

Headlines:

- Raheel Sharif heads "Muslim NATO"
- Venezuela in Crisis
- Muslim Girls Must Swim with Boys in Switzerland

Details:

Raheel Sharif heads "Muslim NATO"

The former head of the Pakistan army Raheel Sharif, has accepted an offer to head a Saudi led coalition of nations to "fight terrorism". The coalition, whose headquarters is in Riyadh has appointed Sharif based upon his expertise in organising and leading the Pakistan army, considered the most developed army in the Muslim world. Many see this as a way to bring legitimacy to a coalition in which some Muslim countries immediately denounced or disassociated themselves with. This was always part of Saudi Arabia's aim to posit itself as the "Sunni resistance" within the Muslim world against its Iranian competitor and so far this attempt of uniting the Muslim armies whilst affirming their national identities and secular interests has failed. What good will Raheel do to an already weak coalition of nations?

Venezuela in Crisis

Economic conditions within Venezuela continued to escalate this week, as it appointed its new economic czar to manage the crisis. As an oil producing nation, it has not fared well since the plunge in prices. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that the country's inflation is expected to rise 1,660% this year and 2,880% next year. The country is suffering from huge shortages in food, medicine, and electricity, which has triggered upheavals ranging from widespread looting of stores to disruptions in the school year for millions of children. Minimum wages have risen by over 50% in the past week alone and analysts say the latest increase in minimum wage doesn't come close to keeping up with the rate of inflation, meaning that it won't raise the minimum wage to a rate that's easy to actually live on. The inflation crisis has made the everyday use of cash incredibly difficult. When Velasco visited Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, last fall, it took about 10 100-bolivar bills, which was the country's largest-denomination bill to simply buy a cup of coffee in a shop. Crisis has certainly reached Venezuela and only time will tell if it can recover from this economic anarchy.

Muslim Girls Must Swim with Boys in Switzerland

Switzerland has won a European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) case allowing it to force Muslim parents to send their daughters to mixed school swimming lessons. They were ruling on a legal challenge brought by two Swiss-Turkish parents from Basel, Aziz Osmanoğlu and Sehabat Kocabaş, who refused to send their daughters to mixed swimming lessons on the grounds "that their beliefs prohibited them from allowing their children to take part". A panel of seven judges found that freedom of religion had been "interfered with" but that the move was legitimised by the aim of "social integration". "The Court observed that school played a special role in the process of social integration, and one that was all the more decisive where pupils of foreign origin were concerned," a statement said. "The children's interest in a full education, thus facilitating their successful social integration according to local customs and mores, prevailed over the parents' wish to have their children exempted from mixed swimming lessons."