

# The world at a glance . . . International ↗

## Moscow

**Medvedev tests Obama:** Russian President Dmitry Medvedev didn't give Barack Obama much of a honeymoon. Shortly after Obama was declared the winner in the Nov. 4 election, Medvedev announced that Russia would deploy missiles near Poland if Obama proceeded with a Bush administration plan to build missile-defense facilities in Europe. Railing against "mistaken, egotistical, and sometimes dangerous" policies, Medvedev said the presence of U.S. missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic would force Russia to move short-range missiles within striking distance of NATO countries. Obama has criticized the missile-shield plan as expensive and unreliable, but has not outright rejected it. Obama and Medvedev spoke by phone and agreed to arrange an "early bilateral meeting," the Kremlin said.

## Beijing

**A bailout for Asia:** China this week announced an unprecedented \$586 billion spending package designed to stimulate its wobbling economy by investing heavily in transportation and urban infrastructure. The two-year plan would spend roughly 7 percent of China's gross domestic product each year, in an effort to minimize unemployment and cushion the blow from reduced exports. "The global financial crisis has been intensifying daily," the government said. "We must be fast and heavy-handed." Asian financial markets, which depend on a strong Chinese economy, rose swiftly in response to the move. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said the plan was designed primarily to benefit China, but would also be "our biggest contribution to the world."

## Pyongyang, North Korea

**Power shift:** North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il has ceded a great deal of power to his brother-in-law since falling seriously ill this summer, South Korean analysts and intelligence officials said this week. Jang Song Taek, 62, who is married to Kim's sister, is either relaying Kim's orders to the government or standing in for him entirely, officials said. Kim has not been seen in public since August. U.S. intelligence agencies believe he suffered a stroke over the summer and a second one last month. "Jang is, in effect, No. 2 in terms of real power," said one South Korean intelligence official. Analysts said Jang is unlikely to succeed Kim as an all-powerful ruler, but that he could be closely allied with Kim's eldest son, Kim Jong Nam, as part of a collective leadership.

## Baghdad

**Triple bombing kills schoolgirls:** In the most gruesome and deadly insurgent attack in Iraq since June, a car bomb exploded on a Baghdad street this week, destroying a minibus ferrying two dozen girls to school. Then, when police and civilians rushed to help the mortally wounded victims, two more bombs went off. In all, more than 30 people were killed and as many as 70 injured. Although violence in Iraq has been down substantially this year, it has inched up again in recent weeks. "We are not feeling safe," said Imad Karim, whose restaurant was damaged by the bombs. "There is no security. We only hear about the security from the TV stations."

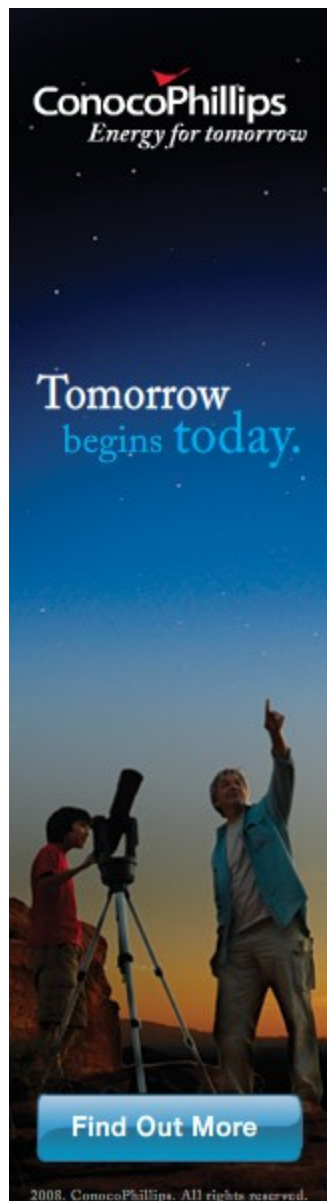
## Baghdad

**Iraq rebuffs 'final' U.S. troop deal:** The Iraqi government said last week that it would continue to insist on a firm withdrawal date for U.S. troops, even as the U.S. said it would not negotiate any new changes to a "status-of-forces" agreement. "We believe the process on our side has been concluded," State Department spokesman Robert Wood said. The agreement is necessary since the U.N. mandate for the occupation of Iraq expires after December. The Bush administration's "final text" refers to a 2011 withdrawal date, but only if certain criteria are met. Iraqis want a firmer commitment. Iraqi negotiators suggested that they believe they will have more success when Barack Obama takes office. "He's been saying all along that he wants to withdraw U.S. forces within 15 months," said Haider Abadi, Iraq's minister of communication. "That fits with the Iraqi proposal."

## Kismayu, Somalia

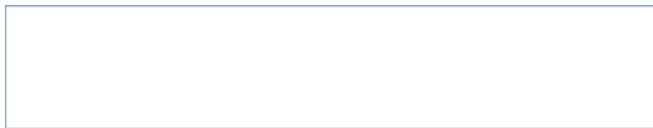
**Rape victim stoned to death:** Islamic fundamentalists brutally executed a 13-year-old girl who was convicted of adultery for being raped by three men, the United Nations confirmed last week. Aisha Ibrahim Duhulow was visiting her grandmother when she sought out the rebel militia that controls the city of Kismayu to report that she'd been raped; that amounted to a confession in the eyes of the *sharia* court. "The evidence came from her side and she officially confirmed her guilt," said the presiding cleric, Sheikh Hayakalah. Duhulow was reportedly dragged screaming into a soccer stadium in front of crowd of 1,000 people, buried up to her neck, and stoned for more than 10 minutes by 50 executioners. Militia members fired on a few people who tried to intervene, killing an 8-year-old boy. The rapists were not arrested.

[digg](#) [del.icio.us](#) [stumbleUpon](#) [newsvine](#) [reddit](#) [furl](#)



## Comment on this article

Name  Email  Message



[Post Comment](#)

Recent comments | 0 total

[Cartoons](#)



[Cartoon Picks of the Day](#)

More From News & Opinion

1. [Abortion: Was voting for Obama a sin?](#)
2. [Comparing struggles: Gay vs. black](#)
3. [Hillary Clinton and Obama's cabinet](#)
4. [Curing AIDS?](#)
5. [How they see us: Obama's tough chief of staff](#)



- **The Week Distills The Best Of U.S. And Foreign**

## Press Into 44 Pages

- [This Week's Issue](#)
- [Get 4 Issues Free](#)
- [Subscribe Now](#)
- [Give a Gift Subscription](#)
- [Magazine Customer Service](#)

## Weekly Quiz

After months of seclusion since admitting to an extramarital affair, John Edwards showed up at Indiana University for an appearance that some say was the start of a "public relations rehab." However, Steve Benen in The Washington Monthly online stated that this rehab would not work because...

## [Take Quiz](#)

## Most Read

1. ['Make my decade'](#)
2. [Robbery, by a different name](#)
3. [Recounting Al Franken's votes](#)
4. [Palin's Republican attackers](#)
5. [A new Monopoly strategy](#)
6. [A Republican civil war?](#)
7. [Gossip: John and Elizabeth Edwards](#)
8. [Republican Party, post election](#)
9. [Was America wrong about David Archuleta?](#)
10. [Obama: Closing Guantanamo](#)

## Most Emailed

## THEWEEK

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Terms & Conditions](#)
- [Ad Info](#)
- [Press Room](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Customer Service](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Site Map](#)

© 2008 The Week Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. THE WEEK® is a registered trademark owned by Felix Dennis.

THEWEEK.COM is a trademark owned by Felix Dennis.