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Bin Laden's Death Is Still Unconfirmed

BY ARIANE BERNARD
THE NEW YORK TIMES

PARIS - French officials said Saturday that the government could not confirm intelligence information published in a French newspaper that the terrorist leader Osama bin Laden died in Pakistan last month.

On Saturday, L'Est Republicain quoted an internal memorandum from France's foreign intelligence service, the DGSE, as saying, "Saudi intelligence services seem to be sure that Osama bin Laden is dead. The elements gathered by the Saudis indicate that the head of al-Qaida was the victim, while he was in Pakistan on Aug 23, 2006, of a strong case of typhoid fever that led to a partial paralysis of his lower limbs."

A senior French intelligence official confirmed that the document was authentic but said the information was "absolutely, absolutely not verified." The official said the memorandum had been sent to the president, prime minister and some ministries as a regular report on terrorism-related intelligence traffic.

President Jacques Chirac responded to questions from reporters by saying, "This information is in no way confirmed, in no way whatsoever." The defense

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FEELING FEVERISH - A nurse assists a patient with symptoms of the mosquito-borne dengue fever at a government hospital in Manila on Sunday. There have been dengue fever outbreaks worldwide this year, and health officials have recorded more than 100 deaths throughout the Philippines as well as Cambodia.

Islamists Calm Somali Capital With Restraint

BY JEFFREY GETTLEMAN
THE NEW YORK TIMES

MOGADISHU, Somalia - As the sun begins to sink over this broken city, work crews swing their axes over their shoulders and head home.

Young couples take to the waterfront, mingling openly in the salty breeze. Thousands of children flock to football fields in

the city center, with a backdrop of beautifully crumbled ruins from battles now over.

It is hard to imagine that this is Mogadishu, the same Mogadishu where clans have fought during 15 years of anarchy. But over the past three months, the Islamists in control here have defied international expectations—in many ways. Not only have they pacified

one of the most dangerous cities in the world, they also seem to have moderated their message.

Instead of acting like the Taliban and ruthlessly imposing a harsh religious orthodoxy, as many feared, the Islamists seem to be trying to increase public support by softening their views, at least officially, delivering social

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Cambodia Greets an Invasion of Foreign Cash

BY DON LEE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

US diplomats made a big splash early this year when they opened an embassy near Wat Phnom, the hill dominated by a holy temple where, according to legend, Phnom Penh was founded.

US Ambassador Joseph Musomeli trumpeted the four-story marble-and-granite outpost as a "powerful symbol" of US interests in Cambodia.

On the other side of the capital, the Chinese also are giving their embassy a makeover. But they're doing a lot more in Cambodia.

The Chinese are digging up minerals and exploring for oil. They are cutting down forests and in some places planting saplings. And across Cambodia, they are building garment factories, power plants, bridges and roads, some into neighboring Laos.

For centuries, Cambodia has tried to fend off greater powers such as Thailand and Vietnam. But today Phnom Penh is welcoming the Chinese with open arms, praising Beijing as a government that offers its largess unconditionally.

By Phnom Penh's tally, Chi-

nese state-owned and private companies plowed more than \$450 million into Cambodia last year—a 460 percent increase over 2004—making China by far the nation's top foreign investor. Beijing says it is also giving hundreds of millions of dollars in loans and aid to Cambodia, easily surpassing the \$62 million in loans and aid from the US.

Some Western diplomats see China's growing influence here as a threat to US political interests in the region.

Washington has tried to exert influence on Cambodia through

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