

# Our World Review

## US Spy Plane Down in Iraq

**Baghdad, Dec 18 (Prensa Latina)** A US surveillance plane crashed near Al Muqdadiya, in the eastern Iraqi province of Diyala, while conducting an armed reconnaissance mission, an American military release informed on Tuesday.

The MQ-1 Predator spy plane went down Monday in an area of strong insurgent resistance, but the reason for the crash was given as unknown in the report.

The US military said that an official Air Force board will convene to investigate the incident.

Washington has lost different types of warplanes, chiefly helicopters, since the US-led invasion of the Arab country began in March 2003 and insurgent groups have claimed responsibility for the attacks on those planes.

The MQ-1 Predator is an unmanned aerial vehicle that is used in combat and surveillance and is also armed with two laser-guided AGM-114 Hellfire missiles.

A pilot and a sensor operator man the controls of a MQ-1 Predator from the control room at Balad Air Base, Iraq.

Meanwhile, Iraqi Defense Minister Abdul Qader al Obeidi announced a new military operation in Diyala Province due to the escalating resistance attacks.

Qader al Obeidi did not specify when and how the offensive would take place, but it is expected that US and local forces will participate.

## Turkish Army Storms Northern Iraq

**Baghdad, Dec 18 (Prensa Latina)** Turkish soldiers penetrated northern Iraq in an overnight operation Tuesday, to attack members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the first offensive of this type against this Arab country.

According to Jabbar Yawar, spokesman of the Kurdish autonomous region security forces, an unknown number of Turkish soldiers entered a deserted area where neither local nor autonomous troops are deployed.

Yawar could not tell press the extent of the offensive or whether the soldiers had any result.

Ankara had previously announced a possible military offensive in northern Iraq, aimed at neutralizing PKK militants.

The incursion coincided with an unannounced visit of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, after she participated in a Paris Conference of Donors for the Palestine National Authority.

## Dominican Navy Seizes 245 kg of Cocaine

**Santo Domingo, Dec 18 (Prensa Latina)** The Dominican Navy announced on Tuesday the seizure of a consignment of 245 kg of cocaine in a fishing boat allegedly bound for Puerto Rico.

Its final destination was the United States, says the note, which added that Navy forces acted after they were tipped off about activities carried out by two individuals who were arrested.

The drug, which was handed over to the delegation of the National Drug Enforcement Agency (DNCD), was in 239 packages camouflaged with some fish, said the source.

## Colombian Guerrillas to Free Detainees

**Bogota, Dec 18 (Prensa Latina)** The Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) announced the release of Clara Rojas, her son Emmanuel, and Consuelo Gonzalez, who will be handed over to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez or any person of his choice.

In a release published Tuesday in Bogota, the rebel group considers this gesture an apology to the detainees' families and to Chavez and Senator Piedad Cordoba, whose efforts for a humanitarian exchange was cancelled by the Colombian government.

According to the text signed by FARC Secretariat, «the order for their release in Colombia has already been issued.»

In the seven-point note, FARC insisted on the demilitarization of Florida and Pradera municipalities for 45 days, in order to effect a humanitarian agreement and ratify the decision move forward on the political solution of the armed conflict.

They considered the proposal to meet within 30 days with «the lying Commissioner Restrepo [Colombian government peace commissioner] in inhospitable, remote and

clandestine places» improvised and unacceptable.

Restrepo makes this offer on one hand, the FARC note said, while threatening more operations, ratifying his order of military rescue and offering dollars to guerrillas to betray their ideals.

They expressed appreciation to Chavez for his dedication, his colossal effort as facilitator, his good faith, his solidarity with the peaceful cause of the Colombian people and the time invested in spite of his great responsibilities.

The insurgent organizations considers «annulling the facilitator gesture was an act of diplomatic barbarism against the legitimate leader of a brother state and against the Venezuelan people, who were in solidarity with the request made from Bogota.»

The FARC note also expressed appreciation to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the Latin American leaders in solidarity with the facilitating task and «the families of the prisoners of war of both parties, who would be nearer the end of their anxiety.»

## Mournful Farewell to Top Militant in Gaza

**Gaza, Dec 18 (Prensa Latina)** Thousands of followers bid a mournful farewell to the senior commander Majed al-Harazin, 40, one of the most important Islamic Jihad military commanders in Gaza, who died victim of two further Israeli air strikes in Gaza.

More than 10,000 people attended his funeral in Gaza City, crying «Vengeance!» and calling on Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas to stop revived negotiations with Israel, according to TV images.

Al Harazin, the 38-year-old chief of the Al-Quds Brigades, was driving in a car in northern Gaza City when a missile fired by an Israeli warplane hit the vehicle, killing him and one of his aides, Palestine sources said.

Islamic Jihad Leader Khader Habib told media he became the most senior Palestinian militant leader that Israel had killed in months and it constitutes a important casualty.

