

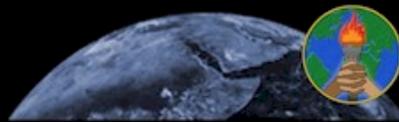
Consolidated weekly report

**CHALLENGER: *wild-card***

Focus article coming soon

Hazard Level	Change Codes
	↓ Deteriorated
	• Steady
	↑ Improved
	↗ Alert
	

week-ended	See daily <a href="#">list of news items</a>
2007 Jul 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Declaring himself a "soldier for Africa" <b>Libya's</b> Muammar <b>Gaddafi</b> has repeated his assertion that <b>Africa</b> must unite under a <i>single government</i> so it can compete in a globalize world -- "even Europe can only ensure its survival thanks to <b>union</b>." [Comment: <i>Sub-Saharan Africans</i> are wary of <i>Arab imperialism</i>.]</li> </ul>
2007 Jun 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>European Union</b> has established an <i>Operation Center</i> independent of NATO; "it poses no duplication of effort with NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), even though the two will perform exactly the same tasks ..." -- <a href="#">EU Opens Military Ops HQ</a>.  The <i>United States of Africa</i> is far from a done thing; "Black Africans must say no to this agenda because the <b>Arabs</b> see us as dumbs who can easily be duped." -- <a href="#">Danger of an Organised United States of Africa</a>.  <b>Turkey</b> [along with <b>Indonesia</b> and <b>Brazil</b>] becomes a <i>global diplomatic player</i> as a focus for '<i>the South</i>' -- <a href="#">Turkey to host meeting of world's poor countries</a>.  The <b>Australian navy</b> plans to spend around US\$9B on <i>warships</i> -- "the purchases would transform Australia's navy into one of the most powerful in the <b>Asia</b> region ..."  The 24 member <b>Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic</b>, comprising <b>Angola</b> and other south-west <i>African</i> countries is potentially a significant <i>south-south</i> alliance -- <a href="#">Premier Presents Strategies of Angola's South Atlantic Presidency</a>.</li> </ul>
2007 Jun 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group</b> has reminded President <b>Musharraf</b> of his own deadline of <u>2007</u> for separating the offices of <i>President</i> and <i>Army Chief</i>. <b>Balochi</b> rebels in expansive southern <b>Pakistan</b> pose perhaps a more daunting challenge than <i>Islamist militantism</i> in the <i>north-west</i> -- <a href="#">Baloch rebels challenge Musharraf</a>.  A significant <i>think-piece</i> on the possible consequences of a <b>Russia-Iran-Turkey</b> alliance that could strangle <b>Europe</b> and the <b>US</b> ... with the additional volatility of Turkish society precariously torn between <i>East</i> and <i>West</i> -- <a href="#">The Turkish Threat to World Peace</a>.</li> </ul>



2007 Jun 10

- A red flag to the **Turkish** bull, the *Kurdish flag* was hoisted over the *regional parliament* in north **Iraq** -- whatever the justice of the Kurdish cause, the US has failed for several years too long to appreciate the delicacy of the Kurdish issue; US *diplomatic perspective* is again cripplingly short. On the same day as reports of "*the largest military operation against Kurdish separatists in the south-east of the country in the past few years*", on 20070606, **AP** reported "several thousand" **Turkish** troops had crossed into northern **Iraq** -- *Turkish troops enter northern Iraq*. But, within hours, denials on all sides indicated the invasion that wasn't may have been a *feint*. In following days, Turkey continued building an "invasion" force (*tanks*) on the border and shelled Kurdish positions in Iraq; "*the Iraqi protest comes amid a major build-up of troops and tanks on the border with northern Iraq*" -- *Iraq condemns Turkish 'shelling'*.



Female pershmerga, the Kurdish security force / © AFP/File - Ahmad al-Rubaye

President **Musharraf** attempts to dampen volatility in a new decree allowing government promulgate new regulations and to *seize* equipment and to seal premises of *media organizations* acting against the regulations -- *Musharraf Issues Decree Cracking Down on News Media*. But following local and foreign outcry, **Pakistan** suspended use of the powers.

**Central Asia** is in increasingly sharp focus as a key to the *New World Order* -- *Common Threats Of Central Asia*.

Two "great nations of the South", **Brazil** and **India**, who now aspire to *permanent seats* of the **UN Security Council**, control between them a formidable proportion of the world's human and natural resources -- *Brazil and India to Quadruple Bilateral Trade to US\$ 10 Billion by 2010*.

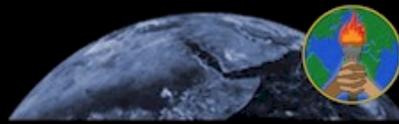
Influential voices in **Africa** are adamant that a *United State/s of Africa* is necessary and inevitable; "*a united State of Africa would also help solve the countless wars that have plagued the African continent*" -- *A United States of Africa is Non-Negotiable*.

2007 Jun 03

- The US again warns **Turkey** not to invade northern **Iraq**; Secretary **Gates** says "*The Turks have a genuine concern with Kurdish terrorism that takes place on Turkish soil.... So one can understand their frustration and unhappiness over this.*" **ASEM** members [**The Asia-Europe Meeting**] now represent *60% of international trade, 58% of the global population* and around *50% of world GDP*. **South Africa**, currently a non-permanent member of the **UN Security Council**, says it's just a club for the *Big Five*; "*Some of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council are using their clout to raise issues that do not belong in the decision-making body*". -- *U.N. powers use Council to push own agendas: SAfrica*.

2007 May 27

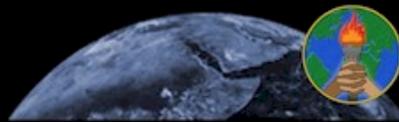
- ✓ In separate incidents, **Turkish** police detained two *suicide bombers*, in one case a woman was arrested in southern Turkey with 5kg of **A4**. A successful bombing injured over 100 in **Ankara** and was the *worst bombing in a decade*; it took place shortly before the **chief of General Staff** and others were due to pass the area. **Turkey's** control of the headwaters of **Tigris** and **Euphrates** rivers, and **Kurdish** separatist refuges in northern **Iraq**, ensure continuing uncertain relations between Turkey and Iraq -- *Turks Take The War Into Iraq*. Any analysis of the *Great Game*, **Central Asia**, and the *New Silk Road* is incomplete without China's western largely Islamic province of **Xinjiang**; "*the European Union, post-imperial Russia, the new independent actors in Central Asia and China's*



