

INTERNATIONAL Herald Tribune

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By Richard Bernstein
The cowardice of Web anonymity

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INTERNATIONAL LIFE 20

'Challenging the institution'



Barack Obama at a campaign event in Lynchburg, Virginia, this month. Indications that many voters say they do not feel they know him puzzle those closest to him.

The mystery and constancy of Barack Obama

By Jodi Kantor

DENVER: From the earliest days of his presidential campaign, Senator Barack Obama's aides have heard the same mantra. He repeated it after debates and appearances, after victories and defeats. "I need to get better," he would say.

In the way Obama has trained himself for competition, he can sometimes seem as much athlete as politician. Even before he entered public life, he began honing not only his political skills, but also his mental and emotional ones. He developed a self-discipline so complete, friends and aides say, that he has established dominion over not only what he does, but also how he feels. He does not easily exult, despair or anger: To do so would be an indulgence, a distraction from his goals. Instead, they say, he separates himself from the moment and assesses.

"He doesn't inhale," said David Axelrod, his chief strategist.

But as Obama was preparing formally to become the Democratic presidential nominee Wednesday night, some of the same qualities that have brought him just one election away from the White House — his virtuosity, his seriousness, his ability to inspire, his seeming immunity from the strains that afflict others — may be among his biggest obstacles to getting there.

There is little about him that feels spontaneous or unpolished, and even after two books, thousands of campaign events and countless hours on television, many voters say they do not feel they know him. The charges of elusiveness puzzle those closest to him. Far more than most politicians, they say, he is the same in public as he is in private.

The mystery and the constancy may share the same root: Obama, 47, is the first presidential candidate to come of age during an era of relentless, 24-hour scrutiny.

"He is, more than any other contemporary political figure, a creature of these times," said Representative Earl Blumenauer, who campaigned with him in Oregon this spring.

Last month in Jerusalem, Obama visited the Western Wall and crammed in a note that was promptly fished out and posted on the Internet. The message was elegantly phrased, as if the candidate had anticipated that his private words to the Almighty would soon be on public display.

In the note, Obama asked for protection, forgiveness and wisdom, a message in keeping with the humility he tries to emphasize. But his uncanny self-assurance and smooth glide upward have stoked

OBAMA, Continued on Page 8

■ After Hillary Rodham Clinton's speech, Democrats wait to see what Bill has to say. **Page 4**

■ When it comes to blasting McCain on the economy, the Democrats are moving slowly. **Page 4**

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Complete coverage of the 2008 Democratic National Convention, including the latest news, commentary, photographs, video and audio.

Fore! And it had better be in English

By Larry Dorman

Concerned about its appeal to sponsors, the U.S. women's professional golf tour, which in recent years has been dominated by players born outside the United States, has warned its members that they must become conversant in English by 2009 or face suspension.

"We live in a sports-entertainment environment," said Libba Galloway, deputy commissioner of the tour, the Ladies Professional Golf Association. "For an athlete to be successful today in the sports entertainment world we live in, they need to be great performers on and off the course, and being able to communicate effectively with sponsors and fans is a big part of this."

"Being a U.S.-based tour, and with the majority of our fan base, pro-am contestants, sponsors and participants being English speaking, we think it is important for our players to effectively communicate in English."

The LPGA and the other profession-



Alastair Grant/The Associated Press

Out of 120 non-American players eligible to play for the LPGA, 45 of them are South Korean. The tour has 358 American players.

al golf tours, unlike professional team sports, are dependent on their relationships with corporate sponsors for their financial survival.

Although Galloway insisted that "the vast majority" of the 120 international players on the LPGA circuit already spoke enough English to get by, she declined to say how many did not. There are 26 countries represented on the LP-

GA Tour. South Korea, with 45 golfers, has the largest non-U.S. contingent. The LPGA says that 358 American players are now eligible for the Tour.

The LPGA's new language policy — believed to be the only such policy in a major sport — was first reported by Golfweek magazine on its Web site Monday. According to Golfweek, the LPGA held a meeting with the tour's South Korean players last week before the Safeway Classic, at which the LPGA commissioner, Carolyn Bivens, outlined the policy. Golfweek reported that

many in attendance misunderstood the penalty, believing they would lose their tour cards if they did not meet the language requirement.

