

Consolidated weekly report

POLICY: Society

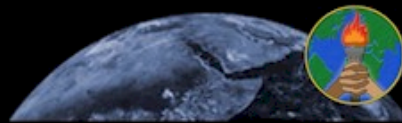
[called *Social Security* until 20070329]

Focus article coming soon

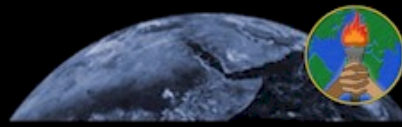
Hazard Level

Change Codes
↓ Deteriorated
• Steady
↑ Improved
↗ Alert

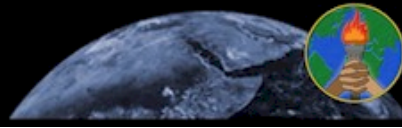
week-ended	See daily list of news items
2007 Jul 01	↓ An observer argues the US has now fallen well below its own standards as a " <i>bastion of freedom</i> " -- Bush's post-9/11 policies have become enemies of the open society .
2007 Jun 24	↓ The administration seems unprepared not only for the <u>3,500 deaths</u> in Iraq but as well for the over <u>35,000 serious injuries</u> that will cost families and a nation for a lifetime -- Gov't struggles to care for wounded GI's . <i>"George W. Bush has degraded many important American concepts and values, such as the rule of law, human rights, and just government. Civilian control of the military is his next victim"</i> -- The End of Supreme Command . The Cheney Branch of Government -- "rather than proving to be an asset with no liabilities, he has turned out to be a liability with hard-to-identify assets." Latin <i>street gangs</i> have dynamic links with counterparts in the US ; "many of these gangs are formed by young Central American men who have trained in the streets of California " -- The Scourge of Juvenile Gangs in Central America .
2007 Jun 17	• A useful survey of the <u>history and typology of think tanks</u> -- Think Tank in Global Perspective .
2007 Jun 10	• Extra British Police During Full Moons , ABC News - USA, 20070605. [18414] Long known by hospital workers and police, the full moon does bring out the lunatics.
2007 Jun 03	• German G-8 Summit Protests Turn Violent -- middle-class <i>pseudo-anarchists</i> and sociopaths waste communal resources with no conceivable useful purpose -- some <u>146 police</u> were hurt, 25 of them seriously. Rotterdam bans cannabis-selling cafes near schools -- "the new laws will not cover <i>primary schools</i> , as <i>primary school children hardly ever consume cannabis ...</i> "; cannabis shops in the Netherlands have <i>revenue</i> of around \$1.3B/year. The <i>Global Peace Index</i> of 24 factors from <i>overseas wars</i> to <i>street violence</i> and <i>prison population</i> ranks the US 96th , just ahead of Iran -- Norway rated world's most peaceful country .
2007 May 27	• <i>Massive income, no socially-useful skills, parasitic guilt</i> -- no surprise Australia's top <i>lawyers</i> [barrister/s] have been found involved with <i>cocaine</i> .
2007 May 20	• A new poll shows an aggregate of <u>75%</u> of <i>Americans</i> are <i>discontented</i> ; to varying degrees, all statistical groups think <i>Camelot</i> it ain't. Former Speaker Newt Gingrich again condemns " <i>radical</i> " <i>secularism</i> , and it seems all forms of secularism, and alleges the US is a <i>Judeo-Christian</i> foundation -- Gingrich: Challenge 'Radical Secularism' . [Comment: The United States in fact rested its foundation on "radical