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	<p><i>Xinjiang are the key components of the new Silk Road ..."</i> -- <a href="#">The Xinjiang factor in the new Silk Road</a>.</p> <p>A good analysis showing why more subtle developments rather than misplaced <b>nukes</b> or actual takeover by <b>Islamists</b> are the risks in <b>Pakistan</b>, "<i>Unfortunately, unfounded fears about Pakistan's nuclear weapons have obscured more pressing threats.</i>"-- <a href="#">Are Pakistani nukes secure</a>.</p> <p>Another review of the <b>Pakistan</b> situation suggests it's Musharraf or an <i>apres-moi le deluge</i> moment -- <a href="#">Clock is ticking for Musharraf</a>.</p>
2007 May 20	<p>✓ As current chair of <b>Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)</b>, <b>Malaysia</b> urges the UN to intervene in <b>Gaza</b> to stop <b>Israeli collective punishment</b> of <b>Palestinians</b> -- "<i>All this violence must stop. The international community must intervene. I think the United Nations must intervene.</i>"</p> <p><i>"Angola is poised to become a regional power in the not so distant future"</i> – the second-largest sub-Saharan <b>oil</b> producer after <b>Nigeria</b>, Angola is now turning its attention to <b>nuclear power</b>.</p> <p>In <b>Pakistan</b> "<i>Those who spy for America will face this same fate</i>" read a note [in the <b>Pashto</b> language] attached to the severed legs of a <b>bomber</b>. Imran <b>Khan</b>, national hero and leader of <b>Tehrik-e-Insaaf</b>, says the <b>UK's</b> double-standard in counter-terrorism -- giving "protection" to exiled <b>Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM)</b> head <b>Altaf Hussain</b> – is to blame for some recent <b>terrorist attacks</b> in <b>Pakistan</b>. Troops were told to shoot rioters as violence mounted in <b>Karachi</b> -- "<i>Fighting between the Pashtuns, and Urdu-speakers linked to the MQM raised the spectre of a return to ethnic bloodshed</i>". Some analysts see this as a bitter <b>proxy war</b> -- "<i>Pakistanis invariably blame Saudi Arabia and Iran for the violence since they funded and trained the partisans of this war</i>" -- <a href="#">Sectarian conflict looms over Pakistan, says study</a>. Many were killed in a <b>bombing</b> in <b>Peshawar</b>, with no indication it was linked to violence between pro-government and opposition supporters elsewhere. <b>Pakistan</b> and <b>Afghan</b> troops have now traded fire, with deaths, on several occasions -- <a href="#">Soldiers die as border talks end in gun battle</a> and <a href="#">Pakistani, Afghan border troops trade fire</a>. Meanwhile, in <b>Islamabad</b>, radical <b>Islamists</b> at the <b>Lal Masjid</b> (Red Mosque) are now holding police as <b>hostages</b> until some of their own group are released from custody. President <b>Musharraf</b> is more precarious now than at any time during his tenure but even political opponent <b>Benazir Bhutto</b> says "<i>I think Musharraf's passage from the scene, one way or the other, would greatly complicate our efforts in the war on terror.</i>"</p> <p>The irreversible emergence of <b>information societies</b> will <u>challenge the very existence of state-based international relations</u>; '<b>terrorism</b>' is just an early example of this -- <a href="#">Information Societies, New Terrorism: Its Impact on International Politics</a>.</p>
2007 May 13	<p>✓ In <b>Algeria</b>, lethal clashes continue between government troops and <b>Islamists</b> in the lead-up to <b>elections</b> -- "<i>The election campaign has aroused little interest as the parliament is widely seen to be powerless.</i>" [Algeria's current unrest started when the military <u>over-turned the popular election</u> of an <b>Islamist</b> government.]</p> <p><b>Pakistan</b> has completed an "<b>anti-Taliban</b>" fence along a few miles of its border with <b>Afghanistan</b> -- "<i>This is that difficult part where most militants reportedly were crossing over.</i>" But <b>Afghan</b> and <b>Pakistani</b> troops have clashed again "in the most serious incident in years" at the north-west border, with the death of at least seven Afghan personnel.</p> <p>✓ Scores were killed in <b>Karachi</b> [<b>Pakistan</b>] in clashes between <b>anti-Musharraf</b> and <b>pro-Musharraf</b> groups triggered by the visit by the dismissed <b>Chief Justice</b> – the situation was so volatile, the judge did not leave the airport.</p> <p>The now tiny <b>British navy</b> hopes, to some extent, to rule the waves with its new</p>

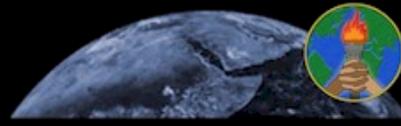
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	<p><i>stealth submarines</i> -- a new \$2.5B Royal Navy submarine from the Channel will be able to detect the <i>QE2</i> cruise liner leaving New York.</p> <p>✚ Following an impasse over selection of a <i>president</i>, the <b>Turkish</b> parliament has proposed a major constitutional reforms allowing <i>popular</i> election of the head of state -- ostensibly a pro-democratic move but also one that may lead to an <i>Islamist</i> Turkey. The US will sell 105 <i>Sidewinder air-to-air missiles</i> to <b>Turkey</b> -- "<i>It is vital to the US national interest to assist our NATO ally in developing and maintaining a strong and ready self-defence capability ...</i>"</p> <p><b>Botswana no longer a beacon of democracy</b> -- "<i>There is unease over the way the government conducts its business and that it no longer cares to consult the masses</i>"; double-dealing the <i>Kalahari Bushmen</i> is one example.</p> <p>As <b>Kosovo</b> quietly brews as nasty <i>Balkan</i> dispute in the <i>Cold War</i> tradition, <b>Indonesia</b>, a non-permanent member of the <b>Security Council</b>, declares support for <b>Russia's</b> position opposing a breakaway Kosovo -- <i>Indonesia's position on the Kosovo question</i>. [An excellent tutorial on the Kosovo issue. Note <i>regional separatism</i> is a hot issue in Indonesia.]</p>
2007 May 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presidents <b>Musharraf</b> [<b>Pakistan</b>] and <b>Karzai</b> [<b>Afghanistan</b>] once again vow constructive relations -- "<i>We've decided to overcome the basic differences together and that this would be useful for both countries... We've not yet talked about the details</i>" -- but, under impossible demands in an impossible situation from the <b>US</b> and others, they quickly revert to blaming each other for what happens in the ungovernable <i>border regions</i>. The recent attack on President <b>Musharraf's</b> ally, his <b>Interior Minister</b>, and the fizzled <i>Taliban</i> spring offensive, may indicate <b>Pakistan's</b> strategy is hurting the foreign insurgents -- <i>Tribal Pakistan: Complexity, fragility</i>. A new <i>jirga</i> comprising about 350 tribal <i>elders, parliamentarians</i> and <i>scholars</i> from <b>Pakistan</b> and <b>Afghanistan</b> may prove be <u>the first entity to have legitimate authority in the border areas</u>. The <b>Chief Justice</b> that President <b>Musharraf</b> suspended for good reason -- or narrow political reason -- is now the focus of anti-Musharraf forces that are gathering against him.</li></ul> <p>With Nicolas <b>Sarkozy</b> <b>France</b> heads <i>right</i>, pro-<b>US</b>, pro-<b>Israel</b>, and at war with unspecified 'scum' he vows to purge from French society; a helpful thumbnail portrait: <i>Immigrant son reaches French presidency</i>.</p> <p>If the <b>US Congress</b> attributes <i>Armenian</i> deaths to <b>Turkey</b>, transit of the 60% of supplies to <b>US</b> forces in <b>Iraq</b> may be disrupted. With a <b>Turkish</b> court blocking an attempt by the government to advance allegedly "<i>Islamist</i>" candidates to the <i>presidency</i>, Turkey is in stalemate ... between government, half the population, and the <i>army</i> - <i>Political crisis as Turkish election annulled</i>.</p> <p>"<i>In Bosnia, the success of the Wahhabis' puritanical form of Islam is often explained by the desolate conditions in the country</i>" -- <i>Wahhabi Rules: Islamic Extremism Comes to Bosnia</i>.</p> <p><b>Blackwater</b>, like the <i>crusaders</i> of old, is an army-for-hire ... providing the cause is holy; "<i>Blackwater has now leapfrogged the other mercenary corporations, apparently through its ties ... to the religious right</i>" -- <i>Blackwater: America's condottieri?</i></p>
2007 Apr 29	<p>↓ [In <b>Turkey</b>, parliament elects the president.] Following massive protests by secularists in Turkey, Prime Minister <b>Erdogan</b>, alleged to be strongly <i>Islamist</i>, will not stand for election as president, leaving Foreign Minister <b>Abdullah Gul</b>, said to be equally <i>Islamist</i>, well positioned to be elected. Intently watching developments, the <b>Turkish military</b> warned it would intervene to defend the country's <i>secular</i> system if necessary [<i>cp</i> <b>Algeria</b>], prompting the <b>EU</b> to warn that the military should stay out of politics. Further mass street demonstration by secularists left Gul unmoved.</p>

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**Pakistan** again insists the *border* with **Afghanistan** is “completely sealed” -- “*the Pakistan-Afghan border has been sealed completely and aerial monitoring of the area through state-of-the-art devices was continuing.*” Pakistan’s plan to fence 35 km of the 2,500-kilometre border is drawing heat from Afghanistan and has already brought exchange of fire between troops across the border.

A survey shows that 54% of Pakistanis approve of President Musharraf’s performance; but responses on *preferred leader* show why Benazir **Bhutto** and the president can benefit from a political marriage of convenience: Musharraf - 32%, Benazir Bhutto - 25%, Nawaz **Sharif** - 15%. Continuing blowback from Pakistan’s *Islamist north-west* remains serious as a *suicide bomber* almost succeeds in killing the **Interior Minister**.

President **Musharraf’s** summary dismissal of **Pakistan’s Chief Justice**, either a regrettable error of judgment, or a vendetta originating in the *security service*, has brought stinging condemnation from the **International Commission of Jurists** -- “virtually unprecedented in the legal annals of the world”; -- *Pakistan rapped over judge crisis*.

