.

The New York Times, 29 March 2008

The Casey Endorsement

In a surprise move, Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania has endorsed Senator Barack Obama in advance of the April 22 Democratic primary. Mr. Casey had said he would remain neutral in the race in part because he wanted to help broker a reconciliation between Mr. Obama and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton afterward. Mr. Casey said that he called Mrs. Clinton last night to tell her of his decision. "She was very gracious. We know that she's a great senator, she's a great leader," he said, Friday. He is joining Mr. Obama today as he begins a six-day bus trip across Pennsylvania and plans to be with him for about three days as Mr. Obama meets up with just the kind of blue collar, Catholic men who have eluded Mr. Obama.

The New York Times, 30 March 2008

Iraqi Offensive Revives Debate for Campaigns

The heavy fighting that broke out last week as Iraqi security forces tried to oust Shiite militias from Basra is reverberating on the presidential campaign trail and posing new challenges and opportunities to the candidates, particularly Senator John McCain. Mr. McCain, the presumptive Republican nominee, has made the Iraq war a centerpiece of his campaign; he rode to success in the primary season partly on his early advocacy of the troop buildup. "Senator McCain is more vulnerable than the Democrats, because this is a reminder of how messy the situation remains in Iraq," Mr. Ross said.

The New York Times, 30 March 2008

Dith Pran,-Killing Fields-Photographer, Dies at 65

Dith Pran, a photojournalist for The New York Times whose gruesome ordeal in the killing fields of Cambodia was re-created in a 1984 movie that gave him an eminence he tenaciously used to press for his people's rights, died in New Brunswick, N.J., on Sunday. He was 65 and lived in Woodbridge, N.J. He had been a journalistic partner of Mr. Schanberg, a Times correspondent assigned to Southeast Asia. He translated, took notes and pictures, and helped Mr. Schanberg maneuver in a fast-changing milieu. Dr. Ngor, the physician turned actor who had himself survived the killing fields, had joined with Mr. Dith in their fight for justice. He was shot to death in 1996 in Los Angeles by a teenage gang member.

The New York Times, 31 March 2008

Cleric Suspends Battle in Basra by Shiite Militia

The Shiite cleric Moktada al-Sadr on Sunday called for his followers to stop fighting in Basra and in turn demanded concessions from Iraq's government, after six days in which his Mahdi Army militia has held off an American-supported Iraqi assault on the southern port city. The negotiations with Mr. Sadr were seen as a serious blow for Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, who had vowed that he would see the Basra campaign through to a

military victory and who has been harshly criticized even within his own coalition for the stalled assault. Over the past two years, Mr. Sadr's popular support has eroded as his movement has gained a reputation for harboring criminals and thugs and carrying out vicious sectarian killings.

The Washington Post, 31 March 2008

Bush to Meet NATO Allies Divided Over Adding Troops in Afghanistan

President Bush heads to Europe today to try to rescue the faltering mission in Afghanistan, and key NATO allies plan to meet his demands for more forces with modest troop increases, though not by as much as U.S. military officers say is needed to put down a stubborn Taliban insurgency. The friction over force levels underscores a philosophical divide between the United States and its allies over the best approach in Afghanistan more than six years after U.S.-led forces toppled the Taliban government -- and, more broadly, over the future of the NATO alliance. The summit in Bucharest, Romania, which begins Wednesday, will also test the allies over issues such as NATO enlargement, missile defense and the relationship with an increasingly muscular Russia.