Even so, the magazine reported, many South Korean players interviewed supported the policy, including the Hall of Famer Se Ri Pak. "We agree

GOLF, Continued on Page 19

Conflict takes toll on Russian markets

The effects of Russia's first foreign war as a capitalist country have wreaked havoc on the Russian stock markets, which dropped this week to their lowest levels since 2006, while also frightening away foreign investors. But so far the conflict has done little damage to its robust, oil-driven economy. **Page 11**

Brazil and Argentina diverge on price policy

Rising food prices mean that many farmers around the world are reaping record profits. And the South American agricultural powerhouses, Brazil and Argentina, are responding to the farming windfall in exactly opposite ways, and with different results. **Page 12**

China and Iraq reach \$3 billion deal on oil

Iraq and China have agreed on the terms of a \$3 billion oil service contract, Iraq's oil minister said. It is Iraq's first big oil contract with a foreign firm since the fall of Saddam Hussein. **Page 14**

Vulnerable Afghan city

A jailbreak of 900 Afghans orchestrated by the Taliban on June 13 exposed the weakness of the Afghan government, its army and the police. **Page 5**

Iraq prisoner killings

In March or April 2007, three non-commissioned U.S. Army officers killed four Iraqi prisoners with shots to the head as they stood by a Baghdad canal blindfolded, two officers said. **Page 5**

A killing unnerves Israelis

Israeli society has been gripped by a nightmarish tale of infidelity, child abuse and murder. **Page 5**

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Wednesday, noon	Previous	
€1=	\$1.4687	\$1.4622
£1=	\$1.8304	\$1.8365
¥1=	¥109.770	¥109.840
₱1=	₱1.1010	₱1.1017

Full currency rates | **Page 15**

OIL	New York, Wednesday, noon
Light sweet crude	\$118.05 ▲ \$1.99

STOCK INDEXES	Wednesday
The Dow noon	11,450.89 ▲ 0.33%
FTSE 100 close	5,528.10 ▲ 1.05%
Nikkei 225 close	12,752.96 ▼ 0.20%



Stuart Goldenberg

Nikon ups the ante

It may not look like much, but Nikon's new camera, the D90, is a game-changing device that is rocket-fast with no shutter lag and sits squarely in between pocket models and the big professional rigs. **Page 17**

NATO ships cause alarm in Moscow

Alliance raises its profile in Black Sea

By Andrew Kramer

MOSCOW: Russian commanders Wednesday said they were growing alarmed at the number of NATO warships sailing into the Black Sea, conceding that NATO vessels now outnumbered the ships in their fleet anchored off the western coast of Georgia.

As focus turned to the balance of naval power in the sea, the leader of the separatist region of Abkhazia said he would invite Russia to establish a naval base at the deep-water port of Sukhumi.

And in a move certain to pique Russia, at a time when tensions over Ukraine's predominantly Russian province of Crimea are already elevated, the Ukrainian president, Viktor Yushchenko, said he would open negotiations with the authorities in Moscow to raise the rent on the Russian naval base at Sevastopol.

The United States is pursuing a delicate policy of delivering humanitarian aid on military transport planes and ships, to illustrate to the Russians that they do not fully control Georgia's airspace or coastline.

The policy has left American and Russian naval vessels maneuvering in close proximity off the western coast of Georgia, with the Americans sailing near the southern port of Batumi and the Russians the central port of Poti.

Apparently testing Russian assertions that their forces have opened the port of Poti for humanitarian aid, the U.S. Embassy in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, said a coast guard cutter, the Dallas, would try to dock there Wednesday, well within a zone controlled by the Russian military during the war.

Russian soldiers had occupied the port and sunk Georgian ships in the harbor. And Russian officials said their forces were now out of the city but occupying positions at checkpoints just to the north. Russian ships are also patrolling off the coast.

The Dallas, however, docked instead at Batumi, to the south. It was carrying 34 tons of humanitarian aid. Georgian military officials said the other port might have been mined. The Associated Press reported.

In Moscow, the naval maneuvering was clearly raising alarms. Russian commanders said the buildup of NATO vessels in the Black Sea violated a 1936 treaty, the Convention of Montreux, that they maintain limits to three weeks the time non-coastal countries can sail military vessels on the sea.

Colonel General Anatoli Nogovitsyn, the deputy head of the Russian general staff, told a briefing in Moscow that under the agreement, Turkey, which controls the straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles, must be notified 15 days in advance before military ships sail into the sea, and that warships cannot remain longer than 21 days.

"The convention stipulates a limited number of vessels," he said. "That is, the same state cannot deploy a certain group without any limit."