A convincing argument that *Latin America* has moved on from the old *left-right* polarities -- *Latin America: Four Competing Blocs Of Power*.

The *Project on Transitional Democracies* believes the **US** must re-think and re-do its *Central Asia* policy to make any gains on the obvious historical and geographical advantages of **China, Russia, and Pakistan**-- *Central Asia: Strategist Wants U.S. To Make Fresh Start In Region*.

The vision of **AFRICOM’s** look and feel is still spongy. Its creation is a response to ; “*the spread of extreme Islamism and other destabilizing forces in sub-Saharan Africa*” but the command will not get any new resources; rather it will be an efficient consolidation of what already exists. The US adds that **AFRICOM** is not naked imperialism; “*The goal is for AFRICOM not to be a U.S. leadership role on the continent, but rather to support African leadership efforts ...*” - *AFRICOM won’t get new resources: Pentagon and U.S. Military’s Continental Command Will Help Leaders*.

2007 Apr 22

• **Eritrea** has suspended membership in the regional **Inter-Governmental Authority on Development** after a rift with **Ethiopia** over **Somalia**.

*Islamists* attacked police in **Kano** in northern **Nigeria** -- the army has been sent in and police have evacuated the area. **EU** observers said there are many *irregularities* with the *election* in **Nigeria**.

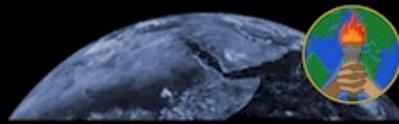
The *Ahmadzai Wazirs* in *South Waziristan [Pakistan]* are said to have requested renewed government security presence in the area.

A growing revolt against President **Musharraf’s secular** regime by an *Islamist* group in *Islamabad* points to the two alternatives for Pakistan; the West must support one of them.

There has been an awkward exchange between **Afghan** and **Pakistani** troops over a *border fence* Pakistan is building along some parts of the border -- “*the Afghan*



*army moved to the area and removed the fence. Pakistani troops fired on our forces.*



2007 Apr 15

*The Afghan army returned fire”.*

*“... the present lack of EU policies on engaging with moderate Islamists leads them to be at best curious about the EU and at worse to be suspicious of it” -- [Political Islam and Europe](#).*

Not a terrorist group, but the inspiration of many groups that are, the **Muslim Brotherhood** will defy the **Egyptian** ban on its existence and seek election -- [Muslim Brotherhood to Run in Election](#).

- *“Climate wars” is a new shorthand embracing water wars, population displacement and other consequences of climate change – the “cake-walks” of Iraq and Afghanistan have stretched resources to limits; so how equipped is the world to take on challenges of a truly continental scale?-- [Climate wars](#).*

There is a *space race* underway in *Asia* -- **India, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan** all have *satellites* in orbit, **North Korea** claims to have sent one up, and all have further ambitions.

An excellent backgrounder on the conflict between **Pakistan tribal groups** and **Uzbeks** in **South Waziristan** -- [Why Is There So Much Anti-Uzbek Anger?](#) Pakistani **tribesmen** killed 300 militants and seized ground from “foreigners” that was then secured by government troops -- feeling vindicated, and slightly pissed off, President **Musharraf** says *“If Pakistan is bluffing, if I am bluffing and the ISI is bluffing, I think we should be out of the coalition”*. Pakistan reiterates, this time with feeling, there is now no **cross-border** movement of Afghans -- *“if someone proves [any cross-border movement] through satellite imagery, I am responsible,”* Major Gen Gul Muhammad said.

The **Kazakh** leader has proposed a **Union of Central Asian States** which would comprise 55 million people and be **energy-rich**.

**Turkey** again urged **Iraq** to stop Kurdish rebels operating across the border into Turkey. [Turkey would also prefer never to hear northern Iraq described as **“Kurdistan”**.] **Turkish special forces** penetrated up to 40km into **Iraq** to disrupt **PKK** activity. *The Jamestown Foundation* sees further conflict between **Turkey** and the **PKK** now ensconced in northern **Iraq** but believe ultimately the **PKK** will exchange greater autonomy in eastern Turkey for sovereignty -- [Turkey's Coming Offensive Against the Iraqi-based PKK](#). A woman alleged to have been trained by **PKK** Kurdish separatists was arrested with **5.3 kg of plastic explosives** in **Istanbul**. 200,000 have marched in **Turkey** in support keeping the nation **secular** -- protesters called on the government to resign and chanted slogans including, *“We don't want an imam as president.”*

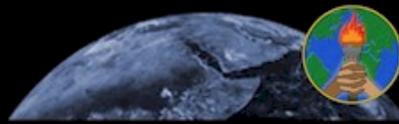
2007 Apr 08

- ↓ President **Gaddafi** of **Libya** says **Africa** should have a **continental army** to defend itself against future predators -- *“They have left us in poverty. They have carried off our resources and raw materials to their countries ... ”*. A “federal” army is just one element of the germinating idea of an African union entity like the *European Union*. [The United States of Africa - The Challenges](#) -- examining the “United States of Africa” idea 50 years after **Kwame Nkrumah** said *“Africa must unite or perish!”*.

At a time when the West roundly commended **“globalisation”** for all, it is no surprise that global movements have a new efficacy; **Marxist-Leninism, Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism** are just some examples of **international revolutionary movements** -- [Policy Watch: Transnational revolution](#). [*Environmentalism* dating from the 1920s is another example.]

An **International Crisis Group** assessment of **Guinea** -- [Blood Aluminum?](#)

**Morocco** – a special friend of **NATO** -- is likely to remain an example like **Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia** of **democracy** [in its local idiom] and **Islam** working together -- [Morocco's Islamic question](#).



## Pakistan

Exiled former Prime Minister Benazir **Bhutto** is threatening to return to Pakistan to assist in the restoration of *democracy* -- a tussle for power in Pakistan at this time may have far-reaching -- and unpleasant -- consequences. A retired Pakistani general and military analyst warns that the middle class will not tolerate interim arrangements forever; "*the nonmilitary institutions are asserting their rights*" -- [Battle Brews Over Rule By Military In Pakistan](#).

Following *riots* in **Afghan refugee camps** in Pakistan, the UN has stopped the refugee *repatriation* program indefinitely.

Deputy Speaker of the **Balochistan** Assembly has warned that Pakistan must *consult* local people on *development* in Balochistan -- Pakistan's **Punjabi**-centered heavy-handed control of development in Balochistan -- with the **Gwadar** port the most recent -- breeds ever deeper resentment.

Pakistani tribesmen beat the *drums of war*; literally -- following approval by the *jiṛga*, the *dhol* drums were beaten to raise a *lashkar* [local militia] to confront the *foreign militants* [Uzbek and Arab] in their territory. "*Tribal elders of Ahmedzai Wazirs gathered in the bazaar and approved raising a lashkar of 900 volunteers.*" A few days later, the tribal militias had encircled *Uzbek* militants in three areas and requested *air and artillery support* from security forces. By 20070406 Pakistani troops secured an area seized from *al-Qaeda* by the tribal militias -- "*The tribesmen overran several bunkers held by Central Asian rebels. They were very strong bunkers and Uzbek fighters were well entrenched there.*"

Elsewhere, around **Parachinar** in the **Kurram** tribal region, near the **Afghan** border, running skirmishes involving *mortars* and *RPGs* broke out between **Shi'ites** and **Sunnis** and government forces attacked both combatants to try to stop the fighting. [Even this dangerous destabilizing situation -- as well as the tribal attack on "foreigners" -- probably accords with President **Musharraf's** view that a *local* solution is the only one that will survive in Pakistan's never-conquered border country.]

2007 Apr 01

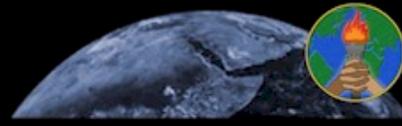
↓ The **Pakistan** government has completed the third *accord* of its kind with *local tribal groups*, near **Khar** in the **Bajur** region, in a move aimed to isolate *foreign Islamists* in the **Afghan border** area. Next day, at **Tank** near **South Waziristan**, dozens were reported killed in an attack by "hundreds" of *militants*. *International Crisis Group* released an update on Pakistan's militant movements -- [Karachi's Madrasas and Violent Extremism](#). Pakistan test-launched its *Hatf II Abdali nuclear-capable missile* which has a range of 200 kilometers (125 miles). **Balochistan**, simmering with discontent since annexation by the **Pakistan** in 1948, is a major element of Pakistan's stability quite distinct from the newer Taliban related issues -- [Balochistan - A Crucible of International Intrigue](#)

A checklist of foreigners *kidnapped* so far during 2007 in the **Nigerian** oil delta -- [Nigerian kidnappings of foreigners in oil delta](#). Nigerian *rebel groups* appear to be now fighting for dominance among themselves.

