

News at a Glance

RUSSIAN AIRSPACE VIOLATIONS

FIN According to the paper *Hufvudstadsbladet* Russia has systematically and consciously violated Finnish airspace during the last few months. Finland has complained of numerous such violations as Russian military planes fly to and from Kaliningrad, a Russian territory that lies on the Baltic Sea between Poland and Lithuania. Military experts suspect that the purpose of the violations is to check the level of alertness of the Finnish airforce. Russia has now apologized to Finland for the violation of its airspace. The Russians plan to launch an extensive training programme for air crews flying over the Gulf of Finland so that similar incidents might be avoided in the future. The open admission and apology are seen as a departure from previous practice. Finland's decision to make public reported airspace violations by foreign aircraft also reflects a new policy. Prime Minister Vanhanen said that Finland would continue to inform the public of all such incidents.



President
Putin

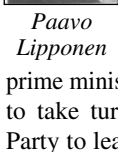
PM **Matti Vanhanen**



PM Matti
Vanhanen

EERO HEINÄLUOMA NEXT PARTY LEADER

FIN The two-meter giant, Eero Heinälouma, 49, is the new leader of the Finnish Social Democratic Party, succeeding Paavo Lipponen who, teary-eyed, bowed out at the party convention in June after 12 years in the top position.



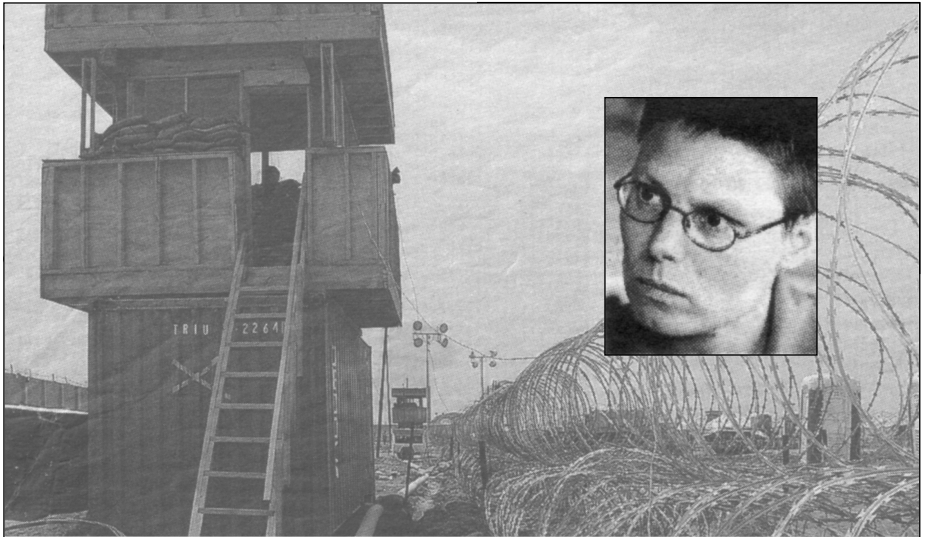
Paavo
Lipponen

The election of a new leader is also the election of a future prime minister as the Social Democrats seem to take turns with the Center Party to lead the government.

Heinälouma, formerly the party secretary, is a traditionalist social democrat whose "school teacher know-it-all" ways are not appreciated by all party comrades. He has had a long career in the trade union movement as well as the Social Democratic party. He is expected to steer the party to the left. He is described as very goal-oriented, a man who regards politics as a chess game. However he has no academic education and is not proficient in any other languages. He has been taking English lessons but, unlike his predecessors, he is not expected to play an international role.



Eero Hei-
nälouma



DANISH TROOPS DENY ABUSE CHARGES

DK In a case with echoes of the Abu Ghraib scandal, a Danish army captain and four military police sergeants have pleaded not guilty to charges of mistreating 11 Iraqi detainees.

The charges stem from three interrogations of detainees at Camp Eden in the southern city of Basra, where the 530-strong Danish contingent in Iraq has been based.

The military prosecutor told Copenhagen City Court that Capt. Annette Hommel forced the four detainees to kneel in uncomfortable positions while she questioned them. Hommel and the four military police sergeants on trial are also accused of verbally humiliating the detainees and denying them water during questioning.

Two of the military police sergeants are accused of dragging one detainee so that his pants were pulled down to his ankles.

The court banned publication of the names of the four sergeants. Hommel has not asked that her name be withheld. If found guilty, each could face a one-year jail sentence. A verdict is expected in December.

The abuse inquiry first made headlines in Denmark last August and prompted Defense Minister Søren Gade to recall Danish military commanders from Iraq.

(Above) A picture of Abu Ghraib that looks very similar to Camp Eden in Basra where Captain Annette Hommel (inset) is alleged to have mistreated prisoners.

Capt Hommel, 37, said she had done nothing wrong. She said the allegations stemmed from a misunderstanding with the translators, who were Danish citizens with Palestinian and Iraqi origins, working at the camp. She had acted in an aggressive manner to break the detainees "negative attitude that was probably based on the fact that I was a woman." Annette Hommel has practically grown up in the Naestved Regiment where her father was the commander. She is a practising Christian.

"Personally I would have preferred to be told that (Annette) had been injured in combat than to have her charged for this," said Leif Hommel Nielsen who has no doubts about his daughter's innocence.

Out of a group of eight officers in the intelligence section at Camp Eden, Hommel was the only one with proper training. Yet she was given a low-level position in a prison. Unlike in the Abu Ghraib case, no images of the Danish abuse have surfaced and most people in Denmark support their government's backing of the US-led coalition in Iraq.

Swedish Press

NVA SVENSKA PRESSEN EST. 1929

RETAILERS MAKE IT BIG IN NORWAY

Swedish chain stores are thriving in Norway. IKEA, H&M, Clas Ohlson and Lindex have made a profit of two billion Norwegian kroner over the last three years. H&M alone made a record 1.1 billion NOK.

Norwegian Press

SHRINKING GLACIERS

Norwegian glaciers shrank for the fourth straight year in 2004 because of warm summers and winters with little snow. Some receded at the fastest rate since measurements started in 1900.