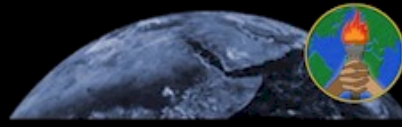
	<p>secularism" -- "<i>the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God</i>", Voltaire's god not the Hebrew god who has hijacked the document.] Jerry Falwell, the most divisive person since <i>Stalin</i>, now gets the chance to find out if Jesus really does vote Republican; or not -- Father of Christian Zionism Leaves the Building. "Minorities" now comprise 100 million of the US population -- the population is segmenting between people who want jobs (increasingly Hispanic) and people who want health care (non-Hispanic).</p> <p>French President Sarkozy has appointed a Muslim woman as a minister -- "<i>It is the first time a French Muslim has held a top government job</i>".</p> <p><i>Racked with guilt?... a burden on society? ... no socially-useful skills?</i> -- no surprise the nation's top lawyers turn to cocaine; Australia hears that cocaine use is not unknown to the nation's highest-paid lawyers [solicitors and barristers].</p> <p>A study finds that 25 countries presently block web-sites; "China, Iran, Myanmar, Syria, Tunisia and Vietnam had the most extensive filters for political sites"; others filter social sites extensively.</p>
2007 May 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much brutality is really necessary to produce a sane, well-trained war-fighter? - Army Training Regimen Brutal in US, Needs Overhauling.
2007 May 06	<p>↓ Former President Clinton sees disasters looming and government not equipped to handle them -- "<i>governments fail to act even when disasters are anticipated because leaders are distracted by ... immediate emergencies.... <u>Big-picture planning gets crowded out.</u></i>"</p> <p>Would Jefferson agree? -- NRA: Terror Suspects Have Gun Rights, Too.</p> <p>Presidential contender Sen. Barack Obama has been given Secret Service protection, nine months before the election, the <u>earliest ever</u> for a presidential candidate.</p> <p>An unsavory clash during a protest march on immigration policy in LA's <i>MacArthur Park</i> has advanced neither the immigration debate nor admiration for the people skills of LA's police.</p> <p>The rat race is getting faster; walking speeds of urban-dwellers have increased globally by <u>10%</u> over the last decade; Singaporeans are fastest, followed by Copenhagen and Madrid.</p>
2007 Apr 29	<p>↓ A bomb was found outside a Texas clinic performing abortions, and disarmed.</p> <p>A tale curiously and curiously emerged at a hearing of the Oversight Committee into matters surrounding Jessica Lynch and Pat Tillman; it was not <i>spin</i> exposed but a psychotic desperation from the very top to rewrite reality -- Pentagon spin on Iraq 'heroes' exposed.</p>
2007 Apr 22	<p>↓ Proving again the adage that those who <i>live by a gun, die by a gun</i>, another mass killing in a public place shocked the US and the world. Does the "world's greatest nation" have a terminal disease -- Massacre triggers world criticism of U.S. gun laws. "<i>Even by US standards, gun culture in Blacksburg was an obsession</i>" -- Blacksburg a town 'saturated with guns'. And there was an intelligent look at why the <i>Second Amendment</i> [like <i>witch burning</i>] is an anachronism in the modern world -- The right to bear arms. Then, with stunning incisiveness, Congress thought it had the answer - U.S. Congress may act to keep guns from mentally ill.</p>
2007 Apr 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impunity of the moral high ground: a tale of the World Bank, Paul Wolfowitz, a "friend" on a stupendous salary, and the US State Department -- Wolfowitz in World Bank Web of Sex and Scandal.
2007 Apr 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administration's point-man on abstinence has prematurely withdrawn himself from office. <p><u>Holistics</u>: Boston is promising hospitals that are both green and health-giving -- "<i>the new greener outlook is <u>not just about energy conservation</u> <u>buildings that are more</u></i>"</p>