*The Jamestown Foundation* notes the resilience of the **Kurdish Workers Party (PKK)** -- "*Turkey's discriminatory policies toward its Kurdish minority ensure that there will continue to be a steady stream of recruits for the PKK ...*" -- [PKK Survives EU Arrests](#).

In **Thailand** a Swiss man has been jailed for 10 years for defacing posters of the king, indicating that *lese majeste* against Thailand's king, the world's longest-reigning monarch, is taken very seriously.

A Chilean **Airbus A-340** was nearly struck by **Russian space junk** over the **South Pacific**.



2007 Mar 26

The "Contact Group" on **Kosovo** -- **US, Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Russia** -- are still at deadlock.

**Egypt** may be proposing a formal *military pact* for the **Arab League's** 22 members, and a "comprehensive review of the *nuclear issues* in the region". Few **Egyptians** turned out to a *referendum* aimed at strengthening state powers -- "What's the use?" some said.

The president of **Kyrgyzstan** has called on the *opposition leader* to be *prime minister* -- "It is the first time an opposition politician has been made a prime minister in **Central Asia**."

The **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation** -- a regional alliance of **China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan** and **Uzbekistan** -- has plans to expand its membership and its areas of cooperation.

2007 Mar 26

↓ A *Great Game* continues to be played out unnoticed by many in the West -- under the auspices of *South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)*, **India** is working towards a transcontinental highway to **Afghanistan** via **Pakistan**; already Indian engineers are connecting Afghanistan's ring road to the **Iranian** border. Fighting broke out in **Pakistan** bordering **Afghanistan** between foreign mainly *Uzbek* foreign militants and local *Pashtun* tribesmen, a scenario possibly conforming to President **Musharraf's** view that local solutions are best. After four days fighting, about 160 have been killed on both sides and tribesmen have offered the estimated 500 foreign militants still in the area surrender or death. **Pakistan's** first deep-sea port, **Gwadar**, was inaugurated -- it is of strategic importance to Pakistan, the region, and to **China** who funded it. Analysts again stressed Pakistan's strategic importance as a diplomatic bridge between East and West -- "*Pakistan is the key to defeating the new threats to the world*", but ruling Pakistan requires a peculiar combination -- "*America, the Army and Allah*".

At sites of an annual *Kurdish* festival across **Turkey**, Kurds carried pictures of **PKK** rebel leader **Abdullah Ocalan**. The **CIA** is said to be supporting the **PKK** for the aggravation it can cause **Iran** but this is equally aggravating to **Turkey** -- "*The US attitude has really pissed off the government and the army...*".

2007 Mar 19

↓ In **Pakistan's** north-west a *jirga* of the *Mamoond* tribe has agreed, at its own pace under its own democratic process, not to shelter *foreign militants*. There has been strident street protest by lawyers and others to the dismissal of the **Chief Justice** -- "*God will punish Musharraf for what he has done with the chief justice*." **Pakistan** has started *fencing* limited stretches of the border with **Afghanistan**, that arbitrary line drawn on a map in 1893 by the British ["the Durand Line"]. A **Chinese** navy task group leaves **Karachi** after exercises. [This would have been irksome to neighboring **India**.]

Minor clashes between riot police and *PKK Kurdish separatists* across **Turkey** came hours after a fatal clash near the **Syrian** border.

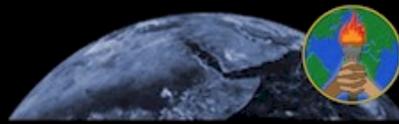
There are calls in **Colombia** to charge **Chiquita** executives for involvement 1997-2004 with the rightist militia, *United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC)*, designated a terrorist organization by the US in September 2001.

In **Ecuador**, the **Electoral Court** has dismissed 57 members of the 100-seat *legislature* when they attempted to impeach the Court -- both parties are thought to be in breach of the *Constitution*.

2007 Mar 12

↓ Four were killed in another attack by *Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)* on Turkish troops in southeast **Turkey**. A **Kazakh Christian** missionary has been detained in **Uzbekistan** where possession of a second copy of a bible is "possession with the aim to *proliferate*".

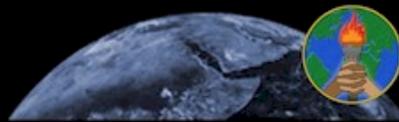
*al Qaeda*-linked rebels and *Pashtun* tribesmen were reported to be holding talks



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	<p>following "the first reported clash between the militants and ethnic Pashtun tribesmen in the area" – this may signal a turning of the situation in the <b>Pakistan</b> tribal areas. The <b>US</b> Senate has tied aid to <b>Pakistan</b> to satisfactory progress in counter-terrorism – although the provisions may be moderated by joint House-Senate discussions, any such move shows distrust of a key ally.</p> <p><b>DPRK</b> may have created its own monster -- there is evidence that the <i>narcotics</i> and <i>counterfeiting</i> enterprises it created now have a life of their own.</p>
2007 Mar 05	<p>↓ During the visit by Vice-president <b>Cheney</b>, it is said President <b>Musharraf</b> was confronted with "compelling" <b>CIA</b> evidence that <i>Afghan fighters</i> have bases in Pakistan; deputy director of the CIA was flown to Pakistan to personally present the evidence. <b>Pakistan</b> reiterates that it will not accept dictates from others about the tribal areas -- "We don't accept dictation from any side, any source." <b>Pakistan</b> police arrest 5 <i>militants</i> as they tried to plant a <i>bomb</i> on a <i>railway track</i> to blow up a train in <i>Hyderabad</i>; they are alleged to be connected to <u>39 bomb attacks</u>. <b>Pakistan</b> test-fired a short-range <i>nuclear-capable missile</i> -- the <i>Hafz-II Abdali</i> has range of 200 km (125 miles) and is capable of carrying all types of war-heads.</p> <p>President <b>Musharraf</b> efforts to convene an <i>Islamic</i> consensus on the <i>Middle East</i> and Iraq has led old fault-lines to re-emerge – <b>Pakistan</b> is a favored friend of the <i>Sunni</i> and <i>Arab Gulf states</i>, <i>non-Arab Shi'ite Iran</i> is not.</p> <p><i>Afghan opium</i> production has hit a new high -- most of the recent \$10B in assistance was spent on <i>security</i> rather than encouraging opium growers to turn to <i>alternative</i> sources of income.</p> <p><b>Algerian</b> security forces repulsed <u>ten simultaneous attacks</u> on police positions east of <i>Algiers</i>, probably the work of <i>Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC)</i>.</p> <p><b>Pakistan</b> is set to help <b>Sri Lanka</b> raise an <i>Armored Brigade</i> but observers say the unsuitability of armor to Sri Lanka suggests <i>corrupt</i> deals.</p> <p><i>Prensa Latina</i> says <b>Guatemala</b> has become "<i>ungovernable</i>" -- "<i>this confirms a crisis in the entire security apparatus, with severe consequences.</i>"</p> <p><b>Turkey</b> plans to construct a <i>nuclear power plant</i> in 2007.</p> <p>In <b>South Africa</b>, although the program of <i>land "redistribution"</i> so far has been under a "<i>willing buyer, willing seller</i>" policy but there are ominous hints this may be about change as a population grows impatient with the government.</p>
2007 Feb 26	<p>• <i>Reuters</i> published a chronology of the dozen or so <i>kidnappings</i> and other incidents in <b>Nigeria's</b> delta region so far during 2007 -- <a href="#">Nigerian militant attacks on oil, gas industries</a></p> <p>There are mounting signs that Robert <b>Mugabe's Zimbabwe</b> is reaching a crunch-point -- Mugabe has destroyed the once successful Rhodesian colonial <i>economy</i> and is now at war with own country, and his eventual passing will bring further turmoil in a <i>succession</i> battle.</p> <p>The governor of <i>Waziristan</i> reports that 50 <i>foreign</i> families [non-<i>Pashtun</i>] are leaving the area which may be a sign the must-scorned <i>pact</i> between <b>Pakistan</b> and Waziri tribal groups is bearing fruit.</p>
2007 Feb 19	<p>↓ <b>Pakistan</b> is proceeding with plans to <i>fence</i> vulnerable stretches of the <i>border</i> with <b>Afghanistan</b> -- "<i>There could be areas where they go through unobserved, but we have made it very, very difficult for them.</i>" Also with the aim of enhancing security, Pakistan will expel 2.4 million Afghan <i>refugees</i> – stung by continual criticism, Pakistan can't be both compassionate and secure.</p> <p><b>Israel's</b> chief of <b>police</b> has been forced to resign -- "<i>He is also said to have ignored links between senior officers and leading figures within criminal circles.</i>"</p> <p>In <b>Turkey</b>, the <b>army</b> goads the government to act against the <b>Kurds</b>; the Foreign Minister <b>Abdullah</b> says soldiers should focus on their duties.</p>