He said any sustained NATO mission would require rotating ships through the straits.

The total number of NATO ships in the sea was unclear Wednesday.

GEORGIA, Continued on Page 8



Mikhail Galustov for The NYT
Dmitri Rogozin, Russia's envoy to NATO, scorns "illusions of partnership."

Envoy big on bluster suddenly is a better fit

By Clifford J. Levy

MOSCOW: Here is one measure of the aggressive shift in Russian foreign policy in recent days: Dmitri Rogozin, Russia's representative to NATO, a finger-wagging nationalist who once hung Stalin's portrait in his office, is not sounding so extreme any more.

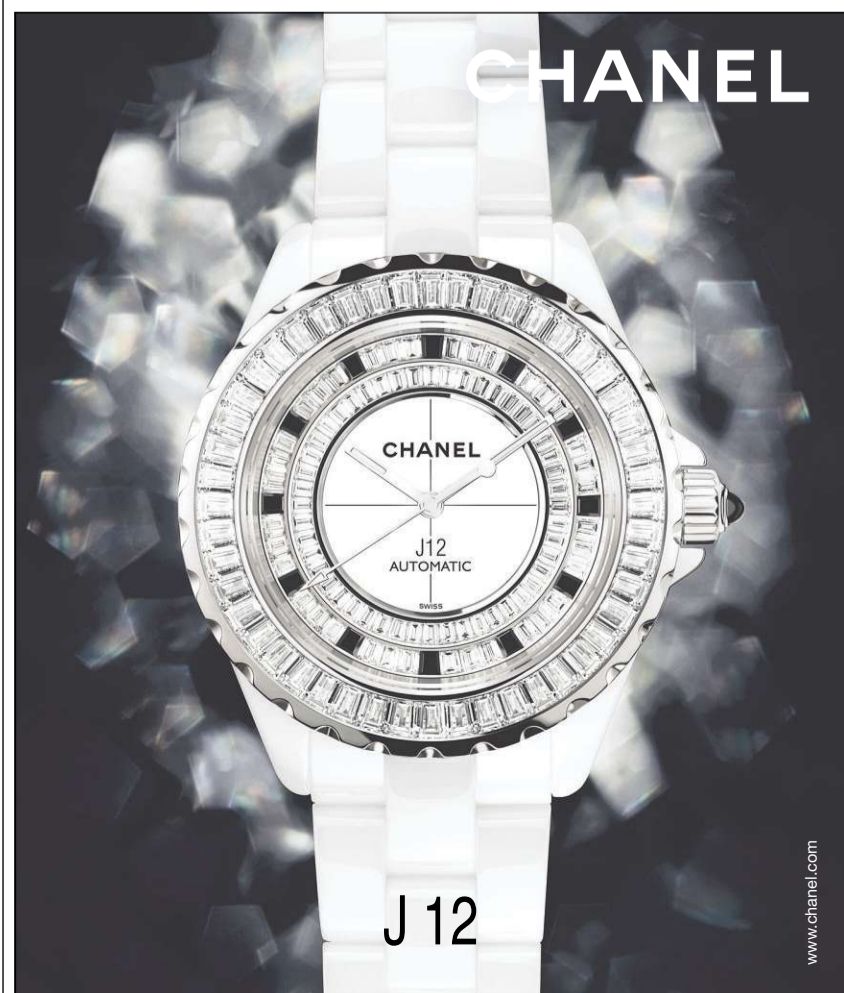
"There are two dates that have changed the world in recent years: Sept. 11, 2001, and Aug. 8, 2008," Rogozin said in an interview, explaining the ramifications of the conflict that erupted in Georgia nearly three weeks ago. "They are basically identical in terms of significance."

"Sept. 11 motivated the United States to behave really differently in the world," he said. "That is to say, Americans realized that even in their homes, they could not feel safe. They had to protect their interests, outside the boundaries of the U.S. For Russia, it is the same thing. We were sitting in our homes, the national discussion was internal. Now this Georgian attack is perceived as aggression, and made us realize that we cannot stay home. We have to go outside our homes to protect ourselves on new frontiers."

Only a few months ago, the blustery Rogozin, 44, was regarded even in the Kremlin as more performance artist than diplomat. Established officials sometimes rolled their eyes when he was mentioned, as if to acknowledge that Vladimir Putin had dispatched him to NATO to do a little trash talking to rattle the West.

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