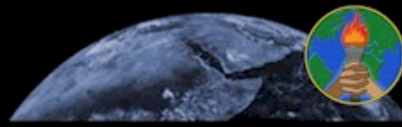
	<p><i>in tune with the environment help patients heal quicker" Why 3-year olds are cheerful and adults are not -- "A friendly bacterium found in soil has the same uplifting effects as those produced by anti-depressant drugs" -- Getting dirty could prevent depression.</i></p>
2007 Apr 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senator Barack Obama accused President Bush of 'Social Darwinism', law of the jungle. [An <i>American Dream</i> for a few means the American Nightmare for many.]
2007 Mar 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report published in <i>The Lancet</i> [UK] suggests "alcohol and tobacco are more dangerous than some illegal drugs like marijuana".
2007 Mar 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysts say that, four years on, all of the Bush administration's "political capital" of 2004 has been spent on Iraq, with no money, ideas or will left for a social agenda. The Surgeon General is the third to be sacrificed in the <i>Walter Reed</i> scandal.
2007 Mar 12	<p>↓ Investigators say the <i>Walter Reed army hospital</i> scandal is just an instance of <u>wider</u> problems at veterans' hospitals across the country. Some say the <i>Walter Reed</i> situation is further proof of the lack of Iraq war planning.</p>
2007 Mar 05	<p>↓ The US Army fired the commander of <i>Walter Reed Hospital</i> -- appalling conditions at <i>Walter Reed</i> have been blamed on "failure of leadership". President Bush ordered a review of service members' care and the Army Secretary resigned over exposure of the shameful treatment of wounded veteran's. But <i>Time</i> asked why the only general who was trying to fix the problems was fired; what of the ones who actually stuffed it up?</p> <p>Harvard researchers at the <i>American Heart Association's</i> 47th Annual Conference say excessive TV viewing among young children is linked to poor eating habits. President Bush acknowledges that <i>New Orleans</i> is still pretty much a mess and promises remain unfulfilled. Amid bipartisan progress towards self-sufficiency and an emphasis on education and skills, some dysfunctions remain due to fear and loathing of the very word "welfare".</p> <p>The first on-line parliamentary vote in the world has been held; in Estonia.</p>
2007 Feb 26	<p>↓ <i>National Center for Policy Analysis</i> asks Where did all the leisure go? -- leisure per capita is the same as it was in 1900 but is cruelly redistributed -- none to some [the "24-7"s], much to others [the unemployed]. Also, <i>National Center for Policy Analysis</i> publishes a view [The free-market zealot's view] on US national health care -- the "monopolistic buying power" of government does not lower the real cost of health care, it only shifts it - Health Spending Report Debated Some US states report that they are running out of health funds -- "<i>many states have nearly used up their annual federal subsidy for child health care, and it is not even midway through the fiscal year ...</i>"</p> <p>New Secretary of Defense Gates says the quality of out-patient medical care for wounded US troops is "unacceptable" -- "<i>they battled our foreign enemies -- they should not have to battle an American bureaucracy.</i>"</p> <p>US police say they need heavier weapons in their daily work -- deputies are now "frequently" encountering assault weapons in local robberies and during simple traffic stops. Persistently high crime rates is turning <i>New Orleans</i> into the "<i>Big Uneasy</i>" -- "<i>it doesn't matter how much money they get from the federal government, nobody's going to stay.</i>"</p> <p>Small town America is hard hit by war casualties -- nearly half of the 3,100 deaths have come from towns where fewer than 25,000 people live; 20% come from towns with less than 5,000.</p>
2007 Feb 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>60%</u> of the US budget is "entitlements" -- failure to address inadequacies in the system may be because politicians are afraid to embrace the politically distasteful term "welfare state" and make it work properly. <p>A UNICEF survey ranks the US and UK at the <u>bottom</u> in child welfare -- "<i>They</i></p>



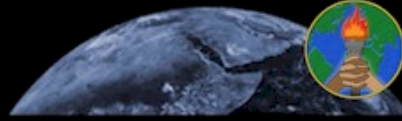
	<p>don't invest as much in children as continental European countries do." [Netherlands ranks top]</p> <p>A <i>Time</i> writer says the time of <i>bigoted triumphalism</i> is over and the values of <i>liberation theology</i> are re-emerging. God and Darwin again fought it out in court again, in Kansas – and Darwin, for the moment, won. [No-one say Lamarckism.]</p> <p>Harvard named its first <i>female</i> President.</p>
2007 Feb 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidential candidate Barack Obama pledges a “new generation of U.S. leadership” – defending his short time in Washington, he says "<i>but I've been there long enough to know that the ways of Washington must change.</i>"
2007 Feb 05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>War on Poverty</i> continues -- In <i>Orlando</i> it is now illegal to feed the homeless; "a week before Orlando's ordinance took effect, <i>Las Vegas</i> criminalized giving food to even a single transient in any city park." • US Presidential candidate John Edwards announced he would introduce <i>health-care</i> closer to the standards of most industrialized nations. • CDC held an <i>exercise</i> practicing for the “Big One” and discovered shortcomings (as exercises should) -- "<u>some [necessary] information was classified, so some key public health experts didn't have all the facts.</u>" [And the exercise was called off due to weather.] • The US Corps of Engineers lists 122 <i>levees</i> at risk from coast to coast -- "the list was released in response to <i>Freedom of Information Act</i> requests filed by news organizations...". • A <i>quality of life</i> report place the US fifth, following 1-France 2-Australia 3-Netherlands 4-New Zealand. • Unions say "technology developed for security will be used to track, label and <i>control workforces</i>."
2007 Jan 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic Senator, and Presidential pre-selection candidate, Barack Obama has called for <i>universal health care</i> -- "<i>We can't afford another disappointing charade in 2008, 2009 and 2010.</i>" President Bush has proposed a new <i>health insurance</i> plan -- "<i>This is a dangerous policy that ultimately <u>shifts cost and risk from employers to employees</u> and could result in a higher number of uninsured.</i>" • California has announced a <i>State Marketing Agreement for Food Safety</i> -- "<i>The action is the first of a series of steps to be taken by the industry and the state in response to [recent fresh food poisoning outbreaks]</i>" • Trojans represent the majority of <i>malware</i> but <i>spyware</i> infects the most computers. 20% of Trojan viruses that infected computers during 2006 were designed to steal <i>bank details</i>. • The FBI has been called on to assist with the response to 'race' gang violence -- "<i>A 14% increase in gang-related crime over the past year is the first since 2003...</i>"
2007 Jan 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the UK, <i>crystal methadone</i> has been promoted from class “B” to a class “A” <i>drug</i>, recognizing that the dangerous stimulant often involved in violence and other crime is taking a foothold throughout much of the world.
2007 Jan 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boston is pressing Congress for tougher <i>gun laws</i> -- "<i>We need to convince Congress to pass common sense gun laws -- laws that punish immoral gun dealers and protect our citizens.</i>" • There are estimated 744,000 homeless people in the US -- "<i>It's a whole influx of new people, and that's the really scary part.</i>" • California is now the fourth (and largest) state to attempt near <i>universal health coverage</i> for its citizens (with Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont).
2007 Jan 08	<p>↓ A curfew is being considered in New Orleans as a measure to stop a spate of <i>murders</i> -- "<i>At least seven people were shot and killed in the first week of the year in an outbreak of lawlessness that has sparked a public outcry for action.</i>" There has</p>