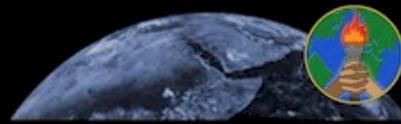
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	<p>The <i>kidnap gangs</i> of <b>Nigeria's</b> Delta are becoming increasingly institutionalized -- "Many are now wondering what will happen when the armed class of 2007 finally graduates".</p> <p>It's salad days in Ashgabat (<b>Turkmenistan</b>) with the election of the new <b>president</b> - full <i>internet</i> access, longer compulsory <i>education</i>, and complaints -- "connection speed is fantastic, but the price stinks".</p> <p>The <i>Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)</i> is considering standing arrangements for a <i>Muslim peacekeeping force</i> -- "I think it is in the interest of the Muslim community to have a peacekeeping force under the OIC banner."</p> <p>Although the <i>Near-Earth-Object (NEO)</i> of 2036 has only a small chance of striking Earth, astronomers and others say a formal international watch should be established for yet unknown NEOs. [<i>Global Warming</i> once seemed a fringe issue too...].</p> <p>Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard <b>Armitage</b> articulates what is increasingly obvious: "In every measure the <i>strategic center of gravity</i> is shifting to <i>Asia</i>".</p>
2007 Feb 12	<p>↓ <b>Zimbabwe</b> is on the brink of total collapse -- <i>doctors</i> and <i>teachers</i> are on strike; <i>inflation</i> is 1,280%; <i>water treatment</i> has collapsed bringing <i>cholera</i>, and President <b>Mugabe</b> says protest "will not be tolerated". South Africa's President <b>Mbeki</b> has again vowed to wage war on <i>crime</i> and <i>poverty</i> -- delivery on promises has proven far slower than the population will tolerate. Will <i>Africa</i> follow <i>Latin America</i> in rejecting elite-driven pseudo-democracies? -- <a href="#">Will the Latin American Leftist Wind Blow Into the Continent</a></p> <p>Another attack on <b>Pakistan's</b> public infrastructure -- <i>Islamabad's international airport</i> -- is thought connected to militant tribesmen in the <i>border region</i> near <b>Afghanistan</b>. The <b>US</b> is unapologetic about firing into <b>Pakistan</b> against <b>Afghan</b> cross-border insurgents.</p> <p>Despite <b>US</b> demands, <b>Nicaragua's</b> President <b>Ortega</b> will keep the arsenal of more than 1,000 <i>SAM-7 missiles</i>, because Washington is giving <i>aircraft</i> to neighbor <b>Honduras</b>.</p> <p>The <i>unlawful military government</i> of <b>Fiji</b> has disarmed the <i>police</i> Tactical Response Division.</p> <p><i>Washington Times</i> attempts an analysis of the <b>Turkish-Kurdish</b> standoff - "the Kurds are feeling emboldened by the autonomous Kurdistan of Iraq and we see how Turkey is not very comfortable"; <a href="#">Solving the Kurdish problem</a></p>
2007 Feb 05	<p>↓ A string of three bombings in <b>Pakistan</b> came amid tight security for <i>Shi'ite</i> ceremonies, posing the grave danger of sectarian Muslim violence. Many believe that a deteriorating situation would give <b>Pakistan's</b> President <b>Musharraf</b> an opportunity to consolidate his position with the imposition of a <i>State of Emergency</i>. An analyst said "The <i>United States</i> is blaming <b>Pakistan</b> for its own mistakes" -- <a href="#">Facts on the ground in Pakistan</a></p> <p><b>Nigeria</b> is said to be squandering its <i>oil</i> riches -- "Much of this windfall has been lost to the extravagance, <i>waste</i> and <i>corruption</i> that characterise state government spending."</p> <p>Although the outcome of the <b>Turkmenistan presidential elections</b> are for many a foregone conclusion, candidates are promising electors all the right things -- the <i>Washington Post</i> says "It could be Iowa -- if it weren't Turkmenistan".</p> <p><b>Turkey</b> warns that it claims the right of <i>hot pursuit</i> of <b>PKK</b> (<i>Kurdish</i> separatist) elements into <b>Iraq</b>.</p>
2007 Jan 29	<p>↓ In a remarkable counter-terrorism move, <b>Pakistan</b> authorities <i>demolished</i> two <i>mosques</i> they saw as security threats along a VIP route. At least 15 were killed, mainly police, in a <i>bombing</i> in <b>Peshawar</b>, capital of <b>Northwest Frontier province</b>.</p>

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Another **bombing** at the **Marriott** in **Islamabad** came amid already high security in anticipation of possible **Sunni-Shi'ite** sectarian violence during **Ashoura**, a Shi'ite religious festival. Pakistan is on guard for any sectarian spillover from **Iraq** -- Sunni-Shi'ite conflict would be disastrous for Pakistan. *The Daily Times* [Pakistan] said **Weakness in Waziristan can no longer be concealed** -- the reality is that the people of **Waziristan** are economically and ethnically integrated with **Afghanistan** and have little loyalty to Pakistan.

**Syria** and **Yemen** signed cooperation agreements. **Egypt** arrested seven more members of the **Muslim Brotherhood** bringing the number now held to more than 270.

Following weeks of instability, **Bangladesh** cracked down on media.

Doomed **Zimbabwe** warns the remaining **European farmers** to not resist being dispossessed of their land -- "We will bite" says the government. Following discovery of more **oil** deposits in **Angola**, production is expected to increase by 90% from 2005 levels by 2010. [China already has oil interests in Angola.]

**Brazil** observed that a landmark **Mercosur Summit** ended on a positive note -- "The higher goal is integration for the benefit of our peoples, and trade is but a tool."

The **Kurds** say **Turkey** is "sowing dissent" in **Iraq** -- "Iraqi Turkmen have aligned themselves with Arab inhabitants of Taameem to oppose any move by the Kurds..." For its part, **Turkey** warns that there will be a "very big civil war" in **Kirkuk** if the Kurds are favored -- "Kirkuk belongs to all Iraqis .... It would be wrong to give the city to only one ethnic group."

2007 Jan 22

↓ **Turkey** is opening tenders for six **stealth submarines** with 12,500-nautical-mile submerged range. There have been further clashes between Turkish troops and **PKK** rebels -- sporadic minor clashes belie the fact that the **Turkish-Kurdish** issue is of momentous diplomatic importance in relation to **Iraq**.

**Egypt** has launched its first **spy satellite**, made in the **Ukraine**, from a site in **Kazakhstan** to monitor the Middle East.

**India** foresees an **East Asian trade community** rivaling the **EU**.

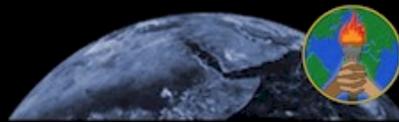
**Afghan** authorities say, within a day of capture, that Taliban actor **Abdul Haq** has confirmed all that Afghanistan (and others) have been saying about **Pakistan's** nefarious role in aiding the Taliban.

