



McCain, you've done it again
USA

John McCain, 2008's failed Republican presidential candidate and a former prisoner of war, is part of a long-running military dynasty. His father, John S, was a navy admiral, while his youngest son, Jimmy, is a marine who served in Iraq.

DEALS
Tactical plumbing
Global [ENERGY SUPPLIES]

Pipelines pump vital supplies of oil and gas around a complex system of transcontinental energy networks. But they are more than just a means of shifting fuel: governments are investing billions of dollars in new pipelines to solve their thorniest national security problems.

For example, the majority of tankers carrying China's oil imports – all five million barrels per day – pass through the Strait of Malacca, giving China's enemies an easy ploy: blockade the strait. However, China has been developing new pipelines connecting the western interior of the country with Burma and Central Asia. And when Iran recently threatened to shut the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, the UAE, whose oil exports previously all went via the strait, fast-tracked a €3.3bn pipeline linking its oil fields with its east coast, whose waters are beyond Iranian control.

However, effectiveness varies according to the geopolitics on the ground says Steve Yetiv, an expert on politics and energy at Old



Dominion University in the US. "It depends on where the pipeline begins and ends, and how much it can carry," he says. — TBM

In the pipeline: potential projects

- 01** South Sudan wants to build a new pipeline to bypass Sudan and will spend up to €3bn.
- 02** Turkey and Kurdistan, an autonomous Iraqi province, are pushing for a pipeline that will supply Turkey with Kurdish oil and gas by 2014.
- 03** Two projects are vying to supply Europe with natural gas from Azerbaijan via Turkey by 2018.



WEAPONS AND SYSTEMS
Small victory
UK [NANOTECHNOLOGY]

The British army has broken new ground in Afghanistan, becoming the first military to deploy a nano-UAV in the field. Its Norwegian-developed Black Hornet drone is a tiny helicopter weighing 16g that can provide battlefield surveillance, enabling troops to locate hidden enemies. Other nano-UAVs are also in the works: the US is developing the Hummingbird, a miniature winged drone, plus versatile quadrotor drones. Nano-UAVs will ultimately become weaponised, carrying payloads with which to dive-bomb potential targets. — TBM

IN THE FIELD
Time to leave?
USA [AFGHANISTAN]

A decision on the US's involvement in Afghanistan beyond 2014 is due by next month. The White House has floated a "zero option" that would leave no troops on the ground once Nato's combat mission concludes, though military analysts say this is unrealistic. Obama has made it clear that America's withdrawal hinges on the need to train and equip Afghanistan's notoriously ineffectual National Army while preparing commando missions to root out al-Qaeda and affiliate groups. The Pentagon has three proposals with regards suggested troop levels, ranging between 3,000 to 9,000 soldiers being on the ground beyond 2014. — RBA



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Q & A
Nick Haekkerup
Defence minister
Denmark

As financial instability squeezes defence budgets, the five Nordic countries are exploring innovative ways of collaborating militarily to boost security while trimming costs. Nordefco was founded in 2009 to focus these efforts. The group broke new ground in 2012 when Finland and Sweden agreed with Nato to take over the patrol of Icelandic airspace.

Nordefco describes itself as a "co-operation, not an alliance". What does that mean?

Nordefco is a framework for co-operation. There is no separate Nordefco staff, like Nato or the EU.

What have been the biggest achievements so far?

[In 2012, the defence] ministers signed a letter of intent to pursue an ambitious co-operation on Nordic tactical air transport, including common training and maintenance. The Nordic countries also have a well-integrated co-operation in the northern part of Afghanistan, where Norway, Sweden and Finland have troops.

Is there potential for joint equipment procurement?

Certainly, whenever it adds value. Potential areas of co-operation in this regard are small-arms ammunition, tugboats, armoured vehicles' rubber tracks, batteries and unit group rations. In the longer term, larger procurements cannot be ruled out.

Are Nordic countries still competitors in the defence field and does this ever limit co-operation?

Nordic countries are to a large extent an extended family. We often agree on different foreign affairs questions and have the same basic interests and values, and therefore often have the same viewpoints on challenges in the security landscape. — TBM

IMAGE: CROWN; ILLUSTRATORS: RYO TAKEMASA, VESA SAMMALISTO

Prime parenting
Norway

The Stoltenberg family has been taking care of Norway's affairs since the 1970s. Thorvald Stoltenberg was an ambassador, foreign minister and UN high commissioner; son Jens is currently prime minister.



AMBASSADOR NO.16
Peace and goodwill
New York [MASOOD KHAN]

On a crisp night in February, UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon and an assortment of dignitaries sang "Happy Birthday" to ambassador Masood Khan, the permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, at the envoy's residence on Park Avenue. The gathering, hosted by Khan in honour of the secretary general, coincided with the former's birthday. "Is this party for him or for me?" teased Ban.

Khan laughed heartily, displaying an easy-going nature that helps when representing a country mired in geopolitical entanglements. Despite massive challenges for the nuclear-armed state, Khan remains optimistic. He cites a litany of initiatives including programmes to help create jobs, promote education and integrate minorities and women.

Following stints as an English professor and then a newscaster on Radio Pakistan, Khan joined Pakistan's foreign service in 1980. He has since served as permanent representative to the UN in Geneva and ambassador to China, before being appointed to his current post last year.

Pakistan has contributed 140,000 troops to UN operations since 1960, second only to Bangladesh. But since the "war on terror" began in 2001, Pakistan has led in the number of soldier and civilian casualties (over 40,000) as well as fiscal losses, without which "in the past decade we probably could have been one of the emerging economies", says Khan – though he still believes in diplomacy. "If you try to understand [people's] perspectives you can create an atmosphere for effective communication. Pakistan's essence is a pluralist society moderate in its traditions; we are adapting to modernity and we will succeed." — SK

Pakistan mission to the UN in New York

- 01 The mission:** Located off Fifth Avenue and housed in an elegant brownstone. Khan's office is lined with first-edition tomes on history and politics, many of which have graced the shelves since the mission was inception in 1947.
- 02 The staff:** There are 18 diplomats supported by dozens of staff members.
- 03 The challenge:** "My main priority is to enhance the prestige of Pakistan as a nation," says Khan. The right publicity could help.

PHOTOGRAPHER: DUSDIN CONDREN; ILLUSTRATORS: TY WILKINS, VESA SAMMALISTO

No one's home
USA [IRANIAN EMBASSY]



Massachusetts Avenue is DC's embassy row, a leafy stretch that buzzes to the hum of limousines. But for more than 30 years number 3003-3005 has been a diplomatic vacuum. The address of the former Iranian embassy has been deserted since 1980, when US-Iran relations came to a standstill. However, the US State Department takes great care of the property; the dome of the Persian Room was recently restored, for example. In its 1970s heyday an invite to the parties thrown by the last ambassador, Ardeshir Zahedi, was the hottest ticket in town; alas, it may be a while before Hollywood stars are dropping in again. — DMP



Watch the flock
Spain [FOREIGN POLICY]



In an effort to rein in wayward provinces and their aspirations for independence, Spain recently passed a law that seeks to oversee all foreign-policy activities conducted by regional governments. It will empower the State Foreign Ministry to assess whether international trips by regional leaders comply with the government's own foreign-policy agenda. The law doesn't allow for prohibiting such trips but it does mean crucial resources such as embassy support and security forces can be withheld. There are currently over 200 provincial government delegations around the world, with the independence-seeking Catalonia representing the lion's share with 48 embassies. — LA