	<p>also been a spate of murders across Puerto Rico; most murders are drug-related and arms dealers oppose any move towards gun restrictions. With the new <i>Congress</i>, the US is set to look again at government medication price negotiation, a ground-shaking revolution for some, a practice well-established for 30 years in other countries.</p>
2007 Jan 01	<p>↓ The birth of the first global “super-union” is imminent -- for some a terrifying rebirth of the 1920s <i>International Workers of the World</i> (IWW); for others an obvious free-market development. Murders are up in New York and several other US cities in 2006 -- "<i>police departments tend to take credit when the murder toll goes down. When crime goes up, it will be interesting to see whether they will accept responsibility.</i>" The work-to-retirement ratio is a terror for all Western governments -- when German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck instituted the first state-run retirement program, the ratio of work years to retirement-years stood at 27:1; it is now 2:1. Proponents of universal medical coverage (as in countries such as Australia) say "<i>Although some people still insist that Social Security is headed for serious trouble, it's our health care system that is truly broken.</i>"</p>
2006 Dec 25	<p>↓ The National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza of November 2005 has been updated – it envisages many agencies will contribute to pandemic preparedness. Bacteria has killed a second baby in an LA hospital; profit-based outsourcing does it again -- medical instruments improperly sterilized by a "central supplier" was the probable source of the outbreak. Recent illness outbreaks from fresh food arises from too little regulation but opposition to food irradiation is a contributor. FBI data indicates that the lull in crime between 2001 and 2004 appears to be over and violent crime is on the rise.</p>
2006 Dec 18	<p>↓ A new report says the US health system is unprepared for a major catastrophic event -- "...emergency health preparedness remains inadequate five years after the 9/11 and anthrax attacks of 2001 raised fears of bioterrorism." The latest report by Reporters sans Frontières says North Korea, Turkmenistan, Eritrea are the worst violators of press freedom -- "<i>Unfortunately nothing has changed in the countries that are the worst predators of press freedom.</i>"</p>
2006 Dec 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent outbreaks of dangerous contamination in fresh food reveal holes in food safety -- "there is little consistency because the government guidelines aren't specific enough" and "produce growers balk at calls for regulation". [Better Dead than Regulated?]
2006 Dec 04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to report]
2006 Nov 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Aggressive changes" by the States in how Medicaid is managed in has brought the first decline in Medicaid costs ever. The first meeting of the National Governors Association after the mid-term elections has made clear its view of national priorities – immigration and health-care. "The return of Hillarycare?" said a headline -- vitriolic attacks on universal health-care as "<i>government's medical interference</i>" betrays ignorance of experience in other countries.
2006 Nov 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The USDA will not use the word hungry; it says of 12% (35 million) in the US ... Let them eat euphemism - "very low food security" A prototype hospital emergency facility in Washington that could expand its areas to handle 10 times the regular number of patients in disaster needs funds to continue design. [<i>Interpretation</i>: A 10-factor is not impressive when "disaster" may call for a thousand-fold requirement.] Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt expressed opposition to negotiation on Medicare drug prices. [<i>Opinion</i>: Is Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt paid by big pharmaceuticals to take such a position?]
2006 Nov 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to report]