2,000 rally to condemn **Pakistan** government attempts to limit cross-border flow -- "Don't divide us. Don't stop us from going to Afghanistan. Don't stop Afghans from coming here because they are our brothers and sisters." Claims that a strike on a ground target was made by a **US drone**, were denied by **Pakistan**, but "getting watertight independent corroboration of anything that happens in Pakistan's tribal badlands is, however, a tall order." Even the urban middle class is attacking President **Musharraf** -- the *Pakistan Supreme Court Bar Association* says Musharraf can be prosecuted for **treason** under Article six for subverting the Constitution. In a remarkable counter-terrorism move, **Pakistan** authorities have demolished two **mosques** they saw as **security threats** overlooking a VIP route.

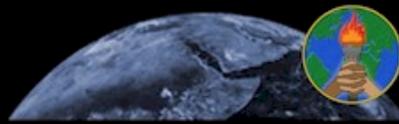
As unrest continues in **Bangladesh** during a **state of emergency** over 2,000 were arrested in 24-hours and five have now **died in custody** -- of one case, police said "He fell sick during interrogation ...". The main beneficiary from the failure of mainstream politics is likely to be an **extremist Islamist** fringe.

In **Thailand**, a team of 100 commandos arrested **military officers** and civilians in 18 locations -- the arrests may confirm the post-coup administration's suspicions that reactionary military elements were behind the New Year's Eve **bombings**.

There are new signs of **Islamic** discontent are apparent in the **Kyrgyz** and **Uzbek** portions of the **Ferghana Valley**, the heart of **Central Asia** -- "the political situation



	<p>in Central Asia is conducive to the development of <i>radical Islam</i> in the region”          [Analysis: This has a flow-on effect for <b>China</b>.]</p>
<p>2007 Jan 15</p>	<p>↓ In <b>Bolivia</b> supporters of President <b>Morales</b> set fire to the <i>Cochabamba</i> to demand the resignation of the conservative governor.  <b>Turkey</b> reiterates its adamant opposition to <i>Kurdish</i> autonomy in northern <b>Iraq</b>.          ↓ As street clashes and more <i>blockades</i> paralyze <b>Bangladesh</b>, a <i>curfew</i> is imposed, <i>elections</i> are postponed and an <i>emergency</i> is declared – there is concern that “<i>Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim country of 140 million people, is heading into a period of political instability.</i>”          President <b>Musharraf</b> ignored security advice to visit <b>Pakistan’s North West Frontiers Province</b> and make popular <i>development</i> announcements. A senior <b>UN</b> official called on <b>Pakistan</b> and <b>Afghanistan</b> to play nicely and address Afghanistan’s problems together --“<i>This war of words, this rhetorical contest between two governments, between two partners in this region must end.</i>”</p>
<p>2007 Jan 08</p>	<p>↓ The <b>British Navy</b> is to <i>mothball</i> half of its fleet -- “senior officials said the plan would turn Britain’s Navy into nothing more than a coastal defense force.”          Five or six <b>RPG launchers</b> stolen from an <b>Australian</b> defence supplier may be in the hands of “terrorists”.          In <b>Pakistan</b>, some see a peaceful future linked through pipelines “... we could even in near future have <i>oil and natural gas pipelines</i> running from the <i>Caspian Sea</i> through <i>Central Asia</i> to <i>Jammu and Kashmir</i> on to [India]”          A <i>Harris Poll</i> reveals differences – In the <b>US</b> and <b>UK</b> the greatest challenge is <i>terrorism</i>, for continental <i>Europe</i> it’s <i>global warming</i> and <i>religious fanaticism</i>.  <b>China</b> and a <i>European</i> country have offered <b>Pakistan high-to-medium-altitude air defence systems</b>.  <b>World Politics Watch</b> says a bitter struggle between <i>Sunnis</i> and <i>Shi’ites</i> is possible -- as with centuries of violence between <i>Catholics</i> and <i>Protestants</i> in <i>Europe</i> – but an equivalent of “<i>Thirty Years War</i>” may eventually also lead the Muslim world to a its version of the <i>Treaty of Westphalia</i> and the modern era.          In <b>Nigeria</b>, <i>violence</i> and <i>kidnappings</i> against <i>oil assets</i> continues -- in one case the ransom was paid and the hostages stayed captive -- “<i>We are prepared to keep them for as long as we find them useful and after that, who knows?</i>”          The <b>Muslim Brotherhood</b> in <b>Egypt</b> said that 29 more members had been arrested -- “<u>President Hosni Mubarak proposed constitutional reforms that would ban religious groups from forming political parties.</u>”  <b>Turkey</b> is aggressively pursuing a <i>military satellite program</i> that may be “a model for emerging regional powers” -- “...<i>the Turkish military is not going to allow local industrial politics to get in the way of ... sovereign regional observation.</i>”          For the sixteenth year, <b>India</b> and <b>Pakistan</b> exchange a list of <i>nuclear installations and facilities</i> covered under a 1998 agreement.</p>
<p>2007 Jan 01</p>	<p>↓ Senior <b>Pakistani</b> officers say they are ‘back to square one’ in their fight against international <i>terrorist groups</i> after the release of dozens of militants by Pakistani <i>courts</i>. [A policeman’s certainty and <i>legal proof</i> are two different things, as they probably should be.]  <b>Reporters San Frontiers</b> report that at least 81 reporters were killed in 2006, the highest toll in more than a decade, with <b>Iraq</b> the deadliest, followed by <b>Mexico</b>.  <b>Libya</b> announces three-day mourning period for the death by <i>execution</i> of <b>Saddam Hussein</b> -- support for <b>Saddam</b> due to the <i>Palestine</i> issue should not be underestimated.          A <b>Saudi</b> cleric issues a venomous fatwa against <i>Shias</i> -- for fundamentalist <i>Sunnis</i>, the Shia school are worse than <i>infidels</i> -- they are <i>heretics</i>. [This is a schism that</p>



should be understood rather than exploited.]

At last, soldiers who really run the army – *senior NCOs* from **Pakistan, Afghanistan** and the **US** -- compare notes at meetings in Pakistan as part of an NCO exchange program.

An *earthquake* near **Taiwan** severed several *major trunk cables* severing *internet* (and phone) connection to most of east Asia -- "The issue here is *parallelism*. You've really got to have multiple paths. You can't lay all the cables in the same place."

Pushed to petulance by criticism from all quarters for inaction, **Pakistan** has offered to *fence and mine* the *Afghan-Pakistan border* -- but **Afghanistan** says [pointedly] "*Fencing or mining the border is neither helpful nor practical. ... The border is not where the problem lies*" and the **UN** says mining the border "*would only add to civilian casualties in a region already littered with unexploded ordnance*."

A **Vatican** cardinal not unacquainted with **Opus Dei** warns a popular bishop in **Paraguay** not to stand as a political candidate -- "... *he is the only figure who can unite the opposition to defeat the conservative Colorado Party, which has been in power for about 60 years*." [It is said the bishop left the priesthood at about the time of the warning.]

A car bomb in *Peshawar* [**Pakistan**], capital of *North West Frontier Province*, is likely to be the work of Islamists.

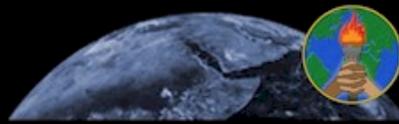
2006 Dec 25

↓ A *car bomb* has exploded near a **Nigerian** government office -- "*the first targeting of a government installation by a militant group that has repeatedly kidnapped foreign oil workers and occupied pumping stations run by multinationals*." The sudden death of the *Leader of All Turkmens* finds **Turkmenistan** without a succession plan to follow 21 years of dictatorship. [Hours later] The Turkmen parliamentary *Speaker* was dismissed and arrested. Surveys show people in *South Asia* overwhelmingly support *democracy*, except in **Pakistan** where about half of respondents are not so certain. A *jirga* of 44 *Pakhtoon* ("Pashtoon") tribes in **Afghanistan** sees no good reason to extend the consultation to *Pakistani* tribes; it also suggests negotiation with the *Taliban*. "You need us" a *Taliban* veteran tells **Pakistan** [Pakistan's *Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam* helped form the Taliban in 1994 with **US** blessing.] While politicians negotiate, generals plan contingencies; India's air-force chief says he is ready for any form of warfare in *Jammu-Kashmir* - "What we are planning today is battle ... all over Jammu and Kashmir". **Indian** Prime Minister **Singh** has formally proposed a *peace treaty* with **Pakistan** -- "*We need to put the past behind us. We need to think about our collective destiny...*" Some suggested an **EU** model may resolve the *Kashmir* issue -- "*A model based on the European Union, whereby borders are made irrelevant but not altered, could solve the vexed Kashmir issue*."