Islamic Jihad vowed to avenge it with scores of suicide attacks. They promised a «veritable earthquake» in response to the killing. «We vow that the assassination will unleash a wave of martyr operations,» Jihad said in a statement, referring to suicide attacks.

## 437 Mexicans Die on US Border

**Mexico, Dec 18 (Prensa Latina)** As many as 437 Mexicans have died so far this year trying to cross the border with the US, local chancellery confirmed Tuesday.

The figure accounts for the January-December 5 period, and corroborates emigrants keep facing a dramatic situation, and their human rights continue to be violated, the foreign ministry added.

According to official estimates, the number of fatal victims totalled 485 in 2006 and 516 in 2005, with the death toll expected to increase in 2008, taking into consideration that the migratory issue will influence on the US electoral campaign.

Reinforced surveillance by US border patrols and the construction of a wall have increased concern, as emigrants are forced to cross through more dangerous zones.

## Palestinian President Condemns Israeli Attacks

**Paris, Dec 18 (Prensa Latina)** Less than 24 hours after a Conference of Donors in Paris, Palestine National Authority President Mahmud Abbas condemned the Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

During a press conference Tuesday in the French capital, Abbas was filled with consternation for the Israeli army offensive that killed ten Islamic Jihad militants.

After receiving a promise of 7.4 billion dollars in donations for the reconstruction and development of Palestine yesterday, Abbas deplored the Israeli attitude.

Abbas called these attacks by Tel Aviv «savage and barbarous,» and also expressed regret at the firing of missiles on Israeli territory from Gaza.

The Palestinian leader said he welcomes the French proposal of an international force to assist Palestinian security services.

Despite his disgust at the Israeli attacks, Abbas acknowledged the billions in donations from over 70 countries as a great political success for the Palestinian process.

## Bolivia's controversial constitution

**John Crabtree  
First of Two Parts**

Bolivia's ruling Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) and its allies anticipated the looming deadline for the rewriting of the country's constitution - 14 December 2007 - by approving the new 411-article constitutional draft on 8-9 December. The constituent assembly in the city of Oruro approved <sup>[1]</sup> the new text - sixteen months since its inauguration on 6 August 2006, and in the absence of the main opposition party - in only sixteen hours. The new document, which involves major institutional changes with respect to the rights of Bolivia's indigenous peoples, will be put to a referendum in 2008. But Bolivia's opposition, encouraged by Hugo Chávez's defeat <sup>[2]</sup> in the Venezuelan \*

*Continued on page 18*

## Argentina Claims Money-Bag Proofs from USA

**Buenos Aires, Dec 18 (Prensa Latina)** The Argentinian justice demanded on Tuesday that INTERPOL requests information from the US police about the statements by four detainees in Miami, in relation to a bag with \$800,000 seized in August.

Local judicial sources, quoted by Telam, an official news agency, said the demand refers to supposed declarations by those accused, about where in Argentina that

moeny would be sent, to include them in the trial for charges in this respect.

Extradition of Guido Atonini Wilson, the money-bag carrier, who used a US



**Guido Atonini Wilson, the money-bag carrier**

passport to return to his home in Miami after the first inquiries when the incident happened, had been requested from Washington three months ago.

This person, identified as a businessman, who is pending for trial in Argentina, for smuggling and money laundering, is now a witness protected by the Federal Bureau of Investigations.

The Argentinian justice will make the request in diplomatic way, and it is currently in the translation process, Telam said.

The news agency highlighted that the trial judge, Maria Marta Novatti, is issuing another information request, directly from the United States, about the origin of the money, starting from the numbers on the bills in the Argentinian authorities' hands.

This way, they will be able to determine a key clue, still unrevealed, which consists of knowing if the \$800,000 were withdrawn from any US bank or financial institution by Atonini Wilson or any other person related to the case.

Buenos Aires is requesting all the information about the four detainees' statements, and confirmation of leaks to the media.

Telam asserted that the objective is «to attach that evidence to the file of the trial in Argentina, and eventually ask for subpoenas, based on that investigation line,» according to the judges in charge of the case.

## Rebels Kill 15 US Afghan Agents

**Kabul, Dec 18 (Prensa Latina)** Afghan insurgents attacked a caravan Tuesday that was guarded by a private US firm identified as USPI, leaving 15 security guards dead and 19 others wounded, military sources reported in Kabul.

USPI is in charge of security for various international and non governmental organizations, as well as for troops stationed in Afghanistan commanded by NATO and the United States.

According to police commander Col. Saydo Khan, the ambush occurred in the Bala Buluk district of the western province of Farah early Tuesday.

The food supply convoy was headed to a military base of the NATO-led International Assistance Security Force in the region, when it was ambushed by the insurgents.

In a separate incident, Pentagon spokespersons told press that various alleged rebels died during an air raid and a combat operation in the southern region of Helmand.

Warplanes targeted a building in which alleged insurgents were hidden, said the sources, although they refrained from saying if there were non-combatants among the victims.