2006 Nov 06	<p>↓ Turnout: Why do so few people vote in the US? "Americans are less apt to vote than are people in old democracies, new ones, dangerous places, dirt poor ones, freezing cold ones, stinking hot ones and highly dysfunctional ones."</p>
2006 Oct 30	<p>↓ The Reporters Without Borders Annual Index drops the US 9 places since last year to 53rd, with Botswana, Croatia, Tonga. [Top of the list is Finland, Netherlands, Ireland, Iceland.]</p>
2006 Oct 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first two years of data from a unique national surveillance project reveals that thousands are hospitalized annually in the US from bad reactions to drugs.
2006 Oct 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [nothing significant to report]
2006 Oct 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US researchers have shown a natural compound found in Marijuana may block formation of Alzheimers plaques in sufferers` brains better than current prescribed drugs.
2006 Oct 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Research Council [US] warns too little is known about the effect nanoparticles may have on " biological and ecological processes".
2006 Sep 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A study found that fewer than 3% of black churches are participating in the faith-based initiative due to lack of infrastructure.
2006 Sep 18	<p>↓ It seems certain a litany of fixable problems will plague the upcoming US elections. A report said one in five children will become obese and the government has killed one of the few remedial programs proven to work.</p>
2006 Sep 11	<p>↓ New York child poverty – expressed as both hunger and obesity -- is 50% higher than the US average — worker productivity is rising but CEOs are among the few who have seen an increase in wages — the US spends more on health care than all other nations but ranks 31st in life expectancy and 40th in childhood survival until age five.</p>
2006 Sep 04	<p>↓ Real wages fail to match past annual rises in productivity; the US now has two economies—census data showed one in eight Americans in poverty; "we are spending more money than ever on anti-poverty programs and we haven't done anything to reduce poverty." Two busts within a week totaling over 500 pounds of crystal meth from Mexican drug gangs proves the problem is "enormous and growing".</p>
2006 Aug 28	<p>↓ Recovery from Hurricane Katrina is still so incomplete a year later that there are serious doubts of the ability to manage another emergency — Gulf Coast hospitals were said to be unprepared for new storms. As to US socioeconomic demography some asked "Why does the U.S. inequality profile look so much like that of a third-world dictatorship? ... When will the second American Revolution begin?"</p>
2006 Aug 21	<p>↓ The head of a major Mexican cartel responsible for 20 murders and the Tijuana tunnel has been arrested by the Coast Guard and DEA — the indiscriminate use of antibiotics has led to the rapid increase in resistant strains, particularly USA300 first identified in 2000.</p>
2006 Aug 14	<p>↓ Electricity supply in the Northern Virginia to New York corridor and four other key areas faces "unparalleled problems" — a DEA travelling exhibit has been criticised for naïve oversimplification of the drug-terrorism link and failing to admit most crime arises from prohibition itself.</p>
2006 Aug 07	<p>↓ In a move that may have resonance in the US, the UK Science Select Committee has recommended drug laws "remove the link with penalties and just focus on harm" -- this places alcohol and tobacco higher in the harm list than cannabis — police groups are alarmed at the current rapid rise in serious crime.</p>
2006 Jul 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the developed world has escaped many of the diseases of the developing world, diseases of affluence such as those arising from obesity and the increasing



		complexity of advanced <i>health-care</i> are problems just as difficult and expensive.
2006 Jul 24	↓	Some say nothing short of a " <i>pension catastrophe</i> " is coming; <i>methamphetamine</i> - the new heroin – has already arrived, in the eastern cities from the west and mid-west.
2006 Jul 17	•	[nothing significant to report]
2006 Jul 10	•	Unexpectedly, President Bush revived the issue of social security reforms.
2006 Jul 03	↓	There is inexplicable upsurge of crime in the “exburbs” and several signs of deterioration in public health care.
Commencement of Service		

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