2006 Dec 18

• The **Arab League** and the **African Union** have signed an MoU on involvement of the *Arab Fund* for technical assistance to *African* countries. The **Pentagon** confirms there will be an **Africa Command** -- "... the memo to establish Africa Command is on the president's desk."

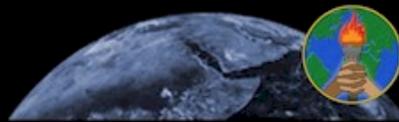
In Mugabe's *Zimbabwe inflation* is now over 1,000% with some items such as paramedical services rising as fast as 17,000%. A legal battle to block *Islamist* ("Taliban") laws in *North West Frontier Province* is pitting President **Musharraf** against Islamists in. **Chinese** troops in **Pakistan** are a sign of a warming relationship -- "Soldiers wearing the uniform of the **Chinese People's Liberation Army** are not a usual sight in the Pakistani garrison town of Rawalpindi." **International Crisis Group** says **Pakistan** needs to re-establish the rule of law in *tribal areas* and provide greater political rights to local communities to avoid the creation of *Taliban* "mini-states". [Analysis: A sensible desire, and the ICG is "never" wrong", but no power on earth has ever been able to establish the rule of law in tribal areas.] The **Afghan**



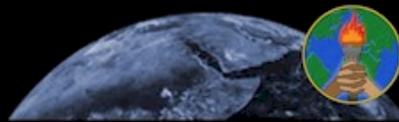
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	<p>President has launched a pointedly undiplomatic scathing attack on <b>Pakistan</b> seeming inaction against <i>cross-border insurgents</i>. The <b>US</b> is seeking to supply <b>AWACS</b> systems to <b>India</b> and <b>Pakistan</b>, augmenting deals they have already made respectively with <b>Israel</b> and <b>Sweden</b>. Eastern <b>Bolivians</b> are intensifying movement for <i>autonomy</i> from the central government -- in the biggest march in Santa Cruz, the country's most populous and wealthy city, hundreds of thousands of protesters held banners that read "Autonomy Now." Dead dictator <b>Pinochet's</b> grandson has been discharged from the Army "...for having made a highly political and out of protocol speech during his grandfather's funeral services." <b>Ecuador</b> may pull out of trade alignments with the <b>US</b> and join <b>Mercosur</b>, reflecting the trend in Latin America to realignment <i>trade policy</i> with <i>foreign policy</i>.</p>
2006 Dec 11	<p>↓ The <i>Middle East</i> is a "Powder Keg" -- the <b>Saudi King</b> states the obvious at a meeting of <b>Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE</b> in Riyadh. Analysts said <b>Lebanon</b> is on the brink -- but of what? -- Lebanon's precarious situation is only dangerous because of the instability surrounding it in all directions. <b>Kazakhstan</b> seems keen to share experience with <b>Iran</b> on <i>ports</i> -- "the <i>Kazakh ambassador called on Caspian Sea littoral states to discuss and review ways of linking Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf.</i>" <b>Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh</b> at the <b>London School of Economics Asia Forum</b> says <b>India</b> and <b>China</b> will alter global income balance -- the world needs "new global rules of the game that can facilitate the peaceful rise of new nations in Asia". The <b>EU</b> says <b>Turkey's</b> late offer to trade with <b>Cyprus</b> is "... not enough but that it was a positive signal". <b>Turkey</b> is very nervous about a power vacuum or division of <b>Iraq</b>, saying it is "of the utmost importance for Turkey to strengthen the Iraqi government and maintain order. <i>A division of Iraq would be akin to the Balkan civil wars.</i>" [i.e. <b>Kurdish</b> homeland] "<i>Crouching Nukes, Hidden Opportunities</i>" said it all for an in depth assessment of the meaning of <i>Central Asia</i> and the <b>Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)</b> for the <b>US</b>. <b>Pakistan</b> is considering <i>mining</i> part of the <i>Pakistan-Afghan border</i>. In <b>Bangladesh</b>, after widespread <b>Awami League</b> protest against alleged unfair electoral process, the interim government has ordered <i>troops</i> to maintain order until new elections in Jan 2007. On current civil strife over elections in <b>Bangladesh</b>, the <b>UK High Commissioner</b> says "If this country 'falls over' it could cause trouble with consequences far beyond Bangladesh's borders."</p>
2006 Dec 04	<p>↓ Brussels (the <b>EU</b>) has dashed <b>Turkish</b> hopes of joining the EU for the foreseeable future -- "Turkey and its friends in the EU had hoped for a less severe form of punishment after Ankara refused to open its ports and airports to <i>Greek-Cypriot</i> shipping." <b>Pakistan</b> has arrested over 150 <b>Balochi</b> Nationalist Party members in a (perhaps unwise) escalating confrontation with Balochi nationalists. The Supreme Court in <b>Pakistan</b> has given the Attorney General two weeks to account for 21 missing "terrorist" <i>detainees</i>. Four <i>bombs</i> have destroyed 36ft of the Taftan-Quetta <i>railway</i> track in <b>Balochistan [Pakistan]</b>. <b>Pakistan</b> has successfully launched a medium range (700km) <i>ballistic missile Hataf 4 (Shaheen-I)</i>. A <b>Pakistani</b> editorial says that the surrounding region is risk from instability in <b>Afghanistan</b>, except for <b>Iran</b> -- "The first nation that protected itself against the blowback was <b>Iran</b>.... The second state that staved off the seduction of Afghanistan successfully was <b>Uzbekistan</b>." Heads of State at the <b>CIS Summit</b> put reform -- and relevance -- at the top of the agenda. The <b>OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities</b> is encouraging moves for education in ethnic minority languages throughout <i>Central Asia</i>.</p>
2006 Nov 27	<p>• Thousands rally in Karachi against <b>Pakistan's</b> move to "secularize" the country's perfidious Islamic law on rape that requires four witnesses. <b>Pakistan</b> now admits it was the <b>US</b> that carried out a <i>madrasah</i> bombing -- "We thought it would be less damaging if we said we did it rather than the US. ... But there was a lot of collateral</p>

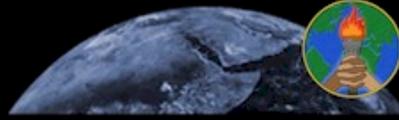
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	<p>damage and we've requested the Americans not to do it again." <b>Quetta</b> police [<b>Pakistan</b>] have apprehended a huge cache of <i>explosives</i> in a wagon coming from Bagh to Quetta at the Balili check-point .</p> <p><b>South Africa</b> will have its first <i>low earth-orbiting communications satellite</i>, <i>SumbandilaSAT</i>, launched from a <b>Russian</b> submarine in April-May 2007.</p> <p>A scholarly article argues <b>Lebanon</b> is on the brink of civil war -- "... civil war appears imminent due to <i>Hizbullah</i>'s violent struggle to seize a significant portion of the government....."</p> <p>Dhaka [<b>Bangladesh</b>] will remain paralyzed as the opposition led by the <b>Awami League</b> continues its argument with the government and the Election Commission.</p>
2006 Nov 20	<p>↓ Pakistan has destroyed 60 more "terrorist camps" in <b>Balochistan</b>. [<i>Interpretation</i>: Pakistan's Balochi "separatist" movement should not be confused with the overflow of the <b>Afghan</b> conflict on the western border but there is overlap around <i>Quetta</i>.] Another major bicycle <i>IED</i> hit a market in the capital of Balochistan. An investigation revealed no militants killed in an attack on a <i>madrassa</i> in the north-west but it cost the <b>Pakistan</b> government significantly in local good-will. <b>South Waziristan</b> authorities have targeted five <i>sub-clans</i> for a range of <i>security</i> offences. The law establishing a department of religion was passed in <b>Pakistan</b>'s <i>North-West Frontiers Province</i> (NWFP) assembly by a majority of 66 to 30.</p> <p><b>Turkey</b> has broken military ties with <b>France</b> following the French bill making it a crime to deny the <i>Armenian "genocide"</i>.</p> <p>Protests in <b>Bangladesh</b> by the <i>Awami League</i> opposition over an electoral dispute have blocked main roads and rail lines.</p>
2006 Nov 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In <b>Bangladesh</b> <i>Awami League</i> protesters attack trains and shut down cities alleging electoral cheating --"We have instructed our followers to paralyse the country ... including ports, buses, trains and ferries" said Awami general secretary Abdul Jalil. <b>Pakistan</b>'s PM says there is an "historic opportunity" to resolve <i>Kashmir</i>, adding Pakistan cannot accept <b>US</b> discrimination on access to <i>civilian nuclear technology</i>. The Second <i>World Islamic Economic Forum</i> in Islamabad has ended with a joint declaration to form an <i>Islamic Free Trade Area</i> in the Muslim world. The claimed discovery of a "super-giant" <i>natural-gas field</i> with reserves of 7 trillion cubic meters in <b>Turkmenistan</b> is still to be confirmed. <i>International Crisis Group</i> says "<b>Kyrgyzstan</b> is on the verge of political breakdown and possible <i>civil war</i>."</li> </ul>
2006 Nov 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrators have massed at the mausoleum of <b>Mustafa Kemal Atatürk</b>, founder of <i>secular Turkey</i>, warning against any concessions to <i>Islamists</i>.</li> <li>• <b>Pakistani</b> police have blamed nationalist <i>Balochi</i> rebels for a <i>suicide car bomb</i> that killed three in <i>Quetta</i> [but it may be <i>Taliban</i>-related].</li> <li>• A Kurdish commander said he wants a <i>permanent US base</i> in northern Iraq. [<i>Analysis</i>: The <b>Kurds</b> may see a <b>US</b> presence in the province as insurance against <b>Turkey</b> (or <b>Iran</b>) attempting to crush the <i>de facto Kurdistan</i>.]</li> <li>• The face veil issue is becoming a hot issue in <b>Egypt</b>, the largest Arab nation -- the President's wife and TV presenters don't wear it but "the streets are full of veiled women".</li> <li>• <b>Prince Charles</b>, currently in <b>Pakistan</b>, cancelled a planned visit to <i>Peshawar</i> -- Pakistani security officials can not guarantee his safety in the wake of the military attack on a <i>madrasah</i>.</li> </ul>
2006 Oct 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of <b>Balochistan</b> for <b>Pakistan nuclear tests</b> is just one of several complaints -- "Baloch locals allege that the nuclear tests have devastated the ecology of the area and their fruits do not taste as sweet as they used to prior to the nuclear tests."</li> </ul>
2006 Oct 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After numerous votes, neither <b>Guatemala</b> nor <b>Venezuela</b>, candidates from their</li> </ul>



	<p>regional group, have reached the needed two-thirds majority for a temporary seat on the <b>UN Security Council</b>.</p> <p>The former head of <b>Pakistani intelligence</b> says "It is absolutely true that <b>America</b> played a role in Gen. <b>Musharraf's take over</b> of 1999."</p>
2006 Oct 16	<p>↓ A <b>Pakistani</b> academic says the <b>Musharraf</b> regime is besieged by <b>Balochistan</b> across the South and <b>Waziristan</b> in the North-west. Pakistan arrested 8 al-Qaeda members and confiscated a large quantity of munitions, preventing attacks on <b>Islamabad</b> and <b>Rawalpindi</b>.</p> <p>A remarkable <b>French</b> move making the <b>Turkish</b> position on the Armenian genocide illegal is complicating Turkish-Armenian relations. <b>Turkey's</b> disagreement over tiny <b>Cyprus</b> comes back to haunt it as Cyprus threatens a veto on accession to the <b>EU</b>. <b>Europe</b> is becoming increasingly concerned as extreme <b>Islam</b> and anti-Islam sentiments grow.</p> <p>In <b>South Africa</b>, <b>Zulu</b> chief <b>Buthelezi's</b> claim of an anti-Zulu conspiracy has been condemned -- "This is playing with fire because Africa is sick and tired of ethnic wars, as we can see in <b>Darfur</b>."</p>
2006 Oct 09	<p>↓ <b>Zulu</b> chief <b>Buthelezi's</b> claim of an anti-Zulu conspiracy has been condemned -- "This is playing with fire because Africa is sick and tired of ethnic wars, as we can see in Darfur." <b>Bishop Desmond Tutu</b> is surprised neglect of the poor has not yet led to unrest. The head of Indonesia's Foreign Ministry NAM section says <b>NAM</b> is important as a multilateral organization, but it must beware of taking "political" stances. President Bush has backed <b>Turkey's</b> bid for entry to the <b>EU</b> -- "White House aides called this a reflection of Turkey's critical relationship with the <b>United States</b>." <b>Turkey</b> has rejected a <b>PKK</b> ceasefire offer -- "The Turkish armed forces have said that they will fight on until not a single armed terrorist is left."</p>
2006 Oct 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Turkey's Kurdish</b> rebels have declared a unilateral cease-fire.</li> </ul>
2006 Sep 25	<p>↓ Two more bombings in Eastern <b>Turkey</b> have been attributed to <b>Kurdish</b> rebels. There is no obvious succession to the third President of <b>South Africa</b> [unlike with the first two]-- and unaccustomed splits are appearing in the <b>ANC</b>.</p>
2006 Sep 18	<p>↓ The situation in <b>Balochistan</b> is suddenly highly volatile after the killing of a tribal leader; observers warn that <b>Pakistan</b> should not try to fix a political problem by military means. The first <b>India-Brazil-South Africa</b> (<b>IBSA</b>) Summit held in Brasilia called for a global effort to eradicate <b>terrorism</b>. The <b>US</b> is applying diplomatic pressure to <b>Turkey</b> to stop it hitting <b>Kurds</b> in northern <b>Iraq</b>.</p>
2006 Sep 11	<p>↓ [nothing significant to report]</p>
2006 Sep 04	<p>↓ The <b>Kurdish</b> separatist movement (<b>PKK</b>) is becoming an increasingly sensitive issue in US relations with <b>Turkey</b>.</p>
2006 Aug 28	<p>↓ Now both <b>Turkey</b> and <b>Iran</b> are attacking <b>PKK</b> [<b>Kurdish</b> separatist] targets in northern <b>Iraq</b> — Turkey may be <b>Central Asia's</b> link to <b>Europe</b>, but more importantly it may be Europe's link to Central Asia.</p>
2006 Aug 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [nothing significant to report]</li> </ul>
2006 Aug 14	<p>↓ The <b>PKK</b> launched harassing attacks in south-eastern <b>Turkey</b> increasing the Turkish urge to smash <b>Kurds</b> in northern <b>Iraq</b> —the <b>Saudi</b> King is visiting <b>Turkey</b> on the first state visit in 40 years.</p>
2006 Aug 07	<p>↓ There was support for a new significant trade entity, a US\$10T <b>pan-Asian free trade area</b> centered on the <b>ASEAN</b> region — one analyst noted that <b>Afghanistan</b> is just one piece of the century old <b>Central Asia</b> "Great Game" — the new <b>Turkish</b></p>



	<p>military chief hinted his country may trade Turkish participation in a NATO <b>Lebanon</b> force for action against <b>Kurds</b> in northern <b>Iraq</b>.</p>
2006 Jul 31	<p>↓ <b>Turkey</b> wants to attack <b>Kurdish</b> separatists across the <b>Iraq</b> border – an analogy of <b>Israel</b>'s attack on <b>Lebanon</b> – but the <b>US</b> has cautioned against this. The US has made it clear that it does not like emergence of the <b>Shanghai Cooperation Organization</b> but little can be done about it (or other multilateral groupings). The powerful <b>Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)</b> condemned the US position on <b>Israel-Lebanon</b>.</p>
2006 Jul 24	<p>↓ <b>Turkey</b> said it reserved the right to attack <b>Kurdish</b> separatists in northern <b>Iraq</b> – the US warned the Turks not to. The Communist Parties of <b>China</b> and <b>South Africa</b> exchanged fraternal greetings.</p>
2006 Jul 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [nothing significant to report]</li> </ul>
2006 Jul 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Turkey</b> and Central Asia's <b>Kazakhstan</b> join the queue of nations reminding others such as the US that a strategic partnership is for two-way advantage.</li> </ul>
2006 Jul 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Turkey</b> continued to encourage its image as the <i>de facto</i> bridge between <b>The West</b> and the <b>Islamic World</b>.</li> </ul>
Commencement of Service	

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